

An interview with Frank D. Correl

Interviewed by: W. Haven North

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Q: Today is September 29, 1998 and this interview is with Frank D. Correl. Frank, why don't we start off first with a thumb nail sketch of your career in AID, when you began and when you ended, so the readers have an overview before we get into the specifics.

Overview of career with USAID

CORREL: I joined the International Cooperation Administration (ICA), the Agency for International Development's (AID's) predecessor agency, in February of 1959, originally as an intern, went off to Korea and Vietnam, returning in 1963, and after a short while in the Vietnam Desk, transferred to the Africa Bureau. I worked there for the next four years (1964-1968) before being sent off for a year to the School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS). I then served in Morocco (1969-1971) and returned to Washington and was in succession Philippine Desk Officer, Program Officer for the old Technical Assistance Bureau, and Program Officer for the Near East and Asia Bureau until 1975. The name changed three times while I was in that bureau. After that, I worked for nearly two years for the Development Studies Program in the Office of Personnel. In September 1977, I went on an 18 month detail up to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, first with Senator Hubert Humphrey, and then Mrs. Humphrey and Senator Dick Clark of Iowa. After that, I became Mission Director in Lesotho (1979-1982); Deputy Assistant Administrator for West and Central Africa; a member of the Senior Seminar of the State Department; and finally Director of the Mission in Sri Lanka from which I retired on the 30th of June, 1986.

Q: That's great. Let's go back to where you're from, where you grew up, your early education, but with a view of those things that influenced you to get into the international development business leading up to before you joined AID.

Early years and education

CORREL: I was born in Frankfurt, Germany, on January 3, 1929, and spent the first 10 years of my life in Germany. I left Germany three weeks before World War II started, going to England as a refugee while my parents were trying to make their way to the United States. I lived in England for a little over four years during the war, going through the London blitz, among other things. During the time in both England and Germany, I had a standard education. In Germany, it was a private school most of the time; in England it was the public school system, finishing up with what they call a leaver's certificate in the Summer of 1943. After that, I was in a business school until the good word came through that I was coming to the U.S. I arrived in the U.S. at the end of November, 1943 and after that my life was a little more regular. I entered high school and graduated from Highland Park High School in New Jersey in June of 1946. I spent a year at the Associated Colleges of Upper New York at their campus at the old Sampson Naval Base on Lake Geneva and then went to Rider College (now Rider University), then located in Trenton, New Jersey where I graduated with a Bachelor of Science. in Commerce in 1950. After that, I changed course and went to graduate school at Columbia University and emerged from there with an Master of Arts in history in 1955.

Q: Was there anything during that education experience that aroused your interested in international affairs or international development?

CORREL: With my European background and a little bit of travel even before the war, I was always very, very interested in international relations and quite early on, set my sights on a career in the Foreign Service as I understood it at the time. I guess my focus was more on traditional diplomacy and foreign relations. However, the whole question of development aid and the kind of emergency support given at the end of the war, leading to economic recovery in Europe, were things that I was keenly interested in. After I joined the Debating Society at Rider, shortly before my graduation, I won a little gold medal at a debating tournament at Temple University in 1950 for delivering an extemporaneous speech on whether or not the U.S. should adopt a Marshall Plan for Asia, in which I argued that while assistance to Asia was certainly very important, I didn't think the Marshall Plan approach would help much.

Q: Good. What was your reasoning for that?

CORREL: Well, you're asking me to go back quite a while, but essentially what I argued at the time without any government background, was that in Europe there were some highly structured traditional governments experienced in ways of doing things. European economies, which might have been very badly damaged or dislocated during the war, essentially were modern economies and Marshall Plan-type of aid could help. By contrast, in Asia there was such a wide of range of problems and situations, with countries either emerging from colonial domination or which had remained far behind in everything, even though they had retained their independence. I just didn't think that the kind of structured approach we had in the Marshall Plan - a very close cooperation - was really going to be effective in Asia.

Q: Good. Did you have any special classes or did you write a thesis that related to international affairs?

CORREL: To be honest about it, no. My thesis at Columbia had to do with the outbreak of World War II. It covered German-Polish diplomatic relations from 1934, primarily from Munich to the outbreak of the war. My interest in aid matters was more informal than anything structural or academic.

Q: So, after you got your Masters Degree, was that it?

CORREL: A specific opportunity to be considered for U.S. government work arose even before I got my Masters. Around Thanksgiving of 1951, a friend of mine saw a bulletin board announcement about exams for a Civil Service Program to be held down in Greenwich Village. We were both at loose ends, and we applied. We went down there and took the exam. One thing led to another and I interrupted my M.A. work before I got my degree and had finished my thesis, in order to accept a Junior Management Assistant position in Washington.

Q: So, this was the Junior Management Intern Program wasn't it?

CORREL: Yes, except it was with the Department of Commerce. I worked for Commerce from '52 until early '59 when I switched over to ICA in a lateral position.

First government position as an intern with the Department of Commerce - 1952

Q: I see. What was your function in the Department of Commerce?

CORREL: It was in the Office of Export Supply, a euphemism for export control, in the Bureau of Foreign Commerce. We were dealing with strategic trade in the job that I started out with and returned to after my 1953-1955 military service, which interrupted this Commerce stint. I was writing procedures, specifically the export control regulations of the United States and related transmittal letters, which interpreted the regulations for exporters and other parties. I found this very useful for my later career in the Foreign Service, because it gave me a very good idea of regulations and how to write them clearly and exactly so that all bases were covered and that people could understand them. After that, I became a Program Officer in the Strategic Controls Division of this agency where we worked on a variety of trade cases and policy issues of a sensitive nature as they came up. I remember one particular incident where an application was received to send one athletic supporter to Moscow. Nothing could be sent to the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) without an export license, and we joked that it was for Stalin himself.

Q: What was the major strategic resource that we were trying to limit?

CORREL: First of all I should say that exports of arms or other military items were not handled by us. The Department of State handled the licensing of that. Our job in Commerce was to handle negotiations with our allies and manage the issuance of licenses for non-military commodities. It all depended on the destination. If this was the Soviet Union, Mainland China, any of the Soviet bloc countries, or transit points, especially Hong Kong and Macao, we required a license for pretty much everything. But, we were also part of a coordinated multi-national approach. There was a committee, which I think even still exists today, called COCOM, the Coordinating Committee on Strategic Trade consisting of Japan and our Western European allies. There would be constant discussion on whether this or that particular commodity needed control. Specifically, to answer your question, we were concerned with a lot of machinery and equipment that could possibly have a strategic application, and also with raw materials, things like molybdenum and beryllium, and steel products, furnaces, rolling mills, and so forth. These required a so-called validated license, which was a paper document. It was distinguished from a "general license," which was exported freely.

Q: Did you do any traveling in that kind of role?

CORREL: No, I'm afraid I did not. My only trips while in that job were orientation visits to the Collectors of Customs in New York and Baltimore. More extensive government travel didn't come until much later.

Q: I see. Were there any major issues that you had to deal with during that, or was it more routine?

CORREL: At my level, which was at the GS-9 and 11 levels, the involvement in major issues was quite minimal.

Q: But, you mentioned that you took off some time from this job to go in to the military? What was that experience?

CORREL: I arrived in Washington on the 29th of July, 1952. In May 1953, I was drafted and inducted into the Army. The experience consisted of basic training and assignment to the Southeastern Signal School as a radioman at Camp Gordon, Georgia. I was subsequently assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division. There I tried to maintain quite a low profile and ended up as a clerk in the Division Signal Office.

Q: All of this was in the United States?

CORREL: It was in Georgia and at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, a total of 21 months.

Q: All right. Then you returned to Commerce?

CORREL: I returned to Commerce after a four month stint at Columbia, during which I wrote my thesis and finished up all the work on the M.A.

Q: I see. Well, then from Commerce you say, you went to ICA?

CORREL: I was not terribly happy in Commerce. After a while, I started looking for the opportunity to get involved in actual overseas work. I took the Foreign Service exam in 1957 or '58 and got quite a high score in the written part. Then, I underwent a very interesting experience with the oral exam, where after quite an interrogation, I was told that I had missed out by a very small margin.

Q: What was the experience? Why do you call it interesting?

CORREL: It when I asked why I had missed by such a small margin. At first the reaction was, we don't have to tell you. I said, well, I'd gone through quite a lot to take this exam and to prepare for it, and I thought at least common courtesy demanded that I get some kind of indication. I was told that the panel had felt that as a result of my having lived abroad until I was just about 15, I had formed certain opinions that made them think I would not be particularly effective as a representative of the U.S. abroad. I must say, I subsequently stored this in the back of my mind and from time to time, I suppose it resulted in a rather critical view about the Department of State and what it was trying to do.

Q: Right. So, what did you do then?

Joined ICA as an intern - February 1959

CORREL: After that I tried ICA. Then, as probably now, things moved kind of slowly. But, after about a year's wait, I was offered a job, again as an Intern, at my current grade. While that wasn't a particularly attractive package as far as immediate career advancement was concerned, I concluded that I really had nothing to lose and that the move might produce an interesting career. I'm glad I made that choice. It was as an intern, the second time around, that I joined ICA on February 20, 1959.

Q: I see. What was your first assignment? What did an intern do when they joined ICA?

CORREL: I was in an intern group with a couple of people who subsequently distinguished themselves very much in AID and also other agencies. One was Philip Birnbaum and the other was Ernest Stern, and some other people. We all became immersed in the development lore as practiced by ICA at the time, which wasn't all that strongly development-oriented. Much of the aid was the sort of thing that subsequently became known as supporting assistance. I do remember one particular project where Ernie and Phil and I sat up until 2:30 in the morning in one of the many buildings that ICA had around Washington at the time. It was on 13th Street somewhere, and we developed a development plan for Sudan. I don't know that it ever was used. Maybe it should have been adopted by the agency. It might have resulted in better results than what's happened in that poor country since then.

Q: Was this a training exercise or was this an actual program design?

CORREL: No, it was a training exercise. We were basically exposed to training situations only. I left the group early. The terms of employment were, that the Intern Program would last about a year and that we would leave Washington sometime within that year, maybe after several months, and then go in to a training situation overseas, leading to an operational position.

First overseas assignment in ICA/South Korea - May 1969

Maybe because of my previous government service or whatever, I got sent after only two and a half months to Korea. I was earmarked to become a Special Assistant to the Mission Director. At the time, if Korea wasn't the biggest mission we had in the world, it was one of the biggest, because there were over 500 employees including contractors there. The Mission Director at the time that I was hired, was a fellow named Bill Warne, but as it happened in AID and its predecessors, by the time I got to Korea, Warne had left and there was no longer that job for me. To my everlasting benefit, I was immediately put into an operational job in the Program Office in that big mission in Seoul. My job was to deal with so-called non-project assistance, the commodity import program. This consisted of what was called the Saleable Dollars Program. Thereby, dollars were sold for local currency to Korean end users and middlemen importers to purchase specified commodities for the Korean civil economy, and thereby mobilize local currency to be used for the defense effort.

Q: What was the situation in Korea at that time?

CORREL: When I arrived in May of 1959, things were quiet, but there was the constant menace of the North Koreans hanging over the whole situation. Seoul still showed extensive damage from the Korean War that had ended six years earlier. We were constantly reminded of the very close presence of the North Koreans. The economy was at a very modest level. If I remember correctly, their total earnings from exports were something like \$16 million. In addition to that, they earned foreign exchange from sales of commodities and services to the U.N. forces, largely American, but there still were Turks and some others around. The economy in Korea had absolutely no resemblance to what subsequently happened when it just burst forth into one of the giants on Earth. In Seoul itself, conditions were relatively primitive. The Koreans relied a great deal on castoff equipment. Most motor vehicles were rehabilitated jeeps. They got streetcars from the U.S. They had some old rolling stock for the trains. If you took the train from Seoul down to Pusan in the South, it was an all-night trip, not a particularly comfortable one. I understand today you can do it by road in a couple of hours. The people were still quite poor. There was some business, but generally they were picking themselves up by their bootstraps. The government was in bad shape. One of the heroes of the time when the Koreans were under Japanese occupation, Syngman Rhee, had come back to Korea, become President and had established a very authoritarian regime. The U.S. policy was to cater to that regime and as a result, a number of things were happening in that country that I don't think helped create stability.

Q: Such as?

CORREL: The Rhee government was very repressive and in 1960 there were student demonstrations, which I think the U.S. establishment tended to discount. Certainly the theme of briefings we got, both from Embassy and senior AID people, were that this unrest was considered a blot on the record of an otherwise deserving country, that these people didn't really know what was good for them and so on. It made a lot of us, including junior officers like myself, very uncomfortable, because we did have extensive contact with Koreans at various levels. We could see or hear of people who were having a very hard time. Working on the non-project program, I could see for myself that basically the system of auctions of dollars was rigged so that the cronies of the party were getting the lion's share if not just about all of the money. Essentially, even though this was supposed to generate currency to run a fair defense effort, we were getting only 30, 40 cents on the dollar and I just didn't see how that could be in the U.S. interest.

Q: How was the allocation process? You were much involved, I guess, in the allocations. What scale of resources are we talking about that you were handling in the non -project assistance?

CORREL: In rough terms, it was between a hundred and a hundred and fifty million dollars a year as I recall. Then, on top of that came a PL480 Title One sales program (government-to-government sales of agricultural commodities), which technically we in USAID didn't have responsibility for, but we had a very good relationship with the office over at the Embassy where that was handled. There was a PL480 Officer over there, a woman by the name of Elsie Quick, with whom I became very friendly and we ended up coordinating the two programs as if they were the same. I remember returning on home leave in 1961 and the U.S. customs agent in New York asking me how much money I'd spent while I was out of the country. I was able to count it up and say, half a billion dollars. So, that's what we programmed in two years.

One very interesting thing about this program, if I may just make a quick aside, is that we had 500 plus people in that mission, but they were only three of us Americans, plus one Korean who handled the non-project program, which was far greater than anything else that the mission had. Everybody else was concerned about project assistance and other things. Somehow, the four of us were very much left alone to handle this program and we had very little in the way of accountability or guidance as to how to allocate the money. We based our decisions on analysis that we did ourselves. We programmed the money and negotiated with our Korean counterparts. When some kind of question developed, only then did we really have very much attention from the Front Office (Ambassador's Office), at least in the first couple of years that I was there. The actual allocation process consisted of a joint Korean and USAID Committee called The Saleables Review Committee. We were not called USAID at the time, we were the Office of the Economic Coordinator of the United Nations Command in Korea. We would meet with people from the Ministry of Reconstruction (MOR), which later became the Economic Planning Board, and they'd have a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as a member of the committee on their side. We were sparring with them and reaching agreement on how to allocate all these dollars. We had a couple of special situations. One of them, and a very important one, was imports of petroleum and petroleum products (POL). POL was not imported commercially, but by the U.N. command, i.e. the U.S. Military, and then was allocated to the Korean civil economy. Civil economy imports were covered by our non-project program within the total program level. Thus, large POL imports would have reduced availabilities of funds for other imports. This was one of the key issues in our allocation process, because the Korean government's policy, especially in the days of the Syngman Rhee government, was to keep that POL allocation down at rock bottom levels. This was because, essentially, they were stealing the rest from the military, and that was an official government policy that a Korean official once admitted to me. When I reported this to the Commanding General of the U.N. forces at the time and to the Mission Director, they were absolutely flabbergasted that that was the case.

Q: I don't understand. What was the process?

CORREL: Well, we found out that the Koreans had tapped the POL supply line in Incheon Harbor and were siphoning off supplies. Further, the various commodities in military stocks were stored at different bases all over Korea and were being stolen there. They were generally in drums or containers like that. So, what would happen is, that if let's say you had a quarterly allocation of 25 million dollars for the total commodity import program, of which \$10 million was needed for POL, the Koreans would try to set the quarterly level for POL at only five million, figuring they could steal the rest. Then they would want to program other commodities. Thus, in effect, if they were successful in persuading us to go along, they would get a lot more than the official program level, namely what they were able to acquire "informally" in the way of POL. On the other hand, if we made them program POL at realistic levels, they would receive fewer other commodities. It was this whole POL issue that probably took, if not half the time of our deliberations, an awful lot of time.

Q: Were there any action taken by your leaders when you reported it?

CORREL: No, not that I ever knew, at the time at least. The general was very offended that his military was being criticized for not exercising whatever caution was necessary. He pushed for us to increase civil economy POL allocations so that the thefts would not occur, a most unrealistic view since the stolen supplies came at little or no cost to the Koreans. Action was eventually taken by a subsequent general, General Carter Magruder, who unlike his predecessor, was very interested in AID and what we were doing there, and who once invited me to come and give him a briefing on how this whole commodity import program worked.

Q: How did you decide on how to allocate the resources in the non-project assistance?

CORREL: We would analyze the situation with regard to specific commodities. That might be through travel, visiting plants, conferring with businessmen, and reviewing newspaper reports and documents. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry would provide justification for the things they were requesting. I had a Korean assistant, a commodity analyst who went out and came back with data. We also reviewed past import and consumption levels, i.e., historic levels or what kind of record had been established over recent years.

Q: What were the major categories or commodities?

CORREL: Of the non-PL480 stuff, beside POL, a very important thing was fertilizer. We had production materials, machinery and equipment, but no finished consumer goods. We had a long list of commodities.

Q: Was there a positive or a negative list which you used to characterize these programs?

CORREL: We had a positive list defined by program category. I mentioned fertilizer and POL. There were also a number of industrial chemicals, textile materials that were not covered by PL480, such as tire cord, logs and lumber, pulp and paper, iron and steel, non metallic minerals, non-ferrous metals, machinery and scientific equipment, medicines, medical equipment, even some rubber and sugar in those days. This would have been fiscal year 1963 when we still had world-wide procurement.

Q: Did you track any of these as you imported them as to where they went and how they were used?

CORREL: Yes, we did. But, before we did that, we would get together with the Koreans and decide on how these were to be allocated, as between end-users and traders or middlemen. They were all made available at a Bank of Korea auction, but in the case of quotas allotted to end users, they generally got together to fix up the quotas before hand, so the bidding was rigged. This was a problem when you had an unrealistic exchange rate. In the case of the stuff where there was competition, you had genuine auctions, namely among traders. Some allocations were made partly to traders and partly to end users. In this case, the percentages could be very important, and it took a lot of our time to calculate this. As far as actually tracking the commodities themselves, it was more on a spot basis than anything else. We had a policy of going around the country visiting different plants and seeing how the stuff was stored and how it was being used. But, we ourselves did not have that extensive an end use checking capability. There was some of it. But, given the relative isolation of Korea, once the stuff was in the country and given the kind of materials they were, they generally ended up in the right place. It was the terms under which they ended up that were probably more important. It could be that some commodities were being made available very cheaply and this would result in an undue skimming-off of profits by the government party and by insiders rather than low prices in the civil economy.

Q: There was a system of import controls, I suppose, at that time within which you were operating. It wasn't a free foreign exchange environment.

CORREL: Absolutely not. Foreign exchange was extremely short, yes, and most of it came from us.

Q: Were you involved in issues over who got what and how the licenses were issued and all that?

CORREL: Very much so.

Q: Some people say, it's not particularly important in non -project assistance, it's just the flow of resources, but other people ask: "what was the impact?" Did you ever have a sense or an evaluation of what was accomplished by these commodities in getting businesses going or servicing the agricultural sector with fertilizer. Did you have any sense of impact of the program apart from just providing foreign exchange?

CORREL: I would say from the time I arrived in 1959 to the time that I left, which was October of 1962, there were a couple of very important developments in Korea. Number one, Syngman Rhee's government was overthrown in April of 1960. After that, there was a year's political uncertainty, which then resulted in a military coup. That would have been May of '61. During this time, notwithstanding these political uncertainties, there was a constant growing of Korean industrial capacity, manufacturing capacity, and there were more and more products available in the market places. I spent quite a bit of time looking around at markets, factories, etc. We visited plants that were starting up and producing for export. One that is particularly in my memory is the Gold Star Electronic Company. They started by making little radios, but they subsequently became one of the industrial giants in Korea. On my last trip, just before I left Korea, I visited a site where they were just beginning to build the Hyundai shipyard, which became an industrial complex that went on to make cars and everything else. We never had a formal evaluation during my three years in Korea that I remember. But, I know that there was evidence all over the place that things were really catching on in Korea and that more and more enterprises were getting started and expanding and supplying goods, both for export and for domestic consumption.

Q: Were some of these Korean giant businesses ones that we were supporting with this program in our early days?

CORREL: Well, in those days, the big giants, if there were any, were in textiles. They certainly were being supported by the U.S. government, largely through PL480, but also through textile machinery and parts. We had no policy that the big giants had to fend for themselves and that we were only interested in small business. The whole idea of support for the small farmer, small business, the concept of as wide participation as possible, didn't come until later, although we had things in the system that permitted a relatively modest trader to participate in it and act as distribution to small enterprises.

Q: But, you were able to recognize some of the successful companies, the ones that we were providing resources to in the early period?

CORREL: Certainly among the textile companies, yes.

Q: But, in other areas?

CORREL: Other than that, there weren't any big ones at the time.

Q: I see.

CORREL: Gold Star, as I remember the plant, looked like the sort of thing you'd see up on the road outside of Harper's Ferry somewhere, a machine shop. They were turning out these little radios, the kind that had been popular in the United States about 10 years earlier.

Q: Were we providing any support for this activity?

CORREL: They were getting some raw material from us.

Q: Was there any technical assistance tied in with these commodities?

CORREL: Only insofar as these products went to an organization. In the case of agricultural development, we had various projects, but there was little if any coordination between U.S. project and non-project assistance. But, the idea that somebody was buying a million dollars worth of machinery and that we in USAID would have somebody to assist in the using of that machinery or financing that, that was done through the supplier of the machinery. Also, as you can probably tell from the list of those commodities, in those days, we had worldwide procurement. Otherwise, how could we have furnished rubber? Most of the programmed funds were not going to the United States.

Q: I see. I hadn't realized that.

CORREL: The limited worldwide procurement didn't come until after 1962.

Q: Was this non-project assistance linked to policy reform measures, to policy dialogues? Was there any thought of linkage in terms of reform measures and conditionality?

CORREL: Let's put it this way: My memory fails me if there was. The only kind of policy reform that I remember had to do with opening the economy more to competition, and quite honestly the initiative came from us in our little office. I don't recall that in my time the commodity import program was ever used to encourage policy reform. It was essentially viewed from the U.S. side, officially at top-side, as a means of supplying resources for the civil economy and generating local currency for the defense effort.

Q: It wasn't involved in any exchange rate reform at that point?

CORREL: During the Syngman Rhee days, the U.S. government did not seem to exercise any pressure for them to reform the exchange rate. Later on, there was exchange rate revision. I think the U.S. changed its position at some point, but the Koreans themselves realized they weren't getting anywhere. The rate was 500 Hwan to one dollar when I got there, which was totally unrealistic, and then went to 650 to one, which was just about as unrealistic. After Rhee was gone, it went to 1,300. At that point, we actually had a sensible opportunity there, and at 1,300 things started thriving.

Q: Did you get to know the Koreans and how did you find them to work with and socialize with?

CORREL: I got to know the Koreans largely through my office and socialization was a very interesting experience. There were friendly relations, especially with one of the people from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry with whom we dealt with a great deal on commodity justification and getting information on the economy. We visited each other's homes. Much of the Korean entertainment was of a predictable variety. I don't suppose it is any different now than it was at that time. Usually, one was invited after work to a party in a restaurant somewhere where there is a lengthy dinner and lots of talking and relaxed informality in contrast to rather stilted formal meetings. Then, there were Kisaeng girls, which are sort of the same idea as the Japanese geishas who help entertain. In my case, they helped me to use the almost-knitting-needle-like chopsticks, occasionally even having to feed me. In such parties, which I reciprocated by dinners at the big officers' club on the Yongsan base, one got to know these people reasonably well without establishing a close relationship. I think the key element in those days was to get to the point of where they would feel free to come to your house and maybe bring their wife with them and vice versa. We did achieve that to a considerable degree, which I won't say is unusual, but it wasn't that terribly frequent. Some of the USAID project technicians, especially again in agriculture, had very good relationships with their Korean counterparts. Other than Korean counterparts, I know that we took a very lively interest in the Korean Branch, or the Royal Asiatic Society, which put on trips to different places in Korea, even outside of Korea. There, one might run into people at museums, cultural events, and things like that. I did have a number of more casual Korean friends and acquaintances whom I'd see from time to time.

Q: Did you have much dealing with the Embassy in that time?

CORREL: Yes, especially with the PL480 section, Miss Quick, and then the economic section where we had reasonably good relations. Other than that, we didn't have much contact with the Embassy, except during periods of unrest.

Q: Did you get signals to deal with something from a political point of view or respond to a certain person through the commodity program? In other words, did you get political pressure from the Ambassador or others on resource allocations?

CORREL: It's hard to believe when considering what happened afterwards, but I do not recall that we were ever under any kind of political pressure with that program, with the exception of the good general complaining that we were not importing enough petroleum. If anyone contacted the Ambassador about a larger allocation of, say, cotton, I certainly never heard of it. It didn't happen with regard to our program. I would say that we had a very substantial free hand and again, people seemed to be focusing on other things. They were focusing on the military situation; they were focusing on project assistance and that's what kept our Mission Director and his Deputy occupied much of the time.

Things changed in the summer of 1961 when the Mission Director left, and Jim Killen arrived to take his place. Killen started taking a somewhat broader interest in the Mission. He gave the clear impression that his main interest was to cut activities and cut the number of people and there were very substantial reductions. But actually, I think Killen was very concerned about the quality of the program and its contents. Unfortunately, at the same time, I had an immediate boss whose approach basically was that we were really interfering much too much in the process of this resource allocation and we should let the Koreans do it.

Q: Did you share that view?

CORREL: I most certainly did not and objected quite vigorously.

Q: Why?

CORREL: Because, basically I felt that if the Koreans with their political, cultural, and individual economic pressures allocated the funds there would be a number of things happening that would not achieve our stated objectives of developing a stronger civil economy and generate support for the defense effort. It was a question of trying to get a free economy going, rather than one that consisted of preferred suppliers who were on the scene and profited handsomely from the status quo. We felt that with the kind of resources we had, the development of a free economy with true competition was of critical importance for the future of that country. Essentially, I think my chief's position was that this stuff was basically of no relevance, the most important thing was, get rid of the dollars and be done with it. This man's tour ended just before a so-called installment sale of these dollars took place. All of a sudden, the entire allocation went "on a weekend" and there was no money left. I had gone on leave and when I came back, my Chief had gone and the dollars had gone. I had written an analysis beforehand as to what I thought would happen under that policy. Mission Director Killen, who had sort of put me in a corner with my stupid views, called me up and asked me to come see him. Let's say that from that time on, he and I had a very close professional and personally friendly relationship.

Q: Good. How did you find the mission as a place to work?

CORREL: A very mixed bag. I was very uncomfortable in some respects, because there were so many people who seemed to be either going off on a tangent or at the very fringes of programs. I just felt that the program was much too widely scattered and that supervision either wasn't adequate or couldn't be adequate. I met some very impressive people there, but also a type of person, who I was told was considered a "stateside reject," and I agreed. Fortunately, there weren't all that many of them.

Q: What was that?

CORREL: A "stateside reject" was somebody who managed to get a job with AID when they couldn't get a job elsewhere in the United States. Some of them were in leading positions within the Mission. But, changes came, some inaugurated by Jim Killen, and others took place naturally. There seemed to be an increase in the overall quality of the leadership or the middle leadership of that Mission. I found that there were some people who I really came to respect very highly, who were doing very effective work in their particular areas in Korea, and who I had the pleasure of running into again elsewhere in the world as I went through my AID career.

Q: Looking back on that time, what would you say were the principal characteristics of the Korean situation, society and so on that led to the tremendous growth and development that people hadn't anticipated in the early days?

CORREL: Well, I think the Koreans have been used to a great deal of hardship. They had a terrible Japanese occupation. It was the kind of country where many people lived literally at the margin and had to work awfully hard for their livelihood. I think that as more resources became available and as opportunities arose, they seized their chance. At the same time, I think the Park Chung-Hee government, like earlier ones, maintained a very strict discipline and really managed to get an awful lot of work out of the people. In my mind, the thing that made the Korean economy take off was the Vietnam War. I think that the Vietnam War gave Korea a chance to produce much more for the export market, i.e. the U.S. and elsewhere in Asia, than before, and under favorable conditions. I think that the Vietnam War, more than anything else was a key catalyst in how that economy took off. We saw some very nice positive developments in '62, even a little earlier, but nothing like what happened afterwards. And, of course, the Koreans jumped right in when the United States started getting into Vietnam in a very big way.

Q: And, that was in the early '70s?

CORREL: No. I think the Koreans started supplying the U.S. forces when things started really expanding, in '65 maybe. Then, of course they had Korean troops and supporting personnel in Vietnam. I think they jumped at the chance. I know that wouldn't account for all of this tremendous economic activity, but I think it provided the spark.

Q: Did you see anything in the Korean culture or society that seemed to support this growth?

CORREL: The combination of very great diligence and discipline and being used to a very modest lifestyle.

Q: I see. Well, to what extent do you think that the U.S. assistance program made a difference in enabling Korea to take off like it did?

CORREL: I think that the U.S. aid program provided them a tremendous resource pool that they would have had absolutely no chance of otherwise getting. In fact, it was the kind of thing that we kept thinking about constantly in our non-project program. And, that was to make that resource make a real difference for this country. Don't just dump it in there to generate money. A non-project program can do double duty, which I think was an unusual concept at the time. I think the project program in a number of key elements made a big difference. For one thing is, it got Koreans out of the country to get training that wasn't available there. The Koreans, unlike some other countries' nationals, came back, went to work and applied their knowledge. I think the exposure to the U.S. education system and to the U.S. generally, was of critical importance in the Korean development and they were concerned to exploit it. It's interesting to see how many Koreans have left in the many years since I left there - '62 to '98, that's 36 years. Now, there are a lot of Koreans in this country. But, that wasn't the case in the '60s. They were working in Korea then. Whatever immigration there was came later.

Q: Well, anything else on your Korean experience that you want to add at this point?

CORREL: Well, it was my first overseas tour for the U.S. government. I think that, until I became a Mission Director, it was the best job I have had; it was the most responsible job I have had; it taught me a tremendous amount; it gave me a great deal of confidence in dealing with people from other countries. I think that I had a greater sense of accomplishment with regard to that job, other than the time that I spent in the doghouse at the Mission, than most other jobs gave me in AID. Regrettably, during my career, I never returned there. I was not able to see for myself at first hand what happened.

Q: You never returned?

CORREL: I have never been back there and it is one of the genuine regrets of my AID career and subsequent life. It was an incredibly valuable learning experience and it was a doing experience and I deeply appreciated it all.

More observations on the Korean experience

CORREL: I'd like to go back to a couple of things in what we covered in our last discussion. One thing with regard to the non-project program in Korea was the need to learn and know the details. I really wish to underline this because it was so important and had a lot to do with how I came to view my subsequent AID work. I must stress the whole question of the relations with the Koreans and the kind of culture of bribery and corruption that existed there at all levels, much of which managed to get completely past the technicians and leadership of USAID. I know from some of my discussions with the USAID leadership and with other AID employees that they didn't have the faintest idea of things like that. For example, take the allocation of the commodities, even at the quarterly levels. Regarding percentages as between traders and end-users, even small numbers were of critical importance. This was brought home to me one time when my Korean assistant, with whom I had established a very close and productive working relationship, told me about an endeavor made by some people who had come to see me to "present their case" for an increase in a commodity allocation. Under their proposal a ten percent switch between end user and trader was to be effected on a procurement authorization of a couple of hundred thousand dollars. They were basically fishing to find out if I would accept a bribe equal to five thousand dollars on what, to us, seemed like an almost insignificant amount of money. I personally feel that since we were in the business of supposedly creating a stronger civil economy in Korea, a fairly significant presence by us - Program Officers, Commodity Management Officers, or whatever you wanted to call it - was very important and that by and by as people started understanding the rules, we could lessen the extent to which we involved ourselves to such a degree.

I'd also like to mention that during the period May, 1959 through the beginning of October, 1962 we went through two changes of government: one dramatic, drawn out collapse of government, which removed Syngman Rhee after a great deal of violence; followed by a period of about one year where the Korean government was trying to find a level from which it could effectively operate, which was brought to a close with a coup by the Army, headed by Park Chung Hee. We were operating in a very unstable political situation. We were able to work effectively with the Koreans to achieve a more effective exchange rate and we then had a currency reform, which was intended to take a lot of excess money out of circulation, which it did up to a point, I believe. I don't honestly know, because I think that there were a number of back-door ways that people could make the exchanges on more favorable terms than generally permitted from the old currency to the new. Certainly, on the basis of the activities that I saw and heard about, I believe there was a great deal of collusion at higher levels. This was after Park Chung Hee had come to power. So, it wasn't just the kind of thing that might have happened under a less well-organized government. Unfortunately, I'm familiar with at least one example of an attempt by a senior USAID Officer to profit from the exchange rate through inside information connections and things like that. Quite honestly, I'm pleased to say that my colleagues and our program managed to avoid getting involved in things like that. That's Korea.

Q: You finished up there in what year?

Assignment in USAID/Vietnam - 1962

CORREL: In October, 1962, I was sent on a direct transfer to the AID Mission in Saigon, Vietnam.

Q: How did this come about?

CORREL: I had made a brief reference earlier about having been in this situation where I was very much in the Mission doghouse for my views. I happened to be in touch with a former supervisor of mine who had been transferred to Vietnam. Somehow things happened and the word came through that I was needed in Saigon. I wouldn't say that I arranged it, but certainly indicated my availability. As I perhaps didn't know too well at the time, the worm does turn and, of course, by the time this request for a reassignment came up, things had changed by 180 degrees in Seoul. When I left, I was sorry to go, and I think Jim Killen was sorry to see me go.

Q: What was your assignment in Vietnam?

CORREL: In Vietnam, I was assigned to a large commodity import program, and I worked on that during my tour.

Q: It must have been tremendous.

CORREL: Well, actually in dollar amounts it was not as great as the program in Korea was. In terms of complexity and in terms of management style, it was a very different atmosphere and a very different situation.

Q: What was the complexity?

CORREL: Well, for one thing, it was a much larger office. There were four Americans and eight Vietnamese. We did more commodity analysis; we had a great deal to do with foreign importers, which was much less the case in Korea. In Korea, my supervisors had ranged from being relatively disinterested to being very interested in how the program was making an impact. During the time I was in Vietnam, the one Chief I worked for had a philosophy which reflected very much what the Mission philosophy was: That was: "they need it, they ask for it, they get it." We essentially were running the equivalent of a mail order service for the Vietnamese. Whatever it was they wanted, they got it.

Q: There was no room for critiquing or challenging them?

CORREL: It was not welcome. You were considered to be a sorehead or even disloyal if you basically even questioned the modus operandi under which things were happening in Vietnam. I didn't stay there very long. Subsequently, I also saw the picture from the other side, sitting on the Vietnam desk in AID/W (AID/Washington) for a while. I have kept a copy of an interesting letter that Jim Killen asked me to write him after I'd been in Saigon for a while about my impressions of the place.

Q: What did you tell him?

CORREL: Well, I told him seven pages worth of stuff.

Q: Well, we could put that in an annex if you'd like.

CORREL: It's probably the easiest way to do it, but what I did highlight was that our preoccupation was counterinsurgency, and that this was eating up the rest of the Mission at the expense of other priorities. In our commodity import program, we were doing the same thing we were supposed to do in Korea, and that is generate local currency for the defense effort. We had an anomaly of foreign exchange rates that was even greater than in Korea, but unlike Korea, nothing was ever done about it in Vietnam. We had instances where the commodity import program actually ran counter to what some of our project program was trying to do. I remember in particular aid to set up a local dairy. The Foremost Dairy Co. had a project in Vietnam, and under the project we were importing dairy equipment and everything else and providing extensive technical assistance. Under the Commodity Import Program we were bringing in very large amounts of sweetened condensed milk, which is what this dairy was supposed to be producing. Our objectives in the two programs were in complete contradiction.

Q: Your letter.

CORREL: Perhaps I ought to quote a couple of things, that's the easiest: "The commercial import program in the past has not had a program level determined at the beginning of the fiscal year. The practice has been to issue procurement authorizations as they were requested by the government of Vietnam and whatever that added up to on June 30 was the level for that year. The composition wasn't determined either. In the words of my boss, they need it, they ask for it, they get it. In several important instances, government requests and PA issuances were based on the word of certain importers. "Relations between our office and traders are very close indeed," I could have said of suspicious characters. The leadership of the Mission basically was only concerned that these levels be used and local currency be generated, even if it was at a very unfavorable rate of exchange.

After I got back to Washington, I was working on the desk over my objections. I really wanted to accept an offer to go to the African Bureau at the time, but agreed to work on the Vietnam desk. Together with two analysts on the desk and an economic officer in the Asia Bureau, we worked on an analysis of the commercial import program in Vietnam, which was actually presented to a White House advisor, Mike Forestall. He asked a lot of questions. Subsequently, the word came back to us to stop being nitpicking about these programs. This made me decide that the time had come for Vietnam and me to part.

Q: What was the heart of the issue that you were presenting from your analysis?

CORREL: Not only were we not accomplishing our aims in Vietnam with regard to strengthening the economy, we were actually encouraging multiple waste of the resources. On the one hand, the Vietnamese were getting aid for such things as that dairy plant, or a paper mill that was being undercut by commodity imports and they were not generating anywhere near what they could in local currency with the resources we were giving them, but sort of spiriting them away. We were creating a dangerous degree of dependency that we would not be able to satisfy once things calmed down, if that ever happened.

Q: The commodity import program was counter productive in terms of development ?

CORREL: Not only in development terms, I don't think there was even much thought of development, but even in accomplishing its stated objectives.

Q: Which was?

CORREL: Which was to generate local currency for the counter insurgency effort. Basically, I was very unhappy in a substantive, professional way. I thought that the Mission in Saigon was completely on the wrong track. I got to feeling that way almost from the first day, very shortly after my arrival when we had a briefing from the Major General commanding the Military Assistance Group, and the stuff that he was telling us about Vietnam and about the war effort, was untrue and unbelievable. It was kind of an embarrassment working there. I don't know that the Mission had very strong leadership and there seemed to be a feeling that whatever was happening was perfectly okay and that any questioning was considered to be undesirable and disloyal. Ironically, much later, in 1971, a State Department senior official told me that at the time a number of the embassy people had agreed with my positions but had not felt free to say so.

Q: Did you work with it or socialize with any of the Vietnamese?

CORREL: Only with the people who I worked with in the office. Unlike the other people in the office who had absolutely nothing to do with the local employees and local counterparts after hours, my wife and I socialized with several of them and in fact, became quite close friends with a couple of them.

Q: How did you find Vietnamese people to work with and so on?

CORREL: Some of the Vietnamese in my office I really valued as coworkers and friends. There were others where it was more of a neutral experience. Not that they were hard to get along with or anything like that, but I frankly think some of them had other interests. I think they were serving as intelligence agents for importers, or possibly were government agents. One didn't see them very much in the office, but I wasn't responsible for supervising them. I was very definitely one of the Indians. Otherwise, I didn't really get to meet many Vietnamese, except a few through the medium of a fellow who was supposed to be an Assistant PL480 Officer in the Mission. He told me that he was CIA and he certainly had some interesting contacts. Otherwise, the Vietnamese people met would have been people in the market or like that.

Q: How was life in Saigon at that time?

CORREL: Other than having to be always on the alert for something happening, it was very pleasant, until the middle of August of 1963. But, Saigon was a very large, sophisticated city, representing Vietnamese, French, and Chinese culture. It was a place where one could really enjoy good food, an interesting culture, a lot of things to do and what have you. We were constrained from going out of town. I did get over to Cambodia on personal leave for a trip to Angkor and to Phnom Penh. In addition, I went on a working trip to look at commodity import programs to both Cambodia and Laos with a State Department officer from Hong Kong. That was certainly very fascinating. Then, on either the 20th or 21st of August, 1963, a great deal of tenseness had built in Saigon, much of it due to Buddhist opposition. Then, the forces of the President's brother, Ngo Diem raided the Buddhist temples, including one right next to the AID Mission. We weren't at work for several days. We had been without an Ambassador for a while. Henry Cabot Lodge came in at that point to become Ambassador, and he had to walk down the street to come to our Mission, because our street was cut off and we were isolated.

Q: You said you went to Cambodia and Laos. Does anything stand out in your mind about that trip when you went to see their commodity import programs?

CORREL: It wasn't too different. I had the feeling that in both Cambodia and Laos there was a little more give and take with the government, but nothing very significant. It was a very interesting trip.

Q: Why were you asked to go? What were you supposed to do?

CORREL: It was basically to go along with the State Department man while he familiarized himself with how the commodity import programs worked. I got to talk to the respective officers in the two Missions, but it was not exactly a dawn to dusk-type job. There were a couple of very distinct personalities in the two Missions who believed in running the Missions in, I won't quite say authoritarian manner, but with a very strong presence and that certainly colored how people at subordinate levels worked in the Mission.

Q: What's the other one?

Additional observations on the Vietnam experience - letter to James Killen, 1963

CORREL: I'd like to mention that I arrived in Vietnam roughly three or four weeks before the first monk burned himself on the street. The tension and the very high degree of unpopularity of the government proceeded to become more and more marked. It made life in Saigon and getting the work done considerably more difficult as one got the suspicion that the government was losing meaningful control of the support of its people. And, of course with the coming of the attack on the Buddhist Temples, there were instances where people just felt that the United States was pouring money down a rat hole. There were also some personal experiences. I'd just like to mention one incident in the latter part of August 1963 while we were at work and trying to sort of figure out how to get through this whole business. My two children, one of whom was a baby in a pram, and the other was a little boy about three years old, had gone with the nurse maid to the Circle Sportif and then had been held on the street by a Vietnamese guard armed with a bayonet for an extended period of time at the height of a very hot day while my wife was going frantic at home. Incidents like that really also made one wonder just exactly whether anybody there was interested in what the United States had to do in that country, except to throw its money away.

Returned to USAID/Washington to the Vietnam Desk - 1963

Q: After being in Vietnam you went on to the Vietnam desk; were you on the desk very long?

CORREL: I was on the desk for approximately eight months after I came off home leave.

Q: Anything particular during that time?

CORREL: Yes, it was a very important period. With the assassination of Ngo Diem on November 1, 1963, and, of course, the assassination of John F. Kennedy after that, and with real instability coming to the fore with regard to South Vietnam, the United States decided to embark on a very big increase in the level of assistance and, of course, a much greater military involvement. We were supposed to have had 16,000 American military advisors in Vietnam during the time that I was there. While during that eight months, we didn't get anywhere near the half million troops, significant increases took place. The level of interest at the White House had increased. There had been a lot of interest in the White House before, but apparently there was also a great deal of difference of opinion. But, I think that in 1964, policy started crystallizing and the more dissenting elements were shoveled out of the way. I remember a couple of officers in particular who definitely ended up in the deep freeze. They were State Department officers. In AID, the Asia Bureau was very much attuned to meeting whatever was asked of them. This was the period when Secretary of Defense McNamara and the Deputy Administrator of the Agency, Bill Gaud, went off to a big meeting in Hawaii, where Gaud came back with the word that the AID Program was to increase very extensively, including the provision of, if it wasn't out and out military equipment, it was the next best thing. Thus, the character of the assistance effort in Vietnam became much larger and also qualitatively changed because of the tremendous increase in quantity and dollar value.

Q: What was the change? Change to what mainly?

CORREL: One big item was a whole bunch of radios and other communications equipment. The commodity import program increased quite significantly. They started sending more people out for the office of rural affairs and as provincial and district representatives. Reports also came back from Vietnam, not just from people like me, but also from visitors who'd been sent out there under contracts, that the whole concept of the strategic hamlets had very significant flaws in it. I remember quite well a woman who was sent out there to do an evaluation of strategic hamlets and being asked to do that without ever going to one. And, she said, well I can't do much of an evaluation if I can't go visit them, will you let me go to ten of them? The military said, well we can't guarantee your safety, and she said, well can you guarantee just one place I can go to and spend the night? And they said, no they couldn't even do that. It cast some very serious doubt on the stuff that was being fed to the public and maybe being fed to people at the highest government level and what was happening at a different level.

Q: Anything else during that eight month period? What was your job at that time?

CORREL: My job was basically program analysis and stuff like that. I remember one time I was asked to do an analysis. I had a couple of people working for me on the desk. We were asked to do an analysis of the Vietnamese economy and some of its weak points and strong points, which we did. The Desk Officer at the time was Walter G. "Stony" Stoneman. He took a look at our report. It was reasonably critical and he said, "I want to check this out with the CIA." He then came back to me with a little note, which said that the CIA had looked at the report, had said that it contained more stuff than they had available, and that they had absolutely nothing to add to it, that they were going to adopt it as their own analysis. This was most interesting, as at the same time we were being told that our view of what was happening in Vietnam was just unwarranted and wrong-headed.

Q: What was the main point you were making in that analysis?

CORREL: An account of the weaknesses in the economy and its heavy dependence on Uncle Sam acting as a Santa Claus.

Q: A very dependent society.

CORREL: Not only very dependent, but increasingly dependent.

Q: Well, so after eight months, what precipitated your leaving that part of the world?

CORREL: Oh, change in desk officer, general fatigue with the program, the feeling that I was unable to work effectively there, and that if anything, my presence was considered counter-productive. A new assignment in the USAID Africa Bureau Program Office - 1964

Q: So, then you moved to the Africa Bureau, but why the Africa Bureau?

CORREL: Well, a couple of reasons. Once again, it was a matter of having a good contact.

Q: What year was this now?

CORREL: This would have been in August of 1964. One of my friends from Korea in the Economic Development Office was a man who I had known during my earlier incarnation in the Department of Commerce and who, when he left Korea, went back to Washington and ended up working in the Africa Bureau. Also, if you recall, 1960 was the year that many African countries achieved independence. AID (It was still ICA in 1960.) was trying very hard to organize itself for providing assistance to Africa. The combination of the contact and what I considered to be an opportunity to actually work on some development efforts far, far removed from the very dubious proposition in Vietnam, encouraged me to see what was available there. It was through my contact, you probably remember him, his name was Henry Shavell, that I found out that there was a vacancy in the Development Planning Office. I was interviewed for it and was offered the job.

Q: Good, and what was your function there?

CORREL: There, I was the Chief of the Program Division, which meant the Congressional Presentation and the budget allocation process, the funding allocation process, review of projects, both new and continuing, and evaluations. An unsurpassed place for getting acquainted with the program and the Bureau.

Q: What was the sort of development orientation of the Bureau at that time? What kind of strategy? You were in a key position to relate to that. What were we emphasizing?

CORREL: Well, unlike Asia, in the Africa Bureau the program basically consisted of technical assistance and an extensive program of development loans. I believe that there were also a couple of Supporting Assistance programs at the time. I don't recall very well, but they certainly were not a very significant part of the overall program. I think we had some Supporting Assistance money in places like Sudan. The philosophy certainly, when I came to the Bureau in August of '64, was to try to have a program in just about every independent country. Moreover, when countries became independent, which several of them did during the four years that I worked there, the Agency gave a so-called independence gift. It was a very inclusive type of policy. And, while the number of personnel in missions was nothing like I had been used to in Asia, in light of what happened later on, staffing was reasonably liberal. I recall that we had over 600 technical assistance projects. The reason I know it was over 600 is because in the Congressional Presentation we had to have a data sheet in a book that was given to all Congressmen, which gave details of each project and the kind of funding needed. Plus, for the use of our witnesses before the Congressional Committees, we had a fat volume of supporting data sheets. This meant that at considerable cost, especially in terms of time, one got a really good overview of what the program consisted of.

Q: Are there any particular programs or countries or projects that stand out in your mind from that time?

CORREL: Yes. When I said, it's my feeling that the Africa Bureau programs in that period, 1964 to 1968, were all inclusive. Not only am I talking about individual country programs that were charged to a country level, but also, and this was very important for Africa, some programs which were designed to aid several countries at one time. One of those regional programs that sticks out in my mind as a certainly big money project, and one which I think offered a great deal of education to everybody was a smallpox/measles project, involving a couple of African health organizations. The idea was to control smallpox and measles in a large number of African countries. There were some very interesting lessons to be learned from that.

Q: What were they?

CORREL: One was the extent to which the governments actually collaborated in those programs.

Q: Recipient governments?

CORREL: The recipient governments. I remember receiving the project data sheets from the different Desk Officers in the Bureau who were required to fill them out for the Congressional Presentation. We had to highlight both what the United States was contributing and what the recipient countries were contributing. And, time after time the country contribution consisted of the patients and nothing else. We all had a good laugh about that, but the thing that bothered me was that when I got to work on African programs in Africa itself years later, not that much had changed. Donors, not necessarily only the United States, still had not seemed to have found out what it took to get meaningful government collaboration in these health projects. Or, phrased another way, there was a great deal of emphasis on getting supplies into a country and hopefully out to where people could be vaccinated or whatever. However, the infrastructure and the government support never really was very well developed.

Q: That wasn't a priority, I guess in that kind of a program?

CORREL: It wasn't seen as a priority. But, certainly the Africa regional smallpox/measles project is one that sticks in my mind. I also remember some very interesting development loans. I know we had a whole bunch of them in Nigeria. Nigeria was being presented to Congress as a showcase for development. Things were going reasonably well in Nigeria until the civil war broke out and then there was less emphasis on "showcase." Certainly our most visible Congressional overlord, Congressman Otto Passman, had a lot of fun with that word, showcase. But, that doesn't detract from the fact that there was some significant assistance to road building, universities, and other things in Nigeria. I don't know anything about it now, and I never had anything more to do with Nigeria. In the period later on when I was Deputy Assistant Administrator, there was no program in Nigeria. It was not a country we spent much time on. But back in 1964-1968, it was a major country program.

Q: Do you remember why Nigeria was singled out for such special attention?

CORREL: Well, being the biggest and most populous country in Africa, and having a fairly significant base of civil servants and others left from British colonial times, undoubtedly it was felt that here was a country where the aid could be put to good use and that one could realize some real economies of scale. Certainly enough money was put in there.

I also recall a development loan to the Trans-Cameroon Railway and to the extent to which the railway became an economic engine of growth for further development.

Another project I recall was the famous Tanzam Railway, the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, which actually was in use when I got to Zambia in 1979 on one of my many short-term trips. It was undertaken for political reasons in order to compete with the Communist Chinese who were getting a good foothold as aid donors in Africa. There seemed to be less compelling economic factors for building the railroad, but the important thing was to get going on it early and fast.

One regional program which I thought had some very interesting possibilities was a general participant training program designed to ease the terrible shortage of educated Africans at levels above elementary school. This was for undergraduate and some graduate work and some practical training. There were also a number of other education programs. In fact, the only trip that I took during the four years that I worked with the Africa Bureau in those days was up to New York to take a look at what the African-American Institute was doing in managing graduate and undergraduate programs. The names, as I recall them were AFGRAD and ASPAU.

Q: Were they working well?

CORREL: As I recall it, and my memory isn't too clear on this point, they did seem to be working reasonably well. There was a problem of getting people to go back to Africa, and of course, that was something the Bureau addressed more and more as incidents came to be known. However, Africans were getting an education and quite a few of them were going back. I guess quite a few of them ended up in key positions, not always to our benefit. I gather some of these Liberian warlords managed to get some sort of education in the United States. One of the programs that I remember well, because A: I did an evaluation on it, and B: I got to appreciate it when I became a Mission Director in Africa myself, was the program that furnished American experts to African countries in an operational capacity, the so-called OPEX Program.

Q: What was the point of that?

CORREL: The point was that when some African countries became independent, there were so few qualified people to run even basic elements of government, that the U.S. and other countries offered to make people available who would become functioning civil servants in those countries. Such people would be part of the government establishment with a standard government salary, government housing, and all that sort of thing. The U.S. AID program would top off salaries to U.S. levels, and provide whatever other benefits were necessary and appropriate in order to get such people out there. There was a joint program for the three southern African countries, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. Becoming Mission Director in Lesotho in 1979, I had quite a bit of first hand experience with that program. But, already in 1976, I had been the head of a team that had gone to the three countries to evaluate that project, and we had by and large been very favorably impressed about how that project was functioning.

Q: What was being accomplished?

CORREL: It was actually creating capabilities in government departments in those countries that simply did not exist beforehand.

Q: Were we simply providing that capability by providing outside experts; what happened to the local capacity?

CORREL: No. I was getting to that point. That is, as we were furnishing the experts, we were also supposed to be training people to take their place. How effective that worked depended a great deal on individual circumstances, even within a country. But, by and large, people were trained who then could come back and replace the experts. As I remember it, in countries other than Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, the program was terminated before some of that actually came to pass. I know that we in Lesotho had people coming back and we had some people at the Mission who could monitor and work with the returning Basutos. The program offered a great deal of promise. Some people said this was compromising their sovereignty, and it wasn't very good, but I don't think that the Basutos were terribly upset by having people like that work with and for them. I believe they became very conscientiously involved in it. I guess some of the details have to wait for my experience as Mission Director in Lesotho from 1979 to '82. I always felt the OPEX project was something that might have been pushed a little bit harder in other countries in Africa too. I didn't have too much of an idea about it until I got to evaluate the project, and then I really got to see the possibilities. Then, as Mission Director, I actually got to see how the project was being run, and could be fine-tuned. I believe it was an excellent program.

Q: How did you find the Bureau to work in at that time? It was such a contrast to where you were before, I guess.

CORREL: Well, I think it had some very nice points. I think my first three years or so in the Bureau were very demanding, but it was a very important learning experience for me and I enjoyed it. I felt that the Bureau was very well run. I worked for one of the people during my AID career for whom I developed a tremendous amount of respect and always found that working with him was not only a learning experience, but an experience in total professionalism. That was Carroll Hinman. I thought that he was the most outstanding supervisor I ever had during the entire time I worked for AID.

Q: He was head of the Program Office at that time? What was his position?

CORREL: He was the Director of the Development Planning Office for two of the four years that I was there. He had tremendous experience; he had excellent judgment and insights; he was not at all hesitant in sharing that information and letting you know where you could improve. I very much valued my association with him. I stayed in touch with him until his death. I feel I owe Carroll a great deal for what subsequently became of me. My view of some of the other people in that office or in the Bureau was not quite as elevated, but that's neither here nor there. I had a very satisfying time in getting to know a great deal about a very big part of the world.

Q: It was a great opportunity to learn, wasn't it?

CORREL: It certainly was. Now, the work demanded ferocious hours, particularly in the period from January through June when we worked on the Congressional Presentation.

Q: What did you think about the Congressional Presentation process and hearing process and all that?

CORREL: Well, to tell you the truth, I had very mixed feelings about it. I mean the hearing process, the idea of accountability and being able to explain in articulate terms what you were doing and what you were trying to do is absolutely necessary and good. I think it tended to degenerate into a circus quite a bit. Chairman Otto Passman of the Appropriations Subcommittee looked on the agency as a cow to be milked by him for any number of publicity and more substantive reasons. I think that a lot of his stuff was very capricious. But, I must say, looking at it in hindsight, he was very probing and there were a good number of things I learned from him.

Q: Did you participate in these hearings?

CORREL: I was a bag carrier, page-turner, and prepared notes to help the Bureau witnesses. Let's say I was at a tertiary level.

Q: But, you did go to the hearings?

CORREL: I went to the hearings. I also edited and corrected testimony.

Q: Did you change what people said?

CORREL: I certainly did. In a specific instance, after Mr. Hutchinson, the man who was the head of the Bureau during my first couple of years left, he was succeeded by a political appointee whose knowledge of Africa and its programs was considerably less than Hutchinson's had been. To be honest about it, when he went before Otto Passman to testify, the testimony was not particularly acute. When I got that transcript, I won't say I rewrote it from top to bottom, but I believe that my editing probably involved making as many changes as what had originally been said. And, when I delivered my edited version to this man, he subsequently came to thank me for making him sound like he was on top of the job.

Q: He knew what he was talking about?

CORREL: It made him sound like he was able to speak proper English and that he was functioning. He had a terrible time in front of Passman, who picked him up on any number of errors. I guess this is one of the real drawbacks regarding some appointments. Many of them are just unable to immerse themselves in the kind of detail that at that time would have been asked with regard to a program.

Q: Do you remember any other encounters that stood out in your mind?

CORREL: I'm trying to think whether I was part of a Foreign Affairs Committee hearing for the African Bureau. I remember going up at least three times before Passman. But, I don't recall the authorizing committee. It would have been much more staid.

Q: Do you have any views on the Congressional Presentation? It was a huge exercise. Was it all necessary?

CORREL: I cannot imagine it being done today. Even if it were not used for a congressional hearing, I personally would consider it exceedingly valuable if I were the head of an agency to have that kind of data on my desk at all times. How reasonable it is to ask anyone to do that, I hardly know. Because, the wonderful thing about it was, and I think this was perhaps its strongest point, that you weren't supposed to use more than one page per activity and rarely, except for really the most complex project, we did. And, to have key information on any given activity in your Bureau available on a one page summary, to me, would be a very valuable management tool. My answer to your question would be, that to get the ball rolling, I would be tempted to hire somebody under contract who could do this. To get the thing set up and then make it a continuing responsibility of people you work with to keep it up to date. It came at a terrible human cost and I think I know what I'm talking about with regard to my own family situation. I thought that the end product was far more valuable than people thought it was.

Q: Do you think it was a fairly accurate representation of what was going on in the real world?

CORREL: To be fair about it, in most cases yes. I think we tended to put the best pitch on a project, but we weren't that far off. Admittedly, absence of facts sometimes was made up for with some wishful thinking, but all in all, I think it wasn't a bad quality document at all, and it showed us the need to get more answers.

Q: You also indicated that while you were in that position you were involved in the allocation of the budgets among countries and setting budget levels and so on. What rule of thumb or guidelines or criteria did you use as to which country should get what or how much?

CORREL: Well, unlike my experience in Vietnam and Korea, we had a very large interest in the aid levels from our colleagues in the State Department Africa Bureau. It was pretty much a Bureau negotiation in which I, myself did more staff work than actually participate extensively. I think we had some significant constraints with regard to the magnitude of levels in the first instance. Then it was a matter of negotiating with different Office Directors and the front office, and priorities and prior experience played a very important role. Given the amount of money we had, I believe we were reasonably generous on new projects.

Q: Was there a particular development strategy that was guiding the Bureau at that time that said, we should emphasize these kinds of programs, rather than those, or these countries over other countries?

CORREL: My memory isn't all that clear, but as I remember it, we did a great deal to refine our programs and modify them during the four years that I was there. When I first came, I don't recall that there was a very clearly enunciated comprehensive development policy. There were some big countries that were identified as special opportunities. We had a pretty wide-ranging program. Later, much against the opposition of the State Department, which had the feeling that all God's children had wings, we started having to be more selective. Part of that was congressionally mandated and part of it was the way that the thinking was evolving in the Bureau and the Agency as a whole. We started developing concentration countries and we had some congressional limitations. I recall that Congress even mandated the number of countries in which we were supposed to have programs. However, there were some escape clauses to that. We found that we would have to close down some bilateral programs and develop regional or multi-country programs, and substitute a Washington office for certain field missions or AID Affairs Offices.

There was an effort on concentration and that there were countries that were eligible for development loans and others that weren't and so on. Then came the new initiatives of President Johnson in agriculture, education, and health. I think the agriculture one generally had widespread support. With education and health, the support was a lot more spotty, partly because of the weakness of the recipient country institutions. While we had plenty of money allocated to education and health, people generally were more hesitant about projects in those areas than in agriculture. Then also began the family planning emphasis. But, quite apart from strategy, something very important happened then which I think it affected the Africa Bureau as much as other Bureaus, which made a big difference to the program. That was, that the demands of the Vietnam War started impinging on personnel levels and availabilities.

Q: How did this affect the Africa Bureau?

CORREL: Quite a few people ended up not going to the Africa Bureau or being pulled out. Staff ceilings were reduced. I can't swear about whether the programs were being reduced at that time, I'm reasonably sure they were. Together with concentration programs, the new initiatives, plus the development of another separate initiative by the Africa Bureau, the Ambassador's Self Help Fund, we started getting a real dog's breakfast of a program in Africa in my last year.

Q: What was the Africa Self Help Program?

CORREL: Precipitated by the Africa Bureau of State and some U.S. ambassadors in the African countries, the idea was to make available a small amount of money. I believe at first it was fifty thousand dollars and afterwards, in some countries, a hundred thousand. These AID funds were made available for use by the Ambassador to make grants for certain small-scale activities. We developed some criteria, and this money made it possible to make small grants for activities intended to be of highly visible nature to demonstrate American interest in the country and in the people outside of our regular programs.

Q: Do you think it was a useful program ?

CORREL: I have very mixed feelings on the subject. I think some Ambassadors had not the faintest idea of using it ever for a development program. In other cases, it got Ambassadors really interested in development. In the days that we're talking about (1965-1968), there was quite a mix of State Department people working in Africa. A lot of them had the feeling that they were serving a sentence, they were hoping to go back to Europe or Japan or some place like that. We actually managed to capture the interest of some of those people with this little fund. They subsequently became very helpful in getting their country interested in development programs as they themselves got a better view of the AID dimension. For a lot of them, alas, I think the fund was viewed like dropping money into a slot somewhere and playing with a pinball machine for a while.

In Morocco where later I was the Assistant Director for Programs, there was a fellow in my office who was in charge of helping program that fund. He was a conscientious enough fellow, but not endowed with the best judgment in the world, and we had a couple of quite embarrassing incidents. One was to finance provision of beds and other furniture to a whore house that was supposed to be a student hostel. That wasn't the only such incident. Let's put it this way: the self-help fund tended to detract from getting more significant work done. On the other hand, there was something to be said for it conceptually.

Q: Anything else about your time at that time in the Bureau?

CORREL:I'm sure I could talk at length about the program. However, there's something very important that happened regarding personnel. Specifically, the capability of the office I worked in was very badly compromised by a lingering and exceedingly badly handled case involving charges of racial discrimination. It involved the Office of Development Planning, but in particular my office.

As I've said before, the work in that office involved very long hours and considerable attention to detail. I think we had pretty good morale among the analysts working in the office, which consisted of me and four others. We had two secretaries, one of whom came to see me one time to say that she would very much welcome the opportunity to rise out of the secretarial area and be doing work of a more substantive character. She wasn't talking about becoming an analyst or anything like that, but sort of a Program Assistant who could be used for something other than just the standard secretarial duties. Now, the situation in the office was that the analysts plus the woman we had keeping track of the numbers were all white, and the two secretaries were black. The two secretaries had families and one thing that would happen from time to time was that they wouldn't show up or they'd be late or something or other. At times, they weren't around when they were really needed. I told the woman who spoke to me about branching out that I would be very happy to give her a chance for more substantive work as a step to moving on to more professional responsibilities, getting out of the secretarial field. I worked with her and I had the others work with her. I won't say she had the greatest aptitude, but she was trying. After a while she came to me and said, she didn't really think that she was doing very well and questioned whether she ought to continue. I said to her that I felt that she'd made a promising start, that obviously there was going to be more involved, and that she really should try to stick with it and we certainly would be glad to help her. After these many years I can't recall how this all happened. I do recall that my personal feeling at the time was that I was not happy with the overall racial and gender mix in the part of the agency I was working in. There were hardly any black people at all. There were relatively few women working in substantive positions. In fact, when I'd had some vacancies in my office, and I had hired women for them at one point, I was told that I was establishing a harem. This was by one of my own bosses. I might add this was certainly not Carroll Hinman. So, I personally felt a wish and an obligation to try to provide a little more of what's called diversity nowadays. So, I took an interest in this woman's efforts, although she wasn't an outstanding candidate, but she was doing okay. This happened about 1966 and somehow in the next year or two, a real antagonism developed, which didn't involve me personally. My two secretaries, plus another couple of secretaries elsewhere in the Development Planning Office, were being treated as second class citizens. And, before we all knew it, a variety of charges of racial discrimination and everything else were leveled against the office, in particular against the man who became the head of the Development Planning Office after Carroll Hinman left, Hy Nissenbaum. I knew about the situation as it was developing, but not all the details. I learned that Nissenbaum had been given a letter of reprimand by the Assistant Administrator of the Africa Bureau, Peter Straus, which he was fighting. I offered to help him. I had left the Bureau by the time this all came to a head, which means it was the latter half of 1968 and early 1969. I found out at one point from Nissenbaum (with profuse apologies) that in the defense that he had written, basically he blamed the situation on me. Well, while all this developed, it was difficult to get one's work done. Together with this imbroglio and periodic requests or demands that I return to Vietnam, as well as keeping the work going, I found myself under a great deal of very unpleasant pressure that had relatively little to do with how well I was doing the substance of my work.

By the time 1968 rolled around, I must say I was pretty much exhausted. At the last Congressional Presentation that I supervised, I was the Deputy Director of the whole Development Planning Office, dealing with all kinds of people. I remember being so totally exhausted that I left town for a week and went up to visit my mother in New York and just completely forgot about AID and everything else. These particular memories very much colored my memory of the work in the Bureau. It had been challenging and interesting and one had a real sense of participation, and then I felt that almost anytime absolute disaster would strike. I spent a year at the School for Advanced International Studies. I kept in touch with the office. That's when I heard about my own implication in all of this, for which Nissenbaum had responsibility. Then, of course, came the question of an onward assignment. I understand that even that was affected to some extent by word that had gotten around that I had been involved in the discrimination case, although I never was faced by any charges or anything like that.

Q: Was it any particular incidence or was it just a pervasive situation?

CORREL: It was a pervasive kind of thing. There was no incident that I recall happening with anybody. It was just sort of one charge after charge after charge. The complainant kept going to the Equal Opportunity Office and filing charges, which they dismissed, but which still kept on going. Eventually, Nissenbaum left the Agency.

Q: And somebody thought he was made a scapegoat for the issue?

CORREL: He was, but I'm not sure what he was "scapegoated" for, because the incident itself in all honesty had no merit.

Q: Yes, but it was there and I guess the head of the Bureau wanted to act on it .

CORREL: Undoubtedly there was a certain political factor involved. As I said, I had some other concerns, too. In the summer of 1968, just before I went to SAIS, I was literally drafted for Vietnam. That was pending my departure from the Bureau to go to SAIS, which the Bureau had offered me, and it had been approved. The Deputy Assistant Administrator, who was Bob Smith at the time said, well, it's too bad this has happened, but now that you're leaving the Bureau we can't fight for you. So, I was all on my own against this business of going back to Vietnam. What happened was that Jim Grant, who was the Assistant Administrator for Vietnam, and I had a set-to beginning at three o'clock one afternoon that lasted until about seven o'clock at night. After that rather difficult interview at which I declined the assignment, I went off on vacation at the suggestion of Peter Straus. He called me a couple of weeks later in New Hampshire to say that the heat was off.

Q: And when there was great pressure on all the AID Staff from Jim Grant and the Vietnam Bureau to go to back to or go in to the Vietnam Program.

CORREL: Well, that was about the fourth time that I had been told that my name was on a White House list, but this time they apparently really meant it. Grant apparently changed his mind after my meeting with him, at least according to what Peter Straus later told me on the telephone. I met Grant several times many years later when I was Mission Director in Sri Lanka and he was the head of UNICEF, and he always greeted me as an old friend. Maybe he thought I had done the right thing by turning him down in 1968.

Additional observations on the four years with the Africa Bureau and State Department/USAID relations

I now want to make a couple more remarks with regard to my four year stint in the Africa Bureau in Washington, 1964 to 1968. One thing I failed to mention was perhaps the single most vivid experience during that period. This was the 1967 war in the Middle East. All the newspaper and other publicity dealt with the Middle Eastern countries, Israel, Egypt and the rest of them. AID had a lot of work as a result of the U.S. reaction to the breaking of diplomatic relations by various Arab and African countries. It turned out that the Africa Bureau was far more affected than even the Near East Bureau, because in our countries we had a couple of very big programs. One I remember particularly was in the Sudan. Our participation in the Task Force dealing with how AID should handle these cases turned out to be a fairly substantial job. I remember a very large shipment of water pipe and similar equipment for a water project in Khartoum that was on the high seas that had to be diverted. Between analysis of how the war was affecting us, taking actions to either safeguard commodities or divert them to other projects and then do forward planning, it was one of the most interesting assignments that fell our way.

Q: What were the features of this task in coping with closing down the Sudan Mission and all?

CORREL: First, we had to pull our people out. I remember Sudan particularly well, because it was one of our biggest programs. We had some people in a couple of other places. In the case of Mauritania, which was certainly not one of our bigger programs, when the United States announced because they breaking relations, we would no longer be able to give economic aid, they came back to Washington to say, well, they had meant to break diplomatic relations only, but wanted to keep up economic relations. However funny this sounded at the time, it afterwards made me think more in terms of how one really could deal more effectively with some countries whose optic understanding of the modern diplomatic world was considerably different from our own.

Q: Do you have some thoughts on that that you would like to mention?

CORREL: I feel that one of the healthiest things that has happened in international assistance and development aid, supporting aid and all that, since the days I'm talking about is a realization that the private sector, private voluntarily agencies, or some kind of semi-private way of delivering assistance is useful. Now there's much more planning for that. I'm going to revert to that topic when we get to my stint on Capitol Hill. Partly as a result of my experience in the Africa Bureau, but also subsequently seeing what was going on in Morocco and then working in the Near East Bureau, I developed a great interest in PVOs (Private Voluntary Organizations), and that was reflected in some work I did while I was up on the Hill.

I also wanted to mention some instances while I worked in the Africa Bureau of disputes and termination of aid.

Two countries that come to mind immediately are Ghana and Guinea. There, after a while, the U.S. felt that an economic assistance program wasn't really accomplishing anything, given their priorities and the difficulties in dealing with them. Then, of course, there was the famous case of Congo-Brazzaville, which happened not too long after I came to the Bureau. In that case, one of our AID Officers was on a tour to various countries in West and Central Africa. He was not always the most careful in observing regulations or paying attention to his own documentation. This man was unwise enough to arrive in Brazzaville on the very day that his visa expired. After letting him get to the hotel, the Congolese police came for him and proceeded to throw him in jail. That led to a breaking of diplomatic relations and the canceling of all AID projects, except letting certain trainees complete at least part of their training in the United States.

Q: What's your view about this sort of periodic disruption of the program, of closing it down entirely or partially? How did you react to that? How would you react to that?

CORREL: I don't want to sound pettifogging, but my own feeling is that I wouldn't care to follow a general formula for such instances. I think it depends a great deal on the circumstances and on what the practical situation is likely to be. If obviously a government flouts the agreements it has made to obtain the assistance, and if we make an effort to point this out and explain the consequences and see whether there is some way of reaching middle ground and it fails, then I think terminating assistance is appropriate. I honestly believe that successful aid programs require a prerequisite recognition that the recipient country and the United States are both credible business partners. When either side doesn't seem to be able to act in that fashion, there's going to be trouble. Thinking back to that period, I was fully in agreement with the decisions that had been reached. However, I don't wish to imply that this is the sort of thing that only happens on the recipient's side.

Another thing that I didn't mention with regard to the Africa Bureau was a consequence of the concentration of assistance and the development of "closeout" countries. It was the decision that actually we didn't want to have a Mission in all these countries. We developed the concept of a Regional Mission for West and Central Africa, to be run from Washington. I remember I gave it a fair amount of thinking.

Q: This was a result of the Ambassador Korry report? Do you recall that?

CORREL: Yes. In the Program Office of the Bureau, we had a lot of dealings with the people of this Regional USAID, the famous RUA. At the time, I had not formed a very strong opinion. I think that it was a reasonably good solution, but didn't work in a number of cases where having in-country experience close to the situation would have been of benefit. I subsequently came to the conclusion that having an outfit like that, but working in a field location and covering several countries was a much better idea. My view has been reinforced by the experience that I had the first time I went to Southern Africa in 1976 to do an evaluation. I was very impressed how OSARAC, the Office of Southern Africa Regional Assistance activities was functioning with regard to primarily Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, but also Malawi and Zambia. That was an effective organization, close to their partners.

Q: Before you leave RUA, why don't you think it worked very well?

CORREL: I think that when you're located in Washington, you inevitably get involved in a lot of Washington priorities. Moreover, the insights you need in order to run an effective program in a country, recognize what is needed in that country, and whom one can work with, that element is just not available in Washington. Some officials in RUA did have extensive relevant field experience. The head of the organization had been Mission Director in a couple of places. That helped overcome that problem to some extent. But, it's only to some extent, because what matters constantly is what your working level people could accomplish.

There was also the establishment of Regional Offices, REDSOs, first in Nairobi, but then also in Abidjan. On the one hand, they handled so-called regional projects, projects involving more than one country, but they also ended up becoming the headquarters for supplying in-depth technical and support personnel to Missions and to governments directly. The REDSO idea was very good where it just wasn't practical to station specialists in any one particular country where there was no big program.

Summing up, the four years in the Africa Bureau were very demanding in terms of time needed, becoming familiar with details, digging up information, presenting it, making budget allocations, and making a wide range of programs and policy recommendations. The experience was also valuable, much of it in retrospect, in helping me make decisions when I became a Mission Director. I found that I looked back to that four year period with considerable gratitude.

A year at the School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS) - 1968

Q: So, you went on to SAIS?

CORREL: I went off to SAIS for the year. That was a very interesting and enjoyable experience, except for the times when I went back into the State Department building to address myself to the personnel situation. SAIS really helped broaden my horizons.

Q: What did you focus on at SAIS?

CORREL: I picked four or five courses; one on World Trade, and another one on some International Economic principles; and one which I took on Africa because of my work background. That last one turned out to be somewhat of a disappointment on Africa. The thing I remember best about SAIS was a research project I had to do for Professor Isaiah Frank.

Q: What was that about?

CORREL: The subject I picked was the International Coffee Agreement. That gave me a chance to do some research and do some work on a topic of considerable interest to many less developed countries. Many of them are in Latin America, which wasn't exactly my line, but I got to write a pretty interesting report on it. I felt my year at SAIS was very well spent. From there, I went as Assistant Director for Program to the Mission in Morocco.

Overseas assignment in USAID/Morocco - 1969

Q: Well, that was quite a change for you.

CORREL: It certainly was. I arrived there in August of 1969.

Q: So, you were off to Morocco and what was the situation in Morocco at that time?

CORREL: Well, in Morocco I felt that in some ways I was stepping back in time to my days in Vietnam. We definitely believed that the Moroccans were very important to us and that we weren't going to argue with them about the niceties of what programs looked like.

Q: Why wasn't it important?

CORREL: I think it was all part of the Cold War fallout and their strategic location, as well as their moderate stance regarding the Middle East.

Q: We had bases there at the time?

CORREL: Several had just been given up. In fact, one of our main aid projects was the conversion of Nouasseur Air Base into a civilian airport. We still did have some bases there, but they were terminated during the time that I was there. We had a Navy establishment at the old Port Lyautey, now Kenitra; there were also a couple of small facilities around. But, I don't think the bases were half as important as the overall importance of Morocco due to its strategic location. There was the perception of Morocco being a very moderate Arab country. And, mind you, this all sounds kind of hollow right now, not from the point of view whether Morocco was moderate or not, but rather about how even more unstable Middle East politics became after that time. Just as I went to Morocco in 1969, Qadhafi overthrew the Libyan monarchy, so things were only really getting started.

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

CORREL: The development situation in Morocco was that we had a number of projects largely in agriculture and education. In addition, we were gamely trying to get a family planning project started. The Moroccans had the feeling that essentially they needed no assistance with regard to the human side, that they had all the trained personnel they needed that were fully capable of making decisions. Essentially what they wanted from us were dollars. Our position on these projects was that there was extensive upgrading needed in the skills of Moroccan managers; that there was a very thin supply of Moroccan technicians who needed training; and that much of the Moroccan outlook was along very traditional lines and weren't really ready to go much beyond a subsistence type of farming to big capital projects.

In education, the question of agricultural-oriented education or a scientific type of education, was really not a high Moroccan priority at all. There was still a great deal of influence by the French. When it came to family planning, what the Moroccans very cleverly did was to appoint a chief, not the Secretary General in the Health Ministry, but rather a Director of Family Planning, a very dignified, elderly former ambassador, a very decent and articulate guy, but with no political clout. We endeavored to help him get a Family Planning Program started. The overall attitude of the American Embassy was pretty much like that of my boss in Saigon: "they want it, they ask for it, they get it." The Ambassador at the time I arrived was a very strong proponent of that viewpoint. At one point, our Food for Peace officer was told to make an allocation of wheat to pay Moroccans to build a wall around the International School or something like that. When our man pointed out to the DCM that this was against AID and PL480 regulations, he was promptly taken in to the Ambassador, who told him that if he didn't know how to do it, they'd get somebody else who would.

Q: It didn't sound like you had a very productive relationship with the Moroccans in that kind of situation.

CORREL: Actually, surprisingly enough we had some quite productive relationships with the Moroccans. I won't say we got that much done overall, but it's amazing what we did get done in the family planning area.

Q: What kind of approach were you taking on family planning?

CORREL: A very low profile one of making supplies and training programs available, and training Moroccan health workers with heavy emphasis on maternal health. We were quite successful, for a while at least, in two or three pilot provinces.

Q: This was through the Ministry of Health?

CORREL: Through the Ministry of Health. I will say that Dr. Laraki in his quiet persistent way was able to get programs started these provinces despite official indifference or worse. We endeared ourselves to Laraki by helping get his daughter out of the country to avoid a bad traditional marriage.

Q: It was the beginning of the program.

CORREL: With regard to some of the other programs, one thing I didn't mention was the beginning of priority programs for opening the economy to more competition and private enterprise. It was the early AID-mandated private enterprise initiative. The same officer who had been the head of the commercial import program in Saigon ended up as the private enterprise officer in Morocco. He served as a conduit for a number of visitors and missions. He interpreted his work in Morocco basically as going around and, for example, visiting a hotel that was being set up and saying, you ought to put the reception over here, and you ought to have this over there, and so forth. He saw his role definitely as a hands-on type of job while I think the intent of the job was a little different. I think this gentleman, conscientious enough, basically was used to something other than what we think of as an American ways of doing things. He saw doing things pretty much through personal relationships, which sometimes may have caused ethical problems, and being a quasi-colonial administrator.

Q: Was there any private investment facilitated by the program at that time? What was the result of it?

CORREL: Yes, actually I'm trying to think what, if any major thing there was. I know there were a whole bunch of little things where people had come through looking for investment possibilities. As far as I recall, there were a couple of hotel projects such as Ramada, as well as agriculture processing plants. My memory isn't too good on that.

Q: What other programs stand out in your mind?

CORREL: We had quite extensive agricultural programs.

Q: Were you involved in the Hassan II Agricultural University?

CORREL: Yes, I was trying to avoid talking about that one, because I remember there was an exceedingly ineffectual head of that institute.

Q: Do you mean a Moroccan?

CORREL: A Moroccan, yes. We used to go and talk with him about improvements, but I'm not sure we accomplished very much. We tended to tread water on that activity.

Q: Did we have a University contract at that time? Minnesota, I think had a long relationship with it, but I don't remember whether they were active at your time.

CORREL: I'm trying to recall. Minnesota doesn't sound familiar to me. Actually, I remember that we had quite a bit of economic planning and analysis going on. We had a team headed by Wolfgang Stolper come out. I had responsibility for taking them around on a trip.

Q: What was he supposed to be doing?

CORREL: He was going to make some kind of a critique of the Moroccan economy. What happened was that on the day we left Rabat, I started feeling quite sick and that night at Azrou in the Middle Atlas, I developed a hundred and four degree temperature. We came back to Rabat the next day. I saw a doctor at the hospital in Kenitra and had a good raving case of mononucleosis and hepatitis. So, Mr. Stolper's trip is only a faint memory in my mind. I don't think he ever did submit a report.

Q: Any other programs that you want to speak about?

CORREL: We still had a big agricultural irrigation project in Northern Morocco in the old Spanish zone, in the Moulouya Valley. Agriculture was an important part of the program and we had a good agriculture office there. But, as far as being able to talk very much about specifics, I'm not so well equipped.

Q: Did you work with the Moroccans very much?

CORREL: Yes, quite a bit.

Q: How did you find working with them?

CORREL: Once we were out in the field, things were fine. In Rabat it was very difficult. One of our key contacts, the Secretary General of the Agricultural Ministry, was an exceedingly difficult person to deal with. Some of the other government officials were equally so. We didn't get very far with them. Right after I came, the Mission Director left, that was Phil Birnbaum, to become Deputy Assistant Administrator back in Washington. After a lengthy hiatus of about five months, Don Brown came as Director, who established quite close relations with a number of high level Moroccans and basically handled that level with little, if any, input from anybody else in the Mission.

Q: He was very much on his own?

CORREL: He was very much on his own. He was very interested also in getting included in the Embassy-type things. The rest of us were left dealing at the working level. There I found that our relations with field people were really quite satisfying. As memory comes back to me, at the Mission, we were assigned a multi-sector officer who took care of PL480 Title II and some other projects. This was Helen Wilson with whom I traveled on one very interesting trip across the High Atlas to the area on the other side, including well into the desert. We saw some Title II activities and various other AID stuff that I don't recall particularly. The Title II Promotion Nationale project, a food for work project, sounded very good in concept. In actual fact, I don't know how much we had to show for it, but in those days I don't think that Title II was considered as a significant a resource as it subsequently became.

Q: I see. Well, you can add things on Morocco if you like, but that pretty well covers it for the moment?

CORREL: I would also like to recall a coup attempt in the spring of 1971. It came out of the blue and occurred when Ambassador Stuart Rockwell was attending a function that the King had at his seaside palace near Mohommadia, between Rabat and Casablanca. Some army cadets and others captured the palace and had the Ambassador and the rest of the diplomatic community lying on their stomach on the floor for several hours while they were searching for the King. They did not find the King. Apparently, he was hiding in a closet or a bathroom somewhere. There was a state of emergency in Rabat and that impacted quite strongly with regard to me. Our Mission Director was out of the country and the Acting Mission Director was monitoring what he was hearing on the radio in his car. Meanwhile, I was trying to stay in touch with the various USAID people. As luck would have it, in our mission the married people, who were the more senior people and technicians, by and large lived in the suburbs where there was no particular problem. But, in downtown Rabat, we had a number of single women, secretaries and others, and I was concerned that we had a constant method of communication with them.

I'd also like to mention briefly the topic of relations with the State Department. I referred earlier to my experience and views that I developed as a result of taking the exam for the State Department Foreign Service. I was very happy to join AID. I found it a challenging and enjoyable experience. In Korea, I met a couple of State Department people with whom I became good friends and who were very good people to work. I mentioned one name in particular, Elsie Quick. However, one thing that I ran into quite early on in my Foreign Service career was that as an AFSA member I read the magazine and found article after article written by various people, talking about how the life at the embassies was being complicated and almost polluted by all these non-State Department people, like AID, USIA, and others. I was really amazed that this seemed to be such a big theme of the magazine of an organization of which I was a member. So, when the time came to renew, I failed to do so and I have never joined AFSA again in all of that time. This kind of exclusiveness or elitism seemed so strange and in some cases, it was reflected in how an Embassy might deal with AID people. It seemed extraordinary to me that this would be done in the process of trying to maintain the foreign relations and interests of the United States. This whole business was brought home to me in a very direct way when I was in Morocco, which together with Zaire was probably the worst post I ever served at with this particular problem. At the AID Mission in Rabat, we had to rely on contractors for some of our project operations. In one agricultural project where we had the benefit of advice from the Corn Improvement Institute (CYMMIT) in Mexico City, at the recommendation of Norman Borlaug, now a Nobel Prize winner, we hired a third country technician from Mexico, a Mr. Acosta, who arrived in Rabat with his family and four children. The embassy flatly refused to give him access to the commissary. Given the fact that this was a family with small children, it was a considerable hardship. Some appeals at the staff level were just turned back totally without any kind of consideration.

Well, I felt I had a responsibility there. I was the Assistant Director for Program. The Mission Director was in Washington. He subsequently stayed there as a Deputy Assistant Administrator. The Acting Director and I discussed this again and we went over and made an appeal directly to the Deputy Chief of Mission who was about as glad to see us as he was a case of leprosy walking in through the door. However, I did bring the regulations with me and we stood our ground. I don't think I will ever forget the look on the DCM's face when he turned to the CAMO Director and the Management Officer and said, "admit them." The Acostas were granted the access and I guess all's well that ends well. But, it really made my flesh creep that at an embassy, even when the regulations were on our side, it was such a big job to try to get them to understand that AID had needs that they were responsible to serve. I'm pleased to say things got much better later with Stuart Rockwell as Ambassador and Richard Parker as DCM. They treated us with consideration and courtesy and the other levels followed suit.

Morocco was my first foreign post where I was in a key mission management position. Not that program officer is usually that prominent a position, but in Morocco we had turnover at the director level and the Deputy, later Acting Director, had some health problems and often referred actions and decisions to me as next in line. Thus, I became involved in a number of very touchy personnel issues and assumed the role of trying to move the mission from its almost total deference to the embassy way of doing things. While the Director and his deputy were in the embassy "loop," the rest of the mission staff often were not well informed and felt that challenging time-honored ways of doing things was likely to get them in trouble. Thus, things occurred regarding program as well as more personal matters such as housing assignments and commissary privileges that were not appropriate or fair. I saw my job as being a little more pro-active concerning AID concerns and personnel and gradually became known over at the embassy as an advocate for change. This happened largely after Phil Birnbaum and Ambassador Tasca were no longer on the scene. The new leadership at the embassy reacted very positively. I became a member of the commissary supervisory board and the CAMO director often consulted me on other matters also, and seemed to appreciate my suggestions. I also established close working relationships with the Peace Corps, especially Bill Garvey, the Peace Corps (PC) Director, and was able to relate AID and PC activities and plan accordingly. I mention this because I believe my Moroccan experience proved very valuable to me in my later career as mission chief and DAA (Deputy Assistant Administrator). I believe that it was in Morocco I really learned how not to do things. Rather, that it was important to encourage initiative and feedback in two directions, both upwards and downwards. Also, judiciously to promote mission interests and personnel within the country team structure and, very importantly, not to isolate the staff from the embassy and to back them up when needed.

During my tour in Morocco, I also went to two excellent Bureau program and evaluation conferences, one in Uganda and the second in Ethiopia. There, I was able to see other missions and programs in operation, and share and profit from others' experiences. I think that the two years in Morocco really were a trial by combat or fire that served me well.

That would take us to August of 1971.

Q: What was your next assignment at that time? Transferred to the Philippines Desk - 1971

CORREL: Not long before leaving Morocco, I found out that I had been drafted for Cambodia. My own views on the war in Southeast Asia were such that I felt no need to serve in Cambodia. I was rather unhappy that there had been no effort made by the Africa Bureau - by people in positions of responsibility, whom I had helped avoid service in Southeast Asia - to say that there was some priority in keeping me, and I found myself without a job unless I returned to Morocco. The Bureau didn't have a job for me otherwise, they said. Fortunately, through a contact that I had developed while I was at SAIS before going to Morocco, I was able to get assigned as Philippine Desk Officer. All of a sudden, I found myself in a completely different situation. I'd served in Asia before, but now I was in a development situation. I had a somewhat less than energetic Assistant Desk Officer, who had his limited range of interests and performed those reasonably well. I also had the benefit of one of the people who had served in Vietnam as a Provincial Officer and who had been retained in AID as a so-called PAT, I believe it was called a Professional Advancement Trainee. This young man was very energetic and had a great sense of humor. He came to work on the Philippine Program. In Manila, they had a very redoubtable Mission Director, kind of a legend in AID, Tom Niblock, who really considered Desks as his messenger boys in Washington. Well, I got the Desk organized and then went to the Philippines for a month and had a chance to meet and work with Tom Niblock.

Q: What was the situation in the Philippines at that time?

CORREL: In the Philippines at the time, there was a feeling that you couldn't possibly do enough for them, that you had to have a lot of projects, a lot of activities. There was a great deal of emphasis on agriculture and health, but also a program that under the guise of health was essentially a large feeding and relief program. These were the early years of Ferdinand Marcos. I guess it was in 1969 while I was in Morocco that Marcos was first elected. Two years later, I was in Manila attending functions where Marcos was speaking and meeting his personal Chief of Staff. The program stressed very extensive training and commodity support.

I remember there was a big program for supply and distribution of fertilizer. There was a family planning program, which was having very indifferent success, partly because of the lack of enthusiasm and substantial opposition to it on the part of certain members of the Catholic Church hierarchy in the Philippines. Such opposition was anything but universal. I remember Tom Niblock and his "Nutri-Bun" program, whereby flour was being imported under Public Law 480 and baked into these sort of mini-cannon balls, which were supposed to be very nutritious and which were distributed to recipients throughout the country.

As Desk Officer, I was able to travel quite extensively through the Philippines. I visited not only Luzon Island, but also the Visayas and Mindanao where the first steps were being taken on the idea of an Area Development Project in the north, in Cagayan de Oro. There, I had a very good meeting and established a nice relationship with the Mayor. Then, I was very interested to see what family planning possibly could accomplish in the non-Catholic areas of the Philippines, namely the Muslim areas. I found myself at 3:30 a.m. one morning boarding a plane in Manila to fly to the Island of Jolo in the extreme southern part of the Philippines, the area where a great deal of violence was taking place, and where you definitely did not have a Catholic presence. Things started quite well when I arrived in Jolo and this tall Filipino stepped forward and said, "Dr. Correl, I presume." This was about seven o'clock on a Sunday morning. And, with this man, who was the provincial family planning chief and a medical doctor, I covered a good bit of the island, visiting clinics and talking to health workers. I was quite surprised that even though in Morocco we'd had religion thrown at us quite often as an alibi for not taking action, that didn't appear to be a problem with family planning in the Muslim Southern Philippines. Not only that, but my own experience in Morocco had been that mosques were out of bounds for any non-Muslims, and that one had to be a little careful with regard to some of the religious sensibilities in the towns and villages. While in Jolo, the doctor suggested that we take a trip across the island to a little town called Maibung, which consisted of a large, recently built mosque and a whole bunch of houses built on stilts over the water. We arrived there and had just gotten out of the car when we saw coming across the square in this town, a line of men, some in uniform and some not, carrying all kinds of different weapons - rifles, carbines, and machetes. They turned out to be the Mayor and his bodyguards. Apparently, the Mayor's brother had been his predecessor, and had been gunned down shortly before. They were very suspicious. But my friend, the doctor, stepped forward and explained to the Mayor who we were, the guns were lowered, and after that we had the freedom of the city. We were shown around, we met all the family planning people. I was even invited to go inside the mosque and look around. Then we were invited to lunch at the Mayor's office in his house. We sat around, had a nice meal, and talked about different matters, such as the government down there, various problems, what we were supposed to be doing, and a little bit about the AID Mission. The gunmen sat at a picnic table off in another room. This was on the 7th of December, 1969. In the background, the radio was playing a version of The Twelve Days of Christmas. It was certainly a vivid experience.

Q: I'm sure it was. What was the development situation in that community that you were observing?

CORREL: The people were mostly fishermen. Other than the Family Planning Clinic, there was no American-supported activity. In fact, I doubted that anyone from the AID Mission had ever been down there.

Q: Was the Family Planning Program working?

CORREL: It seemed to be working reasonably well. I mean, one has to make some allowances.

Q: Were they combined with health care activities in an integrated program?

CORREL: Yes. I should say regarding the development situation on the island of Jolo, that Jolo was actually a free port and there was a very large international market there. You wouldn't think it until you saw it. The town of Jolo itself wasn't very big or prepossessing. Actually, over the years, Jolo has been a very important trading point. Jolo was also one of the great centers of resistance to American occupation during the Philippine Insurrection, the period after the Spanish-American War. Things down there have developed considerably differently than in the rest of the island.

Q: Anything else on the Philippines? Do you think our program was having a significant impact?

CORREL: One thing about the Philippines was that you were dealing with some very capable people who "spoke the language." I don't just mean that they spoke English, they certainly did, but knew how to talk the American development language. In most cases you were dealing with college graduates, you were talking with people who were very interested in what was going on. I had the feeling that our programs, particularly in agricultural development, were getting somewhere. The family planning on an overall basis was very much touch and go.

Q: What was the focus of the agricultural program?

CORREL: As I mentioned before, it had to do with the planning and provision and financing of agricultural inputs to farmers, including credit. Then, there were some specialized activities like fish production. And, of course, very extensive agricultural research. The IRRI facilities there, the International Rice Research Institute, were doing some very good work with our assistance.

Q: You mentioned earlier about the relation between the Desk and the Mission.

CORREL: Well, Tom Niblock was a demanding person and not the easiest person to get along with, but he and I seemed to hit it off reasonably well. We use to make jokes in Washington on the Desk because Tom Niblock always was trying to go above the level of the Desk in order to get support from the Assistant Administrator. The Asia Development Bureau was actually a small office because the vast preponderance of the program in Asia had to do with Vietnam and the war in Indochina. That would have been AID supporting assistance. The Asia Development Office was run by Will Meinecke, whom I knew from Africa Bureau days, but whom I'd really gotten to know well during my time in SAIS. Will would get in touch with me when some of this stuff from Niblock came in and after a while, I think Tom, partly as a result of my visit and partly what happened afterwards, got the idea that maybe dealing with me was going to be the best way to get the most effective support out of Washington. People heard that Tom Niblock was actually saying that nobody in Washington really understood the Philippines, except Frank Correl. I thought that was quite a tribute to my tactfulness. I must say Tom and I had an effective relationship. It certainly wasn't warm. We weren't particularly compatible characters, but it was a good, professional relationship. Indeed, several years after I'd left the Philippine Desk and found myself in the reorganized Near East/South Asia Bureau when it also covered East Asia, he specifically asked me to come through Manila on the way to a conference in Bangkok, because there were some things that he wanted to discuss with me that he believed and the Bureau didn't seem to be understanding well enough.

Q: But, the relation with the Bureau was less cordial, is that right?

CORREL: It could get a little warm at time.

Q: What scale of program are we talking about at that time?

CORREL: I wish I could remember. It was quite substantial when you start adding PL480, especially Title II and the Nutri-Buns. I suspect it was well over 50 million dollars a year, which in those days was money.

Q: Right. You left the Desk in what year?

CORREL: I left the following year, was 1972 and I went to the Technical Assistance Bureau, having been invited to do so by the Assistant Administrator, Joel Bernstein.

Program Officer in the USAID Technical Assistance Bureau - 1972

Q: What was the Technical Assistance Bureau?

CORREL: The Technical Assistance Bureau (TAB) was the bureau in AID that housed technical specialists and some miscellaneous offices that provided a central capability to the Agency to have technical and scientific expertise without having to rely on the geographic bureaus. There were various technical offices, plus an office of scientific affairs, and an office of special projects, both of which undertook activities which I don't think had ever had been heard of in some geographic bureaus, at least at that time. TAB subsequently was renamed and had various modifications over the year. I have to confess, I haven't kept track of them.

I was only there a year, and I once again found myself in my old function of being the Program Officer for the Bureau and having the congressional presentation around my neck, as well as the budget function. In that Bureau, that was considerably more responsibility for a couple of reasons. Number one, unlike the Africa Bureau where with a little human contact, Desk Officers and Office Directors were really very responsive and very well acquainted with their programs and could discuss their needs, this wasn't the case in most TAB offices. There, you tended to have Program Assistants who really didn't have the faintest idea of how to put a budget together, whether it was for a project or for the office. So, my analysts and I found ourselves getting involved much more in individual project detail than we had in the Africa Bureau. We in my office were actually helping shape some of the activities. Of course, the rest of the agency tended to look down on us, which didn't make life easy as far as staff capabilities and recruiting were concerned. It was actually once again, a very interesting learning experience for me.

Q: What was Joel Bernstein as the head, trying to do with the Bureau? How was he trying to shape it as you recall?

CORREL: I think I have to reply that I don't know that Joel was trying to shape it in any particular way. I think that Joel was one of these people who was fascinated by anything that came along. It is the only time in my entire 34-year government career that I attended meetings that would start first thing in the morning and continue until way after close of business and then resume the next day. I have to confess that at one of these meetings, I took my leave about lunch time, went up the street to the Old Circle movie, saw a double feature, came back, and the meeting was still in progress. Joel was a very bright man. He was a very decent, considerate man; he was very good in many ways to work for. But, I don't think that the idea of him ever having to make a decision to cut one thing out in order to put something else in occurred to Joel.

Q: He didn't give up on anything.

CORREL: He just was fascinated by the world as it was, and how development assistance was to function within it. It could be a very enlightening experience at times to hear him develop a topic, and other times you could sink through the chair.

Q: What did you perceive as the Technical Assistance Bureau's function within the AID operation, the relationship to the field particularly.

CORREL: Well, my feeling was that, the Technical Assistance Bureau was basically intended to provide in-depth technical expertise to strengthen the more general expertise available in the geographic bureaus at that time. I think that some of the geographic bureaus resented our presence. I think they felt that we were essentially duplicative and superfluous. In actual fact, we could provide quite significant assistance to them, and indeed while I was in the TAB, I was invited to Brazil for two weeks on exactly such an assignment. It was to prepare for the Mission Director down there some suggestions on how he could use the Bureau effectively to complement his country program. My memory just isn't very sharp on my year in TAB, particularly because of those terribly long meetings. We had Joel, and if Joel wasn't enough there was Irvin Long. Do you remember Irv Long?

Q: I see. Yes.

CORREL: Well, I remember him vividly, but what he talked about I couldn't possibly come back with. Then, there was a science program, which also featured marathon meetings. I still see Bill Littlewood today, and again, I feel it was only for a year, but a long year.

Q: Then what did you do after one year? Was that 1973, I guess?

Moved to be the Program Officer for the Near East and South Asia Bureau - 1973

CORREL: This would have been 1973 and I was beginning to feel however much I appreciated some of the work I was doing, it wasn't really the place for me. Once again, I moved. It was a mistake, but I accepted another program position at the urging of the development planning people in the Near East and South Asia Bureau. I became the Program Officer for that bureau during the time that it changed its name a couple of times. The name changes reflected changes in geographic coverage in the aftermath of the war in Indochina. It had to do with Southeast Asia. At one point we had it and at another point we didn't. The move turned out to be on balance, a very good assignment from the point of view of expanding my knowledge to yet another geographic area, but career-wise, it was an absolute disaster.

Q: Any particular dimension of the program or policy that you want to comment on?

CORREL: The Bureau was probably (I never served in the Latin America Bureau, so I can't really comment on that) the most hidebound and tightly run of all the geographic Bureaus. It was run at the top echelons by a group that had been together for a long time. India and Pakistan were the main program countries and were the focus of attention, at times it seemed almost exclusively so, of the Bureau relationship and key officers. Actually, the experience that I remember probably most vividly and positively was the attempt by the Bureau to arrive at an AID strategy for Yemen. The sense of priority and general interest in the Bureau was such that they couldn't even get anybody to Yemen. It became an interest of mine by default. In addition, my sometime Assistant on the Philippine Desk had become Yemen Desk Officer. Between the two of us we managed to work out a more positive approach, which subsequently resulted in my taking three trips to Yemen to work with the Mission on a strategy.

Q: What was the strategy you evolved?

CORREL: In Yemen, it was absolutely essential to have a lot of training, and a lot of it in country, and we made provisions for that. The strategy had heavily to do with manpower development and education. Saudi Arabia was building schools all over the country that stood completely empty because there were no Yemeni teachers, administrators or anybody else to use them. Our program sought to build up human resources so that those schools and other establishments would serve to accomplish something. We also had some major capital projects.

Q: What kind of projects were you designing?

CORREL: An important project was modernization of the water system for the city of Sanaa. There was also a major road project. The Mission Director was an engineer and he was very interested in engineering projects. We needed to translate relatively vague Yemeni interests into something specific. Al Ruiz, the Yemen Mission Director, was a field-oriented, hands-on person and needed us to help analyze, refine, and write up Yemeni and his ideas and turn them into an interrelated coherent program consistent with U.S. objectives and aid strategy. The Mission in Sanaa was a disparate group of varying competence and we all tried effectively to come up with a program. On one of my visits, I was sent out there with Jack Benz, a former Mission Director, and very much a Senior Officer to develop the strategy. To the best of my recollection, the strategy was adopted. It reflected likely U.S. staff availabilities and expectations of Yemeni capabilities. It didn't represent anything very radical or new, but put much greater emphasis on indigenous manpower development. We soft-pedaled the capital projects which were no longer in the AID policy to the extent they had been previously.

Q: What kind of projects did you have in the education and training area on the ground, any?

CORREL: I honestly don't recall at this point. Agricultural production and research was also important.

Q: Well, maybe we can put it in later. How did you find Yemen as a place to work?

CORREL: Not too easy.

Q: Was there a government to work with?

CORREL: Yes, there was. A typical experience was the following: arriving at the Ministry of Agriculture in the morning, I found that absolutely nothing happened until a Sudanese Advisor came and physically unlocked the door. The Yemeni would show up during the morning. Usually, work in Yemen is done in the morning, because in the afternoon it's pretty much a universal habit to be chewing qat, the mildly, narcotic leaf that grows in Yemen and is the preferred source of relaxation. There was very little of a private sector to deal with at the time.

The big exception to the rule was the Minister of Development, a man named Iriyani, who had very good relations with our Mission Director and who at a later point became Prime Minister. One thing about traveling around Yemen was that you saw the remains of any number of big capital projects, whether they were financed by the Russians, by us, or other donors, with rusting equipment abandoned all over the place. One very interesting exception to that pattern was a Chinese aid program. The Chinese were building a road from the capital of Sanaa to the Saudi border. It was being done almost entirely by human labor. I think I saw one roller on the stretch of road I visited. The work was being done entirely by human labor with the Chinese working right among the Yemeni. It looked like they were building a pretty good road. In contrast, the U.S. had agreed to build a road in Yemen that was being done by more mechanized means at vast cost.

Q: Where was this road, do you remember?

CORREL: Well, I seem to remember that it ran down from Taiz to Hodeida. The main roads in Yemen were part of a triangle from the capital, Sanaa to Taiz, to Al Hudaydah, and then from Al Hudaydah to Sanaa. The road building was certainly a big item in the overall AID level to Yemen.

Q: Why were we in Yemen at all?

CORREL: I think that in the overall context of the Middle East, it was a moderate state and we wanted to show that we could help them and keep out more radical Arab influences. On Yemen's southern and eastern borders, the former British Colony and protectorate of Aden became a radical communist type state. We were there because of both Cold War and Middle Eastern political reasons. We were also reconciling with Egypt at the time. I think Yemen was an opportunity and we were in there.

Q: Good. Any other country interests while you were in the South Asia Bureau?

CORREL: Well, as I said, Pakistan and India were pretty much the province of the people who were the leaders of the Bureau. If I wanted to have any kind of an interest other than just flog papers endlessly, I had to look for secondary countries. As a result, I also took a strong interest in Nepal, which paid off some time afterwards.

Q: What about the Nepal?

CORREL: Nepal was a very backward place, but absolutely fascinating. I managed to visit it in connection with attending a program conference in Bangkok the first year I was in the Bureau and had a chance to look at the program and travel around the country. In the Nepal program, there was agricultural development, education, health, and then family planning. In Nepal it was particularly true that if there was a training opportunity, it didn't matter what it was called, people were going to apply for it. Depending on what kind of connections they had, as long as they could get out of the country, they would take any training they could get. But, the big problem in Nepal was getting trained people to work out in the countryside. If there was a health program and you needed doctors, the great challenge was what could be done to get doctors to serve out in the countryside. What was missing was some kind of an incentive system, such as increased salaries, providing special benefits and other measures to serve out in the countryside. I thought this was absolutely essential to get anything done in rural Nepal. I remember especially well that this was one of the program challenges in Nepal.

Q: Did anything like that every get adopted?

CORREL: Not that I know of. I got a chance to recommend it again some years later.

Q: Did you get out into the rural areas yourself?

CORREL: Very much so. On that trip I got down to the Terai, the lowland plain, and spent quite a bit of time looking at farms, talking to farmers about production and things like that. This is now 1973 and an important program emphasis was being adopted in AID, putting the focus on the so-called small farmer. Visiting the Terai and Nepal agriculture in general was interesting from the point of view of actually meeting the target group of the new AID focus. Unfortunately, in Washington in our Bureau (maybe it was different in other Bureaus), we became involved in absolutely impossible arguments that should have been cut off by somebody at the top. This was, what really is a small farmer? Was a landholding of two and one-half acres okay? Was that okay in one country and if two and one-half wasn't right, should it be only one acre? Or maybe one-half acre? The arguments were endless, circular, and totally counterproductive. We could not ever settle on a reasonable definition as a basic guideline.

Q: What generated this debate?

CORREL: You know, I can't remember why it became so time-consuming. Maybe we needed to be less rigid and more flexible in our policy definitions.

Q: This was part of the New Directions Policy, remember?

CORREL: To be very candid, in all the years that I served in AID, the first time I heard of so-called New Directions was in the Africa Bureau in approximately 1967. After that, I kept hearing the term "new initiatives" time and time again every couple of years. It is hard over time to sort out which new direction was which. Direct assistance to the poor and basic human needs was very much emphasized in the early and mid 1970s. I know that in the Near East/South Asia complex, the small farmer was very much the big focus.

A very important thing that happened during the time I was in that Bureau was the winning of independence by Bangladesh from Pakistan. It was interesting how the Bureau reacted to it. The AID Deputy Administrator had once been Mission Director in Pakistan and Assistant Administrator of the Bureau. The Bureau was still being run by his associates. All that I heard, until the very moment that Bangladesh achieved independence, was how they had absolutely no business to have it. This whole business of Bangladesh becoming independent was completely wrong and that the U.S. interest should be to keep Pakistan together.

Q: Why was that?

CORREL: I presume that once again it was strategic and the Cold War. Also, the very strong attachment that the long-time leaders in the Bureau and some of its alumni had towards Pakistan. In the Bureau there were some people who essentially were supporters of India. However, it wasn't all that fashionable to be supportive of India, except in general fuzzy terms. The really key leadership in that Bureau seemed to be very strongly drawn toward the cause of Pakistan. I think in terms of American interest, it was a very short-sighted view.

Q: Why was that?

CORREL: Because I felt that a population of 60 or 80 million people even with a common religion, but with completely different characteristics and completely different economic interests from the dominating part of the country in the West, could not be cowed into submission. It was absolutely unrealistic to conclude that they would be able to stay together in the absence of agreement between the Bengali and the West Pakistani that they would be able to stay together. It was very interesting to see that once Bangladesh became independent, even the people who had strongly opposed the creation of Bangladesh, started wearing these buttons that said, "Joy Bangla." It was a very quick change of feelings on that. Of course Bangladesh is a very poor country. People talk about an international basket case, whatever that is supposed to be. But, the old state was just an unnatural union that had been formed on the basis of religious affinity and it was evident that religious affinity was by no means the most important factor once the subcontinent had been split apart.

Q: Anything else from that time in the Bureau?

CORREL: The Congressional presentation was a very big part of my job, once again. It was complicated because the Bureau kept shifting its boundaries. At one point, it would include East and South Asia; then it would not. This lack of continuity made assembly and presentation of the data more difficult. Also, unlike my earlier experience in the Africa Bureau, we had more intensive interest in our program by both authorizing and appropriating committees. The cast of characters has changed. Otto Passman was gone but instead we had Clarence Long in the House and Senator Daniel Inouye as our main taskmasters. They were less prone to personal foibles than Passman but they were prodigious sleuths. I was Acting Director of the DP office during these annual sessions, two directors in succession having gone off to greener pastures, leaving me to hold the bag. So, I was right in the vortex of the storm. My staff was excellent and worked very hard.

During these years, 1973-1975, I also became involved in work with the private voluntary agencies then operating around the AID periphery. Nobody else gave them much time, least of all the key people in the Near East Bureau, and I started to cover developments as part of a coordinating group within the agency. It became a sustained interest, especially when I worked up on Capitol Hill later on, and after I became a mission director.

The pace of work was frantic much of the time. I did get on a couple of trips - to Yemen twice, Morocco, and Nepal. However, I had to deal with the undisguised antagonism that developed towards me on the part of the DAA in the Bureau, which threatened the effectiveness of my office and would eventually have demoralized the staff. I don't wish to go into details, but it was an exceptionally loyal and motivated staff, and it was the high quality of work that we all turned out, that sustained me. I know, from staff members, that the DAA claimed he was looking for cause "to put me out on the street." Ironically enough, I now (24 years later) see this individual on occasion and I take a certain sardonic pleasure that he always greets me most effusively, especially when I think his antagonism was the goad that led me to quit that slough of despair and go on to my subsequent career.

It was a very difficult time for me personally. I started looking for another position. By this time, after the Africa Bureau, the Technical Assistance Bureau and this Near East South Asia experience, I was quite honestly finished with doing congressional and programming work and decided it was time to do something else. And, in looking at other opportunities in the Near East/South Asia Bureau, they appeared to be closed off to me. I then decided that maybe the thing to do was to look toward getting out of the agency, retire, and find rewarding work in some other capacity in the international development area.

Became Coordinator of the Development Studies Program - 1975

At this point, I made one of the smartest decisions in my entire career. I applied for the Development Studies Program (DSP) as a participant. The program had just been set up and like everything else in AID, they were having trouble getting nominees and were trying all kinds of things to get the Bureaus to nominate people. I heard of it. I checked out what it was, and applied for it. I am pleased to say that I got the clearance to go to it. Once I was over there as a participant, I then proceeded to see what I could do to get on the faculty. This all happened in the last months of 1975, and at the beginning of 1976 I started a completely new career as a Training Officer. I became the so-called Coordinator, handling the budget and various other administrative and substantive program matters for the Development Studies Program. As a faculty member, I helped in the development and modification of the program as we went along.

Q: What was the Development Studies Program?

CORREL: The Development Studies Program was initiated by the AID Administrator at that time in line with the emphasis on direct assistance and basic human needs, dealing with the great population at large. It was designed to give AID officers, including some Foreign Service National employees in substantive jobs, an exposure, not only to AID programs and economic development but also to social and political factors affecting development, relating it to some extent to the American experience and American examples of less developed areas and what to do about them. In my day, it was a 12-week course, starting with a week out-of-town where everybody got acquainted and where we presented the outlines of the course. The bulk of the work was done over in Rosslyn with various development experts, sociologists, economists, anthropologists and other academic disciplines. A very interesting thing was a two-week period when the each class would go to some developmentally challenged part of the United States and observe conditions and what kind of programs were being undertaken to address them.

Q: Well, let's dwell on that a little bit longer. Where did they go for example?

CORREL: When I was a participant, my group went to the western counties of North Carolina. As a faculty member, I stayed with DSP for five cycles, 1976 until September of '77 and during that time we would have had five 12-week cycles. We went to North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. The reason I'm a little uncertain is that there was an unexpected benefit to me that came from this program. Once I was out of the operating mode as a program drudge, people started getting in touch with me to do specific, short-time planning and evaluation assignments, basically consultancies. I know we went to North Carolina a couple of times more, again to the western part in one case and then also to Whiteville, closer to South Carolina and the sea. One time, we were in Tifton, Georgia. We also went to Tuskegee, Alabama. Now that I think of it, one group went to tidewater North Carolina, around Edenton. I did not go on, because I got pulled off to Zaire for two months at the insistence of the Personnel office, in early 1977.

Q: What did the groups do when they went to these areas?

CORREL: Well, first we had to introduce ourselves, which was no mean task.

Q: What did you go to observe? What did you do? At first you said you had to be welcomed.

CORREL: Yes. First, we sent an advance group to talk to the local powers that be - local government, local representatives of federal and state institutions like the Farm Home Administration, the State Welfare or Health Department, or whoever that might take care of things like farm credit, agricultural extension, or child development activities. We also talked to private employers, cooperatives, and local academic institutions. We were looking for organizations that provided jobs or various services to lower income people.

Q: Particularly poor areas, you mean?

CORREL: The places we visited were considered relatively poor areas. We would be headquartered in a town with a motel or a college dormitory and would spend most of our time in the surrounding areas, where incomes and living standards were quite low. I remember there was a co-op that was growing blueberries down somewhere in Georgia that we covered from Tifton. There might also be some housing activities and other activities that resulted in creation of gainful employment.

Maybe my own experience as a participant and the kind of project I worked on gives a little insight how this all worked. One thing that I've always found is that it's all very well to be a member of a group, but especially with a program like this where you have faculty members of various disciplines who have a certain theory to prove, they want to try and organize the work unduly and push you into groups. I wasn't too anxious to do that. I teamed up with another fellow who came out of the Latin America Bureau. We picked a topic we knew no one else would be interested in and where we wouldn't get too much in the way of guidance (and second guessing) by our faculty members. Our topic was child development activities. My partner in this was John Gant, an Education Officer. We visited the four or five western-most North Carolina counties to check on their child development activities. This was of interest because in that part of the country, at least at that time, November 1975. There were a lot of textile plants and other industrial plants where the workers were single mothers. Obviously, for them to be able to work, they had to have some kind of child care and child development activities. We talked extensively with the Director of Child Development for these western counties. He took us around and we also visited independently different places in the counties. We learned about these either from this man or from others, including a very dedicated social worker. We found that this whole child development effort was a very low achiever operation and that nothing much was happening. The leadership of the child development effort was basically not doing anything and the money was just dissipating. There was no real program other than simple group babysitting, no planning, no evaluation. People who were concerned about child development, not necessarily employees of the program, had seen this, but nobody had paid any attention to them. John and I all of a sudden were catapulted into a real operational problem. Of course, our job was not to be some kind of expert on how to develop a proper child development program in Western North Carolina, but there was a report we had to write. John and I were very careful on how we drafted that report. We drafted it circumspectly enough, but still clearly enough that the Director of Child Development was replaced, which of course made a big hit.

Q: Was it a State position or County?

CORREL: If I remember correctly, it was a position that was financed by the Federal Appalachian Regional Program, but it was a State appointment. It went beyond individual counties. Our DSP group was headquartered in Boone, North Carolina, home of Appalachian State University. The DSP field team looked at important factors in creating and maintaining employment and learning about the situation and evaluating it, and making presentations of our findings.

Q: What do you think the various groups that participated in these trips came away with that was useful to them in their work?

CORREL: For one thing, they were able to take the American experience and apply it, use it as sort of a kind of benchmark in planning and implementing projects overseas. Seeing how things fit together and conversely taking their foreign experience and evaluating it in terms of what was happening in the United States. I think that when we were successful, the DSP participants came away from the entire program, not just this two-week exercise, with an awareness that there was a hell of a lot more to development than just designing and implementing projects, that you had to take into account the social and other background in the area where you were going to be working, and what kind of people you were going to deal with.

Q: Did the course have any particular development theory or development philosophy that it was presenting?

CORREL: It was keyed to the concept of popular participation in making decisions in planning and implementation and was designed to help conceptualize the new aid policies.

Q: That was the day, I guess, of the New Directions, which focused on the poor and the poorest of the poor. But, there are those who emphasized later the private sector and others later on talked about economic reform. What was the balance of this course in terms of your time?

CORREL: It was not unduly keyed toward private sector development, more toward working jointly together, such as cooperatives. More extensive private enterprise involvement inevitably became a major concern, but our focus usually was primarily on local or more modest regional efforts rather than the national dimension. This may have been one of the best things about the course. In the United States, such activities would have had to be carried on privately, whether it was some group forming a co-op, or whether it was an employer who ran a textile mill. The question of job creation and private involvement certainly was something we were aware of. But it was before the days of really putting massive national-scale emphasis on private development. The emphasis was on private voluntary association often sparked by a voluntary agency. Also, in those southern states we visited, we were running into an additional problem. Even in 1975, '76, and '77, there were instances of very separate development as far as the races were concerned. This also was the case overseas where the division might not be on racial grounds, but very much based on tribal or socio-economic factors. In Alabama, for example, we found that public health system for black people, for ordinary low-income black people was very different from the system for white people. That was brought home to us very effectively during our two weeks there.

Q: You said different, but you mean much more inadequate?

CORREL: Yes. I mean, you had to take very special measures if you wanted anything adequate. This was being done in Alabama in order to upgrade black medical care. Organizations such as the Tuskegee Institute were heavily involved.

Q: But, in the course as a whole, did it dwell on macro economic policy? Did it dwell on what is talked about these days, about democracy and governance and things like that? Was there any of that?

CORREL: Beyond discussing economic policies and practice, relatively little. We certainly talked about participatory government, but it was secondary. In many of the countries, it seemed a will o' the wisp. These things have come up in a much more prominent way since those days. I mean, we were aware of them and we talked about them, but the idea that somehow one aspect deserved special attention, that really wasn't it. As far as being concerned about macroeconomic matters, I think the Development Studies Program was specifically intended to show to AID people, especially the program types, that there was more to assistance than macro economic factors.

Q: Were there any professors that were particularly outstanding?

CORREL: Our Director had a good overall background in public administration with some anthropology and economics. There was Jim Weaver, an economist from American University, who was a very dynamic person, and a very good lecturer. I think he did an excellent job of explaining some of the economic back and forth to people who weren't too good on that. He certainly was a very effective lecturer and presenter. Where he went on the field trips, he certainly provided some excellent guidance. One thing that the DSP did, which I think was very good, they didn't just rely on people from inside AID. They used the Inter-governmental Personnel Act as their authority, to hire people from universities. We had an economic geographer from Louisiana State University, a man I became very friendly with, by the name of Donald Vermeer, who was outstanding.

Q: As part of the staff you mean?

CORREL: As part of the DSP faculty. I also recall a sociologist and an earlier appointment of a geographer from Temple University. Her name was Marilyn Silberfine. These people helped present effective background that people were able to understand. Using such outsiders happened steadily in the DSP during the years that I was there and in the years immediately afterwards.

Q: Did AID employ one institution?

CORREL: The DSP was strictly an in-house AID effort where a few outside people were selected for limited periods of time, never more than a year or two. The director, Richard Blue, and key faculty members were under personal services contracts, and some eventually became AID employees. Contracting out the whole DSP course didn't come until later. A couple of us were direct-hire AID. I'm not positive whether it was contracted out during the time I was still with AID. What has happened to it since that time, I haven't the faintest idea.

Q: I think it's discontinued, but I'm not sure. That was an interesting time. Anything more on that you want to comment on?

CORREL: Yes. I've now told you what I was supposed to be doing officially, which was to serve as the Coordinator. The whole course management and planning, especially working on the curriculum, was very much of a collaborative effort. We did our work together. Even when one of us did something of a particular nature, say, I did the budget or planned the trip or something like that, we then discussed it very nicely in staff meetings and I thought those were positive experiences. I might laugh about occasional individual contributions or foibles, but no question about it, it was a participatory program and I felt very much at home in it. I realized I wasn't going to stick with it forever, but I was pleased to make a contribution and feel there was some recognition coming out of it, as distinguished from my prior experience.

Special assignment to develop an AID strategy for Sri Lanka - 1976

But, what happened was that with me on the loose and having a fair amount of experience, people started getting in touch with me to do specific jobs for their Bureaus. The very first that came along turned out to be one of the most rewarding in terms of personal satisfaction, as well as career. After the Near East South Asia Bureau was broken up once again, a more traditional Asian Bureau was set up, headed by Arthur Z. Gardiner, Jr. with Michael Adler as his Deputy. Mike Adler got in touch with me to undertake an assessment of what we might do in the way of a new assistance program in Sri Lanka. This was in early 1976, only a short while after I'd gone to the DSP and I'm pleased to say that the DSP people were very generous in letting me go. It was a last minute sort of thing. I was originally supposed to have a couple of people on a team with me, but all I ended up with was a very junior, completely green intern of some kind who I can't say was much help. But, all of a sudden I found myself arriving in Colombo where there was an AID representative, an assistant, and a secretary within the embassy, all of them looking for some advice on what might be done in Sri Lanka in an AID Program.

Q: Great opportunity wasn't it?

CORREL: Not only was it a great opportunity, but it was also something that I would never ever have been able to do quite as well as if I'd still been in the old Bureau. It was very intensive. Sri Lanka was a very different place from when I was subsequently assigned there. It was run by a coalition government, headed by Mrs. Bandaranaike, who is a socialist of sorts. It was hard to tell from party names what they really are in Sri Lanka. The parties have names like Marxists, socialists, radicals, and everything else. But, essentially, there was a Sinhalese nationalist presence, and a kaleidoscope of smaller parties, including parties representing the Tamils. Mrs. Bandaranaike's government was a leftist coalition and it really had no foreign exchange. It had little to do with the Western countries in practical terms. There were diplomatic relations, but they were getting next to no aid from us. There was a feeling in Washington, both in AID and the aid side of State, that we wanted to do something there, but we really didn't know what.

Q: Why would we want to do something there ?

CORREL: At that time?

Q: Yes.

CORREL: I think again, it was Cold War world politics and possibly an opening for a more accommodating and friendly outlook by the government there to our foreign policy objectives.

Q: What year was this?

CORREL: 1976.

Q: That was the time when the New Direction policy was pushing us to go into all the poor countries of the world and perhaps that was the reason.

CORREL: Perhaps. But, in any event, I remember sitting in Art Gardiner's office. He was eating a Milky Way bar and I was looking at that most enviously while Mike Adler was explaining what they wanted me to do. The trip was very short, only a couple of weeks. I made my introductions and then spent two very intensive weeks in Colombo and various places in the countryside, including the Agricultural Research Station at Peradeniya outside of Kandy. This was a very important stop, because support to that facility was one of the key recommendations of my report. I also went to an area in the middle of the country around the Mahaweli Ganga River, where other donors were getting involved quite heavily in a huge irrigation and resettlement project including a lot of construction, the kind of things that we were abjuring at that point. In addition, there was the question of a PL-480 Program. We had a sales program going in a stuttering way and we and the Sri Lankans were hung up over a down-payment issue. As I remember it now, the amount of a down payment that was involved was something like two hundred and fifty or three hundred thousand dollars. We were totally unable to get anywhere on this. One really needed to go to Sri Lanka at the time to realize what two hundred thousand dollars foregone meant to them. They just could not afford it. When I had some free time or between appointments, I was out walking everywhere. I visited the extensive market area outside of the commercial section of Colombo, called The Fort, and I literally saw no imported goods whatsoever, none at all. This made a very deep impression on me. Here was a country with very, very modest modern resources. They had their rubber and tea exports. Mrs. Bandaranaike's economic policies weren't helping the country very much. The idea that somehow the United States had to extract that pound of flesh in connection with the PL-480 sale program just struck me as being totally against our own interests.

Q: How did they get it resolved?

CORREL: As I remember it, I made a very strong recommendation when I came back to forget about it and I believe that they actually ended up waiving it.

Q: Well, what kind of a program or study did you come up with?

CORREL: I came up with a couple of things. At the Agricultural Research Institute, it was explained to me that in Sri Lanka, there was an extraordinary variety of different agricultural zones. A major recommendation was assistance to that institution in order to let it be able to do the kind of research that was necessary for more modern, diversified agricultural production consistent with the different climatic zones. The second thing I recommended was that we should not get involved in major capital construction in the Mahaweli area. Instead, I suggested that we should consider some kind of assistance up there so that all of the big things that were being built would be more likely to benefit the people. I did my report in 1976 and when I was sent on a program evaluation mission to Mahaweli in 1983, AID was financing a sector support loan. I won't say that it was my recommendation directly that resulted in this approach, but I was able to see how the sector support loan ended up doing exactly what I was concerned about. But, visiting the Mahaweli area in 1976, I remember seeing that very little of the so-called downstream work was being done by the Sri Lankans. They had very little or no outside aid because the big donors, the World Bank and whoever else it was, were building these huge dams. The Sri Lankans had undertaken to build the downstream work and it wasn't being done. I remember coming across a guy sleeping by the side of a canal next to some kind of pump that was running and he woke up as our vehicle came close. When my Sri Lankan guide from the Mahaweli Development Board, said, "How are things going?" He said, "Oh, things are going very well, we're working day and night." It was the kind of thing that really makes an impression on you. I also recommended an expansion in PL 480 activities and I don't immediately remember what else there was, but it was a modest program, maybe \$7 million all together.

Q: Did the government have any special views they were trying to impress on you, the things they wanted?

CORREL: No, not much. Mahaweli was the big thing. It was the Mahaweli Board that they wanted me to talk to. As I said, I was there only a very short of time. I ended up sending Mike Adler a 14-page cable which converted into a full-scale report when I came back. Apparently, that cable made a big hit with him personally, and with Gardiner. Ambassador Van Hollen was very complimentary, too, when I gave him a verbal report.

I found what had finally happened was that I had gotten into a dream situation and had done well in it. I liked Sri Lanka very much. I thought it was a fabulous place. It was a strange experience as an American coming there and finding that it was off the map as far as we were concerned. They had no tourism, except from the Soviet bloc. The only visitors were Russians. The Russians weren't big suppliers or spenders of foreign currency. I still remember those mornings where these Russians, all of them dressed alike with little white caps sitting on their head, waiting inside the hotel yard to get picked up to be taken on a bus tour somewhere. Nobody ever ventured out on their own. Apparently what happened was that they were sent on these Communist "strength-through-joy" trips. They certainly didn't spend any money. Apparently, they would bring gold or silver coins, either from the 1920s or even czarist times, or else from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia between the wars, and try to barter. I bought some old coins and stamps from a shopkeeper in the Fort area and he had all these things in the window. I asked him where they came from and he said, "The Russians come and sell them when nobody is watching and then they go and buy big five pound bricks of tea to take home." That was Sri Lanka's foreign tourism. Obviously, they could do much better than that.

Q: Let's go on with the special assignments.

Special assignment: Evaluation of the OPEX program in Southern Africa - 1976

CORREL: The trip to Sri Lanka was a terrific way to get started in this new job as Development Studies Program Coordinator and little did I know that within three months another Bureau would come after me on a similar assignment. That was the Africa Bureau where at the behest of Princeton Lyman, I headed a team to Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland to evaluate the Southern Africa Manpower Development Project. This was an OPEX project as I described earlier in this interview. My team consisted of me as the program person, a public administration person from the Technical Assistance Bureau named Bill Siffin, and a manpower development man. Our brief was to work out of OSARAC, the AID office that handled assistance to the Southern African countries, other than of course, the Republic of South Africa itself. OSARAC was located in Swaziland and headed by my old friend from Africa DP days, Charlie Ward. Together with some OSARAC people, the team traveled to the three countries to evaluate the effectiveness of operational experts that had been seconded to the governments. We also looked at the follow-up consisting of training local people to assume these jobs and thereby displace the American experts. I should add that the American program was really only a relatively small part of a much bigger effort. The British had quite extensive OPEX people in these countries. I think they probably had more in places like Zambia than they did in the three countries in Southern Africa. There were certainly quite a few British all over the place.

Q: What did you conclude in this evaluation?

CORREL: We came to the conclusion that by and large the program offered a great deal of promise and that at a relatively early stage, it was doing well, particularly in Botswana. There was a special problem in Swaziland that was not present in other countries. In Swaziland, there really were two parallel governments. There was a kind of modern government as we know it, with departments and the Prime Minister. However, very importantly, there was also a parallel tribal government that was responsible to the King. This was a much more closed and court-type affair that tended to vitiate the effectiveness of some of OPEX people who were being supplied to the other kind of government. In Lesotho we found that the positions that we had were quite effective. There weren't all that many of them, but thanks largely to some excellent monitoring on the part of a mid-level AID officer, Harry Johnson, we got a pretty good picture on how things were working. We felt that it was a promising program. I got quite sick in Lesotho; therefore, some of the memories in my mind have more to do with that than with the actual individual experiences that we had. But, I know that we returned from those countries in a pretty upbeat mood.

Q: What were the characteristics that made it look like a good program?

CORREL: I think that with the exception of that bifurcation in Swaziland the countries basically were very receptive. I think it had a fair amount to do with the fact that except for the British there wasn't any other donor to help them in this particular regard. The other practical alternative would have been to take South Africans and they weren't prepared to do that. Having some Americans there, once they got their feet on the ground and had something to contribute, meant that they were helping to actually create an indigenous capability that otherwise would not have been possible except with South Africans. This was certainly the case in Botswana.

Q: Were there any particular areas that we gave priority to in the OPEX program?

CORREL: I have to be careful to distinguish between the program in 1976 and later on as I encountered it as Mission Director in Lesotho. If I remember correctly, the U.S. was furnishing one expert who was serving as adjunct to a Permanent Secretary. There were also some OPEX positions at the University. In '76 they still had the united UBLS, the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. By the time I got there in 1979 as Mission Director the Universities had split apart. In Lesotho, I don't think that in '76 we were yet into road building and public works. Again, I think primarily in terms of agriculture, education and health, except I don't remember health particularly well in all of this.

Q: What kind of time frame did we have for that kind of assistance? The idea was to shift the responsibility over to the nationals and get out, was it?

CORREL: To be realistic, one had to think in terms of providing the assistance long enough, first of all, to get the concept adopted, and working on the ground, and secondly to cover the generation of replacements and getting them trained. And, all that in my mind, adds up to an absolute minimum of five years.

Q: Five years?

CORREL: Yes. Most likely in some cases, depending on complexity and careful monitoring, it's closer to seven years and even more than that. The worst thing that could happen was is that one sent somebody over there for two years and then didn't replace him when that contract was up or after one renewal, and then left the countries high and dry. Because, rightly or wrongly, I don't think that the countries were at the point where they could make that jump. If one wanted this kind of program, one was in it for a longer period of time and not argue about it. Otherwise, don't start it.

Q: Did you think this type of program was adapted to a unique situation, or was it something that could be appropriate for other developing countries?

CORREL: I personally think that it offered a great deal of opportunity to many developing countries. One very important caveat is that down in Southern Africa they were interested in it and were ready to accept it. I can think of a number of countries where that would be impossible. I would hate to have planned, to say nothing of ever having served in it, in such a position in Zaire. I think it would have been a total disaster. In Southern Africa, I believe it worked well and I think there were opportunities in some other African countries.

Q: These were situations where there was a relatively disciplined government if still limited in its human resources. Would that make a difference?

CORREL: Discipline, yes. Also, having confidence that their independence wasn't being compromised by what was being done. This, of course, involves the OPEX personnel not acting like some kind of a human herd coming in and tending to short circuit indigenous authority. Most importantly, it involved making sure that the titular supervisor had confidence that these people really did work for him, did share their knowledge, and made it possible for that supervisor to look doubly good by having that person on this staff. I think it was something that required a great deal of care and tact by the Mission Director and officers, and by the firm that was responsible for selecting and nominating persons, providing constant monitoring and ensuring that the people who were in these positions understood what very sensitive role they were playing. I think we did pretty well. When I say we, I don't mean just ourselves in Lesotho later on when I was Director there, but in Swaziland and Botswana, too.

Q: Good. Well, then you had some other assignments?

Special assignment: Acting Program Office in USAID/Zaire - 1977

CORREL: Well, this Southern Africa evaluation trip was another wonderful assignment, one that I really enjoyed doing. I thought that it wasn't in the cards that I travel again away from my DSP responsibilities until a constant dispute with AID personnel burst into flame when they tried to draft me as Program Officer to Zaire at the beginning of 1977. That came about just after I had been contacted by my good friend in the Asia Bureau, Mike Adler, to do what I would have considered an absolutely fabulous challenge, a survey of possibilities for assistance to the independent countries in the South Pacific. At this point, Personnel put their foot down and said that I wasn't going to the South Pacific, I was going as Program Officer to Zaire. I replied that I had important personal reasons for staying in Washington, that my career had been blighted for so long by some of the very people who were trying to recruit me for Zaire, and that it was an unfair action to send me to Zaire. To make a long story short, a compromise was negotiated whereby I went to Zaire for two months to be the Acting Program Officer. Again, it was an experience that in terms of making an impression on me was just incredible. I arrived at probably one of the most unhappy missions I've ever seen in my entire career. People didn't know what they were doing. Many of them were very unhappy.

Q: This was what year?

CORREL: This was the beginning of 1977. I arrived there about the 8th of January, 1977 and I was there until the end of February. I was the acting head of the Program Office. They tried to find someone else for permanent assignment and they did eventually send somebody out there. While they were searching, I was in charge on the spot. The first thing that happened when I arrived in Kinshasa and went to pay my respects to the Mission Director, he said, "Well, Frank, I'm glad to see you and now that you're here I just want you to know that I'm leaving." He went on an extended leave and I suddenly found myself Acting Mission Director for a program that gave one the feeling that one was hanging on by the skin of one's teeth. As I said, the mission certainly was very unsure of its role, and I rarely have encountered such low morale or virtual absence of any kind of commitment to one's work. There was a situation involving relations with the Embassy. The Mission Director and the DCM and the Ambassador did not get along well. The Mission Director told me how much he resented how the previous Ambassador had treated him. This was an African American Mission Director who felt that the previous Ambassador had mocked him, had tried to address him in mock Southern dialect and had obviously been an exceedingly insensitive person. I don't think that the current ambassador and DCM held this man in the world's greatest respect. To be absolutely candid about it, I could see both the Embassy's point of view and the Director's point of view. Anyway, he took off and here I was in the hot seat.

The first thing that happened, as I remember, was, that word started filtering in from the area between Kinshasa and the Atlantic Coast that there was some kind of a virulent fever raging there that was killing people like flies. It was named green monkey fever, and I gather that medical opinion later on decided that it was some kind of precursor to HIV/AIDS. We and the Embassy, of course, were worried very much about this. We had a doctor on the Mission staff and I saw Dr. Kennedy every day with a personal report on what was coming in. I think that the Embassy appreciated very much how we were monitoring the situation and keeping them informed. As I remember, we had a Commodity Import Program in Zaire, which had its share of problems. I remember myself doing some kind of an analysis for the DCM with suggestions how some improvements could be made. I'm very pleased to say that it was accepted in a very positive way. Next thing that happened was is that we had a very serious volcanic eruption in the East, near Bukavu or Kivu, I'm not sure which.

The Head of State, Mobutu, came in with a request to the Ambassador for five million dollars in disaster assistance, which was referred to me. I talked to the DCM and said, "We need to send somebody out to take a look at the situation and see what we can learn from that. We have a \$25,000 authority, but obviously if this is such a big thing, then we have some other steps that we can take." I sent a person from the Program Office out to the East, a young woman who had been pretty much sidelined in the Program Office. I discussed with her what to do, how to go about it, what to look for, to use her judgment and write me a very candid report. We would see after that how we handled it with the Embassy. Everybody was so nervous as to whether the Embassy was going to run all over us. And, indeed, when I told the DCM that I was sending this young woman out who was the Assistant Disaster Relief Officer, he said, "Well, do you think she's the right one?" I'm sorry to say that I had in the back of my mind an uncomfortable suspicion that she was being questioned as being the right person on account of being an African-American. And I said, "Well, she has the job, and I've talked to her, and I have confidence that she can do the job." She went out and came back with an excellent report and excellent observations. We, together, recommended that the Ambassador give them \$20,000 and, by God, they bought it.

One of my things I'm particularly pleased with having done during my government career is that I helped work Mobutu out of four million, nine hundred and eighty thousand dollars. That \$20,000 was for tents and blankets, and that apparently provided what was needed. As I'm telling you this, I think you'll realize that my two months in Kinshasa went pretty fast. I was ensconced at the top of the apartment house that the Embassy had in those days, called the Alhadeff Arms, where at night I could look and see the lights of Brazzaville twinkling across Stanley Pool. Zaire was in a very messy economic situation at the time with a vastly overvalued currency. Zaire's suppliers of petroleum products refused to ship unless they received payment in advance. One of my memories of Kinshasa in those days was long lines of vehicles trying to buy a few liters of gasoline. I recall another crisis on a more personal level. It involved a rather untoward incident involving distribution of Butagas cans used for cooking to the Mission families. I'm sorry that I had to use my prerogative as Acting Director to take away a whole bunch of Butagas cans being hoarded by the wife of the actual Director and distribute them on a fair basis all around. On the 28th of February, I got on a Lufthansa plane together with an AID inspector who had come through Kinshasa sometime earlier and with whom I became friendly, and I went home. I really felt that after two months I had earned my pay.

Q: You certainly had.

CORREL: It was a fascinating thing. I had been very reluctant to go and, of course, the opportunity cost was that trip to the South Pacific, but in retrospect, it was a very interesting and satisfying assignment. I even got somebody promoted during that time, because the officer whose place I was taking, who had left, hadn't written any efficiency reports on the staff. I'm very pleased to say also that it was the first time for me in an executive-type situation. I had a chance to influence what some of the local employees of the Mission were doing, and I think they felt quite good about that.

Q: Good. Well, any more of these assignments?

Special assignment: a development strategy for USAID/Nepal - 1977

CORREL: Once again, Mike Adler called on me, this time to lead a team to do a strategy assessment for Nepal. In May of 1977, I took off with John Eriksson, as the economist, and a couple of team members. We spent quite a bit of time out in the field. One big trip resulted in a recommendation to go along with something the Mission itself had been thinking of, which was a Regional Development zone in the area of Nepal called Rapti. We could only get out there by chartered so-called STOL plane, the short takeoff and landing plane. When we got there, and that was the closest I had gotten to being airsick in the previous 15 years or so, we then had to walk probably about seven miles to where we were staying and from where we did our work.

Q: Did you travel in the Rapti zone?

CORREL: Yes. We stayed in a guesthouse somewhere. As I remember, we had somebody along who did some cooking, so we lived on Nepalese food and a few imported items that our carriers had brought along. I remember one of the things we looked at was a family planning activity, but that wasn't until we were close to leaving our area there after about a four or five day stay. A helicopter came and took some of us straight up to a village high in the mountains where this family planning activity was being carried out. John Eriksson, for some crazy reason, decided to walk and he ended up, when we saw him, draped across a horse, totally exhausted. The Nepalese luckily had found a horse to put him on part of the way up the mountain. But, he literally stayed up, which I knew that I really couldn't have done and survive to be useful.

One remarkable aspect about that trip was that, after long, long flights from Washington, with an overnight in London and a few hours rest in New Delhi, good old Sam Butterfield had us met at the airport in Nepal and, without a stop at a hotel, took us immediately to the office of the Minister of Finance. There, Nepalese and AID officials were waiting and we were supposed to explain what our task in Nepal was. I remember glancing around at some point while doing my little presentation for the Minister and Sam and all the Minister's people, and seeing that my three companions were all asleep.

Q: I'm not surprised.

CORREL: Yes, it was absolutely crazy.

Q: Why the Rapti zone?

CORREL: I guess they had figured out that the area had some potential. Looking into it, our inclination was to check it out, and we came to the conclusion that it seemed reasonable.

Q: What kind of activities were you proposing?

CORREL: It was very much connected with agriculture production and the by now usual family planning and education activities. In the case of training and education, we ran into the overall problem of would the participants return and serve out in the countryside. I remember putting in several caveats in our report with regard to making it very highly focused and including safeguards that would insure that these people would actually work out in the countryside afterwards.

Going back to your question concerning the Rapti zone. Different donors were working on different areas of Nepal and somehow the Mission had zeroed in on the Rapti zone as their most likely area. In very remote countries, donors coordinated their approach geographically. Obviously, when we were there, accessibility was a very dubious thing, at least for us, used to modern means of transport and communication. If you were prepared to walk, then everything was possible, because walking was the common way to travel around Nepal. Invariably, even Peace Corps people and technicians we sent out in the field walked to get to where they were going.

Anticipating a question of yours about governments and democracy, I remember very well that we did not feel that there was very much we could say about that subject per se. We did approach it, in a way, through the question of country versus Kathmandu on the question of resource distribution and application.

Q: All right. Were there other elements in the strategy in Nepal that you were recommending or was Rapti the main program?

CORREL: Rapti certainly was the major program. Again, the usual aspects of strengthening the agriculture research in the country and family planning were big items. I'd like to say one thing that we did do in Nepal as we saw these opportunities. I think it's fair enough for me to take credit that during the days I was in the Near East South Asia Bureau, from mid '73 until I went off to the DSP in September of '75, I found that there was a real problem with regard to overseas mission programs, that is, they were all supposed to put their money into developing projects. The technical support catchall project had been abolished and after talking it over with one of the analysts on my staff, I made a recommendation, which the Bureau adopted, to provide support for project development from Bureau funds, rather than out of annual country program amounts. It was different from Tech Support, it was called Program Development and Support, and it was intended to be flexible but carefully administered, basically to give a Mission Director the opportunity to ask for money. He had to justify activities that promoted or strengthened the program but were not necessarily a part of a project. We promoted use of this new authority in Nepal. I know that the idea did not come from another Bureau. I developed the concept for the Near East South Asia Bureau. One of my previous colleagues from the old Africa Bureau days, Sarah Jane Littlefield, had gone to the Asia Bureau at one point, and she approached me to ask whether it wouldn't be possible to borrow an allotment of Program Development and Support (PD&S) funds from our fund for her programs. We had to turn that request down. But, after that it became an agency wide thing. Unfortunately, later on, it was put into a straight jacket of rules so that later eventually I found it unrecognizable and very hard to get. But, I thought that in the early days in '75 and even when I was Mission Director in Lesotho some years later, it was a very valuable tool where a little bit of money accomplished a lot of useful things. I just wanted to mention that.

Q: Yes, as I recall, it was a very useful device.

CORREL: I can't say I got any credit for it, but I was pleased enough to see how it was used in the earlier years. It was helpful. I just wanted to mention that Nepal was the first opportunity I had to really do some programming using the PD&S funds.

Q: Well, let's move on. After you worked with the Development Studies Program and the Special Missions, what happened?

Joined the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to work on the Humphrey Bill -
1977

CORREL: The Development Studies Program provided me with two very satisfying years, both from the point of view of my work with the program itself, and, I suppose more importantly, with the extraordinary special assignments. I knew I wouldn't be able to hold off the wolves of Personnel forever. After a casual discussion with one of the people who had worked for me on earlier occasions both in the Africa Bureau and Near East South Asia, who at that point was up on the Hill working in Senator Humphrey's office, I was asked to come up there for an interview. It was with the man who today is the Chief of Staff to the USAID Administrator, Dick McCall, and out of that came a request from Senator Hubert Humphrey for me to be detailed to join the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee dealing with foreign assistance to help draft a new AID bill and work on AID matters in general. A letter signed by Hubert Humphrey to Governor Gilligan, the AID Administrator at the time, had me up there in short order. I joined the Committee staff and spent the rest of 1977 and 1978 helping conceptualize and write a new AID bill.

Unfortunately, Hubert Humphrey was dying. He died in January of 1978 before the so-called Humphrey Bill saw the light of day. Another man who had come to the staff from Treasury, Joel Johnson, and I did much of the work while some of the regular staff members were off doing something else or taking time off because of the legislative recess. I don't mean to take credit for the bill, but Joel and I certainly did a surprisingly large amount for being outsiders. My partner was a very capable guy and subsequently became an Assistant Secretary of something or other. I think we both felt good about our contributions. It was an interesting job, because we had a real catch as catch can staff up there. Hubert Humphrey had an awful lot of political irons in the fire. He'd been Vice President, but he'd also been a real power in the Senate. He was an enthusiastic Minnesota booster anyway and he had an enormous hinterland of supporters and hangers-on. The Committee staff reflected that to a large extent.

One of my colleagues on the Committee staff, a relatively junior man, was the current ex Congressman and UN Ambassador, Bill Richardson. Another one was Connie Freeman, the daughter of Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman, who subsequently went back to State and served in Thailand and Kenya. I'm not sure where she is now. But anyway, we got this bill written. Hubert Humphrey died in January and his widow, Muriel, who only died recently, was appointed Senator. She decided that she did not want to run again, but she introduced the Humphrey Bill on the Senate floor and it was treated as a tribute to her late husband, Hubert.

I made a contribution of a particular nature to that bill. It had to do with what I was telling you before about my work on voluntary agencies. I wrote a special chapter in the Humphrey Bill, Chapter Six, which dealt with private initiatives and development and which basically provided for the establishment of an agency one step removed from the U.S. government and AID to handle voluntary assistance and the Peace Corps. We were going to call it something like the International Development Institute, on the model of the National Institutes of Health. That is, it had the kind of link it needed to the government, but was going to be able to do a lot of things tailor-made for a much more private outlook, a non-governmental outlook, than if the program were put under AID. Before his death, Hubert Humphrey was very much in favor of this approach. It was part of a larger proposal that we all worked on, which was to have the whole international development effort put under an umbrella agency. That ended up really being stillborn. It was IDCA, the International Development Coordination Agency. It was to include the Development Institute, AID, OPIC, and I don't know what else. IDCA would have made a lot of sense.

When the Humphrey bill was introduced later in 1978, it had, I believe, 53 sponsors. Quite an extraordinary number of people signed up. But, for some reason, the Carter White House decided to oppose it and it was left hanging on the vine. Senator Frank Church who was the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee didn't really fight for it. Once it was on the floor, nobody really leaned on the White House and on the AID man in the White House, Henry Owen. But, it was a wonderful opportunity to have opened a dialog and have come up with a significantly different AID bill, which is what people were crying for in those days. There have been significantly different AID bills since then, but in the optic of 1978, this was revolutionary and I was very pleased to be part of it.

Q: Any of the elements to what you were proposing get picked up in the legislation?

CORREL: Later on. Not the thing that I really cared about, which was putting private and voluntary AID and Peace Corps one step removed from normal government operations. Peace Corps, of course, was, in a way, although I must say I was amazed when I saw how Peace Corps functioned in Zaire. I mean, the Peace Corps Director was about as hidebound a member of the Ambassador's country team as just about anybody, even while his people were functioning out in the countryside under very difficult conditions. It was a very great disappointment to me that this concept was never adopted, because I think it would have really strengthened the role of voluntary agencies and private ways of giving aid and have enabled the U.S. Government to get things done in off-beat situations with much greater flexibility.

Q: Did you have voluntary agencies supporting it?

CORREL: Yes. In fact, I've still got a note somewhere about how much they liked it. It was coordinated with them, it wasn't just made up in a room somewhere.

Q: Was there a particular report on this that wrote it up and described it?

CORREL: Well, it was part of the bill and I wrote the section-by-section analysis of the legislation. I also wrote a couple of papers about it. The PVOs (Private Voluntary Organizations) had a coordinating and liaison committee on the Hill. The man in charge of that was Larry Minear, who came to see me quite often and with whom I would discuss this very frankly. They were very receptive. The interesting thing is that they didn't volunteer proposals for handling their government-supported activities. I still remember that some months after Hubert Humphrey's death, they came to see me talking about gathering support for the bill and I said, "Well, we've got a little bit of a problem, and that is we've got to stop talking about the Humphrey bill. We've got to start talking about how Frank Church is so important this." Working on that bill, I guess, was my big accomplishment up there.

Assisted with the Congressman Obey Amendment on Foreign Service Personnel - 1978

However, I also got involved in something else more because of a personal connection. It was suggested that I talk to somebody coming from the House side who wanted some help from the Committee regarding AID personnel. Nobody was inclined to provide it because they didn't have enough detail on the subject. That someone turned out to be the right hand man on AID matters to Representative David Obey on the Foreign Operations Committee. Obey wasn't Chairman at the time, but he was definitely one of the key people on the committee.

Q: What was the substance of what you were working on?

CORREL: The substance had to do with the utilization of AID personnel and the feeling that AID personnel were misallocated. I did an analysis. AID was trying to make some changes. It was trying to get some authority to manage better the distribution of AID people between Washington and the field. I did an analysis, going back to about 1968 on the location of AID personnel. When one started disaggregating what people were doing, one found that many people had switched back to Washington, but that in many cases the personnel numbers were not all that bad as far as the field was concerned. I also put forth the premise that, overall, the field was underrepresented in the way that AID was doing business internally. I pointed out, partly as a result of the experience I'd had during the Vietnam days, that AID was cleft down the middle between Foreign Service people and non-Foreign Service people (Civil Service or excepted service). The Washington operation was very strongly staffed by the latter. My analysis pointed out that many of the key topics and decisions were being analyzed and made by people who were not Foreign Service and had no idea of what service abroad really consisted of. To make a long story short, I went with the man who had contacted me and who encouraged me to develop this to see Congressman Obey. The next thing that happened was that Obey introduced his amendment about Foreign Service.

Q: What was the amendment?

CORREL: The amendment was that the agency was to be primarily Foreign Service.

Q: All Foreign Service?

CORREL: That it was to be strongly built around the Foreign Service. It basically said that, like the State Department, AID was a Foreign Service Agency. That was very vigorously opposed in AID. The Obey Amendment was passed by Congress and to some extent it was enforced for a while. However, in the last analysis, Obey had a lot of other things on his mind and lost interest and therefore didn't provide the kind of outside pressure needed to ensure that the amendment was enforced in good faith.

Another thing that I believe I can take credit for was the legislation that mandated that AID Foreign Service people were to be required to know foreign languages. Part of the reason for that was a conversation I had in 1974 or 1975 with the Assistant Administrator for the Near East South Asia after my return from Yemen on one of my trips where I told him, "If we want to be effective in a country like this, and if we want to use AID as a valuable tool in the Middle East, we've got to take some people and make sure they know Arabic." This person, whom I respected and regarded very highly and thought a very decent man, looked at me and said, "We couldn't possibly do that. Everyone would think that they were CIA." I thought to myself, we had better get a different image than that in our foreign affairs work. This incident may not have been the genesis of the idea, but it certainly helped it along, the mandating of foreign language capability. When I became a Deputy in the Africa Bureau, I ruffled some feathers by taking the language requirement seriously. I recall one case. I assigned one Officer who had just completed French training to a position in a Francophone country instead of the cushy job he had picked out and used his insider connection to reserve, which required no French and would have resulted in his unlearning what he had learned while keeping the qualifications on paper.

My detail to the Committee kind of petered out. Mrs. Humphrey chose not to stand for reelection. In 1978, there were many Republican Senators elected, so that things were beginning to change up on Capitol Hill. The person who then assumed the responsibility for my detail was Senator Dick Clark of Iowa who was defeated himself in that election. And, just about that time, I started getting word from AID that they were interested in my coming back.

Q: What did they call you back to do?

Special assignment to Zambia on manpower development - 1979

CORREL: Well, the ultimate job offer was to go as Director of the USAID Mission to Maseru, Lesotho, but before I went there, I did one more short term consultancy and this one was to Zambia in connection with a manpower development effort AID had going there and was interested in expanding. So, I spent much of the month of March of 1979 in Lusaka working with people who had come down from the REDSO Office in Nairobi to develop an expanded project. I would say it was a pretty standard project involving academic and some non-academic training.

Q: Participant Training?

CORREL: Some of it, but as I remember it, most of it was actually training in country. I just don't remember very much about the assignment. I guess that going to Maseru on a full time assignment as Director of the Mission there has stuck in my mind more than this short time assignment, which, however, exposed me to Zambia for the first time and which had a some relevance in my later work with.

Q: Do you have any particular observations about Zambia at that time?

CORREL: Yes. It was a classic case of a country that had put all its eggs in the natural resources production and export basket and had grievously neglected its potential in agriculture and other means of creating sustained widespread employment for the people. Zambia had had some very fat years when copper prices were high, but as the price of copper declined significantly, the Zambians found themselves in very serious budgetary trouble with a great deal of unemployment and economic instability. Certainly, I would think that Zambia is a textbook case for showing the fallacy of the kind of development that counts too much on exploiting a particular natural resource instead of trying to achieve broad-based employment and an economy that at least has the capability of significantly feeding its people, rather than hoping for something like gold or copper or oil to provide the main income.

Appointed Mission Director in USAID/Lesotho - 1979

Q: When did you go to Lesotho?

CORREL: That was in August of 1979.

Q: What was the situation there when you got there?

CORREL: Well, I had been in Lesotho some three years earlier as head of the Evaluation Team on Manpower Development, the OPEX project, so it wasn't a completely strange place to me. What I found in Maseru was something that I had always been concerned about in my AID work once I'd left the Far East. We appeared to have committed ourselves to a goodly number of activities, all of certainly some merit, but with very little capability to keep these activities under a careful watch, to make sure that they were accomplishing their objectives and that they basically made sense. I think the thing that I remember best about arriving in Maseru was that it all sounded very familiar, but that there were some significant implications and other problems that I wasn't comfortable with and required my very early attention.

I was most concerned about our single largest project, the Southern Perimeter Road. This was part of the anti-apartheid strategy of not only the United States, but also of other Western donors. The United States had agreed to help with the construction of a series of roads around Lesotho on the principle that this network was designed to remove Lesotho's total dependency on South Africa and its road network. As people generally know, Lesotho is totally surrounded by South Africa. Of course, it's inevitable that there will be a very close relationship between the two countries any way you look at it, short of having a blockade, and the Southern Perimeter Road was part of a multi-donor effort to reduce at least the transportation dependency on South Africa. Our road had been grievously over-designed. I don't remember the numbers exactly, but essentially something like 35 million dollars had been made available by the U.S., including funding for the design of the road. There was a provision for perhaps three million dollars worth of contributions by the Government of Lesotho. In taking a detailed look at the project, it was very obvious that this was grossly insufficient to get the kind of road built that had been designed. Thus, one of the first things I ran into was a great deal of pressure to get funding increased for the road and that ended up becoming a major imbroglio.

Q: Why did the design get so elaborate, did you understand? I presume it was originally not intended to be so complex a project?

CORREL: I think that one of the problems was that the firm that had originally been asked to design it did not fully recognize the difficulties of moving through the kind of topography where the road was to be located.

Q: What was the setting that the road was being built in?

CORREL: The road traversed a mountainous area of Lesotho in the southeastern part of the country. A lot of the design work had apparently been done on the basis of aerial reconnaissance, rather than on ground development. The company that actually did the construction and also was in charge of construction supervision proceeded to challenge what had been agreed. This came to a head in the first three months after my arrival. When we asked for a presentation of what they thought was necessary in order to get the job done as had been agreed, it turned out that we were 83 million dollars short to do what \$38 million project was supposed to finance.

Q: Was it because the design became more sophisticated, was that a factor? Or was it a different concept of the road?

CORREL: I don't know that the concept was very different from what had originally been expected and hoped for. I think what happened was that the contractor proceeded to enrich the overall formula for building the road some. One of the problems was that the engineer at the AID Mission in Lesotho had a real problem in challenging what had gone on beforehand, and again was most reluctant to challenge what was evolving there. He did refer me to another engineer in the Africa Bureau whom I had come out together with, who was an engineer, and a lawyer. We did a complete review of the project and came to the conclusion that we had to reduce its scope very significantly and still accomplish the objective of providing a serviceable road to the point where the next donors would take over. We finally came up with a far more labor-intensive type construction involving more Basotho workers under a system called "force account." We were actually able to save a very substantial amount of money that had originally been factored into the redesign, but it did mean a somewhat more direct involvement by the AID Mission and the Lesotho Ministry of Public Works than, I think, the contractor had ever expected. Coming up with our revisions certainly took a great deal of time on the part of all of us. But, we ended up with a 41 million dollar total project that we and the Lesotho government felt comfortable in supporting. The Government increased its own contribution by \$2 million more, to \$5 million.

Q: Was it completed, was it built?

CORREL: By the time I had left it wasn't completed yet, but it was well on the way. The one party that was not satisfied with these arrangements was the company that had made the very high estimate and we had considerable trouble.

Q: Was it an American Company?

CORREL: Yes, it was. They were not easy to deal with. But, I must say it was a very gratifying experience to see how we were able to defuse the crisis with the help that we could get, both from staff up at REDSO and our excellent lawyer from the Regional Office in Swaziland. These supporting officers and we in the Mission took a good look at the overall concept of what we were trying to do here, what we could get away with and get the job done properly, and we worked very effectively, together with the Lesotho government, which participated fully in the whole process all along the way.

Q: They weren't part of the process of jacking up the design?

CORREL: I think previously the Ministry had been relegated to being told what was going to happen. What we did after I got there was to consult with them. We reviewed all the different elements that were causing problems and we were very careful to outline what the different options were and consequences of those options. The Basotho ended up feeling that they had a very distinct stake in this project. When perhaps two years later, Finance threatened to cut out funding for their part of the project, we objected. At a meeting with the Prime Minister - an informal meeting in connection with one of his big public rallies called a "Pitso," which is part carnival, political consultation, and social event - the Ambassador and I were his guests and afterwards at lunch got to talk to him about the project. I explained to the Prime Minister that if the cuts were to happen to the Southern Perimeter Road, there unfortunately wouldn't be a road. We found that they felt strongly about the road, so whatever they did in the budget their funding allocation for the road remained intact.

Q: What did you think about the objective of having the road that allowed travel within Lesotho without having to go into South Africa? Did it make sense?

CORREL: I remember being of two minds at the time. Economically, it didn't make very much sense at all. But, there were some important political imperatives, both from the point of view of the Basotho and then also from the point of view of the United States and the outside world. After all, 1979 through 1982 when I was down there were the heyday of apartheid. P.W. Botha was President and he may not have been quite as completely hard line as his predecessors, but he still was a solid, stubborn supporter of and believer in apartheid. I can see where it was very tempting to undertake a project like that.

Q: Did the South African government react to building this road?

CORREL: Certainly not in my time. I don't know that the South Africans ever really reacted to AID projects that we undertook in Lesotho. They might have prior to '79 when I arrived, but not once during my three years there was it a consideration that we would have to watch out for an adverse South African reaction. I think the South Africans figured that as long as what was going on in these countries didn't pose a threat to them, to hell with it.

Q: What were some of the other projects that you were concerned with?

CORREL: I've made reference to one of my favorites, which was the Southern African Manpower Development Project. After having evaluated this activity three years earlier (in 1976), I ended up in charge of the Lesotho part of it. My fellow Directors in the other two Southern African countries affected by the project and I used get together at periodic intervals to compare notes on how the project was working and to see how we could strengthen its effectiveness in the three countries and learn from each other. We also sought to create and maintain a united front in dealing with the contractors and outsiders regarding what to do with that project. I think that we had very effective coordination. We developed excellent relationships with the contractors, which was gratifying. I think the project worked very well in all three countries.

Q: How did it work in terms of a particular position in Lesotho? What was the process you went through?

CORREL: Initially, the government of Lesotho and we would identify likely positions to be filled by an OPEX person. Indeed, in connection with the road, such a position was identified for filling by an OPEX appointment for a while. After such an identification, we dealt with the contractor to identify and select a candidate. Usually, we would receive a list of candidates and the Basotho and we would review those and agree on a mutual choice. The Basotho depended to some extent on us in the evaluation of each candidate's qualifications and background. I remember that they were very careful in evaluating these things themselves. They would ask a lot of questions and then we generally got agreement on a candidate. We had some good choices and were able to get some very good candidates. One of the things that I have to really emphasize is that I don't know that a Mission Director coming into a new place ever had as well qualified a staff in practical terms as I found in my little mission when I got to Maseru. I had nine Americans, including a secretary. I also had probably about 12 local employees, and among these 20-odd employees, I would say I had no more than a couple of dubious people. I had well-motivated people with excellent judgment. I found early on that we were able to function most effectively together.

Q: Where was the contractual relationship of the OPEX person?

CORREL: The OPEX person was an employee of the government. This person signed a standard employment contract with the government, whereby he or she would have the salary of a certain position, like our GS grades. Perhaps that paid eighteen hundred dollars a year. That was the contract that bound that individual to the government. Then, there was a separate contract between the employing contractor, our implementing contractor, and the OPEX person. The difference between the standard government's salary, which always was extremely low by U.S. standards, and what an experienced engineer would have been making in the United States was paid for with AID funds, which were administered by the implementing contractor. There was a further contract between ourselves and the government, or an implementation order under the particular project agreement, whereby the government recognized that we were making these payments, and that this was part of the AID Program. So, it was really a three contract system. The important thing is, these people were employees of the government, took their orders from the government, and they understood that.

Q: What are some of the other examples of positions that you filled?

CORREL: We had some people in the Ministries of Education and Agriculture. I keep seeing some of the names in front of me, and trying to associate them with specific jobs. But agriculture and education were two of the key ones and possibly someone in the Ministry of Health. We had a very interesting rural health project. I think we might have had someone in the Health Ministry at the time. We definitely had a person in the Ministry of Public Works.

Q: What were the expectations in terms of how long these people would stay and eventually be replaced by Basothos

CORREL: Our expectation was that each OPEX person would have to stay a good four years. They should come for two years on the initial contract with a renewal of two years more, conceivably even more after that. It was keyed to getting Basothos trained and ready to assume the position. Of course that involved at least four years. I would say our expectations were between four and ten years

Q: Do you think it worked?

CORREL: My recollection is that it worked reasonably well. We had on our staff an outstanding education and training officer who had remarkably good relations with the Basotho. This man applied himself very hard, working with ministries and other organizations in order to identify candidates and keep track of their performance. And, being there only three years, I can't say much more about it because, ironically, in AID one doesn't really get a chance to go back again. I had the feeling that we were on to something pretty good.

Q: About how many OPEX positions were we filling when you were there? We're talking about a number of people, approximately?

CORREL: I would think about 15, maybe 20.

Q: These were fairly senior positions?

CORREL: Yes, without exception.

Q: They were head of departments or that sort?

CORREL: Yes. Head of departments. However, we did not have anybody in Lesotho who would have been a (inaudible).

Q: Principal Secretary?

CORREL: Even an Under Secretary. I know we had people like that in Swaziland at least, but in Lesotho they were below that level.

Q: Well, what about some other projects that you had?

CORREL: An interesting one that I remember and one with which we had fewer problems than with the road, was a rural health project. Lesotho is a very mountainous country. In fact, the capital city is at 5,000 feet, but at least it's on the high plain. There are extensive mountainous areas and communications are not all that good. Our project was designed to provide health facilities in areas like that. It involved the provision of nurse practitioners and nurse practitioners' training. This was because it just wasn't realistic to staff these areas with doctors. The nurse practitioners were able to provide the kind of basic primary health care that would do the trick in most cases. To the extent that physicians were available, they could be consulted in appropriate cases. The health system in Lesotho was not particularly good. We had a three-person team there who worked on this project and who also arranged for the training of these nurse practitioners. I remember that one as working well. It was another project that I inherited. We also had a project in agricultural planning.

Q: On the health project, were there many nurse practitioners that were actually trained and sent out to the rural areas during your time?

CORREL: I won't say many, but we did get some out. Again, if I had to guess, I would say it was about a dozen or so in my time.

Q: Were you involved in building clinics as well?

CORREL: You know, I'm not certain. I don't remember anything about building clinics. I don't think we were. I think the clinics came from some other source. We probably had responsibility for some equipment and maybe some renovation or something like that. But I don't recall encountering the kinds of problems that I would have expected from a construction project.

Q: Did we include family planning in that program?

CORREL: We did, but I don't know that it was that big a part. I think that family planning was an automatic part of the project and never got that much highlighting because we did not encounter resistance or other problems with it.

Q: Do you remember any of the health services being provided? Immunization?

CORREL: There was immunization, but one of the biggest problems was to provide education with regard to safe water and to take care of intestinal diseases. In Lesotho, respiratory diseases were also a major problem. We sought to introduce the concept of preventive medicine in Lesotho, although an awful lot of the work they had to do was of curative nature. I would have thought that intestinal and respiratory diseases would have been two of the biggest problems. In Lesotho, it is important to remember that a lot of the people living out in the rural areas were families where women were the effective heads of households and the main workforce. There were only old men and youngsters.

Q: Why was that?

CORREL: Because a large number of men went to South Africa to work in the mines or in agriculture or other jobs. In rural Lesotho, there was a clientele that was largely women, old people, and children.

Q: I see. Well, you started to talk about an agriculture project.

CORREL: Well, we had an agricultural planning project which involved providing assistance through a team on the spot, but also a very important training element where agricultural planners were sent to Colorado State University. It was a high profile project. I can't honestly say I remember very vividly what all was accomplished there, except that we had regular monitoring meetings and evaluations. I know that we had to redesign the project at some point. By the time I left, I believe some people were coming back to Lesotho under it.

Q: Was there any particular agricultural strategy? What were we trying to promote in a country like that?

CORREL: I remember telling the first of the two German Ambassadors who I met out in Lesotho that one was tempted to think that anybody who engaged in agriculture in Lesotho was an economic idiot. As I recall, diversification and improvement of yields were important goals, and also introduction or improvement of higher value horticulture crops that could grow there. One thing I remember particularly well was asparagus, because they were growing a kind of spindly asparagus and there was some improvement. The agriculture strategy in Lesotho basically was to do better with pitifully limited resources.

Q: Were we in the mohair project when you were there?

CORREL: Yes. That actually was a little side project. That wasn't associated with any of our major projects. It was a project that involved the Winrock Mohair Center down in Arkansas. I seem to recall vaguely that it ran into some trouble, partly because of the volatile nature of the market for mohair. It was not as rosy a prospect as had been expected.

Q: Other projects?

CORREL: We had an agricultural production project, which caused a lot of trouble, partly because the implementing university seemed to think that the project was primarily for their people to do their own research. There was a real problem (inaudible).

Q: American University?

CORREL: Yes. With getting the University contract team, the Lesotho Government, and ourselves on the same wavelength. There was a change in chief of party toward the end of my time out there, and some evidence of greater receptivity by the University to what the Basotho wanted to have done. That was not one of our shining successes. We also had a rural water supply project. That session where the Prime Minister and I had a chance to talk about continuing their support of local currency for our Southern Perimeter road project in the context of their budget cutback was actually at the dedication of a section of our Rural Water Project which then led to the Pitso where I mentioned it to the Prime Minister at lunch.

Q: How about PL480 Program? You must have had some PL480 assistance?

CORREL: We had some Title Two.

Q: This was school feeding or what?

CORREL: I believe there was some school feeding associated with it. School feeding and some rural feeding. Quite likely, the PL480 Title II Program assisted with maternal child health in the context of that rural health project.

Q: Any other projects come to mind?

CORREL: I'm sure there were. A teaching center and maybe a couple more.

Q: How was your relationship with the people in the government? How were they to work with?

CORREL: In most cases, extremely good. The Mission had good contacts throughout the government. According to the Basotho system, our key contact was the Senior Permanent Secretary of the government. He was both the government watchdog on the one hand and the coordinator and facilitator on the other hand. In our relations with the finance ministry, we had a sufficiently close relationship with the Minister, who was one of the key men in the government. Indeed, on one occasion when we needed to obligate some money, our Program Officer went over to his house on a Saturday morning and got him out of the bath tub to sign the documents. We were complimented several times by Washington on our obligation level. My personal policy was always to keep in mind that things could get awfully aggravating on this obligation business. I tried hard to make sure that we had our obligations done as promptly as we reasonably could. I saw no reason to delay on these things and we gave the Basotho to understand that it was in their interest to expedite the process when we came to them. There wasn't much haggling about it. This could be done because we were in constant touch with them throughout the year and didn't have to nail a lot of things down when the documents needed to be signed. I think that especially with the Rural Development Ministry and the Ministry of Public Works, our relations were very close and very effective. I give credit for that to people on my staff and some of those OPEX and other technicians who really managed to generate a great deal of respect and loyalty from the Basotho. I think I had an outstanding staff and mission operation.

Q: How about the relationship with Embassy? Were they heavily involved in the program?

CORREL: They were not. When I first came to Lesotho, I had an absentee Ambassador who was deeply suspicious of AID and who apparently bore me some personal animus regarding the circumstances of my nomination. He apparently had felt that somehow his prerogatives had not been sufficiently recognized. He was stationed in Botswana, but he was on his way out and came to Lesotho within a week or two after my arrival and then also to Swaziland in order to make his goodbyes. I remember that the Chargé at the embassy, with whom I got along very well, and I went out to meet the plane. The ambassador came out and talked to the others. I was introduced to him. I would say the meeting was chilly.

He did tell me in what he undoubtedly considered his very imperious way that I should call on him to get the benefit of his ideas about the development situation in Southern Africa. I sort of mentally flinched and gave thanks that this guy wasn't going to be around very long. I recall, this happened on a Monday. I went up to the Embassy and very carefully made an appointment right away. Word came back to me that my appointment was for Thursday. I guess he thought it might be about for an hour. I very carefully let him talk and would step in very carefully. After a while, it seemed I was doing a little bit more of the talking. Well, to make a long story short, we were together three hours. He took his leave of me in quite a cordial way and before leaving the country, he made it a point at his farewell party to introduce me to every leading Basotho and third country person and to tell me how much he had appreciated having had that talk with me. I must say from there I never looked backwards regarding my relations with the Embassy. We were the early American presence of Lesotho and the Embassy was very small. As luck would have it, the man who came as the first resident ambassador in Lesotho was the man whom I had met as DCM in Lusaka. With him, I had a very close and friendly relationship and he not only was supportive but apparently really pleased that I was there.

Q: Was there any pressure or demands on you? Did you do certain things because of our political relationship there?

CORREL: Never, never. I don't think that our people thought that way. I don't recall ever that the Ambassador said the Basotho asked him for something that they wouldn't have asked of the mission. I'm trying desperately to remember for what, if anything, we ever used the Ambassador's special self help fund. I'm sure we did. While the junior officer at the Embassy messed around with it a little bit, there was never any attempt to do something that was unreasonable. We were always consulted. It was a very good relationship, which carried over to Ambassador Clingerman's successors. He left after two years. During my last year in Lesotho, before I was pulled out, I had two Chargé's for about a month or two each. Then, a political Ambassador was appointed who was one of the most charming and supportive people that I've ever had the pleasure to work with.

Q: Who was that?

CORREL: His name was Keith Brown. He had been a Republican National Committee man or something like that in Colorado. I believe his background was real estate investment. He and his wife were personally very warm and friendly people. That atmosphere prevailed on a professional, as well as on a personal basis. I've always had the feeling that I have a special section of Heaven reserved for me on account of the kind of State Department I dealt with in Lesotho.

Q: How was it living in Lesotho?

CORREL: It was somewhat of a mixed bag. Physically, the place was interesting, it was fun, and it was very attractive. I had a very nice house with a beautiful view. But we had a fair amount of crime and we had to protect ourselves from that. With quite a few visitors, we had to make a very special point of briefing them on the overall personal security situation. We also had an incipient rebellion against the government.

The situation in Lesotho was quite tense. The government of Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan had hijacked at least one, probably two elections and there was considerable political discontent. In addition to that, there was the situation with South Africa. My house was just about a mile from the Maseru bridge, which constituted the border, and we had incidents of insurgents or other elements. We never really knew who was behind them, who occasionally fired tracer bullets, once attacked a power plant, and did various other things so that we always had to be a little on our toes. My immediate successor was much more affected than I by this sort of thing, because it never got close to me. But, she was there when South African armed troops crossed the border one time in order to put a stop to what they said were some subversive activities. There was actually firing right around the house where she lived and she spent a fair amount of time prone on the floor of the house during this siege. I never had anything like that.

I found that Lesotho was fun; the work was rewarding, the mission functioned well, we had effective support from our regional folks in Nairobi and Swaziland, and I met some wonderful people there, including my present wife. We got married there on July 3, 1981 and afterwards went to the Independence Day reception of the Ambassador's. When we showed up there, just about the first two people we got to greet were the King and the Prime Minister of Lesotho. Not too many people can say that such guests show up on one's wedding day. What was interesting was that the King and the Prime Minister were political enemies. In fact, the Prime Minister had exiled King Moshoeshoe on a couple of occasions and this was the first time that the two of them had appeared at the same public function. Ambassador Clingerman and we were trying to cope with that. Thus, we had this very interesting experience right after our wedding ceremony. That was memorable enough in itself since we were the only white couple getting married among a large number of Africans, and we all had a great time. I was very happy in Lesotho in a personal way, and most definitely in a professional way. In both ways, I viewed Lesotho as the land of heart's delight.

Q: What was your understanding of a political situation? Was it an ethnic problem or what was this?

CORREL: I don't believe it was an ethnic problem at all, because unlike many, if not most African countries, there was no ethnic minority in Lesotho. It was strictly a question of the one party perpetuating itself in power under this strong-armed authoritarian leadership. Jonathan was eventually overthrown by a military coup. It happened after I left and eventually he died while under house arrest. Unfortunately, some of our closest contacts among the Basotho, people we remember quite warmly, were killed under mysterious circumstances, not all that long after we left Lesotho. The country has had much political instability since then and most recently there was armed intervention by the South Africans and by Botswana.

Q: But these factions were people in the same ethnic group?

CORREL: Yes, that is my understanding.

Q: Anything else you want to add on Lesotho before we move on?

CORREL: I think it worth mentioning that Southern Africa was getting much political attention from the United States because of the problem posed by the apartheid regime in South Africa. Somehow, the way the U.S. did things seemed in much higher profile than some of the other countries. We had a donor coordination committee in Maseru which met once a month or so. We had lively discussions and actually shared experiences and problems and apparently learned something from each other. Our meetings encouraged much informal contact regarding aid matters far beyond what I have observed in other countries. The second German ambassador and I became good friends. In fact, he used to come and see me to get advice on how to say something to the Basotho. He even brought letters that his staff had drafted to get my judgment whether they should be rephrased or if somehow the overall thrust or atmosphere ought to be changed. Other donors included a Nationalist Chinese ambassador, my neighbor, with whom I also had a nice rapport. He and I used to consult quite closely regarding his activities, which had a large commercial element.

I participated several times in meetings of the AID Directors in the region with State Department people. I recall meetings in Botswana and Zambia where we discussed the United States role and potential in Southern Africa. We also had a change in administration. Jimmy Carter lost the election of 1980 and with Ronald Reagan's victory, there were very extensive changes in personnel and direction by AID. While I was stationed in the Lesotho, I actually got to travel to quite a few places in Southern Africa, and also was exposed to a lot of political and other factors beyond little Lesotho.

Q: Were you involved in any of the regional initiatives in Southern Africa? Are they connected with the formation of the SADCC (Southern African Development Coordinating Committee)?

CORREL: No. The regional initiative in my time was the joint manpower project with the other two countries. There were other general discussions. SADCC came later.

Q: And the road, of course was a major project.

CORREL: Yes, it counted as regional. I remember one particular meeting, which was called by the State Department, because we had a visiting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Carol Lancaster, who subsequently became AID Deputy Administrator. In those days, she was in State and she put forth a whole number of ideas that I found awfully difficult to agree with.

Q: Can you mention what they are?

CORREL: One had to do with creation of an industrial capacity that would overshadow that of South Africa, in the interests of achieving regional cooperation and integration. As I understood it, the concept was one of essentially becoming a rival of South Africa's in a number of industrial and transportation things, which very honestly I didn't think was in the cards. We also had a couple of AID meetings, including one with the new Assistant Administrator who wanted to meet all the Mission Directors. This was a very fateful meeting for me because this new man decided he'd like to get me back to Washington. Some months later that manifested itself by me being appointed one of his three deputies and having to leave Lesotho. It was really quite a remarkable three years that I spent in Lesotho.

Appointment as a Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Africa Bureau - 1982

Q: Well, you moved back to Washington in one of the Deputy Assistant Administrator positions? When was this?

CORREL: This was in June of 1982 and my appointment was as Deputy Assistant Administrator for West and Central Africa, i.e., Francophone Africa.

Q: Why were there three Deputies, which they hadn't had before?

CORREL: As I understood it, it was to provide a more focused direction to AID activities on the African continent, with so many different countries, most of which were receiving American aid. The feeling was to insert another level between the office directors and the Assistant Administrator. The Assistant Administrator was a political appointment who had no acquaintance with Africa at all, other than what he was getting on the job. The three deputies all had field experience. I had worked in the Bureau in the old days and so had my colleague for the Anglophone part of Africa. The man who served as the principal Deputy had been the Director of the REDSO in Nairobi. I think it was felt that between the three of us we could provide more in-depth capability to the front office to make the political appointee feel more confident that the Reagan Administration's and his own priorities were adequately propagated throughout the Bureau.

Q: Were there any special issues that you had to deal with while you were in that position?

CORREL: I wasn't in that position very long. As I remember it, when you say special issues or topics, the new approach to AID put very heavy emphasis on private enterprise. There were the so-called four cornerstones of the new Administrator, which consisted of policy dialogue, the private enterprise initiative, institution building, and technology transfer. Of course, we were constantly admonished to make sure that our programs put sufficient emphasis on these. One special concern during my time, one of considerable import, was the very destructive factional war in Chad. We were trying to provide assistance to Chad. That became an international effort and there was a conference in Geneva in December of 1982 that I attended with the Assistant Administrator.

Q: This was after the crisis or during the crisis?

CORREL: Well, actually I believe it was between crises. People thought that one crisis was over, but it was never finished. There was an international effort to provide mostly immediate rebuilding assistance to Chad, but as I recall, more trouble developed down the road. We did go to this conference and an agreement was reached on putting together an aid program.

I spent quite a bit of the eight months or so that I had that job traveling. I attended a couple of program meetings in West Africa. I attended one in Abidjan and the other one in Niamey. I was quite anxious to go, because quite a few of the problems that were coming up had to do with Sahel projects. There was a great deal of pressure to start new projects.

Q: Do you recall any of those issues you were working with on the Sahel Program , for example?

CORREL: The way I remember it from my optic was that we were being bombarded in the Bureau by new project proposals which, like the ones I had met in Lesotho, sounded fine on paper. However, when you started asking questions about them, it turned out that they represented a vast expansion of our involvement with nowhere near sufficient money or manpower to undertake them. I know I had a couple of very hard meetings and discussions where, shall we say, activist Mission Directors felt that they were being shortchanged by my more conservative approach. That is my vivid memory of the program side of the eight months or so that I served.

Q: How did you find your experience being back in Washington?

CORREL: The pace was enough to make one dizzy. The Bureau Chief wanted everyone to travel, including himself. I did my fair share of travel, too. However, I found myself Acting Assistant Administrator on a few occasions, usually when something special was going on. I was in that role when Liberia's Chairman Doe (Moe, according to Ronald Reagan) came to town looking for one billion dollars in aid. I went up to the Hilton Hotel with Administrator McPherson as he told Doe that Liberia had the highest per capita aid level in all of Africa and that no more was forthcoming. Doe appeared to have trouble hearing the word "no." He kept repeating his request. McPherson and I also met with President Ahidjio of Cameroon. I had the task of organizing the papers and briefing work from the Bureau for McPherson. Then, there were many Congressional inquiries that required guidance to staff and a few sensitive personnel matters. I even had to deal with the problem of a child molester at one of our posts in West Africa that threatened to cause an imbroglio on Capitol Hill.

As my wife can certify, I had said while out in Lesotho that I had become less and less enchanted with Washington and that if anyone ever wanted to reassign me there, I would file for retirement. But then, when I was given the appointment as Deputy Assistant Administrator, I decided this was sufficient cause for that rule to be broken. Given the circumstances, I came to regret my decision to return to Washington at that time. The job was a great challenge but the circumstances involving my new boss, the AA/Africa (Assistant Administrator for the African Bureau), were not good.

Q: What were the problems that you faced?

CORREL: I found that a lot of my time was spent in having to justify even routine actions to my boss, the Assistant Administrator. It actually got to the point where I had the feeling that a criminal case was being built, not so much against me but against some of the other people who were working in the Bureau. I found that there wasn't time to get any real work done, that one had to constantly look over one's shoulders for unpleasant surprises. I had to defend a number of staff against accusations that were totally unfounded.

Q: From the Assistant Administrator?

CORREL: From the Assistant Administrator.

Q: What was he concerned about?

CORREL: I think he was concerned about a couple of things. On the program side, he personally had a very strong anti-family planning outlook. I know that he was not only suspicious, but very negative on any kind of family planning activity and actually looked for reasons to try to choke them off. In one case, I personally was accused of not having stopped some kind of an activity in Zaire that he had wanted to stop. Actually, I had located a copy of a telegram that indicated that I had notified the mission to suspend the activity until they got further instructions from Washington. But, to do that and then to counter the charge took quite a bit of time. Indeed, I found this incident was cited in a personnel evaluation in an untrue way, which led me to take that evaluation up to the office of the AID Administrator to get some changes made. The Deputy Administrator then took the responsibility for the rating away from him. He accused people of running up to the Hill and saying things other than what the official Agency and Bureau policies were. A Mission Director, a man whom I'd known for a number of years and who to me certainly represented a very high level of integrity, was accused of having gone up to the Hill and spread false stories around. I interviewed the man and he claimed that the charge was totally false. Fortunately, thanks to my own stint on the Hill, I could call on some people on the House Foreign Affairs Committee staff, who assured me categorically that this man had not done anything like that. Indeed, this was perhaps the fourth or fifth instance of such baseless accusations of ever-increasing difficulty. After putting out that fire, I told the Assistant Administrator that I was pulling out. I had to account for my action to the Administrator's office. They expressed their understanding and I went off to something else. The AA was replaced and ended up as an ambassador.

Q: So, then after eight or nine months there, you went back overseas? What did you do?

Special assignments in the Gambia, Sri Lanka, Senior Seminar - 1983

CORREL: No, I was at loose ends for a while. Before I even left the job formally, I did a management survey in Gambia. I spent a couple of weeks in Gambia taking a look at mission operations and making some recommendations for streamlining them and perhaps making them more effective from the personnel point of view. Then, I was appointed by the Deputy Administrator as head of the first evaluation panel for marginal performance, i.e., identifying persons for selection out. After that, I went at the request of the Asia Bureau as the head of a team to evaluate the sector support loan for the Mahaweli irrigation project in Sri Lanka. As I mentioned before, I had first had contact with this big undertaking in 1976 and had been responsible for recommending U.S. involvement. This Mahaweli sector support loan turned out to be one of the activities. That was in the summer of 1983, just before I went to the Senior Seminar of the State Department for the year 1983-1984. I was with this program for about eight months before being pulled out to become Mission Director in Sri Lanka.

Q: Did you actually attend the Senior Seminar?

CORREL: I did, but not to completion. In fact, I served as class president. I had an active and varied year or so. Also, I was consulted by the Administrator's Office Deputy Administrator on several occasions in connection with the situation in the Africa Bureau, and this also took a little time. In the Senior Seminar, my major accomplishment was a two-week trip to Louisiana in February 1984 for original research about the Houma Indians living along the Bayous and on the Gulf. These people were an example of economic underdevelopment in the USA. I interviewed community leaders, employers, and many of the ordinary people. Some of the old folks spoke no English, only an archaic form of French. It was an extraordinary experience both for me and for my wife, who had only been in the U.S. for less than two years. My report was a sensation in the class; most of them had not heard that such people lived in this country. I think that I was able to present to the group what underdevelopment and our aid work was about and that one did not have to go overseas to find really poor people. This research project was an integral part of the Seminar. I got the idea of my project from my old DSP experiences and was able to get help from my former colleague from LSU (Louisiana State University) in making the initial contacts in the Houma area.

Q: Well, let's move on to your new assignment in Sri Lanka. When did you go out there?

Assignment as Mission Director in USAID/Sri Lanka - 1984

CORREL: I was pulled out of the Senior Seminar first for about 10-12 days to attend an Asia Bureau regional conference in Bangkok. That was in January 1984. I actually went as Director in May of 1984.

Q: What was the situation in Sri Lanka at that time?

CORREL: The situation can best be described by what happened on my arrival at the airport in Colombo. My wife and I had spent a week in Denmark on leave on our way over there. We were met by my Deputy. He said to me as we were talking, "I guess you haven't heard the news." We had arrived on a Saturday, and on the previous Thursday evening, an American contractor and his wife had been kidnapped up in the North, in the area of the town of Jaffna by the Tamil Tiger rebels. So, on my very first day in the country, I was faced with an AID contractor kidnapped by terrorists. There was, of course, considerable contact over the weekend with the Embassy. I knew nobody at that point, but thanks to my Deputy we were able to stay in touch. The contractor and his wife were released on the Sunday and came back to Colombo on Monday morning. My first official act as Mission Director was to interview the American couple and then go with the Ambassador and the released contractor couple to call on President Jayewardene, because he wanted to meet them. So, on my first day in office in Sri Lanka, I got to meet the President on a topic like that. From there, it was pretty active all the time.

Q: Was there a particular reason why they were kidnapped or was this just an arbitrary act?

CORREL: It appeared to have been a target of opportunity that a wise guy thought would make a lot of sense. However, once they thought about it more, they moved to release them pretty quickly. There were no demands. I think once they had them, they tried to find some way of letting them go as quickly as possible. They, and we, were lucky.

Q: What was the political and economic situation in the country?

CORREL: The insurrection had started not quite a year earlier. It was a manifestation of feeling by the more militant Tamils that they were getting an unfair deal from the majority Sinhalese. In British times, peace had been maintained in the country by sort of a sharing of power. The British relied on Tamils to quite a substantial degree in administrative positions and the Tamils had achieved considerable prominence in economic affairs. In the late 1950s, the more conservative party that had dominated Ceylonese politics, even before independence, lost the election to a coalition government headed by a man who was nominally socialist, but in actual fact was a very strong Sinhalese nationalist. That was Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, who proceeded to introduce legislation to give greater power to the Sinhalese at the cost of the Tamils. From that moment on, there was considerable racial tension on that island, which from time to time manifested itself in armed clashes and uprisings.

I'm not able to get into a detailed discussion of what happened before I came, but I remember that in July of 1983 when I completed my evaluation mission of the Mahaweli, there was an incident where, during an armed clash, some isolated rebels had killed seven or eight soldiers of the Sri Lankan army. When those soldiers' bodies were returned to Colombo, there were riots and a giant demonstration, which led to the massacre of many Tamils in Colombo. In turn, that sparked widespread unrest by not only the Tamil Tigers, but by other militant Tamil groups. Eventually, the northern and eastern parts of the island, which have a Tamil majority, largely came under the control of the rebels, including the city of Jaffna in the extreme North. In Jaffna, we had a water project, a fairly big project. I don't recall what the kidnapped contractor did for the project, but he was associated with it. There were constant attacks on Sri Lanka military facilities and many civilian targets in many parts of the island, including Colombo. The economic situation began to deteriorate more and more as the government had to shove some of their development work aside in order to finance the counterrevolutionary activities. Some of our projects became endangered, particularly this water project.

Q: Did you visit the water project?

CORREL: I, myself never got up there, but my deputy did on one occasion.

Q: Did it go ahead?

CORREL: It continued for a while, but then there were interruptions. Fighting and incidents of sabotage really built up. I don't recall what triggered the whole business, but at one point we began to consider closing it down.

Q: Did it ever get finished?

CORREL: No, it did not. We closed it down. There were a lot of objections by the Sri Lankan government departments to my decision. They were still in control of Jaffna at that time, but essentially they were powerless to prevent the raids and were unable to guarantee in a reasonable way the security of our people. I suggested that the project be closed down. Interestingly enough, the Sri Lankans did not appeal to the Ambassador. In my case, we had gotten to the Ambassador first with an explanation. The Ambassador was an interesting fellow and very nice to work with when you knew his approach. He had been Governor of Maine. He had been appointed Ambassador by President Ford. He was a political appointee, succeeding a career man, James Van Hollen, who had been Ambassador when I had been out to Sri Lanka in March 1976. Of course, he had gone out of office when Ford lost the election and then showed up again as Reagan's Ambassador in Colombo in 1981. That's where I became acquainted with him again and we had a pleasant relationship.

Q: What was his name?

CORREL: John Reed, former Republican Governor of Maine. A very courtly and kind man, very much aware of his prerogatives and very jealous in guarding them. He was concerned at one point that the Mission was going to rent a house that the Yugoslav Ambassador had an interest in. I don't know what happened, but the Yugoslav Ambassador said something to him and he got back to us and said that he would not agree to us renting this new house unless he personally signed the lease. Well, it turned out we didn't want the house. Ambassador Reed saw himself as the President's personal representative in Colombo, and in a very nice way, but very clearly he wanted it understood that this meant that he could get himself involved in just about anything. But, anyway, he was never approached by the Sri Lankans to try to get my decision on the water project overturned, little as they liked it, because I think they realized that in the last analysis it would be awfully difficult for an American Ambassador, particularly one with a great deal of political savvy, to override a decision based on the safety of American personnel.

Q: Well, what was the thrust of the program other than that project that you were concerned with?

CORREL: Again the old familiar range of agriculture projects, and of course, the Mahaweli project took a great deal of our time. We had some other water supply projects. We also had an interesting private sector development project with a contractor and an umbrella project that funded activities by indigenous private voluntary agencies.

Q: Let's talk about the Mahaweli a bit. What was our role in that?

CORREL: We still were not associated with the big Mahaweli works at that time. We were not obligating new funds anymore but we were still implementing construction of the so-called down-stream work from the big dams that other donors - the UK, Sweden, etc. - had built. An American contractor, Zachary Dillingham, was engaged in construction of the system of canals and related facilities. Besides this activity, there were the Mahaweli sector support loans.

Q: You made dollars available?

CORREL: We made dollars available to reimburse the Sri Lankans for expenditures of an agreed nature they were carrying out in the Mahaweli area.

Q: What kind of activities are you talking about?

CORREL: Most of them had to do with resettlement activities, bringing people from other parts of Sri Lanka into the area of the Mahaweli project. And the Sri Lankans were constructing housing, schools, roads, and other things, quite considerable activities. The loan was designed to encourage this work. We hoped it would be done faster so that services and benefits for the newly-settled populace would be in place much more rapidly than if they had to wait for the Sri Lankans to generate that money from normal budgetary sources.

Q: What's your view of the Mahaweli project overall? Was it a good project?

CORREL: At the time, I thought that we were playing a very constructive role. I'm glad we didn't get involved in any of the very big construction projects.

Q: How would you describe our role and what we were trying to do?

CORREL: Our role was to make these huge foreign aid investments work more effectively at the people level by providing necessary support structures and services to the settlements. It was part of the Government's Accelerated Mahaweli Scheme. The British had agreed to do the Victoria Dam, Sweden did the Kotmale Dam, and Germany and Canada also built dams. Our activities provided the means for the people settling in the area to benefit from the big works. I think we were right with the concept and the type of support we offered. I had problems with how the program was implemented, but I thought we offered the potential for the Sri Lankans to achieve their economic development objectives. They set up a special government establishment for Mahaweli and exempted it from all kinds of government rules. A special Mahaweli Authority was headed by a prominent government leader who had been chairman of the ruling party. He was highly respected and carried plenty of authority. Moreover, there was a special Mahaweli Ministry, headed by one of the leading young politicians on the rise in Sri Lanka and who very definitely had presidential ambitions. In the local scheme of things, association with the Mahaweli program offered much political benefit.

Q: Was our part of the program working? Was it beginning to have an impact?

CORREL: It was, up to a point. As I mentioned previously, I found I was a strong believer in non-project assistance. I found that when I started getting immersed in Sri Lankan matters, especially as Director, and started having to look at the whole program, I thought there were some significant gaps in the way that the Mission had approached that sector support loan. I believe that we could have done a hell of a lot more. I think we could have been much more effective.

Q: What for example are you referring to?

CORREL: I'm referring to the system whereby we cleared money to be paid to the National Bank of Ceylon. It was a very cumbersome system for reimbursement. And even then, the reimbursement was on difficult and restricted terms, so that it wasn't easy for them to use. During the time I was out there, I worked to revise the system to make it simpler for them to draw down the amount of money and have an incentive to increase their local project activities. That was the object of the whole idea of sector support loans and we were not capitalizing on it as much as we should have.

Q: And this was reimbursement for a specific activity?

CORREL: Reimbursement for specific activities that they were financing with their own money. I mean, they would generate some money and pay for the housing, the schools, the loans, or whatever it was and then they would present the bills to us. Our Public Works Office would take a look at them and they would say, "Well, twenty-five percent isn't for the purposes of this loan." I mean, you expect that sort of thing. But, the work wasn't going very fast. Part of the reason the work wasn't going fast was because the Sri Lankans never saw reimbursements for what they submitted until very late and then they couldn't use it for some of the things they wanted to. In other words, we were tying them up on several levels. Then, I remember, there were some terms in connection with the Federal Reserve letter of credit that were much less favorable than if you had just made the payment to the bank.

I guess it was the way that my predecessor saw that loan as a not very desirable activity. This drove the Mission view of the loan. It was an activity that people preferred not to have. My approach, on the other hand, was that this was the kind of flexible thing that ought to enable us to do a great deal if only the Sri Lankans also understood that it is a valuable program tool that they could use to greater benefit. We weren't explaining it to them. I asked an economist in the Program Office to go to the National Bank and start working with them on trying to accelerate that whole process. Arriving in Colombo in May of 1984, just about the first thing I had to do after taking care of the kidnapped contractor was to write a letter telling the government that because they were overdue in submitting acceptable requests, we were not going to be able to release any more money under that sector support loan. I remember looking at my Deputy and saying, "How could we possibly have gotten into this kind of a bind?" So, I feel that we were not as effective as we might have been. After that, we started getting more acceptable requests and drawdowns. In broad general terms, we were contributing very significantly to the Mahaweli development project. But we had problems with our support to Mahaweli because the Sri Lankans were not paying enough attention to some important resettlement questions. They had to do a lot with health problems.

Q: Well, anything more on the Mahaweli project? How many Sri Lankans were affected by this project, roughly?

CORREL: Several million. The population of Sri Lanka was 15 1/2 million and for Mahaweli we're probably talking about somewhere between 2 and 2 1/2. I should add a couple of things on the Mahaweli project. I just said that one of the problems was with health. It turned out that some of what had been identified by the Sri Lankans as part of the Mahaweli resettlement area was very unhealthy due to malaria in particular. As I will mention later, we were also helping on nationwide control of malaria, and that was not a success. In my opinion, we had a disastrous project there and the Sri Lankans just were not paying enough attention to moving people into certain areas of Mahaweli that were very unhealthy. The other thing I want to mention is, I did get to meet a lot of people in Colombo. Among the people I met was the Cuban ambassador, who was an exceedingly attractive woman, probably in her 40s. We met at a dinner given by the Canadian High Commissioner. I met her again at other receptions. She introduced me to a couple of other people and I don't know whether there was a direct correlation or not, but at a reception sometime considerably after I first met her, I ended up talking to a fellow who turned out to be the Russian DCM. He told me that the Russians were contemplating getting involved in Mahaweli and did I have any comments or suggestions as to what might be an area for a project by them. I said I knew that the Sri Lankans still had several areas in which they were looking for donor coverage and that they might be worth looking at.

Q: Geographic areas?

CORREL: Yes. The ones I indicated to him I pretty much had identified as being the least desirable areas to work in anyway. I reported to Ambassador Spain, who had succeeded John Reed, that I had this conversation and was asked to write a cable back to Washington. It turned out that absolutely nobody, least of all the CIA in Colombo, had heard anything about this. The Russians did subsequently send some kind of an investigating team, so it wasn't just cocktail chatter. The idea of getting the Russians involved in some fiasco in Mahaweli seemed interesting. The other thing about Mahaweli was that I ran into fewer serious problems with the American contractor, the Zachary-Dillingham Company, than with the people who had the contract for the Southern Perimeter road in Lesotho. But, at one point their headquarters started pushing for expansion of the downstream work into other areas of Mahaweli. I was on my way back to the United States for a brief consultation and I said absolutely and positively no. We've gotten involved enough in Mahaweli and I would not support any expansion. When I came back here to Washington on TDY for various program matters, I was contacted at the Assistant Administrator's Office and told that there were insistent inquiries coming from the Hill. Would I go over and talk to them? I found myself confronted by two staff members who were very prominent in AID matters with the Foreign Relations and Foreign Operations Sub-Committees. Jim Bond was one. I spent about an hour and a half getting very severe pressure on why I wouldn't agree to an expansion of the project. I explained that first of all, we had sunk enough money into Mahaweli already, and moreover, the firm was experiencing interruptions getting their work done and the area they wanted to expand into was downright dangerous from the point of view of Tamil rebel activity. Under no circumstances would I countenance expansion of our efforts there. This took care of the matter, but it was a very interesting experience to me to what length people would push a construction project in order for a company to make some money.

Q: This was a construction project?

CORREL: Yes. It was continuing and expanding the downstream work.

Q: Irrigation systems?

CORREL: There was a lot of interest in Mahaweli. I got to be quite friendly with some of the key Sri Lankan people in the Mahaweli Ministry and Authority. The Minister himself was dynamic and not above using considerable demagoguery. The civil servants, the administrators, professional and technical people were always very cooperative and helpful, and we had an excellent working relationship. They were very frank about almost everything. I'm rather pleased to say that quite a few years after I retired, I ran into one of them in Eritrea. He had retired from the Sri Lankan government and become head of the World Food Program in Eritrea. We talked a little bit about Sri Lanka. He had always been one of the people who had been very straight and had, at times, given us a couple of good pointers that I know weren't easy for them to say politically.

Q: What other kind of projects did you have?

CORREL: We had a water project.

Q: What kind of water project?

CORREL: It was a water project in a number of smaller cities in Sri Lanka. Again, a project with a great deal of political push behind it. Our contact was someone in the Prime Minister's Office. In this instance, we had a bad American contractor; we had to do a great deal to get them up to snuff and we spent some time both redesigning the project and making the contractor perform adequately. Another significant project was a housing project. It was not so much because of the money in it, but again because of high political interests with which I was not very comfortable.

Q: A housing guarantee program?

CORREL: A housing guarantee program. That had been undertaken prior to my arrival, in the face of the Mission's opposition. It was being pushed by the Housing Office in AID/Washington. The Housing Office had its own regional representative stationed in Bangkok. In addition, there was a person assigned from that office to the Mission in Sri Lanka who was a very good, conscientious officer and who went to great lengths to report very meticulously on what was going on in the project and what the problems were. These included the Prime Minister's Office trying very hard to politicize that project more and more. The Prime Minister himself was basically pushing the program as a big part of his own populist program. Indeed, he took political credit for the U.N.'s decade of housing wherever he could. We had some extensive dealings with the people assigned by the Prime Minister to handle that project, and indeed we were able to engage the Prime Minister himself on some of our problems for a fair solution.

In Sri Lanka, there is a presidential form of government. In 1974-1976, J.R. Jayewardene was President, and he provided the general policy leadership. He also had, I think it was 68 different ministries, which meant that centralization was not one of that government's strong attributes. The Prime Minister, Ranasinghe Premadasa, represented a very important center of power but he could only do so much. His largest felt need was basically to get enough of a high political profile so that he would be able to be elected successor to President Jayewardene. He also was a strong Sinhalese nationalist. He was accused of complicity in many irregularities concerning strong-arm methods towards his opposition. He was a very controversial individual who had many detractors. I met him with one of the AID political appointees responsible for the Housing Office who came over to Sri Lanka. We had a delightful session with him during which we talked about housing projects and politics and things like that, as well as elephants. The Prime Minister had a real affection for elephants. He did subsequently succeed Jayewardene as President and was blown up by a suicide bomber. He was much disliked by the more well-to-do Sri Lankans, because of his caste. He was in a very, very difficult position and therefore he had to find a lot of ways politically to get the masses behind him. The housing project helped an awful lot.

Q: This was low cost housing or middle class housing?

CORREL: It was really designed for both, but mostly low cost housing was involved.

Q: Did the housing get constructed and occupied?

CORREL: Oh, yes. It wasn't bad either. I still remember some of my Sri Lankan friends going up in smoke on the subject of Premadasa, about what an awful fellow he was, dangerous and everything else. The worst thing about him, they said, was that he was from the caste that did the laundry for the cinnamon workers. It sounds funny, but in actual fact, it explains an awful lot about the chaotic political system and stratified social system in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka had all the trappings of democracy. In fact, at independence it had a working parliament and it had very fine numbers with regard to literacy, health, and things like that. These statistics became sort of empty shelves in a lot of ways, because of complacency and incompetence later on. In the case of politics, there was an increasing authoritarian flavor done in the name of the people. A lot of people here in Washington, and most certainly in international agencies, tended to take the description of the government and the statistics and things like that at face value, rather than check out actual conditions. In a situation like that, Premadasa saw himself as having to act almost like a warlord in many ways.

Q: You mentioned you had a small project in private sector development. What was it trying to do there?

CORREL: We were trying to help create sufficient expertise for Sri Lankan enterprises to be able to function effectively. Even after the end of the Socialist-dominated governments in Sri Lanka - after S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was assassinated and his wife, Sirimavo, became Prime Minister, there were many state enterprises and private enterprise was not encouraged. A legacy of colonialism also helped those socialist-oriented governments to rely on government enterprises. Our project was also to help with the privatization of some of these enterprises. The project made several of us a little uncomfortable. It seemed to be primarily a cash cow for the contractor, Coopers and Lybrand, to milk and we were not pleased with what was being done.

Q: Did it succeed in any privatization?

CORREL: I seemed to remember yes, that they did in some. I can't give you any examples. We also had the IESC, the International Executive Service Corps, which sent some excellent people to work with individual enterprises. This was well run by an excellent Sri Lankan manager, and which, I feel, accomplished as much as the other much more expensive project.

Q: Other projects of this program?

CORREL: One which may not have seemed important, but which I spent quite a bit of time on because it gave me a chance to really look at Sri Lanka as people lived, was the fund that we had for indigenous PVO's. We enforced a lower limit on individual grants. I had the benefit of a local employee who knew the agencies backwards and forwards. Although he personally was a very reserved individual, he was not at all shy about being very frank about the agencies and encouraging me to meet the people and see what their activities were. There we had a number of income generating and education-type activities that I thought were doing a hell of a good job for the little bit of money that were put into them.

Q: These were indigenous organizations?

CORREL: Every single one. We had no American PVO's associated with any of them.

Q: How large were the grants that we are talking about?

CORREL: I think probably the biggest we ever gave was the rupee equivalent of \$30-40,000 and the smallest would have been \$5,000. I think we probably had about 30 individual activities.

Q: And you had a project from which you could then make these allocations, is that it?

CORREL: Yes.

Q: What was it called?

CORREL: It was called PVO Co-Financing or something like that. The recipient organizations had to put up some of their own money and they generally were able to do that. These activities produced a fair amount of political mileage in some cases. One of the people I got to meet and was very impressed by was the District Minister for the District of Kurunegala. This was a very dynamic guy who was encouraging that project by local associations to bring some activities in improving horticulture production in his area. A District Minister is an individual of Cabinet level rank. He is sort of the parliamentary political boss of the District; he is an elected government official who has oversight responsibility in his District, as distinguished from the regular government administrative system, which was headed by the District Officer. He was a member of parliament, appointed to this position. This District Minister at one point told me that they wanted him to become a departmental Minister of something or other which would have really exposed him to violence and everything else, and that he was able to talk himself out of that job. Through him, I got to see quite a bit of how ordinary Sri Lankans out in the countryside lived, in an area where things ran pretty well, as distinguished from some other areas where things were not so good.

The project I am referring to was not particularly important in money terms, but it provided valuable insights. My predecessor had very little patience for things that she herself was not really interested in. She tended to think in terms of regular projects. She didn't like PVO's; she didn't like IESC or other things like that.

Anyway, one of the things that I inherited when I got to Sri Lanka was this PVO project, as well as an American PVO project in the Maldives. This was, I suppose, a regional development project run by a PVO. It was solely in the Maldives, which consist of 500-plus little islands, some of which are barely as big as this house. This project was on one atoll called Raa, a 13-hour boat ride from the capital city, Male. It consisted of a variety of miscellaneous activities. One element was having built and staffed a little hospital on one of the islands, and supplying some medicines and equipment. Another element involved providing some agricultural production assistance. It also included building sanitary home toilets and something about reducing the presence of bats. It was a catchall and was run by an organization called IHAP, International Human Assistance Programs, which you probably remember from Africa, also. The organization was run by a former Assistant Administrator for Asia. It was time to evaluate that project. The officer in my Mission who used at least to open the mail on the project, came in to see me and said that nobody was familiar with the project. My predecessor apparently never let him or anyone else travel anywhere in connection with it. He knew absolutely nothing about the project and didn't seem particularly interested either, but it was time to evaluate the project. I said, "Well, you've come to the right place," and I appointed myself to evaluate that project. My wife went with me, at our own expense. I found myself in the Maldives, an incredible place. The project technicians were a young couple. She was an American, he was Dutch. They had done a pretty good job out there on this potpourri of a project. They had to hire a dhoni, a typical Maldives fishing boat, to take us out there. It was a 13-hour trip and we spent four or five days looking at all the different activities. The genesis of the idea of the project was that these atolls were located far from the center and modern conveniences and approaches were largely unknown. If there was going to be any kind of development in the Maldives, you really had to have this kind of activity. I did take a close look at the activities and came to the conclusion that what they were doing was in and of itself okay. Quite honestly, it wasn't cost effective, but even more important, I was not able to discern the kind of commitment needed by the Maldives government to make that kind of thing work. My evaluation covered all that. There were proposals for expanding this project to other atolls and I just flatly said, no, I really didn't think that we could justify that. While that was not that easy a decision to make since people felt you ought to do something in the Maldives, it stuck. I must say it was one of the most fascinating trips of my life.

Q: Why were we in the Maldives at all?

CORREL: To plant our flag. Somewhere along the line an American Ambassador had been in the Maldives and we had been hit up for something. I suspect what also happened was that when the former Assistant Administrator for Asia had taken up the job with IHAP, he had taken a trip around, and somewhere along the line had gotten to the Maldives. Somebody had persuaded him that this was a worthwhile activity to consider, and he had managed to sell it to Washington. Nobody had taken an interest in it since then. It had been left to sort of develop. The Mission in Colombo had washed its hands of it and it would probably have continued if a little bureaucratic effort in Washington had been put behind it. More importantly, we were sending some Maldivian students to the American University in Beirut. Unfortunately, in the mid 80s, Beirut became a very unsafe place and we ended up not sending many people to Beirut, although we were sending some.

Q: Why did you conclude that it wasn't cost effective or wasn't worthwhile continuing?

CORREL: I didn't see where there was going to be any long-term effect from it. We weren't leaving anything much behind. The link that was missing was the kind of Maldivian support that would have ensured momentum and continuity. It was just a collection of activities with no prospect of sustainability. Things were okay while our people were there. But, you knew, whether you put in 50 thousand dollars or whether you put in a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, that at the end of that project, the result would be exactly the same than if you stopped now. In addition to that, I was very uncomfortable with the contractor, the PVO. They played around with the concept of co-financing. You recall, I'm sure, that in order to undertake projects with American PVOs, the PVOs also were required to enlist some resources. In this case, the resources that they invested often were phony. Because they could lay their hands on it, they would send a shipment of medicines to that hospital, and the medicines were all expired. I felt that for a US AID project, they had neither prospects for success nor the kind of characteristics where we could say comfortably that this was a project we ought to be associated with. I do not fault the two project managers at all. They were conscientious people trying to do what they were hired to do and do it as well as they could. In fact, I maintained a correspondence with them for many years after leaving Sri Lanka. Perhaps, under different circumstances and with a different agency, we could have put a project together. The Maldivians are an interesting situation anyway. At least from what I saw, they didn't seem to understand what the concept of development assistance was. Their approach was to get a project and that it was the donor's responsibility to make it work and they basically were to reap the benefits. That may be okay as long as they're ready to A) make sure that benefits accrue to productive people and that they are responsible for providing some of them; and B) that they contribute to the overall project, have a stake in it, and plan for phase-out and follow-on activity. This was definitely not the case in the Maldives.

Q: Well, in Sri Lanka , was there anything else that you wanted to cover?

CORREL: Well, it was a very difficult period. On and off, we had problems with some kind of terrorists out in Colombo or out in the field. I got around Sri Lanka quite a lot and saw activities and met many Sri Lankans in a lot of different positions and places. I had the feeling that a country that had a great deal going for it was in the process of disintegration. I think we had some good programs there, some that really didn't have a chance. Some probably shouldn't have been pushed in the first place. I must say I resisted several attempts by all kinds of people to come in with programs. I feel that we tried hard to concentrate both our attention and our assistance on key things and not become bogged down in a lot of tangential initiatives.

Q: What do you consider was most effective and had the most significant impact of what we were doing?

CORREL: I have to say it was Mahaweli. I think we could have done more and better for probably the same amount of money. I think on balance that made the biggest impact.

Q: Were we involved in any population programs?

CORREL: We had population activities, yes. I think they worked well. I don't think the Sri Lankans had any problems as far as population programs were concerned. But you remind me that I did not talk about our health project, our malaria project.

For as long as I was with AID, we had malaria projects in many parts of the world. There was some dispute about the nomenclature, whether they were control or eradication. But, I know there were several generations of the American foreign assistance effort that included malaria projects. We had them for pretty long periods, but somehow they would always peter out and then they would start up again. Sri Lanka was no exception to that. It seemed to me that a big problem with the whole concept of malaria eradication or control was that there was really only one legitimate objective, and that was to get the cooperating country or region to make it of sufficient priority to ensure continuous monitoring and continuous eradication or spraying and whatever else was needed. I never saw that factor in any project like that. In Sri Lanka, we spent money on this malaria control business with a ministry that among a good number of dubious ministries was easily the most feckless and irresponsibly led. Quite honestly, I had the feeling that we were pouring money down a rat hole. Of course, that is of great relevance to the comments I made before about sending people from relatively healthy areas of Sri Lanka into the malaria-infested areas that were part of Mahaweli.

Q: Do you remember what technique we were using for malaria control?

CORREL: I'm sure if you mention it I'll recognize it.

Q: DDT spraying and that sort?

CORREL: No, I think it was Malathion.

Q: Were we able to reduce the incidence of malaria during the time?

CORREL: On paper, yes, but I had the feeling that when things were coming to an end, everything would go back to the status quo ante. We had reports. We were dealing with a minister who couldn't care less, who wasn't interested, and who repeated again and again that Sri Lanka had the best health statistics. I know that we in the United States meant well in Sri Lanka. But in doing this project, I think we had the wrong approach worldwide. I think that the way the U.S. went about this campaign just was wrong for accomplishing the objectives of that project.

Q: Okay. Anything else on Sri Lanka that you want to mention?

CORREL: No, I think that covers my two years there. It was my last post before I retired. Again, I thought my mission had many very good people in it. I think I didn't have quite as good a mission as I had in Lesotho, but I had many really good people and really no great failures.

Q: What was the scale of the AID program in Sri Lanka?

CORREL: At one point we were as high as 42 to 45 million dollars. Then, toward the end of my stay there we started running into budget problems. As I recall, the level that was being talked about for the coming year was only about \$20 million, which left us in a difficult position.

Q: And most of this was for the Mahaweli project?

CORREL: By 1986, our Mahaweli new obligations were finished. It would have been for the other things that I mentioned, the water, agricultural planning and production, private enterprise development and things like that. I don't believe we had any new Mahaweli money at that point.

Q: Well, any other thoughts on this Sri Lanka situation; what you felt about the program?

CORREL: About Sri Lanka itself, I wish we'd had peaceful conditions to work in. I think that the Sri Lankans and we would have been able to deal much more effectively with each other if we hadn't had the insurgency hanging over our heads, and all the things that were becoming a real cancer in the Sri Lankan society and Sri Lankan government. The insurgency involved the Tamils of the North and the East. There was also a fair amount of discontent elsewhere. There had been trouble down South many years earlier which, I understand, had been put down with a great deal of brutality. This was by people who had a reputation of being very respectful of life and all that sort of thing. It is a country that has seen some very bad days and which doesn't appear to be able to surmount its troubles. The degree of incompetence in key places, like in that health ministry, is very worrisome. It's a shame, because it's a country that has an awful lot to offer and it is beautiful. And, when you deal with the people on the street and in many government buildings, you can really feel very gratified by your relationships with them. That extends all the way to ministers. Some of the people I recall from my time have left the country when they had the opportunity to do so. A lot of people are out of Sri Lanka now, but also quite a few of the acquaintances I made among ministers, including the Prime Minister, have been assassinated.

Q: Well, then you retired when?

CORREL: I retired on the 30th of June, 1986. I do have one other thing I want to just briefly mention about my stay in Sri Lanka. My wife and I lived in a house that had been found for us along a nice street. As Mission Director, I had one important perquisite, which was an armed guard who would stand in front of our front door with a long, old rusty rifle. Supposedly, that was my first line of security. Our embassy security officer came and took a look at the house and wrote a long report about all the shortcomings from a security point of view. However, he ended up saying that actually mine was the most secure house within the entire American community because we had this large dog, which was described as an awesome deterrent, and this became part of the official government report. I'm mentioning all of this because I had, through one of my Sri Lankan contacts, established a contact with the leader of the opposition, Anura Bandaranaike. He was the son of the assassinated Prime Minister Bandaranaike, and who was likely to be the next President if he could only win the election. In fact, my wife and I set up a luncheon between the new Ambassador, James Spain, and Anura when Spain first arrived in the country because nobody else at the embassy knew him. I read in the local paper that one of Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party members got up on the floor of the beautiful parliament and announced that number 30 Horton Place, our residence, was the headquarters of the Israeli interest section in Colombo. This wasn't designed to make life any easier for us since there was some anti-Israel agitation at the time when this interests section was agreed to between the two countries. We told Anura about it at lunch and he apologized all over the place and said he'd have it taken care of. So, we had that additional factor complicating our security situation.

Q: Well, very good. In your retirement since '86, have there been any assignments that stand out in your mind that is particularly interesting?

A letter to the Administrator - 1986

CORREL: I have undertaken some 30-odd assignments. Before we get to that, if it's all right with you, I'd like to mention another thing. The very last thing I did before finishing up 27 years with AID and its predecessor agency was to write a farewell letter to the AID Administrator, Peter McPherson. I wanted to mention one of the three things I asked McPherson to particularly keep in mind. That had to do with the health initiatives, like child survival or malaria control program. My point was that AID absolutely needed to look at administrative improvements, better planning, staff utilization and management, and alternate community-based services as an integral part of any program. That one couldn't look at the problem of sick or dying children without also looking at having an organization with the administrative capability that would work on such a program. I need to read this sentence, because I couldn't possibly rephrase it better. "No where else but in Sri Lanka is it more vividly demonstrated how dreadful health ministries can be and how many opportunities and resources are lost or dissipated without adequate attention to these non-medical factors." I mentioned this now because I became involved in a couple of consultancies dealing with AID-supported child survival activities that proved the point very dramatically.

Assignments after retiring - 1986

Q: What had led you to that conclusion?

CORREL: My experience with ministries of health in some of the countries, but in Sri Lanka in particular. They were usually the least competent of the ministries. In Sri Lanka it had to do with malaria; in other countries, certainly in Africa, it had to do with a whole gambit of health activities and child survival-type activities. One can have the best technical plans. Programs can bring in hydration materials by the wagonload. But, if there is no committed ministry, one that at least has a reasonably capable establishment, the programs are not going to be effective.

In the 30 or so assignments that I have worked on since I retired, a couple have involved health. Two I remember particularly well were in Mauritania in 1988 and in Guinea in 1989. In both places, I found a number of quite serious shortcomings on the AID side, to say nothing of problems attributable to the cooperating country. In Mauritania, we looked at a very small, centrally-funded project. AID had pushed it down the memory hole. The Mission wasn't paying any attention to the project at all. It had to do with combating childhood diarrhea. I was head of a three-person team. One member was a young French woman doctor, and the other one was an Information Specialist. The program was being run by an American contractor working with the Mauritanian Ministry of Health. When we got to Mauritania and took a look at how the different regions were running the program, the contrast was tremendous. In one region they were on top of the program. The supplies were well stored and accounted for; there also was good training for the personnel involved with the program. In the next province, it was an absolute disaster. Nothing was being done.

Q: How did you account for the difference?

CORREL: The health projects in the different provinces were run by people with different things on their mind. In the second province we visited, we saw the jeeps of the Ministry of Health carrying people around with their families. There was no leadership from the top; bad storage; no decent records; apparently no training programs or any accountability. It was different again in a town that we visited in Mauritania. In Boutlimite, the Mayor, who incidentally served as our host, personally assured himself that the program was being publicized, that people were being involved, that the materials were properly stored, and so forth. The clinic looked clean and well kept and made a good impression. The central ministry seemed to have a laid back approach: whatever they found was okay. They provided little leadership, if any.

In Guinea, we evaluated a child survival project in the big regional child survival program. Guinea was a participating country. I found out that out of Washington the project wasn't even being handled by a regular AID officer. It was being supervised, in a manner of speaking, by a temporary employee who had either a six month or a one year contract without any indication if that was going to be renewed or not. She was dealing with the CDC and anyone else, without being adequately supervised by anybody in the AID Africa Bureau or by the health hierarchy in AID. This, in my opinion, was a grievous fault. The CDC was sending large numbers of consultants to Guinea to get research done that had nothing to do with the project, but was being charged to it. I asked a simple question of a Guinean technician at project headquarters in Conakry: "Do you have a record of the CDC technicians who've come over here and what did they do?" When I saw what the record showed, I was pretty disgusted with the CDC role in this project. There were a very large number of research trips listed with little discernable relevance to the project. What really irked me was that I was the first person, whether from AID/Washington, the Guinea Mission, the Government of Guinea, or the contracted project manager, to ask to see the list of research projects. Further, my team found that one of the important things that we were mandating was some kind of cost sharing, namely that the people whose children were getting vaccinations would contribute a part of the cost. The mothers were required to buy a card for a hundred Guinea francs, maybe 20 cents U.S. It's a very nominal sum to us. But it meant something to the rural people. This money was paid to the local clinics together with local committees that were set up to provide oversight and collect that money. In Conakry, it had looked like there wasn't much going on at all on the project. But, when we got out to the provinces we found that invariably the local committees were keeping good records; mothers were coming with their children and the vaccination cards, and paid their hundred francs. There was good, conscientious accounting for the money and there was good treatment at the medical facility. They were not top-notch by any standards but by God, people were conscientiously keeping them up; people were getting trained; people were able to tell our Guinean associates what they were doing, and the ones that could speak French could tell us directly. We had the feeling that out in the countryside, despite all kinds of difficulties, this thing was working. We were very impressed.

Q: Why do you think it was working so well?

CORREL: People were committed to it. They believed it was helping their children and they were taking it seriously. So, what happened to the money? The money was required to be deposited in Conakry, in a bank account from which they couldn't get the money out. It was just completely lost to the program and given the on-going inflation, it just depreciated. Unfortunately, I have to say that even though friends of mine were in charge of the Mission, the Mission took no interest in that project whatsoever. It was just so sad to see.

This health field was one particular area of consultancies that I got involved in. It was interesting, but not for reasons that I particularly liked. Another area of involvement for me was looking at the inside of AID operations. Both in 1987 and 1988, I participated in two management assessments. One was in Zaire and the other one was of the two REDSO's in Abidjan and Nairobi. Both certainly were prodigious tasks. For the second one, under the leadership of a Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa, we split the team up. Everybody went to Abidjan initially, but another person and I ended up doing most of the work in Abidjan, while the others left early and did the job in Nairobi. Both in Zaire and in Abidjan, it was very interesting to see how the two establishments worked internally and also in Abidjan, how that REDSO was supporting its client Missions. In this latter regard, I found that in Abidjan, there were some very significant shortcomings. Certain people were being asked to travel constantly. This was an unrealistic requirement for people to be able to do a good job and provide effective service to the client mission and also maintain the morale of themselves and their families. Other people wouldn't travel at all when they ought to have been.

I've always considered Zaire to be a very difficult place to work in. Not only because of the Zaireans who, once you get out of Kinshasa, actually were pretty good to work with, but in the central government. This was not necessarily because they were negative, but because they literally had no power. And then also, the AID Mission always had the Embassy standing behind it with a large dagger. That hadn't changed much from 1977. In fact, I would say it was considerably worse in 1987 and 1988 than what I had run into when I had been on that TDY in 1977. The situation was so bad that the AID Mission Director had received orders from the Embassy that he was not allowed to talk to the World Bank representative without the Embassy Economic Officer being present. When we submitted our report about how the Mission leadership was being hassled by the Embassy, I am happy to say that Lois Richards, the DAA/Africa in 1987 (not the person who went on the Abidjan/Nairobi trip in 1988), actually contacted the State Department and made a big issue out of it, so that the matter got better. I must also confess that I probably met the saddest excuse for an American Ambassador on that trip to Zaire in 1987. I thought that the Embassy's attitude in dealing with AID was a disgrace.

However, besides this deplorable situation, there were some high points in what we found out in Zaire. I am glad that we were able to see some of the field work in which the Mission was engaged. We traveled through the bush in Bandundu province and saw instances of AID/Peace Corps collaboration, including some rural health and school facilities and a fishpond project. We ended up in the provincial capital, Kikwit. At the guesthouse there, I had a parrot stationed outside my bedroom door which served as an alarm clock, beginning to talk and screech at 6:30 am. I never had such a singular perquisite anywhere else, even as a Mission Director.

Q: What did you think about the management assessment process?

CORREL: I thought it was an excellent idea and much needed. I was rather intrigued by the fact that the assessments never received any kind of publicity or distribution once they got back to Washington, which I frankly don't think was very good.

Q: But, did you find that some of recommendations were acted on?

CORREL: Yes. On the one for Zaire in 1987, the item on Embassy-Mission relations I know was acted on. By contrast, I don't know that anything ever happened to the one in '88 for Abidjan and Nairobi. I had the feeling afterwards, talking to some of my fellow team members, that having the report might have just been for window dressing. I was disappointed that not more came out of it, because we certainly had plenty of recommendations that were worth considering. When I came back in '89 and '90 to some of client Missions of Abidjan, I found that they were not being well served by some of the officers coming out there. The officers weren't particularly good.

Another brace of consultancies that I engaged in, which maybe were my favorites over the entire period, were two trips to Guinea-Bissau in late 1989 and March 1990, to help the AID representative develop a new strategy. That required a lot of very intensive activity, examining projects, gathering information, consulting all around, and helping the AID representative, the only substantive person at post, put together the pieces of a new strategy. That was not only very challenging and interesting, but it was a lot of fun. I later incorporated some of my experiences in an article on Guinea-Bissau postal history that was published in 1997.

Q: What kind of strategy were you promoting?

CORREL: I should provide a little background before answering that question directly. The political party PAIGC that had fought for and achieved independence in both Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, was Marxist-oriented and the economy suffered badly. The party relinquished its monopoly on power sometime in the mid to late 1980s, and after elections, the government was somewhat more open. It decided to abandon its previous policies, but such basic concepts as commercial law, contractual relationships for establishing private ownership, and so forth did not exist. Many of the legal, constitutional, and governmental concepts that are generally considered basic did not exist.

In the circumstances, we recommended against keeping up the mishmash of projects all over the country that weren't going anywhere. We proposed a basic strategy of strengthening the capability of the government and the economy to function in a modern free-enterprise oriented world. We started by proposing activities designed to help accomplish that. We then added a couple of sector activities and that was the program.

Q: What sectors were you talking about?

CORREL: Agriculture and manpower development, which were the most critical in a country that really had very little. The proposed program ran into considerable trouble from the Bureau. I know that the AID representative of my time did not stay in Bissau. There was supposedly some kind of a mix up in the personnel system and she was transferred to make room for someone else. I honestly don't know what happened to the program after that. I gather some of the things we talked about at the time were adopted, but I don't know that they ever got anywhere. There also was some PL480 in Guinea Bissau, because the country was not capable of feeding itself at that time. I'm sure that's no better now.

Otherwise, I did some interesting work for a voluntary agency called VOCA, Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance, accompanied some of their program officers to a number of countries to look at opportunities for expanding their assistance program, not only to cooperatives but also other organizations operating at the grass roots level and to provide help to build agribusiness enterprises, often on a small scale. I visited Ghana, Cameroon, Uganda, Botswana, Malawi, Senegal, and the Philippines and really got out into the rural areas. I also did some internal management assessment work for VOCA, including putting together a revised pay system. In addition to the countries mentioned, we also made a try at activities in South Africa, which was beginning to dismantle its rigid apartheid structure. I regret to say that trip proved a disappointment. We had explained our mission and approach to the USAID in Pretoria, but when we returned with our proposals, they said they didn't want to do anything connected with agriculture. Considering what the South African agricultural situation and farm labor situation had been like, this was just like saying "I'd like to live in this place, but I don't want to breathe the air."

I would have liked to have more of these assignments, but I had 30 of them and enjoyed and valued them very much.

I do want to mention a couple more. In one instance, after seeing a little squib in the paper asking for volunteers, I had an association with the U.S. Baltic Foundation for a while. That was unpaid, except for one specific assignment I undertook for them. I helped develop some proposals for activities in the Baltic States and helped them prepare an application for an AID grant. I helped them to clean up their budget and trained them a bit in how to budget and what a budget consists of. Then, in January 1993, I got an urgent call from Asmara, Eritrea, where the AID representative wanted to put on a seminar for all the leading people at the primary and secondary level in the Eritrean government. This was to explain to the Eritreans what USAID was, how it did its work, what kind of resources the United States had, and how possibly U.S. could be helpful. Eritrea had won its freedom from Ethiopia and had organized a government which received international recognition shortly thereafter.

Q: This was the beginning of the Eritrean Program, wasn't it?

CORREL: It was, more or less. We had a few miscellaneous activities in country, but were only then beginning to develop a program.

Q: Who were you meeting with? Who was in the seminar?

CORREL: In the seminar was every administrator, at Secretary rank, in the Eritrean government connected with economic things, running the gambit from civil aviation to agriculture and finance, as well as the people who were in charge of integrating the freedom fighters into the civil economy.

Q: What was their reaction to what you were talking about?

CORREL: There was considerable interest and quite a few questions.

Q: Any particular issue that they had?

CORREL: No. It was mostly to get clarification and to understand what some of the things were. It was too early for questions like conditionality and program issues to concern them. We did not discuss topics such as these, which I understand subsequently caused some disagreements between the government and USAID. As a result of that trip, I became involved in a couple of sidelines. First of all, the independence referendum was just coming up and I was invited by the Eritrean Mission here to be one of the monitors of the vote in Washington. Besides holding the referendum in Eritrea itself, people from Eritrea could vote at several locations in North America, Europe, and elsewhere in Africa. People who had fled Eritrea could establish their credentials and vote. In addition, while still in Asmara, I was introduced to the lady who was the Secretary of the Postal Service and I ended up writing my first article of a philatelic nature on the postal and philatelic situations in Eritrea emerging from 30 years of warfare and Ethiopian domination. I write quite a few such articles now with regard to these countries. I'm a stamp collector and postal historian. As I mentioned, I've been able to turn some of my old AID experience, both when I was in the agency and as an independent consultant since I retired, into nice stories that I get paid a little for.

Concluding observations

Q: Good. Some general observations about Foreign Assistance and your role? You may want to add to this later when you've had more time to think about it. But, what stands out in your mind from your many years of experience? What are some of the key lessons in trying to conduct Foreign Assistance programs and their work in international development? What have you learned that one needs to understand in trying to carry out these kinds of programs?

CORREL: Well, I think probably the thing that impressed me the most is that over the years that I worked in Foreign Assistance we had so many cases of new initiatives. Not that I had any problem with new initiatives, but somehow the rest of the scene tended to wither away from the point of view of attention. To me, there's no such thing as a new initiative in a vacuum. One of the most important things that I feel I learned from my association with this kind of work was, that you've got to keep all the balls in the air and avoid concentrating only on new initiatives.

In the countries where I was Mission Director, I particularly liked to get out of the office, getting out into markets and the countryside, meeting and observing people, often very humble people, and actually seeing what people were trying to do and relating that to our activities. I'm very happy that I had the opportunity to do that ever since my first assignment in Korea. Admittedly, it was very different in Korea than later in places like Nepal, Yemen, Lesotho, or Sri Lanka.

I don't like programs that are all over the map. I believe concentration is important and I believe we should pick a limited number of activities, staff and finance them properly, and provide adequate monitoring. Dedicated host country support is a must; if we can't get it, we're wasting our time, whatever alibi we manufacture to convince ourselves otherwise. On the margin, a little something like a PVO activity, especially if it develops local organizations and capabilities, is most desirable.

There are very important questions for us to address that don't come up as a new initiative. We need to understand and address why it is that in many countries the worst of the civil servants and the least effectual politicians end up in the health ministry. That never is featured as a new initiative. However, it is a very basic topic if we ever hope to do something effective for the health of children.

I know things have changed over the years, but I thought that our reluctance to get involved in more non-project assistance was unfortunate. I felt that non-project aid in Korea was accomplishing a lot, both what it did for the country's economy and also what we ourselves learned in assuring that the commodities or funds were being used as agreed and for sensible purposes. I wish we had programs like that in the ex-Soviet Union instead of the many exorbitantly priced consultancies that were marginal or useless in many cases.

I also believe that a key need for a successful aid agency is top-down concern for and involvement in staff development; not just for morale reasons, but thoughtful, in-depth approaches. The image that individuals have of their role in the work and their vision where they are going and getting an understanding response to that from supervisors is of critical importance to a well-functioning outfit. I certainly felt that way and it was confirmed for me in all the places in AID where I worked. So many of the people I met believed that they were accomplishing things despite, rather than on account of, the outfit they worked for. I find that kind of outlook very unfortunate. I took the responsibility of thoughtful personnel evaluations very seriously throughout my career. Unlike some others, I actually welcomed working on personnel evaluation panels. I thought such service was among the most important things I could do.

I realize this is a very old saw, but I can't underline enough the need for coordination with just about anybody. That doesn't mean waiting for them to tell you it's okay to do things, but going out and establishing a kind of relationship that makes people want to get in touch with you and say, I see you're about to do this, let me tell you about what happened to us, or vice versa, can you help us with this particular dilemma? The coordination element is something that a lot of words have been spent on. When you really work at it, it really produces some amazing results.

Q: Do you think it's something that people give much priority to?

CORREL: That all depends. I think a lot of people couldn't care less. They go to a meeting, give some lip service, and that's it. Coordination to me is having every one of the people working in a program know who their counterparts are, and I don't mean in the government only, but all over the place, including the other donors and people on the other scene. Some of these can provide very valuable insights. I don't think there's a radical difference to be talking to the Cuban Ambassador about restoration in historic Havana on the one hand and finding a Sri Lankan, Yemeni, or Frenchman and showing an interest in that person's work, even if it doesn't appear to be directly in your line. It is remarkable how something will come up that has a work implication. Not that I would ask the Cuban Ambassador for her advice on how to run my programs, but she might share an experience from a field trip that's worth knowing about. One's work can also benefit from the casual and social side of being on the spot where the work takes place. I prefer that to an AID/W office, reading the cable traffic or spending hours at meetings or on the telephone.

Personal contacts are absolutely invaluable. Sometimes you just don't manage to do things through the usual channels. In Lesotho, we had the problem with the South African border post. Some of our people would run up against the color bar. This could pose difficulties, especially when we had medical or other emergency reasons for crossing the border, or when we had important program-related things to get done on the South African side and the Embassy could not help. At the Embassy, we were told that the situation wasn't amenable to improvement because the South African border post commander was "such a jerk." We at the mission quietly invited the commander, a police captain, to come see what we were doing. We showed them our mission building and gave him a little briefing in my office about our program and the people who worked on it. Afterwards, we took him to my home for lunch. We told him that we had some contractors who had trouble getting across the bridge on occasion. And he replied that we should call him any time at all and he would ensure free access in and out of South Africa. Nobody else had such an arrangement, I believe. I thought that was a nice accomplishment and it really made life easier for the non-white contractors and their families.

I also took seriously the concerns of the local employees. In Sri Lanka, I contracted for a consultant to come over and beat the Embassy to a study of living costs, etc. We presented the results to the Embassy just as they were getting ready to make adjustments in their local salaries. We were so much better prepared than they were that we were able to get significant changes made in the salary adjustment recommendations. I also tried to get AID/W to fight to get relief for FSNs from the Act of Congress that removed the floor from their pensions. That had become law apparently without any real State objection.

Q: You mentioned that some projects worked and some didn't. Was there anything that stood out in your experience that would be a common factor explaining why they worked or didn't work?

CORREL: Well, I think that one common factor is the failure to be fully familiar with conditions under which the project is supposed to operate. Tending to make assumptions that are not accurate has an awful lot to do with it.

Q: Like what?

CORREL: Well, I keep thinking of the design of the Southern Perimeter Road. I think that one thing one has to remember always is the old question of qui bono, who benefits, and the question of who are the affected people, is something you couldn't possibly pay enough attention to. I personally believe that if the United States is going to have an overseas AID program, we should have capable people in the field and those capable people should call on whatever they can find to help them get the right information, both in planning a project and implementing it. I feel that very often that wasn't done. I think that some projects didn't work because they operated from faulty premises. They were done in the vacuum. New initiative projects were very desirable politically, but a lot of them came about because people felt that the name of the game was to generate new activities and obligate money. Once that was done, not enough attention was paid to the context in which these projects were to operate.

Q: Well, that turns to another question, looking at the foreign assistance over the time that you were associated with it. Do you think it's been effective? Has it made a difference?

CORREL: I think the assistance has made quite a lot of impact in many places. I never served there, but certainly I think India is a good country to cite as an example of where foreign assistance made a big difference. Concerning countries in which I've worked, I feel confident that the kind of activities taking place that we helped fuel with our non-project assistance in Korea did make a big difference. That was not the case in Vietnam, but for very different reasons. I think in Vietnam we were suffering from a false plan and our reluctance to admit that was very politically driven.

I think that for Africa it's a very difficult question to answer. I was associated with the Africa Bureau over spread out periods and some things that looked awfully good in 1964 to 1968 looked more dubious later on. Some of our big programs, like Sudan and Somalia, probably are hard to even find, given the fate of those countries. In a place like Liberia, I guess some of our activities worked reasonably well until the whole country became a shambles. Certainly something like the Trans-Cameroon Railway, which we helped finance, has made a big difference in that country. How did we do in Lesotho and the other Southern African countries? I'd like to think it made a difference. I wish I could evaluate the impact in those countries myself today. I think in many cases throughout Africa, we did make a difference. Today, we meet some of the people from all over who were trained under our programs and who are running programs in a number of these countries quite well. Unfortunately, the failures tend to get most of the attention. A lot of the things, big and little, that have worked haven't gotten that sort of attention. I personally feel that the foreign aid effort has been worthwhile and I'm sorry to see that it has always been questioned so much on the basis of some of the lemons. And, when perhaps the questions should have been, how did you go about doing this and how can it be done better in the future?

Q: How would you characterize AID as an agency in international development?

CORREL: I always used to say that AID had its share of faults and then some. I keep looking at other agencies including some of the ones that AID, in my day, tried so hard to imitate, like the World Bank. I feel that as an agency, at least during the time I was in it and was associated with it and could comment in an informed way, AID was pretty good compared to them. I think that AID either had fewer charlatans in the business or knew how to control or neutralize them most of the time, which I don't think other agencies, including all the very highly respected ones, can say. I feel that the development business is prone to an unusually large number of charlatans. I've run into some terrible things, including from some of my fellow Americans in aid work. But, somehow in AID, common sense tended to prevail a little more often than in the other organizations.

Q: Did you feel it was a pioneer in many fields?

CORREL: I think it did some pioneering work. Certainly, it picked up on things that maybe took a little long, before they were recognized as problems. I think that especially in health, AID got involved in things ahead of others. I myself, I guess, to some extent, helped them along with AIDS, because when I went to Zaire in 1987 on that management assessment, I ran into a doctor with the AID program who started telling me about the terrific impact of HIV/AIDS there. I wrote a letter back to the DAA who was effectively running the Africa Program at the time, and I know that after that AID started getting involved in HIV/AIDS programs, and I think they were ahead of others. Certainly, when I think of AID being an innovator, I think of health. I wish they'd also been an innovator in health administration, which of course I criticized quite strongly. Conceptually, I think that we were innovative in looking at things on a program basis, instead of just on an individual activity basis. I don't know that any other country or most donor organizations did that to any great degree.

Q: How would you size up your own career?

CORREL: Well, again I maybe ought to quote from the letter that I sent McPherson on my last day in the agency.

Q: Do you want to attach that to the interview?

CORREL: Yes, I do. I certainly had a career with some great times and some pretty awful times. I tried to make the most of each job I had and not constantly covet the next step upward. In positions of responsibility, I wanted to be part of an effective team and make a boss or an ambassador feel that we wanted to make him or her look good. My strategy was to get there "fustest with the mostest," convince people that my office did reliable work and knew what it was talking about. That latter could be dangerous at times, especially in the Vietnam days.

My personnel history was mixed, to say the least. My career stalled badly for several years in the 1970s and I was looking for a departure from AID as the mess in the Near East Asia Bureau continued. The saving grace was that my reputation was good enough that I wasn't stuck in the same position endlessly and could dodge a bad supervisor or fight assignments that I thought unfair. My luck changed dramatically once I became associated with the DSP and what came after.

I like to remember the good times and as far as the bad times are concerned, they are now ancient history. I often recall people I worked with under sometimes very trying and challenging circumstances. I spoke about Carroll Hinman and Mike Adler earlier; they were the people I admired most in all the time I worked for AID and I honor their memory still today. I made some other, very close personal friends. I remember my mission in Lesotho with special affection. One of my proudest moments was to take a telephone call from Maseru at my hotel in Johannesburg on Thanksgiving Day 1981 to hear the news that all five of the people in that little mission I had recommended for promotion had been promoted. There were so many other good times and fine people, some of whom have stayed in touch, that I can look back on my career in international development with much satisfaction.

Q: Would you recommend to some young man or woman who's looking for a career to have a career in international development?

CORREL: In principle yes, without a doubt. As far as what opportunities there are, I don't know that I can help advise that person right now. I really have very little to do with AID nowadays. So, I don't know what they're like and I have to confess that from what I've heard from people who are still on the inside, things are not particularly happy and that AID in the years since I served with them, hasn't been that happy of a place to work. I certainly have seen some examples of leadership to make me glad that I haven't been around. But, you know, that's a very subjective reasoning.

One thing is, that much of the time I worked for AID, I always had the feeling that even when there were things I didn't like and I thought wrong, there was a premium on doing the right thing and that somehow things tended to get better. That if you looked at the curve, it was going up. Unfortunately, it took a distinct drop as AID became gripped by the Vietnam crisis. I thought that was a fateful period for AID. The organization was hurt by it and was slow to recover. But, even that to the contrary, I always had the feeling that people were dedicated to improvement and individuals could be making contributions to improvement. I must say that according to some of the things I hear nowadays, I don't have that feeling now and I think I would be very unhappy in AID today. If I had still been there, I probably would have been selected out by now.

Q: Any last few comments or will you end it there?

CORREL: I think that I'll end it there. Thank you for the opportunity to talk about all these things and participate in the project.

Q: Sure. Well, it's been an interesting and enjoyable interview. Thank you very much.

CORREL: You're welcome.

End of interview