

Foreign Assistance Series

ROY STACEY

Interviewed by W. Haven North

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[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Stacey.]

Q: Today is March 26, 1999, and the interview is with Roy Stacey. Let's start off today covering a bit about where you grew up, your early years, your education and bring out anything that suggests why you got into international affairs and development rather than something else.

STACEY: I had a rather idyllic childhood running around the beaches of Hawaii, and growing up really as a minority, as we were called in those days. There weren't too many of us who were real mainlanders in the pre-war period in Hawaii. Later I finished my education in California for high school and my undergraduate work. During the time that I was at the University of California, I got involved in something called Project India, which was a competitive student program that sent out fourteen American students in two teams of seven each to India to do a summer work program with Indian students. That was my Junior year in my undergraduate program, and up until that time I had been heading towards an ultimate degree in law with a political science major. But this trip to India in the summer of 1960 was really an eye opener, and really so changed the directions that I was going in.

Q: What were you doing in India?

STACEY: It was a program that had been devised by the University of California, at UCLA. It was really kind of a precursor to the Peace Corps as a matter of fact. When the Peace Corps was formed later in the early sixties, it adopted a lot of the training methods of Project India. What we really did was work under very difficult conditions with Indian students in urban slums and rural areas building clinics. Very much of self-ed program, going around visiting Indian colleges, answering questions about the United States. It was both good will and there were some very concrete things we tried to do in terms of self-ed.

Q: Was that related to a particular course at the university?

STACEY: No, it had nothing to do with a course. It was a program that was sponsored by all of the religious groups on campus. It was an ecumenical program. There were hundreds of students that applied every year, and only fourteen were selected. Those fourteen were selected from a larger pool of about fifty, who went up into the mountains and went through a real tough training program. You had to sleep on the ground and eat dirty food. It was really the kind of training that Peace Corps went through. They love it. Anyway, this changed my directions toward wanting a career in development.

Q: I see. Your major was Political Science?

STACEY: Major was Political Science with an emphasis on China. My language was Mandarin. I thought I was going to be among the first wave of Foreign Services Officers going to China. Little did I know that AID would only have a post to offer me in Mogadishu, Somalia, and I never did serve in Asia, but nonetheless, that was the major at the time.

Q: But you had the idea of joining the Foreign Service?

STACEY: That's correct, yes.

Q: Was that AID?

STACEY: No, that was Foreign Service. I got interested in AID later on through a senior AID official that I met, a man by the name of Seymour Peyser, who was the second man in AID's private sector office back in those days. After I came to Washington, DC in 1961-62. I came for a Master's program at George Washington, I met Sy Peyser who taught me all about the Junior Officer Training Program. After I got my Masters, I applied for the JOT Program.

Q: Where did you go for your Masters?

STACEY: I went to George Washington, and got a Masters in Public Administration.

Q: Did it have any international character to it or was it strictly Public Administration?

STACEY: No, it was strictly a degree in Public Administration. I later, thanks to AID, had a very good year and a half program at the Fletcher School. That was after my first tour overseas. AID had a contract with the Fletcher School in those days on popular participation and development, the old Carter-Lang program, so that enabled me to get some additional work on International Economics and Development early in my career.

Q: So you got your Masters Degree and...

STACEY: I actually got two Masters. I got another one at Fletcher, thanks to AID, but I didn't go on and complete the Doctorate.

Q: I see. So how did you get into AID?

STACEY: I applied to the Junior Officer Training Program. I went through written and panel exams, and I was one of seventeen selected in 1963 for the JOT program, which preceded the IDI Program. It was called the JOT program. As I recall I was the only one among the seventeen that didn't have a Doctorate, so I just got in under the wire.

Q: What year was that?

STACEY: That was 1963.

Q: And what was your first assignment?

STACEY: My first assignment was to the Somalia desk, because I had been slated to go to Mogadishu for my first assignment with AID. So I had a year on the Somali desk and then went over to Mogadishu from 1965-67.

Q: Did you have an orientation program?

STACEY: Yes, there was an orientation program. I worked in different parts of the African Bureau, aside from the Somali desk. I went to DP (Development Program Office) and worked for awhile; I worked in different parts of the African Bureau.

Q: What was your impression of the agency at that time?

STACEY: This was right at the beginning, and I was young and naive. While I was doing my graduate degree at George Washington, I had worked for a year in the Senate, for Senator Edward Long of Missouri. It certainly was long enough to convince me that I really didn't want to be part of the Legislative branch. I really found a lot of things that shocked me in the Senate, in terms of the inattention to detail or real issues. There was a great deal of self-interest in the Senator's office that really rubbed me wrong. So it was really very good when I had this opportunity to go to work with AID.

Q: After your year on the Somali desk, what happened?

STACEY: After the Somali desk, I went out to Mogadishu as the Assistant Program Officer.

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

STACEY: Ed Hogan was the Program Officer and Mabel Warnicki was the Deputy Program Officer and I was the Assistant Program Officer. The situation in Somalia in those days was very much one of Cold War politics. The single largest program was the Public Safety Program. We had eight Public Safety advisors there. We had a deep relationship with the Somali police.

Q: This was the largest program?

STACEY: Yes, and the Soviet Union had a very strong relationship with the Somali army, so the whole program there was very much oriented towards a sort of competitive advantage over our covert adversaries. There were perceptions that this Horn of Africa was a strategic interest for the U.S., given its geographic proximity to the Middle East.

Q: What were we doing in the police program?

STACEY: Teaching the Somali police to act as a counterbalance to the Somali army. That was the single largest program along with Kismayo Port, which was a port we were building in the south of the country, ostensibly for banana exports, to stimulate development of the inter-river region down there between the Juba and the Shebelle Rivers. In fact in looking through the files, it was clear that the port was undertaken for AID for some eventual strategic advantage that people in the Foreign Service establishment saw that Somalia might play in the Cold War.

Q: Did you work with the Somali's?

STACEY: Yes, we worked quite closely with the Somali's. I think that I had perhaps the most interesting project of the time, which was the project that I really got to manage, since I was the junior person in the mission, which was a rural school construction project that we were doing jointly with the Peace Corps. According to information that I had, it was one of the first joint AID/Peace Corps programs, because this was very early in the Peace Corp's existence.

Q: They usually didn't want to cooperate with AID in those days.

STACEY: That's right. There was a very strong injunction against it. What happened is they sent a couple of Peace Corp volunteers who were out there and had a little bit of background in architecture and had designed a very inexpensive schoolhouse, that could be constructed largely out of local materials, but it did require the importation of your roofing materials, window frames, cement, some paint. But I think the input content was maybe thirty percent. Local labor content was maybe fifty percent and then there was another twenty percent local costs. So we had worked out a program where the Peace Corps would deal with designs, and AID would import pickup trucks, cement mixers that we would hook up on the back of pickup trucks, the cement and the imported materials. The Peace Corp. volunteers along with local villagers were supervising the self-help and the construction, so AID's role was largely the importation and signing off on the completed building. We built over 570 schoolhouses in two years.

Q: Five hundred? What's happened to them? Were they able to staff them?

STACEY: Yes, they were able to staff them and were able to build furniture and get the furniture out there, but to my knowledge most of them were destroyed during the war. As civil disorder spread in Somalia, anything that was an official building usually became a target of various groups. According to the information I have, most of the schools have been destroyed.

Q: Fascinating. I hadn't heard about that project. Was there any other project of note in your experience there?

STACEY: Yes. We had a major agricultural research institution in Baidoa that did a lot of work on improved varieties of sorghum and millet. It was one of the early breeding stations. I think it was Kansas State University that was implementing that project. While I don't have the proof of it, I'm sure that some of that research is today is being used in Somalia, because they're still largely sorghum producers in terms of agriculture. The other major project was a teacher training institute at Afgoi which was run by Eastern Michigan University. We trained a large number of Somali teachers. I think this institute was converted into other uses after the CFIA came to power. I think our single biggest failure that I can remember, aside from Kismayo Port, which had major problems. We had improper supervision on the construction of the port. This was supposed to have been done by the U.S. Corp of Engineers, but the Corp of Engineers wasn't really watching things that closely and neither was the AID engineer and as a result there was a lot of salt that got mixed into the cement. A few years down the road the port began to disintegrate, so AID later had to go in there and make costly repairs to this port. So to this day Kismayo Port is used very little.

Q: It wasn't used very much in those days?

STACEY: It wasn't used very much. They had gotten one banana boat a month, maybe two. It was largely for the export of bananas and grapefruit, which were being produced by Italian ex-patriots on large scale plantations. It was never really intended to benefit small farmers or ordinary Somalis. So that was certainly a failure. I can't imagine how or why we got into that port in the first place except for the reason I gave you earlier. There was also the famous Somali-American Fishing Company, SAFCO, which was a fish freezing plant that was built way up north on the Somali coast in a town called Alula. Pretty much at the end of the world out there. But SAFCO had been built largely on the recommendations of an American fisheries expert who had been in Somalia about seven years when I arrived. The guy's name was Scotty Napir. Scotty had written up great stories about the increased catches of fish that the Somali fishermen were recording, tuna, and all sorts of large fish. Based largely on the "fish" stories of this expert, the Somali's formed their own fishing company, the Somali Fishing Company. Then the Somali Fishing Company approached AID for a joint loan. AID found a company in Massachusetts, Quincy Market and Cold Storage, which is now bankrupt- no longer in existence- and a joint project for SAFCO was done. After this fish plant was completed on this coast up in Alula, they started fishing and lo and behold, people discovered that there weren't a lot of fish around. Not the kinds they wanted at least. Further research apparently showed there had never been a large number of fish in those waters. Eventually the plant went bankrupt and was sold to Kuwaiti interests. I don't know if it's still in operation, but that project was a failure.

Q: We hadn't done an independent feasibility study I guess.

STACEY: No, the company did an independent feasibility study, but I have reason to believe that there were other interests in this project. There were certain parties in the U.S. government who wanted an observation post up on the north coast of Somalia in those days when that was a critical lifeline for all of the oil supplies going in.

Q: Were the Soviets there at the time and did you have contact with them at all?

STACEY: The Soviets were there and no, we didn't have much contact with them at all. They were building a big air base up in the north of Somalia. There was a real tension between the different communities in those days. The only importance of Somalia was its geography. There's really nothing there in terms of resources. This desolate place of less than two million people had become such a competition ground for the Cold War.

Q: It was really the front lines.

STACEY: Yes, and this was really surprising to me as a young AID officer, because I'd gone out there to do development and here was this major public safety program. It was ironic later on when the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Somalia, Muhammad Egal, was overthrown, the President of the country, who was more of a figurehead, was assassinated. It was ironic that the man, who pulled the trigger on this assassination had been trained by the USA Public Safety Program. He learned how to shoot a gun at our pistol range here in Washington, DC, and apparently he learned to shoot straight. It was ironic that the end of fledgling democracy in Somalia came from one of our trained public safety people.

Q: Was this a clan feud?

STACEY: Yes, largely a clan feud. In the days when we were there, Somali was an unwritten language still. All of our official work was done in Italian. We understood very, very little about these people, their clans, their social interrelationships, their feuds.

Q: Somalia was then viewed as a homogeneous country that didn't have all these complex tribal issues and therefore it was very promising, had a common language, etc. We missed something.

STACEY: That's right. It shows how we thought that because there was a common language and a common religion, that this was a homogeneous country. But when you looked below the surface, it was much more fractious than that.

Q: How did you find working with the Somalis?

STACEY: At the time I found them quite interesting. I was struck by, in the midst of all their poverty, how proud they were. Matter of fact, they used to tell me that I had all these problems and worries of having come from the developed world. I had to worry about nuclear accidents; I had to worry about pollution and all kinds of things and I really couldn't go out like they could for two or three months at a time with their camels, sleep under the stars and drink camel's milk. I just couldn't appreciate this higher form of life that they had. So we had some wonderful discussions.

Q: I'm sure you did. Were there some who were sufficiently educated in English that you could communicate with?

Stacey: Oh, yes. You had a veneer of highly educated Somalis, some of whom had studied in the States. You had another group who had gotten their education in Italy. You know, under the Italian system even if you got a high school degree in those days you could call yourself a "doctore." So you had a lot of "doctores" in different positions. You could begin to see the differences between the kind of education they had in Italy, and some of the Somalis who had a U.S. education. We invested a great deal in the human resources in that country in those days. The number of participants who were trained was substantial. Who knows where those people are. I doubt that very few of them are still in the country. I suspect most of them with any kind of an advanced education had to leave the country in order to survive.

Q: Did you have a sense of the Cold War going on?

STACEY: We had a sense of it only in the sense that it was clear that the Public Safety program, our work with the police, had a very, very high priority. It was also clear in some of the areas of the country where we were restricted from going to because there was Soviet military presence. I went off on a safari one day with one of my colleagues and we accidentally wandered into one of the areas where there were some Russian tanks, Somalis were being trained on Russian tanks. We barely escaped with our lives. They stopped us and stripped us and made us lay down on the ground in the hot sun.

Q: These were the Russians?

STACEY: No, these were the Somalis. They accused us of being spies, because we had binoculars, we had cameras. That's what you normally take on safari, so they said we were spies. We were getting pretty badly sunburned lying out there in the sun as I recall, and fortunately a Somali officer came along who had been trained at Sandhurst. We convinced him that we were innocent and he told us to get the heck out of there. We were most happy to do so.

Q: How did you find the conditions in the country? You traveled around in it quite a bit I guess.

STACEY: You had this contrast of what we would call extreme poverty, and yet in those days Somalia was at peace. Those who were practicing pastoralism had a relatively consistent source of food and they had their herds, and they had their grazing patterns, which were uninterrupted. Those who were cultivating the river valley there was water, and they could cultivate. Education was needed and healthcare was needed, but again it looked promising. It looked like there were some opportunities for some slow but not spectacular growth. What we didn't understand was the depth of the political problems, which later resulted in Said Bari coming to power. As you recall this was after I had left there. We continued (the U.S.) to support Said Bari again for reasons of Cold War strategic location. During the time that Said Bari was in power, the civil society was sort of systematically destroyed. Farmers cooperatives, herders groups, things like that which existed - the kinds of elements of social interaction that can absorb conflict- were systematically destroyed by Said Bari.

Q: What were his motives, power and control?

STACEY: Power. Of course, when Said Bari was finally overthrown, the result was now a country that split into many different pieces with the so called war lords and so on. It really has reverted to a government structure that is almost medieval right now. It's very sad.

Q: Anything else on Somalia?

STACEY: No, that's about all of it that I can think of right now.

Q: That's interesting. How long were you there?

STACEY: I was there until 1967.

Q: You were there quite a while I guess.

STACEY: Yes, 1965-1967. I remember I left on the day that the Arab-Israeli War started in 1967. I did a little bit of short-term work then with the East African community office which was in Nairobi. I do recall that this was about the time that the Korry report was published, which had as an intention to limit all bi-lateral programs to ten in all of Africa. So it appeared that Somalia would not be one of those 10 countries at that point, and we wanted to put greater emphasis on what we could achieve through the East African community and through the East Africa regional program.

Q: Part of the Korry report was to emphasize regional programs?

STACEY: Right. To emphasize regional. I do think there that looking back I don't have a lot of observations on the program with the East Africa community, but I think it was a missed opportunity. Our approach to the East Africa community was very technical. We were doing things with seed sterilization and all kinds of things with livestock and veterinary control. It assumed that the political consensus on the institutions was there. The political consensus wasn't there. Our diplomats and our ambassadors had no major political interest in the East African community, so it seemed like our whole approach to it was technical. We didn't have a political strategy. If we had a political strategy we would have recognized that one of the things that has enabled Europe to get to progress has been the compensatory mechanisms which made sure that poorer countries like Portugal and Greece would come along with the rest. Of course that is what was missing in the East African community, with most of the growth and economic activity going to Kenya. If we had more of a political approach and more of a political strategy, I think that maybe we could have preserved more of that regional program in that period. It looked like such a wonderful opportunity at the time.

Q: But your work was mostly with the technical?

STACEY: Yes, I was really doing program work. This was just a short-term assignment before I came back to Washington in 1968.

Q: What position did you come back to?

STACEY: I came back onto the Uganda desk. I was Uganda desk officer then and I was working with Will Muller on the Uganda program. Again, Uganda seemed like such a glorious opportunity. This was the pre-Idi Amin period of time, and it was one of those countries where anything would grow. They used to say you could stick a pencil in the ground in Uganda and it will sprout. So I worked as the Ugandan desk officer for a year and then was offered this opportunity to go for mid-tour training to the Fletcher School on Participation and Development. I went up to Fletcher from 1969-1970.

Q: It's interesting that early on in your career that you were given a year off.

STACEY: Yes, a total surprise. I was sitting in my office one day and I got a call from Princeton Lyman, who was in PPC in those days. Princeton said "We have a group going up to Fletcher and we've got one more slot. I know you haven't been with the agency very long but would you be interested?" It didn't take me long to decide.

Q: What was the purpose of the program?

STACEY: The Congress had put into the legislation a so called Title IX, where AID was supposed to take into account everything it did in popular participation and development. AID felt they didn't have a great deal of knowledge about what this meant. So they developed a contract with Professor Rob West at the Fletcher school, who had been a former AID Director in Zaire. Rob West along with Professor Von Lazar up there had developed a model which we could use to measure the relationship between economic growth and political change, and vice versa. The idea was to put these seven students through a training program and then see if we could apply the model to a particular country.

Q: Do you remember the characteristics of the model?

STACEY: You know, I really don't. I'd have to go back and dig it out. I wrote my paper on pre-Idi Amin Uganda and tried to indicate why there was a degree of political change going on that was going to improve the prospects for political growth. I hadn't calculated into my paper Idi Amin. When he arrived that was...this element of dictatorship or "governance" as I like to call it.

Q: Were there other aspects about this course? It predates the recent developments of participation. Were there other aspects that we are talking about today?

STACEY: I spend those two years sort of academically up there.

Q: It was a two-year program?

STACEY: It was a two-year program. What happened to me as a result of that program was unexpected because as you'll recall, the year 69-70 was the height of the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations. Being in Boston at the time we were really caught up in all this, and I would say we became a little more militant on the subject than we would have been normally because we were in this academic environment. I was informed in the second year of my program at Fletcher that I had been chosen to go to Vietnam to be the Senior Planning Officer at CORDS. I'd already done my military career. I'd joined the Air Force when I was seventeen, and I had completed four years of active duty and another four years of reserve, and so I felt like I didn't join AID to go and participate in what really was a military exercise in my mind. So I turned down the Vietnam assignment and as a result I had to submit my letter of resignation to AID because you recall, in those days, people who refused to go were required to put in their resignation. I was pretty angry because I liked very much what AID was about, and I really felt that what we were being called upon to do in Vietnam was such a distortion of our mission that it was personally very troubling. But that didn't happen.

Q: They didn't make you resign?

STACEY: They didn't make me resign. I think there were a few people in the agency, who perhaps thought I had something to offer.

Q: At this point you were a trained Title IX Officer, were you not? Was there any idea that you would come back to be doing Title IX type of programming?

STACEY: It wasn't really Title IX programming but I think that some aspects of the training I had just had came in good stead, because the assignment that was proposed to me was to go out into the BLS countries in Southern Africa to start some of the early programs out there. We had really just opened up this office of OSARAC (Office of Southern Africa Regional Affairs). So I went down there as the Program Officer. This was in 1971. Some of the activities that we were beginning in Botswana we did draw on some of the Title IX work.

Q: Like what? Do you have any examples?

STACEY: We had a land settlement program in Swaziland, which involved rationalizing land

use. It was land use planning so that the areas that were being farmed in a very irrational way where they had erosion problems, where they hadn't demarcated the grazing areas from the irrigated farming from the rain-fed agriculture. So we came in - this was a joint project with the British - but all of the land use planning was done through what they call in Southern Africa "congretla", where you sit down with the villagers and talk about what they want and their objectives. You have to talk about these things as long as it takes until there's a consensus, and it's a very horizontal type discussion with no time limits.

Q: Did you participate in that?

STACEY: Yes, we participated in that. We had also some regional activities there that we were trying to hang onto like preserving the University of Botswana as a Regional Center of Excellence. Despite all the talk over the years about Regional Centers of Excellence, there aren't any that... So that also failed, when the UBLS eventually split apart.

Q: You were based in Swaziland?

STACEY: Yes, I was based in Swaziland but we had responsibility for Lesotho, Botswana and Malawi. I think that what was important at this time, historically speaking, was that we had a unique regional model there of an office, where we had only one AID staff in Botswana, one in Lesotho and one in Malawi. They were an integral part of the embassy. They were listed as the Second Secretary for Development and they reported to the Ambassador but they got all of their authorities for funding, for contracts, through the regional AID office. And the regional AID office wrote their evaluations, but based on a letter from the Ambassador. These people had a full place at the table and the donor meetings; but it was a great model of a regional program with a bilateral dimension and yet without separate AID offices, the staff was part of the embassy. It's a model that I think AID should have reconsidered in the last few years when they began closing missions all over the place. In many cases I still feel horrified at some of the mission size that I saw over the years of my career, and yet there were so many examples that we had of implementing programs with small missions.

Q: This was supposed to be within a regional framework, except for the concentration countries. Were all your projects regional?

STACEY: No, in fact some of the activities that people were undertaking were national projects, but we were undertaking them through a regional umbrella.

Q: What kind of projects stood out in your mind that you found significant?

STACEY: I think that perhaps the most important contributions we made in those days were in Botswana frankly. Very quietly we began to work with Botswana on education, both in terms of secondary education and the University of Botswana - the Botswana campus of the UBL. They organized, with some assistance we provided through the Ford Foundation in those days a civil service that really was based on merit. Looking back, I think that was one of the most important things Botswana did. They had outstanding civil servants all through their early independence, which has really helped them in managing their economy.

Q: Why do you think this came about there when it didn't elsewhere?

STACEY: Through the foresight of the president of Botswana in those days- he had enormous foresight and was probably one of the best leaders Africa's had in the post independence period. He felt that the two most essential things for Botswana was to have a competent, honest civil service, and secondly to make sure they invested the returns from the mineral resources into education and into human capital. One of the few countries that didn't catch the Dutch disease in terms of the way they manage their mineral resources.

Q: But they had a very limited number of Botswanans, who had an education and advancement.

How did they staff the government?

STACEY: They staffed it rather slowly. You had a number of ex-patriots who were down there who were either British or South African citizens. They weren't thrown out of their posts immediately. It was the policy of the government to "Africanize" the civil service as people became competent to do so. There were people in the civil service who went on, for instance, to the World Bank, and then came back to the Botswana government because the terms of service were so attractive. I think that another important contribution that we made was a project, which we wouldn't do today. This was a water supply project for a new town that was going to grow up around a mining venture. This was a private sector mining venture, nickel and copper, and it required actually the creation of a small town at Selebi-Phikwe. That town couldn't be created without a water supply and AID undertook the project to bring water from the Selebi River to the town. I forget the distance. That was a turnkey project managed by Sam Rea who was the Botswana officer, and to this day Selebi-Phikwe is a thriving little town, and stayed a thriving little town because they took the returns from the copper and nickel and invested it wisely, unlike what other countries have done with their mineral resources. Again, this is the kind of project that could have been a failure had the government made subsequent poor policy decisions. But because they made wise policy decisions, the project I think was a success.

Q: Did we have an operating executives program at that time providing staff for government positions?

STACEY: Yes, we were providing people on a topped up basis. You just refreshed my memory. This was an issue because the government was very sensitive to the "topping up". They didn't want the kind of disequilibria in their compensation packages for staff. So they were very careful about bringing in ex-pats. But on the other hand, when the government did bring them in they didn't become just marginalized or advisors. In other words, they had a serious job to do.

Q: Were there a fair number of them, do you recall?

STACEY: A modest number, but given the size of Botswana, it was a relatively modest number.

Q: What was the political environment in which you were working there, given the South African situation then? Did you have a feel for that?

STACEY: The political situation was actually quite tense. I recall that we had great difficulty getting visas from the South African government even to do our regional work. In those days we either had to fly into Johannesburg and stay overnight, which was sometimes a little bit uncomfortable, or we could drive by the most direct route between Swaziland and Botswana, and we had to get there within twelve hours. So we frequently had to drive that route - I think I drove you once as a matter of fact - from Basutu to Botswana. I remember once you being on a visit out there and we did that drive. South Africa saw the AID people very much as troublemakers. They monitored our activities pretty carefully.

Q: What about the impact of our program on the development in those three countries?

STACEY: Again, I think we did some important projects in the three countries, but without my going back there I don't know to what extent they've stood the test of time. We had a large focus on education which you'll find almost missing now from what we're doing in Africa. We were doing an important secondary school in Swaziland. We were doing a technical training institute as well. We had important programs with all of the three campuses of the UBLS. We were doing a little bit of infrastructure and road building. In Lesotho we had started an important effort in soil erosion. Lesotho has some of the most credible soil on this earth, and it used to be said that Lesotho's major export was soil to South Africa.

Q: Any other perspective on those countries? That was your first introduction to Southern Africa?

STACEY: That was my first introduction to Southern Africa, which I was to come back to again later in my career. I do recall feeling that ultimately these small former high commission countries, the BLS countries, especially Lesotho, didn't make a great deal of sense, especially in a longer term geo-political view of Southern Africa. Eventually these almost artificial borders would have to disappear as a result of economic forces.

Q: Anything else on that?

STACEY: No, I think that's about all.

Q: You were there for two years?

STACEY: Yes, I was there for two years, from 1971-1973.

Q: Okay. And then where did you go?

STACEY: I was asked to go to the Ivory Coast in 1973 to be the Regional Planning Officer for REDSO in Ivory Coast.

Q: Interesting. What's the role of the Regional Planning Officer?

STACEY: It's funny that you should ask, because that's the same question I asked when they offered me the job. There weren't very many of those in AID in those days. The idea was for me to head up a section of the office, which was to do some long-term thinking on the West Africa region and what kind of regional strategy and programs would make the most sense. We were still in those days fighting against the restrictions of the Korry report. We had all kinds of regional programs that we had cooked up. Some of them looked like real Rube Goldberg operations in order to circumvent the restrictions of the Korry report.

Q: Can you give me any examples?

STACEY: Of some of these regional programs? Yes, I can. We had a series of programs with the Entente Fund, which were very strange because the Entente was hardly a regional body. It seemed to be built around a personality. I can't even remember the man's name, but he was quite a dynamic salesman.

Q: You mean the Executive Director of the Fund?

STACEY: Of the Entente Fund, who had developed certain personal relationships with people in the U.S. and AID. So there were a series of regional programs under the Entente Fund - like the Intermediate Credit Program- that looked promising but I think they were pretty much doomed to failure because the Entente was a kind of personality cult built around one person. We were delivering what we thought were some important projects to groups that we couldn't have reached otherwise.

Q: What did you do with Regional Planning? What kind of ideas were you coming up with?

STACEY: The work really became dominated by the great Sahelian drought in 1973. It was dominated by the enormous task of getting the food relief in. We had tons of food sitting on the docks that we couldn't move inland. We had food that was in danger of rotting in warehouses. We had a logistical nightmare in the 1973-1974 period. So in that context, the kind of regional planning that we did do was to look at the adaptive strategies of people. We had a situation in which the old systems that sustain people were breaking down. Old systems of production, systems of how people move their cattle and so forth were breaking down, and it wasn't very obvious what the new household strategies would be. We focused our research and our fieldwork on trying to understand what people were doing.

Q: Triggered by the drought?

STACEY: Triggered by the drought but it was part of a larger picture of the breakdown of these systems that used to sustain them. In the 1950's they had a period of abundant rainfall in the Sahel. The seventies and eighties had been just the opposite, so we were trying to understand how people were changing their lives. It became obvious to me at that time that one of the most fundamental aspects of their adaptive strategies was human mobility. These borders that we saw on the map, which were drawn conveniently back in 1899 when the Europeans sat down to divide up Africa, didn't mean a thing to these people. As a matter of fact, in order to survive, one or more family members always had to disregard borders. A lot of our work in those days- we had Mike Horowitz, a well known anthropologist from SUNY in New York who was under contract with AID for a couple of years - I had him working for me and an Ag economist from Perdue, so we had people who were good in research. We had very little understanding in '73 of the literature in French. There was enormous literature on this region, but we had hardly looked at it. Frankly a lot of AID people tended to disregard the French observations and the French conclusions. There was sort of an attitude that "if the French knew what they were doing, these countries wouldn't be in the state they were in." Which was unfortunate. Just on tropical forestry alone, there's a huge institute outside of Paris that has enormous data and information on forestry in West Africa. It was also a time of really familiarizing ourselves with French literature and beginning to understand a lot more about the region than we knew.

Q: Were there any particular findings other than the one's you've mentioned in this research?

STACEY: We did get into some project design work. As you recall, we had a rather unusual appropriation of funds during the 1973-74 period for Sahelian projects and we had to obligate those funds in a very short time period. I do recall taking a team of about nine people up to eastern Burkina Faso to design an integrated rural development project. It was one of those situations where you've got x amount of money, you've got three months to design and approve the project in or you lose the money. You know that. The people in Upper Volta, which was the name of the country in those days, knew that. Everybody would give you all the right answers in order to come up with a project because there was money to be lost otherwise. So we went out and we visited sixty-two villages in two weeks time. We borrowed sleeping bags from the Peace Corp. We bought a bunch of tin food from the commissary and we went out in the bush for two weeks.

Q: Nine of you?

STACEY: Yes. We hired two bush taxis, these old Peugeot 404's. We'd throw out mosquito nets up over the trees every night and we had cots and we'd sleep out. We did all this in a bottom up way. We talked to farmers and so on. Of course we found out that the farmers had a totally different view of what the priorities were than the government did. We eventually reconciled those differences with...

Q: Do you remember what they were?

STACEY: The people were very interested in the water supply and roads as a first priority, and the government was interested in importing things. In other words, they wanted a project with lots of vehicles and all kinds of things like that. We were somewhere in between. We were looking at a project with much more intermediate technology, animal traction - no tractors- we were way apart on priorities. Eventually we decided on a technical package that we thought would work in the region based on the research, but it was all supply driven. What was driving this project was the money was sitting there, and everybody wanted to obligate it. We had a deadline to do it, and we did it and, of course, the project ultimately was not evaluated as a success. Funds were disposed; experts came out. Now if you go to the area today, which is where this project was located, it's a thriving little town. I would say that when the EC paved the road it had a major impact. We wouldn't do that. They wanted us to pave the road and we said we wanted to work with the small farmers. It was my first experience with a so-called Integrated Rural Development Project, and we began to realize later all of the problems of it.

Q: You were doing well, you were getting local input. What was missing?

STACEY: What was missing again was...what we really needed was a different kind of mandate to say we could go out and design the project and we'd have five million dollars, but it doesn't have to be a five year project. It could be a twenty-year project. Because what we really needed was drip irrigation over a much longer period of time. We put too much money into the project up front and considering the drought and the poverty of the country, we didn't really negotiate the local contributions, the recurrent costs. All the promises that were made on recurrent costs and so on were never met. Of course, we waived those ultimately because it's a poor country; they were suffering from drought and so on. In hindsight we should have had a twenty-year project with drip irrigation, making sure that we got the local contributions and recurring costs paid for from the government budget.

Q: Were there other projects you worked on from the Abidjan office?

STACEY: I was supervising a group of people that were working on a number of projects. We had the Veterinary Lab Facility in Mali, in Bamako, which was a controversial project.

Q: Why was it controversial?

STACEY: Again, it was conceived as a regional project. It was to be a veterinary lab in Bamako producing vaccines that could be used for livestock all over the Sahel. There were various problems in terms of capacity, in terms of getting vaccines to other countries. There were various production problems. Again, it's difficult for me to remember some of the different projects, but there were many people who felt this project was headed toward being a failure. I was at the facility recently, and here it is almost thirty years down the road, and this facility did function and operate on a cost recovery basis. It took a long time for it to become viable, but it has become a viable facility.

Q: Serving the region.

STACEY: And it's serving the region. It was just twenty years before it's time.

Q: Or it took twenty years to get it right. What was the understanding of the operation...the organizational arrangement?

STACEY: In those days it made a lot of sense, because the kinds of presence we had in non-concentration countries was very small. We had one or two people in Niamey, and we had one or two people in Bamako. I felt that the REDSO operation made a lot of sense when we were keeping these kinds of micro-missions, if I can call them that, in the countries we were serving. But I don't remember exactly when the restrictions on the Korry Report were broken, but it was about this period of time. And suddenly these small regional offices, as we call them, became bi-lateral missions. Sometime between 1973 and the early eighties, we suddenly had twenty-five or thirty Americans in Bamako, plus a local staff of over a hundred. I think that's where we really lost our way, because we got into such staff intensive offices, putting all these Americans in place. During this period, 73-75, I felt we had the right balance of these very small offices, largely with embassy support - we didn't have separate AID administrative support and car pool support and so on. Then all of a sudden, after that changed I guess it was in the late '70's and early '80's again in hindsight we were taking the kinds of steps which kind of "de-responsibilized" (if that's a word) local officials. We were doing everything for them.

Q: In your position, was REDSO involved in doing some of the strategic planning for the Sahel Development Program at that point?

STACEY: Yes, this was a period of time when there was some early thinking on the Sahel Development Program. There was a lot of contact with the French at that time. We had an AID officer at the embassy in Paris who participated in some of the thinking on this. But it was a little bit later, in about 1975, and it was after I left Abidjan and I had gone to the Club du Sahel, that we got much more involved in that.

Q: Anything more on the REDSO experience?

STACEY: No, not at this time. I think what that period confirmed for me, Haven, was that we could get into situations where we understood very poorly local constraints, local motivations, what people were really doing. When we understood those things poorly, on one hand, and, on the other hand, we had a supply driven obligation schedule to commit funds, that you were pretty much going to end up with a non-viable project in the long term.

Q: What was your impression of why we had that supply driven pressure? Why were we being pushed to move ahead, ready or not?

STACEY: This was a period of time when there was a supplemental appropriation of funds because of the drought in 1974-75, and I guess it stuck in my mind in those days that the amount of money, the obligation authority that we had every year, was not our biggest problem. It wasn't the level of money that was so essential as it was the real understanding of what we were doing and how we were doing it. That's why later on when the Sahel Development Program started, this was during I guess the next phase of my career, the fact that a lot of people worked very hard to get no year money for the Sahel Development Program. It became very important because we wanted to diminish this pressure on obligation schedules.

Q: After the REDSO experience, what happened then?

STACEY: After the REDSO experience, I went back to Washington for a short period of time, about three months. I was going to go into a senior position in Africa DP as I recall. Then I was asked to go to Paris to work with the DAC Chairman, Maurice Williams at the time (He had been a former deputy administrator of AID) to work on an idea of what to do in the post-drought period on the Sahel. There had been some earlier conversations that I certainly wasn't a part of, between the French and the Americans. There had been great concern about: if the Sahara had returned to it's pre-drought AID levels, which were very, very small, that this region would be condemned; that there were going to be recurring droughts and recurring emergencies. How could we drought proof this region? How could we insulate it from these weather-induced emergencies?

Q: Do you know who was the instigator in this?

STACEY: Yes. The two people that were the primary instigators were Sam Adams, who was the Assistant Administrator for Africa, and Jean Audibert, the Director of Development in the French Ministry of Cooperation. Jean Audibert later went on to be their ambassador in Algeria

And he's retired now living in Paris. We see so many instances where the French and the Americans can't agree on something, but the Club du Sahel really was a French-American initiative.

Q: Why were the French interested in having us around? That wasn't always the case.

STACEY: I suspect they decided, which was a rational decision in their eyes, they couldn't bear the burden of this very poor and rather vulnerable region all alone, and it would be in their best interest...

Q: Were they active in the relief operation?

STACEY: Oh, yes. They were active in the relief operation.

Q: But not on the scale of the U.S.?

STACEY: Not on the scale of the U.S., but that's because so much of their food aid goes through the European Community, so the EC was certainly active on the scale of the U.S., but...we estimated that the drought, even though by some estimates a hundred thousand lives were lost and millions of head of livestock, the overall relief effort in '73-'74 cost about two billion dollars for the entire world community. The thought that this might happen every few years, especially in '73 seemed catastrophic, not just for loss of life but catastrophic in terms of budgetary impact. The idea that maybe we could do something to head this off became...certain people began talking about that. The idea to explore what could be done, and if the Sahelians would be interested in doing something on a regional basis, Maury Williams, the DAC Chairman was also President Nixon's Drought Relief Coordinator, and so the green light was given to Maury (this was unusual for the DAC Chairman who really is an international civil servant although he works for the U.S.) to explore whether the Sahelian countries were interested in some kind of initiative, and would they take the lead on this, or what were they interested in. So Maury said he needed a staff person from the French and one from the Americans to work on this to do the legwork, the staff-work, to do the traveling and so I was asked to do that which was a very lucky opportunity for me.

Q: Building on the fact that you had this REDSO experience.

STACEY: Yes, I think it was because I had the REDSO experience and by that time had pretty decent French. It was difficult to work with the French unless you could speak their language, they didn't like that at all. What I particularly remember about this period in which the Sahel Development Program was created as a line item in the U.S. budget - and as I mentioned it was no year money, unheard of - was that those bureaucrats like ourselves that worked on this, people in the AID office here in Washington, people in the AID missions in the field, we never succeeded in creating a strong executive branch interest in this initiative. We somehow created more of a Congressional interest in the initiative.

It was while I was in Paris at the Club du Sahel, that perhaps one of my more memorable experiences occurred as an AID officer, in that the Senate held hearings on the Sahel Development Program. In those days the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had an Africa subcommittee, which was chaired by Hubert Humphrey. I still considered myself a young and relatively inexperienced AID officer, and was asked to come in from Paris and testify before Hubert Humphrey on the Sahel Development Program. Which I did, and we laid out what we meant to accomplish. I recall that the Congressional interest in this was positive and later in my various dealings with the Hill and working with the Congress, I never saw this kind of positive interest in anything else. Hubert Humphrey was really interested. I do remember him really grilling me on who was going to be in charge, because as far as he was concerned, if we were going to have a Sahel Development Program, somebody had to be in charge, and it couldn't be an American. He wanted to know who out there was in charge.

Q: What did you say?

STACEY: I said it was the Minister Coordinator, because the organization we were working with, which had been created by the Sahelians at the time of the drought, was the CILSS , which stands for the Interstate Committee for the Fight Against Drought and Desertification. That's a French acronym. The CILSS was governed by a Council of Ministers, and there was a lead minister who was called the Minister Coordinator. The Minister Coordinator in those days was a man called Buli Mamunga, who happened to be a colonel in the Niger army, but he was also Niger's Minister of Rural Development and Agriculture. So I told Senator Humphrey that the man in charge would be Buli Mamunga. He had a tough time pronouncing that name, but we finally got it on the record. It's interesting that Buli Mamunga was really quite a competent military person. Shortly after those hearings, he was imprisoned by the president of Niger, who as we know, was a bit of a dictator and quite an authoritarian person. Buli Mamunga spent seven years in solitary confinement in a very tiny prison cell. I met him recently. He's now the head of the Energy Agency in Niger, an oil company that does all of the importing of oil. He said the way he kept his sanity in prison was a combination of exercise and prayer, but with exercising every day for hours at a time, he got to the point where he could do hundreds of push-ups. Interesting man, and he's somebody that I did remember.

Q: What was the concept of the program you were presenting to Congress and Humphrey?

STACEY: The concept of the program was first of all to mobilize a great deal of international support. There were many countries, which were not providing any kind of assistance and were not engaged in this region of Africa. This had largely been French domain in the Sahel. So the first element was to develop some conceptual framework that could be of use to other donors. There was a major study that was requested of MIT on the Sahel. I think Congress appropriated a million dollars for MIT to do that study.

Q: What became of that study?

STACEY: Oh, it's filed in the libraries and so on. The study was not very optimistic. It presented the Sahel as caught up in a series of vicious circles that were not likely to result in any easy strategy of development. I haven't looked at the MIT study in years and years, but it was not very useful to the countries. We did a lot more work with various researchers on the Sahel, putting forward some strategies for better dry land farming, more secure rain fed farming. There was a major investment in the Regional Agro-Meteorologic Center in Niamey. Part of the problem was in always knowing when to plant, knowing when the rainy season was really installed. It was not unusual for farmers to lose their seeds because they planted too soon and even to lose their seeds a second time, and not to have enough seeds for planting the third time. So it was coming up with better information and more secure forms of farming. We had an element to open up new lands. Some of the regions of the Sahel where you did have more fertile lands were precluded from human habitation because of various disease factors. There was a major WHO-World Bank led program (started in part by USAID) to open up some new areas for settlement, especially in the Volta. Some of the Volta tributaries touched in the Sahel but some of this program was in the northern tier of coastal countries as well. We were looking with a noted American geographer out of Clark University at a whole dimension of settling people into new lands where there could be more intensive farm production. A large part of the activity in those years was basically putting together the Club du Sahel, which was to be based in the OECD, and getting the Sahelian concurrence in this. The idea of a Club was discussed extensively with the Sahelian government, ministers, civil society representatives. They had their ideas and we had our ideas but we didn't create a Club du Sahel until their heads of state sat down and voted on it. That occurred in Mauritania in 1976.

Q: That's an unusual phenomena for OECD and the DAC to be associated with, wasn't it?

STACEY: The DAC was always considered non-operational, and when the Club du Sahel idea came along, there were some DAC members who were uncomfortable with the idea. As a matter of fact, the Germans outright opposed it.

Q: On the grounds that it was getting the DAC into operations?

STACEY: That's right. On the grounds that it was getting the DAC into operations on the one hand, and the other thing is that the OECD of course, was considered a club of developed countries.

Now we had this group of developing countries, poorer African countries, that were going to at least have their big toe under the tent of this developed country club. The German government didn't like the idea at all, but they decided not to oppose it. Under the OECD rules, if a country reserves on something then you don't go ahead if you don't have an absolute consensus. The Club was set up under some informal rules of the DAC. It's interesting that till this day, the Club operates on the basis of a sufficient consensus whereas the rest of the OECD has to suffer by operating on an absolute consensus, and there's a big difference. An absolute consensus means that often your work is the lowest common denominator on what the thirty countries can agree on.

Q: We'll come back to that. Who was the driving force or forces that brought this into being despite the rather unusual situation?

STACEY: I think the driving forces were a few key Africans, people like Buli Mamunga and Ali Sissai who was the Malian executive secretary of CILSS. Sam Adams and Jean Audibert were very convincing with some of their other colleagues in the DAC. Ultimately the Club was formed but only after the Sahelians had officially voted on it. I think to his credit, Maury Williams made sure that we had a high level of participation at the first meeting of the Club du Sahel, which was held in Dakar in 1976. He organized a Tidewater meeting in Dakar at the same time. I don't know if you recall that the Tidewater meetings were informal off the record meetings that all of the heads of development agencies had once a year. The name comes from the first meeting, which was held in Tidewater, Maryland. Heretofore all the Tidewater meetings had been held in some DAC member country, either Germany, Japan, France or the U.S. This was the first time that it was held in a developing country. The German minister refused to come, because he saw exactly what Mr. Williams was doing. What he was doing was making sure that we had the first meeting of the Club du Sahel was at ministerial level. The U.S. was represented by Dan Parker of Parker Pens. He was the AID Administrator in those days. We had people at that level for the first meeting of the Club. What was interesting is that the mandate of the Club du Sahel that was agreed upon at that meeting was on one page (as a matter of fact it was on a half a page), and for twenty years the Club du Sahel existed on that half page mandate.

Q: What did it say? Do you remember?

STACEY: It laid out in very general terms, what the objective was, what it intended to do, what were the areas of focus. It was a very, very general mandate having virtually no legal basis.

Q: Who wrote it?

STACEY: It was written by myself and David Shear, late in the night the first day of the meeting along with Ann De Lattre who was my French colleague on the French side. We showed it to Maury Williams and the people who were leading the Sahelian side and it was basically adopted. The point is that sometimes something that is very brief and very general and informal is very workable. I'm convinced that when the history of development is written, we're going to find a graveyard of declarations, resolutions, conventions, all kinds of formal documents that were negotiated as a result of meetings that resulted in nothing. In the case of this Club meeting we had this very informal mandate, we had an informal structure, it was all voluntary, it was inclusive, there were no formal qualifications for membership. If you engaged in the work, committed to the Sahel, the door was open. The Club secretariat operated on a year-to-year basis. We had to secure voluntary funding year by year. The staff was there on year by year contracts. It was the difference between an institution and a fora - an informal forum.

Q: There was a structure that was agreed to at that time. What was it? How did it work?

STACEY: There was a structure that was agreed to at that time which was more one of convenience. We established an overall working group - north/south. These were the early days of so called north-south dialogue. We felt in the Club that we'd gone beyond that. We had the first north-south action group. We had gone beyond dialogue and had something we were agreeing to work on. We set up a working group that had Sahelians, Americans, French, Dutch, Canadians - and this working group had a series of sub-working groups with security and anti-desertification being the central themes. We had working groups organized around irrigated farming, dry land farming, fisheries and the opening of new lands. Very much of a production focus. Then we had transversal working groups working on human resources, environment. Later on the number of working groups became unmanageable. The irrigated working group for instance was dropped, because it became clear that for a considerable period of time the way we were going to get the most increases in food production was going to come from improved dry land farming. The capital costs implied in irrigated farming were astronomical relative to the market and the return you could get from that kind of investment. So the irrigated working group fell aside and ultimately fisheries did as well. We began to get more focused groups.

One of the things that I do remember is the question of big monopolies in marketing was considered a big impediment. The state marketing boards were considered major impediments to freeing up some of the creative energies of Sahelian farmers and even of people who operated in the marketing of foods. The countries were enormously suspicious of the private sector. There had been too many examples in the past of private traders in food - hoarding food, so this was a very difficult dialogue. Long before structural adjustment came along, in the context of the Club, we had this enormously frank series of meetings and exchanges on food and cereals pricing. A lot of the analytical work was led by Elliot Berg, from our side, and Dirk Striker, who is up at the Fletcher School now. It resulted in some changes in policy on cereals marketing that were so important for the region. I think one of the early successes of the club was the changes in...

Q: To follow that line, how did it come about if there was such resistance to this kind of change?

How did you bring it about?

STACEY: I think through the kinds of dialogue we had, and the kinds of exchanges and papers. This stretched out over two years, maybe more - three years. The countries became convinced that in terms of the objectives they had set for themselves in food production, and improving the food security of their people, that this was a step they had to take. The risk, in terms of private traders exploiting the people and so on were such that they could be taken. There were ways to deal with these issues. But my point was that the Club was a place, long before structural adjustment came along, where some major policy issues were not only discussed, but where policy reform took place as a result of those discussions. Our agenda on policy reform was very specific. We weren't looking at an exchange rate policy, or at fiscal policy, or at tax and customs. But much at food pricing and state monopolies in food, and serious marketing that wasn't working.

Matter of fact, we had a great example in Burkina Faso one year when we were working down there. The government had set a price of thirty-eight or forty francs CFA a kilo that they would pay for sorghum, which was considered an incentive price. The marketing board had set that. The farmers planted and it rained that year, so they had a big harvest. When it came time for the marketing board to begin to purchase, they didn't have any money. They hadn't received the necessary authorities from the Ministry of Finance to purchase at the prices they said they could purchase. So they had all this sorghum sitting in the markets there ready to buy, while the trucks came in from Ghana, and from Ivory Coast and from Togo. According to the data we had, they bought sorghum between four and eight CFA a kilo. So the next year the government said "Okay, we're offering forty-five CFA a kilo, and everyone said we don't believe you" and they didn't plant enough to have surpluses. So you can see there is the capacity there to produce surpluses, but what to do with them was always a problem. We began to understand that the farmers could produce. This wasn't the problem. It was the marketing and pricing.

Q: Who were the key players in bringing about this change? You mentioned Elliot Berg, but on the Sahelian side I gather there was considerable opposition to these arguments.

STACEY: Oh, there was considerable opposition. There were a series of ministers who were very important, because ultimately this debate got into the CILSS Council of Ministers, and these were all the Ministers of Agriculture. But some of the key players I remember are the former Minister of Agriculture in Mali who is now retired, Engola Traore, was a key member. Unfortunately I can't remember all the names of the Sahelians, but for me it was an indication that there's a lot of formality about our business. The way we negotiate agreements, the way the World Bank negotiates loans, etc. There is an indication to me that sometimes one of the best ways to do policy dialogue and to get policy change is through informality as well. We were also dealing with regional issues. These markets were very porous. You couldn't get your pricing right in one country and have it wrong in the other country. In a sense, these were things the countries had to move forward together on.

Q: Were there other policy issues that you were addressing?

STACEY: This was the major one that I recall during the time when I was there. There was a lot of discussions, of course, of environment, of land tenure, and the question of natural resource management. That didn't bear fruit until about 1984 when the Sahelians announced a regional strategy on desertification, which preceded by fifteen years the national convention on desertification. So some of their early experience on anti desertification measures was very useful in terms of illuminating...

Q: What were the basic elements of their strategy? What was the understanding of the desertification situation?

STACEY: Not that the strategy was comprehensive or necessarily designed to be successful. There were technical measures in terms of better water retention, various ways to better retain moisture. There was getting information to farmers via rural radio in terms of planting, but also there was a whole element of forestry, and planting of trees, especially the reforestation. There was an element of more rational grazing, because traditionally the pastoralists have used natural forests to graze in, so there was going to be improved access and more rational rotation of grazing land in national forests. There was an element of supplemental feeding of animals, growing better fodder crops. There was an element of restraint on water points, because the location of wells that had been drilled during the sixties actually resulted in excessive concentrations of animals in areas where you didn't have adequate holding capacity. All of this was put together in a comprehensive study.

Q: What was the understanding, because at the time wasn't there a discussion that the desert just was creeping on and on? What was the understanding then about the desert creep?

STACEY: There wasn't a lot of understanding. I'd go so far as to say there still isn't among a lot of people. Actually, if you look at the maps of the Sahel and the rainfall patterns over a hundred year period, you see that the desert advances and retreats during various times. During the fifties you had a period of rather abundant rainfall, and people were actually cultivating further north than they had done in many, many decades. When the drought came in 1973-74, there was a sharp reversal of a longtime trend. You could almost see the movement of where they could cultivate and where they could graze about two hundred kilometers further southward. No one knew if this drought was going to be a new long dry period and then there was going to be a new wet period. I think what we managed to accomplish through the discussions was acknowledgment that desertification was largely a human induced condition. This was not primarily weather related. They had, by that time, sufficient examples about what happened with over-grazing, over-stocking of animals, inappropriate siting of water points, inappropriate agricultural practices, which just mine the soils and take out the nutrients. A lot of the soils out there are phosphate deficient. There's enough information now that people could acknowledge that desertification was largely human causes, and it wasn't so much the desert advancing southward, as it was spots of desertification that were occurring where you had excessive concentrations of animals.

Population growth - we tried to create the first demographic dialogue in the Sahel. One of the projects we supported in this period was the beginning of the Sahel Institute, which is based in Bamako. We financed a demographic unit called Demographics in Development, because we could clearly see that the Sahel was headed for some of the highest population growth rates in the world. The only thing that kept them down below three percent in those days was the high infant mortality rates and the disease, especially malaria. As infant mortality rates began to fall in the eighties, the Sahel now has some of the highest population growth in the world.

Q: Let's talk about some of the programs. Livestock, as you mentioned, was a major issue. What were we trying to do with livestock programs?

STACEY: I'm not sure we knew what we were trying to do with the livestock programs. I mean obviously livestock was a source of food, and source of survival for a lot of people, especially the pastoralists, so our initial efforts in livestock were to improve pasturage, better ability for them to graze in some of the traditional areas, improved animal health through vaccines and so on, and an attempt to improve marketing possibilities in the coastal states, which have traditionally been their markets. Unfortunately we, as development experts, didn't have our handles on all of the leaders, because it was about that time that other countries started dumping meat into coastal West Africa.. New Zealand, Australia and then later on the European community, so that little by little the availability of cheap meat from other parts of the world began to undercut the Sahelian market. We were just working on the Sahelian supply side of the equation. They began actually in the eighties to lose their market share in livestock. That's changed now with the devaluation of CFA franc, and the fact that at least Europe's mountain of meat surplus is somewhat diminished. We pulled out of livestock eventually. We had a lot of programs in livestock, but those programs were almost universally evaluated negatively.

Q: What were the main, aside from the market problems, problems with them?

STACEY: The main problem was essentially the market problem, but also ways of delivering assistance. We didn't have a lot of experience working with really nomadic peoples. So the kinds of problems we were working on which had to do with mixed farming and trying to get people into more sedentarized modes of production. There has been more sedentarization now in a lot of people even in Mauritania have abandoned herding. What you find now is that the herds are owned by big landowners, or people who live in the cities and they hire people out to graze them. Earlier this was all small herders.

Q: Did we try to do any range land management?

STACEY: We were doing range land management and were trying to improve some of the grazing areas and get more rational grazing patterns. That's where we got into problems with local politics and local land tenure issues. I guess I have difficulty remembering all the reasons, but it was generally considered that livestock wasn't working as a sector.

Q: What do you think were some of the more successful pursuits of the Club du Sahel during this time?

STACEY: The most important thing we did at this point was to put together an international partnership around a group of northern countries and a group of southern countries. This had never really been done before. Even the word partnership, which everyone is over using today, is really nothing new. We used the word back when the Club was first started. I think that the real success here was developing the framework for real informal off the record honest dialogue. It was amazing how many meetings you could get into that had "wooden language", a lot of speech making, position taking, rhetorical, but no real exchange of issues. The Club established this basis for that kind of dialogue. It was a place where people could really say what they thought, and there weren't necessarily going to be any consequences for speaking honestly.

Q: How did you bring that about? Have lots of large Club meetings each year?

STACEY: We had large club meetings, but I think it was some of the principals who were directing the Club at time. Both on the Sahelian side and in the OECD, they were insisting that we had to have this kind of dialogue that this had to be the place for this kind of frank and honest exchange. Where we failed was in our definition of partnership. We really had some of these strategies laid out in desertification and food security, we succeeded in mobilizing a lot more aid money. The aid levels of the Sahel practically tripled in just a few years after 1974. Where it failed was the partnership basis was undermined because the Sahelian countries were not able to put up the recurrent costs. They were not able to put up the local counterparts in many instances. Rather than waiting and insisting on that, the donors began to waive the local cost requirements. They began to waive the recurrent cost requirements. We got into the period of the early eighties where gap filling was so important. We had structural adjustment. There were gaps that had to be filled. There was a certain through put of money that had to go through each national budget, otherwise they couldn't pay their multilateral debt. We basically began to waive all those requirements, and pick up even one hundred percent local cost financing on these projects. We basically undermined our own partnership agreement. It seemed like the right thing to do at the time, because these countries were so poor, they had just gone through this terrible drought and so on.

Q: Why would this undermine the partnership?

STACEY: Because the very things that we were seeking in the partnership agreement of their taking the lead, their taking primary responsibility, creating capacity, assuming ownership - all of the things that we talk about today were premised on these programs becoming their priorities, and these priorities being manifest in their own budgets. But we wouldn't wait around on that. And maybe the countries knew that if they waited long enough, we'd say that we'd pay all of it.

Q: You mean we were more concerned about the situation than they were?

STACEY: Yes, perhaps.

Q: How did you respond to that? We'll come back to the general subject later but there's always the concern about doing something in a crisis or emergency. How long do you sit and wait until the other partner finally comes around to understanding it or prepared to put up the resources?

STACEY: I'm not sure there's an easy answer to that. I think we probably shouldn't have started down this partnership track saying that this is the way it's going to work. We can do this if you do your share. We basically should have come in and said this is not workable right now. I mean, after we started this idea, we didn't call it the new partnership, as they're talking about now. We called it a more mature partnership. This was in 1976, so in seeking a more mature partnership, we defined what it ideally would entail, but it was unrealistic because the countries either couldn't or wouldn't meet their responsibilities.

Q: At that time there was concern about financing recurrent costs; was there a recurrent cost study done?

STACEY: There was a major recurrent cost study.

Q: What triggered that and what did it come up with?

STACEY: What triggered that was the conclusion that the countries couldn't do this and they weren't doing it, and the basis of the study was to see what should be done. I wasn't there when the study was done, so I can't tell you what the conclusions were.

Q: What about the African members of the Club du Sahel. Obviously the name Sahel defines it but not all of them were strictly Sahel countries. How was this territory defined?

STACEY: Initially the Sahel was defined by the nine countries - in those days it was eight countries - that were members of CILSS. The CILSS was a formal institution in contrast to the Club, which was informal. The CILSS was created by the countries and the heads of state would meet every three years. There was a convention, which grants all of the people working for CILSS immunity when they cross borders and go into other countries to do their work. They had tax privileges and things like that.

Q: It's an international organization.

STACEY: That's right. It's an international, intergovernmental organization, but it has formal statutes and it has a convention, which covers all of the people who work at the agri-met center at the CILSS and at the Sahel Institute. The Club, on the other hand, was not an institute; it was just a forum. Initially the work was limited to those eight countries. It's only been in recent years that the Club has begun to work outside of the Sahel, probably in the last ten years. It's because the Sahelians also know that their long-term future is tied in with West Africa. As a development unit, the Sahel makes no sense. But in a longer-term context, it's their economic and other relationships with the coastal countries.

Q: We'll come back to that. In that period, the CILSS grew out of the drought. Why would they come together? Why didn't we just deal with each country separately? Why have a CILSS at all?

STACEY: Because there were a series of common problems that required common solutions. In many cases, some of the work that needed to be done, whether it was research on more drought resistant crops, or information and so on, there were economies of scale in working on all of these countries together. They saw this themselves. They also felt that in the longer term, in terms of their relations with the coastal states, especially the big ones like Ivory Coast and Nigeria, that they had a better chance if they would hang together. They wanted to institutionalize the word Sahel. They wanted it to mean something. This was a special part of West Africa that had special issues, special needs, special challenges. If you look for instance at the makeup of The Economic Community of West Africa, the Sahelian states make up half of the sixteen members. Chad is not a member. The other eight makeup half, and they don't feel like they have half the weight. So one of the aspects of CILSS now is to coordinate Sahelian positions in the context of their evolving situation.

Q: I could see that originally it was the drought and the famine and being able to make an appeal, but now what is the glue that holds them together? Countries tend to fly apart with internal problems and go down their own track.

STACEY: Believe it or not, there really is common identity here among Sahelian people. I mean, Malian people think of themselves as Sahelian. So do people in Senegal. I was rather surprised at the depth of this identity. Beyond that it is the drought, this common threat of drought, desertification, the common environment they live in that really holds them together. In many ways, it's more solid than other regional groupings, because of what they've gone through and the common experience.

Q: I see. On the donor side, how many donors were there? Do you remember?

STACEY: Originally there were five who came into the Club after the U.S. and France started it. There was Canada, Netherlands, and Italy. Today there are thirteen donors, so little by little there has been an expansion of the countries that are contributing. Initially the U.S. was putting up sixty percent of the budget, then it came down to about forty percent, then down to thirty five percent, and the U.S. pays now seventeen percent of the Club budget.

Q: You mean the total program?

STACEY: Yes, the program for the Secretariat of the Club. In terms of a donor in the region, the U.S. has always been somewhere between four and five percent, and they may even be down to three percent now.

Q: What scale of resources are we talking about? Initially what did you start out with?

STACEY: We're talking about...initially the total flows into the eight country region were probably a little over eight hundred million dollars a year. Eventually that got up to nearly three billion a year from all sources. It's not that now, but at the high water mark it was.

Q: Do you know where most of that money went? Was it in agriculture or livestock?

STACEY: A lot of it went into agriculture, but a lot of it went into transport. This region was so transport deficient, which became one of the major costs in terms of moving food around during the drought. So some of the big donors, especially the European Community, began to put resources into infrastructure and roads and even improving some of the railways.

Q: Regional?

STACEY: Regional transport. There's been a phenomenal improvement in rural roads and other transport in the Sahel over the last twenty years.

Q: Did the World Bank join the group?

STACEY: Yes, the World Bank joined the group.

Q: I thought originally it wasn't very interested.

STACEY: Yes, originally they weren't. They'd never really done much regional lending, and I think the donors who had the most difficulty in working regionally in the Club were the World Bank and the Africa Development Bank since they don't do regional loans. The EC was always a difficult partner as well, because they have their very particular programming procedures that tie in with Lome Convention. And the way that Lome provided for the programming of regional funds was not consistent with the way that we were trying to work with the Sahelians. The EC funds could be committed if two ministers from a country made the request. It really didn't have to be a regional project that had a regionalized scope to it anyway.

Q: Did the donors talk among themselves in terms of improving their level of effort, their procedures, their approach?

STACEY: Not in the early days, no. In the early days, it was more one of trying to agree on some common strategies, some common approaches, understanding the region better, having this dialogue with the Sahelians. It's only been in the past few years that I've seen the donors working more on the aid delivery and how to improve their aid instruments. There may have been some talk about that early on, but I wouldn't say it was a serious effort.

Q: Anything else about the early period? We'll come back to the later period, but is there anything in the early period we haven't touched on?

STACEY: As we come back to this later period in the Club-because I did come back to the Club later on in my career-the next period that covers Southern Africa and Zimbabwe and then a return to the Sahel you might want discuss.

Q: Rather to shifting to Southern Africa at this point, let's continue with the Sahel Development Program. You left the program in what year in the earlier stage?

STACEY: I left in 1978, at very short notice, request of Golda Butcher, who was the Assistant Administrator for Africa, to take on a study of Southern Africa that the Congress had mandated to AID of development needs in Southern Africa - a region that we didn't know a great deal about. I left in '78 and had an opportunity to come back to the Sahel after my retirement from AID in 1992. It was very interesting to come back some twenty years plus to the scene of one's earlier crimes, and to try to do an assessment of what had happened.

Q: That gives an opportunity for an interesting perspective, a twenty-year gap in a regional program and how it evolved. What was the situation in the Sahel in 1992 when you went back?

STACEY: The situation in the Sahel was an under-appreciated food security success, if I can call it that. And let me qualify that a bit. Many of the studies of the Sahel in the '70's including the MIT study that the U.S. government spent a million dollars on, predicted a series of recurring emergencies, recurring droughts, expensive relief operations. Organizations like FAO were calling for pre-positioning of large stacks of emergency food, etc. The happy result is that for the last fourteen years, food aid to the Sahel has gone down continuously. There was another drought in 1984, one that was even more severe than 1974, and, at that time, the food was over-programmed. In 1985 they had a good harvest and, of course, a lot of the food aid arrived late and they had more food aid than they needed. Prices fell, and at that time they had a consensus by both the Sahelians and the donors that something had to be done to discipline food aid.

There was a Food Aid Charter negotiated between 1984 and 1990, which lays out all of the do's and don'ts of food aid. It gives priority to local purchase of food grains, rather than importation from the U.S. or Europe. It was the first example that I know of where a group of poor developing countries and donors negotiated an instrument to try to reduced dependency on something. There was a feeling that countries had become far too dependent on food aid in many ways, that food aid was becoming inappropriately requested in some cases and inappropriately programmed in other cases. This Food Aid Charter seems to have worked, because as I said food aid has declined for the past twelve years. Eighteen out of the last twenty years in the Sahel, rainfall has been below average. Last year they had a overall harvest across the nine countries of eleven million tons, which was a new record. There's been a diversification of food production - lot of different kinds of crops are produced. Much more pari-urban production. It's been a food security success because the regional market worked. You had food going across borders through normal commercial channels. If you contrast that with the horn of Africa, that's a very significant factor. So that's what I found in '90 in general.

I could say a second success that was really unnoticed about the Sahel, was how well they had managed conflict and vulnerability. There had been conflict in the north of Mali and Niger, between certain cultivator groups. There had been conflict in the Senegal Basin, between Mauritania and Senegal. There had been conflict in the Casamance, but in contrast to Southern Africa the conflict never really got out of hand and never got to the point of really becoming terribly explosive. The Sahelians have a long history of managing conflict situations so that I found what I thought what was a very successful Sahelian effort.

On the other hand, I found a Club, which was in some crisis. The reason the Club du Sahel was in crisis was that the counterpart organization that we worked with, the CILSS, was in crisis. What had happened was that the CILSS had misused some funds during a period - EC and other donor funds which were used not for the intentions they were given- not that the money was stolen, but they were funds that legitimately could have been requested back by the donors. The CILSS itself was bankrupt. They didn't even have the funds from their own governments to close the organization or let go the staff they had and pay them what they would be due. So we had a major crisis. There was an audit and a program to restructure the organization. We had to close the books on the old organization. All the staff had to be let go, paid their severance pay and then a new CILSS had to be created. I arrived just at the time that was happening. It was an awkward role for the Club, because the Club, the Secretariat in Paris, was supposed to be a neutral interlocutor. Instead they had become a hammer for the donors to reshape this organization.

Q: Let's go back a little before you get into that. What were the factors that contributed to the decline of the CILSS? Was it losing interest, or success causing people to go their own way? What was the original impetus behind the CILSS decline?

STACEY: I think the CILSS had an excessively large role in implementing regional projects rather than coordinating their implementation, perhaps by the national states. In taking on this role, this came at a time when a lot of donors, especially the EC, had a lot of regional money to place. Frankly the CILSS was among the better performing regional organizations in Africa. There were over two hundred different inter- governmental organizations in Africa, and most of them don't perform very well. Since the CILSS were one of the better performing ones, there was a temptation to put more and more project money in it. That created the condition where there was a certain lack of capacity in the financial management and so on, and they got themselves in trouble. You could combine that with the fact that in terms of the local payments that the States were supposed to make for the organization, which weren't very heavy, they were heavily in arrears, so that the CILSS was about ninety-nine percent dependent on external financing. Those two factors came together and really created a crisis where the donors basically said that they were willing to bail the CILSS out. They felt that the States had to be willing to do something also. What they demanded was that the core central unit of the CILSS, which is about twenty-five staff members, that all of the salaries and recurrent costs of that part of the organization would be paid for by the States. That line wouldn't be crossed. The arrears were mostly paid up, with the exception of Niger, which still had a large chunk of arrears, but with Cape Verde taking the lead and Mali as well, began to get the States to pay up.

Q: Do you think some of the motivation that started the CILSS had waned because of the change of political and economic circumstances?

STACEY: There was a certain perception that the CILSS had done its job, the food security had been improved, they had some success on anti-desertification and natural resource management. There was a feeling that they didn't have a role to play in regional integration. That was a misreading of the importance of the organization. If you look at the three most important regional organizations in West Africa, UEMOA, which is basically the CFA zone, which really focuses on monetary policy, ECOWAS, which is a bigger organization of sixteen countries. But that is basically an integration of trade organizations. The CILSS has really evolved into a center of excellence on issues like agro-meteorology, population-the demographic in the Sahel Institute is excellent, it's world class. It's got a lot of expertise in areas of natural resource management that could be of use to the Horn of Africa for instance. So there is a center of excellence that has a certain role to play, and it has a role to play beyond the Sahel. Some of the long-term projections of some of the Dutch institutes show that as a result of global warming we're going to get a drying trend in all of West Africa. Some of the northern tier of countries of Ghana, Ivory Coast and so on, are projected to suffer an increasing drying trend. I suspect a lot of the knowledge that CILSS has would be of use to the coastal countries in the future. So I would argue it's a very valuable institution and the fact that we were able to restructure it, close it down and reopen it - it's still excessively dependent on donor financing.

The answer to that, which is something I've started in motion just recently, is to create a foundation endowing an intergovernmental organization. I don't think it's been done. But the way we put together the endowment plan is the States would take the first fifty-one percent of the endowment. This would mean advance contributions on their annual payments. The other forty-nine percent would be raised privately. It would not be a fund that would be looking for donor financing. That plan is before the Ministers of Finance now. During my return to the Club, the important thing was to get the Club Secretariat back into a more neutral role.

Q: What were the characteristics of the restructuring of the CILSS?

STACEY: They created a central unit of twenty-three positions, I believe it was, which was going to be entirely supported by the States. The entire group of projects was then grouped into six major programs. Two were based in Niamey at the Agrimet Center. Those were the major programs in research and in technical training, because they have a major training program there in integrated pest management. Then there were two programs in Bamako, at the Sahel Institute. One is the demographics population program, and the second is the environmental education program. They have an excellent program introducing environmental curricula into the school system. The two major programs that were policy oriented, that were Food Security and Natural Resource Management, were to be based in Ouagadougou. The Executive Secretary was to have four counselors, senior staff: one for Food Security, one for Natural Resource Management, one for Administration and one for Communications. The new structuring was put together so that the major programs in the other countries did not operate under the vertical top down management from the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary's power was in information, and getting that information presented upward to the Heads of State and to the Council of Ministers. In terms of managing the technical aspects of the project, that was really left up to the project managers and their two Director Generals, one for the Agrimet Center, and one for the Sahel Institute. So it was to decentralize management, and then there were management centers in each of the three capitals. There was an Internal Auditor position that was established that reported not to the Executive Secretary, but to the Council of Ministers, and annually did his own audits and a separate report.

Q: Who was the prime leader in this reform?

STACEY: The donors. It ultimately came down to a situation where they said if the States aren't able to do this, because there was a major audit that was done by Coopers and Lybrand, and after the Heads of State agreed to the recommendations of the audit, it really became clear that CILSS was going to lose a enormous amount of funding if these reforms weren't undertaken. It had to be the States who took the lead on it. I'm not sure of any one person who was...

Q: No leading person in the Sahelian group?

STACEY: The Minister from Cape Verde. As a country Cape Verde really took the lead. During the period of 1991-1994, the President of Cape Verde was the president of the CILSS. He took personal leave, including traveling around to the other countries to get them to pay up their arrears and to really get behind this reform program. So I would say that the mover and shaker was little Cape Verde.

Q: Why do you think Cape Verde was so fired up about this?

STACEY: First of all it was their turn to have this rotating presidency. But Cape Verdeans have always played a very creative leadership role in the CILSS and in the Sahel. In some ways though, the most Sahelian of all the countries, in a good year they only produce ten percent of all their food requirements, and yet they've done a remarkable job of trying to reforest some areas to prevent erosion, building roads from stones all over the islands. They really see themselves as a country that benefits from the expertise in CILSS. The last two directors from Agromet have come from Cape Verde, and some of the people they have put into regional organizations have been world class.

Q: Their future very much depended on linking into some sort of regional complex for trade and development issues.

STACEY: On the donor side, during this time, we had a tough situation in that the Sahara already had very high levels of aid. In a sense the Club had done its job in increasing donor flows to the Sahel and as a result we had a group of countries who still ranked among the poorest in the world, who, a lot of people would say, were not developing - in other words, managing vulnerability, managing crisis, is not a development success. It certainly doesn't show up in the data. There was an improvement in infant mortality rates, which of course increased the population growth rate. The donors felt that one, there was a lot of aid going in there; two, that it wasn't having an impact and wasn't succeeding because look at the aid flows and look at the per capita GDP, the literacy rates, the number of kids that aren't in school. At that time donors began "picking winners and losers" as I call it. Coming up with various criteria for trying to concentrate their aid on countries that were going to progress more rapidly or countries that had a better approach to democracy or human rights, countries who had gone through these kinds of democratic transitions.

In the process of trying to pick these winners or losers, it was difficult. For instance, I had come to the Club as officially nominated by the U.S. government. My nomination had to go through the White House even. Then immediately AID starts closing down. It closed down in Cape Verde, closed down in Chad, later closed down in Niger and Gambia, because of coup d'etat. It also closed down in Burkina Faso. Now the World Bank thinks Burkina Faso, Chad and Gambia are all good performers, but we didn't reopen. So it was a difficult time. A lot of donors were willing to consider their regional programs with CILSS, but they were closing down bilaterally. You could see the double standard setting in. Even if Kenya perhaps had a worse record on corruption, human rights and democracy, we weren't going to close down in Kenya. Even if Egypt has issues with human rights and democracy, we weren't going to close down in Egypt. This double standard was not lost on the Sahelians. In a sense, we had to change the debate.

Elliot Berg was instrumental in working with us on this, because the Sahelians had to begin to see that the high level of aid dependency that had resulted the last twenty years was not a healthy situation. It worked against capacity building. It tended to maybe de-responsibilize their officials. We all had a mutual interest in financing a sustainable development from things other than aid as we've known it-ODA. How do we make that shift to finance development from trade and investment over time, and not just this aid dependency conundrum that we had gotten into. We have had a very healthy dialogue with the Sahelians during the last five years on this. And I think that it's not an easy answer, because there are all sorts of impediments other than policies which prevent the kind of private investment coming in that you would like to see. We like to think that it's as simplistic as policy, but there's human capital, infrastructure and being land locked, and these are major factors.

Q: All the things that make them dependent on outside expertise that we're saying they should be relieved of in some respect. How do you balance this dependency on one hand, and a requirement for external support and expertise and so on, on the other hand?

STACEY: We did a major exercise; we actually had two exercises that ran in parallel after we got through the CILSS restructuring. One was called Sahel Twenty-One, where we had set up structures in all of the countries that brought in civil society, farmer's groups, women's groups, herder's groups, municipalities, private sectors, into a dialogue about where did they see their country in its region, going in the next twenty to thirty years. What were the priorities and issues. We wanted them to focus on a regional vision but with their locality very much in mind. All of this eventually came together after about eighteen months in Sahel Twenty-One, which is a statement of their regional vision and is very interesting, which we can come back to. What we did is Cooperation Twenty-One, in which we looked at this last thirty years of aid flows to the Sahel - magnitude, impact, imprint, if we couldn't measure impact, what worked well, what didn't work well, what were the problems with the view of ultimately to getting a consensus on the need for an exit strategy from this aid dependence. These two exercises ran parallel but touched at various times because one of the conclusions we had was that the instruments of aid that we used were, in many cases, a part of the problem. That inadvertently issues of ownership, participation, and sustainability were undermined by the very instruments that we used. So through this Cooperation Twenty-One exercise, we were able to make some recommendations. The first word that came out of the recommendations was restraint. So much is driven by the need to obligate and disperse and fill gaps.

Q: "Results" is the word today.

STACEY: And results. It is particularly disturbing to me that people want to show results within a year or you don't get the next budget tranche. Anyway we can come back to that later on.

Q: What happened to the Club as a group? Is it still functioning?

STACEY: Yes, the Club is functioning more than ever because we also did a multi-donor evaluation of the Club. Five donors joined together and did an evaluation- Germany, Canada, the United States, the Netherlands and France. There was an evaluation, which basically said this mandate that we had from 1976 which was on one page of paper was really no longer adequate. The Sahel had changed and there was a greater capacity within the Sahelian institutions and we had to look again at the mandate. What we did was we used these twin exercises of Sahel Twenty-One and Cooperation Twenty-One to draft up a new mandate for the Club, which was called the Second Generation Contract which was approved in Banjul in 1997. It's called the Banjul memorandum. It's about four pages long.

Q: You drafted this?

STACEY: Yes, I drafted it along with my French colleagues, and it went through several innovations as the donors and the Sahelians studied it. It was approved by the Heads of State and the Donor Ministers. We got most of the ministers and we got some non-ministers. It's a great new mandate for the Club.

Q: Does it change the orientation or basic mission?

STACEY: Oh, yes. There had been a confusion about what the Club was. A lot of people thought the Club du Sahel was the Secretariat sitting at the OECD in Paris. That was not the Club du Sahel. The Club du Sahel was the forum where all of us came together, and the Sahelians were as much a part of the Club as OECD members. One of my objectives was to make the Club even more inclusive and we brought the municipalities in. There is an association of municipalities in West Africa now that's very well represented with some very dynamic people. Development is more decentralized now at the local levels. We brought in the private sector in the form of the West Africa Enterprise Network, which is a network of African entrepreneurs covering thirteen countries. We brought in NGOs - both Sahelian and some northern NGOs. That's the Club; the Secretariat that had been in Paris, probably due to some very dynamic people who had been there in the past, had frankly become a bit too dominant. The Sahelians had complained to me that one, the Club was too pushy, and two, that every time they'd just get on board something that the Club had been working on, then the Club would jump off to something else. We were probably joining a bit of the donor fadism that comes along - these fads that we all fall victim to. It became clear that the most important thing in my job description was to be a good listener. I had to listen to the Sahelians first and foremost, then listen to the donors. It had to be emphasized that the Club was just a forum that could disappear tomorrow. It was not an institution. It also had to be Sahelian led. They had to see this as an instrument of their regional strategy- their window to the world, their mechanism to coordinate the donors. A regional roundtable, if you will. During the last five years we've made some real progress on that. Only time will tell, but the Club had to be restructured as well. It wasn't adequate to just restructure the CILSS.

Q: The membership in the Club is quite a large group, if you have all the members there.

STACEY: It's enlarged. What started off as basically five countries supporting the Club is now thirteen. We have strong support from Switzerland, Austria; Denmark has now joined and I think Sweden is about to join. Also the UK recently joined as well as Portugal. It's interesting that the UK joined, because they now have a much better working relation with the French than they did before, since the Labor Government was elected in England and the Socialist Government was elected in France. They think that the Anglo-Franco divide in West Africa, this language divide, really has to be breached. You really have to get past that. They're actively working on that together. So the British felt it was in their interest to join the Club du Sahel.

Q: Anyone on the Sahelian side? They were members of the Club, I presume?

STACEY: Oh, yes. They're members of the Club. The rotating presidency has now passed to Gambia. As you know, Gambia is now being...

The president of the Club is always a donor. This is something new I created as well because I felt the Director of the Club du Sahel had to be a much more of a quiet broker and he couldn't be out there representing the donor viewpoint. So we created a rotating president of the Club du Sahel that rotates among the donors. During the time I was there, Canada, France, and Germany had it and now Switzerland has it. I think it'll pass to the Dutch next. They're the ones who write the tough letters saying "This is what the donors feel." Before it was the Club Director that was doing that, and I felt it was inappropriate.

Q: But the Sahelians participate but they're sort of second.

STACEY: No, they're not second. Every three years we have a meeting with the heads of state, and once a year we have a meeting with the Ministers. They basically determine the agendas of those meetings. We work with them very closely on the papers and things like that but quite honestly, how much leadership they provide in the Club depends frequently on the head of state. The Cape Verde President took a very active role and he saw the Club as an important instrument. The Gambian president who is currently there is a young former military officer who came to power in the coup. He's thirty years old. He's gone through an election which a lot of people had questions with. He certainly has cleaned up the corruption in Gambia but he doesn't operate in the same way as the Cape Verde president does. Next year the presidency passes to Mali. I expect something very interesting to happen during the time that Mali has it. This is the first time in the twenty-five year history of CILSS that Mali has had the rotating presidency.

Q: How is the program different than it was twenty years ago?

STACEY: The Club program or the CILSS program?

Q: The donor program of assistance to the Sahelian countries. The Club program of what the donors are doing. Are they doing the same thing that they were doing twenty years ago?

STACEY: They're doing a lot of the same things they were doing twenty years ago in the regional programs, because there's been a continuity of support for some of these institutions, as the institutions have upgraded their capabilities.

Q: You're talking about the Agrimet Center?

STACEY: The Agrimet Center, the Sahelian Institute. In terms of bilateral programs, these have largely moved away from what we were seeing in the early eighties in terms of integrated rural development projects, much more to a form of sector programs. A lot more of the donor aid has come in the form of program aid in order to try to support some of the adjustment efforts. You have strong proliferation of NGO activities that we didn't have in the early days. Both local NGOs and international NGOs. There seems to be a kind of dichotomy that's developing where the government aid might go through sector adjustment programs or investment programs. On the other hand, people-to-people activities through NGOs with the idea that they are going to have more of an impact on poverty. One of the conclusions of our Cooperation Twenty-One exercise was that many of the problems of donor instruments, which undermine local participation and ownership - these same problems occur in the NGO programs as well. They don't fess up to these problems but it's true.

Q: There hasn't been a major shift in the sector emphasis of the donor program?

STACEY: There's been some difficulty because in some cases the Sahelian governments are having difficulty meeting some of the requirements for the sector programs. Those countries that have undertaken adjustment programs have had some more general budget support, but the six sector investment programs are really just getting started. There's a great interest in helping education because the Sahel is so much further behind in education, yet so many of the reforms that are being undertaken are politically very difficult for the countries. We have some of the most overpaid teachers in the world in this region.

Q: Are they French or are they local?

STACEY: Local teachers but through the years, because of the strength of the unions especially in the French system, they have pretty nice salaries in relative terms. So frequently, your education budgets in these countries-sometimes ninety-five percent of the budget-will be eaten up by teacher's salaries and there's nothing left over to do anything else. So you have a very high cost, low quality, low output education system.

Q: Is the education system still the narrow structure of a few going all the way up rather than broad based?

STACEY: That's right. One of the things I've found at the Club is that education was really missing from our work program and yet I recognized that this is a very crowded area of activity. We had a view that there were some very dynamic things happening in community-based education in local languages. We wanted to find out more about what was going on, so we did a series of case studies. Forty-eight communities were covered, where some sort of local literacy program had taken root and had really developed in the sense that it had been capitalized in various ways. The literacy had been capitalized on socially, through health programs, or it had been capitalized on financially by setting up some sort of an export cooperative. Some cases had been capitalized in different ways, technically as well. We wanted to find out how this came about. What we found was that communities are able to unleash a lot of capacity from local communities to do things: to really wrestle with daily development problems simply by literacy in local languages. It's an enormously powerful thing in building or unleashing local capacity.

The second thing we found is that the formal education systems are operating in ways almost like silos that are divorced from the daily development problems that people are dealing with. Much more attention needs to be put into non-formal education, but the World Bank and some of the donors are concerned about that because they don't want to emphasize non-formal education too much. It might be that you are suggesting that non-formal education is an acceptable substitute for a good formal education and I don't want to do that.

Q: You spoke earlier about one of your interests in building the local associations, municipalities, other groups and so on. What were those and what was your objective in that area.?

STACEY: All of the countries in the region had listed as part of their democratization programs decentralization. There are various moves going on right now to decentralize authorities. As you know, the old French systems were highly centralized. There's also a kind of "bottom up" decentralization going on, just as I described it a few minutes ago, through local communities gaining capacity and moving into the vacuum of development activities that the state has vacated or never filled. So you have these two things happening at once and they meet at the municipality level. Mali, I think this year, will elect 710 mayors in 710 towns. Every one of those guys has got an idea about what he wants to do. Donors are lining up now to try to assist the decentralization process by trying to assist certain municipalities. This will invariably get them into competing for municipalities.

What we tried to do is set up a program. It's a UNDP program run out of Cotonou, which assists municipalities, and is run by a man named Jean Pierre Along Basse. We set up a program with Jean Pierre to develop a way of analyzing local economies so that the mayor or city council of a town can use this as an instrument to find out exactly what their local economy is. Where is the dynamic part of their local economy? What's growing? What's stagnant? Where is their tax base? What should they be investing in in the future, in terms of accelerating overall growth and expanding their revenue base? Pretty simple models and tools. These programs, which we call Ecolock, we did a series of case studies of about six towns so far, and we conducted a series of training programs with the mayors and municipalities not in capital cities but in secondary towns.

Q: You also talked about forming a new association too?

STACEY: Yes. The Club du Sahel had a major conference in Cape Verde the second year I was there, on land tenure and decentralization. That conference was conducted in six languages: French, English and four local languages. We had a large number of herders and farmers groups that had been chosen. Each country had chosen their farmer and herder representatives to come to this meeting. As a result of this meeting with these groups, which came together for the first time from the nine countries, they decided that they wanted to form what they called "Platform Payson," which is an organization of national associations of farmers and herders into a regional platform that would represent their regional interests as well. It was this platform that was the moving group for the Sahel Twenty-One, which helped paint their vision of the region. What's interesting about these groups is that when they come together, they seem to recognize that as countries in this rapidly changing world that has small land locked countries, that the solution to their national vulnerabilities and national weaknesses are regional solutions. It is in the context of working well with their neighbors that their development prospects are enhanced and their participation in the global economy is enhanced.

Q: This was a vision of local farming communities?

STACEY: This was a vision of local farming communities.

Q: And they got this larger picture?

STACEY: They have a much larger picture and it's very interesting, that's why this Sahel Twenty-One statement is... They really think that just left to their own national borders and own national governments and economies they're pretty much doomed to long term poverty.

Q: Were there other associations that you were a part of?

STACEY: There was the Women's Platform, which had not yet become as dynamic as the farmer's. And then just as I was leaving there was a Youth Platform trying to get formed, but there was always the danger of these groups forming not because they want to do a serious work program, but because there's always meetings to go to and per diem's to be had, and you have to be careful that they're forming around serious intentions and not just to benefit from opportunistic money that always seems to be available.

Q: You alluded to the larger concept of the region, the coastal area: I understand that one of your interests at this time was how the Sahelian countries and the coastal countries might need to join together. What was your understanding of the situation and what were you thinking about?

STACEY: The training arrangement we had with CILSS had always limited the Club's ability to break out of that geographic constraint. Just before I arrived at the Club, an exercise was started with a project called Synergy, which was put in the African Development Bank at Abidjan funded by the Club. It was a small group of Sahelians who were charged, along with the Club Secretariat in Paris, to complete a West African long-term perspective study which was a study of eighteen countries.

Q: This was your initiative?

STACEY: It was initiative taken before I arrived. I completed it and we published it. The idea was to put the Sahel at the center and to cover a broader region of eighteen countries, and to look at this region not through a short-term series of still photographs, but a real moving picture that really covered from 1960 with projections to the year 2020. So we really covered a whole period of sixty years. The hypothesis being that you see a very different picture than you see - for instance there are nearly eight million Sahelians who have left the Sahel. Don't forget the Sahelian rural population would be fifty percent larger today than it is if you hadn't had this spatial redistribution of population. The World Bank has a projection that the population of Niger will stabilize at seventy-one million people in the year 2020. Everyone knows that the population of Niger will never reach seventy-one million. These people will become dispersed They have become very good at doing that.

The long-term study also was premised on two mega trends that this region was going through of dramatic change due to two major factors: one was the exposure of the region to competition. It was unavoidable, it was happening, and even though they weren't well placed to participate in global economy or their membership in the World Trade Organization, nonetheless this region was really being exposed to external competition. Secondly, the population dynamics, and not just the population growth but the movement of farmers from rural areas to cities, the movement of farmers from rural areas closer to markets, the fact that farmers were more and more in touch with markets going back to some of the old theories on the importance of the density of markets. We found a lot of dynamic changes going on, so we published this study. There was some concern that the Club was becoming a Club of West Africa. There was a bit of tension with our Sahelian colleagues over the publication of the study, because it was not done with them, it was done more with the African Development Bank. The CILSS opted out on this one. After we published it, they decided they wanted to do Sahel Twenty-One, because they wanted to develop their own vision of the Sahel within the context of West Africa. So I think the positive side of publishing the Wolpe study, we called it, was that it stimulated the Sahel Twenty-One exercise. The UNDP had taken on the task of doing national long-term perspective studies after the World Bank had published their famous Long Term Perspective on Africa in 1989. We felt by just doing a series of national long-term perspective studies, they were really missing something. So we wanted to complement that with the West Africa study.

Q: Was the UNDP involved in that?

STACEY: No, they weren't. Unfortunately the man who was running the Africa Futures Program out of Abidjan was very much locked into his own trajectory and didn't want to be involved.

Q: What's your understanding then of the relationships of the Sahel to the rest of West Africa in economic and political terms?

STACEY: The high degree of interdependence had always been acknowledged. The question isn't whether the Sahelians see their relationship with the coastal states, it's whether the coastal states see the importance of making sure that the Sahel develops at the same time. You have had higher growth in Ivory Coast and Ghana, and under a normal set of circumstances you would have had that in Nigeria as well, than you would have in Niger or Chad. Everything that happens in Nigeria is fundamental for Niger. The comparative advantages that the Sahel might have are very limited - livestock and human capital. It's interesting that a lot of the Sahelians that did locate down the coast, many of them are not just working as house servants or people in the informal economy there, they're business men and women, they're in the professions. So the coastal countries, when they were importing a lot of this meat from the EC and from other parts of New Zealand and Australia (what really was dumping) were not really working to the advantage of the Sahel. I think that much more intensive dialogue is needed on issues of livestock and regional meat production. You see some of the coastal states now investing in their own meat production, which really doesn't make a lot of sense. The Agrimet Center in Niamey has the capacity to cover all of West Africa, yet you see some of the other countries on the coast investing in their own agro-meteorological services when they could buy those services. This could be a way to get the Agromet Center to reduce its aid dependence, if it could sell its services to the coastal states. So there are a whole series of things which require important dialogue between the CILSS and Sahelian countries and the coastal countries.

One of the challenges for the Club now is to set up some of the informal structures that have been the hallmark of the Club to do that. For instance, if they want to do anything serious about the river basins, and I'm not talking about dams and irrigation, but about watershed management, desertification, and protecting the watershed. You can't do that without bringing Guinea into the picture, because the Fruta General in Guinea is the key to the whole watershed. So the CILSS, as they begin a program on this, which they hope to do because there's a regional program called for under the International Convention of Desertification, then they would bring Guinea into a variable geometry working relationship on that. That's the way the CILSS and the Club are evolving now.

Q: Do you see anybody on the African side that has a vision of this sort of thing? Is there any impetus there?

STACEY: There's one person I have some real hopes for there. It may be premature, but I did have the occasion when I was working on the Global Coalition for Africa a few years ago, to spend a bit of time with General Obasanjo, who was in a period of retirement then. Now that he's assumed the Presidency of Nigeria, I know that he's very sensitive to the kind of regional leadership and vision that Nigeria should have for West Africa.

Q: And on the donor side?

STACEY: On the donor side, I think that's more of a mixed bag. The French, in recent years, have begun to diversify their interests. You find very significant French programs in Mozambique, in South Africa, in Angola. The old Ministry of Cooperation is no more. That part of the French government had a special relationship with the former colonies. Instead, everything is now being put under the CFD (the Caisse Francaise de Developpement) which means that the programs for Mozambique and Latin America and former colonies will all be run out of the same offices, and supposedly subjected to the same criteria. The Dutch are still in many ways, the most progressive in terms of aid instruments, but they too are going through a retrenchment in the number of bilateral programs. My biggest worry is that as people reduce for whatever reasons, either they want more performing countries, or they have administrative cost problems or whatever, they reduce the number of bilateral missions that they can undertake worldwide.

Q: What about the U.S.?

STACEY: Including the U.S. Invariably those cuts fall on the small and politically insignificant countries, meaning Chad and Gambia.

Q: What about the vision for the West Africa area. Is there any thinking on that?

STACEY: For five years now there have been two attempts to write a new West Africa regional strategy and all of these efforts have been stillborn. It's not just AID's problem. I would say the donors in general are having trouble articulating a broader West Africa strategy because they have some serious and legitimate concerns about the regional organizations that they would have to work with. ECOWAS, for all of its promise, frankly has become more of a military and peacekeeping organization in the last few years. As the former senior African representative at the IMF, Mambo Butori, told me one day "You don't need regional bureaucrats to get goods and services moving across borders more efficiently." So you have this difficult situation where the EC, because they have large amounts of regional money and other donors have put significant resources into the ECOWAS Secretariat, quite honestly I would say you have a problem there of some poorly articulated projects, lack of political will among the countries to implement them, and a lot of this money just goes into paying the salaries of regional bureaucrats which are really not needed. So the problem is how do you articulate a regional strategy when you've got that kind of impediment.

The only answer I have is that you find ways to help the real actors who are integrating the region. These are economic actors. They are small businessmen, like the West African Enterprise Network; they're these groups like the municipalities. One of the things that's missing from our arsenal are things that are both regional and local. We don't have aid instruments that are simultaneously regional and decentralized at the same time. How do we work with a group of municipalities, for instance?

Q: Let's go back for a minute to what started this interest in the Sahel, which was the desertification situation. What is the understanding of that phenomenon which started the Sahel program?

STACEY: You've got a contradictory situation now. Don't forget that the Sahel in 1960 was only thirteen percent urbanized. It is now forty-five percent urbanized. That means it's not that you had a reduction of population in rural areas, because the population growth rate has assured that, but you have had a lot of farmers and rural producers that have moved closer to markets. So what you see is an intensification of peri-urban agriculture that has come about. The farmers are using more sustainable techniques. Kano, Nigeria is our most interesting example, although it's not officially in the Sahel. It's a city of over two million people and you have about six hundred and twenty-five millimeters of rain annually, and yet the city is virtually self-sufficient in a broad range of agricultural and dairy products, poultry products-eggs, cheese cereals and vegetables. This comes not from any aid programs. Farmers are re-capitalizing their soils with a combination of compost, green manure, urban waste and some chemical fertilizers. That's what Sahelian agriculture in a sense is going to look like in the future. You're getting a different kind of intensified production around Bamako, around Ouagadougou, whereas around the more remote Sahelian areas they're still practicing non-sustainable agriculture. You still have people trying to rotate their lands, they're still mining the soils and it's still highly vulnerable. Those people have learned different techniques. But the most significant thing that has happened is that if you look at the source of family income, in 1974 rural families in the Sahel were maybe eighty percent dependent on either farming or herding for their income. Today that's about forty percent, according to some of the estimates we have.

Q: Where does the rest come from?

STACEY: The rest comes from family members who have migrated out of the Sahel and those who are in the city; it comes from more diversified activities such as handicrafts and selling various products. They diversified their family strategies in interesting ways. Where the farmers have moved closer to markets, and again going back to the fact that there was only thirteen percent urbanized, we also see in the cities now a rather dramatic drop in family size. Especially where women have had opportunities for education or where the families have become urbanized, family size seems to drop very rapidly even in one generation. We would conclude that urbanization has been a good thing for the Sahel. It has helped intensify production; it has helped give a greater density to the market for agricultural producers; and it seems to give greater opportunity for delivering both education and family services to Sahelians.

Q: Any change in the livestock situation?

STACEY: The biggest change in the livestock situation was as a result of the 1992 devaluation. Between 1984 and 1992, we didn't have the data but herd size was really going up I'm sure, because the traditional markets on the coast were very difficult with all this surplus meat being dumped there. Lower quality meat cuts that weren't even consumable in Europe, and they were selling them for practically nothing down in the coastal countries. But after the 1992 devaluation, we had a tremendous increase in exports out of the Sahel. In some cases, countries doubled their exports of livestock in one year. Every indication is that has continued. They may not exactly have the same competitive edge they had right after the devaluation, but on the whole the devaluation has very much helped agricultural exports and livestock. What you have now is a situation...when I was in Abidjan you'd go in the supermarket and you'd find so much imported food because the overvalued exchange rate subsidized those imports basically. What you have to know is that African farmers in West Africa are beginning to capture their own regional markets, maybe even more than beginning. That's why I say that the key to the Sahelian food security has been that this regional market functions. The Sahel is producing surpluses. Mali exported six hundred thousand tons of rice last year. No one imagined that Mali could do that. Niger exported three million tons of sorghum and millet last year. No one imagined that they could grow that much.

Q: Let's shift now closer to home. Given that long-term perspective, what do you think is the core of the contribution of the U.S. assistance program?

STACEY: Overall? To the Sahel?

Q: Yes. Has it been significant or not effective?

STACEY: I think the areas of greatest significance - some are not obvious yet- but clearly the projects that have had a durable impact were those that involved, in many cases, improved water supply, improved healthcare, improvement in infant mortality. So programs in health were considered highly successful, and you can see that data to prove that. Roads and infrastructure have had a stimulating effect on rural production.

Q: Was that a major area of US assistance?

STACEY: Not for US assistance, but it was a major area of assistance for some donors, although the U.S. did some in the early days. Where the U.S. has made a contribution, and it's very difficult to attribute, is in Ag research and Ag extension, many of the programs we tried in the seventies. Don't forget, there's probably been a spillover of technology from Northern Nigeria as well, because you're in the same climatic zone, and the U.S. had invested heavily in the agricultural faculties at Ahmadu Bello University in Northern Nigeria. I have no doubt there's been a spillover from those excellent programs, which were in the sixties. What happened is that as the density of market changed, as the policy reforms began to have an effect, and especially after the devaluation, where we see this intensification of production in the peri-urban agricultural zone, I'm absolutely convinced that US efforts in research and extension are a part of that. Improved seed, integrated pest management, all of these things are a part of that. These are areas we had invested heavily in.

The area of greatest disappointment, and this is for all donors including the U.S., would be in institution building and capacity building. A lot of the efforts in this, bringing in very expensive technical assistance, training people and so on, the difficult budgetary and financial situation of the country really undermined a lot of the institutional development projects. They couldn't pay the costs. Donors weren't willing to continue.

Q: It was not much of a priority in the rush to do things?

STACEY: It was a priority, but in many cases, at least for the countries - you see it in the universities for instance, in higher education where the universities have suffered - some of the institutions we invested in like the Niger River Commission...we had a big documentation center we were supporting, building up a data base on the Niger River...well, the countries never supported this and they've completely fallen into disuse. So in general our review of aid over the past twenty years shows that the least successful area was institution and capacity building.

Q: Within individual countries you say that's the problem? We haven't helped create within Mali and Niger institutions and capacities?

STACEY: The efforts we made, not that they were improperly designed or misguided, but the people that we trained, the people that were the key people that we were supposed to work with they didn't continue much beyond the projects after we phased out simply because the governments were either unwilling or unable to pay the local costs. All of the things we put into agreements on that didn't work.

Q: The governments didn't have institutional development as a priority?

STACEY: Again, some of these governments went through crises, coup d'etats, but I'm trying to think of specific institutions. There were a few that got privatized like the veterinary lab in Mali which survived. A lot of the other research centers and things like that, which we supported ...some of them may be still limping along.

Q: Is there any change of view about approaching this issue in recent times?

STACEY: It's not a question of the point of view. It's only in the last two or three years that there's been any real positive growth in these economies and there's only one or two of them. Gambia, for instance, has expanded its revenue collection. Until the countries can get some sort of a tax base and a revenue collection that they can expand, they cannot begin to pick up these kinds of continuing costs...

Q: What you're saying in effect is that building up and sustaining institutional growth in these countries is mainly an economic and financial issue?

STACEY: It's a policy issue as well. The governments in some cases, haven't put the right people in or supported the institutions. It's not just financial obviously; it is policy. Certainly the areas of most success were that the donors provided for the Sahel a kind of psychological sense of confidence. They knew that they had enough support there that they weren't going to starve to death, and that they really could work on the food security issues. There was an element of confidence building, that they weren't condemned to these recurring droughts and emergencies and a lot of confidence that I think the donors helped instill, that the Sahel was still a productive place.

Q: Let's turn now to your work in Southern Africa and Zimbabwe. When did you get started in that? Of course, you were in Southern Africa earlier; we talked about that. When did you return?

STACEY: During the period that I had been working in the Sahel, there had been some movement on the Southern Africa front. The Rhodesian War was quite intense during this period. During the period of 1979-1980, Henry Kissinger was increasingly involving himself in looking for a Rhodesia settlement. There were all kinds of talk of significant amounts of money to be set aside to buy out the white farmers of Rhodesia to try to bring this war to a settlement. There were some pretty ideas floating around; and it was in that context that certain members of the Senate staff, people like Pauline Baker, who is now with the Aspen Institute but at that time was on the Hill; Frank Balance who was working for Senator Jacob Javits; Dick McCall, who was also working as a Senate staffer... This group of people was able to get into the legislation a mandate for AID to conduct a comprehensive needs analysis of development in Southern Africa. As an agency, we realized at that time how little we knew of the overall region, particularly some of the former Portuguese colonies where language and data were difficult. For Rhodesia, where we had virtually nobody on the ground, reporting was difficult. I was brought in to do this study on rather short notice, after the previous director of the study and Mrs. Butcher were unable to agree on some of the aspects of the study.

Q: There was a previous study, but it had political problems or do you remember?

STACEY: An earlier study?

Q: On Southern Africa, before you got there.

STACEY: Gosh, you know I don't know what the problems were. It was unacceptable.

Q: What was the scope of what you were asked to take on?

STACEY: The scope was to get much more of an African input into the study. They did want us to get out into the region and get some of the Southern Africans involved. There were a number of US scholars, African-Americans, that people wanted involved. It was a very difficult kind of a political equation in terms of dealing with various people who insisted on having a role. The contract had already been lent to a minority firm here to work on this study, and there were some problems with the management of that company. Although the individuals working on the study were competent, in terms of the management of that company, there were some concerns about making sure that the finances of the company were properly managed. We established a joint working group with the State Department, at least in name. State wanted to keep an oversight in this and what AID was doing. We were in frequent contact with the Hill and we began to quietly put together some outside contributors to the study, not just Southern Africans who would work with us but also good contact with Europeans who had more experience with Southern Africa than we did.

At the time the countries in the region, the so-called Front Line states, some of the leadership there had realized that it was not just sufficient to be against apartheid, they had to be for something also. The whole dimension of the so-called Front Line states had been drawn up to oppose apartheid, and in looking beyond apartheid, really thinking about Southern Africa in a post-apartheid era, what was it that they were for? What kind of economic cooperation and integration? The study that we were doing we thought, if handled properly, that some of these ideas could help the states, who were wrestling with this idea of what was it they wanted to do economically and developmentally with their region after apartheid met its end. One of the significant things I remember about this period was that it put me personally in touch with a group of Europeans who were working very quietly on the preliminary ideas for SADCC. This group included David Hood, who was the Africa person at the Carnegie Foundation; Maurice Foley who was the head of the Development Directorate of Southern Africa, the EC, a former British labor member of Parliament; and David Anderson, who was British and was the Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat. To my pleasant surprise, they invited me into their discussion group on one condition only. The condition was that I couldn't come with anyone else from the U.S. government, so whenever I went to Brussels to see them, I had to figure some way to ditch the embassy representative or they wouldn't let me into the meetings.

Q: Because they wanted to keep it quiet?

STACEY: They wanted to keep it very quiet. The focus here was developmental, it was economic; they didn't want political reporting on what they were trying to do. What they were trying to do was to formulate a series of sound ideas but to work with two of the Southern Africa Heads of State, in order to set down the first precepts of SADCC, as the post-apartheid manifestation of the so called Front Line states. That enabled me to attend a series of meetings, most of them in Brussels; one of them was in New York. It enabled me through this group to have contact with quite a number of knowledgeable people on Rhodesia, Mozambique and Angola that normally would not have worked with us, because there was a lot of suspicions about the U.S. government. We were seen as supporters of South Africa. The political tensions were such that we had to be almost as invisible as possible in order to have access to the people who could help us inform and enlighten this study so that we were not just limited to the official and known sources of information on the region.

Q: What was the scope of the study?

STACEY: The scope of the study covered all of Southern Africa, including Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, the BLS countries and Namibia. To define those needs, of course, very heterogeneous, the needs in Mozambique were very different from those in South Africa or Zambia. There was sufficient heterogeneity among the countries that we had to do individual country studies as well as an overall regional study.

Q: These were functional studies, weren't they?

STACEY: These were functional studies.

Q: Such as?

STACEY: Fisheries, agriculture, transportation, human resources as I recall. So we had functional studies, country studies, and then an overall summary. One of the more difficult aspects of this was getting State clearance on some of the language we wanted to use in the study. We had a sense that this was an opportunity, with the Congress, to present a needs analysis that would create a favorable climate for appropriations for what we wanted to do in the future as an agency. So we had AID self-interest here, which in some ways was different from State.

Q: How long did the study take?

STACEY: The study took just about a year. We had a very short time frame because of when the Congress wanted it. We were handicapped in that we couldn't travel to some of these countries. We couldn't travel to Rhodesia or Namibia. We did travel to Mozambique, but even that was difficult in this time period. I recall going on one mission to Mozambique where we lived in the ambassador's residence because the U.S. Ambassador had long ago left. Since the currency was absolutely worthless in Mozambique, you couldn't go down to the store and buy any kind of food. So we had to bring our own food stored in our suitcases, and bring tin goods in and we lived in and worked out of the ambassador's residence and ate canned food while we did our Mozambique mission.

Q: Do you remember the overall cost of the study?

STACEY: The cost as I recall was a million dollars. A healthy part of this went to the consulting firm called Pacific Associates. A young economist named Gary Walker was very able on this study, as well as some other people. There were a couple specific things that I do recall of the study that were notable. One was that one of the major resources - fisheries- off the Angola and Namibia coast, there had been a major study done by the UN Council on the Namibia and what was happening to these fishery resources, which was a real catastrophe in the making. We could never get that report out the UN Council on the Namibia largely due to the Soviet Union, whose fishing fleets were the ones really over exploiting these waters in the most horrendous way. So access to information...it was really amazing how little reliable data there was on Southern Africa, even in '78-'79. A lot of the official data that was being put out, both by the South African government and the Rhodesian government, was deliberately manipulated to make things either look better or worse than they were, depending on the sectors.

Q: Were there real substantive or process issues in preparing this report?

STACEY: There were certainly a lot of process issues. Again I'm trying to recall. There was an important element here of being able to bring in some of the U.S. academic community who had some strong views on Southern Africa, and to bring in views of Southern Africans. We were able to organize a major conference to review some of these drafts that had been pulled together by the various consultants, and so the substantive studies, the country studies, we had a good two or three day discussion as I recall. Like many of those kinds of meetings, they're not satisfactory. In other words, we got some political statements, we got some specific criticisms, we got a bit of praise. We were able to do some further work on the draft as a result of this meeting. But you never get the real kind of political validation that you would like to get from these groups that have their own agenda. I do recall that there were a number of African American academics. The people recall are Elliot Skinner, Walter Johnson, people who had some very strong views on how some of these issues should be presented. We were trying to steer away from some of the unproductive rhetoric of anti-colonialism and so on that were not going to be helpful in terms of the Congress. Since this study had been mandated by the Congress, as much as we wanted our audience to be the Southern Africans, clearly the primary audience was the Congress.

Q: Were they trying to steer it in some way?

STACEY: Yes, they were trying to steer it. I was fortunate to have a couple of good AID people, Mike Feldstein and Charlie Blankstein.

Q: My question was: did the Congress try to manipulate or steer what you were coming out with, in the substance or direction of the report?

STACEY: I don't recall that Congress tried to steer it too much. There were a handful of staff people up there who had their own ideas about what they wanted to see, and they were willing to work with us quietly and have discussions with us. They wanted to clearly set rationale for a much stronger US involvement in the future development of Southern Africa. They saw this as much as anything not a study that would come up with definitive paradigms for the future, but a study that was going to help educate parts of the Congress, parts of the Executive Branch, about this region which a lot of people knew very little about.

Q: What were the issues with the State Department in this?

STACEY: The issues with the State Department were what we were proposing to do in Mozambique and Angola, where there were certain kinds of both policy and legislative restrictions. There were issues with the State Department about South Africa, and the contact with certain groups or individuals they didn't want us to have contact with. The same went for Rhodesia.

Q: What were the results of the report? What happened to it?

STACEY: The report was finally sent to the Senate. As I recall they had maybe one subcommittee hearing on the report. In general, it seemed to be well received. There was a certain level of disbelief within the State Department that this was going to result in anything, and that we would get any useful legislative authorities as a result of the study. Of course, the study preceded by a year or so the successful negotiations at Lancaster House. So in my view the study was useful in that it helped prepare various people in the government for the eventual opening of programs in both Zimbabwe and SADCC as well, after we made a significant pledge of assistance at Lancaster House. I do recall that, for instance, on the Zimbabwe section of the report, we were able to dig into the land issue, which was and still is the most volatile political economic issue in Zimbabwe. It prepared the ground for a very practical approach to this, because after doing this study we understood better that it would be catastrophic for the country if there was an extensive flight of white farmers, managers and technical people who were in the government, and that given other factors, you weren't going to solve the land problem by redistributing productive assets to small farmers. This was something that had to be very carefully considered. When the eventual break came at Lancaster House, and the U.S. pledged seventy-five million dollars a year for three years to support implementation of the program, the Southern Africa Needs Study gave us a lot of useful information in terms of some of those early programs.

Q: Do you have a sense of how it was received in Southern Africa?

STACEY: It was received in Southern Africa with kind of a mixed audience. Those people that wanted to see greater US involvement and engagement in Southern Africa welcomed the study. But there was another group who felt that the study represented the cutting edge of an international corporate conspiracy to come and exploit Southern Africa's mineral resources, and that they had to be cautious of real US intentions. It wasn't until later in the 1980's that the Reagan Administration made the unfortunate decision to really up the ante by assisting Savimbi, but I think there were already indications that the U.S. was beginning to support some groups within Angola and Mozambique for another agenda. That was not well received by the other Southern African countries.

Q: Do you remember anything about the state of the program that we had?

STACEY: During the time of the study, we had our small programs in the BLS countries. We had a program in Malawi and were trying to have a program in Zambia, although the Zambians made it very difficult by constantly creating policy conditions where it was tough to do anything. But we had nothing virtually except for humanitarian programs in Angola and Mozambique, and nothing in South Africa. During the time that this study was underway, or it might have been a little bit later, yes, when the funds were voted for Zimbabwe, there was a relief bill voted. There was an earmark put in that relief bill that we had to spend at least five million dollars for relief inside Rhodesia, which would have been a violation of US sanctions, or at least many people considered it so. I remember that during this period we had a difficult issue with Senator Helms' staff, who didn't want us assisting countries on the periphery of Rhodesia without doing something for Rhodesia itself.

Q: You finished up the study?

STACEY: We finished up the study in 1979 and at that time I was asked to take over the Office of Development Planning in Washington in AID. I did that for about a year and a half. It was not the most rewarding assignment for me. I much preferred being in the field. The Development and Planning Office involved an awful lot of budget work. We were constantly working out budget allocations, program allocations, not only with the different missions, but negotiating these with State, within the Bureau, within PPC, within other parts of AID. Then, of course, the Congressional Presentations and all of the notices that had to be made to Congress all went through this office.

Q: No strategic initiatives that you were working on?

STACEY: We tried to work on a few strategic initiatives. The one that I do recall at the time was one that there was a great deal of concern about the changing situation in agricultural production and the possibility of a neo-Malthusian rising population, declining food productivity and declining environmental capacity on lands. We did put together a major presentation for the Congress and other parts of the administration to really try to demonstrate that Africa really wasn't feeding itself. Imports were increasing and we were always influenced by fads and changing modes in this business of development. When I started with AID, the focus was on institutional development. Not too many years later it became basic human needs, after the ILO had published its famous study on basic human needs. Then, of course, it became structural adjustment, and every time we were in some mode that was perceived as trickle down, people would want something different, so after structural adjustment became sustainable, development came and so on.

Q: During this time though, or it was in the later phases, we were in the New Directions mode. Do you know anything about that?

STACEY: It was the end of the basic human needs period but it was the New Directions mode. You better refresh my memory. It seemed like we always had new directions.

Q: It was a congressional initiative, after the Vietnam affair in the mid 1970's, when support for foreign assistance waned. It shifted the focus to direct assistance to the poor and the poor majority. You were part of that effort to direct programs along that line.

STACEY: Yes, I do recall that. In a sense that grew out of the basic human needs approach, but I agree with you. In a sense, this was all of the antibodies that had built up to what people thought was trickle down.

Q: We can come back to that. So you were there not too long and then you moved on to Zimbabwe I believe?

STACEY: I had a short stint as Office Director of Southern Africa. I had the opportunity to look at how to implement some of the things we had done in the Southern Africa study a couple of years earlier. I had only been the Office Director of Southern Africa for a relatively short period of time when the first AID Director to Zimbabwe, Chuck Grader, decided to leave and accept an offer in the private sector. I had been scheduled to go to Tunisia as a Director, but at the last moment I was offered the opportunity to go to Zimbabwe. This was an opportunity I certainly didn't want to pass up. From 1981-1986 I was in Harare, as the Director of both the bilateral program which was committed by the U.S. at Lancaster House, when the Rhodesian settlement was negotiated, and also the initial program for SADCC (the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference).

Q: Just a tangent here, do you think your study and the reports that you did had any relationship to the formation of SADCC?

STACEY: Oh, yes; it contributed. I think SADCC would have been formed regardless of whether the study was done or not. But because of the working relationship I had established with the contact group, involving David Hood, the EC and the Commonwealth Secretariat, we were able to get some of our ideas into the briefing materials for the two presidents who really pushed SADCC.

Q: We can come back to that in a minute. What month in the year of 1981 was this?

STACEY: You know, I really can't remember. I think it was early in 1981 and I was there until 1986.

Q: What was the situation in Zimbabwe when you arrived there?

STACEY: The situation was really quite hopeful in that there were so many things to work with in Zimbabwe. There was still a technically competent civil service; you had a local currency that had some value that you could do things with. You had a private sector that was functioning and an economy that was making hundreds of small-scale industrial products. You had a sophisticated agricultural sector, which had grown up around commercial farming that technologically had something to offer the small farmers, this new set of clients that were coming on strength. So there were a lot of positive things to work with. There was a sense of can-do that came out of the Lancaster House conference. The Zimbabweans organized a major meeting called ZIMCORD, which was their first major meeting of coordination of donors. There was a lot of good will towards Zimbabwe, to help them recover from the war, help them rebuild and get their agriculture going again. Everyone was reasonably confident of success except for one thing. Nobody knew how Socialist or Marxist the policies of these former guerillas really were, because when they were in the bush fighting they said some pretty strong things along Socialist lines. I do recall Chedzaro, at the first ZIMCORD conference saying something that has...

Q: He was the Minister?

STACEY: Yes, he was the Minister of Economy and Finance and had spent most of the war outside of the country. He was the Deputy Secretary General of UNCTAD, so he a pretty good indoctrination into Western thinking and nobody thought that he was a Marxist like some of the other leaders of ZANU and ZAPU. I remember him at the ZIMCORD conference saying something that I remembered a long time. He said "Growth without equity is unacceptable, but equity without growth is disaster." It was his way of trying to reassure the donors that the country was not going to pursue a policy of redistributing productive assets. If anything, in terms of the politics of redistribution, what the government focused on was trying to redistribute opportunity.

They did that through massive expansion of education, a modest program of land resettlement based on purchase of land on a "willing seller-willing buyer" basis. They changed some of the labor laws to try to give people a more stability in their employment. It certainly, aside from the modest land purchase program, it wasn't a redistribution kind of strategy at all.

Q: So what was your task?

STACEY: I was the Director. We had seventy-five million dollars a year, which had been promised at Lancaster House.

Q: And a pledge at the ZIMCORD meeting, I believe.

STACEY: And a pledge at the ZIMCORD meeting. Fortunately, because we were in a reconstruction period, we had very flexible authorities on how we could use these funds. There was an interest in terms of the senior management of AID, to really implement this program with a very small mission. The idea, which I completely agreed with, was to see what we could do with a very small bilateral mission, which was running the regional program as well. We had seven direct-hire staff total, including for the SADCC Program. We got the necessary support from Washington with the kind of authorities we needed to approve projects in the field. One of the chief elements of the strategy at that time was to give support to the Zimbabwe private sector, which was really starved for foreign exchange. They had been living under very difficult import restrictions for a long time. They were awash in liquidity of local currency. The idea was to use our dollars to sop up the excess foreign currency of the private sector, letting them have access to foreign exchange. We, in turn, then would use the local currency for reconstruction, seed packs, rebuilding schools and bridges. We did the first land mine clearance program that I know of, that AID ever did in Zimbabwe in 1982-83. We had to do it in a rather...it took a little bit of creative styling of this project to do it legally.

Q: What were the main sectors or concerns?

STACEY: Aside from this significant commodity import program, because the country had been starved for many years for any imports, the farmers needed tractors, all kinds of industry needed raw materials. Aside from that, the major areas that we focused in and where I think we really made some contributions, was a major population program. There was a significant demand and a very strong group of women who were able to get through a major program. As a result, I think Zimbabwe's contraceptive prevalence rate has now gone over fifty percent. It's considered the outstanding family planning program in Africa now.

Q: What were you trying to do with the program then?

STACEY: The program had been largely run by private hands. It didn't have a lot of legitimacy in the new political leadership. What we had to do is to get the political blessings of the new leadership and basically transform it to one-because that was the best we were going to get from a private family planning organization- that had the right kind of support and hands-off philosophy from government. It was fortuitous timing that one of the women who was a key actor in this organization was the twin sister of Mrs. Mugabe. Both of them were from Ghana originally and they had a background in this field. So between Mrs. Mugabe and her sister, we got the political support we needed. The program was difficult because we were under in the period of the AID administration in 1981, when we were being pushed very hard to use only natural family planning methods by the then USAID/Africa Bureau Assistant Administrator at the time - Mr. Frank Ruddy.

Q: Assistant administrator.

STACEY: Assistant administrator for Africa. The Zimbabweans wanted a full range of services, including Depo-Provera, which was an injectable at that time, which had not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, but it had been approved by the WHO. It had been used in Zimbabwe and had many social advantages for women. They wanted to continue with Depo-Provera and at that time it was against U.S. policy to finance the use of it, and even to finance organizations that were using it. So we had some difficult and awkward political issues with the headquarters on this program before we finally got it approved but it certainly is pulled off.

Q: We were the primary supporter of the program?

STACEY: Yes, we were the primary supporter of the program, and later on the World Bank and other donors came in, but this was clearly a program that we took the lead on and took a lot on heat on early on.

Q: Do you have any information on how it got started? How the interest in family planning began?

STACEY: There were various people who claimed credit for getting this interest. I decided that many of the women in Zimbabwe had become quite empowered during the war. They played an enormously important role in the fighting. They had political access after the war and this was right at the top of the women's agenda. It wasn't small business products or agricultural farm implements. It wasn't a change in the gender laws. It was family planning. They wanted to reduce family size and better education for their kids. That was the number one priority.

Q: What about the other sectors?

STACEY: Another major sector that was enormously challenging was education. Since the government's policy was to expand educational opportunity, they went from eight hundred thousand children in school, to over two million, in less than two years. They more than doubled the number of kids in school.

Q: What was our role?

STACEY: Our role was to try to keep them from collapsing under this influence. We had a major educational planning model that we had been creating in the Ministry of Education, with US technical assistance, through the AED - Academy for Educational Development. So we helped with a lot of the planning, and perhaps one of the most significant things we did was we built a teacher training college, entirely out of local currency. This project was exceptionally interesting, in that since it was funded with local currency, we didn't have the same review and approval process to go through, had we been constructing this institution with US dollar funds. So a lot of the contractor selection, architectural work and building were done by the Zimbabweans, which we signed off on. To make a long story short, they built this college on an old airstrip that had been used before as part of their sanctions busting effort during the Rhodesian war. We transformed this old airfield into a fully functioning teacher college in fourteen months.

Q: Where did the staff come from?

STACEY: The staff had been trained and put in place at another institution, during the time that the college was being built. So that when the physical construction was finished, they could transfer the staff right over from this other institution.

Q: These were all Zimbabwean staff?

STACEY: Mostly Zimbabwean, some were white Zimbabweans. It was a teacher training institute where all of the teachers who were going out to teach had to be able to teach not only science, English and math, but also they had to be able to teach one of three technical skills - either carpentry, electricity or agriculture. So they had a whole practical dimension to the curriculum.

Q: Was the curriculum developed by our people?

STACEY: We had some input into the curriculum through the contract with AED. Later we helped them on distance learning. But our strategy was generally built around employment. We said: "Look, we have to reduce the number of new entrants coming into the labor force. We have to improve the quality of those entrants coming into the labor force, in terms of the education they're getting. We have to get greater productivity out of the agricultural sector, so that more off farm employment could be created in the rural areas." In that regard, we invested in a series of marketing depots, again using local currency. Every farmer in the country had a marketing depot within fifty kilometers of his farm. At these marketing depots, they could bring in cotton, maize, a variety of produce, have it weighed, purchased and he could receive his check when he went out the door. He could also buy new seeds, fertilizers and other farm implements at the same time. So it was kind of a one-stop shop, in these farming depots, but the Agricultural Marketing Authority made sure that the farmers received their check on the spot. One of the keys to the small amount of agricultural success we saw after independence was not just that they had the technology of improved seeds and other things that had been developed by commercial farmers, but they had these marketing depots and they knew they were going to get paid immediately. When they got paid immediately, their incentive to produce was nailed down and they got a fair price.

Q: We also had a major role in the agricultural sector, didn't we, in this program?

STACEY: We had a major role in helping reintroduce seed packs and farm implements and imports that were absolutely essential to get agriculture reborn again.

Q: We had a local currency program there too?

STACEY: Yes, we had a large local currency program there for the ag center. We also financed three cotton gins. Cotton was the fastest growing crop among small holders, a cash crop. They grew the cotton in rotation with maize and it would be a major impediment if they couldn't get new ginning capacity. There was a very strong preference for American gins, so we had to make the case that the Zimbabwean cotton didn't compete with American cotton, in order to finance these cotton gins under the Commodity Import Program. This resulted in a significant expansion of cotton production.

Q: Were we involved in any of the overall planning and strategy for the agricultural sector?

STACEY: Yes, we worked with the Ministry, but we could only go so far with really influencing their strategies. We worked very closely with the British. We did help them with studies which tried to show them that land resettlement was not the answer for the population pressure in the so called "communal lands" - lands that had been occupied more by the traditional African farmers. They had thought prior to independence that by redistributing the land they could solve this problem, but it was impossible.

Q: Did we have any agricultural institutions that we were supporting?

STACEY: Yes, the agricultural faculty at the university was a major program. We not only reinforced their Bachelors Degree program, we helped them create a Masters program in agriculture - probably the best Masters program on the continent in agriculture. That was done through a contract with Michigan State University. We had Carl Eicher there as one of the leaders in the program. We bought a farm for the University. This farm supports itself, or the sale of the produce supports the farm. It was very close to the University, so the students could come out on the weekend to have practical classes in irrigation, poultry, beekeeping, dairy production, because it was a completely integrated farm. Again, we bought that out of local currency, with the government's concurrence.

We did some innovative food triangulars there as well. There were some serious maize deficits in both Malawi and Mozambique, largely as a result of the war that was continuing to wage over there. Large numbers of refugees were moving into Malawi. Zimbabwe had maize surpluses, so we were able to convince the USDA to ship wheat to Zimbabwe, which they normally imported, and Zimbabwe then shipped their surplus maize to Malawi and Mozambique. This was good in the sense that it helped facilitate regional commercial trade in food grants. It also recognized the fact that we were not competitive in exporting maize to this region, but since these countries couldn't produce adequate wheat, we were competitive.

Q: What about the transport sector? Were you working on that as well?

STACEY: Through the Commodity Import Program, eighty percent of the commodity imports was reserved for the private sector, and twenty percent was reserved for the public sector. Through the public sector parts of it, we did support transport. We financed GE locomotives for the railroads. That was at the top end of the spectrum. At the lower end of the spectrum, we were using local currency to repair bridges, repair roads, things that were damaged during the war. We also imported some D8 caterpillars for the Ministry of Rural Roads, for rural road repair and maintenance, but that was a bit of a subterfuge because the government had a very difficult land mine clearance program ahead of it. The kinds of mines that had been planted in Zimbabwe were these plastic anti-personnel mines, which often didn't kill people as much as maim them for life. What they wanted was D8 caterpillars with three inch steel reinforcing at the bottom, and then they would just run over the mines and blow them up. So we put that kind of specification into the procurement documents for the D8 caterpillars, and then we just didn't notice when the Ministry for Rural Roads lent the caterpillars to the Ministry of Defense for land mine clearance. And when we did notice, we asked them to return them and they did, but it was a few years later, after a lot of mines had been cleared.

Q: Not a loss of our tractors in the process?

STACEY: Not a one.

Q: I had the impression that in all of these programs you're talking about that you were having a fairly innovative program strategy, programming arrangement and so on. What were you doing there that was so different from the typical AID program?

STACEY: AID had allowed us to do sector programs before sector programs really existed, as we know sector investment programs now. They had given us considerable authority to approve these projects in the field and considerable authority in the programming of the local currencies and the approval of local currency projects in the field. Some of this authority was concurrent with REDSO in Nairobi, helping us out, because we were committed to keeping a small mission so there were certain specialties that REDSO had: contracting officer, engineer, and so on. The fact that they would let us...for example, for an ag sector program, finance a lot of those activities with a commodity import program. So we were doing an ag sector program with a commodity import program element that went beyond the agriculture sector, but we were applying the local currency to agriculture. What we were trying to do on one hand was keep the private sector alive in Zimbabwe until more stable times prevailed, but make sure that this local currency, which we could do a lot of things with, was being applied in a strategic way to priorities we agreed on with the Zimbabwe government. Since most of these local currencies were country-owned, we had to work very carefully with them.

Q: How did you find working with the Zimbabwean government?

STACEY: There were some terrific people we worked with in the government who were highly trained, very clear thinking. People like Bernard Chedzaro, who was the Minister of Finance and Economic Development; Dennis Norman, who was the Minister of Agriculture, a white Zimbabwean; Robbie Buwuzi, who was the permanent secretary to the Minister of Agriculture. They were really excellent to work with. We had very frank sometimes a little bit fractious relationships. There was always a great deal of resentment on the part of the Prime Minister, President Mugabe, whenever there were conditions on any kind of aid. As far as he was concerned there were no conditions that were put up at Lancaster House when the seventy-five million dollars was promised.

There was a time when some of his military, the so-called Fifth Brigade, were really abusing civilians in Matabeleland. A lot of human rights organizations including Amnesty International, were quite concerned about these human rights violations, so we did suspend the program at one time. At least the ag sector program, until some of these practices stopped. That created a rather tense period with the Zimbabweans. This was in 1984. One program I forgot to mention that we did which was quite successful was a housing program as well - Housing Investment Guarantee (HIG). You had sufficient number of people in urban areas with salaried employment that HIG could pay for itself. There was a large unmet demand for low cost housing. The building societies, which did lend for housing did not lend to that low-income strata. Thus, they would lend to medium income people for housing. What we did was we used our HIG in a way that got the building societies to lower their thresholds for lending, something in the range of two to three thousand dollars, so that they were reaching a different end of the market-lower income people. We started several housing programs there. The properties were bought and the loan repayments were quite good. As far as I know, these programs have succeeded.

Q: On this question of working with the Zimbabweans in this capacity, how do you compare that capacity with the Sahelian countries and whether this was a factor in what you were able to do?

STACEY: There was no comparison. The kinds of people you had in various government offices in 1981-82 were very high.

Q: Below the top level?

STACEY: Even below the top level you had people who knew what they were doing. I suspect that there's less capacity now than there was in '81-'82. You've had a lot of people who have left government and some of the people that they attracted back to government from overseas after the war was ended; they didn't stay too long. They found that working in government was in some cases difficult. In other cases, they weren't paid as well as they could be in the private sector. Even the university, where we had really built up an excellent ag faculty after South Africa became independent, they began recruiting black professors from neighboring countries and quite a number of Zimbabweans went down to South Africa. So they were lost to Zimbabwe.

Q: But you did see some brain drain into South Africa at some point?

STACEY: Oh, yes. Out of Zambia and Malawi as well. Out of all of the English speaking countries there's been a brain drain. Not a brain drain to the region, but it's been a brain drain from Zimbabwe. Again, the salaries and conditions that they were working under were not ideal. The government, in some cases, put a lot of restrictions on university professors as to what they could do and say and so on.

Q: What about your relationship with the embassy? Were they trying to steer you in various directions?

STACEY: We had a good relationship with the embassy. We had a series of ambassadors who were well informed. They saw AID as a strategic part of what we were trying to do there, and yet they had enough good sense to let us get on with the job and do what we were doing. Ambassador Bob Keeley, was the first ambassador. He was later succeeded by David Miller, who had come up from Tanzania. The staff always appreciated Ambassador Miller. He would come over once a week to the AID office, have coffee with us, kick off his shoes and sort of ask us what was going on, what was it he needed to know, what kind of problems were we having that he could help us with. So we always appreciated the weekly visit from the ambassador.

Q: Anything else on the Zimbabwe program?

STACEY: We also had a rather novel situation in that I was not only the Director for the Zimbabwe Bilateral Program, but for SADCC as well. We set the initial parameters in that period for the U.S. regional program with SADCC. We began getting into Mozambique and into transportation in the SADCC program. During the period of the seventies, we had been very much in the New Directions mode of basic human needs, and we were not doing very much with infrastructure. I had the rather unusual situation in Zimbabwe where all of the seventy-five million dollars was Economic Support Funds (ESF), so I didn't have the same earmarks and restrictions that we had on the AID account. I was doing everything from railroads to population with ESF money. We always had to convince the State people that this was a good strategic use of ESF money, and that under this set of circumstances you didn't just want to write the government a check. In fact, we were spending the money twice: the first time through the private sector, and the second time through the local currency accounts. The fact that we could really get back into transport again with Zimbabwe being land locked, Botswana being land locked. Some of your potentially higher performing countries there were highly dependent on either Mozambique or South Africa for their egress. I think we really broke the ice there of getting back into major infrastructure.

Q: Your mission was to get involved in the infrastructure transport area with SADCC?

STACEY: When SADCC was formed, different countries were charged with taking the lead on a particular sector, and Mozambique was the lead country for transportation planning in all of Southern Africa. It was so important to the future of the region - to agriculture, to exports, to growth, to poverty strategies, to employment creation - you just couldn't walk away from transport. Because it had been severely disrupted during the war, these countries had a lot of things they needed to import, they had things they could export, but you had to work with Mozambique. The problem we had in those days was that the government of Mozambique was not very pro-American. We were still working out our relationships with the government, which a lot of people in Washington considered to be Marxist. It was really in the mid-eighties that we began to work that out. That's where the SADCC programming in Mozambique really helped to pave the way.

Q: Were you involved with the initiative for transport under SADCC?

STACEY: I was very much involved with the planning of the Beira corridor. There was a lot of opposition in Congress to getting involved in the Beira corridor because Zimbabwe had troops down there. The only pipeline, which provided fuel to Zimbabwe came up through the Beira Corridor, and it had been blown up a few times by some guerillas, so Zimbabwe sent their troops across the border which they thought was in their own self interest. A lot of members of Congress didn't like that and they didn't particularly want us getting into Beira corridor transport project, which was aimed at rehabilitating the Port of Beira and the railway going down there when in fact Zimbabwe had a military operation underway. So we had to work through those issues.

Q: Did you work with SADCC as an institution? What was that phenomena?

STACEY: We worked with SADCC as an institution. SADCC had it's Regional Executive Secretary in Botswana. Our program with them wasn't just transport. We also, for instance, got into a major ag research program with them in sorghum and millet with ICRISAT as the implementing agency. We also began working with them on livestock possibilities, since two countries down there had EC quotas for fresh meat exports. It was thought that perhaps other countries could participate in that.

The SADCC program was hurt by two things at the end of my stay in Zimbabwe that probably should be noted. On the SADCC side, the decision was made by the Reagan Administration to increase the assistance to Savimbi. It was ironic that Savimbi was visiting the White House on the very day that SADCC was having its ministerial meeting in Harare. The lead minister for SADCC, who happened to be the Vice President of Botswana, Peter Mmusi, got up and read a resolution from the ministers condemning the U.S. regretting that on this day they were meeting that Mr. Savimbi had been invited into the White House, and been given assistance that they thought was counterproductive to the interests of the region. When this motion was read out from the floor of the meeting, the head of the U.S. delegation, who was the Assistant Administrator for Africa, Mark Edelman, instructed all of us to get up and walk out in protest, including the Zimbabwe Director. We all did, and that created a rather difficult working environment with SADCC for some time afterwards, as long as the U.S. was involved with Savimbi.

The thing that happened on the bilateral side, which came with terrible timing, was that Zimbabwe was elected in 1985 to the Security Council for the UN as one of the three Africa seats. I think it was in '85 or '84, I can't remember. It was just before the South Korean airliner was shot down by the Russians as it crossed over near Japan. As you'll recall, there were a series of efforts to condemn the Soviet Union, including a resolution in the Security Council. Despite all kinds of lobbying efforts by the United States, including George Schultz personally, the Zimbabweans decided to abstain rather than to vote in favor of the U.S. resolution. That abstention was taken as a real slap in the face to US interests. Our seventy-five million dollar per year program was dramatically cut right after that. We were in the last year of our commitment to the Lancaster House. We received a very substantial cut in our obligation authority as a result of that one abstention. A vote history will little remember nor long record.

Q: And this was long before President Carter fiasco, which cut off the aid all together later on.

STACEY: That's right. Later on was when President Carter had to walk out of a meeting and that was the end of it.

Q: Did you meet with President Mugabe?

STACEY: Yes, I met with him a few times. He was a very insular type of man. You always got the impression that he was not listening very carefully. I do recall one discussion with him on the merits of capitalism versus socialism. He said that for him, he recognized the ability of capitalism to create wealth, no question about it. But for him the danger of capitalism was individualism: that the kind of individualism that our capitalist system spawned created a predatory individual. This was a threat to the family and society, this kind of individualism. So he said he wasn't afraid of capitalism, he was afraid of individualism. I do remember another discussion with him. This goes back to earlier days in the late seventies when Henry Kissinger discovered Rhodesia, and was going around the world making speeches about mobilizing billions of dollars to settle the Rhodesia question. During the time that I was there, Henry Kissinger came through, this time as a private citizen. There was a meeting with Mr. Mugabe and the American ambassador. At the meeting, Mugabe asked Mr. Kissinger where all these billions were that he had been talking about. Kissinger answered with almost a straight face. He said " Oh, Mr. President, the billions are out there. All you have to do is borrow them. Nobody will make you pay them back." That said a lot about the view of third world debt that Mr. Kissinger held.

Q: Anything more on SADCC and the Zimbabwe experience?

STACEY: That is perhaps the highlights of the time. I do know that while we were convinced we were doing good projects and that many of these projects would stand up to the test of time, and from what I know many of them have, such as the Teacher Training College, and the agricultural faculty at the university, and the Marketing Depots. They're all still functioning. But we had a little impact on overall policy. We had an impact on population policy; we had an impact on housing policy. We had a limited impact on agricultural pricing policy. But overall in terms of the macro policies, I think we were in a situation where there was a risk. We see it today with the declining value of the Zimbabwe currency, rising budget deficits, the fact that there was never a peace dividend. In other words, the ending of the Rhodesian War never resulted in any reduction in military spending. The government still kept increasing its military spending. All of these factors meant that the optimum results possible from the kind of AID investment program we were making, we weren't getting; that was the real dilemma. We really were doing some good projects, but we weren't sure they would stand the test of time, because of the macro-economic policy and because in those days they really didn't want to have a great deal to do with the World Bank, either. We had a situation where we and the British were doing as well as anyone anywhere with policy dialogue with the Zimbabweans, because they were rather impervious to outside policy advice in those days.

Q: Let's move on to your next assignment. You were finishing up in Zimbabwe and what happened then?

STACEY: Since I'd had my entire career in Africa, and since I had an interest in Asia as well - I'd started back in India - I basically decided that maybe I should look for my next tour somewhere outside of Africa. About that time I got a call from Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker, who was quite tied up in those days with very difficult situations in Angola and South Africa, who wanted a senior AID person as one of his deputies, to handle all of the economic and AID matters. I got a call from him and he asked if I would be interested, provided that he could get my nomination past the White House, because they didn't like too many liberals coming into the administration.

Q: This was during the Reagan administration?

STACEY: This was during the Reagan administration. I'd always been an independent voter, but my leanings had always been left of center. I don't think I'd voted for Mr. Reagan. So I got a call back about a month or so later. I got the support of the ambassador there who was a political appointee, David Miller. I got a call back saying there were no liberal odors, which was the term that the assistant secretary used. So I took the job and came back to Washington in 1986, which was right in the middle of the Reagan administration.

Q: What was the position, to be clear? What was the job?

STACEY: There were three deputies: one that handled political affairs, one that handled military affairs, all in coordination with the Pentagon and the intelligence agencies, and one which handled all economic and aid matters. I was one of the deputies.

Q: You were Deputy Assistant Secretary? That was your title?

STACEY: Yes, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Africa Region. It was a very good assignment. We had early morning political briefings at about seven thirty, with the Assistant Secretary. Following the Intelligence Briefings, we would have a small staff meeting of all the deputies with the Assistant Secretary. We'd go over major issues for the day, what needed to be brought to the Secretary's attention. I always did the briefings on anything that had to do with aid, with our relations with AID, budget allocations; country levels; any kind of political issues; anything dealing with the World Bank or any kinds of major programs that were going off track in terms of the IMF or the World Bank; severe debt problems in terms of countries that would no longer be eligible. There was a whole range of things that I had to cover in this position.

Q: Did you have staff?

STACEY: My direct staff was just a secretary, but I basically supervised the EPS office, which was the Economic Policy Office of the Africa Region. I also supervised the regional office, so I had about twenty evaluations to write of State officers, many of them who had already served as ambassadors. It was kind of difficult.

Q: A fairly senior group then?

STACEY: A fairly senior group, and they didn't like AID people coming over into such senior positions. They didn't think we had necessarily earned our stripes. We hadn't passed the same tests. I think I was at least on the personal side, very rewarded, because I seemed to have very good relations with all of the State people. I really never felt like a second class citizen or anything like that.

Q: What were the issues that you were concerned with. Let's take them one by one, the things you were trying to do and the issues you had to face.

STACEY: One of the more difficult issues at the time, and you will recall this because you were involved as well, is that we were really beginning an AID program in apartheid South Africa. The issues of how apartheid would end and in what role was still not clear at all. There was enormous pressure from the Congress and interest groups for sanctions on South Africa, something the White House and the administration were resisting. And yet it was expected that the aid program there would, without violating everyone's desire to put pressures and sanctions on the government, help build linkages with the majority community and future leaders. This was an extremely delicate political issue. It was expected that I would provide a lot of oversight on what AID was doing and not doing. The embassy in South Africa, the ambassador then was Herb Nichol, wanted to keep the AID program on a very short leash and restrict their activities quite severely. On the other hand, in order to be effective in what they were supposed to do, the AID people needed this kind of liberty to go out and build relationships and bridges with these future leaders. Some of the people that were assigned to the South Africa program in those days, the AID people, were really doing that, but there was a constant amount of objections coming back from the embassy wanting us to really get tough with the AID people. All of that fell on my desk.

Q: Was there a lot of staff then, in South Africa?

STACEY: There was a small staff in South Africa. I can't remember if Tim Bork was heading up the office at that time. Carlos Pascal, who's now with the National Security Council was out there at that time, as an AID officer, with his wife. I think it was a small staff, two or three people, but most of the program was being managed by locals, by South Africans, because there were some very capable people down there. I don't remember the exact content of the program that well at this time, but I know that for instance we were very involved with financing the defense of the Delmas Six, which were a group of accused South African terrorists who...

Q: This was a human rights program?

STACEY: This was part of a human rights program, and the Delmas Six were a very well known group of ANC people who had been apparently caught planning activities or undertaking activities. They deserved a fair trial and we helped support that. They were eventually found not guilty and were freed. I think two of them are ministers today for the South African government, which shows you the kinds of people that AID was working with.

Q: We were financing their defense?

STACEY: We were financing their defense plus a lot of support of their families, because these peoples families were almost destitute, and in some cases they were having difficulty keeping a roof over their head and keeping from becoming homeless, so AID was doing some really very important work and yet it was a very sensitive time. To some groups we were breaking sanctions or working against sanctions. To other groups we weren't doing enough. We should have been supporting something more revolutionary. Despite all the difficulties, I think that was one of AID's finer hours, because they really did do some goods things.

Q: Were there other projects that you remember getting involved in? Others were not so controversial.

STACEY: There were a couple that were particularly important. You'll recall at the time that the Congress was in the process of passing a sanction on South Africa. Very strong lobbying from groups like Trans Africa and other African-American groups. The administration's policy was "constructive engagement", a term we hear once again now in 1998. But it was a term that really got people rather inflamed, even in Southern Africa. Many groups, even in the countries I had previously worked with, in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, felt that there should be no engagement with this regime. At the same time, they were all trading with South Africa out of economic survival. Anyway, there was concern that we had to do something other than just stave off sanctions. I was able to convince Crocker, and he was able to convince Secretary of State Schultz, that doing something much more positive and more visible for the countries on South Africa's periphery who were suffering because of sanctions and were likely to suffer more if sanctions were added. So they asked me to work on a major program of five hundred million dollars over three years. Some people wanted to stretch it out over five years, but we conceived it as a three-year program. It focused on transportation, and a number of other key areas: air transport, rail transport and road transport, to permit the periphery countries of South Africa to continue to get their exports out, their imports in during what could have been a protracted period of sanctions against South Africa, because all of the European countries were increasing their sanctions as well. One of the focal points of this program as well was the "Beira Corridor" which was the key to the Zimbabwe's survival. The Beira Corridor contained their oil and fuel pipeline from Beira up to Zimbabwe to the capital Harare. It also was one of the key lines for importing the various things that they needed and getting their tobacco out, which was the prime foreign exchange area. This whole line at the time was under a guerilla attack from a group known as RENAMO, which was a rather shadowy group, at least in 1985, that people knew very little about. It had its origins from some of South Africa's activities in helping organize such groups against the governments who were providing assistance to ANC or the PAC. In this case RENAMO was severely disrupting the Beira Corridor. Zimbabwe had sent troops into Mozambique to protect their interests. There was really kind of a mess. As we conceived this program for the Beira Corridor, we had to undertake certain consultations with members of Congress. There was a lot of opposition at the time from some key Republicans. This was difficult because I was working in a Republican administration. Key members really felt that we should be supporting RENAMO and that the government of Mozambique...

Q: Senator Helms and that group?

STACEY: Yes, it was Senator Helms, Congressman Burton, Senator Mitch McConnell - especially McConnell from Kentucky. Some of them really felt that we should be working against the government in Mozambique. You'll recall at the time there was something called the Reagan Doctrine, which had underpinned, at least philosophically, the support for the Contras in Latin America, for the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan. Some of the members on the right on the Hill felt that the same should support RENAMO in Mozambique-these were anti-Communist fighters and that we should be assisting them.

This became a major issue for Crocker. He was absolutely convinced, as was Secretary Schultz, that RENAMO could not be compared to Savimbi. They had incidentally opposed the aid to Savimbi, but had lost that battle. They felt that it was going to come back to haunt us as we now know in 1998, because we see that Savimbi is not a Democrat. But at least in terms of RENAMO, they felt that this group had no political program. Their tactics were, from what we knew of them, abhorrent. They were practicing very severe violations of human rights. So there was a strong resistance. We would not even see their representatives, although they had representatives here in Washington who had set up their offices in the Heritage Foundation. So the difficulty with this program, although it made a lot of economic sense, is that there were people on the Hill who were opposed to it. The program never really saw the light of day, because after the Senate and the Congress, as a whole, had passed the sanctions legislation, President Reagan decided to veto it. This was not the recommendation of Secretary Schultz and Assistant Secretary Crocker. What had been recommended to President Reagan was a series of executive orders sanctions that would have ratcheted up the pressure on South Africa and the announcement of this positive program for the periphery countries to help strengthen their resolve and actually helped them survive in what we thought was going to be a period of protracted ratcheting up of sanctions, both from ourselves and the European Union, as well as other countries. This program never saw the light of day because the President decided to veto it. He gave a speech, which was really inflammatory to all of the anti-apartheid groups. The speech, we found out later, had been written by Patrick Buchanan, who was then in the White House in the Communications Office. He is a current Presidential candidate now as we speak in 1999. That speech really assured that the veto was overridden. What we had happen was that the sanctions legislation came into effect, and this positive program we had dreamt up for the periphery died. There was some increase later on for SADCC activities, but the program as we had actually worked it out, was just whipped into the archives.

Q: You were talking about this five hundred million dollar program but that may have been an extension of what had been started when you were in Zimbabwe?

STACEY: That's right. In 1982-'83 approximately, there had been a program, which AID was supporting for SADCC, and I recall we had asked for about a hundred million dollars. I don't know if that was over two years or three years, but it was primarily on transport and for locomotives, which they needed. There was also a program for agriculture. What we did later in 1986 was in many ways an extension of that, but they wanted to give it more of a political spin. We were going to hit South Africa with this stick with some sanctions, but we had all these carrots for all the countries on the periphery. They wanted to package this in a political way. I do recall that Peter McPherson, who was then the AID administrator, and I traveled rather quietly through Southern Africa consulting with the countries. So I think that the program with SADCC, although State when I was there, we tried to put some political packaging on it. It was AID's determination that the program went ahead later.

Q: Anything else on that particular program that Reagan shot down?

STACEY: No, not on that. At the time the White House also decided that they wanted to undertake some African initiatives. It seems like every White House that comes along wants to undertake Africa initiatives. The first that the Reagan White House wanted to do was on African debt. It wasn't so much that they wanted to forgive it, as they wanted to understand the problem better. So they formed an interdepartmental group on African debt, in which I was the State representative. We were able, at that time, to improve some of the terms that were being offered at the Paris Club. This group really did begin the debate that you really had to do something about the stock of debt. That just doing things on terms of debt was not going to get you anywhere. We were just rolling a larger and larger snowball uphill.

In addition, the White House said that the President also wanted to do something on African hunger. I think the origins of this was a call from one of his old actor friends, a woman in Hollywood, who had seen something on television and called him up and said "Ron, we really have to do something about African hunger." So a task force was put together. We spent quite a bit of time, all the various people on this task force from the White House, people from AID, people from State, to create an initiative that would show that Africa mattered. Of course, nobody today can remember this initiative or what happened to it, but there was a ceremony to announce this and there were slick little publications put out on what the U.S. was going to do about African hunger. I fear that when the history of development is written, it's going to be a cemetery of initiatives of this kind that each administration comes along and wants to take. So that was the Africa food initiative.

Q: What was the content of it?

STACEY: The content of it was largely to increase funding for agricultural research, a lot of that through US universities. To support, more comprehensively, the CGIAR system, more PL480, Food for Peace, especially soft term loans for US surpluses - not necessarily the best developmental tool, but to feed people. There was also some other kind of lending that was going to be available for fertilizers and other kinds of agricultural inputs. Most of this program had been dreamt up in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and I must say the AID people didn't have much of an impact on the program. Had they, it would have been more interesting.

Q: Well, what other initiatives were you occupied with?

STACEY: I also chaired an interdepartmental group on refugees, emergency and food aid. We had ongoing emergencies in quite a number of countries, especially in Ethiopia in the North where there was a war raging. Groups inside those countries that we couldn't reach any other way, except to bring food aid into Sudan, which was a very sensitive issue, because we didn't have the approval of the Sudanese government to do that. So we had managed very quietly and almost secretively, this trans border food aid program. The key groups that we were working with were NGOs that were set up by the Tigri¹/₂ and the Ethiopians. We were not supposed to assist these groups. We did not recognize them. The official position was they were as Marxist as was the government in Ethiopia. The idea was how to work very quietly with their relief organizations to try to make sure that this food was not supporting the war effort or going to their guerilla fighters. That it really was getting to the people who needed it. We had confirmation of the need. But this became a difficult program to manage, and eventually it was abandoned because it didn't have the kinds of controls on the food distribution that one would normally have to have.

The other thing that I managed which was also very difficult politically was this task force that I chaired, which also had responsibilities for refugees. There was an extraordinary outflow of refugees from Mozambique at this time, into Malawi, into Zimbabwe, into Zambia, into Tanzania, into Swaziland and into South Africa.

The most serious refugee flow was into Malawi. People wanted to know why these people were coming out in such numbers. It almost reminded one of Kosovo today. What was the cause of this extraordinary flight? We were asked to undertake an evaluation of this, and we hired Robert Gersony, someone who was well known in the international community because he had helped to uncover the killing fields of Cambodia earlier. Bob Gersony went out and he spent weeks traveling all over to refugee camps. He interviewed over four hundred refugees on an average of three to four hours for each refugee. He took extensive notes on what the refugees were saying, because he was really trying to find out a great deal of information and he had a very well developed questionnaire. All of his notes and his questionnaires he kept secret. No one has ever really seen these except I did. He showed them to me at one point. What he discovered was an extraordinary pattern, because the refugees that were in Tanzania, Malawi and Zimbabwe etc. were all talking about a very similar pattern of what had happened to them. So Bob Gersony's report, when he wrote it up in draft, was politically very explosive. It showed RENAMO had a very organized pattern of slave labor camps, of terrible atrocities in the way that they recruited young people to their ranks; of how they would kill their own parents before their very eyes. This was all systematic and it was coming at a time when RENAMO was trying to get political recognition in Washington. They had ambitions to have the Reagan Doctrine apply to them and to receive assistance as Mr. Savimbi had. So when the report, which I had to manage through the bureaucracy... it was a real political hot potato. The first briefing we did was of US Secretary Schultz, who gave us a full hour as I recall. He listened intently to the briefing and at the end of it said, "This report should be published." There were parts of the U.S. establishment, especially some of the U.S. intelligence agencies, who had concluded that RENAMO was going to win this conflict, and that we ought to support the winner. And as I indicated earlier, other right wing groups who felt RENAMO as an anti-Marxist, ought to be supported. There was great concern that we would not be able to publish the report unless we had some support of other key actors, and so Secretary Schultz called the then Secretary of Defense, Robert Carlucci, and said, "I want you to meet privately with a couple of people." So we went over to the Pentagon and we met with Mr. Carlucci. The only other person present at the meeting was the Deputy Secretary of Defense Taft, the husband of Julia Taft, who had been with AID. We presented what was happening and both of them again gave us a great listen and literally heard what we said, and they said, "This report should be published." So it was published. It was very well received in Southern Africa.

Q: Publicly available?

STACEY: Publicly available. The Gersony Report of Refugees - I forget the exact title, but my name doesn't appear on it. Appropriately, Mr. Gersony's does because he really worked hard under very difficult conditions, where he was sleeping at night, out there to get all of these refugee interviews. It killed RENAMO politically in Washington. They basically shut up their office and a number of their political supporters in the Congress came out with statements saying that they would no longer support them. We really never heard anything further from other proponents about assisting RENAMO. Later on, Ambassador Melissa Wells, who was Ambassador in Mozambique, helped get the government and RENAMO talking. Ultimately there was a negotiated settlement. She said that had the Gersony report not been published, she probably couldn't have established the U.S. or herself as a neutral broker. In other words, it was the publishing of this report that gave her the credibility with the government that the U.S. was a neutral broker. The government was very convinced that the U.S. was either planning to or already assisting RENAMO. So this report was very important, she said. That was my small contribution to policy at that time.

Q: From then on in it was more into the peace negotiation between RENAMO and the government, but you were not involved in that?

STACEY: No, I was not involved in that because in 1988 when I had fifty years of service with my Air Force time...

Q: Didn't you go to Mozambique at some point during that?

STACEY: Yes, I went to Mozambique for a major conference on the food crisis, because the U.S. was providing a great deal of food aid at that time, there was so many people to feed.

Q: Food crisis in Mozambique or in the region?

STACEY: Both, because we had internal refugees as well as people outside the country. So there was a major meeting of donors there on food aid, but we had published the Gersony Report a couple of weeks before hand. So at the speech I made at the conference, we called a lot of attention to this report. It was the only time in all of my public service that when I made a statement in a donor meeting, I got a standing ovation.

Q: What did you say?

STACEY: We pointed out the results of this survey, and really condemned the terrible practices of RENAMO. While there were some human rights violations on the part of Frelimo on the other side, the preponderance of the evidence was that these refugees were fleeing in great numbers because of a terribly organized and systematic exploitation and enslavement of these people. I called it the worst holocaust against ordinary human beings since World War II, in the speech. It was something that was widely appreciated by the Southern African countries, by the donors, because they really thought the U.S. had come down in the right way and done the right thing. We did get calls. I got a call from the Assistant Secretary right after the speech saying that he had been receiving some calls from various groups saying why did I have to use the word holocaust? From the perspective from where I was sitting, and certainly from the perspective of the villagers who were living under this terrible system, that's exactly what it was.

Q: Were there any other operations you were involved in? You had to testify on the Hill I assume from time to time?

STACEY: Yes, I had to testify a number of times on the Hill, and I'm glad you asked me about that. Chet Crocker was, I think, one of the most interesting people I ever worked with. He's the only Assistant Secretary that I can remember during my career in Africa that really saw development as an integral part of our foreign policy. He was very positive about AID and development. What he wasn't positive about was the U.S. Congress. He considered many members of the U.S. Congress not worth wasting his time with.

Q: That was a hard position to be in.

STACEY: It was a hard position to be in, and so his idea of his job was to really be in the field as much as he could, working with the key actors. Of course, he was trying to get the Cubans out of Angola and find a settlement to the Libya problem, which many people credit him with. We solved the Libya program but certainly created a new one in Angola, or certainly fueled it and perpetuated it. Nonetheless, he didn't want to go out and testify. He would much rather go out and negotiate. So he was always sending his deputies out to testify. I got quite a bit of Congressional testimony.

Q: What was your experience with Congress? Was it essentially hostile?

STACEY: A lot of the testimony was before the Africa Subcommittee of the House, which at that time was chaired by Howard Wolpe, as I recall. He had on his committee some rather flamboyant people. On the right I remember you had Congressman Burton, but you also had Congressman Bob Dornan from California - the one they always called B-1 Bob, because he was always supporting the B-1 bomber. They were particularly hostile to just about everything that was development or anything we were doing in Africa. I do recall testifying several times before the Leland subcommittee. Mickey Leland had a subcommittee on food and hunger.

One particular testimony with Mickey Leland I remember was when he really started raising the land mine issue. This was in 1987, long before people like Princess Diana and other politicians had discovered what land mines were doing. But Congressman Leland was particularly incensed and concerned that we might be providing land mines, which was denied by the administration, but that we weren't speaking out on this issue - that children were losing limbs and it was a terrible, terrible thing. It was innocent people who were suffering by land mines. Since we had been involved in the land mine clearance in Zimbabwe, rather quietly as I had mentioned, it was something I could really relate to with the Congressman, so after a testimony he invited me back to his office and we had a long talk about the land mine issue. He said he had a feeling that I didn't share the administration's positions on land mines, since I had to state what the position of the administration was, which was these were very much needed in defense of the country and so on. I always thought that had Mickey Leland not died in that terrible plane crash in Ethiopia, that this issue of land mines and what it is doing to populations of Africa and other parts of the world would have been on the international agenda much earlier.

Q: How about on the Senate side?

STACEY: I don't think the Senate had an Africa subcommittee in those years. I'm trying to remember if I did do any Senate testimony. As I recall, most of the testimony was on the House, and there were a couple of times before the appropriation committees, on the AID budget. I would go up jointly with one of the AID deputy assistant administrators.

Q: How about your relations with AID? You were an AID person in State or a State person in AID. How did you find that worked?

STACEY: I found that curiously I was more accepted by the State people than I was by the AID people. I think a lot of the AID people saw me as a little bit of the enemy at that point. We had to really fight AID on some of the country allocations.

Q: On aid levels?

STACEY: On aid levels, and as much as I wanted to cut some of these programs like Kenya and so on, State had it's politics. I was the point person on this. The Assistant Secretary told me that he didn't want to have to resolve the budget issues with Administrator McPherson or anyone else. He said: I want you guys to solve this. That's your job." So we felt it was our job to solve these country allocation budget issues.

Q: Did you find these aid levels politically significant?

STACEY: What we found is that we were always fighting a bit of a losing battle. As I recall, the year before I came into the Deputy Assistant Secretary job, we had lost sixty-five million dollars of our obligation authority from that year to Latin America. So the big problem was how to even protect the Africa levels that you would start off with. It was difficult enough to arrive at levels, but then during the course of the year, we were being asked to take these hits, like "we need ten million of your budget." Where we would take those from became very painful and also acrimonious in negotiations with the AID people. We realized that somehow we had to get an Africa earmark. As much as people didn't like the word "earmark" and nobody wanted to hear about it, that was when we started working on the Africa Development Fund, in 1986. We had to have some way to protect the African money and stop these other regions from raiding it. In the politics of things, Africa was always second fiddle.

Q: Were you involved in the origins of the Development Fund for Africa?

STACEY: Yes, we worked very closely with AID people and people in State, so I do recall that as something we were involved in.

Q: Do you remember anything about what the strategy and concept was behind it, apart from protecting money?

STACEY: Yes, I do recall the areas of emphasis and so on. I think it was something where everyone who worked on that deserved a lot of credit. It was one of those things that had a hundred fathers. It later enlightened the rest of the AID budget. The current legislation then had a lot of its basis in the Africa Development Fund.

Q: How about working with the embassies in Africa and working with the ambassadors? You must have been involved in some of these AID issues with them?

STACEY: Yes, they were always difficult. In general, I would say that the State Department people did not understand what AID was doing and why we were doing it, and how we were doing it. There were always problems with communication. It was pretty tiresome to hear the AID people kind of denigrated, which occasionally happened from these visiting ambassadors. There were some who were really deeply appreciative of the program. We had a number of AID directors who got on the wrong side of their ambassadors and were asked to leave the country. So I always met with new AID mission directors before they were going overseas and we'd talk about AID/State relationships. I'd always tell them, "Look, some of these guys are a real pain in the backside, but you have to work with them and make them happy. You have to keep them informed and if you get at cross purposes with them, it's a no win situation."

Q: You must have been in a number of regional meetings with African ambassadors and AID people?

STACEY: Yes, there were a couple of regional meetings with...

Q: Any particular issues you recall?

STACEY: You know, I really can't... This is one of the things that you remember something and I don't! What I really do remember about the ambassadors is that they had such a short term. I had my fifty years, given my Air Force, and I had some family issues I had to deal with. I also felt that Foreign Service was a younger person's job. I really felt one of the important things about Foreign Service was to get the old fuddy-duddy's out and get the younger people in.

Q: You weren't really much of a fuddy-duddy at fifty.

STACEY: I felt like if I was going to do other things, it's better to start them at fifty rather than waiting around till sixty.

Q: What did you do?

STACEY: I retired for about a year, and after that I had the opportunity to come back to the World Bank and do some work with Kim Jaycox, who was then the Vice President of the Africa Region at the World Bank, and who wanted to start an Africa capacity building initiative. He began to put together a group to think about how to address some capacity issues, and so I worked with him as a Senior Advisor for about a year and a half and helped to start the Africa Capacity Building Foundation which is now in Harare and Zimbabwe.

Q: What was the concept behind the foundation?

STACEY: The concept behind the foundation is that Africa had been in structural adjustment now for approximately seven years. One of the criticisms, and rightfully so, was that so many of the macro economic and fiscal policy issues were really being managed by the Bank and by various managers who were being put in place, either through the project units that were being put into the field, or through the supervision teams that were going out. This was a dead end street. Africans had to find ways to build capacities for Africa, to manage their own economies. There were a number of foundations, including Rockefeller and Carnegie, who agreed to participate in the working group on these issues. There was also this council of African economic advisors that the Bank had put together, which was some twenty eminent Africans, many of them former ministers, and so on. So they were also a source of discussion and ideas. There was a great deal of discussion in these groups about how to approach this. Some people wanted a broader capacity building initiative. You might be building capacity in environment, or in taking on the university issue, because there had been a decline in African universities in capacity. But Mr. Jaycox was very vigorous in saying "No, this has to be focused on economic policy management capacity." Ultimately this led to the creation with a hundred million dollars that it was put together. The Bank put fifteen million into it and other donors put more into it. The Africa Capacity Building Foundation is based in Harare, with a board provided from the international donors who contributed. I think the first American board member on the ACBF was Elliot Berg, who has just left the board. There's a second person now who has joined the board. They have been financing projects, but at this point I can't really evaluate whether this foundation is going to be successful.

Q: You haven't had any word on what kind of projects they've been financing?

STACEY: They've been financing various in-service or on the job training programs for central banks, for ministries of finance. Not long term scholarships but things that are very much improvement of internal systems and modernization of how they deal with data. The focus has been largely on training and research. In talking to Elliot Berg, he has questioned the quality of projects that have been approved. It really seems like a drop in the ocean in terms of capacity needs. Given the capacity that's needed at all levels - local levels in all kinds of sectors- whether it's population, environment, the very narrow focus of this needs to be complemented by other capacity building initiatives. I hope that foundations of this kind catch on in Africa, because there are a lot of wealthy African entrepreneurs. I recall John D. Rockefeller saying that the best investment he ever made was in the Rockefeller Foundation. I hope that Africa can begin to build up its own foundations and some of these wealthy and successful African businessmen will look back and think that these foundations that they might have supported were some of the best investments that they could have made. We're kind of on the threshold of that possibility right now.

Q: Interesting. Well, you did that for a year and a half. What did you do after that?

STACEY: The World Bank published in 1989 the famous long term perspective study on Africa. When I say famous I mean that it generated a lot of interest and stirred up a lot of activity. One of the conclusions of that report was that Africa needed to be much better known to the external world. It needed to really begin to build a coalition of international support for Africa, but, at the same time, it needed a place where Africans could talk much more frankly with the outside world. There was no consensus on many of the issues, and we needed a place where we could talk about this consensus in much more honest ways. What was proposed was the Global Coalition for Africa. The Dutch in 1989 hosted a ministerial level meeting; there were a lot of Heads of State there as well to examine this study of the bank. One of the outcomes of that meeting was the proposal to establish the Global Coalition for Africa. The three co-chairmen, Jan Pronk, who was the Dutch minister of development in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Robert McNamara, the former US Secretary of Defense and President of the World Bank; and Quett Masire, who is the President of Botswana. They had agreed to be the three co-Presidents of this Global Coalition for Africa. So here was something that the whole world had agreed on. We had three co-presidents and we had no operating instructions, no program of work or structure. Kim Jaycox asked me if I would work with the African who was going to be the first Executive Secretary. There was an agreement that there would be a secretary attached to the World Bank but not part of the World Bank. So Kim Jaycox asked me if I would be willing to go over and help get this started. At the time he wanted me to help manage the SPA Program, the Special Program for Africa, which was funding the support for Africa's structural adjustment. In the meantime, since the person who was managing that, Phil Birnbaum, one of our former colleagues, was not yet ready to retire but was getting close. The idea was that I would go over and work on getting the Global Coalition started and then come back over to SPA. So I worked with the first Executive Secretary of the GCA. He had come there from ECOWAS, where he had been the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS in Lagos. He and I were a two person secretariat and we sat down and started working on how this would operate. We wanted something informal. A lot of the operational process that the GCA now utilizes was drawn from the Club du Sahel, because everyone wanted something informal and that's the way the Club had been, so we agreed to use that as a bit of a case study. Finally we had our first political meeting of the GCA, which was held in France, hosted by the French and the Ministry of Development. We presented all of the operational documents and the first year's work program and so on. It was approved and everyone pledged enough money to get the Secretariat going.

Q: Who attended this meeting?

STACEY: It was attended by all of the major donors in Africa. As I said, most of them were heads of agencies or ministers. I'm trying to recall who came from AID.

Q: On the African side?

STACEY: There were a number of African ministers and a few heads of state; President Masire chaired the meeting. Everyone wanted a GCA that would be African led. That's why they had an African head of the Executive Secretary. There were some who were not happy about the attachment to the World Bank. They felt that maybe the GCA Secretariat should be somewhere in Africa. The counter argument was, "That's politically correct, but that's not necessarily the place where the Secretariat can be most effective, in terms of lobbying for Africa, access to information, in terms of being present in the major places where you want the Secretariat present. Either France or Washington was the best place. By having an attachment to the Bank, this group could also keep an eye on the Bank. They could be Africa's insight into the Bank if the African's would use it properly.

Q: What was the main function of this group?

STACEY: The main function of this group as I said, was to first of all admit that there were all kinds of areas, in terms of Africa's development and economic issues where we did not have a consensus.

Q: Such as?

STACEY: Such as the issue of what we call the nexus between population growth, agriculture and environment. Many people were approaching these as single issues. Some people thought Africa was doing okay on agriculture. Others thought it was an environmental disaster. A lot of people felt their population growth was much too high. There were others who felt Africa didn't have enough population density to stimulate its markets. So despite the fact that we were all doing projects and programs, because that's what you had to do to get the money, there wasn't a consensus on the real policy issues, especially how they interacted across sectors. So the idea was to admit that, and then have the kinds of exchanges on these issues as we could. The GCA started off with three subcommittees in which we assembled people, again using some of the contacts that the three co-Presidents had, to really bring people in at policy level. The three subcommittees were one on economic policy, one on democracy governance and human rights, and one on regional integration. The one on economic policy was chaired by Kwesi Botchway, who was then the Minister of Finance and Economy in Ghana. The one on governance and human rights was co-chaired by President Soglo of Benin and President Masire of Botswana. The one on regional integration was to be chaired by the President of Senegal. Unfortunately we started off badly on the third subcommittee. The first meeting we had was with all these regional organizations - the SADCC, ECOWAS, etc. The agenda, which had been written up, because we wanted to plunge right into the issue, was Rationalizing Africa's Regional Institutions. All those regional secretariats arrived thinking they were fully rational. How dare we, as a group of outsiders, come in and suggest that all this was an irrational pattern of institutions. Eventually this subcommittee was abandoned. We then began to operate with just the two committees, and began to deal with regional integration under the Economic Policy committee. The other chairmen were active.

Q: What did you do with population and demographics? What was the process?

STACEY: The process was not to launch programs, but to try to move from the absence of consensus to some general consensus on how to proceed, and then to bring into the room all of these people from their respective countries and agencies, you talk honestly about the issues; you try to agree on how you should proceed. For instance on population, that we not take too narrow a focus. This is not just about reducing the growth rates. We took a much more comprehensive view of this. Then you assume that everyone is going to go back to his respective countries or agencies and put these recommendations into practice. Six months or a year later you have a meeting and just basically say, "Are you people doing it this way?" In other words, you were trying to validate politically specific approaches, but then the assumption was that people would go back and carry these out.

Q: Did it work?

STACEY: I think it's too early to tell. It's only been a few years now. The GCA is pretty strongly supported by the people who go to their meetings, and if nothing else there's an appreciation for the ability to...because in GCA meetings you're not allowed to make speeches. If you come with a pre-prepared speech from your capital, they ask you to submit it for the record. The meetings are organized in such a way as to force ministers and heads of state to abandon their briefing notes and talk from what they really feel inside. Because donors and even the African ministers go to so many places where everything is so formal, they appreciate the candor of these kinds of meetings. Now a critic would say that it's only a talk shop and you're not really changing policy.

Q: But you did reach a consensus?

STACEY: Yes, there was a consensus that was reached on how to approach some of these issues, but again, you reach a consensus for instance on the idea that we have far too many projects. So therefore, we have to move to programs. Everyone can agree on that, but you can't agree on how to change some of their own funding procedures and in some cases, things that are legislated.

Q: Did they deal with donor procedures and things of that sort?

STACEY: We dealt with donor procedures in the context of how do donors more effectively finance their interests in democracy and governance. How do donors more effectively support adjustment and policy change? You don't do it by having two hundred and thirty-seven conditions in a loan. These issues of conditionality and so on were discussed very thoroughly.

Q: Do you think these had any impact on the donors and the Bank?

STACEY: In a sense, the Bank became a good listener in these meetings and committed itself to improve the nature of the support programs for adjustment. Some of the evolution was towards the sector investment programs now have come from some of these discussions. On the other hand, the Africans realize more now the importance of spending on social sectors. I've never seen such frank discussions on military spending, for instance, and what the appropriate level of military spending is for a country. These are the kinds of things that the Bank really couldn't discuss too heatedly with the governments, because they're member governments of the Bank. But under the GCA umbrella, things like the level of military spending could be brought up. The GCA gave the bank a little bit of an umbrella to talk about things that they couldn't talk about in their normal lending capacity.

Q: Were any UN agencies involved in this?

STACEY: Yes, the UNDP Administrator was always there, and we had a very active participation from the head of UNFPA - I forget her name, a Pakistani woman. The head of UNICEF was there also.

Q: Were these reports published?

STACEY: Yes, they published reports. We also instituted an annual report on Africa, which took about thirty-five key indicators which we tried to focus on. This annual report now is a great source of a very authentic view of what Africa is all about. We hope that the GCA report will begin to have the same kind of audience that the UN Human Development Report does. It's much briefer and much more readable, in that it only focuses on about thirty-five key indicators.

Q: Have they changed the agenda of subjects or are they still just economic and population based?

STACEY: It's economic and then democracy and human rights, so that the population issues, agriculture issues and regional integration issues are all subsumed under the economic committee.

Q: Right.

STACEY: It's a kind of entity that works if everybody gets engaged in it. In other words, if the Africans invest their leadership in it; if the donors invest their time in it, and a little bit of money, it can be useful for Africa. But if they don't and just expect that the Secretariat is going to deliver some sort of revolution for Africa, then it won't work. The only thing that the GCA is, and this is very much like the Club du Sahel, it's a gathering place where people come together. If they come together and really put their shoulders to the wheel because they want to do some things and they want to learn from each other, you can accomplish something.

Q: Did it have any promotional dissemination where they took the issues and consensus and then tried to spread the word through sub group meetings within the African and donor communities?

STACEY: Yes, they organized for instance with the Japanese. They have two major conferences in Japan on African Development and these were jointly organized with the GCA Secretariat and the Japanese. You could see that there was a good opportunity to provide information and insight to Japan and some of the Asian countries.

Q: Within Africa?

STACEY: Within Africa, less so. We did have a couple of major meetings in Uganda and South Africa and also in Benin, but if you asked the African on the street, "What's the Global Coalition to you and what's it done for you?" they wouldn't know. It's very much something that would be more known in Europe or in Washington and New York than in Africa.

Q: Anything else on the Global Coalition?

STACEY: That's really about all right now. I was possibly going to stay with the Bank but at that time I was contacted by the Club du Sahel to see if I would consider coming back to direct the Club, which also had to go through a time of restructuring and getting itself re-mandated. We had talked about that earlier.

Q: So you left the Bank in what year?

STACEY: I left the Bank in 1992 and went to the OECD initially for a period of three years, then they asked me to stay for a couple of more.

Q: That pretty well covers it. You'll have an opportunity to flesh out some of those subjects. That's quite a history and great story. Let's turn to some general observations. We can take them one at a time, but if there are any other areas that we haven't touched on that you want to bring out in general, fine. Maybe you'd like to start off with some of your own general observations on your experience. One of my first questions would be: given this tremendous experience you've had over the years in the world of foreign assistance and development, are there any universal lessons that come to mind in the practice of foreign assistance or in its role in development that would be useful for people to understand what works and what doesn't work? I know that's a big question, but maybe there are two or three or four things that you've already referred to that we might put into a sum up here.

STACEY: I have an awful lot of thoughts and I feel I've already touched on many of them.

Q: Which of them stand out in your mind?

STACEY: One of the things that stands out in my mind is how enthusiastic we were. How misunderstood we were in some ways, about what we were doing.

Q: In AID?

STACEY: In AID. I must say, whether it was from the Congress or colleagues in State, it always seemed like we were really battling on all sides to try to prove that we really had something to offer. In terms of the best of what this country is about, AID was certainly undervalued and underappreciated in terms of policy. I remember one of my professors saying that foreign policy is basically composed of two elements. There is the moral element, which is our values and how we project those values overseas, and then there's national interest. When the two conflict, it's always the national interests that prevails. I always felt like we had such a difficult row to hoe to present the moral and the best of our values, which is what AID was supposed to be about. Then to complicate things further, we were always the victims of fadism. Rather than building systematically on our experience and our knowledge base, we devaluated ourselves and as we accumulated new knowledge, we were always the victims of these new fads. It seemed like every new administration that came in either had a program of reorganization or a program of new directions. As I look back, we were constantly adjusting to the new directions and new fads, and when you look back you discover that nothing is really new.

Q: Did you feel that all these fads were basically any different from the days when you started?

STACEY: No, they were nothing new and often they were dangerous because some of these fads were fueled by special interests or by single-issue kinds of people.

Q: Like what?

STACEY: Like population, for instance, was an issue we constantly wrestled with. We know now, for instance, that urbanization is good for reduced family size. Urbanization gives women a more rapid access to education and literacy. But we never promoted urbanization. On the contrary, we were trying to do all kinds of rural development projects to keep people down on the farm. So we weren't looking at these issues in comprehensive and dynamic ways. We wanted to approach population from the standpoint of getting information and birth control methods and so on - meeting this demand that was there for birth control and not really appreciating how important family size was to the survival of many of these people, where the number of units of labor you could put on the family farm in a given year might be whether you make it or you don't make it.

Q: What does this reflect though? What's lacking? Why do we have this dilemma?

STACEY: As I said, we were always the agency of the U.S. government that was, in the eyes of everyone, that needed to be changed. Foreign aid was always unpopular. So to say we were going to go in and reorganize foreign aid on the basis of how we run businesses, as was said during a Republican administration, suddenly we had these things that just had to be terribly efficient. No project could run more than five years. That's not the way development works in these countries. Many of the results that we were going to get, we knew, from our experience. We knew this was going to come twenty or thirty years down the road but we couldn't fight the fadism. All of this contributed to a less than successful portfolio that we should have had, if we were able to build on the experience and the learning we did as an agency. Rather than being able to provide value-added to this accumulation of experience and learning, we were constantly wrestling with the new fads that came in with each new administration.

Q: You talked about this experience and learning. Was there anything that came to your mind as a key lesson of that experience that we should be building on or have built on?

STACEY: For instance, for me I think that it was demonstrated in a number of instances in Southern Africa in 1971, 1973. It was demonstrated in the early phases of the Sahel Program and then later in Zimbabwe that we could run very substantial aid programs with very small overseas missions, and yet we didn't do that. We allowed mission size to grow. A lot of this was driven by Washington's need for more information, more planning, more evaluation. In other words, the amount of information, processed-type information, missions were being required to provide accounting and financial management. A lot of this was fueled by Congress or the Inspector General's Office; they constantly wanted to tighten down the financial management. So some of the flexible ways that allowed us to run these programs with small missions were taken away from us. We never really built on that experience that we had in the seventies. We never built on the experience of working very closely with the embassies; in other words, having one or two AID officers in the missions. There was an insistence on having separate missions. Frankly, I think it was an error.

Q: What about what we learned about designing and developing projects in African countries?

STACEY: We've learned that despite all our great ideas and despite all of our very knowledgeable people in the project design and technical specialties, that we had to be much better listeners to what our African partners were talking about; what their problems really were. It's not so easy to do that, because when these kinds of important finances are involved, you get a lot of mixed signals. What I learned about designing projects is that in many cases we should have taken a much smaller role to begin with, with a longer perspective without putting too much money up front on some of these projects. Even saying what the budget should be was a mistake. It distorted the possibilities for local ownership right from the beginning.

Q: What about the whole area that's been a theme throughout all of your work and others - the building of the African capacity. What have we learned in that area?

STACEY: It's not that we don't know how to do capacity building because I've watched what AID has done with universities and research institutions and so on over the years. Capacity building in one country is very easily lost to a neighboring country or somewhere else, as we saw when events changed in South Africa. We've been far too forgiving of the technical assistance establishment over the years. The demands that certain kinds of technical assistance or management or support offices had to be in place because you just didn't have the local people who could do this were exaggerated. We fell into the trap of financing what really is a kind of industry - the industry of development. It's probably a necessary industry. There are a lot of very good people out there. But we put far more lip service into using African consultants for instance, and really looking for competent Africans who could work on these projects than we should have. We gave, in some cases, less credit to local capacity than we should have. I always thought we should speak more of capacity enhancement than capacity building, because there's enormous local knowledge out there that isn't capitalized on. You don't have the value-added in many ways. I know that in the Sahel, for instance, these people have the capacity to survive and extract a living out of a very, very difficult ecology that I don't have the capacity to do, even with all my degrees.

Q: That's interesting. Let's go back. You mentioned earlier the two interests - the moral and the national interest conflict. Given that you worked both in AID and in the State Department, do you find these interests mutually supportive, or does one undermine the other? What has been your experience? How do these two get along with each other?

STACEY: In a sense, it was always a false distinction. Some of the programs we did in Zimbabwe with ESF funds - the seventy-five million dollars we had a year with ESF funds-we used that to support everything from population, agriculture and seed packs, all kinds of rural development. We funded the teacher education college. These were being funded with so called security funds.

Q: But why was it ESF?

STACEY: Because the seventy-five million dollars a year had been basically justified as a political contribution to the Lancaster House Agreement, so rather than take that kind of a hit into the money that was pledged on the DA budget, they said it would be funded out of ESF. This was a time when it was easier, frankly, to get ESF than it was Development Assistance. But what we used it for was developmental. It had nothing to do with security.

Q: So you found the two quite compatible in that sense. Was that always the case?

STACEY: That was not always the case, no.

Q: Were there other instances where the political pressure from the Ambassador or State Department undermined your development effort?

STACEY: There were instances where ambassadors wanted to do different things with the funds, but I can't remember, at least in my field missions, that ever happening. What I found was that there was a lack of appreciation about why development should be an integral part of our foreign policy and not something that was apart, or something that was just our moralistic, do-good conscious saving. No. It should be an integral part of our interest. What I find is today there is more appreciation of that than there was twenty years ago. I've watched how some of the most effective donors in the world operate, some of the Nordic countries and the Dutch. Their aid establishment now is an integral part of their Foreign Ministry. And yet they somehow seem to avoid having the short-term political pressures of ambassadors. They seem to be able to operate with very small overseas staff and I don't hear complaints for instance, from the NGO communities in Europe that the presence of the aid function in the Foreign Ministry is really compromising people development. The NGOs are still very active. They get broad support from the Dutch ministry. They have a good working relationship, but the Dutch aid establishment is part of the Foreign Ministry. Despite all AID has done for me, I really think that by integrating the best of the AID people in State, we really could bring about an integration of our foreign policy and development interests in a much more coherent way. Let me give you an example.

Most of our ambassadors in the field have no brief whatsoever on the things that they take up with the president of a country or the head of that country. No brief whatsoever of a regional nature. It's almost all bilateral. So in terms of Africa's regional integration, the development of markets, a lot of what we would want to happen regionally by these countries doesn't necessarily need a program or projects. You need to have a coherent plan that all of the ambassadors in the West Africa region saying the same things. By bringing AID into State, we could have a much more effective coherency in our trade, our investment and our development policies. That's going to be the name of the game in the future. Making sure that our trade policy is...

Q: I was going to ask how the development program supports or has supported out national interest? Given that some of these things seem kind of remote. They're good things but how do they serve our national interest?

STACEY: What's striking today as we speak in 1999 is the years and years that we have all spent really projecting the best of the U.S., and yet how angry a lot of the world is at us right now. The value of what AID has done over the years is broadly unappreciated. It's so easy to condemn AID as being money wasted or money "down a rat hole" as Senator Helms has said, and I can think of so many instances where, had AID not been there, had the assistance not been provided, we would have had very serious consequences. You can't prove that because the fact that these consequences didn't happen, you don't have the proof of the counterfactual of what would have happened, but I certainly believe that.

Q: That leads into my next question, which is this. Looking back over your many years in foreign assistance and your work with AID, do you think it has made a difference in the world?

STACEY: Yes, I certainly do. There were programs I never worked with when I first came into the agency - programs with Korea and Taiwan and Turkey, countries that are really developed countries today. Two of them are members of the OECD and the DAC, but they were aid recipients when I came with AID. As I look at the contributions all over Africa, they're visible to me. They're not as visible to other people.

Q: What do you see?

STACEY: I see an agricultural transformation taking place in many parts of Africa, that is drawing greatly on a lot of US provided technology that came through a variety of research programs, universities, international research institutes - all of that was funded from the AID budget over a long period of time. As markets are changing now, as policy reform has made farming more competitive, as Africans are able to capture their own markets, they're drawing on a great deal of expertise, competence and management capacity that either directly or indirectly has come from international aid and support.

Q: Are there any other areas besides agriculture?

STACEY: Education. Not all African countries have progressed as well as some on education, but those that have progressed have accomplished a hundred percent or close to a hundred percent enrollment in terms of their primary and secondary schools. A lot of that came from US support. Look at Botswana, Zimbabwe, Ghana, the universities in Africa. Although they've gone through difficult times, they still have continued to provide an output of people that are very important to building capacity.

If you ask me what was our single greatest contribution to capacity, I would say some of the African universities. They're there all over the continent. As I said, despite the fact that they've fallen on some hard times, many of these faculties are still operating and many of them are improving in the last ten years. So I think that's a second area. In terms of population, although it's always been controversial both on the right and the left, AID has been very courageous in supporting the availability of services because there was a demand. The need was there; the demand was there. Despite being buffeted by all kinds of politics with the population program, AID has been able to help many countries provide services. In places like Zimbabwe where the contraceptive use has gone over fifty percent now and family size is dropping. These programs are probably the only delivery vehicle, albeit ineffective at this point, for HIV/AIDS prevention and dissemination of information on HIV/AIDS. So some of the infrastructure that we helped provide in the '70's and '80's with the beginnings of these family planning programs, have been terribly important now in helping with the delivery of HIV/AIDS related services. Infrastructure, people have forgotten that we did a lot of infrastructure in Africa. We did railways; we did dams and all kinds of primary and secondary roads. We got out of the infrastructure business with some of the fads that came along like basic human needs. It always seemed if you were doing basic human needs and people centered development you shouldn't do transport, and yet the record would show that... For example, the Canadians, who kept doing transport throughout the eighties, really believed that probably the greatest impact they had on agriculture was because they funded roads. I think it's unfortunate that we got out of transportation, but during our career, during the sixties, seventies and early eighties it was part of what we did. I think that in a way it was almost unfortunate that we got into democracy as a major element of the AID business. I know that could be controversial in some quarters.

Q: Were you more concerned with that in the early days?

STACEY: We didn't call it that. We called it "Popular Participation and Development". As we began to call it "Democracy" we began to excessively look for democracy through the optics of multi-party elections and not all of the other democratic things that were happening. We also understood poorly the traditional elements of African democracy. The "kgotla" where everybody from a district or a village would get out and sit under a tree and talk for days and weeks, if necessary, in what really is a very horizontal discussion. It's not vertical. It's not hierarchical, but very horizontal. Everybody has his say. And eventually there's a consensus that happens. Sometimes people will talk way around the issue. The issue may be a livestock head tax but people are talking about somebody else's goats eating somebody else's grass. So Africans' sometimes have very basic ways of approaching issues that are very democratic. Sometimes we haven't looked for African democracy where it is, because I see it in this explosion of newspapers and journalists, private radio, NGOs, and civil society organizations. And yet multi-party democracies as we know them, are almost always flawed. I've watched some countries, which are in some ways doing very good things developmentally. They're even improving governance but they've taken a couple of steps backward on multi-party elections. So they get bad marks on democracy and we close up and yet they're progressing very positively on improved governance. The way we approached democracy as a kind of litmus test as to whether a country was developing or improving the lot of their people, we have to look for democracy where it is and not just through multi-party elections.

Q: Good. Looking at Africa today, there are a lot of people who are very negative or very skeptical about anything being accomplished through the AID program, what do you say to the people who say, "The African situation is hopeless. What have you done with all this assistance over the years? It doesn't seem to be any better." How do you respond to people along that line?

STACEY: First of all, the amount of assistance we have put in over the last thirty years is a drop in the bucket compared to what others have put in and what the Africans' themselves have put in. People don't realize how much effort Africans' have put into the struggle themselves for their own development. While the people of Africa merited better governments, the fact that they didn't have them didn't prevent the people from struggling in their own ways for their development. We underestimate the challenges that they have in terms of geography, soils, climate and disease. I remember people used to talk about the low productivity of African labor. My productivity would be pretty low too, if I were carrying five diseases around in my body while I was trying to work in the hot sun. Again, we have to better establish the counterfactual. Where would Africa be today if the international community and the U.S. had not done what we had? We did not do enough development. If our budgets had been larger, we might have wasted more money. I don't know. You can't compare, for instance, Africa and India. When India came to independence, the British left this enormous system of schools systems - secondary schools, universities, medical and law schools. They left railways and irrigation systems all over the place. The British didn't leave anything like that in Africa. The French and the Portuguese left even less. So what the Africans were building on was a much more difficult task than say India or Asia, I would argue. The conventional wisdom on Africa is that savings and investment rates are the lowest in the world. I don't believe that. I see, all over Africa, enormous amounts of private savings going into homes and urban businesses and kiosks, and their own children's education. You'd be amazed at how much they put into their children's education from their own savings. All of this doesn't get valued in the official data.

Q: What about African leadership? What we hear about Mobutu and some of the others who have led some of these atrocities. How do you measure African leadership?

STACEY: Some of the worst of African leaders we helped prolong their existence for reasons of Cold War. That was clearly the case with Mobutu. But he wasn't the only one. Others that we knew were not doing the best things for their country. The new generation of African leadership that one sees now is much more encouraging. You see this in a number of countries. I don't know that the governance issues are all going to be corrected very quickly. The most difficult question to answer is whether a lot of the good things we see on the ground will continue to be really durable in any way if you have leaders who continue to rob the countries and stimulate all sorts of illegal capital flight. I guess I've always been too much of an optimist on Africa to think that's going to continue forever. There are a number of countries where you see capital coming back now, even though they had leadership that robbed the countries.

Q: And in the ethnic conflict area?

STACEY: Again, I see ethnicity as the reason for African conflict. If you look at the way people live and function, and the intermarriages between family and tribal groups, you see that the conflicts are much more over either boundaries that make no sense, because they were drawn by Europeans, or conflicts over natural resources. As people's livelihoods are broken down, as old systems that used to sustain people have changed - competition for productive land and grazing areas... There was a major conflict in which a hundred people died in Nigeria yesterday between two ethnic groups of herders and cultivators. The conflict issue was land tenure, not ethnicity. Frequently, the international press and others interpret these conflicts as ethnic conflicts. I would argue that the major source of African conflict continues to be scarce resources like water, pasturage, land. Also the borders that make no sense and the competition for power that emanates from them. If people really saw, for instance, that Sierra Leone's future was not as Sierra Leone with all of the trappings of sovereignty and so on, but really as part of the United States of West Africa, then maybe you wouldn't have so many people willing to fight and die over what really are artificial boundaries. You could, in the same sense, look at the future of Montenegro, Bosnia or Kosovo. Their future is part of the European Union, not of Yugoslavia. I think we have to look beyond these manifestations of sovereignty that are really anachronistic for Africa. I'm afraid that our aid programs and all of the bilateral instruments we use in some ways add to that. We've got to look beyond these boundaries and beyond these short-term natural resource conflicts so people can begin to follow opportunities in the ways that they have for centuries. The fact that the people from different ethnic groups move across borders has always been accepted. It's only when we create artificial borders and deify them with too much of all of the accouterments of national sovereignty, that we complicate their lives and our own lives as AID donors and in terms of the diplomacy that we want to play.

Q: That's excellent. One last thought and let's get more personal. Looking back over your career in Foreign Assistance and an interesting career, how do you characterize your experience?

STACEY: I can't think of anything else that I would rather have done. In terms of the career choice that I made, it was wonderful. I always looked forward to going to work in the morning. I was earning a living at what I really wanted to do. I felt very fortunate. I could have been assembling Ford trucks or something like that, but I was working at something I really wanted to do.

Q: How did you find AID as an agency to work for?

STACEY: On the whole, I found AID a great agency to work for. I wish it didn't have to go through all the painful deaths and rebirths that it always had to go through. One always wanted to defend the agency because you felt you were under attack from so many quarters. I remember Crocker saying to me, "Listen, when the people on the right and the people on the left and the NGOs are all angry at you, then you know you're on the right track." So I kept telling myself that AID was on the right track because we were getting hit from all sides. There's an old proverb that says that "people only throw stones at trees that give fruit" so I thought that was a pretty good proverb to bear in mind. This business was something that I wouldn't have wanted to miss in terms of a career, so I'm glad I did it.

Q: With that proverb, which was a good one to close with, this has been an excellent and fascinating interview and I thank you very much.

STACEY: There was another great proverb I used to always bear in mind, especially since we were always dealing with various donor coordination arrangements, bringing people together and trying to find consensus, whether it was a Round Table or a CG. The proverb is "Ten men digging, one man filling, lots of dust, no hole."

Q: Excellent.

End of interview