

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

**JENNIFER HASKELL**

*Interviewed by: Mark Tauber  
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**INTERVIEW**

*Q: Today is September 23, 2019, we're beginning our interview with Jennifer Haskell, who right now is in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, but had an earlier start in life somewhere else. So Jennifer, where were you born?*

HASKELL: I was born in Roseburg, Oregon, in 1961. And by the way, thank you for the introduction.

*Q: Okay. And is that where you stayed throughout your adolescence as you were growing up?*

HASKELL: Yes, I didn't leave until my second year of college. My first year of college was at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg. Then I transferred to the University of Oregon in Eugene.

*Q: So tell us a little bit about Roseburg—the town, how big it was, what were the major sources of economic growth or commerce.*

HASKELL: So it's a pretty small town in southern Oregon. I think the population of the actual town was about fifteen thousand, but I lived with my family about twelve miles outside of town in the country in the foothills of the Coast Range of mountains between the Oregon coast and the inland valleys. The area was called Elgarose, near a bit bigger place [with a country store] called Melrose. The greater area was known as the Umpqua Valley. The major source of income for many years was logging and the processing of timber. Although it's still important in the county, Douglas County, there is nothing now like the volume of timber cutting that there used to be.

*Q: So, were you also close to any of the big rivers or national parks?*

HASKELL: The North Umpqua River and the South Umpqua River joined near Roseburg to form the Umpqua River, which flowed through the Coast Range to enter the Pacific Ocean near Reedsport, Oregon, in Douglas County. We explored many of the National Parks in Oregon as I was growing up.

*Q: Your parents, did they both work or how was your family situated?*

HASKELL: My father, James E. Conn, was a civil servant with the Bureau of Land Management [BLM]. He was a forestry technician for much of my childhood but also later served as a safety officer, administrative officer, and hazmat specialist, all for the BLM. My father was also very active in the U.S. Naval Reserve, retiring after thirty-five years as a command master chief. My mother, Joyce Becker Conn, did not work outside the home, with a few exceptions when she helped out during my grandfather's melon harvest. My father's family had a history of farming. From about the time I was in junior high school, my mom and I both worked during the summers in the vegetable and melon fields of my father's cousin. We hoed and thinned and harvested everything from bell peppers to tomatoes and zucchini, yellow squash, and corn. My mom didn't work full time until I was already in high school or maybe I just started college. That's when she went to work at an enterprise that designed and sewed things like bags and camping equipment, even panniers for bikes.

*Q: So now the rest of your family—do you have brothers and sisters?*

HASKELL: I have two brothers, one older, Fred Conn, and one younger, Jay Conn. Fred is a retired U.S. Marine and currently works for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jay, who was also a marine but not for a full career, is the general manager of North River Boats.

*Q: Nowadays a lot of people have done ancestry work at this point. Have you traced your origins back?*

HASKELL: I did not do it personally because my father takes that on in a huge way. I have a thick book all about my paternal family history. My aunt has done a lot of work on my mother's side of the family, so I also have a notebook with all that information. My husband has done some work on my family history, mostly on the Ancestry.com website.

*Q: Just out of curiosity, about how long ago did your family arrive in Oregon? Was it in a Conestoga wagon?*

HASKELL: Pretty much, yes. My father's paternal "greats" on the Conn side came to Oregon from Indiana in 1854 via wagon train. They had come to the United States in 1753 from Ireland. The Fenn family, my father's maternal great-grandparents moved from Iowa in 1905 first to central Oregon before moving to Melrose in 1908. The Woodruffs [my mother's maternal great-grandparents] came to Oregon in 1859 from either Illinois or Indiana also via wagon train. The Beckers, her paternal grandparents, came from Germany in 1899. So both of my parents' families settled more or less at the same time [1854 and 1859] in the same place near Roseburg, Oregon.

*Q: Did your parents meet in your hometown?*

HASKELL: Yes! In the sixth grade.

*Q: Wonderful. Okay.*

HASKELL: They were married when they were eighteen, and when they got married, the entire countryside became related.

*Q: Wow. That's like small town America. Now, but your grandparents were involved in farming of some kind.*

HASKELL: Right. For my grandfather on my father's side, it was turkey ranching. When my father was growing up, they had a huge turkey raising operation, and my grandfather was actually president of the Norbest Turkey Association of America. But eventually he stopped with the turkeys and went to growing grocery store crops like cantaloupes and corn.

*Q: And each summer, as you mentioned, you and other members of your family worked on the farm?*

HASKELL: After my grandfather died in 1965, we didn't have any more farming. I remember going down to the fields when I was a little kid, going and watching the people picking and loading up the trailers with the cantaloupes. But he died in 1965 and the farm was leased and/or sold. But my father's cousin did continue farming and that's who my mother and I worked for in the summers. And I think probably my brothers did some irrigation pipe moving or some such.

*Q: Okay. Now, so you went to school in the same town where you were born, I imagine only one high school.*

HASKELL: Yes. Roseburg High School.

*Q: About how big was that?*

HASKELL: Well, it wasn't really small. It was only three grades. We had a junior high that was seventh, eighth, ninth grade. So our high school was tenth, eleventh, twelfth. My class was about 550 people.

*Q: Okay. Was it a public school?*

HASKELL: Yes.

*Q: Okay. Was there any diversity in the town?*

HASKELL: Not that much. I would say that Hispanics were normal among us. We didn't think about it, although probably there weren't really that many. And you know, I think literally there was one black family and they had maybe five kids, but none of them were in my grade. So I didn't really know them. There were a couple of Jewish families, not

many. And there were some Chinese people. One of my friend's family owned the Chinese restaurant. So it was not very diverse. No, but there was a little bit.

*Q: Now as you were growing up and you're going to school and so on. Did you begin taking part in any extracurricular activities? Could be anything from Girl Scouts or sport or those sorts of things?*

HASKELL: Well, I rode horses. I started on a little pony at age four. I started in 4-H when I was six. My parents got us into 4-H. I guess by the time I was nine, I discovered I wanted to learn to jump. So that started a whole new thing. From then on I rode mostly English—hunt seat—doing jumping and eventually worked up to three-day events or what's also known as combined training, which is the dressage, cross country jumping, and stadium jumping. So I did that pretty seriously from about sixth grade through the end of high school.

*Q: Wow. How far did your competitions take you?*

HASKELL: In level? The highest level I did, I entered an intermediate level competition once. But I was actually too young for the competition, so I convinced them to let me ride hors concours [outside of competition]. That was the only chance I had because we just didn't have that level of competition very often in the Pacific Northwest.

*Q: Yeah. Did your horse riding also take you out of the state?*

HASKELL: I think the first time I did eventing was in northern California, so we traveled to northern California, Oregon, including central Oregon and Washington state, to an annual event on Whidbey Island and some others around the Seattle area. And we even did a Fox hunt [not with real foxes!] once at Woodbrook Hunt at Fort Lewis. Wow.

*Q: What about other travel as a youngster? Did you, did your family, travel through the United States or abroad?*

HASKELL: My parents believed that we should know our home state before we bothered with anything else. So our vacations tended to be camping anywhere in Oregon, camping and backpacking. I think by the time I was sixteen, I just wanted a hotel. In the end, I was sort of tired of that. We did make the requisite trip to Southern California to Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland and SeaWorld. And we once or twice traveled into Nevada to see friends and to Washington state for the competitions and to see an uncle and cousins that lived north of Seattle, but that was it. Once on a trip to eastern Oregon, we jumped across the border into Idaho. I hadn't gone anywhere past that until I was maybe sixteen when I went to see a friend in Texas. I was never east of the Mississippi until I joined the Foreign Service. But by then I had gone overseas already to Japan and to Australia.

My grandmother, when I was maybe about eight or nine, decided that she was going to take a big trip all around Europe and to Cairo, Israel, and Lebanon. She loved the travel and started to do these huge trips every two or three years. She went with the tours, the

ones with the guide holding up an umbrella. She traveled much of the world doing that during my childhood. She always brought back many stories, little gifts, and photos. She'd get slides of the places she'd been and do presentations to groups. She usually tried them out on my brothers and me.

*Q: But you did not go along?*

HASKELL: No, I did not go overseas until I was out of college.

*Q: Well, okay.*

HASKELL: It was between college and graduate school.

*Q: Okay. But just then to go back to high school for a moment, were there activities or classes that particularly interested you?*

HASKELL: I was not particularly great at much of anything in school. I got okay grades, but mostly I was totally wrapped around my horses. I was always in choir. And at least at the junior high level, I did some choir competitions, and I did play piano through junior high. In high school, nothing really grabbed my interest at the time. I was a member of the AFS [American Field Service] club in high school, and was president my senior year. That was the American Field Service, an organization that sends high school students on homestay/study abroad programs. The club at my high school supported the ten to twelve foreign students we had studying at Roseburg High. There were different things. I considered things: Oh, I want to be a journalist; oh, I want to be a psychologist, but none of that was really tied to anything specific. I'd never heard of the Foreign Service until I was probably sixteen or seventeen years old when a friend who didn't live in my town told me he wanted to be in the Foreign Service. I was, like, what is that? He just mentioned it was working in American embassies, and I sort of shrugged.

But then my first year of college, I took a class in international relations and that did it.

*Q: We'll get there in a minute, but I do want to ask also while you're in high school, if you began foreign language?*

HASKELL: I did take some French, but it was pretty miserable teaching, and I was a pretty miserable learner.

*Q: Not uncommon in high school—foreign language teaching in the U.S.—*

HASKELL: It was really bad.

*Q: Did, but did your parents emphasize learning more about the Internet, the world outside of Oregon? You know, were there newspapers around and did they encourage you to read and so on?*

HASKELL: Oh, definitely. You know, the local paper, and on Sundays, the *Oregonian*. And there was an interest in reading and in traveling. My father particularly had a huge interest in the places that he saw when he was in the navy. My father was only in the navy for about eighteen months because at that point in time, he was needed on the farm. His father's health was failing and he was needed to help. He didn't have any brothers and so was only in the navy for a very short time, but he took advantage of the travel opportunities. He was in the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Japan, but on a ship. He took shore leaves and he always made it a point to find a way to go to a farm and see what farms were like in that country. He made an effort to check out the places and get to know as much as he could about the culture or language. In fact, when we were little kids, he taught us to count in Japanese.

Plus my grandmother was traveling, and as I mentioned she always had all these slides. She was not taking these slides. I don't know where she got the slides, but she always came back from a trip and then she would make a slide show and she would show it to the church or the school or whatever. So I was definitely exposed to things international—the concepts and the different cultures in that way. When my father was a little kid, my grandparents hosted a Fulbrighter for a weekend—one weekend. They remained friends for life to the point that when I went to Japan so many years later, I was able to meet with them. It was so interesting. Mr. Kurata had been a journalist. He had been a reporter on the U.S.S. *Missouri* when the World War II surrender was signed. It was amazing to have maintained that friendship—based on a single weekend—over so many years.

*Q: Wow. That's pretty good.*

HASKELL: He also was one of CNN's first on-air reporters when they opened in Japan.

*Q: Okay. As you're approaching the end of high school, were your parents talking to you about college or what were your thoughts about it?*

HASKELL: Well, I definitely wanted to go to college. It wasn't something that my family really did. In fact, up to that point, I knew of only my one aunt who had gone to teachers' college. She was the only person. My father went to university for just one year, but he was already married. He had a kid or two and it just didn't stick. It wasn't really a thing that was going to work out. So to be honest, they didn't particularly value it. It was, and their theory was, go to school, do what you can do, and whatever.

*Q: Then the other question is, were they talking to you or were you talking to them about work or professions, or as you're approaching the end of high school, where did you see yourself going in terms of work or even just next steps?*

HASKELL: It pains me to say this, but, no, not really. I mean, I was still focusing on going to college, but I was trying to figure out how to do that. I knew there was no money. So I was kind of at a loss. I think that the assumption was I would just get married and have babies. So, somehow I ended up with a scholarship to the local community college. So I did that.

*Q: There was one other question that I wanted to ask you about. Oh, during high school, did you also work part time?*

HASKELL: Yes. I worked at Wendy's for a while. In the summer I worked at Wendy's in the evening, and in the garden on the farm in the mornings. The first outside-of-the-farm job I had was as a waitress for a few months just to earn some money for something specific. Then when Wendy's opened, I got a job there. I also worked in a boutique for awhile until I figured out that I was spending more than I was earning.

*Q: So now the scholarship arrives. You, you're notified of the scholarship. How far away is the community college? Can you commute to school?*

HASKELL: Yeah, I continued to live at home and it was probably about a thirty minute drive.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: Fifteen miles one way.

*Q: When you got there, what were you expected to study? In other words, was there required study? Were there required classes?*

HASKELL: No, I don't think so. But what I did was, I chose to take classes for credit that I knew was transferable to a state university, and I took a lot of credits. Some terms, I took twenty-one credit hours.

*Q: Wow. That's a lot of work.*

HASKELL: And I was working.

*Q: As you're doing all of these classes, are any of the subjects gripping you? Are you beginning to see a major?*

HASKELL: Well, I actually started at the community college just a couple of weeks after I'd finished high school. I took a summer term, and I did the entire psychology sequence—101, 102, 103—because at that point I was thinking that's what I wanted to do. And after that summer I thought, well, maybe not so much. I was just taking classes that would transfer and meet requirements. Then I took an international relations course, and I couldn't put the book down. I read it like a novel.

*Q: What year is this now, as you begin community college?*

HASKELL: I graduated from high school in 1979 and started at the community college just a couple weeks after that. I was attending the summer term. It was a term system, not semesters. I attended five terms: a summer, a fall, a winter, a spring, and another summer term.

*Q: Now as international relations begins to interest you, do you have any resources at the community college or professors to talk to about how to shape your studies from there on?*

HASKELL: If there were, I didn't know it, so I was just investigating where I could transfer to. I really kind of wanted to go to the University of Washington, and I made a lot of effort toward that end. I went to Seattle where I applied for jobs and checked out neighborhoods to live in. And then, in August, just before the school year started for the universities, I was offered a job as a telephone operator in Seattle. I realized at that moment that I didn't want to do that. If I went ahead and moved to Seattle I wouldn't be able to graduate for at least six years. I would have to work full time to be able to afford out-of-state tuition, and I probably still wouldn't really be able to afford it. So at that moment I turned that job down. I immediately applied to the University of Oregon.

*Q: University of Oregon, obviously for in-state tuition, was much more reasonable.*

HASKELL: Yes. They also had just started an international studies program.

*Q: Ah, okay. What was that program? What sort of things were in the program?*

HASKELL: So the interesting thing was you had to apply to the program. I don't think you had to apply to any other program at that school—maybe engineering or something, but certainly nothing else in liberal arts. But you had to make an application. And in that application you had to list out all the classes you were going to take to meet the requirements and to tell them what you wanted to do with that degree. What did you want your career to be? That was probably the application. There were three sorts of areas in which you had to complete a certain number of courses. You had to do a language that was one. You had to complete three years of a language. You had to complete an area studies—pick a region or area to focus on. Then you had to do what they called global studies. And that was really quite wide open and could include things from any discipline. I remember I took a biology course on genetics that counted. At the time there were no international studies classes. Every course was taken from all the other sections of the university. It was totally interdisciplinary.

*Q: So they didn't even really have a lecturer in international organization or other.*

HASKELL: No, no, no, they did. But they were in the political science department or the history department. They had a lot of experts. I don't remember how many years later, but within a few years of my graduation, they started to introduce specific international studies classes.

*Q: All right, so now you're going from the community college to the state university, and at this point you pretty much have to live on campus or off campus.*

HASKELL: I couldn't afford a dormitory. That was not happening. You had to lay down five thousand dollars or something and there was no way. So I was just asking around to



see if I could find a roommate and somebody that I had been working with said she knew somebody. So we met, and we decided we would be roommates. We drove up to Eugene and found a little one bedroom, a little furnished one-bedroom apartment. We had to have them take out the queen bed and put in the twin beds. It was just across the street from campus. It was an expensive apartment. It was \$210 a month. Wow.

*Q: Oh my goodness. At that time do you remember how much a course cost? I imagine it's a three credit course.*

HASKELL: I don't remember because if you took between nine and twenty-one credits, it was all the same price. All right. So, and I don't really remember, but I should because I paid for every dime of it.

*Q: What sort of work did you do to be able to pay your rent and go to class?*

HASKELL: I was a waitress at the IHOP [International House of Pancakes].

*Q: You somehow managed your schedule to fit with your classes?*

HASKELL: I only worked two days a week—Friday night and Saturday night shifts—until I got enough seniority to do Saturday day and Sunday day shifts.

*Q: Now you are officially in the international relations program, but when you applied, what did you tell them you wanted to do as a result of the studies?*

HASKELL: I told them I wanted to be in the Foreign Service, but the only problem was that if you said you wanted to be in the Foreign Service, you had to present a backup plan. I could have said I wanted to be the CEO of Bristol Meyers and they wouldn't have required me to have a backup plan. But if you wanted to be in the Foreign Service, you had to have a backup plan. This was based on the low rate of entry into the Foreign Service.

*Q: Okay. So what was your plan B?*

HASKELL: I have no idea. It must've been—it was probably to do international business or something.

*Q: Now did you continue with French or did you decide to take a different language?*

HASKELL: So I signed up for French and Chinese.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I finished the first term of Chinese and I started the second term of Chinese, and I realized I couldn't remember what I learned in the first term of Chinese and realized

this is not sustainable. And I dropped the Chinese and continued with the French, which was poorly taught.

*Q: For your region, which region did you choose?*

HASKELL: China.

*Q: And is that the way it ended or did you change your region?*

HASKELL: I kept with China.

*Q: Now as you're studying international relations and you're beginning to see what kinds of jobs there are, what kinds of opportunities there are, did Foreign Service really remain your interest or was that just for the moment? Something you just put down, you know, just so you could get in the program?*

HASKELL: Nope, I kept thinking that was it, but I didn't know if I could get in or not.

*Q: What were your strongest memories of the program? What were the things that impressed you most or that stuck with you in terms of your college training and international relations?*

HASKELL: The history classes were probably the most interesting. I took some of the history classes that were applied to the global studies section, like a series on World War II, but then I took Chinese history and Chinese religions, and Chinese political systems to apply to the area studies requirement. Of course, having never worked in China or on anything Chinese, I don't remember much of what I studied on China. I did find the history courses interesting. I figured out that I was pretty good at writing the papers and doing the exams, the essay exams. I was okay at that, so I ended up with decent grades.

*Q: Did you see an opportunity to go abroad or to do a junior year abroad? Were you thinking in those terms?*

HASKELL: I did the math. I had in my savings account, that I had put aside, that I wasn't using for my tuition, eight hundred dollars. It was what I had from my share of selling my horse when I went to college. My mother kept the rest because she had bought the horse originally for herself. She kept what she invested. So I had eight hundred dollars sitting there, which I decided was my little nest egg. Also it would have been very hard to have paid for a year abroad because I couldn't work and pay as I went. I didn't really even consider a year abroad. I knew it was not possible. So I thought about a summer just traveling around for a summer or summer program. I probably could have, maybe, financed that somehow, but again, I wouldn't have been working. And I really needed to work every summer. I worked, and I enrolled in school. So I was doing classes every summer. I weighed all that up and thought, well this is dumb. You're doing international studies classes and you've never been overseas. But I decided that I needed to just finish. I really wanted to finish the university part and then try to figure out what to do.

*Q: Okay. Did you finish early given how you were taking such a heavy load?*

HASKELL: I did.

*Q: In all of the studying that you did, did you make acquaintances or networks, professors or other people who might have come to the campus that might have told you, you really ought to look into this or you should maybe do an internship in Washington, or the kinds of things that might typically happen as you network in a field?*

HASKELL: Definitely people were doing internships. That was a big thing. I would have loved to do one, but that wasn't happening because they weren't paid. If you remember back then, no internship was paid. I just couldn't, I wouldn't have any income, and I had no money from my parents. So what I did—the last thing I did, after realizing at one point that if I took extra political science classes, I could have a double major. I finished the end of the summer term after my third year, but that summer I did an internship at the state legislature with the Committee on High Technology.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: The internship worked because I could continue working my job at IHOP. There was a shuttle that took us from Eugene to the state capital, Salem, every day. But legislature wasn't in session. So it was kind of a hokey internship. Basically. I wrote a report on the status of the high technology industry in Oregon, which at the time was pretty much HP [Hewlett-Packard Development Company] and a few others. There were a few companies that had built factories up near Portland, and I happened to have a friend who worked for one. She was helpful in giving me tours and input for the report. That report got me my final political science credits. It counted as political science because I was working at the legislature.

*Q: So you're crushing your way through international relations. You finish in three years if it's in '82.*

HASKELL: Yes.

*Q: What are you thinking now in 1982 with your degree from Oregon state? Where are you going to go now?*

HASKELL: Not Oregon State, University of Oregon.

*Q: Oh yes. I apologize.*

HASKELL: I still wanted to do the Foreign Service. I took the test while I was in college, and I passed, but it took a long time to find out that I had passed because it was this horribly long process. When I finished college I had to get a job, an actual job. I wasn't getting any offers through the university's job placement center, so I actually used my eight hundred dollars savings to pay for an employment service. I got a job as a L'eggs

lady. I sold L'eggs pantyhose. I drove around a big truck, like the old UPS vans. It was like a billboard for L'eggs pantyhose. I made eight hundred dollars a month. That's why I had to pay eight hundred dollars, because I had to pay the employment company one month of my starting salary.

*Q: Wow. That's remarkable. I understand L'eggs very well, but I never saw people selling them. Were you selling them door-to-door?*

HASKELL: No. The way it works is this. It's not like this anymore, but at the time those display cases of L'eggs pantyhose in supermarkets or department or convenience stores, those were on consignment, which meant that depending on the volume of sales, I would go once a week or twice a week or once a month or once every two weeks or once every six weeks or whatever to each sales location. I was responsible for counting what was missing, replacing them, and making up the paperwork for store signatures. Hanes [L'eggs was owned by Hanes] would then be able to bill the store. I also cleaned those racks, ordered my next week's product, and drove all over the place. Of course I was also supposed to be selling new accounts. But if you think about it, how often does a new supermarket open up, an independent, not a chain. If it's a chain, the account is opened at the corporate level. It's not coming through me. Even a 7-Eleven is corporate. You don't go into a 7-Eleven and try to sell it because it's corporate. So the idea of getting a new account was ridiculous. We also sold shippers. You know those cardboard displays in the middle of the aisle in the supermarkets? The ones that sometimes get you hung up with your cart? That is a shipper. Those we sold to each store. Some would take one, someone would take as many as ten. I think I got something like three dollars for each one I sold.

*Q: Fascinating. It's really a fascinating moment in American commerce to imagine that this was a job at one time, and you earned money doing it.*

HASKELL: Yes, I paid my living expenses. I had an apartment with my boyfriend and we had to move from Eugene to Salem for that job. I worked out of Salem for about a year and then I transferred to a route in Vancouver, Washington.

*Q: In the same company?*

HASKELL: Yeah.

*Q: Was that more lucrative?*

HASKELL: No, I think that I did that because my boyfriend found a job in Portland.

*Q: Okay. So while all this is going on, you've got a relationship; you've got a job, however small it might've been. But you're sort of out on your own now, and meanwhile the Foreign Service clock is ticking away. When do you hear from the Foreign Service?*

HASKELL: So at some point during the first year I was in Vancouver, I got that letter telling me I would go on the register to be a Foreign Service officer [FSO]. My plan was

to stay with the L'eggs job for more than a year, because after two years I qualified to have dental insurance. As that time got closer, I looked for something else, another job. And I, as soon as I had completed the second, I went to the dentist to get my teeth fixed, and then I quit. I started work as a research associate for a guy in Vancouver who was starting his own consultancy in local economic development.

*Q: Interesting. How did you convince him that your background was suitable for that?*

HASKELL: Well, I had a college degree. I was a smart person. He knew my boyfriend peripherally. That's how I met my new boss. Basically we made a deal. I would work, and he wouldn't pay me until he got a job that paid him. Then he would pay me up to the amount he owed me or the amount he was paid, whichever was greater.

He wouldn't pay any more than he earned, but sometimes my bill was more than he got from that job. That arrangement suited him, and it suited me. And it was kind of interesting. I didn't know anything about computers, but he told me that if I would learn to use Lotus 123, he would pay me half my rate for the hour I spent trying to learn it.

*Q: How? You taught yourself?*

HASKELL: I taught myself a lot. When I got stuck I would call a friend who was a computer wizard. I'd ask how the heck do I do this? He would explain. I would try it and try it and try it. Sometimes it would take me eight hours to do something that, once I learned, I could do in five minutes.

*Q: The wonderful thing about that is you learned the language of computers, and you learned not to be afraid of them. But obviously Lotus went away and there are many, many other programs that replaced it and so on. But at least that was a skill of no small importance at that time.*

HASKELL: Right. And to be honest, the new programs weren't that different. The stuff I needed to know in the Foreign Service wasn't that much different. I don't think I ever needed to know how to write a macro in the Foreign Service, but I was writing macros in the job I was doing. We were doing some work that required some data analysis. We were doing some for the City of Portland. They wanted something for an area known as the Central East Side.

You know, sort of a renaissance of that area. And they wanted to know what was there. We were hired to basically figure out what actually was happening on every plot of land in this prescribed area of the city. Then we had to compare it with what the zoning was. So I literally walked up and down the streets, making notations. Then I had to go back to the office and load it all into the computer. And then I had to figure out how to make that something—present the data intelligibly.

*Q: Very interesting and not so far off of what an average Foreign Service officer might do, though not quite as much detail. It was an interesting skill to acquire. Was there a*

*particular consultancy that your little firm got while you were there that you recall, that was particularly interesting or valuable?*

HASKELL: Well, the Central East Side project was probably the biggest one. But we had one job where we worked for the city of Vancouver. They have a tiny little space in Vancouver, Washington, that's actually former military. It had officer's quarters still there [the houses]. It was called Officer's Row. They wanted recommendations for what they should do with that. How should it be developed, that sort of thing. We also did some work for, I think a part of eastern Washington state, up in the northeast corner. They wanted to figure out what to do to stimulate some economic development. I contacted a couple of cities in California, and I went to Bend, Oregon. I talked with their city officials and different people in those areas because they had a reputation at the time of having been able to draw in employers. I put the information together on that. I think at one point we did a marketing scheme. We produced lots of paper that looked good. It was really interesting work but it wasn't constant. I didn't work every day. I only worked when there was a job. So I got very bored, which is when I decided to enroll in Japanese at the local community college.

*Q: Now things get interesting. Okay. What made you, after you had not done so well with Chinese, what made you want to learn Japanese?*

HASKELL: Well, my father had already taught me to count, so I figured I already knew how to do that. I was so stupid. This stupid. You know what I did when I decided I wanted to do this—take Japanese. The first term of the class was already almost over and I actually went to the professor and convinced him that I was so smart. I told him that if he let me start with the second term, I could catch up. This was insane, but I did it.

*Q: And so you got your book, you got your Japanese book, and you did all of the lessons up and until the end of the first semester so that you could join the second semester.*

HASKELL: Something like that. Or maybe I was trying to juggle both at the same time, but somehow I caught up.

*Q: How far did you go with it?*

HASKELL: I took a year of Japanese. I also took, maybe a history class or culture class or something, I can't remember. But I took all the classes. They were all in the evening. At a certain point I had realized they had a program in the summer in Japan. I thought, Oh, I want to do that, but I had to take all these classes to do it. They had a program, which sounded like study abroad, but it wasn't, not really. It was just that the professor had friends in Japan. And he would send a few students every year to stay with these friends. And I went together with three other young women—younger than I was. They were still in community college, and I had already been out of university for two years.

*Q: So you're going to Japan?*

HASKELL: Yes. That was my first time abroad.

*Q: What was the goal of this program? In other words, how long and what were you supposed to accomplish?*

HASKELL: As near as I could tell there wasn't a lot to accomplish. I would say that because I already had a college degree, and I had already worked actual jobs. We did homestays. We went to two places. We went to a town called Hamamatsu and a town called Imabari. We stayed in Hamamatsu for five weeks. In my homestay, the wife wasn't too keen on my staying in their home. They actually kicked somebody they knew out of their apartment, and I had my own little apartment in the same building. The home stay was with a guy who had his own business making some kind of machinery that you would use maybe in restaurants or something. I actually went to Japan prepared to work. I went with professional clothes, and I went to the office every day. What I did was correct the very badly translated English in the marketing materials. I fixed it all. That's what I did there.

*Q: Oh, cool.*

HASKELL: We did a lot of cultural and tourism stuff, too. The other three young women weren't doing any work. They were just hanging out with their host families and going to see things. Frankly, it was magical. We did so many really interesting things that I would never have had an opportunity to do. But then we went for three weeks to Imabari, which is a town on the small Island of Shikoku, the smallest of the five big islands. And there I didn't have any kind of professional responsibilities. The family I stayed with had a son about my age. We became good friends. So that was good. Then I went to Tokyo where I stayed for a week with a friend of a friend. I wandered around Tokyo for a week. The friend happened to be American.

*Q: I know this is the first time you've actually been overseas.*

HASKELL: Yeah.

*Q: But in the meantime, you're still on the register with the Foreign Service?*

HASKELL: Yes.

*Q: Did they—*

HASKELL: I never got called.

*Q: Ah, okay. That's of course, that's the sad thing. You can be on the register, but if your score isn't high enough, the eighteen months can go by and they may never reach your name. But did they notify you that your eighteen months had expired or did they send you any subsequent communication?*

HASKELL: I don't remember. But I know that eventually I took the test again, but for some reason I was in a snit and I refused to take the orals. I don't know why. I can't remember, but I didn't do it.

*Q: Okay. Just so that we catch up, what year are we in when you go to Japan?*

HASKELL: Nineteen eighty-four.

*Q: Okay. All right. So you've been through community college.*

HASKELL: Yes, 1984.

*Q: So you've by now had your community college, university, and kind of graduate studies, because learning Japanese, you can think of this as graduate study and some study abroad and you've taken the test. But the second time not taking the oral. What happened after that?*

HASKELL: Eventually I quit that job in Vancouver. I broke up with my boyfriend. I moved back to my hometown. I kind of went back with an earlier boyfriend. There are always boyfriends in this life. I decided I wanted to get a job in Japan. And before I moved back to my hometown, I started that process. I went back to the Japanese professor at the community college and used him as a contact to get a job in Japan. In the end I was denied the visa because the company wrote down on the application something that they thought I was going to be doing, and I wrote down something else that I thought I was going to be doing, and that disqualified me from the visa. By then I was just not in a frame of mind to pursue that anymore. And there was always this niggling thing in the back of my mind about how on the up-and-up that job was going to be. I wasn't sure that I trusted the people that were involved.

*Q: Did you ever consider these one or two year teaching stints where you teach English?*

HASKELL: I didn't know about those. I thought I was going to teach English to people in the company and that's what I put down on the visa application. That's why I was a little bit thinking this doesn't make sense. I was, I thought, going there to teach English for this restaurant chain, to their workers. But evidently that's not what they put on their paperwork for the visa.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I don't know what they put down, but that wasn't it. But in the end, it was fine. I went back to my hometown and to this old boyfriend. I got a job with a local economic development organization called CCD Business Development, Corp. CCD was for Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties. CCD was a tri-county, quasi-governmental organization. It was funded by the three counties, and its job was to bring employers to the counties and to help businesses grow. We had a guy who specialized in Small



Business Administration loans and similar programs. They hired me as a research associate. We did reports every year. I prepared most of those reports.

I did that for about a year and a half, two years maybe. So in 1984 I went to Japan. I must have gotten that job with CCD in late 1985. I stayed until I left that job in May of 1987. So it was about two years, a little bit less, maybe around two years, but it was also some reasonable experience. I got my first IRA [individual retirement account] started there.

*Q: So now you're earning real money.*

HASKELL: Well, a little bit of money. I was a low man on the totem pole in a county government level organization.

*Q: But you were able to afford your own apartment and live on your own and so on.*

HASKELL: I lived with a boyfriend who was paying for everything.

*Q: But you know, having taken the Foreign Service exam twice and still having, I guess, the ambition to go into the Foreign Service, what happens next with that aspect of your life?*

HASKELL: There's a long story around it. But I ended up getting married to that boyfriend. And part of the deal was that he would have a real job. He had a real job, but it wasn't a job that was going to ever move and do anything anywhere else in the world. And so he had—he decided he was going to be a professional diver, which he could have done. I did all the work to find the appropriate school. Then as I was finding apartments in southern California, he said he just couldn't do it. He was too afraid of the classroom work. At which point I thought well, this isn't working out very well. And I told him that, in that case, I would be going to graduate school. I found my own opportunity and told him he could come if he wanted to. So he did come, but I went to graduate school then.

*Q: But now that you're going to go to graduate school, what was your thought process? Where did you want to go? What did you want to study? What was the goal?*

HASKELL: I decided to try to get an MBA in international business.

*Q: And where did you end up going to do that?*

HASKELL: Thunderbird.

*Q: Good. Typical choice, very well-known school. If I remember right, you can do it in less than two years.*

HASKELL: Yes. I did it in one year because I was able to get credit for quite a number of courses. If you had already taken within a certain number of years what we called "baby" courses—intro to accounting, intro to marketing, intro to finance, those introductory

courses that you need for business—you didn't have to retake them. They were courses that most people with an undergraduate degree in business would have already taken. Luckily I had taken several of those courses. In college I had economics; I had statistics. They even let me waive or get credit for one of the hardest classes that they were teaching at Thunderbird, which was international trade and finance. This was because I had taken a class like that at the University of Oregon. I was trying to persuade the professor who I was dealing with to give me credit for that class. He asked me who my professor had been. And I told him, and he knew him. He said sure, yes, you can have credit. I was happy about that. It meant I could finish in one year. Wow. Fantastic. Oh, I skipped one other thing. I passed a CLEP [College Level Examination Program] test for intro to management. That was yet another course I didn't have to take.

*Q: But now you are living in Arizona, right?*

HASKELL: Yeah.

*Q: And your boyfriend, your husband's with you?*

HASKELL: Yeah.

*Q: How were you financing it?*

HASKELL: I took loans and I was a teaching assistant one semester. But that wasn't actually worth very much money.

*Q: And as you're aware, one of the good things about Thunderbird is it does have connections and it does try to help you get a job as you're approaching the end. If they have—I guess they have job fairs and so on. But what were you doing to get yourself a job after graduation?*

HASKELL: Well, I took the Foreign Service test again, and I sent my resume to every major hotel chain that operated in Asia, among other things, but that was the one that worked. I got a job with Sheraton in Brisbane, Australia, as a market analyst.

*Q: Wow. So as you graduate, and you're graduating now in 1988.*

HASKELL: Yes.

*Q: You leave for Brisbane.*

HASKELL: Yup.

*Q: That's pretty remarkable, I have to say. Did your husband accompany you?*

HASKELL: He did.

*Q: Okay. Because you know there were the visas and all of that.*

HASKELL: Yeah, Sheraton worked on that because they are a hotel. They have a lot of expatriates working in their properties, so it wasn't that hard. They managed to do all that pretty quickly. I even told them they had to pay to move my stuff, and they said would pay for one liftvan. [That's not much, but I didn't have much.] But they didn't pay for my husband's airfare. They found an apartment for me, one that I could afford that was within walking distance to the hotel. I had to pay the rent, but they found it and had it ready for me.

*Q: Was your husband happy about it? Did he have a work permit to work in Australia?*

HASKELL: The hotel must have helped him with something, as he did find a job.

*Q: It's 1988. You're in Brisbane, Australia. This is fascinating. How did you like that?*

HASKELL: The job? Well, the job was interesting, except that when I arrived, and for literally the entire time I had that job, Brisbane was hosting [World] Expo 88. So the hotel was 100 percent booked every single day. As a market analyst, basically I futzed around a lot, otherwise known as looking for something to do. I discovered things like they had no idea who their customers were. They had no computer systems to help analyze anything. I worked with the IT section to get them to let me be able to manipulate the system so that I could pull data off of it. But at literally almost the same time that Expo ended, I got that phone call from the consul general in Brisbane asking me if I wanted to join the Foreign Service.

*Q: So the Foreign Service knew you were in Brisbane.*

HASKELL: Well, when you pass the test, you have to fill in forms and tell them where you are. That was happening about the time I graduated from Thunderbird and was moving to Brisbane.

*Q: That's remarkable.*

HASKELL: It was weird, though, that they had the consul general call me. I thought that was weird, but he did. It was Frontis B. Wiggins. I remember that.

*Q: Now when the call came, were you offered just entry or were you offered entry in a particular cone?*

HASKELL: It was coned. I came in as an administrative officer.

*Q: Okay. Was that where you imagined yourself to be? This was where you wanted to be?*

HASKELL: Yes. Because when you don't know anything about the Foreign Service, you read those little blurbs they send you about each of the cones. And you have an MBA, you're reading this stuff and you're like, well, this sounds like I can do this. Okay, I'll see. I'll do that.

*Q: Okay. That's a good enough reason. All right, so now you let your husband know this, and I guess you let your employer know. Was the breakup amicable? I don't mean with your husband. I mean with Sheraton. They let you out of your contract.*

HASKELL: It was interesting. It was interesting because I went to my boss and I said, "I've got this offer from the State Department." I didn't say, "I'm quitting." I said, "I've got this offer from the State Department." I said that because to be honest, I was sort of annoyed at the State Department because they took so long. And I had already found myself a job overseas. And they wait to offer it until I'm in this job overseas and I've been there only three months. And they were offering me a place in a class that was going to start in maybe six or seven weeks.

So, I went to my boss and I was waiting to see if they counter-offered. But his reaction was, "Oh my God, that's so incredible. Oh my God, why don't you go to work for the CIA? That would be so cool!" He was just over the moon that I was going to do this. He never once, nobody ever said, "Why don't you stay?" And the Human Resources guy who had actually done all my hiring was on vacation at the time. He came back from vacation a week before I left, and he said, "I don't understand what's going on. Why are you doing this?" And I looked at him, I said, "No one asked me to stay."

*Q: Wow. That's beautiful. Since you are in Brisbane and you have been hired by the State Department, in theory they're supposed to pay for your transit to Washington.*

HASKELL: And they did.

*Q: All right.*

HASKELL: They sent the packing company to pack up my belongings, put it on a boat, and sent it off to Washington.

*Q: That's a pretty remarkable story. So the call came, and it's offering you a place in an A-100 class. How much time did you have to get ready to be able to go back and get in the class?*

HASKELL: I think the class was going to start about six weeks after I got the offer.

*Q: Okay. So you had a little bit of time to prepare and get ready. And at that time your husband knew what this meant, that you were going into a career now where you would be moving around every few years.*

HASKELL: Yeah, he was thinking it was pretty cool.

*Q: Great. Okay. Wow. So you pack your stuff up, leave Brisbane, and you get to Washington. I imagine you find an apartment or a hotel or something. Any other interesting things to mention before we go on with you to the A-100 course?*

HASKELL: No, I don't think so. I'm trying to remember if we even went to Oregon on the way. I think I flew straight to Washington. My husband did not go straight to Washington because he drove our car from Oregon to Washington so we'd have a car.

*Q: Okay. Do you remember what number class it was? What A-100 number class?*

HASKELL: It was forty-five, I think.

*Q: Okay. And how large was it?*

HASKELL: I think it was fifty-two people.

*Q: Wow. Okay. So a pretty, pretty—*

HASKELL: For the time it was quite big.

*Q: And this is now 1990.*

HASKELL: No, it's 1988 still.

*Q: Holy cow.*

HASKELL: November, 1988.

*Q: Wow. A lot of stuff happens in your life in 1988. Okay. Fifty-two people. Do you recall the rough breakdown demographically or how diverse it was?*

HASKELL: It wasn't particularly diverse. Out of those people, I'm just gonna take a shot in the dark and say maybe there were three black people.

*Q: How many women?*

HASKELL: I don't think half. We certainly weren't half.

*Q: Okay. Now this is also your first real introduction to the Foreign Service. I mean, you learn bits about it by reading and so on, but it's the first time also that you're being introduced to the federal government, to how the State Department works. How was the A-100 experience for you? What were the strongest impressions that you took away from it?*

HASKELL: I think it was a little bit overwhelming. It was sitting in class all day, listening to talking heads for weeks and weeks. We started in November, and we didn't

finish until, I think we finished in February because we had the Christmas period where we took a week or two out when they weren't really doing the class. But I met a lot of really interesting people. I think we were pretty close. Even with fifty-two people, I think we were pretty close. We had those off sites, which were sort of wild. Those are wowing. We learned about the class system of the cones pretty well, that management [then called administrative] was the bottom of the totem pole. On the first day when we each had to stand up and introduce ourselves, there were management-coned people who stood up and said, I'm in administration, but I'm not going to do that. I'm going to change out.

*Q: It's interesting that even in 1988, the reputation of certain cones continued to persist.*

HASKELL: I think it was worse then, and certainly it was worse then than it is now. There was that whole period of the "great un-cone" when it got really bad because it often meant that you were low ranked by the tenuring board if you were management cone. And even though I had been in for a while when that happened, I felt the need to remind people that no, no, no, I chose management, that I was not low ranked.

*Q: Did a fair number of people who were in a cone they didn't like actually end up changing?*

HASKELL: A few of them did.

*Q: Okay. So you're getting all this introduction, and you're also getting introduced to the State Department corporate culture. How was that? It does take a little bit of adjustment.*

HASKELL: I think I was still in shock. The kind of shock that says, How on earth can I be in this club? How did they let me join this club?

*Q: I totally understand that. Your experience is not unique. There are plenty of people who had never had experience with the federal government before. Never worked for a government before. Didn't have any training in how serious somethings are or not terribly serious other things are. Just learning the whole thing as you're going along. Did you find any mentors that early, even in A-100?*

HASKELL: No. We had a class mentor, but I don't recall him ever meeting with me individually, and I think he might've had one or two group things. I think being with the government wasn't that weird to me because my father had been a federal civil servant. It was more the Foreign Service thing. Because it's this elite thing that nobody else can get into. Think back to when I was in college and they were telling me nobody gets in. And yet I got in.

*Q: I guess what I'm trying to find out is this early in your entry into the Foreign Service, are you figuring out how to find the information you need? Because it can be a welter of stuff.*

HASKELL: I think at that time in my life I thrived on organizing things, like the paperwork that was involved. It didn't phase me. Now I'm thinking, "Oh crap, a travel voucher. I don't want to deal." I was just so happy to be there that they could have fed me anything, and I would've spit it back out at them. I wasn't complaining about anything. I think the hardest thing was when we got our assignments in A-100, there were only two management positions on the list. Lagos and somewhere else that I can't remember. And they were explaining to us strategies for how to bid on what we wanted. We had to take into account language—were you going to get language training, or were you going to get your consular tour out of the way, or would you get your in-cone work out of the way?

These are all things you need to get tenured. Each of us was choosing the maybe ten or twelve posts on the list we wanted. They had way more on the list than we had people. Maybe there were seventy-five posts or rather seventy-five positions on offer, and we had to put them in rank order—our top maybe ten or twelve. I can't remember which. Also, I remember that I had decided that I would put a GSO [general services officer] position in Lagos at the top, because nobody else wanted it. And I felt okay, I'll get it then—I'll know what I'm doing after my first tour. And then I put all these other positions on my list that I can't remember. But the very last one I put on was Manila, consular officer Manila. I knew I wouldn't get the language training and wouldn't get my in-cone work, either. So it was nearly a zero for me in a way. Yes, I got the consular out of the way, but I was trying to get more of the tenuring requirements out of the way. Though really even Lagos wasn't going to get more than the management work. It wasn't even a rotation [GSO/Consular]. I think I wanted to get the experience in my cone. That's why I put Lagos first.

*Q: Is that how it worked out?*

HASKELL: Yeah. I went to Manila and I was by far the most shocked person in the class. I didn't have a clue what flag that was when they waved it. I had no idea. And a woman who was sent to Lagos was in shock.

*Q: I guess I'm in shock because typically if you bid Lagos, you get Lagos. So you catch your breath, and you find out you're going as a consular officer to Manila, and you get your training next, ConGen Rosslyn [Basic Consular Course]. So what did you think?*

HASKELL: I went to no language training. There was another classmate who was also going to Manila, and we went straight for consular training. There was one person in our class who went out to post earlier than we did. There was one guy who went to Port au Prince and he already spoke French. I don't think he went out as consular, so he must've had some shorter training, a course of just a week or two. He was the first one of our class to leave. And then, my classmate and I went, though he departed about four days before I did, just after the consular training.

*Q: What did you think of the consular training? Did you feel prepared by the time you got to Manila?*

HASKELL: I think I just knew how much I didn't know. And I was really terrible. When I arrived, I was put into the NIV [non-immigrant visa] section, and they said, "Here, sit next to this person and watch this person do these interviews. You can do that. And then you'll start doing interviews." I sat next to somebody for a week, and they finally said, "You gotta do it yourself." I was horrified that I was going to be doing this myself.

*Q: And your husband has come along?*

HASKELL: Yes.

*Q: Was he able to find a job or how did he adapt?*

HASKELL: Well, those were the days when EFM [eligible family members] employment was much harder. And in fact, what he decided to do—partly because I had put conditions on him [who does that?], one of which was that he would go to school—he would go to college. Luckily at the time we still had the U.S. military bases in the Philippines. He signed up for classes through the University of Maryland at Clark Air Base. He would drive up to Clark once a week for night classes. He could stay there, on base, cheaply, maybe ten dollars a night and then drive back the next day. That's what he did.

*Q: Let's go back to the consular section and the non-immigrant visas. Roughly how many people did you see a day? What was the rough number?*

HASKELL: You have to do the math. We started interviewing at 8:30 am, and we interviewed until 4:30 pm. I think we allowed three minutes per interview.

So 8:30 to 4:30, five days a week, we interviewed. We were the first post that did the appointment system, and I think the appointments were three minutes each. But of course if it was a family, they came up to the window together. Also we gave out our appointments far in advance because we had so many appointments. So if an officer was sick or went on leave unexpectedly, we had to do all those previously scheduled interviews. I think we had only five interviewing officers, which wasn't a lot. From 8:00 to 8:30 and from 4:30 to 5:00 we did the dropbox visas, which were crew visas and nurse visas, for the most part.

*Q: At what point in the day did you actually process the visa into the passport?*

HASKELL: We had EFMs [who were dependents of officers] do that. All we did was sit at the window. The applicants gave us their application; we read their answers; we asked standard questions; and we wrote things on their applications that indicated reasons for our decision, especially if it was a denial. That is no longer allowed. We had codes for all kinds of things we used as reasons for denial. And we said no a lot, refused the majority of the applicants because they didn't have sufficient ties to the Philippines to convince us they would return. We often felt there was no way they were coming back.



*Q: So you had a very high refusal rate and all of the difficulties of refusing people who wanted a U.S. visa. Did you spend all of your time in the non-immigrant visa section or did you rotate?*

HASKELL: I rotated. I went from NIVs to the anti-fraud unit to IVs [immigrant visas]. But it was a long time. It was six months or more in each of the visa sections. I was only on an eighteen-month tour. At the time, an out-of-cone assignment with no language training was only eighteen-months.

*Q: I just want to take you through the end of the Manila tour. Now you go into the anti-fraud unit and this is again the first time you're interacting I guess with local police or local administration of justice. What was that like?*

HASKELL: It was very bizarre. We definitely had a couple of police guys that we worked with and a lot of it was meeting flights from the U.S. that had "turn-arounds." There was an INS [U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service] office, so we worked very close with our INS colleagues. In fact, what we did was we had two officers in the anti-fraud unit and there were two or three INS officers. We shared the airport duties because the flights came in at like eleven at night. When there were "turn-arounds" [people who had been refused entry into the United States by the immigration officer at the U.S. airport] or the local airport officials thought they had someone trying to board that shouldn't—maybe the officials suspected the visa was a forgery—then we had to go to the airport. We worked with these two policemen, who, in hindsight, were probably highly corrupt. We also worked with some prosecutors that took the cases of visa fraud to court.

I never testified, but I wasn't the head of the office. The head of the office would occasionally be called to testify in court cases. To do that would have to go through the process to get permission from the State Department Legal Office. We also had a couple of internal cases of fraud within the embassy with immigrant visas. It was interesting and it was a lot more out of the office than the visa interview part of the work. The Philippine government had an Overseas Employment Agency [POEA] that worked with Filipinos who were going to work overseas. So we would go to POEA and talk to them about how they were preparing people and making sure that people were going and coming back and living within the immigration laws. So, yes, it was interesting.

*Q: Was the process of doing visas beginning to be automated? Did that have any effect on how you were doing your work?*

HASKELL: I had a pencil in my hand every day. That was it. We [the officers] didn't do anything electronically. Each officer had a team in the immigrant visa section. We also had a team of people who put everything together for the NIVs. The officers just decided to issue or refuse. And sometimes we would say yes with some condition, usually a shorter than normal time of validity or limit the number of entries to the United States. Sometimes we would decide to annotate visas. For those, we had to physically write what the annotation should. And then there was a whole team in the back that did all the

processing. There was a spouse who worked on the AVLOS [automated visa look out system] system to see if there were any hits [derogatory information]. There were FSNs [Foreign Service nationals [who were locally-hired employees]] who actually used the visa plates to stamp the visa into the passport. They weren't stickers then. The FSN would fill in the blanks—name, et cetera.

*Q: Very labor intensive in the immigrant visa section. Again, what were the strongest impressions you had? Because obviously many Filipinos also immigrate to the United States, but it's also the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and all sorts of other issues that can prevent somebody from going to the United States. What was the immigrant visa experience?*

HASKELL: HIV/AIDS had not yet made its way into our process. We're still in 1989 and 1990. The biggest thing similar to that that could put the kibosh on someone immigrating to the United States from the Philippines was tuberculosis [TB]. If someone had TB, they would have to undergo treatment and come back once they could get a new medical clearance. But one thing that was astonishing on the immigrant visa side was the length of time it took before certain family members of a U.S. citizen could get an interview. The Filipino brother or sister of a U.S. citizen would have to wait something like twenty-seven years from the time the petition was approved by the INS before getting an appointment to be interviewed. Each month we would receive dates from the INS. All family members whose petitions were approved on or before those dates, which depended on the family category, would be scheduled for interviews. That date only moved three days per month in the brother/sister category. So you can see that the wait was getting longer and longer.

That category was the P5 category, I think it was called. Those were the brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens. A lot of those people, I'm sure after waiting so long—they're never going to immigrate to the United States. Many of them even died before their date came up.

I guess the immigrant visa situations that were the most astonishing to me were the mail order brides. This was before the Internet, so they were literally mail-order brides. We didn't have emails. Even in the State Department, we didn't have an email system until some point during that Manila tour. But that is a whole other story. So back to the mail-order brides. This was challenging—whether or not to issue those. Were they legitimate relationships? And the other situation was our military members. There were a lot of K visas [fiancée visas] and some of those made you wonder. We were well versed on how to determine if an applicant was a prostitute or not because many of them were. Ever having been a prostitute was an ineligibility.

But we handled it. We had a very good way of doing it, frankly. We worked really well with the U.S. military. The military would help the service members and their fiancées or wives prepare for the interview. One of the many important ways they were prepared was being prepared for the question that could come up. The service member petitioner was told not to be offended if it was implied that their fiancée/wife was a prostitute. The INS

had determined a woman [I never saw a man in this situation] who had ever accepted what were called “bar fines” had been a prostitute. So we tried to do it as nicely as we could. And then if they said yes—and they knew to say yes because we had their work history there and we could tell by the work history if they were likely to have accepted bar fines—then we would just say, okay, that’s an ineligibility.

We give them this piece of paper. And then we would just send them off to INS. They would do the paperwork with INS, and they would get their waiver. Then they came back and got their visa. It took time, but then that was it. There were a lot of housemaids, too, who were coming for interviews [K and also P1, which is for the spouse of a U.S. citizen]. But it was interesting to see. I mean, to be honest, there were times when I was so impressed when I got a case that was more sort of “normal”—just two normal people who weren’t in the military or weren’t mail-order brides or whatever.

*Q: What I’m going to recommend is that we pause here because it’s sort of a good moment to break. Then the training, get into the Foreign Service, see how an embassy runs, see how the consular service works. We’ll pick up next time as you begin bidding on your next post, and the thoughts going through your head back then and what your goals were and so on. So I’ll end the recording now for today.*

*Q: So today is September twenty-sixth, 2019. We’re resuming our interview with Jennifer Heiskell, and Jennifer, you had two recollections from A-100 you wanted to include.*

HASKELL: Hi. Thanks for that. I did think of a couple things. One thing I wanted to mention was that when I joined the Foreign Service, my name was actually Jennifer Lawrence. So that was just a small thing. And I can’t remember if we talked about the swearing-in. And I do remember that our class’s swearing-in was the day after Thanksgiving in 1988 and that we were the last class sworn in by George Schultz, Secretary of State George Schultz. So that was fun. And then another thing that I remembered is that December 21, 1988 is the day that Pan Am 103 was bombed out of the sky over Lockerbie. And of course, we were briefed on that and told that there were several State Department personnel on that plane. And of course, over time we all learned a lot more about it, and it changed the whole way we do our notifications for threats and how we handle all those things to which the no-double-standard rule applies. All that came from that, happened while I was in A-100. And the third thing that was just an interesting note was I went to Ronald Reagan’s inauguration [sic]. I stood in the freezing cold on the Mall and tried to see that little tiny red speck up there. That was Nancy Reagan’s coat.

*Q: And this is 1984 or 1980.*

HASKELL: That was 1989. Oh, you mean Bush? Yes, Reagan was there because he was swearing in George H.W. Bush. Sorry. Sorry about that. I just kept remembering the Nancy Reagan coat thing.

Anyway, so back to Manila, I wanted to go through some of the things that I remember that were kind of highlights to the time I was there. My tour was an eighteen-month tour because at the time if you didn't have language training and you weren't doing an in-cone assignment, it was only eighteen months. I came up with a few things that I wanted to mention. I'll just mention them briefly here so you can understand where I'm coming from. The first thing was I arrived on April 25 in 1989. Four days before that Colonel Nick Rowe was assassinated.

He was the head of the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group [JUSMAG] there. I'll mention a little bit about that. I want to mention the December 1989 coup attempt against President Corazon Aquino and some other things kind of related to that. Also, the kidnapping of a Peace Corps volunteer in June which I think came down to us in July. And then also in July there was a big earthquake. Those were things that were important. And it was interesting even though the tour was very short. There were an awful lot of interesting things that happened during that time. With Nick Rowe, of course, he was a Vietnam War hero.

*Q: Can I ask you here, all of these things that you mentioned have a common thread in that they are all threats and security problems. Did that cause any changes in the way security was addressed at U.S. Embassy Manila while you were there?*

HASKELL: Well, yes. I would say there were other things that I didn't even mention that were part of the security discussion. Because in an eighteen-month period or fourteen-month period, eight Americans were assassinated. All of this was related to National People's Army [NPA] activities. They were the communist group. There were many, many grievances, including the negotiations that were on-going to renew the leases on our two military bases, Subic Naval base and Clark Air Base. There were a lot of anti-American demonstrations at the time, too. We did have a lot of limitations on where we could travel because things were happening, especially after the Peace Corps volunteer was kidnapped. We were really limited in whether we could go out into the boondocks—I like to use the word—boondocks when talking about the Philippines, because evidently the word originated there. But, certainly from my perspective, arriving when the embassy was in quite a state of shock from the assassination of a member of the embassy community. Nick Rowe had been a Vietnam War hero and had a considerable intelligence background. He had known that there were threats that the NPA was going to commit a terrorist attack, probably trying to assassinate an American. And he actually also had reported that he was number two or three on the list. But even having known all that, he didn't vary his times and routes. [Not trying to blame the victim here.]

That morning on his way to work, he was assassinated. There were something like forty-some odd bullets fired from a handgun and an automatic weapon. And one bullet went through the piece of the car that didn't have armor, and that killed him. So, that was quite a thing to arrive to. It took away, I guess, from the importance [to me] of my own arrival at such a big post. It started certainly to make people think a lot more about security and that things could really go wrong there.

We did have some security issues, and during my tour, people [American citizens] outside of Clark Air Base or north in Tarlac province, DOD civilians and military, were assassinated as terrorist acts committed by the NPA. As a result of all of these combined things that happened, we also had numerous threats against specific Americans in the embassy. If you also remember, it was a time, I think, when there was an article published in a German magazine listing names of people the author claimed were working for the CIA. Some people that were posted in Manila either were on that list or somehow names were derived off that list. And so there were some repercussions from that with some people leaving post.

With these things happening, in about June of 1990, post had a whole conversation about whether to go to voluntary [authorized] departure because there were so many security things going on. For example, Vice President Quayle came to visit, and as his plane was about to land there were Americans pulled out of their car and murdered in Tarlac.

They were Department of Defense [DOD] civilians. It was quite an interesting time. We had pillbox bombs tossed over the embassy walls fairly commonly. They weren't anything that caused any damage, but it happened. At one point there were two rocket-launched grenades launched into the embassy's Sea Front housing compound, which is where I lived. It happened while I was at work. No one was injured. It was also one of those times when you find out that the security training either didn't stick or we weren't listening. But evidently, some people who were there at the time heard the first one land and explode.

Then, of course, people ran towards what was happening. They're not supposed to do that. Luckily, no one was hurt with any of these. It was quite lucky. They had this whole discussion about the voluntary departure, the pros and cons. It was a very large post. We probably had more than five hundred American employees there. And then probably we had a couple of thousand local staff. USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] was very big there. Of course, we had a huge Consular Section.

And probably a couple of hundred thousand American citizens, private American citizens, living in that part of the Philippines. And that the concept of trying to evacuate that many people, even if we had an ordered departure, seemed implausible. We couldn't really do that because how are we going to be able to accommodate all the American citizens? It was a discussion that wouldn't be unfamiliar today, but it certainly wasn't happening very many places at that time. The bottom line of it was we did not go to the voluntary departure because once you do that newcomers [embassy employees and their families] can't arrive. And we had so many positions that would need to be filled by people coming in over the next period of time. Also, once your family left, they couldn't come back. The community itself didn't really want that. People weren't so afraid that they wanted to do it. Instead, what we did, or maybe not instead, but separately, we actually began to receive danger pay.

Embassy Manila had had a 20 percent hardship differential and the hardship differential was reduced to 15 percent, and then we were given 15 percent danger pay. The only time

I was ever in a post with danger pay was in Manila on my first tour. That was to answer your question. Moving on to the coup attempt. That was quite interesting. It started on December 1, 1989. There had already been maybe three or four coup attempts against Corazon Aquino before that. They had been unsuccessful. This was a coup attempt led by a coalition between rogue members of the armed forces and a guy named Colonel Gregorio Honasan, who was really known as Gringo Honasan. And he went by colonel, still, even though he had been convicted of coup plotting in the past and had served a prison term.

He was well known. Honasan wasn't active in the military at the time. The coup attempt was launched. It was well organized. They had somewhere, depending on who you listened to, a thousand, maybe even three thousand troops that participated. Some active duty troops participated, and they seized some air bases and other military bases. They had access to some small, old aircraft. They flew missions over parts of the city, some of Manila. It was clear within the first twenty-four hours that the Philippines armed forces were not going to be able to stop the coup quickly and maybe not ever. Certainly not too effectively. Aquino didn't have a good grip on it. The military did launch a counterattack later in the day of the beginning of the coup. And President Bush agreed to assist when Aquino asked for military assistance, because the Philippines Armed Forces weren't able to handle the situation very well.

It was interesting that we had the bases there and that the U.S. government was in negotiations to renew the leases on the bases. It was a very unpopular proposition in the Philippines. The population did not want the leases to be renewed. So, of course we did provide the assistance Aquino requested. It was just a sort of air cover or display of air power. We had aircraft carriers close by in region and with our air base, Clark Air Base, and with the big naval base, we had jets, fighter jets. They basically buzzed the city. I remember this. I watched them fly back and forth across the city. Their orders were to prevent the smaller aircraft seized by the rebels from taking off.

Also part of the orders was that if the rebel planes took off, the U.S. pilots were supposed to shoot them down. It was effective. It enabled the Philippine military to get a grip on what was going on, and it forced the coup participants to move out of the military installations they had commandeered. But they chose to go to Makati, which is a part of Manila, sort of the elite business district. It's nearby large residential areas. The embassy had quite a number of families living in those residential areas. I think those families got very little notice that they would be evacuated from their homes. They were brought to the Sea Front housing compound, where I lived. I had extra bedrooms. I remember having a couple come and stay with me. Also we had U.S. military at the embassy. They brought in 120 plus or minus U.S. Marines to take up defensive positions inside of our embassy compound.

They set up gun emplacements. I didn't realize that concertina wire could be five or six feet in diameter and with razor wire. When we came to work in the morning or the evening, as the case may be, we had to get through that maze of defenses. It was a little bit interesting with the sandbag machine emplacements around the embassy compound.

When the rebels went into the business area, there were thousands of Americans there either doing business or tourism in hotels. So, we set up a twenty-four-hour Consular operations center. We were handling phone calls from Americans in the United States. They were calling to ask us to do welfare and whereabouts for their family members.

We also were handling the calls from the American citizens who were in Makati and watching what was going on. Sometimes they were calling to report what they were seeing. Sometimes they were calling to tell us there was a guy on the corner down there with the gun, and to ask us if he was with the army or was he a coup plotter. Like we would know. Of course, we didn't know. We spent a lot of time trying to reassure people and to basically give them some guidance. Our original guidance from the front office was that they, the Americans, should all stay in their hotel rooms. Then we got notification that some of the rebels were going into the hotels and we had to, at one point, call people back. This is all on landlines, of course.

This is long before cell phones. We had to call back to tell them maybe they should leave or regroup. Meanwhile we had embassy people who were negotiating to find a way to get those people out. Eventually there was an agreement that we could send in buses. We hired a lot of buses—twelve buses, twenty buses, I don't know, a lot of buses. There was a ceasefire, and we were able to get those buses driven into Makati. Consular officers assisted in the loading of those buses, and we took everybody out. It was an interesting time. The main part of the coup attempt took place from December 1 to 3. But the rebels didn't leave Makati until December 7.

It was about a week that we were dealing with this part of what's going on. There was fighting all around the residential areas. Some of our people went back home and found spent shells in their bathrooms. Ammunition had come in through their windows. After the conclusion of the main part of the fighting, there was still one Philippine air base, Mactan Air Base, near Cebu [on a different island] that wasn't, let's say, freed from the rebels until December 9. For the last day or two I was not in the Consular operations center anymore. They'd sent me up to the front office to work on the log, the event log, but it was all very interesting.

The first time we heard about the coup—I think that probably people in the front office might've known—but one of the junior officers was the duty officer that day. He got a call that evening from an American who happened to be at the airport saying that there were soldiers everywhere. He wanted to know what was going on. The duty officer reported that back to the front office. That duty officer was Todd Haskell. He comes up later in the story. It was an interesting way to spend your first tour. I want to move on now from the coup attempt. Although, I understand it, it was Vice President Quayle who was sitting in the Situation Room at the White House directing actions and making decisions or taking those decisions to President Bush, especially about the request for the American military intervention.

And the Vice President did come to visit later. I think it was in the spring of 1990; he made a visit to the Philippines. That was my first VIP visit, and I worked in the control

room. It was the first of many VIP visits to come. Moving on to the Peace Corps volunteer. Around the beginning of July, I was working in the immigrant visa section when we found out about a Peace Corps volunteer who had been kidnapped. My recollection, which is of course some thirty years old, is that he was kidnapped. The Peace Corps decided to evacuate all the Peace Corps volunteers. But there was more to the story that those of us in the Consular Section, at least I, didn't know. While we knew about the threat to the Peace Corps volunteers, or really at the time there was a general threat to all Americans, not just Peace Corps volunteers.

If you read press reports, there was a threat specific to Peace Corps volunteers and that when Peace Corps or local officials went to notify this particular Peace Corps volunteer of the evacuation, he was on an island in the southern Philippines. He had recently gotten married to a Filipina. When the officials arrived, his wife told the Peace Corps volunteers, or whoever it was, that he had been taken by rebels [NPA] on June 13 and that he had asked her not to notify the authorities because he thought he knew some of the NPA. He lived in a part of the country where there were a lot of NPA around. He had tried to do what we do when we're in those situations, and be friendly with them to not draw attention to himself. He thought it would be safer for him if she didn't tell the authorities. So he'd already been in captivity for a couple of weeks when we found out that he was kidnapped. Then we were busily evacuating some 260 Peace Corps volunteers. Being part of the immigrant visa section, this increased our visa workload tremendously because a number of those Peace Corps volunteers quickly filed K-visa petitions, which are fiancé[e] visas. There were even some who had already gotten married and wanted to file a spouse immigrant visa petition for their new spouses. These petitions came flooding into the immigrant visa section. We processed all those as quickly as we could. All of this we still think was part of the NBAs anti-U.S. military base agitation.

And the quickly filed visas, in which our fiancé[e] visas and even some who had already gotten married and wanted to file a spouse immigrant visa petition for their new spouses, came flooding into the immigrant visa section. And so we processed all those as quickly as we could. All of this we still think was part of the MBAs anti-base agitation.

Now we're into July 1990. I have only a few months left of my tour and on July sixteenth there was a huge earthquake in the afternoon. It was late in the afternoon. We were in the immigrant visa section. The waiting room, which of course most of the day was full to the gills, didn't have very many people left in it. There were just a few people waiting for their interviews. It was about a 7.7, or if you read the earthquake site website, 7.8 earthquake. It was, I think, about 250 miles northeast of Manila, but we felt it big time. The Consular Annex building was maybe five floors. The visa section was all on the first floor, and it started rocking. We all just sort of looked at each other. Of course, our offices were made of, I think, just plywood or sheetrock. They were just sort of temporary, permanent offices. A couple of us were standing in a doorway, and we realized that that was not a very sturdy doorway. So we retreated to under our desks. We ended up with a big crack, maybe an inch-wide crack, all the way across the floor of the immigrant visa waiting room. It was a pretty big earthquake.



There was a lot of damage in parts of the country. Baguio city, which is probably a hundred miles or something from Manila—I don't really remember, probably more than that—but up in the mountains. The U.S. military had a rest camp up there. We actually had military housing up there that people could use for weekend vacations. We even had three houses for the embassy to use. It wasn't that big of a city, but it was badly damaged. All the tall buildings, anything over a few stories, pancaked. We had to do a lot of welfare and whereabouts of U.S. citizens. The airport runway was badly damaged and, at the very beginning, only helicopters could get up there. Eventually the runway was repaired/cleared enough that they could fly in C-130s, which need only a very short runway. Landslides had made the roads that lead up to Baguio accessible. For like two or three days, no one really could get up there. We did send a whole team up to conduct the welfare and whereabouts of Americans. Some of us stayed in Manila and continued in the immigrant visa section.

I think only two of us stayed back, but we had to manage the entire interview load. We were doing the workload of probably four or five officers, but we were only two people. We were required, as part of our work requirements, to do fifty immigrant visa interviews a day. I think those days we were each, the two of us, doing well over a hundred interviews every day to try to meet the needs of the people who came in for their interview appointment. They were not going to miss their chance for an immigrant visa to the United States, even if there had just been an earthquake; they were definitely all showing up for their interviews. But even ten days or two weeks after the earthquake, they were still finding people alive in the rubble. I was sent up to Baguio about ten days after the earthquake. I finally got my chance to go up and do welfare and whereabouts.

At that point, I was the only one from the Consular Section up there. It was really interesting because they sent a navy helicopter, a big one, to pick me up from the embassy and fly me to Baguio. I don't know the types of helicopters, but it was the kind with the rotors on each end. It was a big navy helicopter with a black and white checkered square on the back, and it had big doors that they opened in mid air. They landed on the embassy's helipad and flew me up to Baguio. I was absolutely amazed at the experience. The pilots decided they would fly very low over the rice paddies. They tethered me in and opened the doors so that I could watch as we skimmed the fields. As we got closer to Baguio, which, again, was in the mountains, there were a lot of clouds. The pilots couldn't see well. Their landing zone was the golf course; the U.S. military had a golf course there.

It's all in the mountains and there were trees everywhere except the fairways of the golf course. You can't see anything because we were in the clouds. So, they would zoom down to see if they were in the right place. Oops. Nope. And zoom back up. It was a little bit frightening, but also, I was young enough then to think it was a bit like a carnival ride. I was having fun. But they went up and down like that two or three times before they discovered the correct landing place. I stayed in one of the embassy's little houses as they hadn't suffered damage. One night a member of the U.S. military came knocking on my door; we had no communications in those houses. There were no phone lines or anything. Everything was knocked out by the earthquake.

So he was banging on my door loudly, loudly. He said the rescuers had found two survivors in the rubble. I didn't know if they were going to be Americans or not. I thought, Oh, could be Americans, but I realized I didn't have an updated list of the missing Americans. I went down into the town where we had a little office to work from, and I had a phone that had been set up by the military. I started trying to figure out how to find out who were the missing Americans, because my list was not updated [without cell phones, remember]. I managed to figure it out by calling somebody who I knew had the answer, who was at a dinner party in Manila. I think it was a Friday night.

So even without cell phones you can do things like that. When I had the list, I went and stood with all the rest of the crowd while the rescuers dug for hours. The people that were under the rubble were alive, and they were digging them out. They were doing the final work to get them out, and they did, they did get them out. There were two people. They were alive, but they weren't Americans. They were actually employees of the Hyatt hotel. Some eighty people more or less had died in the Hyatt. These two who were pulled out alive after ten days and then another employee was also pulled out alive on day fourteen. It was all very exciting. I had a driver who drove me around town as I was doing my welfare and whereabouts. All the houses were just collapsed, with the second floor collapsed onto the second floor and the third floor on that. Some were leaning over to the side and very difficult to get around because the roads were crowded with debris and people.

Our military had a big part of the rescue and relief effort. Everything from the mortuary to people to heavy lifting, et cetera. We were the main transportation to and from Baguio; the Philippine army, obviously, was very active. There were mining companies that sent in miners to help with the extrication of people.

There were constant aftershocks. I remember that we didn't feel the aftershocks in Manila so much, but in Baguio it was constant aftershocks. It was just amazing. The house that I was staying in, the windows would just rattle every so often. That was my first experience with an earthquake of any kind. I remember that after I left Manila, and I was in Washington on training, I went to the Pentagon City shopping mall. I was standing at the counter paying for something, and I felt an earthquake, I thought. I looked around and nobody was noticing anything. Everybody was just going about their business. I later figured out that, of course, it was the Metro going underneath the mall. I had become super-sensitized to the slight movements. Years later, when there was an earthquake off the coast of Cyprus while I was in Israel, I felt it. I immediately mentioned it to my colleagues, but they said, There are no earthquakes here. You're crazy.

Then two hours later there were reports about it on the radio, and I had felt it. The earthquake was another one of those things that was an influence. It gave me experience on how to do things and make decisions and deal with crises. Just remembering that USAID was having a workshop or conference or training at one of the hotels in Baguio at the time of the earthquake, and it collapsed. Twenty-seven of the participants died, including one of the USAID American officials. That's the earthquake story.

We had a lot of things going on in the Philippines. I had a really great first tour, a great first boss in the Foreign Service. His name was Howard Kavalier. Nine years later he was posted in Nairobi with his wife, Prahbi, who had been a General Services Officer [GSO] with us in Manila. Prahbi was killed in the terrorist bombing of the embassy in Nairobi in 1998. That was really very sad. We had had a very close-knit junior officer corps in Manila. Some of the people that were my friends there are still my friends today. We stayed close and, as I mentioned, the duty officer who got the call about the coup became a part of my life. I separated from my husband, got a divorce, and then married my current husband, Todd Haskell, who is a Foreign Service officer that I met in Manila. Any questions?

*Q: You met Todd in the Philippines, but you were married later I imagine, or did all of that also happen while you were there?*

HASKELL: Well, first of all, there's no divorce in the Philippines, and I was on my first tour there. So when I left the Philippines at the very beginning of October 1990. Quick anecdote that it was my first experience with a continuing resolution because there was no federal budget. There was no money to buy me a plane ticket to leave. I remember I had to sign a repayment agreement so that I could leave. I was anxious to leave according to my schedule because I was going to take three days of home leave right away in order to file for divorce. So, I did that. Then I went on to my training in Washington, DC for my onward assignment. I went through the divorce proceedings and in August of 1991, Todd and I got married. So we've been married 28 years now.

*Q: Okay. Now let's just go back one second. As your consular tour is coming to an end, you have to think about bidding. You have to think about where you're going next. What were your thoughts to the extent you remember them now, about where you wanted to go, what you were planning in terms of next steps for your career?*

HASKELL: When I was bidding, I was a winter cycle bidder, so there weren't very many posts to bid on. And I remember that my career development officer [CDO] sent me a cable with a few posts for you to bid on. And to be honest, I don't remember which ones they were, but I clearly didn't like them because I do remember that I called her up and I said, "I don't think so. I bid on Lagos first in A-100. And you didn't send me there. So no, I would like something else, some other choices besides these." Amazingly, she sent a cable with a couple more posts to bid on. This was part of my education of learning that if you don't ask, you don't get, and if you ask, you might get. One of the new options was Prague. I don't remember the others. I remember sending in a cable with one bid, Prague. Thank you very much. So I didn't have a very typical bidding experience my first time.

*Q: Theoretically your CDO sort of owed you a better destination after having survived all of those issues in Manila, including danger pay. So in theory, the personnel system should have given you something that had a zero differential or something close to that.*

HASKELL: Right. And I do think that one of the posts that they proposed was a Western European post, but I had no money and I was paying off student loans, and I felt that

there was no way I could afford to live there, which is why I did not want to bid on that post.

*Q: It's interesting to note that, as a junior officer or an entry level officer, many officers make that same decision, that it's too early in their career to go to Western Europe because of the cost.*

HASKELL: Yes. And, at the time Prague had a 10 percent differential, although I think I got paid the differential for about four days because it was eliminated about the same time I arrived at post. I think I got a little bit of differential pay on one paycheck

*Q: What was the job in Prague that you were going to?*

HASKELL: General Services officer [GSO]. I was in what we called administrative cone back then, but it was a GSO job, so I was happy to do that. I had to do an in-cone assignment, and I had to get language training. For some reason I thought Czech was fine to learn. I discovered later that, no, it wasn't fine for me to learn, but I asked for it.

*Q: Now did you have to learn Czech all the way up to the 3/3 level or what was the language requirement?*

HASKELL: Thank God, it was just a 2/2.

*Q: And how many months of training then at FSI did you get to reach a 2/2?*

HASKELL: I got twenty-six weeks of language training, but I also had twelve weeks of GSO training. I think I was in Washington about ten months.

*Q: Did your GSO training that early in your career also come with contractual authority?*

HASKELL: Yes, it included acquisitions.

*Q: Okay. So you would have been advised to get personal liability insurance?*

HASKELL: I don't think I was at that time. I've had personal liability insurance for many, many years, but I was not the contracting officer in Prague. I was the backup. When I went to my second GSO job, I got smarter.

*Q: During the period you were in Washington and you were doing all of this training, did you also have time to talk to people about Prague or talk to people about GSO? Did you have opportunities to network, in other words?*

HASKELL: Oh, that's a good question. I did a lot of consultations, even during the coursework. I was in Washington for a long time. I didn't wait till the very end to do it, mostly because I was taking home leave after my training [remember I took only three

days immediately after leaving Manila] and that's when we got married. Todd and I got married, and we had a short honeymoon in the U.S Virgin Islands. We went to the Virgin Islands because it was home leave and we had to stay in United States territory. And then I went to post. I can't remember how I did my consultations, but I tried to work them in as I went along. The list of consultations for GSO was very long. It was maybe twenty-five people, and I did that. We had language and area studies during the language training period at the Foreign Service Institute [FSI]. It was all at the old FSI, not the new one. It was the one in Rosslyn.

I felt pretty prepared, I guess, when I got to Prague. Although I think one of the things that occurred to me was that when training is twelve weeks long, it's an awful lot to learn—very technical things, some of it was too technical, frankly, that we really didn't need to know. We didn't need to know what “greenies” and “blueys” were—when you're looking at an electrical wire.

I thought that in some ways it's better to go to post for a month or two and then go back and do the training because then you really know what to pay the most attention to. I found that since I had my GSO training first, it had been several months since I had finished the training in February. I went to post the very end of August or the beginning of September, and I had had Czech in the meantime. I had a hard time remembering a lot of my training, and I really wished that I had paid more attention to certain things. Somehow, I managed to muddle through my GSO tour. They seemed to like me well enough.

*Q: And of course, you're arriving just at the end of communism in Czechoslovakia and then the Czech Republic.*

HASKELL: The Berlin Wall, the Velvet Revolution had already happened and Vaclav Havel was the president. Tourism was becoming a thing. But Americans really had not found Prague yet. There were plenty of tour buses, but they were primarily Germans and Italians, and the city wasn't really set up yet for tourism. For example, the restaurants hadn't really figured out how to host very many Westerners. You could walk into a restaurant with nobody there and ask, “Can we sit down?” And they would ask, “Do you have a reservation?” And we'd say, “Well, no.” And they'd say, “Well, you have to have a reservation.” It was ridiculous. I think that I used to joke that there was really only one big kitchen underneath Prague and all the food came from that one conveyor belt to every restaurant. Because the food was the same everywhere, with only a couple of exceptions.

McDonald's opened in Prague while I was there, or shortly before. That was a big exception. And they served beer. There was one really super fancy, expensive restaurant called U Maliru, which knew how to do it. I don't know if it had Michelin stars, but it could have been a Michelin star restaurant. And I think I went there only once or twice because it was very, very, very expensive [or so it seemed to me at the time]. I think we went with my in-laws when they came to visit. There was another decent restaurant down on the Vltava river across the street from the National Theater. I can't remember the name of that restaurant, but it was excellent. It was very Western standard. I think that it

must have been owned or started by people who'd lived in the United States or someplace similar. They tended to hire foreigners to be the servers, so the service was quite good. The other thing was that Czechoslovakia was famous for lead crystal, for making crystal glassware. There were shops everywhere, as if there were tourists everywhere. There weren't really tourists everywhere at that time, but there were crystal shops everywhere. It was ridiculously inexpensive, but they wouldn't take a credit card. They couldn't take a credit card. I did buy a lot of crystal, and I still have most of it. [I would have bought more if they'd taken credit cards!]

*Q: Now, when you arrived as GSO, you were the only GSO. You didn't have an assistant and there was not a chief GSO or anything like that?*

HASKELL: Nope, I had a supervisory GSO.

*Q: Oh, you did?*

HASKELL: I did. In fact, there were supposed to be three GSOs, but one of the positions was vacant and had been vacant for a very long time.

*Q: Okay. So what areas of responsibility did you have when you arrived?*

HASKELL: I was thinking about this. I had the motor pool, and I had the warehouse and customs and receiving and shipping. I remember that my boss did the procurement and the housing, which were the two hardest bits of GSO. He wasn't very popular for whatever reason. I became sort of the face of GSO. So whenever anybody wanted or needed anything, they came to see me, and then I would deal with going to talk to my boss or whatever. He and I got along very well. He was a good guy; people just don't tend to like people who often have to say "no."

I guess having a sort of intermediary helped people settle down a little bit, to be more happy. There had been a long vacancy before I arrived, too. I watched how my boss did things. I learned from him, although I didn't really get to do the housing myself or the procurement myself. But I remember thinking that as I moved on up through, I thought that I could probably do housing. I would be happy to be housing officer in a later tour. And you'll hear later that I was housing officer. I don't know what I was thinking—

I had a big job. Our warehouse, literally, had been a stable up until shortly after World War II, and it still kind of looked like a stable. During the communist era, it had been the dispatching point for the secret police. They had cars and people posted there. It was an interesting time because it was soon enough after the fall of the wall, and the change of government that the Czech people hadn't really adjusted yet, and our local employees at the embassy had not adjusted to the new times. For example, during the time when it was under the influence of the Soviet Union, we had a "no fraternization" policy, so the Americans couldn't be friends with the local staff. Then suddenly overnight, presto we could be friends with them, and they didn't really appreciate that. They were leery of the

instant change. People like me would arrive, and not having been there in the bad old days, and we would just be “normal” and try to be friendly, and they really didn’t like it.

There were only a few, a very few, who would accept our reaching out to be friends or to be more than just a simple work acquaintance. It wasn’t that easy. Also I think because the Czechs had done better, let’s say, under communism, under the Soviet Union’s control, than some other countries, they suffered less, they were not embracing the West, as much, as quickly. And I contrast it with Poland. My husband was in Washington learning Polish to go to Poland. Six months later, visiting him, I saw amazing differences in how the Poles embraced the opening to the West with open arms in every way.

The Poles were often going to Germany to buy things to bring back to sell. And they opened little shops on every corner. They had twenty-four-hour supermarkets. They were really reaching out to bring the conveniences, whereas in Prague that just wasn’t happening. They had maybe one supermarket here, one supermarket there, but they were far out of the downtown. And they weren’t that great. They weren’t twenty-four hours. Certainly, they weren’t opening up all these little shops and whatnot and becoming good capitalists in the way that the Poles were.

*Q: What were the major challenges for you, though, in just carrying out your job at that moment with all the changes going on?*

HASKELL: Well, the 2/2 Czech wasn’t great, and I didn’t really learn it very well. Right now I couldn’t even begin to count, not even to three. I really remember very, very, very little of my Czech, and I didn’t use it very well. I had a good local staff, and we worked well together. The chief emission residence in Prague was/is very impressive. It’s built as a replica of a palace in the Loire Valley of France, but it was built in, in a kind of a faux materials. It needed a lot of maintenance work. Except the furnishings, which came with the house. There’s actually a Sotheby’s antique valuation of the contents of that house similar to what we have I think for Paris and probably London. There was a big, probably two-inch thick catalog of all the things in that house that were worth a lot of money, a lot of Oriental rugs and furniture.

There was even a lot of precious china and silver, like old sterling silver trays that were so heavy that if you put anything on them you wouldn’t be able to carry them. The strange thing was that the house had belonged to a family called the Petscheks. The Petscheks were a Czech Jewish family that left Prague in 1938, anticipating the Nazi conquest. The house was used by the Nazis and the Czech government, and then it was eventually purchased by the U.S. government to use as the ambassador’s residence. We bought it with all the contents. There is, I think, a book about it and I know that we had documentation about it. And the Petschek family was okay with it being ours and we having all of their things worth an awful lot of money. I remembered that we had one dining room chair that was worth something outrageous, like fifty thousand dollars. We had a dining table that would seat thirty-five people. So we had thirty-four replica chairs made of the one that was worth a lot of money. I remember standing in that room one day

trying to figure out which one was the one worth fifty thousand dollars. I did figure it out, eventually.

*Q: Also going on at the same time was sort of the slow move towards the divorce between the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Did that affect your work at all?*

HASKELL: No, actually by then I was already married, so I filed, I filed for my divorce in October of 1990, in Oregon, where it's pretty straight forward. My first husband and I had little money and no kids. So, it wasn't a complicated divorce. It was finalized in April of 1991. While I was in language training, I was planning a wedding actually, and Todd and I got married in August of 1991. Todd, my husband, had gone from Manila to the Sinai [Multinational Forces and Observers, MFO]. It was a one-year assignment. He came back to Washington in July 1991. Let me think about this.

Yes, at some point he had bid and been assigned to Poznan, Poland. Yet, somehow we went to the department, trying to figure out how to be posted together, but we weren't married yet. I remember my CDO looked at us, took all of our ideas and our papers, and put them to the side and said, "You're not married yet. Come back when you have a marriage certificate." So that was kind of annoying. I was already assigned to go to Prague, and my husband had been assigned to Poznan, Poland. We had discovered that there was an opening for a GSO in Poznan at the same time as the GSO opening in Prague. We actually got both posts to agree to change my assignment to Poland and then the person in A-100 would be sent to Prague. My theory was that Czech was awfully close to Polish and that I could probably do some sort of a little conversion deal in Poland and manage. They weren't having it—the Career Development Office people—because we hadn't actually gotten married yet. Todd went ahead and learned Polish for six months and went to Poznan. We spent a lot of time driving back and forth between Poznan and Prague.

*Q: Now that was your divorce and remarriage. But what about the overall context in the Czech Republic where it was beginning moves now for the divorce with Slovakia, but your divorce and remarriage is interesting, but for the professional side of life, did that divorce between the Czech Republic and Slovakia affect you?*

HASKELL: We had a consulate in Bratislava. It was a small consulate, and I would go down there occasionally and work with them. The split was happening. The groundwork was underway. I curtailed my assignment in order to go on leave-without-pay [LWOP] to go live with my husband in Poznan. The actual separation happened just about two months after I left Prague. It seemed to be so easy from a practical standpoint. Both Slovakia and the Czech Republic were in favor, everybody was in favor. They figured it out and they did it. They changed the money. They did everything really quickly. I don't remember it being an issue.

*Q: Okay. Before we leave Prague, you go over to Poznan, are there other, um, aspects of your first job as a GSO that still stick out in your mind?*



HASKELL: I liked that job. I thought I was pretty good at it, and people were pretty kind. I don't think that's the case for all GSOs in every post. It's hard. You can't make everything work the way some people want it to. You can't find the houses people want. You can't do everything you want to do. I did form some really good, lasting, productive relationships with people in Washington, and I think that's really key for, for management people, to have key relationships, personal relationships that give you credibility in Washington, so that when you need something you can get it.

*Q: Yeah, absolutely. Were those mostly with the bureau or were they with the under secretary for management's offices? Where did you find the most value for assistance in Washington?*

HASKELL: I did not really use the bureau very much. I went straight to whomever I needed in the various functional areas. OBO [Overseas Buildings Operations] [then FBO] was a big one, and the Transportation office. I had responsibility for transportation, travel, and motor pool. The marines wrecked a car—a van—and we needed to get a new van. I was sure Washington was going to take forever to send a new van and that it was going to cost a bazillion dollars to send it there. I thought that was insane. Ford had cars in Europe. Why couldn't I buy a Ford van, a Ford van in Europe. I formulated the argument for why this should be allowed, and it worked. They let us do it. I learned a lot of things about not just assuming whatever somebody tells you is the way, or the only way. If you can justify a better way, you can often make it happen. And it served me well throughout my management career.

*Q: So you were beginning to see that. You didn't necessarily always have to say no, even if the regulation didn't support it, there were creative alternatives you might be able to find.*

HASKELL: Yes. I always like to tell people that I learned how to operate in the gray and that I learned how to make a justification for just about anything.

*Q: And I'm sure that that skill will serve you well as you go on through your career.*

HASKELL: I think that's right.

*Q: So, you curtailed in Prague. How long altogether were you there as the GSO?*

HASKELL: I stayed only fourteen months in Prague. At a certain point my husband and I had been apart for a very long time. He had left Manila long before I did and gone to his tour in the Sinai. Then I was in Prague, and he was in Poznan. We weren't liking this very much, still not living together. We'd like to say we tried everything we could think of to figure out how to get posted together.

We ended up, after trying plans A, B, C, D, all the way through to plan P, which was to get pregnant. We wanted to have kids, so we decided we should do it when it was convenient for us and not for the department. I was up for tenure and it was my second

time. The first time it was impossible to be tenured because I hadn't done any in-cone work nor had I gotten off language probation. So, the second time came around, and I knew that I would either be tenured or kicked out. So, I decided that, well, okay, that works for me. So, we decided to get pregnant and I did. Then, knowing that the tenuring cable was due out soon, I called my CDO and told her that I was pregnant and wanted to curtail to go live with my husband. She told me to wait until the cable came out soon and that after the cable came to send in my cable to request a curtailment.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: So that's what we did.

*Q: Okay. And so fortunately you were both tenured and your curtailment was approved, yes? When did you leave Prague?*

HASKELL: I left Prague in November of 1992.

*Q: Okay. And when you arrive in Poznan, you're on leave without pay. When do you deliver the baby?*

HASKELL: So, Michael was born on February 27, 1993, in Frankfurt.

*Q: Okay. Because when you're in Poznan, the nearest recommended place for safe and healthy delivery is Frankfurt.*

HASKELL: Yes. And, also, the medical care in Poznan was just—I couldn't do it. I did have some prenatal care there, and it was just awful.

*Q: Yes. You've arrived in Poznan, your baby is born, and we'll pick up again in this new situation.*

*Today is October 2, 2019. We're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell, with some parting thoughts about her tour in Prague. And Jennifer, just to remind us, what were the dates you were in Prague?*

HASKELL: I arrived at the beginning of September 1991 and I departed in November of 1992. There were a couple of things I wanted to add about our discussion about my tour in Prague. One of them was that the ambassador was Shirley Temple Black.

That's always a fun little tidbit. It was her second time as ambassador, and she'd also served as chief of protocol in the department. She was not a neophyte political appointee. It was interesting and kind of fun. I did read her book while I was in Prague. She wrote her autobiography, *Child Star: An Autobiography* in 1988. She always said that she was going to write another book and whenever something interesting or strange would happen with one of us, she would tell us that it was going to be in the book. But then she never

did write another book, which was unfortunate because it would have been interesting to read more about her life after she became a diplomat.

She was pretty easy to work with, but I made her really mad once. I got called in and called on the carpet. The chief of mission residence in Prague is enormous. It's a copy of a Loire Valley palace, and as I might have mentioned earlier, it was on huge grounds. It had a very big greenhouse. One day the Economics Section chief came to me and he said they'd like to buy some plants for the section and could they do that. Was there money to do that? Being about the practical person I was, I told him that we had this huge greenhouse filled with hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of plants. I told him he take three. Oh my God. The gardeners complained to the ambassador, and I got in big trouble.

*Q: It was their turf and they didn't want you invading it.*

HASKELL: Yes. And she, you know, she took every perk very seriously, as I think most ambassadors do. And, probably if I'd asked she would have said it was fine. It was just the concept that I had assumed that since it was just a huge greenhouse with more plants than they could ever use, that in that whole big thing, that three wouldn't be damaging anybody's prospects. But anyway, I learned from that one.

It was an interesting time though in the State Department, because it was a time of ever shrinking budgets. In fact, it was the time when the Soviet Union was falling apart, and we were trying to—well, the State Department was facing the challenge of opening several new embassies in the former Soviet republics. I remember that Secretary of State James Baker was testifying before Congress, and they asked him how much— [if I would get the story straight. I did not Google this, but this is how I remember it.] He was asked how much more money he would need to open all these new embassies, because it was quite a number. And he responded with something along the lines that they shouldn't worry, that we don't need any more money. I'm not sure that the European Bureau was so keen on that. I remember that as a GSO, it did have an impact on us. I remember that that year we only got \$25,000 in our budget for things like furniture and drapes and appliances and carpets and all the things you need just to make a house liveable and look kind of interesting.

That \$25,000 would have covered one house if you wanted to put everything new. And we were a growing post. We were getting new positions quite frequently because of the opening up of central Europe to the West. It was really hard and I think people did have to make-do with a lot of really substandard things in their house because we couldn't afford to replace anything. It wasn't nice to be in that position, as the GSO, to have to say no to virtually every request. But we managed to get through it. I suppose at some point we must have gotten more money because I know that it was hard to furnish ten—it was ten or more new posts—without a new budget. But I also thought it was interesting that it was my first post where I really got involved in VIP visits.

I had served in a control room in Manila, but in Prague I did my first SecState [secretary of state] visit, which was Secretary Baker. He came for a four-hour visit, which wasn't

the usual way of things. But it was probably really good for me, to be my first time. It's when I learned to be a motorcade officer, which would serve me well later on as I did that a fair bit on other tours. But I also got to participate in the visit of the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff who was at the time General Colin Powell. It was quite a contrast to see how the secretary of state traveled with how General Powell came with maybe five people staying in the hotel with him. That was quite a difference from how the secretary of state usually had hundreds of support and policy people accompanying. I also remember chatting at the airport with the Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell as he waited to board his plane after an overnight visit.

Those VIP visits were fun and interesting, and they set me up to do a lot more on VIP visits. My next overseas tour, which was a few years down the road, was Tel Aviv, where I needed to have all that VIP visit stuff down. The only other thing that I wanted to mention about Prague was that after Ambassador Black left, we got a career appointee ambassador, Adrian Basora. I noticed when I was going through my papers that Ambassador Basora had attached a memo to my Employee Evaluation Report [EER], which ambassadors can do if they want to say more than they feel like was in your EER. Not that an ambassador would normally even read a GSO's EER, but he asked to put a memo in mine. I learned that evidently ambassadors are allowed to do that.

I felt really good about that. It was about how much I helped him fix up the house. Okay, that was my job, but that is what's important, it seems, to an awful lot of people, right, their housing—which we all know. Even if people aren't willing to admit it, it's a big part of their lives. So he wrote more than a page memo about the efforts we went to help him and his wife get the house into a situation they thought was good and included successfully requesting some—a lot of funds actually—to renovate some very valuable antiques. I don't know if you've ever heard of these large Belgian tapestries. They're often, just guessing here, twelve to fifteen feet square or more. We had one of those, it was maybe four hundred years old and badly in need of restoration. We actually got some money from what was then FBO [now OBO] to have it restored. So anyway, that was fun. That's all I had wanted to add on my Prague tour.

*Q: Now, in Poznan you have a newborn, but—*

HASKELL: He [Michael] wasn't born until after I got to Poznan. So, actually, when I went there, towards the end of November of 1992, I was six months pregnant. It was the first time we'd ever lived together, when I got to Poznan. So yes, he was born—our oldest son Michael—was born at the end of February, February 27, 1993.

*Q: In Frankfurt.*

HASKELL: Yes, that's right. We got through that. Yes. I remember that I had already, luckily, gotten my follow-on assignment before I went on leave-without-pay. I believe I remember doing a phone call interview for that. But Poznan was an interesting place to be on leave-without-pay. I felt good that I had that opportunity to do that.

*Q: Okay. Now go back a moment to talk about how you acquired your next post. You mentioned the telephone interview. How did it all come about?*

HASKELL: I remembered that in A-100, when they talked about working in the Operations Center [OpsCenter], and that we could do a tour of the OpsCenter, I had thought that sounded pretty cool, that maybe I would like to do that someday. When I was in Prague, the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] there, John Evans, took very seriously his duty to mentor the junior officers. I remember doing occasional lunches with him, and we talked about serving in the OpsCenter and that he thought that it would be a really good thing for me to do. He very enthusiastically supported my bid on the OpsCenter. So that was good. They did call and I had a conversation. I remember the director of the OpsCenter at the time was Steve Mull, who comes up later in life. We did the interview, and I got that job. It seemed, still a little bit of, is this a club that wants me? Do I want to belong to a club that wants me as a member? But that is what made us decide that we were going back to Washington. My husband wasn't really keen on going back to Washington, but I wanted that job. So he said, if you get that job, then we'll go back to Washington.

*Q: So that becomes clear to you by, let's say, spring of 1992 or so.*

HASKELL: I don't remember when they actually let us know, but I know that I wasn't worried about it. I knew that it dictated our departure from post, and I know that when I got to Washington, I had to start working immediately while my husband was able to take a longer home leave and find us a place to live. That was—so we went back in August of 1993.

*Q: Okay. Aside from taking care of the baby, were you involved in any way as an eligible family member and working at the embassy?*

HASKELL: No. And we were at the consulate in Poznan, so it was only four, maybe five Americans there. It was really tiny. So, no. Mostly I was exhausted. I was exhausted with my first baby.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: We did a lot of driving travel around Poland, and we drove frequently over to Berlin. At least once we went back to Prague. I thought I would trade in my Czechoslovakian crowns [old currency] for the new money, but the time period had already passed. So somewhere in my belongings, I have a few hundred dollars in Czechoslovakian crowns.

*Q: Oh, they may now be valuable on eBay as historic documents—*

HASKELL: Maybe.

*Q: So, this takes you up to the end of your husband's tour, and now you're getting ready to go back to Washington with the new baby. And you're going to be on the changing shift schedule of the OpsCenter. Where do you end up finding a house or an apartment when you go back to Washington?*

HASKELL: We bought a townhouse in Vienna, Virginia, just a short walk from the Metro station there. We kept that townhouse until 2003 when we sold it.

*Q: But at least it made it convenient for you to be able to go into work on the changing schedule. So why don't you go ahead and talk about what it was like as a new mother in the OpsCenter?*

HASKELL: Well, the first thing we did right when I was first pregnant was have a discussion about looking forward to how our careers would go with kids. We were not thrilled with the idea of each time we moved, both of us having to show up at work and leaving our kids with somebody that we didn't know every time. That didn't make any sense to us. So, we decided to find a more permanent solution—a nanny/housekeeper who would go with us from post to post. We had both had housekeepers in Manila, so Todd proposed his housekeeper as a nanny. I vetoed that as she was very young and likely to leave very soon and not really stay with us. I had my housekeeper, who had already had her kids and they were already young adults. Her name was Lilia. So, we contacted her. I went through somebody that I still knew in Manila who I could ask to find Lilia. I was sure Lilia was still working for somebody in the mission in Manila. I proposed to Lilia that she would come and work with us and move around with us from post to post. She agreed to do that. She'd never been outside of the Philippines before. She got on a plane and flew to Warsaw. My husband drove to Warsaw and picked her up. She joined us when our oldest son was three weeks old, and she served as our nanny/housekeeper for twenty-one years.

*Q: Wow. Oh, my heavens. That's incredible.*

HASKELL: It made it work in so many ways that I just don't understand why other people don't do it quite like that. We started off paying her twice as much per month as she would be earning in the Philippines. And as we went to the States, she came with us, and we paid her the minimum wage per the law. We promised her we wouldn't reduce her salary just because we were going someplace where it was cheaper. So in some countries, she was probably the highest paid household help in the country. It was definitely worth it. And each time we had a new baby, we gave her a raise. It worked out very well. I'm still suffering from not having her with me. She decided in 2013 when we left Santa Domingo, to go back to the Philippines.

*Q: That's remarkable. So all together, how many children did you have in the Foreign Service?*

HASKELL: Three. Three boys.

*Q: And so she really was the nanny at raising all three of them at some point.*

HASKELL: Right from the very beginning we had a rule that if one of us was in the house, she didn't do anything with the kids.

So yes, she was very, extremely valuable for all those work days and all those evening events. On Saturday mornings she would take them because our oldest woke up at five am every morning and that was just not on for us on the weekend. So she would get up with him on Saturday mornings. But after we woke up, on the weekends, they were ours. Sundays Lilia was off the entire day. At a certain point, we trained them to—I think our oldest was four and the youngest at the time or the middle one was about two. The older one could turn on the VCR and put in a tape. We would leave dry cereal out for their breakfast. They could get up by themselves and watch TV until we woke up. That was Sundays, when Lilia had the whole day off.

But no, I was very spoiled with Lilia. At first, I was very uncomfortable having household help, because Americans, we don't have household help, right. I certainly never had help growing up, and to the point of having our first child, had never had live-in help. That was really kind of strange for me, but it still seemed like the right thing to do if we were going to have kids. To ameliorate my discomfort with having someone live-in, I wrote a long ten-page document with everything I wanted her to do spelled out, so I would never have to be chasing her down about stuff. And she was still doing everything the same way, even though we had more kids. Okay, she did laundry more times a week. She had evolved as our family evolved. It was super helpful to always have somebody there to help me pack-out, help us pack-out, help us unpack when household effects arrived. We would buy her tickets back to the Philippines whenever we were on home leave and also when important things happened. When her husband died, we sent her back to the Philippines for quite a long time. So it worked out well. It was very handy having her for me to be in the Operations Center where the hours changed every two days.

*Q: That's what I wanted to ask you about. With a newborn, how did you manage the changing shift work?*

HASKELL: He, Michael, was still breastfeeding, and I went to the OpsCenter thinking I would pump milk at work. Well, no. That did not work in the OpsCenter at all. It was very hard when there was a super busy shift, and I would have to tell the senior watch officer that I had to go pump or I might fly around the room after exploding. So, I decided that I would pump and freeze milk, as much as I could at home. I stopped pumping at work, and he had some formula. Maybe four months after I started working in the OpsCenter, Michael basically weaned himself. That was the hardest part of being a nursing mom in the OpsCenter.

*Q: I imagine. Once your first child is weaned, were you able to manage the changing shifts? Because sometimes you're awake when he is, but sometimes not.*

HASKELL: You know what, my husband was there. He had a normal job. He worked pretty normal hours without many late hours. So in a way, our son had a parent with him more than he would have had had we both been on normal shifts. Many times I had two days off in the middle of the week if I was working weekend shifts. In the middle of the week I could take him to the park or to the playground in the mall, or whatever, when it was less crowded. We wouldn't have had that normally. So I thought it was great. I really liked that job, and I thought that while it was a drag, these hours were a drag because you're always exhausted. I can tell you that my husband does not have fond memories of that time.

*Q: Okay. Why? Why not?*

HASKELL: I think he got really sick of social occasions on the weekends when I was not able to go. He just sort of felt like it wasn't really working for us on weekends and a lot of working holidays. And he, of course, didn't experience the positives I had, which was seeing what was going on in the world.

*Q: Did you learn a lot about the department from being there?*

HASKELL: Absolutely. I did. How the seventh floor works was one of the things I learned. What is important to people on the seventh floor; and how do you brief people on the seventh floor; and how do you write for people on the seventh floor. I also had the opportunity to do a couple of things there that, at the time, I felt put me closer to doing foreign policy as opposed to the management work than I thought I might ever have again in my career. So, yes, we did have our share of really boring shifts where nothing really happened and everyone's just struggling to stay awake, but there were a lot of really busy shifts. And back in those days when the secretary of state traveled, the OpsCenter was incredibly important because we managed all the phone communications.

So that was important. But even when not on secretary of state visits, doing memcons [memoranda of conversations], listening in on the secretary's calls. First, we placed the calls, connecting the secretary to whomever he wanted to talk to. We got to place those calls. We had to find Prime Minister Rabine [of Israel] or President Mitterrand [of France] or whomever. We would get them on the line, and then someone in the OpsCenter would take the notes. If you were sitting in the editor's chair that shift, you drafted the memcon, so you had to get it right. You had to listen, take the notes—not word for word. And we didn't record them. So, the memcons were what we put in them [and were cleared by the senior watch officer who also listened]. There were times when I did a couple of those in one shift and that was hard because you spend a lot of time on a memcon. Once you listen to the call, you'd spend a fair bit of time trying to make sure it was right, just right.

Also, a funny thing, when the secretary traveled—when there was a visit—it seemed like everybody on the secretary's plane lined up in the aisle to get on the phone just so that they could call someone and say that they were calling from the secretary's plane.



*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: It was very amusing. It was so clear that people were doing that. So they would literally be lined up and we would just be on the phone the whole time the plane was in the air. Who is next? And then we would put their call through to somebody. It sounds a lot like being a telephone operator, and there were people in the OpsCenter who felt that way. They were very impressed with themselves, and they felt that their skills were underused, that they were just glorified telephone operators. But I thought it was really interesting, and if we didn't have that job, none of us would have had that exposure to all those things. It was not long after the scandal which resulted in the resignation of the assistant secretary for consular affairs, Elizabeth Tamposi [who was forced to resign due to her improperly ordering a search of the passport records of presidential candidates Bill Clinton and Ross Perot]. I think that before I got to the OpsCenter, staff there were asked to provide their notes if maybe they had been on phone calls relating to the scandal and those kinds of things. So procedures had changed a little bit. We no longer kept any notes we took during our shifts, except the final memcons for the secretary or the deputy secretary—when we did memcons for the deputy, as well.

Another thing that changed before I arrived was that while we used to stay on the line for all phone calls, we stopped doing that. The new procedure was to put the phone call through, and then we would announce that we were dropping off the call, unless the person on the line, the principal on the line, asked us to stay on. And sometimes they would ask us to stay on because they wanted to make a series of phone calls.

We logged every phone call that we made/took to or from a seventh floor principal plus a few other people who were considered "log-able." So, we did keep a log of who everybody was talking to, which was what we're supposed to do for the record keeping side of things. So, we kept doing that, but we didn't take a note of every single phone call that we took or that we made. Learning what was important on the seventh floor was helpful later, as you go on and up. To this day I feel really good about a couple of things that I was able to participate in while I was there. And one of those things had to do with the effort to end the Bosnian war. This was during the Dayton negotiations led by Richard Holbrooke.

It was around that time period. Bosnian prime minister Haris Silajdžić was coming to the United States for talks. He was transiting in Frankfurt with his entourage, trying to board the plane. They were coming on a commercial flight, maybe United. And some of them didn't have visas, and so the airline was concerned about boarding them. They actually called us in the OpsCenter, the counter agent in Frankfurter, the airline station chief. I got that phone call. They said they wanted to know what to do since they don't have visas and normally they couldn't board people without visas. So, I put together a little conference call with the visa duty officer and the senior officer on the Bosnia Desk, and maybe others, Protocol probably. [My role was to put them together so they could decide what to do.] They hemmed and hawed and looked to the visa duty officer for a solution. She said that she didn't know what to do. So, I told her that she should dictate to me a

memo that says blah, blah, blah, blah, and then I'm going to fax that memo to the agent at the airline counter in Frankfurt, and then they will board them.

So, she did that. In the meantime, I asked the desk officer to come into the office—it is the middle of the night—since he had all the information needed to prepare the paperwork needed by immigration officials to allow the party to enter the United States. He needed to liaise with the people at Dulles airport to make sure that there would be no scandal, since Silajdžić was coming to meet with President Clinton. It all worked out. It was interesting that the people on the call, none of them really knew how to handle it, and I just sort of made it up and it worked very smoothly. It was a lesson for me in being confident in problem solving.

The other event where I had luck—because it's really luck, you know, if you answer the phone or not—had to do with the Middle East. There were ongoing talks about Middle East peace. Dennis Ross was our envoy; he worked closely with Martin Indyk at the National Security Council [NSC]. They had a meeting scheduled in Tunis [with the Palestinians and the Israelis]. I picked up a phone, and it was a call coming from the Israeli Foreign Ministry; I think it was a director general. And he told me that the Israeli plane carrying their negotiators was in the air, flying over the Mediterranean on its way to Tunis, but that the Tunisians were refusing them landing rights.

So, we had to fix this. How were we going to fix this? I really didn't know how to fix this one, but I talked to a few people. Then I actually called Dennis Ross on his plane. He was on a plane, you know, one of those small U.S. military jets, flying to Tunis along with Martin Indyk and a few others. We had a long conversation about how to fix it. They suggested that while they were flying to Tunis, they were still several hours out and that the Israelis should go to Sigonella Airbase [in Italy] instead of to Tunis, and that our plane would stop in Sigonella and pick them up so that the negotiators could get there. So, this was a great idea. In what became a several-hours, many-phone-calls series, I called back the Israeli official with this plan. There were many issues to overcome to make this happen, like how many people on the Israeli plan had to join, did they have bodyguards—a lot of conversation going on back and forth. I was the go-between in many ways.

But the hard part came when the Israelis called to tell me they couldn't find our guys, that they weren't at the airport. I asked them where they were. They replied that their people were at Fiumicino. I confirmed that that was, in fact, the airport in Rome. I told them they were supposed to go to Sigonella. They had to get back in their plane and go again south to Sigonella. There were more questions, like are your bodyguards carrying weapons, because they can't get on our plane with their weapons, et cetera. Anyway, it worked, and we got everybody to Tunis for the negotiations. We kind of pulled a fast one, I guess, on the Tunisians who are, of course, supporting the Palestinians. That one was a lot of work. It took the entire shift, and at one point, the Israeli guy called me to tell me he was going to be unreachable for about an hour. He had to take his kids to school.

After they landed and everybody's good, the Israeli guy called back and talked to my boss, the senior watch officer, to thank him for all the work we did. He, the Israeli Foreign Ministry, sent a very nice letter about me to the State Department. So that was fun. There's a lot of fun stuff in the OpsCenter. And you know, one of the good things about it—yes, the changing of shifts was difficult, but you almost never had to work overtime because you literally had to get out of the chair at the end of the shift because someone else was coming to sit in it.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: There were a few times when the person responsible for the logging had to stay a bit late to complete the official log. The others on the shift who were taking phone calls had to give slips of paper with info for the log to the logger, who entered everything to the official record log.

There were a few times when I was sitting in that chair when it was so busy that I couldn't keep up with the log, I just couldn't. Then I would have to sit at a side desk somewhere and spend an hour or two catching the log up, going through big stacks of little pieces of paper.

*Q: I have a question. During the time you were in the OpsCenter, did they have to establish emergency task forces? Were you involved in any of those?*

HASKELL: Yes. CMS, the Crisis Management Strategy Office, existed there. But they were there, and whenever we did have a crisis to attend to it was important that we help them. Usually in the lead up to or beginning of the crisis, they needed a bit of time to set up a task force. That's when we managed the situation, which was keeping open lines of communication or whatever it was until the regional bureau could set up a properly staffed task force within the OpsCenter's Crisis Management Strategy section.

Some sensational or unfortunate crisis that happened while I was serving in the OpsCenter was the Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia. That was when a U.S. military helicopter was downed in Mogadishu. It was a difficult one to deal with because we were constantly getting new updates about what was really happening. Of course, we were reporting all this and briefing it back to the seventh floor and to the White House. One of the things most people don't understand is that State Ops briefs the White House Situation Room [Sit Room] on world events. My follow-on assignment was in the Sit Room, so I can tell you with a hundred percent clarity that at that time, the State Department Operations Center was a much more interesting place to be because we got everything [all the international news and reports from embassies], and we would decide if something warranted being briefed to the Sit Room. And then the Sit Room would brief the NSC or other people over there. So we received a lot more information, much more in detail about what was going on. But when something like the Somalia thing was happening, we, of course, had to be briefing back constantly to the NSC. The other one big crisis was the genocide in Rwanda. That also happened while I was in the OpsCenter

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: So, these are really huge things. The Rwanda crisis went on and on and on. We kept an open line from the OpsCenter to the DCM often through Nairobi. Somehow Nairobi had an old-fashioned radio connection, and they could put our phone system through their radio system somehow. At one point I remember being on the phone with the DCM who was hiding in the closet because people were coming into the house.

*Q: Did we ultimately—I don't remember this detail. Did we ultimately evacuate Kigali?*

HASKELL: Well, what happened there is interesting, and I only kind of know this because the GSO who was serving in Kigali at that time came to the OpsCenter when she came back, after the evacuation. She was married to a former marine security guard. Her story has been out there. I remember she wrote quite a wonderful account of how they left Rwanda. I think it was published in Reader's Digest or something, and probably other publications, as well. Basically, she and her husband managed the evacuation, and yes, they did get people out. Eventually they went overland, organized it on their own. They collected everybody and created a convoy. As I understand, they wove their way around the country picking up various American citizens that wanted to be picked up.

*Q: Wow. Remarkable. They were able to manage to stay in touch with you at least part of the time with satellite phones?*

HASKELL: I don't think they had sat [satellite] phones. Not sure, though. They were using radio systems and landlines. Maybe they had sat phones. You know what, I just don't remember. I know that while cell/sat phones existed back then, they were very awkward. You know, they weren't like the ones we have now. I think you had to set up a big antenna and whatnot. So, I don't remember the details. I do remember that there were several days ongoing with that crisis. It was another reason why having to get up and leave the chair [not work too long on any given day] is really important because that meant that nobody was overburdened by what was a very, very nasty situation. When somebody else came in, you had to get up and leave. Then they take over whatever you were doing.

*Q: Yes, exactly. Also during this period of time, a few of the watch officers are prepared or they're asked to consider working on the Line in the Secretariat Office that prepares all of the papers and the visits and advances the visits for the secretary of state. Were you ever considering that?*

HASKELL: As I remember, people tended to debate on whether to bid on the Line or the OpsCenter, and if somebody went from the OpsCenter to the Line that was a little bit unusual. Or if they did it, it was because they were going to take a little bit of a senior position, not just the regular line officer jobs. Another option that comes from serving in the OpsCenter is the opportunity to staff the Sit Room, the White House Situation Room. So, I bid for my follow-on assignment, and I was assigned to EUR/EX [Executive Office of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs] as a post management officer, I think, or

maybe as an assignments officer. I don't remember which. When the announcement came out, at some point, to those of us in the OpsCenter, asking who was interested in working in the White House, we should let the managers of the OpsCenter know.

And I did put my name on that list. They chatted and decided who they thought should be the two people to go to the Sit Room. That's how it was decided. They picked these two people, both of whom I was friends with. It became apparent within a couple of months, still months before they would be changing jobs, that neither of them really had the intention of going to the Sit Room. And I knew it. I knew that it was happening, and I was waiting for there to be an announcement, a new announcement that this opportunity was open again. And that announcement did not come. At a certain point, I went to the director or the deputy director and asked what was up with that, that I knew they were not going. They told me they'd already picked someone to go. I told them I didn't think they could really do that. I felt that they should have told people, partly because new people arrived at the OpsCenter all during the year, and that maybe there were new people who wanted to have a chance. I told them I thought it would have been more fair if they had announced that the two positions were open again.

They said that they were only going to send one person now anyway. They hemmed and hawed a little bit, but then they told me that they would do what other agencies that also staff to Sit Room do. They would send three candidates over to the Sit Room for interviews and the Sit Room director would choose from among the three candidates. I thought that sounded like a brilliant solution. They sent three of us over there, including the person that I happened to know was the one they had chosen without letting us know of the renewed openings.

Except that person didn't get chosen. I did.

*Q: Okay. When you were chosen by the White House Sit Room, did they say why? What was it about your application that they found so compelling?*

HASKELL: No. The guy that was in charge of the Sit Room was military, and he didn't say much. I never really got a feeling for his managing the place.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I'm not sure what he really did. He had the title, but he wasn't a very hands on manager. He was the person I went and had a chat with. I think I probably interviewed well.

*Q: Okay. Now, how long were you expected to stay in the White House Sit Room?*

HASKELL: A year? It was supposed to be basically a year in the OpsCenter and then you move for a year to the Situation Room.

*Q: Is it the same rotating shifts?*

HASKELL: It is rotating shifts, but it was different in that in the OpsCenter we had three shifts every day. And you would do two days in a row on one shift, and then you would change to another shift for two days, et cetera. So, you would do only two day shifts, then do midday shifts, and then two nights shifts and then you would have days off. And sometimes it was a day and a half off or it could be as many as three days off. And then you would start again, but not in a consistent pattern. The schedule came out only the first of each month. So as the month went on, you couldn't predict what your schedule would be in the following month. So, it did wreak havoc on one's social life, but we were allowed to trade shifts with people. If we had something really important, we could find somebody else and we could change the shift by swapping with others. People were really good about that.

But in the Sit Room there were only two shifts, two twelve-hour shifts. But they were really more than twelve-hours shifts because you were expected to come at least thirty minutes early to read-in, to read through all the news tickers. There would be these clipboards with tickers and cables and different things that you would need to read to be up on what was happening before you actually sat down in the chair. Then sometimes you would also not be able to leave right at the end of the twelve hours. But your shifts stayed the same for a week. So, theoretically, you could calculate months in advance when you would be working. The twelve-hour shifts were pretty long.

*Q: Yeah, that might be grueling. I can imagine.*

HASKELL: Yeah. And I was pregnant the entire time I was there, which totally freaked people out. My teammates were all single men. I found out later that they had made all these plans, what they were going to do if I went into labor.

*Q: Wow. But did you actually deliver your second child while you were working in the Sit Room?*

HASKELL: Well, what I did was, I didn't stay the full year. I decided that I didn't want to come back to work immediately. I had had about six months off from work after my first baby, in addition to the two or three months I had off before my baby was born. I also had had to bid again, remember, so I'd already gone through the bidding process. I knew that I would be starting language training at the end of the Sit Room tour. So, I curtailed my assignment and took leave until the language training started in August. So, Jonah was born in the beginning of March [March 5], and I stopped working in the Sit Room one week before he was born.

*Q: Okay. But before we leave the Sit Room, were there any major events you remember that you took part in that you can talk about?*

HASKELL: There was less of that kind of intensity of following things there than there was in the OpsCenter. I guess some of the main things that were happening at the time included Haiti. Haiti was a disaster and there was an awful lot of stuff going on with Haiti

[Operation Uphold Democracy had recently happened]. I remember that I listened in on the president's calls and the vice president's calls.

And if we were on shift, two people were selected—we weren't always picked each time. There were three of us plus communicators on the shift. So, we weren't always picked to be the one to participate in the call as a listener/transcriber.

In the White House, you had to try to transcribe word-for-word what was said. We were not transcriptionists. It was hard. So, what we would do is one person would transcribe what one of the interlocutors was saying and the other person transcribe what the other one was saying. So, one of us was doing the president and the other one was doing whomever he was talking to. We were trying to just scribble as fast as possible. Now sometimes there were translators involved. So that made it easier because it gave you more time.

The word-for-word thing was hard, and it seemed to me a bit, you know, I don't know—I kind of liked the memcon method better—the way we did it at the State Department. But I did notes for calls with President Clinton with Yeltsin, with Mitterrand, Majors, and Mubarak. Wow.

You know, there could have been many things, but the Haiti issue [Cedras capitulating and Aristide going back to take his elected position as president] was probably the biggest thing that was going on. And I think that they were talking to Aristide all the time. I remember at some point being in the State Department and getting on an elevator to see Aristide on his way up to the seventh floor. This was when he was still well-thought-of, before he went off the rails and we didn't like him anymore. We drafted similar kinds of products to those we did in the OpsCenter. [In the OpsCenter] we drafted a product during each shift, aimed at the seventh floor audience. Each product had to be not more than one page. Never more, which meant we had to be very, very cognizant of what were the most important events to report. And then each item we wrote couldn't be more than about six lines maximum.

We all learned how to write very concisely. In the OpsCenter, when the person sitting in the editor chair that shift was finished with the draft, they would come and ask the rest of us “do a knit/nit.” It was called the knit/nit, and there's still disagreement on whether it was the nit, like nitpicking or whether it was with a “k,” like knitting things together. So, we would do the knit/nit. Everybody would stop what they were doing, hoping the phones wouldn't ring. The editor would read what they'd written out loud, and then everybody got to pick it apart to make it better. It did really help everyone's writing because some of your colleagues were incredible writers. The senior watch officers would participate in this. By contrast, in the Sit Room there was no limit on the number of pages, which was insane because sometimes that product would be eight pages long. State people would be wondering who was going to read all that? I usually made the point that the document was too long and ask who was going to read all that. The products were done more in the style of the intelligence agencies, too. So, the writing was different.

And, of course, we would include lots of things. It wasn't just foreign policy. We would include things that happen domestically, too. It was primarily foreign policy, but something big happening domestically, we also would include.

Tony Lake was the national security advisor at the time, and he was actually my reviewing officer. Wow. I went back and read the review statement that he did, and I hadn't remembered doing what was written there. But, of course, I did do it. One of those things was that on the weekends when Tony Lake, or Sandy Berger, who was the deputy national security at that time, were in the office when they didn't have staff, somebody from the Sit Room had to go up there and answer the phone or fend off people at the door, if there were other people at the NSC wandering around. I did that a few times. They wrote something in my EER review statement that I wouldn't have known to put in there. I had drafted everything as the first draft, but he put things in there that I wouldn't have thought to put in there. So that was nice. Also, there was the guy—the White House press person or the spokesperson. He used to come into the Sit Room to chat us up. Mike McCurry, I think his name was Mike McCurry. He was cool.

One thing that happened when I was not on shift for, not for either of these two events, but of course impacted us in terms of the “wow” factor— A small plane crashed into the White House. That was bizarre.

*Q: Wow. Wow.*

HASKELL: And then another time somebody took a machine gun and shot up the outside of the White House from the street, right at the outside wall of the Press Briefing Room. I was also not on shift for that one. I was lucky not to be on shift during those because I'm sure that it was pretty hairy. We also did fun things, which I don't think you can do anymore. We used to occasionally wander around the West Wing at night and check stuff out. Just to show each other. When I was new, somebody took me on a tour of everything in the whole West Wing at night, including the underground bits and the Old Executive Office Building. I saw the office where Oliver North sat, and this is where they keep all the bulletproof graduation gowns or whatever. That was kind of fun. And you could bring your family members on the weekend to give them a tour of the West Wing.

I don't think you can do that so much anymore, although I did go on a tour a few years ago that included the Press Briefing Room. So, maybe they brought back some of it, I guess. When the president was returning from a trip, Marine One [the president's helicopter] would land on the White House lawn, and they like to do rope line. He, President Clinton, liked to do rope lines, so they would put out the word that the president would be arriving and if you wanted to be on the rope line be there at X o'clock. Once I jumped in my car and went home to get my husband and our oldest son who was about a year and a half, almost two years old at the time. We stood on the rope line. I have a not great picture where I'm holding up this little boy, and there is President Clinton. Fun stuff like that.

*Q: Great.*



HASKELL: You can also put in a request to get a letter sent to your parents [or other relative] for their birthday or another celebratory event. So, I was pregnant while in the Sit Room, and then I had the baby, Jonah. So, I have a letter congratulating me on the birth of my son. And my son, who was born then, has a letter to him from President Clinton. I did not organize those. Somebody else organized those.

*Q: Nice. Presidential letterhead and all of that.*

HASKELL: Yeah. And congratulating him on the occasion of his birth.

*Q: Very nice. You said also that during this time, while you're in the Sit Room, you have to bid.*

HASKELL: Yes.

*Q: What was going through your mind?*

HASKELL: Well, we wanted to go back overseas and so we had bid on a number of posts. I remember three of them. I remember we'd bid on Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, and Tel Aviv. My husband, who I think I mentioned earlier, had worked in the Sinai on the MFO. He'd been to Israel. He thought it was a cool place. I'd never been to Hong Kong, and it seemed like it would be a cool place to be posted. And it was still Hong Kong. It hadn't yet reverted to the PRC [People's Republic of China]. And Sri Lanka just sounded like a cool place to go. We started to make the rounds doing our lobbying.

NEA/SCA/EX [Executive Office of the Bureau of Near Eastern and Asian Affairs and Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs]. That was just after the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs was created, and the EX office handled both of those bureaus. I was looking for some kind of management job. So we went in to see the guy there. He told us that they couldn't give us Sri Lanka because they'd already promised it to somebody coming from one of the former Soviet republics. This was back in the days when bureaus could still say things like that. But, he noticed we had bid on Tel Aviv, which we had put down way low on our list. We had it low because the job for me was another junior officer job, and I didn't want to do it because it was a junior officer job. I told him that. I also knew there was another job, another GSO job opening at the same time that was a higher grade that I would be more interested in. But it was not language-designated.

As the job my husband was bidding on in the Consular Section was language designated, so it would have had me going to post a year earlier than he would have. We were not interested in that at all. And with the Hong Kong bid, it seemed like EAP was really interested in us, and it would have been our first choice. But at the time EAP wasn't so organized, and they didn't give us any warm and fuzzy feedback. And as a tandem, you usually go with what you think is going to work so you don't end up without something together. So we told NEA that if they could fix it so that I could get language at the same time that my husband would, if they could work it out so that I could be paneled into the

higher rank 03 job and get language training that we would be interested in going to Tel Aviv. Yeah. So they did that.

*Q: Wow. Okay.*

HASKELL: If you don't ask, you don't get, and the worst they could have said was no, but we asked. I explained how it made sense, and post supported it. So they did that. And then after we committed to NEA for Tel Aviv, of course, only then did EAP offer us Hong Kong. We told them that they were behind the times and that they had never told us they were interested in us. So, no thank you. And, so we were getting ready to study Hebrew at the end of the Sit Room tour

*Q: What year, or when was that when you left the Sit Room and went into training?*

HASKELL: 1995.

*Q: Okay. It would have been beginning in 1995, like January.*

HASKELL: I left the Sit Room a week before Jonah was born on March 5, 1995. After that, I took leave. I think first we had area studies and that was probably around the first or second week of August.

*Q: Okay. So your language study is going to be six months.*

HASKELL: We got the full year—wasn't a full year. Forty-four weeks, I think.

*Q: So, fall of 1995 to fall of 1996 is your language training more or less?*

HASKELL: I think language started September 1995 and we finished sometime in June 1996.

*Q: Okay. All right. How did you find learning Hebrew?*

HASKELL: I'm not a good language learner. My husband is a better language learner. He's one of those people who once he figures out what the trick is, he just can do it. I can understand the trick and still not be able to do it. It just takes me a lot of practice. There was only one class for beginning Hebrew; there were four of us in it. We were two of them.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: I take that back. In the beginning there were five of us. Three of them were only going for the twenty-six week part of it, and we were doing the forty-four week class.

One of those people that was in that class with us never showed up at post. We never understood what was going on there. She was not with State, but she never showed up. And then the other two students became close friends with us. He and his family are close friends of ours, and we've stayed close friends all these years, even though he was also not Foreign Service. He was on a Civil Service excursion tour. So, that was nice, but learning Hebrew wasn't easy. It's a difficult language. And the teaching staff had issues with each other, including the supervisor who supervised more than just the Hebrew section. There were always little dramas going on. It was fine for the first weeks. But that December was the year that Newt Gingrich shutdown the federal government.

We were furloughed. Three weeks furlough that went across Christmas and New Year's. And of course, those of us in language training were worried that we'd never get the scores we needed, that we would be missing too much class time. We immediately asked if we could have access to the language labs. And they said absolutely not. Our teachers were willing to meet us at coffee shops so we could practice a little bit. But we were absolutely forbidden to do any of these things. Wow. Absolutely. We weren't supposed to crack a book while we were at home.

*Q: Wow. Wow.*

HASKELL: And then just as we were about to go back to work—there was some sort of a continuing resolution or something—and on the Sunday before we were supposed to go back, or maybe it was a Saturday, we had a huge snowstorm. Huge, like three feet. So we missed another week from the snow. So we missed four weeks of our forty-four weeks of language training.

Shortly thereafter, the other people finished their training, and it was just the two of us in a language class. I will say this, that I believe there's really nothing—I can't imagine what it would take for us to separate, because we made it through all those weeks in language training together, which is not an easy thing to do. If you think about how language training works. Every morning you come in and the first thing the teacher does is ask how last night went. What did you do last night? And that made it hard for us. Seriously? And because my husband was much better at learning the language than I was, it got very frustrating. At a certain point, the teacher, one of the teachers that we had the most, he basically stopped teaching me and aimed every lesson at my husband, which really did not please me. I felt very much like that wasn't fair because my husband was doing really well and I was struggling. I didn't like that. I kind of let him know that I didn't like that in a very not nice way. I wasn't very nice.

*Q: Well, theoretically speaking, your teacher can't make that decision on his own. Did they offer you an alternative path? Maybe one of the other teachers could work with you a little more slowly or how did it resolve?*

HASKELL: There was no conscious decision on anybody's part that he would focus on my husband. It was just the way he treated us in class. Everything moved at the speed my husband moved, not at the speed I moved. Not that I thought everything had to move at

my speed, but it was just all about him. So, I tried to make them change that a little bit. My position was language designated for a score of only a 2/2. I was pretty sure I could get to the 2/2, but given the length of time we were studying, I should have gotten to a 3/3, which is what my husband was supposed to get. Interestingly, when we did our testing, I think I ended up with a 2+/2 or something like that.

On the day my husband had his test, they didn't give him a score; they wouldn't give a score like they usually did, right away at the time. I think they do things differently now. So, we waited, and we waited two, three hours, and they were debating it. One of them wanted to give him a 3/3, and the other one didn't. It went on like this. Eventually, we left FSI, and we went to a movie in that old theater that's up on Wisconsin Avenue. And we saw *Independence Day*. It was a long movie and still, when my husband called after the movie, they still didn't have a score. It took them three days to give him a score. And then they gave him a 3/2+, so he didn't get his 3/3. It was amazing [not in a good way]. He studied at post and then he got the 3/3. But really, it was because of all the drama with the teachers. They couldn't agree.

*Q: What position did your husband go to?*

HASKELL: He went to be immigrant visa section chief, but he also spent some time there as an NIV chief. He was consular cone. Maybe he was also ACS [American Citizen Services] chief. I don't know for sure about ACS chief. That was when he was still doing consular work. He was a consular officer for a long time and then after twenty years or so he switched to public diplomacy.

*Q: Okay. Wow. That is quite an experience at FSI. Now at this point you have two children. They haven't quite reached school age yet?*

HASKELL: Nope.

*Q: Okay. But you're getting ready to pack out in the fall of 1996, if I have my years right.*

HASKELL: Yeah, it was all good. We left for Tel Aviv in August, beginning of August 1996.

*Q: Now, 1996. Right around then is when the Oslo Accords begin to become known and also having an effect. Did any of this trickle down to you as you were studying?*

HASKELL: No, not so much. But you know, what did was when [Israeli Prime Minister] Rabin was assassinated.

*Q: Ah, yes. Sure.*

HASKELL: That happened while we were studying. It was pretty intense. One weird little thing that had become part of my life from having served in the OpsCenter and then the White House Situation Room was that I could not stop watching CNN, which at the

time soon was still new-ish. Because I was so used to knowing exactly what was going on in the world at all times, I could not stop watching it. At that time, there was also the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. That happened, too.

*Q: All while you are at FSI, a relatively quiet, comfortable situation.*

HASKELL: That reminds me of something I should have said a long time ago. But when our oldest son Michael was born, we kept the newspaper from the day he was born. And it was the *International Herald Tribune* because he was born in Frankfurt. On the front page was the story of the first bombing of the World Trade Center.

*Q: Incredible. Wow.*

HASKELL: So, when the second baby, Jonah, was born, we kept the *Washington Post*, and what was on that was, I think, somebody got killed by a lion at the zoo.

*Q: Amazing. Yeah. Amazing. What the newspapers choose to make your banner headline.*

*Well, all right, so you pack up in Vienna, Virginia, and you arrive in September of 1996.*

HASKELL: August 9, I think, or 10, we had had a habit of often arriving on or around our wedding anniversary, which is August 10.

*Q: Were you able to go right into permanent housing?*

HASKELL: Yes, we went right into our house, which was nice. It was pretty newly renovated. U.S. government owned housing, a ten-minute walk from the beach in Herzliya Pituach, which was a wonderful place. We loved it. I took a week of annual leave when we arrived because we had decided we would try to put our oldest son into an Israeli preschool.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: But it needed to be within walking distance of our house because our nanny didn't drive. So I spent a week seeking that, basically pushing my kid in a stroller all around the neighborhood, looking for any little preschool kind of places. It could have been in a home or whatever. In the end that just was not working out. And in the end, we put him in a little preschool at the embassy's Recreation Center. Then we had to find somebody who could drive him to and from preschool everyday. It was all a little bit of a hassle, but we had a Filipino gardener, called Nato, and he had a little van. So, we were able to have him drive our son to school and pick him up.

*Q: Okay. And the infant, though, was home with your Filipina nanny.*

HASKELL: Yes. When we went, the oldest was three and a half and the second one was eighteen months old.

*Q: All right. So now you're going as GSO in. What were your duties when you got there?*

HASKELL: I was responsible for housing and the warehouse.

*Q: Okay. Very big and important work.*

HASKELL: I thought I was going to be the best housing officer ever and everyone would love me. This was extraordinarily naive of me.

*Q: How did housing work at Embassy Tel Aviv? Was there a housing board? Was it furnished? What were the conditions that you ran?*

HASKELL: My office was in the warehouse, which was twenty miles north of the embassy in the town of Netanya. So, every day I drove that way, north, and my husband went south to the embassy. We did have a housing board and I managed them, in both senses of the word in a way, that certainly later on, you know, after I became a higher ranking management person, I realized that no other housing officers really did that. Nobody told me not to, though; I didn't know any better. I did not take housing board members around to look at houses. I just went and looked at them and said, "Yep, looks good to me."

I did this for three years and nobody ever disagreed with my evaluations of houses. The only people I had to take around to show a house was the USAID ExO [executive officer]. They, in an annoying way at every post I was ever at, somehow managed to get the best houses in the housing pool. It's amazing how they do that. They really took care of their people really super. Not that others didn't, but they just refused if I proposed a house for USAID—they wanted to see it, and then they would tell me nope, not good enough, or it was okay. They were kind of a pain. It was a furnished post. My predecessor had instituted a furniture pool. This was before furniture pools were a thing. And I have to say it was well done. I believe in furniture pools one hundred percent.

I advocated for furniture pools later on in my career in a big way until they finally became mandatory. I had to learn to do the furniture pool in Tel Aviv the way that that guy had set it up. It was cumbersome because of the different pots of money—different agencies and different pots of funding within agencies. Every time we bought something we had to include many different strings of fiscal data from different agencies. I had a big warehouse staff, because we had a big warehouse. They were great people. I loved my warehouse staff. I don't know where else you find staff of the warehouse who, when I was still in my office at five am, they might walk in and have a long discussion on politics with you. That was my warehouse staff in Tel Aviv. They would come up and sit in my office and chat me up about what was going on in politics in Israel.

*Q: Wonderful.*

HASKELL: It was great. We had a lot of disposal sales, which I'll get to. And things were interesting. Like when we first did the physical inventory, which was shortly after I

arrived, maybe a couple of months. I realized that there was no computer equipment of any kind on any of the inventories. I wondered what was going on. Who was taking care of those inventories, those computers. Evidently, the person before me had gotten really angry with the information management people because the information management people didn't tell him where things were moved to when they moved them. And so he just decided he wasn't going to be responsible for any computer equipment anymore and took them all off the inventory. Of course, I had to turn around and put it all back on. That was not the answer to that problem, to be honest. It doesn't make sense because when you use scanners to scan equipment during an inventory, if it's not in the place it was listed previously, the software moves it automatically to the new place. So, it didn't make sense that we needed to know every time they moved something. It really didn't. It was extra work.

*Q: Was it also more complicated because some equipment was owned by different agencies of the federal government?*

HASKELL: Well, to be honest, with everybody except USAID, and at the time we still had USIS [United States Information Agency/Service] and also DAO [Office of the Defense Attaché] who kept track of their own inventories. I didn't worry about them except for housing. The house furniture and appliances—I took care of those for all agencies, because we had the housing pool. You know, once we went to using the scanner guns, doing inventory wasn't as onerous. And the residential inventories we only did when people arrived or left. During the turnover season—the make ready—then we would produce a new printout for the new people moving into that house, but it wasn't too bad.

But at one point, we were having all these disposal sales, and I noticed that we were taking in an awful lot of money on these sales. Everyone kept mentioning how much money we got for our used furniture. How really great it was there, and how it helps with our furniture pool costs, keeping our annual contribution lower. I started looking at that closer and closer. Then I figured out why we were getting so much for our used furniture. Everybody loves the china cabinets; everybody wants a good china cabinet. And the best china cabinets are the old china cabinets because they're bigger. And the new china cabinets are smaller. Nobody wants a smaller cabinet. Right. Well what was happening was my warehouse staff was holding back good furniture, in really nice shape but kind of older so it would look like it was okay to sell it. They would put things for disposal into lots and then they would add in one piece of really super good shape, lovely, desirable furniture in there. And that would mean that the whole lot would go for maybe two thousand dollars instead of fifty dollars.

*Q: Ah.*

HASKELL: Oh, I had to lower the boom on that little exercise and explain to them that we were not a retail sales outfit and that our goal was not necessarily to maximize our income, but to get rid of the crap.

*Q: Now just a quick question here. The income that you generated through sales, how, where did that money go? Who had control of it?*

HASKELL: We had to report it back to the bureau in Washington, but they would give it back to post for use in the same category. It had to be used again for furniture. So what it did was it offset the total. If I needed to buy two million dollars of furniture, and we had taken in three hundred thousand dollars in sales, then I only had to get the agencies to pay \$1.7 million.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: It was a big post. We had about 180 houses, I'd say.

*Q: Yeah. So obviously there had been a motivation to get more money, but it, yeah, it didn't always work.*

HASKELL: It wasn't being done in the best way, wasn't the best resource use. But it wouldn't surprise me if the idea hadn't come from some officer sometime back in time.

*Q: Now while you were head of the warehouse, did you have a major challenge like redesigning the ambassador's residence or the DCM's residence or a major change in the embassy that you had to satisfy with new equipment and so on?*

HASKELL: The embassy was under renovation when I arrived, so they were moving people around floor by floor. But, I didn't really have to worry about that so much because when FBO did a major renovation like that, Washington, as part of the contracting of the whole project, had decided what would be put in there and it would just show up, in a timely fashion, just as it was needed. And I'm sure the contractor sent somebody to install all that modular furniture and whatnot. So that wasn't a problem. But the DCM's residence had really old, terrible furniture and the new DCM and his wife and kids arrived almost the same day we did. His wife called me and told me that I needed to go to the house and see how it was. It was amazing how bad it was. Evidently, the previous DCM had had big dogs.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: What they had done, when new furniture had been purchased and sent to post by FBO, the previous DCM refused to take it into the house because he was concerned the dogs would ruin it. That is so against all the rules about how this was handled. So all that brand new, really expensive furniture, was stuck in the warehouse for a couple or three years. And the furniture that was in the house was just all disgusting pieces. It looked like it had been recovered in sheets or something. When I communicated with FMO [Financial Management Office], they told me that we should have new furniture; it must be in the warehouse. And I told them that I was very sorry, but I had been there about two months and all we had found of that new furniture was a bed.



Clearly somebody had sold all that furniture. Phew. I didn't know how long ago, but it wasn't me, and I couldn't find any clear records. Amazingly OBO did not have a complete heart attack. They weren't happy people, but what were they going to do? They came out and looked at what was there and realized it was awful. And the DCM's wife, she spent so much time and effort on drafting a long memo to OBO about what needed to be changed. She took into account the style of the house and the carpets that were there that were in good shape and what it should look like. She wrote her ideas if we could have this certain kind of a setup how nice it would be, with the least expenditure. She wrote maybe four or five pages of ideas, concepts of what would be really good for the house. And then a long time later, maybe nine months later, the new furniture arrived. The warehouse staff took a truckload of furniture down to the DCM's residence. They were unloading this furniture the whole day. And at one point the DCM's wife calls to tell me that maybe I should come down and have a look at it.

Really? She said, I must and that I wasn't going to believe what I saw. So I drove down there. The furniture was so bad. It was new, and I'm sure it cost a fortune. But it was so ugly. It was ugly and frankly just stupid. One piece was this chair. It had a red velvet cushion on a gilded frame. And we joked about it; it looked like some kind of a weird throne. She was very kind to say only that she couldn't deal with all the new furniture at that time. She said that she would do it slowly. That she would keep a few pieces, like the bedroom things. But she said the rest of it had to go back to the warehouse while she caught her breath and figured out where to put it all. So we hauled a bunch of furniture back and forth over the next two or three months. She would ask for a chair or two at a time and tell us that she had figured out where to put them.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: She was such a good sport.

*Q: You were lucky.*

HASKELL: It really was terrible. They clearly had not read a single word of what she had sent to them.

*Q: Wow. And with housing, did the requirements or the allowances change while you were there and then you had to explain all of that?*

HASKELL: We did have a hard time with the market in Tel Aviv. We had a lot of apartments and apartments were quite small. They would take an apartment that we would put one person in and an Israeli family of four could easily live there. So it was hard to find apartments that were big enough. Sometimes we got two and knocked the wall down. And if we had to, we would take a four-bedroom apartment, and we would make one bedroom be the closets, because bedrooms never had closets in them. And the bedrooms were so small that you could sometimes not fit a queen bed with two night tables. So it was hard. And at the time they had, um, the Israelis had embraced the open kitchen concept, which of course when I buy my own house, I want that. And while I

loved that, nobody who wanted that came to Embassy Tel Aviv. And so if we had to take an apartment that had an open kitchen, we would have to devise some way of closing it. You know, we would ask the landlord to find some temporary but aesthetically acceptable way to close the kitchen.

That didn't always go so well. A lot of times the houses just weren't nice. And if we had a big family—sometimes you get families with six kids, five kids, four kids. Those were hard to find. If we wanted a house with that many bedrooms often it was, literally, a mansion—some crazy thing with a ballroom in the basement. We can't really lease those, either. We owned about twenty-eight or twenty-nine houses. Two of them had six bedrooms. They were old and kind of icky.

At one point, Washington decided they wanted to sell those houses. I was not about to sell them because they were six-bedroom houses, badly needed in our housing pool. So, I did this whole big market research exercise. I looked at every house we could come up with over a period of three months that would have five bedrooms or four bedrooms where you could conceivably put a family of six to eight people and how much they cost. They were extremely expensive, so I was able to make the case successfully that we didn't want to sell those houses. We did get them renovated so they weren't so run down, but that was a hard thing to do. And even maintaining houses at a level for the senior Foreign Service people—the economics counselor and management counselor, the political counselor—we often would put them in these government-owned houses that we seemed to think were really nice, but some of them really weren't that nice. When we were getting a new econ counselor, I went on a mission to find a new house to lease for her. I didn't have a government-owned house to put her in, and they were coming just with one child. I was trying to find a house with appropriate representational space, and she was coming from being a DCM.

I had a few phone conversations with her. She wasn't shy about calling me. I did my best to explain to her that she might not like the house she would have here, but that really, we had done a lot of work to find the best house we could find. And it was a very bizarre house. There was not a square corner in it. She was acting DCM upon her arrival because we were getting a new ambassador and the DCM was chargé. Luckily, we got along very well. The DCM [as chargé] made her [the new econ counselor] the head of the housing board. It took a little while before she realized that I really had done an awful lot of work, and then she became my biggest fan, which was nice. And at one point she told me that I was a master of reducing expectations, expectation management. Most people wanted a government-owned house just because they knew they would at least have a big kitchen, and they would get an American washer and dryer and a yard. Whereas a leased house from the Israeli market wasn't going to have a big kitchen, wasn't going to have American-sized washer/dryer and wasn't going to have a big yard.

*Q: All totally understandable. Did you, I mean it sounds like you did manage the housing pool. Well, you know, there are always requests for change, you know, uh, this house isn't big enough. I'm a wine, I want a lot more space or something. But it sounds like overall, you know, you were able to manage without too many awful desktops.*

HASKELL: I tried to be reasonable. Occasionally, after we would make a housing assignment, it would come to light that maybe two people weren't in the right place, and we could swap them without much problem and they would be happier if we did that. So, I tried to keep an open mind about things like that. I think people liked that. We had one house in the pool that had this fabulous family in that this family was so easy to work with. The house was terrible. It had so many problems. And the landlord was kind of recalcitrant. He wanted to be involved; he was responsive. But he was there all the time, but nothing ever quite got fixed. And there was always something new wrong. That family was so kind. They would come almost every day to put in a work order, but they always were smiling about it. You know, they never complained. They always were considerate. They knew we were trying, that we were doing our best to get everything fixed as well as we could. But I couldn't wait for them to leave post because I wanted to cancel that lease and get out of that house.

At the same time USAID decided they needed a new mission director house, and they were doing their own search. Okay fine. They couldn't find anything, and they decided they wanted that house because it was a beautiful house.

But it was just like I said, it would constantly have a lot of big problems. The admin counselor told me we had to keep that house for the mission director. And I said, no, that I wasn't not doing it. And he kept telling me I had to. And then, you know, a week or two go by, and I would be back to see the admin counselor and tell him, no, I wouldn't keep that house because it's so much work. I told him he had no idea how much work it was for our staff. It took the work of ten houses. And I just kept pushing and pushing and pushing. He once told me I was like one of those games at the carnival where the weasel, or gopher, pops up and you're supposed to whack it on the head. He felt like I was the weasel or the gopher popping up constantly about that house, and he was having to pop me on the head constantly. So I told him I wasn't joking, that that house was not a house we needed to have in the housing pool. So we came to an agreement. Yes, USAID could have the house; they would have their own lease; and they would take care of their own maintenance and problems.

*Q: Okay. That's the solution.*

HASKELL: I said, "Okay."

*Q: Now, during the time you were in this job also, were any of the politics of Israel or the negotiations, did any of that affect you?*

HASKELL: I would say that the time we were there from 1996 to 2000 was probably one of the most peaceful times that Israel had had. We had very, very few instances of terrorism. When I was in the OpsCenter, it seemed like every other week we would have reports of rockets being launched from southern Lebanon into Israel or something like that. We had very few instances of things like that. Like you said, the Oslo Accords had been pretty successful. We did still have a lot of secretary of state visits, and we had a presidential visit. Those were huge. Secretary of state visits we could do kind of with our

eyes closed at a certain point because they came so often. One of the things about the secretary of state visits that was interesting is that the capital of Israel is Jerusalem, but the embassy was in Tel Aviv, so the visits actually were centered in Jerusalem. But the consulate in Jerusalem was very small. So all of us that managed the visits would pack up and move to Jerusalem for a few days before the visit started until the end of the visit. We would have to stay up there in hotels because we needed to be available. I was very often the motorcade officer.

It was kind of fun being the motorcade officer in Israel because normally we would dictate the routes, and our security would be in charge of everything [in coordination with host-country security apparatus]. That was not the case in Israel. Israeli security dictated the routes, and we all didn't know what was happening until it happened. There were times when, with our twenty-five-car motorcade, we would pull up, say in front of the hotel.

The "secure package"—the secretary's "package" [the secretary's vehicle plus the immediate lead and follow cars] would go directly into the garage or whatever, but the rest of the motorcade would be on the street in front of the hotel. My job was to make sure the rest of the motorcade was lined up properly and ready to go when the time came. But the Israelis wouldn't tell me which direction we were going. I knew where we were going next, but I didn't know what the route would be. They wouldn't tell me in advance. So, I had to always make friends with the Israeli security guys and let them know that this would be a problem, that they didn't want us to not do this right. And often they would come, literally racing out, waving their hand in a circle above their head, which meant that my motorcade was turned the wrong direction. I would have to stop all the traffic and get the drivers to do a 180 degree turn to drive past each other to get going the right direction as the people were coming out to get in the cars.

Once we were at the prime minister's office, and again, they have a special underground garage where the secretary's car would go. We had the rest of the motorcade outside, and we couldn't see when the secure package left. That time I relied on our embassy security to tell me that the secure package was leaving. Except that one time our security [which was not helpful and just] sauntered up to me in the end car [where the motorcade officer rides] and told me I'd been left behind.

*Q: Oh, beautiful.*

HASKELL: I know. And we were going to Ramallah; we were going into the West Bank, which is a bit of a long drive and I had the whole rest of the motorcade sitting there with me. I rearranged the order of the cars in the front of my line of cars because the driver who was in the front was one of the consulate drivers and he wasn't particularly aggressive. He was just a nice, good driver. I put at the front of my rump motorcade an American former military guy driver. We had, at the time, some former U.S. military guys who had been in Israel in the first Gulf War, manning the Patriot missile sites. Some of them had stayed in Israel, some had married Israeli, or whatever. Some of them worked at the embassy in the DPO [Diplomatic Post Office], or they worked at other

offices in the embassy. Some were hired by the RSO [Regional Security Office] and they would drive when people would go to Gaza. RSO wanted these guys as their drivers for the armored vehicles. So, one of our cars in the motorcade was driven by one of them.

I put him in the front and told him to put on his lights and all the other goodies he had in that car, maybe a siren. And then, unlike every other motorcade where I'm trying to get people not to drive so close to the car in front [to avoid accidents], I told them to go bumper to bumper because we don't want to let any car break up our motorcade. We had to fight our way with no police escort through the intersections to try to catch up. [This was with at least a dozen vehicles.] Luckily we had this fabulous RSO whose name everybody will know. He was Greg Starr, who later was assistant secretary, and he was in charge of UN security. He was our RSO, and he was fabulous. We worked very well together. He was riding in the "secure package" with the secretary, and he noticed we weren't behind them. There is a tunnel when you leave Jerusalem go to Ramallah; you go through this tunnel. So, he stopped the motorcade in the tunnel.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: And they waited for us to catch up.

*Q: Wow. That's remarkable. Yeah, you're right. That's really fantastic work.*

HASKELL: Greg was great, and we did it. We scooted our way through traffic to catch up to them. It was amazing. We did a lot of interesting things. Sometimes the secretary would go to meet with Yassar Arafat. And for those meetings we never knew where the meeting was going to be. We would advance different sites we knew. Of course, we had so many visits that we knew all the sites pretty well anyway, but we would advance all the sites where an Arafat meeting might be held. Sometimes we didn't know if it was going to be in Ramallah or if it was going to be in Gaza. Ramallah we could drive to, but Gaza was too far to drive. So, if the meeting was in Gaza, we would have a motorcade that would drive to a site with a heliport. We would put people in helicopters, and then there would be another motorcade on the other end in Gaza. That was always complicated. And, of course these kinds of decisions were never made and then stuck to.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I, as motorcade officer, both the day before movements and often in the middle of the night, I would get calls. The visit control officer would tell me that the sites or times had changed. They tell me that we're not doing it that way, that we're now doing it this way. Then I would have to call all the drivers and get everybody organized to do it in a new way. It was a lot. At one point in time I was pregnant again, and I was very pregnant while being the motorcade officer for a secretary of state visit, running up and down the line of cars. Sometimes I would have to literally push people into cars because they were not moving fast enough, I knew we had to go. I wasn't very subtle about it.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: Sometimes, for some reason, there would be a mix up. I remember opening a car door once and telling a particular agency head that he needed to scoot over and let somebody else into his car. That didn't go over well, either. I guess that was part of my job. I got to know those people who would travel with the secretary because I was doing this motorcade work. At one point I was seven or eight months pregnant, hugely pregnant, running up and down the line. Then the next time they saw me, I had a baby, and they thought that was all very interesting and wondered how I did it all.

Remember we're going up to Jerusalem to do the visits, and again, and I had a newborn, our third son, Seth. So, my husband was lucky because we worked out so he didn't tend to work on visits. For both of us to work on a visit would have been really hard with the three kids. So I would pump breast milk and give the milk to the drivers who were going back down the hill from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv to give to my husband. And then on the weekends he would bring the baby up to me, or for one visit when it was President Clinton he brought Seth to me in Ashkelon, an Israeli city on the border with Gaza.

We ran that Clinton visit as if it were two completely separate visits—one whole visit for the Gaza portion and one visit for the Israeli portion. So, we had two teams of everything, two full visit hotels, two setups for everything. For that one visit, I wasn't a motorcade officer. I was in charge of the hotel in Ashkelon. It was a town on the border of Gaza. We couldn't have set up a visit in Gaza, so we had a brand new hotel. It hadn't opened, no other guests. We took it over, and they opened up their cafe, their restaurant. They were anticipating all these people eating there. Then, of course, the people who do SecState visits carry their suitcases full of Cup Noodle or something similar. They want to pocket their per diem often. And they are too busy. Sometimes they were just too busy to go eat in a restaurant. The hotel wasn't getting enough business from that, and we had to try to work out how they wouldn't lose money.

Also the hotel had a brand new kashrut certificate [important documentation that meant that Jews who keep kosher could eat in that restaurant]. Some people working the visit would go into town and get McDonald's and bring it back to the hotel. That particular McDonald's was not kosher. Not every McDonald's in Israel is kosher. Some are, and some aren't. They were bringing this food into the hotel, and that the management could see these McDonald's bags coming through the lobby. They didn't like that, for good reason. They would lose their kashrut certification, which would ruin their businesses, because people kept kosher wouldn't come. That was a big part of Israeli culture. I had to take the WHCA [White House Communications Agency] crew, all the communications guys, security guys, those guys, and I had to sit them all down and tell them we were having [serious] conversation about this, that they would not walk through the lobby with McDonald's bags. They must not do that. And if they did get in with a McDonald's bag, not through the lobby, it must be in a burn bag. And the garbage must go out in a burn bag.

*Q: Remarkable. Oh, my goodness. So, this is a three-year tour. It has no differential, I imagine.*

HASKELL: Nope.

*Q: Did the fact that you were dealing with suppliers in Israel and furniture people and so on, did your Hebrew get better?*

HASKELL: Oh, no, it didn't get better. Next session we can talk about some of the aspects of my Hebrew, when it did come in handy. I had that third baby. It was a three-year tour, but my husband extended for a fourth year, but I didn't. I did a year of leave without pay. I also got promoted, so I can talk about all those things.

*Q: So today is October 7, and we're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell on her tour in Tel Aviv. And just to bring us back up to date. What years were you in Tel Aviv?*

HASKELL: We arrived in August of 1996, and we departed in July of 2000. My tour was a three-year tour, though, and I spent one year on leave without pay for the fourth year.

*Q: So, please go ahead.*

HASKELL: Okay, thank you. Nice to see you again. I think when we were speaking last week, you had asked me how it went with my Hebrew, whether my Hebrew improved and whether I had used it very much in my work. And you know, Israel is a very interesting place, and Hebrew has an interesting history. People come to Israel from all over the world, speaking many different languages. So the country, the Israeli government really wants everybody to learn to speak Hebrew. But people are multilingual there. I did use my Hebrew going about town, and most traffic signs were also in English, which because Hebrew has a different alphabet is very helpful if you can't read fast. And it was helpful in my work. For example, my comprehension was better than my speaking ability, and I could sit in—I would obviously be in the meetings on, say, lease negotiations or if we were dealing with a recalcitrant landlord, or we were doing some sort of lease renewal, or something where the local employees wanted me to be there, too.

And most of our landlords spoke English, but not all of them. There were times when the landlord and my FSN [Foreign Service national] staff, the leasing assistant, would be having a conversation where I understood Hebrew well enough to know that the way the FSN was describing something, that their description wasn't really quite right. I could follow along enough to intervene to redirect things when I didn't necessarily agree with how the FSN was portraying something. That was always a little bit delicate to do so as not to sabotage the FSN in some way with the landlord. I certainly didn't feel that confident in my speaking ability, but I could sit in on the lease negotiations and follow along better than I would have expected with the 2+/2+ language score. One of the other interesting things about the embassy is that it's probably—someone could probably prove me wrong with this—but it's probably the only embassy where all of the signs and forms in the consular section are not only in four different languages, but in four different alphabets because everything was in Hebrew, English, of course, Arabic, and Russian.

*Q: The only thing I would say about that is at some point, I imagine, in Israel the Russian will fall away simply because the people who have immigrated from Russia, yes, are a very large number, but eventually they will be assimilated and probably won't demand that signs be in Russian. What would you say?*

HASKELL: Yes, it's possible. I have no idea if they still do it even now because this is all twenty-some years ago. So it's possible. But it was interesting at the time. It was a little bit tedious to have to put everything into four different languages with four different alphabets. And we had to have FSNs in the sections who could speak all of the languages.

I also wanted to mention that in January 1998, I had our third child. Seth was born on January 2. He had some health issues, it was a little bit hairy. I took some time off, about three months. A post can approve ninety days of leave-without-pay.

At about that time—I don't think I had mentioned this part yet, so tell me if I did. For some time prior to Seth's birth there were United Nations weapons inspectors in Iraq at the time. This was during the time where we had no-fly zones over Iraq. The weapons inspectors were not being allowed in. It was a very tense time. The United States was having problems, obviously, with Saddam Hussein, and there were threats that Iraq would launch Scud missiles to attack Iraq [sic]. So, one day the RSO came to my office at the warehouse and told me he needed to see the gas masks. I told him I didn't know what you're talking about.

*Q: Wait, wait. What you said was there were threats of Scud missiles attacking Iraq. What I think you mean—*

HASKELL: Oh, I mean, Israel. Yes. Iraq was, might attack Israel. Sorry. I mean, that was a theory and probably not it not an explicit/real threat. So, the RSO came to the warehouse where they had their own space that they kept locked. They wanted to go in there because they said they had gas masks there. I didn't know anything about that. What we discovered was that the government of Israel had, all along, been issuing a gas mask to every person who comes to Israel [the live]. So, all of our diplomats were being issued one, every child, every dependent, everybody was getting one, but we all didn't know it. They were all just being stuffed into a warehouse space that only the RSO had access to. So, after they located the gas masks, they took them all and went to the embassy with them. Then there was a debate about whether they would issue the gas masks or not. Of course, at a certain point they have to because by now all the Israelis are carrying theirs around with them and all the other diplomatic missions have theirs. We had a session in the DCM's garage one day so that we could learn how to put gas masks on our children.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: Which is a crazy thing to think about. I had a two-month-old baby and a not-yet three-year-old and a-not-yet five-year-old. So, we go there, all five of us, and they teach us how to use the little ones that look like the adult ones, but for, not adolescents,



but for bigger kids, eight or nine years old up to until you get to be more adult-sized. They were a miniature version of what we had, which were the Darth Vader-looking, black, old-fashioned things. Those were fine. Okay, fine.

Then they had these gas “masks” that were made for kids that were about four—three or four years old—up to maybe eight, seven or eight, years old. At the time our kids were huge Calvin and Hobbes [a comic strip] fans. I don’t know if you know about Spaceman Spiff, but he’s a character in Calvin and Hobbes. The masks they had for these kids. These not-babies, but not-big kids yet. They looked like something from Spaceman Spiff. They were like a soft plastic box, basically like a scrunchie plastic box with seams. It had a fan, and it came down over the shoulders and the theory was somehow it worked.

My son’s friend volunteered to go up and be the guinea pig so we could all see how to put it on. We were all kind of looking at each other with raised eyebrows, thinking “this is getting weird.” Then they bring out the “mask” for infants. Of course, I was sitting there with an infant. It was basically a papoose, a plastic board with a plastic bag over it. And it had a fan because infants don’t have the strength in their breathing to bring air through a filter. So, both the Spaceman Spiff get-up, and the infant size had a fan. They told us that with our infants and small children, we wouldn’t know if they were able to breathe until they’d turned blue. Maybe the filter was not working. Maybe the batteries were dead. The infant set-up had a little space where you were supposed to put a baby bottle nipple. It was at this point that the DCM said “Well, I think we need to reconsider this.”

Even with the Darth Vader-type mask for the bigger kids, the black, sort of old-fashioned masks, it was crazy to think it would be easy. We had all the tape and the plastic sheeting to cover our doors and windows in a specific room to have our safe area in the house so that the chemicals [from the Scud missiles] wouldn’t come into our safe space. And if the air raid sirens were to go off, we were supposed to go wake up our children. And if you’re like I was at the time, you first had to put on your contact lenses before you could do anything. Then you would put your own gas mask on [just like the air supply in a plane], and then you would go to wake up your children [missiles were launched only at night]. You can imagine how a kid would react when waking up and seeing their parent with this big black thing on their face. The whole proposition of relying on gas masks for kids just seemed crazy, and that’s the point at which it became a discussion of ordered departure, or at that point it was authorized/voluntary departure, I think.

I was on leave because I had a newborn. We decided to go—not my husband, he was staying—but I was going to go to the United States. I was holding the four tickets [and a huge advance of per diem], and I remember I had a terrible cold. I was feeling terrible, and I was going to take these three little kids with me on a plane by myself. We were watching the news when President Clinton came on to announce that they had come to an agreement with Iraq for the weapons inspectors to be allowed back in. The management counselor called everybody that was scheduled to fly out and told us that we didn’t have to go now. And literally at that moment, the embassy car had arrived in our driveway to

take us to the airport. I was so happy not to leave. Yay! I wanted to hand all that money back and all those tickets. I decided I was not going.

They kept the voluntary departure on for people who still wanted to go. A month or two later we went on our R&R [rest and recreation trip]. We had our fingers crossed that they would lift the voluntary departure before we were scheduled to return to Israel. Otherwise we couldn't have come back. It was lifted about two days before we came back from our R&R. Those were very tense times. That was in the winter—January, February, March of 1998. Then in December of 1998 [the threat emerged again], my husband was duty officer when he got the call that Washington was putting us on ordered departure. Anybody under the age of eighteen, pregnant women, old people, anybody on whom atropine, which is the antidote for nerve gas—had to leave.

That was on December 16 or 17, so right before Christmas. We all [those in the categories, plus caregivers or other non-essential employees and dependents who preferred to avoid SCUDs] had to leave immediately. We were literally looking at the holiday presents we had bought and deciding what would fit into the suitcase. And we, as a tandem, went back to Washington. I think we were the only family that went to Washington. Most of the other families went to their families in the United States. To us, as a tandem, that didn't work because we were supposed to report for duty. So there we were in Washington, and I remember we had a tree. My husband went to CVS pharmacy to see if they had a tree; they didn't have any little trees left, but they had one in the window. He asked if he could buy the one in the window. They let him buy the one out of the window, complete with the decorations on it. And then ten days later they called off the ordered departure, and we were the first ones back to Tel Aviv.

We were the first ones back and we arrived on New Year's Eve [sic], I think it was. We were picked up by an embassy driver who told us that the embassy had decided that day was a holiday [it was December 30 that we arrived]. He told us they had all been told they didn't have to come to work, just getting this free holiday day. I thought that didn't make any sense and wondered what was going on with that. Later we found out that there had been a threat against the embassy that day, and they didn't tell people there was a threat. So as you can imagine, all the officers who had too much work to do and wanted the time to get caught up, went ahead and went to work anyway.

That was not handled particularly well, I would say. But that was pretty crazy. I'm trying to think where all have I served, but Israel, all in all, we had many things going on there. I think you asked last what it was like there, and I said it was very peaceful. It actually was very peaceful. We had for those four years almost nothing, security-wise, but then this weird thing coming up, from Iraq. It wasn't the normal Palestinian terrorism or political issues that we had there. I can't remember if they didn't shoot any Scuds at Israel or just none came to Tel Aviv. I don't remember for sure.

During the time we were there, I did my first representational events; I did two. I did one with about thirty real estate agents so we could explain our housing needs. That way they would know what we wanted and could contact us. We needed to diversify, to have more

realtors to work with. We have a tendency at embassies to stick with one or two agents and sometimes that can get a little bit corrupt. So we invited all these different agents, and we had a big talk about what is it we're looking for and what is required and what do we need them to do and what do we pay and not pay and all of these kinds of things. That was pretty useful. I did another rep [representational] event that was a dinner. I invited people who did what I was doing for the other Western embassies. We talked about the trials and tribulations of working with landlords, working with real estate agents, et cetera. We agreed we should not pay so much in commissions. It was kind of fun to do those as my first rep events. I don't remember when I did those events, probably 1997 or 1998.

I had a chance to be acting supervisor GSO for four months, which was good. I think it helped me learn a lot more.

*Q: When you say supervisory GSO, what added tasks would that mean?*

HASKELL: Well, we had three GSOs, and I was the deputy. We also had a junior officer. I was working only at the warehouse doing housing and warehousing. To be a supervisory GSO, I had to go to the embassy and manage the whole section. I continued doing my own job, but I also oversaw the junior officer. I think I took on bigger issues. I had to spend a lot of time working on some big real estate possibilities for a new location for the American Cultural Center in Jerusalem and for a new marine house, neither of which was plausible. Washington was demanding things that were not realistic. But I did all the research, figured stuff out, and sent in justifications of the obstacles for why we really couldn't do it—what Washington was telling us to do.

But we succeeded in getting what we needed—getting the money we needed for renovations of both properties. Everybody agreed that Washington likes to tell us that a particular property is overpriced, that there are cheaper properties, and to go find a cheaper property. But there really weren't cheaper properties because the square meter costs aren't the only costs that you see. They were seeing only that in advertisements. And there're all these building maintenance fees, and other things that increase the price of things as much as 33 percent. So, we did a lot of work on that, even while I was doing the supervisory GSO thing. I also got promoted in 1998, so that was good, too.

*Q: To what grade?*

HASKELL: To FS-02. And my husband also got promoted to FS-02, so that was a good promotion list for us.

*Q: Just one other question about supervisory GSO. Toward the end of the fiscal year, GSO gets very, very busy in order to complete spending or begin spending for projects in the following fiscal year. Were you caught in that?*

HASKELL: I was and we also had a SecState visit during the last three days of the fiscal year. So it was pretty hairy. And um, I remember when I was doing it, the FMO probably

didn't appreciate me very much because we were going over this list, right, of all these things on the sort of the wishlist end of your wishlist. And he, you know, he would say it, I don't know, you shouldn't buy that. No, don't buy that. I said, "Look, that's not your job. You don't get to, you don't get to say what we buy. You get to say if we have money and if it's allowed. And if you say it's not allowed, I'm going to look to make sure you're right."

*Q: This is very interesting because this is the behind the scenes work that GSOs do that a lot of people don't understand, that GSOs have a little bit more discretion than the financial management officer would want them to have because you're exercising judgment about not only what you need immediately but what you see coming down the pike for a year later, maybe even two, three years later.*

HASKELL: Yes, exactly that. And also as individuals, people get a bee in their bonnet about certain things that they don't—especially financial management, some of them—that they just don't believe we should be buying. But sometimes it has nothing to do with what's allowed or really whether we do need it for some reason. It's that they just don't like something about it, so they will often tell you that it's not allowed. This happened to me in other positions later on. So, I was glad to have had that experience. It gave me a good grounding for future times when I was working with even more senior FMOs [financial management officers] who would try to tell me something was against appropriation law when often it wasn't, they just liked to use that as an excuse 'cause they didn't want to buy it. And I was trying to get it done by phone in some ways. I had the junior officer GSO do the signing on the contracting side of things, but I was doing a six-day SecState visit at the same time.

*Q: Yep. Did any of that work result in an award for you, given the fact that you were doing so much more than your regular service and for several months?*

HASKELL: I think while I was in Tel Aviv, I got two meritorious honor awards.

*Q: Okay. Because that really is the kind of thing that typically you should get an award for. You are working not only your own job but a job one step above you, and at the same time handling a major visit. That's the definition of an honor award.*

HASKELL: Yes. I felt like throughout my career I got enough awards. I confess that I only tend to think about the awards that were individual awards because group awards were often massive groups of people. I don't put those on my resume. I got a couple of meritorious step increases, as well. Those are always fabulous. You get money forever with those. I got one of those in Prague, so that was very nice.

*Q: Okay. I just wanted to pause you now to emphasize these things because sometimes people who don't work in the department don't realize that these are the kinds of things that, well, that need to be recognized by awards, but also help prepare you for harder things to come.*

HASKELL: Yes, and tell if you definitely did that—prepared me. It made me very comfortable with SecState visits and presidential visits. I felt like I could do them. Later on you'll hear about more visits, to the point where I was the overall control officer for vice president and SecState visits. So Tel Aviv was helpful for that. VIP visits became commonplace in a way, because we had so many.

*Q: And just one last thing I'll mention in bidding myself during my career, Tel Aviv was famous for visits. If you bid on Tel Aviv, people told you, even your career officer told you, to get ready for visits roughly every six weeks to two months.*

HASKELL: Yes. And it depended on the time, what was going on with the peace process. There were definitely times when they were coming more often than not. I know that there were those days of shuttle diplomacy. That was before I got there. They had someone coming virtually every week. That was really very hard. But you know, what that did is it trained the FSNs incredibly well because we did have a very, very competent FSN staff who, to be honest, could probably have done it all without us. But we like to think that we are indispensable. We still continued to do our parts during visits.

I think I mentioned that my office was in a warehouse that was about twenty miles north of Tel Aviv. It was far from our housing areas. We had a lot of apartments in Tel Aviv, and we had some houses that were in Herzliya Pituach and Raanana, which are suburbs up the road from Tel Aviv. This meant that our staff was gone for hours just stuck in traffic because they had to get into the morning commute traffic going into Tel Aviv to take things anywhere. We also were located very far from the Facility Maintenance team. We worked so closely together with them, and we need to have joint meetings.

At the time, we didn't have a very responsive facility manager. And I found that people started calling me for everything that Facilities were supposed to be doing. It took me a while to figure out to just tell them they had to call the other guy. Instead, I would take down their problem; I would call up the Facilities people; and I would go to the FSNs. I would tell them they had to go do this and this and this just to make sure that things would happen. But I decided that we really needed to not be so far away. It didn't make any sense. I started looking for a warehouse facility closer to the housing areas. The warehouse we were in at the time was a very nice, modern, purpose-built warehouse facility in an industrial warehousing complex. It was the right facility but in the wrong place. We found a facility right smack in the middle of Herzliya Pituach. I have no idea if they're still there anymore. Maybe they've moved somewhere else.

But it was an old warehouse. It was really old and crappy, though, and smaller. So we had to reconfigure the way we were going to keep or not keep things and to be more efficient with buying and how we were buying. It had better office space, more office space than the other one did. We did make that move and that was a big move. I was trying to do this on the cheap because Washington wasn't really thrilled with the idea of all these extra expenses with the renovation of some bits of the warehouse and a move can cost a lot of money. My staff came to me and they said, we can do it. We don't need

a moving company. We'll move everything from the old warehouse to the new warehouse. [That's how much they believed we needed to make the move.]

We had a huge sale. I decided to do it differently; we didn't do a sealed bid sale. We did an actual auction, and we made so much more money doing it that way. It was a lot of work, but it was worth it to dispose of so many things. It was a one time thing to do it that way, and the move made things much nicer. Instead of it being a forty-minute drive for the Facilities people to come to us for a meeting, because they didn't have meeting space where we could go to them, we were now a five-minute drive from them. They were able now to have a better warehouse space for their own stock. We could respond to people's needs so much faster. We didn't have to schedule everything a week out because of the transit time. That move was my last hurrah because then I went on leave-without-pay. My successor came to post, and I moved out of my office. I think I sat in another office for about a week overlap. We seldom have an overlap in the Foreign Service. And then I went on leave-without-pay for almost a year.

*Q: Now, during the period when you were on leave-without-pay, did you, nevertheless, get lots of calls from your successor with questions like could you give me more advice about this and so on? In essence, even though you were on leave-without-pay, you were sort of an emeritus GSO.*

HASKELL: Not so much. People were pretty good about that. But that reminds me, another thing that I did maybe four or five months before the end of my tour—I fired someone.

*Q: Interesting.*

HASKELL: Someone who wasn't going willingly, and that did create more work. She grieved the termination. So I had to appear before a grievance board and that sort of thing. But again, that experience, it was the first time I'd ever fired anybody. And it was a difficult one.

*Q: Can you take a moment to describe what the reasons were without mentioning names?*

HASKELL: This was somebody who had been hired maybe a year or two before I arrived to post and was described to me as the best thing since sliced bread and that we'd been so lucky to get her from the British. I didn't know any better, and I just took that for at face value. Over time it became clear to me that maybe she was able to produce but at great cost to other people. And when I started to get phone calls from landlords telling me that their mother was a landlord and that my employee was abusing her, in terms of screaming and yelling on the phone.

The person sat near me in an office next door, and I heard it, myself. So, I started to realize that this wasn't just normal Israeli, direct behavior, that it was more than that and that I had to do something. As I tried to figure out what to do, we were sent on that ordered departure I mentioned earlier where we were gone and then we came back

unexpectedly. When I came back, sooner than expected, I had no people in that particular part of my office. One woman had been on had approved leave, but the other one was gone. I was asking the rest of the office what was going on, where was so-and-so. They said she had left. I checked with my supervisor and with everybody else and there was no signed leave slip. She had just gone—basically AWOL [away without leave]. When she came back I asked her what was up with that, why wasn't she in the office. She told me that since I was gone, she couldn't ask me. I told her that I had a supervisor who was here and was in charge in my absence. She said that he would have said no. I told her that, yes, he would have said no. Anyway, it was a lot of things like that. I was able to document a fair bit of behavior that was not a credit to the U.S. Embassy.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I worked with the HRO [human resources officer] because I didn't know if I had sufficient justification for firing her. I had a whole file which I took it to him. We talked about it, and he said that I absolutely had what was needed. No problem, and that I had documented everything. And he told me that he would do it. I was super happy about that because I had never fired someone before. I didn't want to be the person. I sat in the room and listened to how he did it, which was educational. But I also sat there and listened to that person convince him that she shouldn't be fired.

Now, he didn't change his mind there and then. He stuck with it, but you could feel the shift in the narrative, but it stuck. But because she made a lot of noise—our administrative counselor had left post and there was a long gap before a replacement arrived. This was in the days when DS [Diplomatic Security] was still under the admin function.

*Q: Ah.*

HASKELL: Since I was only an FS-02, they couldn't make me the acting admin counselor. So, they had the RSO do it. He was very good, but he asked me why I was doing it—firing her. He told me I should just give it up, close the file, and let my successor deal with it. Yes, my successor should deal with this.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: But I said no, it would never happen, and I knew that it wouldn't happen. We had found out that the British had fired, clearly, for very good reasons. She did eventually file suit against my boss. As she was using sexual harassment as the basis for the suit, she couldn't get me on that. That case was in the newspapers and in the Israeli courts for quite a while.

*Q: With this aspect of it, did that mean that you had to interact quite a bit with the public diplomacy office in order to handle the story?*

HASKELL: Never. I don't think they ever made a peep. What happened was that, of course, [in any case against the U.S. government] the DOJ [U.S. Department of Justice] hires representation for the embassy. And that happened. I was sort of deposed, and it wasn't in the press immediately. But over time even after I left post, for two or three years after I left, people would occasionally send me links to articles in the press and saying that it's [the case] still out there.

*Q: Okay. Very difficult. A very difficult thing to do under any circumstances, but it was good that you did not leave it for your successor because it happens so often. And you're right—either deadwood or very difficult people end up staying because of this tendency to leave the problem for your successor.*

HASKELL: Because it's hard, it's uncomfortable, it's scary. And to reframe, I don't think the State Department prepares us well for that. And even with that experience and with more experiences that I had later on with having to fire a lot more people, it wasn't until just a few years ago that I figured out the way to do that without it taking a toll on my own mental and emotional health. Frankly, if they had told me in A-100 or at any point along the way, how to do it that way, I would have been better at it. But nobody had ever given me that advice. I found it in a book somewhere, in a small, innocuous paragraph. I felt that now I could do it, I could do that. And that's one of the things I share with anyone asking for mentoring. It's a simple thing. It works in any kind of a difficult conversation situation where very often you're trying to hold someone accountable for what they didn't do or what they did do that they weren't supposed to do. They may often turn it back on you. They might accuse you of not doing something or only if you had done x-y-z. This is a very common reaction of people when they're being held accountable. And it's a simple thing.

All you have to do is tell them that if they would like to talk about you, then you will make another appointment, that today you are talking about this incident/performance issue. It is truly amazing how that just stops the nonsense. And because people start feeling defensive when someone turns the accusations on them, and it becomes a train wreck.

*Q: Interesting. Very interesting. Great. Now, that leads you to your year of leave-without-pay. Why did you decide to take a year of leave with no pay?*

HASKELL: We loved living in Israel. Our kids were young and they loved it, too. We were doing road trips all the time, going to so many historic places, and it really inculcated into our kids an appreciation for history and museums and these kinds of things. For example, one day we came home from work and the kids had made a museum in the living room, with little things. They took us around to show us each little piece of their exhibit. It was great. Years later, one of our kids, years older, made an exhibit, which I'll talk about when we get to that post. But we wanted to stay in Israel, but I had had some difficult supervisors— We had an OIG inspection, and someone was sent packing as a result.



It was a difficult working environment for lots of reasons. I had people say things to me— Someone used to call up early in the morning before I would get to the office and just bypass me, going straight to the FSNs all the time. And one time I was there early, and I picked up the phone. Basically I was told that I was the worst Foreign Service Officer ever on the face of the earth and that I should be fired. I should be ashamed. It was just a screed of crap, and it wasn't true. None of it was true, but that's how some people feel about housing and furniture.

*Q: Wow. And the individual who was talking to you didn't know that they were talking to you?*

HASKELL: Oh, they did. But they just, I guess, felt like they had the right. I was not that high-ranking, and they were the spouse of someone high-ranking who thought that they could say stuff like that. There was another case where we had an employee in embassy housing who was very difficult. Whenever the landlord needed to go to his house to do something, he [the employee in embassy housing] was difficult to the point of—at one point—threatening to shoot the landlord. So I decided that you just can't be like that. So, I wanted to have a meeting with the person's boss and the admin counselor and that guy. They set up the meeting. He didn't show up, and they didn't want to pursue it anymore. We never had that meeting. There were so many things that were happening while I was trying to be on the up and up. I was trying to be fair.

HASKELL: I was trying to provide things that made people happier. At some point, somebody in the embassy had decided we shouldn't provide vacuum cleaners or lawn mowers or patio furniture, all this kind of stuff. I thought that was crazy. So, I reimplemented that as a policy. I did a lot of things, and I got a lot of credit for being very good at my job. But there were just these people, there were enough individuals who were not held accountable. For example, if I had an issue with somebody from the Defense Attachés Office [DAO], I could go to their admin person to tell them that someone was barking up the wrong tree [attempting or pursuing a futile course of action, often by making some kind of suggestion or request]. The DAO admin person would take care of informing the person. Same if somebody in USAID was being unpleasant and disrespectful of my staff or me or anybody else, I could go to their executive officer [EXO] and they would handle the situation. Other agencies would handle the situation. There was no one to handle the situation with the State Department, no one higher level. No one wanted to do that.

*Q: Oh.*

HASKELL: I felt like the work was fine; I found the work to be satisfying. I could do it. It wasn't rocket science, but there were challenges. I was learning how to get what I needed from Washington. But I decided I really was done with admin work—because of the people, mostly State Department people.

*Q: Now, this is interesting because I understand. Here you are. You're now, this is your leave-without-pay year. You're reflecting on your career up until now and making what*

*sounds like a major career decision that you're going to want to look for jobs in a different cone or with different responsibilities.*

HASKELL: Yes. And people still wanted me. You asked if I was called upon to do GSO work while I was on LWOP [leave-without-pay], but in fact, what happened was the econ counselor was losing an officer, an officer that covered Gaza. She wanted me to take the Gaza portfolio and work half time because she knew I wouldn't be willing to work full time. She told me I could just work half time while taking the Gaza portfolio. I talked to her about it, and I seriously considered it because it would have been very interesting. But I realized that what she really wanted me to do was a full-time job in half as many days.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: That was really what she wanted. As much as I would have liked working for her, and as much as I would have learned and as interesting as it would have been, it would not have been a half-time job. So I told her no. I had three little kids. This was to be a break. I wanted to volunteer to be the room mother for the two boys, one in preschool and one in first grade. I could take them to their play dates. I could walk my son to the school bus. I could pick up my son from preschool. All these things I hadn't ever done. And at one point my husband said, "Well, we won't need Lilia anymore." She was our household help from the Philippines. And I told him that if she's leaving, I'm going back to work.

So, yeah, we kept her. It was a great year. The family enjoyed it very much. The kids loved having me around. I got to take tennis lessons and do things that just weren't possible to do when I was working full time. It was a nice decision to have made, and I stuck with it. We did bid during that time. I decided I wasn't going to do admin work, so we had decided that we would bid on the Princeton program—the academic opportunity that the State Department has for mid-level officers going to the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton. At that time, the department usually sent two people every year. So, we decided we were both going to bid on this. We tried to make it clear to the department, which we hoped they would pass on to Princeton, that they didn't have to take both of us, that if they decided one of us wasn't really what they were looking for, that that was okay. We would work something out.

The department sent both of our names forward to Princeton, but neither one of us was selected by Princeton. That was late in the bidding cycle, so we were scrambling. We thought maybe we would go to Haiti. So, we were looking into that, which was kind of crazy because it was a really bad time; it was when Haiti was still in a mess. Cedras [sic] [it was Aristide] was president and it was all going to hell in a handbasket. There was a lot of political violence. I'm sure there were not very many bidders for positions in Haiti. There are never any major bidders on Haiti. My husband is still consular cone, so he was a no-brainer [something that requires or involves little or no mental effort] for them to choose. And he spoke French already. There was a pol-econ job I would be bidding on.

They told me they didn't really believe I would be capable of doing it and was there anyone they could talk to, but they were really skeptical.

Meanwhile, we were talking to other people. What we learned was that this place [Embassy Haiti] was nuts and that we did not need to be going there with three little kids. They were doing the frog in the hot water thing. The school was closed due to the violence, but they hadn't withdrawn families. Kids were going to school in people's houses. It was crazy. So, we decided that no, no, we were not interested in that. We looked some more and found an out-year world language opportunity for both of us in Mexico City. This was fabulous because as a tandem, if you speak Spanish, you can open up that whole part of the world for bidding on jobs.

*Q: And just a quick interruption here, once you've made your decision that you want out of your cone, you are right that you have to find another job that will take you because you can't apply to enter a different cone until you've actually worked in that cone.*

HASKELL: Right. You have to have something like twenty-six months or something in a cone to change to that cone. I hadn't a hundred percent decided to change cones, but I knew that I needed a break from the admin work.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: So, in the language program, you go back to Washington for a year, even if it's only six months or so of training. Spanish is only a six-month language program. So we went to Washington for a year with just our airfreight allotment. We put our oldest son into second grade, and our second son went to kindergarten. We lived close enough to the school that our nanny could walk them to school. The house was close enough to the school that there was no bus for our second grader, although all kindergartners get a bus. But my second grader wasn't going to be walking home alone. It was farther than you would think, and it was crossing a lot of streets.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: So, neither one of them took the bus. We would drop them both off at school on the way to FSI in the morning. The nanny would put the baby in the stroller and walk every day in the afternoon. I did maybe a month or two in a bridge assignment, did my Spanish training, and then went back to that office to finish the year before going to post. My husband did a long bridge assignment in Consular Affairs before he started Spanish. I started Spanish first because I wanted to start Spanish before he did, so I could get a head start.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: It was nice being in Washington. It was in 2000, so it was the presidential election.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: I remember our kids were little—second grade, kindergarten, and two and a half, three years old. They wanted to stay up and watch the election returns. We had a map of the United States. The kids had these little stickers, and they were putting baseballs and footballs [or basketballs] into the states as the election result of each state was called. I was amazed by that, that they were interested.

So, I went to do my bridge assignment in INL [Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement], which was really actually perfect because I was going to Mexico City to work in the narcotics affairs section.

I was working in the INL office for Mexico. It was my first experience doing sort of “foreign policy work,” and it was also foreign assistance work. So, there were a lot of new things to learn about how the foreign assistance funding process works and what are the legal issues with foreign assistance and the different authorities that go with foreign assistance. Working that short time in INL I was able to meet all the people in the bureau and work, somewhat, with the Mexican government, with the Mexican embassy in Washington. I got to know, on the phone, the people at the NAS [Narcotics Affairs Section] in Mexico. It was kind of like being a desk officer, but it’s just for the NAS.

I had to do what I could to help them get more resources or solve issues for them, to work through big procurement problems or different kinds of issues like that. And, I was able to help other desk officers. They weren’t desk officers; I don’t remember what we were called, but officers who didn’t know how to do certain things. For example, there was a NAS in Panama, or maybe it was in some other Central America country. Their NAS was not co-located with the embassy, and they needed to renew their lease. And OBO was telling them they couldn’t renew the lease because it’s not co-located in the embassy and all embassy sections/units/agencies had to be located in the embassy. And I actually knew how to do that.

I knew how to go about getting the waiver. I had to teach them how to write a waiver request. And I knew people in DS [Diplomatic Security]; I had good contacts in DS, and I was able to call them and make sure they understood the circumstances. I let them know the waiver request was coming and that this really has got to happen. And it worked. They were able to get the waiver for their space, so they could continue doing their job. Working in INL was also interesting to learn about how the post was focused on institution building/capacity building and working with the law enforcement agencies. I did a lot of consultations with DEA [Drug Enforcement Agency] and INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service]. I went to FinCEN [Financial Crimes Enforcement Network], with the Treasury Department to learn about money laundering and other financial crimes. I did a lot of that while I was in Washington. I did some before I started Spanish and some after I finished Spanish. Spanish was the third language I was studying at FSI. There is no commonality between Czech, Hebrew, and Spanish. In grad school I studied Japanese, none [commonality] there either.

The thing with Spanish, though, was that I finally actually learned the language. They [FSI] have such a good program that they could really teach you to do it. And I really committed myself to doing the lab work, which before I hadn't ever really done. I had not understood how important it was to sit there with those earphones on and repeat something twenty times one time after another, after another, after another, after another. So I really committed to the lab, and I learned Spanish. I also learned how to take the test, which was crucial because it seems to me that it explains why a lot of people who are fluent in a language, sometimes native speakers, don't test well at FSI. It's because they don't know what is expected of them in the test. There are weird little things that if you don't know—you can't know—if you haven't studied at FSI.

*Q: So, take a moment to explain how you learned it, how you learned to take the test and, and how it made you effective.*

HASKELL: Well, we actually practiced elements of the test in the class. I don't know if they do that anymore, but it was valuable. For example, there was one part of the test—again, it could have changed years ago, I don't know—but they would give you a piece of paper with six little blurbs of text on it. They would ask, What did it say? You're tempted to look at one thing, and it's a business card, and you would say that it's a business card for a doctor. And that was all you might say. If you didn't know that you were supposed to say that that's the address and that's the phone number and that's the logo, et cetera. You have to say all that. If you didn't you wouldn't get points for actually saying all that.

Also, when you did the reading and they asked you to summarize a particular paragraph, they didn't really mean summarize the paragraph. They meant you should tell them every single thing you possibly can about that paragraph—things you would never think of saying because if you had just come in off the street you might just summarize what you read. You didn't know that they wanted you to do more. I think those were keys to being able to do the test. The other thing is that I learned to understand that it's the job of the tester to push you until you can't do it anymore. Because if you didn't know that's how it worked, you could get really defensive and start to panic. I think knowing those things would have been helpful when I did Hebrew. I didn't know it when I took some tests. I took the test in Japanese when I started A-100. I took the Czech test. I didn't know those things when I took those tests.

*Q: No, you're right. That is the test taking experience. That's how they determined pluses or fractions of points.*

HASKELL: And I learned, right, that you have to do, you have to be able to say an idiom. You need to be able to use the subjunctive. And I learned, sometimes I just figured stuff out. I figured out that, you know, when you sit down and you start chit-chatting, that's your first thing. When you go to the test, just chit chat for five minutes, just plan something and then just take charge of that part. And have something in your head that you can talk about what you can do. So yeah, I get it. I got the 3/3 and I was, I was probably an honest 3/3, and I used it constantly in Mexico because our Mexican counterparts did not by any means speak English.

And some of our FSNs—our driver—didn't really speak English. That was the NAS's own driver, and we had our own receiving clerk. He didn't speak English, because everybody in the NAS always spoke really good Spanish. So it was great to have really good Spanish.

*Q: However, when you got to Mexico and you started using it, Mexican Spanish has a little bit of a distinctiveness. Did you find that or was that not really a difficulty?*

HASKELL: It didn't bother me. Mexican Spanish to me was sort of normal. Later when I went to Santa Domingo, it was a whole 'nother story. I had no clue what was going on there. My Spanish went downhill. In Santo Domingo their Spanish really is very different. So Mexican Spanish wasn't that far off from what our teachers at FSI were using. Even if they weren't speaking Columbian—or was it Venezuelan—Spanish which is supposed to be the most perfect, or something.

*Q: Yeah, I've heard Columbian.*

HASKELL: In Mexican Spanish, the easy thing is they often take English words and make it Spanish. For example, to park your car could be “parkear” instead of *estacionar*. You can say “parkear” and everybody knows what you're talking about.

*Q: One funny example, I'll give you. I was in Costa Rica twice. The second time I asked my staff if there was an easy way to say, “Can you give me a ride?” And they said, Yeah, dar me un ride. It finally became a neologism that the Costa Ricans were using.*

HASKELL: But that's fabulous, though. Just yesterday I was at the golf club here, which is a big word for what there is here. It's really rough. Some guy came up to me and started talking to me in French. My French isn't great, and I had no idea what the man was saying. I kept explaining to him that I didn't understand. He just kind of kept saying it over and over, so I rolled down the window on the other side and got the attention of one of my friends there who I knew spoke native French. I told him I didn't know what the guy was asking me, that I didn't know what he wanted. Evidently, the guy wanted me to give him a ride out of the compound to a bus stop or something. I had no idea what he was saying. It should have been simple. That was not part of my French experience. My French wasn't learned at FSI. It's all been very acquired for the moment that I needed it. That moment I needed it. I don't know if I'll remember it next time.

No, it worked out really well. I was very happy with my Spanish ability. There was one guy that we worked with in Mexico that I couldn't understand. He was the head of their Federal Agency for Investigation, which is like their FBI. He had a reputation for being very, very difficult to understand.

*Q: So, this is the period of time you're home, you're learning Spanish, you're also learning the job that you're going to. Were you able to be in touch with the post to find out what specifically you were going to be doing so that you could bone up on things before you left?*

HASKELL: I knew that as deputy I was going to be responsible for the management side of things. The NAS had their own voucher examiner and their own accountant and their own receiving clerk and their own procurement guy.

We did not have a contracting officer. We used the embassy's contracting officer. But we had this management staff. I had to learn about the rules for foreign assistance, which are different from normal operating funds. I talked with the in charge of INL's huge office for procurement. If you have a big procurement, they usually just do it, there, in Washington rather than at post. In fact, they used to say we didn't need contracting officers in the NAS because they could do everything for us in Washington. I understand that a few years ago NAS's started to have their own management officer if they have any big budget. So, that was a big one, learning how to accomplish the procurements with foreign assistance funds. That and learning about the agreements the US government has with Mexico on hot pursuits by Customs enforcement airplanes and other different law enforcement things. It was like doing consultations, working in INL. It was good to have that head start.

I also knew the person who I was taking the job from. She was keeping me well informed of things and what I would need. She seemed quite confident that the job wasn't going to be a stretch for me. What else did we do? One thing that was new that she was emphasizing was a project. It was maybe a year after President Vicente Fox [president of Mexico at the time] had taken office. That had changed everything about the way the Narcotics Affairs section did their work because until Fox took office, we had a pretty bad relationship with Mexico in general, with the government.

Even though the government, the Foreign Ministry, continued to have an old attitude working with us. But the Mexican law enforcement officials had been given marching orders by President Fox to work with us. So, our office went from previously being maybe a seven-million-dollar program, which is peanuts for INL. It was this time of Plan Columbia, and NAS Columbia was probably getting more like three hundred million dollars. We had only seven million dollars a year just a year or two before I arrived in Mexico City. My first year there our budget was up to twenty-one million dollars and then went up to thirty-five million dollars. When I left, I was preparing budgets for over fifty million dollars. It was a really good time to be doing the work. There were about three Mexican government entities that we worked with closely. And, of course, in Mexico city we have at the embassy, every U.S. government law enforcement agency. We had not just DEA, at the time, but also INS, ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives], the Secret Service, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], et cetera. There were more; I'm just not remembering them all. We had the U.S. Coast Guard because of at-sea interdictions. But we, the NAS, we were the people with the money. They all didn't have any money that they could use with the Mexicans.

*Q: People with money are the ones everybody wants to talk to. No question.*

HASKELL: They don't always want to do what you want them to do, though. Well, we did build very good relationships with DEA, particularly, who had a huge contingent there.

*Q: Now, so far as you're talking about what you learned in Washington, the Spanish and then the bridge assignment. Are you ready to now leave Washington and describe the arrival in Mexico and the beginning of your job there?*

HASKELL: I can give you the five-minute beginning. We had decided, my husband decided he wanted to drive the car to Mexico City.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: And I told him I was not getting in the car to drive to Mexico, with three kids for a week. Also, the school year was starting. We were putting our kids in a very small Mexican school that we had identified, that some other people at the embassy were using. I'd had the opportunity while working in the INL program office to fly down to Mexico City to do a program review. While I was there, I did go to a few schools to check them out, because Mexico has a number of schools that people at the embassy use. We chose this very small private school, and the school year was starting July 10 [that could be wrong, maybe it was early August] and ends on around June 15. It goes basically all year round. So, I needed to get there and get the kids started in school.

Our house wasn't ready when we arrived, so we were in temporary housing. My husband took a week to drive down there. That was in the days when you could drive from the U.S.-Mexico border to Mexico City. You can't do it anymore [the embassy security office doesn't allow it], because even as bad as the crime was then, it's worse now. There were certain highways that you could go down through Laredo and straight down to Mexico City. It was fine. So, he drove and I flew and I took the kids and the nanny/housekeeper with me. She was there while I would go right to work. And it was a very high profile place. As you can imagine, Mexico is, though in many ways that people don't really think about this way, the most important foreign relationship we have. People don't like to think that. We think it's just sort of there. When I joined the Foreign Service, if they had posted me to Mexico or Canada, I'm not sure I would have stayed in, because you can drive there. How foreign is that? What do we know? I knew nothing about Mexico until I took the area studies at FSI and started studying and doing some reading. And I think what we think of as Mexico is just the border area—Taco Bell.

From a law enforcement perspective and a counter drug perspective, it was, at the time, the most important relationship we had because while we had these huge programs in Columbia and Peru, those governments were working with us. Those programs were highly militarized. Whereas in Mexico, because we had had this traditionally somewhat dysfunctional government-to-government relationship, frankly, we [the NAS] were the sum total of any military impact or interaction on the drug problem.



At some point in time in the past we had given them helicopters to use for interdiction. We did work with their military on eradication because it was their military that was responsible for eradication activities, going out to find the marijuana fields and uprooting the plants and burning them. So, it was definitely, arguably the most important relationship we had at the time. When you got there and realized how big the embassy was and the breadth of the issues—every single issue you could have with a foreign country, we had with them. Everything about the oceans and tuna and avocados, immigration and drugs and trade. If there was any issue coming up in the UN, we wanted Mexico to be on our side, and frequently they weren't. There was the peso crash back in the 1980s or the early 1990s. We are so dependent on Mexico, but we didn't act like it. We still don't act like it.

When I arrived, I was very lucky because I had a fabulous office. We were about seventeen people in the NAS, total. And my supervisor, my boss, was the NAS director. She was fabulous. We got along incredibly well. We had contractors who worked for us. One who was a retired CIA analyst. We had one who was a retired FBI agent. We had one who was a retired DEA guy who was incredibly interesting. He had been the partner of Kiki Camarena, who was the DEA agent who was kidnapped, tortured, and murdered in Mexico. That was Pedro. We had these guys working for us. And then we had a couple of EFMs [eligible family members] that worked in the training area. We provided a lot of training to police to the Mexican police. We had some FSNs, and later on we got an additional contractor. The new contractor was from the Department of Justice. We were very compatible. We worked well together.

*Q: Just to confirm, the position you were taking was a State Department position in the international narcotics and legal matters office. You're not working directly for DEA, even though there were plenty of interactions with DEA.*

HASKELL: That's right. The DEA agents, they had guards on their houses, and all kinds of security. But we were just, Elizabeth and I, were just out there driving, doing our own thing. We worked with the *Procuraduria General de Justicia*, like the attorney general's office. We worked with CENDRO [Center for Drug Control Planning], which was the Mexican center for drug control. And then they had the AFI [*Agencia Federal de Investigación*], which was a new agency that they were standing up. So I have way more to discuss on Mexico City in our next installment.

*Q: So we'll end here and we'll pick up with you again then in Mexico City with all of the various things you'll be doing there.*

*Today is October 9, 2009. We're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell as she and family arrived in Mexico City. Jennifer, just once again to put this in chronological order. When did you arrive in Mexico City?*

HASKELL: I arrived with our kids. I think it was in July 2001 after spending a year in Washington doing out-year world language training in Spanish. We spent two years there. Thank you again. Nice to see you today. The Mexico City tour, even though it's

only two years, was pretty jam packed with a lot of stuff. As I think I said before, I went as the deputy director of the narcotics affairs section, which now are known as INL officers, international narcotics and law enforcement officers.

*Q: You can put that in later.*

HASKELL: I arrived there with the kids. My husband was driving down. What I want to do is, because it was such a big job, so many interesting things that we did, I want to break it into two parts. I'm going to talk first about the counter-narcotics/counter-drugs and crime issues, specifically. That was the normal work focus—the “why” I went to do the job. And then the 9/11 terrorist attacks happened just not long after we arrived. That will be the second issue that inserted a huge border security element that had never been part of our work before. I want to talk a little bit about the border security separately from the drug stuff because otherwise it kind of gets jumbled, I think in the telling of it.

I think I mentioned before this, the narcotics relationship was probably, at the time, one of the most high-profile, sensitive counter-drug relationships that we had in the world. Even though NAS's other countries had way more money and bigger programs, for example, Columbia and Peru. But this one in Mexico was particularly important because of the shared border. We had this incredible bilateral relationship that was/is really probably the most important one we have. At the time, Mexico was being used as a primary transshipment point for cocaine coming from Columbia. So Mexico was the last resort of trying to stop drugs from entering the United States. The counter narcotics effort was program-related; it was foreign assistance. It was policy, but it was programs and projects that were implementing the policies. We worked with three main areas—interdiction of drugs to stop them from coming into the United States, eradication of drugs, for example, marijuana that was being grown in the Mexican mountains, and also some demand reduction.

I will just say right from the top that the demand reduction was a very small part of our work. I think our annual budget for demand reduction was certainly less than a half a million dollars. It was probably closer to around \$250,000 a year. I don't remember exactly, but it wasn't that much. Our demand reduction money went to an NGO that worked in particular neighborhoods. At that time, which now is nearly twenty years ago, the domestic drug problem in Mexico was not hugely concerning. The Mexican government wasn't working in a big way on fixing a drug problem in and of itself because it didn't have a huge, internal drug problem. That has changed significantly in the years since to where now Mexico has its own huge drug consumption and addiction problem.

So at that time though, 2001–2002, it was not, so we had just a small program that was community-based addressing problems in particular neighborhoods. So, the eradication was the next program. It was nearly as big as interdiction, which was our huge program. We worked primarily with the Mexican military on eradication. It was about the only military engagement we had because they had the helicopters in the Air Wing. Remember we had some years before donated helicopters, and we still helped them with them, some

maintenance and parts and such. But also it was the soldiers, really, that went out into the mountains to do the actual hands-on eradication. This wasn't a huge part of our program, but it was important. It was aimed at reducing the supply of marijuana. Mexico didn't really have an opium poppy-growing issue at the time.

*Q: Did you ever go out with them to see an eradication?*

HASKELL: I did not, but my boss did, the director. Our big program was interdiction. In addition to these directly related drug programs, we had programs on judicial reform and anti-money laundering. We had a pretty broad portfolio. We worked very closely with the DEA. They had a vetted unit program, for example, which had become moribund, so they didn't have a properly vetted unit. There wasn't funding at that moment. Also, there weren't the proper agreements, bilateral agreements, in place. So, one of my projects was to draft a new agreement for a vetted unit. It laid out who would be responsible for what. What were the Mexicans responsible for? What was DEA responsible for? And what was the NAS responsible for? Because it was our money. DEA didn't have money because it was foreign assistance funding and DEA does not have the legal authorities necessary to administer foreign assistance. They didn't have money to provide to the Mexicans or to spend on Mexican law enforcement operations. Because it was NAS money, we dictated the way things had to be run from a bureaucratic perspective.

Obviously, we had nothing to do with the actual operations. We knew no details about the vetted unit itself, but it was a little bit complicated because it took some work to draft this thing. I'd never done such a thing, and there weren't really a lot of precedents. I guess there were probably some hugely different things going on in Colombia or Peru, but there had been in the past real problems with getting the government of Mexico to accept any kind of foreign assistance from the United States.

So, this is one of the problems that had plagued the counter-drug efforts. I think I mentioned before that the Fox presidency had changed a lot of that—had improved the relationship. We were starting to really try to do things in a new way. Some of the issues that we had to figure out were how to deal with the fact that the government of Mexico had no process for accepting funds—actual money—how to work that out. That was a process. Also trying to work with an embassy financial management officer on how to do a process where they were going to hand over some money, cash. They couldn't know really what would be happening with that money or who was really getting it. I had a lot of conversations with the senior financial management officer to explain the program, why it was important, what its impact was going to be, and then working out what those procedures would be that the DEA could agree worked for their operation.

*Q: Now let me just ask a very quick question. What was it that made Vicente Fox more open to this kind of cooperation than previous Mexican presidents? Was there any speculation or understanding in the embassy as to why?*

HASKELL: Well, my own opinion of it, and I think this is probably right, was that, specifically, Fox had not been on the national political scene, although he had been a

state-level representative and the governor of the state of Guanajuato, was not really so much a politician. He had worked for many years for Coca Cola.

The bilateral relationship has been fraught with the spectacle of this enormous northern neighbor who really thinks it's far superior and doesn't tend to pull back from that, at all, ever. Then there is this country, Mexico, that's been around forever and has this incredibly rich history. They have quite their own self-confidence, but they feel constantly pushed on by their big northern neighbor. So, there was always this feeling that we got working with much of the government that there were chips on their shoulders [holding a grudge or grievance that readily provokes disputation] about things, probably well-earned. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA] was one of the worst for that behavior. They didn't really change after Fox's election. Their attitude, at the MFA there, was all about negotiating things and making certain things happen. For example, in order to expend the foreign assistance money, we must have a Letter of Agreement [LOA] that was technically an obligating document, a document that allowed NAS to expend foreign assistance as agreed to in the LOA. It was like doing a purchase order, let's say, where you would obligate the money to be spent in certain broad categories.

The LOA allowed us to sort of park the money, and then we could do actual procurement documents and contracts off of that. In the end, there is usually a pretty proforma template for an LOA, which INL used in most countries. Both sides sign it, usually without angst. But Mexico is a whole 'nother deal. It was always complicated and basically anything that we were going to require of the government of Mexico, they wanted to require of us.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: We had to treat ourselves the same way we were treating them. Of course, there's this long history of mistrust in the relationship; they don't think we trust them is the problem. And they are not completely wrong. Fox could see the problems, and he wanted to change the dynamic, particularly in law enforcement. He could see the value of having a better relationship. He made a very strong policy that with regards to crime and drugs, in particular, there would be cooperation. He also changed the way their law enforcement was working. At the time, the Mexican military had a better reputation than Mexican law enforcement. So, he pulled very competent military members, put them in civilian clothes and placed them into law enforcement organizations. In some ways, the Leahy vetting [Leahy vetting refers to two statutory provisions prohibiting the U.S. government from using foreign assistance funding for units of foreign security forces where there is credible information implicating that unit in the commission of gross violations of human rights] easier for us. We were obligated to do Leahy vetting on everyone. We did a ton of training every year, dozens of training courses. I think what Fox wanted was a different kind of relationship with the United States, and he saw the value to Mexico.

*Q: Just a quick question, define the term Leahy vetting. What does that mean?*

HASKELL: Well, there's a law named for Senator Patrick Leahy that I should be able to quote given all the times I've had to work with it, but I can't. Basically, it says that we can't use taxpayer money that goes towards any person who was a member of a unit that has been accused of human rights abuses. That's it in the easiest way possible. We had to run the names of any individual who was to get training through NAS funding. The names had to be run through databases and then cleared before they could attend the training. It could be troublesome in some countries to find enough people to fill a course. Mexico had a lot of people, and we didn't have that many people who failed the vetting. We were training people at all levels, policemen from beat cops on interviewing techniques, how to do a proper investigation, very basic kinds of law enforcement skills. We used ICITAP [International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program] for a lot of the training; it's a Department of Justice program.

DEA was the U.S. law enforcement agency we worked with the most. Most of our money that was going to agencies was going to DEA. The biggest portion of NAS money went directly to things we purchased. We procured commodities for institution building. Our main goal was law enforcement institution building, law enforcement capacity building, to help them be able to fight crime themselves. They were willing to do all the training we could provide. We sent a lot of people to FLETC, which is the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia. We also sent people to ILEA, which is an International Law Enforcement Academy. I think we had one in New Mexico that was the closest for people in Latin America. We actually brought trainers to Mexico; we had trainers in country most of the time.

We hired an embassy spouse to run that training program, to keep track of it all. With DEA, we did things like that. We worked a lot with U.S. Customs in Mexico. We had an air interdiction program that gave Customs permission to engage in hot pursuit. If they were flying one of their aircraft, looking for aircraft that were flying into the United States suspected of carrying drugs, suspicious aircraft, they could pursue that plane and, if necessary, cross into Mexican airspace, but only in "hot pursuit." At one point, Mexico decided that they were going to end that program and not cooperate with us anymore on hot pursuit. Customs came to us and asked for our assistance because they didn't really know how to approach the government of Mexico to fix the problem. I had the opportunity to work with one of the deputies in the embassy Customs section. He is really high-high up now in Customs, if he's still there.

I had the opportunity just a few years ago to see him again, us both in another capacity. Continuing the anecdote, he and I went to see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to talk to them about why it was important that we continue with the agreement while we worked out the problems that they had with the program. We laid out why it was super important and why it was dangerous not to have the program. It was a lot of talking. I remember understanding the concept of us, as diplomats, being able to talk to other diplomats to work it out, rather than the law enforcement officers on both sides trying to slug it out. They almost, literally, would devolve into slugging when they talked to each other. They didn't have diplomatic skills and experience. It was better to work it through the ministry. They had an office for the United States, similar to our country desk offices.

The MFA's guy in that office was easy to work with. We did manage to save that program, which was great, because it could have been very dangerous for our Customs pilots if we hadn't. If they accidentally crossed the border into Mexican airspace while in hot pursuit, it would have created an international incident. We worked the diplomatic angle on things like that. Later on we can talk some more about Customs with regard to border security. We worked a lot with the FBI on training, primarily, but they had a good relationship with some of the Mexican law enforcement agencies, well one particular law enforcement agency in Mexico, so that just helped the NAS work with that agency, as well. Treasury, we worked on anti-money laundering with U.S. Treasury. We had an INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] office in the embassy in Mexico; it was headed by Hipolito Acosta, who I knew when I was in Manila and working in the consular Anti-Fraud Unit. He had been an INS officer in Manila, and we had worked very closely together. He had become quite high up in INS. In fact, he wrote a book called *The Shadow Catcher* about his experiences when he first joined INS. He used to be an undercover guy, pretending to be somebody who wanted to cross the border from Mexico to the United States. And he had a lot of exciting experiences. It's a fun book.

He was the guy there that we worked with on border security—INS kind of things. We had a Secret Service guy also. We worked with him on anti-money laundering as well. We had a U.S. Marshal Service office that was more about just finding out if they needed any help with the kinds of funding we might be able to do with the Marshal Service. We also did work with, somewhat, with ATF. The U.S. Coast Guard was really big for their work on at-sea interdictions. We had issues with sea interdictions. When there is a U.S. Coast Guard ship out there, at sea, bouncing around in the waves, that has a Mexican boat that they want to board, we had to get involved because they needed permission from the Mexican authorities to board.

Sometimes it would get a little bit complicated. I remember when I worked in the OpsCenter, we were involved in these cases. The OpsCenter put together a big conference, often with twenty-five or thirty people on the call, to discuss what the commander of the U.S. ship, out in the ocean, bouncing around waiting to have permission to do something. That commander would get his marching orders from a consensus of all the people who have this long phone call. But the NAS in Mexico City would then have to make sure there was permission, which was a bit pro forma. Although, sometimes there would be some miscommunications and things would go wrong. We had to work with the Mexican government to really delineate the lines of authority. But the Coast Guard could board a Mexican boat. After each one we smoothed things over. Whenever there was an at-sea interdiction, there had to be an official record of that activity.

Preparation of that official record fell to the NAS. While I was there, it was me. I had to write a diplomatic note that laid out literally everything that happened in the course of that interdiction action. So, I worked with the Coast Guard. They had to tell me everything that the Coast Guard did for that interdiction, and I had to describe it in the diplomatic note I prepared and sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Those notes were twenty pages long sometimes.

Let me go back to the Justice Department. We had a Justice Department official resident, an attaché, at the embassy. That office was separate from all the other Justice Department agencies we had at post. The Justice attaché worked on judicial reform to a certain degree, but mostly worked on extraditions. Extraditions from Mexico had been very difficult.

We had a terrible time getting extraditions of criminals from Mexico. Luckily, in, I think, 2001, the Mexican Supreme Court had changed their law to allow more extraditions, to make it much easier. That meant we started to have big criminals extradited to the United States. The attaché was helpful in working with the Mexicans on what a judicial reform program would look like. We hadn't had justice reform programs in the past, and we wanted to start having training for judges and for officers of the court on how to properly run a trial that wouldn't create problems. And we worked in Washington closely with ONDCP, which was the Office of National Drug Control Policy. And the "drug czar" was the director of ONDCP.

At one point, the AG [Attorney General of the United States] paid us a visit. VIP visits, which I've mentioned before, and which I do more and more as my career goes forward. The NAS handled, alone, visits from the AG and from the director of the ONDCP. I think the NAS had only two official vehicles. With just our small staff, we handled those visits. Normally, the staff of the relevant agency or department would handle VIP visits, with support as needed from the embassy administrative section. When the attorney general came, the NAS was asked to handle the visit because the Justice Department people—all those law enforcement people whose agencies were under the Department of Justice and the Justice attaché, who was a U.S. attorney—had no idea how to run a VIP visit at an embassy. They conceived how it would look. So, the NAS ended up being the one to organize everything—drafting the meeting schedule and doing all the logistics that went with it.

One of the big programs that I worked on during the time I was there, was a three and a half million dollar project for a computer network and modernization of systems for the Mexico government's planning center for drug control, which was known as CENDRO. The project was primarily for document exploitation. When the police do a raid and they take everything they can find—every paper, every computer drive, all that sort of thing, the Mexicans didn't know what to do with all that potential evidence. They didn't know how to determine if it was evidence or to make it into evidence or how to find the clues. We did a special training program for them. In Johnstown, Pennsylvania there was, at the time, I don't know if it's still there, a training center run by an agency that I can't remember. [It was called the National Drug Intelligence Center [NDIC].]

We sent a whole class, maybe fifteen or twenty people from CENDRO, up there for specialized training on how to use this document exploitation program. It was a month or two or more long. And the head of CENTRO was a general in the Mexico army. He and I flew up to Johnstown for the graduation ceremony. I did a graduation speech, in Spanish. The local TV showed up for that, too. I guess they probably didn't show much of the speech as it was in Spanish. It was an exciting opportunity because this was not

something that had been in our plan. That's something that I think we always need to make sure that we don't lose sight of. Sometimes you have to take an opportunity that wasn't in the plan because it's too good to let go.

You have to weigh things and decide that this is good and yes that I can carve out some money to do this. That was one of the nice things about having a pretty decent-sized budget. I could make decisions on spending money at pretty high amounts without worrying that my budget couldn't handle it. At one point, one of the project directors came to tell me that he had forgotten a thing in his budget, that he hadn't ordered this thing that we need. I asked him how much it cost. He told me it was eighty thousand dollars. I was able to tell him it was okay; I knew that we had that in the budget and that we could do it.

*Q: Just a quick question here about your budget. Were you ever in a position where you actually had to go back to get authority, to visit the department or maybe even Congress, to request a change in the way your budget was done in order to take advantage of a sudden opportunity that was for issues or things outside of what you had earmarked?*

HASKELL: We did have to do a congressional budget justification every year for budgets. I worked on those when I was on my bridge assignment in INL. We would look at them and add to them or change them in some way. I do think there were one or two times when we did that, but I couldn't tell you specifically which things they were or. INL was pretty cooperative on that. Nowadays if you need to do a CBJ amendment, if you need to do a notification of a change, the department does not want to do one. If it requires a notification, we're not doing it. We did them at the time.

*Q: The reason I'm asking here is because when I was in Secretary Baker's office, we would see paper going by and some of it would be these requests for special spending outside of an earmark. And it would have to go all the way to the secretary for a decision. It wasn't frequent, but it would typically be in areas like yours where there was a sudden opportunity. It hadn't been foreseen. And they're notifying Congress that they're making a change.*

HASKELL: Right. And I think that that's the way that it is intended to work. I think since we've had such a divided government over the past few years, the department is reluctant to say anything about what's going on. And they just, they don't want to. I don't know if they've sent a notification of a change in a long time. This institution-building project was really about also building trust with the Mexicans. As I mentioned before, they really didn't trust us. And so we were always trying to make sure that we didn't arbitrarily decide things or arbitrarily tell them to do this or this is what you have to do. We really avoided those sorts of interactions. And with President Fox's marching orders, our counterparts were much more willing to listen to us, plus they felt comfortable asking us for things they wanted and needed.

I think I mentioned before that the budget the first year I was there was maybe seven million dollars, but over the course of the year, we got maybe fifty million dollars in



requests from the Mexicans for things they needed. Our budget did jump up quite a lot. A year later it was twenty-one million dollars. Another year later it was thirty-five million dollars. And at the end of my tour I was writing a budget for well over fifty million dollars. I think within a year or two after that it was probably two hundred million dollars, but that had a lot to do with border security. Going back to some of the little internal things you do when you work in the NAS—you're buying stuff. You're usually buying stuff to hand over to the Mexicans and that stuff arrives just like everything else comes to an embassy. You order something, and it shows up at a warehouse and then you have to distribute it or move it somewhere. Embassies often don't like NASs because they buy a lot of stuff. And the big warehouse for Mexico was located, at the time, in Laredo, Texas.

*Q: Wow. Okay.*

HASKELL: The embassy had only a small warehouse in Mexico City. And the NAS had a tiny little corner of that. We had our own guy who managed our tiny corner of that tiny warehouse. And then the big warehouse moved from the facility from Laredo to a new facility in Brownsville, Texas. All this in the middle of our big projects. I flew up to Brownsville to talk to the new warehouse manager. That was really productive, because we talked about the NAS's needs, what kinds of quantities we thought would come in, and how long those goods would need to sit in the warehouse before being freight-forwarded down to Mexico City. He was very willing to help us.

So, we did that. Similarly, we didn't have our own contracting officer in the NAS, at the time, but we were lucky that we had an experienced civil service contracting officer in the embassy. He had an unlimited warrant. Without him, we would not have been able to do a lot of the work that we did in those two years, because some of the work we did was super time sensitive. I built an ongoing relationship with him, so that when I knew there was going to be something, let's say strange or super time sensitive, I could call him upstairs to our office in the CAA [controlled access area] so we could have a chat about why it was important and what the impact was of the program. That was tremendously helpful because if I had had to go through INL in Washington for all those procurement actions, it would have taken months and months longer. And since Washington had confidence in this particular contracting officer, it worked out very well.

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One of the projects we did which I almost forgot about were some things we did with the Mexican attorney general's office, the *Procuraduría General de la República* [PGR]. We helped them open an office of professional responsibility that included a lot of training on ethics and professional conduct. Of course, our normal training that we did, every single training course we did, had a component on ethics and human rights, even if it was not labeled as such.

*Q: Can I ask a quick question?*

HASKELL: Sure.

*Q: Given all of these trainings that you did with Mexicans, and that generally always had an element of either human rights or proper legal standards and practices, did you see an improvement in, at least your contacts, in the way they handled things?*

HASKELL: Well, to be honest, we didn't really have contacts at that level. Our contacts, at least my personal contacts, were more in the attorney general's, not his office. He had a guy, Herman Gallegos. There were maybe three people in his office that we worked very closely with on a whole raft of things. And in Mexico things are pretty top down. And we worked pretty much with the top.

There were also just two or three people we worked with at CENDRO. One of the projects we did, which was a great big one, the *Agencia Federal de Investigación* [AFI], which was just coming into being. Its predecessor had been the Federal Judicial Police, which had been very corrupt. The new guy came in with Fox, and he wanted to redo the whole institution, create something new. He based it all on FBI, the way FBI works. We sent a lot of people to training, and we had a project that was already underway when I arrived. But just after I arrived, as the project was getting underway to help them get stood up, with some computers and that sort of thing, maybe a couple of million dollars. But they were having a hard time finding a space. Finally, they found a space.

We had been helping them look for space. They initially felt they had a space, and we were starting to get procurements ready when all of the sudden they told us they no longer liked that space, that they were no longer taking that space. So, we had to put the project on the back burner while they looked again. And then, all of the sudden they found a space. It was a building that had been previously occupied by, I think, AT&T maybe. It was a nice big building, but they didn't have the funds to do the renovation that was needed. We delineated the space into two parts—cut the building in half, almost as when you could take a step from our carpet to their carpet. The Mexican government renovated half of it, and we renovated half of it. Plus we installed a, maybe 350-400 computer networked system. We did everything for our part of the project. I hired a project management company, a construction project management company, to manage it since we only had two months to do all the work. President Fox wanted to inaugurate the new building/agency on a particular day and we had to get it done by that particular day.

So, we hired Jones Lang Lasalle. There were two guys who were incredible. I sat them down in the beginning and told them how our procurement system worked, what was allowed, that they couldn't spend any money without there being an obligating document, et cetera. I told them that for anything over a certain amount, they had to have three quotes and that they had only this much time to complete the job. The project included installing the electricity for a big computer system, so they had to cut trenches in the concrete floors to lay down electrical wires. We bought the ceiling tiles and the lighting, and we instilled walls and windows and curtains and desks. We bought the computers and all the software, and it was a huge project. It was close to ten million dollars by that time, and it had to be done super quick. I remember not sleeping very well during this time because I knew that, for example, the lighting fixtures were going to show up and I hadn't seen the procurement document yet. But I knew that the Jones Lang Lasalle guys knew the rules, and, sure enough, we always had the right papers at the right time.

We couldn't have done it without that crew. They helped with the management of the project. They found and got all the subcontractors, but we, the NAS, paid the subcontractors directly. But it was stressful to get it done. But we did it, and the whole opening day was quite a production. Essentially President Fox toured the building. We couldn't really be standing there as if it was ours, because it wasn't. But the Mexicans had decided that as part of this renovation, they were going to have four little offices set aside for our people to use if they needed to have an office space.

Not the NAS, but U.S. government people [law enforcement types] for if they needed to have a little space in that building. They were little cubicles with walls so that if they went to talk to somebody or if they just needed a place to sit and do something or make a phone call or whatever, they could. We all like lined up in that space, in the hallway, so that when President Fox came around, we were all standing there waiting—to be appreciated.

It was exciting because I hadn't ever met a head of state at that point, a foreign head of state. I guess I had met four ministers but not heads of state. We had an intern at the time, and she was just thrilled that she got to be there and be part of that event. That was a very important project. We were supporting the institutions and one of the big things that the AFI took on at the time were the kidnappings. There were a lot of kidnappings in Mexico, and Fox wanted the AFI to get a grip on the kidnappings. Genaro Garcia Luna was the head of AFI at the time. If you read about him now, he either became horribly corrupt or he's not horribly corrupt. But he wasn't horribly corrupt then because he had been fully vetted by U.S. law enforcement.

There is no evidence he was corrupt until around 2005 when maybe he became corrupt. But at the time, he really took on this kidnapping problem in a big way. He procured special software, which, you know when you watch police dramas on TV and they show a board on a wall with lines connecting everything—people and actions, and all that—the software helped make those connections. One of the problems with the AFI was that the entire organization was not vetted. There were maybe three people in the organization we

could work with who were fully vetted. They were trying to bring on more people who could be vetted, at least vetted under their own system.

Not being corrupt in Mexican law enforcement was really hard. To be honest, I could see why it was hard. We can sit here and say how it can't be that hard to be honest and not be corrupt. But in those situations, your choices often become corrupt or somebody shoots your kids or your wife or you. It's difficult to fault people sometimes for some of the choices that they make if you know the actual circumstance that they're put in. They aren't always "bought" because they want the money. They're often bought because they don't want what happens if they don't take the money.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: There were successes. There were several different big cartels. One of them was the Arellano-Felix Cartel, which was, I think technically called the Tijuana Cartel. In February 2002, one of the Arellano-Felix brothers—brothers had "inherited" the cartel from their father and they were running it—one was shot and killed by the Mexican police. And then another of the brothers was captured, arrested, and extradited the following month. When there was a big, big success like that nine times out of ten, I'd say, the Mexicans didn't do it all on their own. They likely had some assistance from U.S. law enforcement, at least information sharing or something our team was allowed to do.

Of course, we had disappointments as well. Just last year, in 2018, you may have heard about the trial in New York of "El Chapo" Guzman, who was a big drug kingpin [leader of the Sinaloa Cartel]. He had been around a long, long time. He had been a big thing, at the time I was there, in Mexico, as well. And he was in prison in Mexico. He could do whatever he wanted and have whatever he wanted. And it was the life of luxury in the prison. But this was during the time that the Mexican Supreme Court had changed the extradition laws.

El Chapo didn't want to be in prison anymore because he knew he could be extradited. So, by escaping he put off his extradition for about fourteen or fifteen years. I think he was captured again in maybe 2014. The drug business in Mexico is very complicated; if you really want to try to sit down and read about these drug cartels in Mexico you see how incestuous and complicated it is, and how long-lived. It's been around forever. It's just organized crime. What else? AFI doesn't exist anymore, at least with that name. Now, it's called the Federal Ministerial Police or something. The guy who we were working with very closely in 2002–2003, Genaro Garcia Luna, was named, in 2013, one of the ten most corrupt Mexicans. It is unclear where they got their data.

In El Chapo's trial in 2018, a defense witness claimed that it wasn't really Guzman who was in charge of everything, that it was really Guzman's deputy. The deputy's son was a prosecution witness, and he claimed that he had transferred a suitcase, on two different occasions, filled with three million dollars to Genaro Garcia Luna. That is the sum total of the evidence. I don't know what additional evidence Forbes Magazine [that reported

the corruption] had, but that's all that has ever been submitted into court. You never know what you're getting in Mexico. It's hard to know who to trust, and it's hard to know what's going on.

I want to talk about 9/11. I was in Mexico on September 11, 2001. It's this huge event in our history, which I think only now is maybe starting to dim a tiny bit in some people's memories. Mexico has a one-hour time difference behind New York City. The embassy working hours were 8:30 to 5:30, but many of us arrived at the office earlier. I usually got in probably around eight, and my boss would come to the embassy at maybe 7:30. She would often sit down in the cafeteria and chat with people, including some of the U.S law enforcement guys. There was a TV down there, in the cafeteria. She saw on the TV news that a plane had hit the Twin Towers. I remember that I was in my office, and she came running through the office door, sort of full speed ahead, her coattail flying up behind her. She told us we had to turn on the TV. There is something happening.

I did turn on the TV we had in the office. Others arrived, trickled into the office, and, of course, like everybody else, we were glued to the TV for the whole day. I can't remember who they were, but we had visitors coming in for an appointment with my boss, the NAS director. So, she was in her office with these three or four people, and she asked me to let her know if anything big happens, that I should interrupt the meeting and tell her. I remember having to go in there and tell her that I thought the second tower fell. These were big structures; it was all so surreal, what was happening. Later, not that much later, maybe a week or two later, we found out that two of our Mexican PGR colleagues that we worked very closely with were in one of the towers when the first plane hit.

They had been in a meeting and the people they were with called the building facilities office. They were advised, like everybody else in the building, at the time to stay where they were. But they, our colleagues, did not stay. They left. That was fortuitous. The next year, when we had a solemn ceremony on the anniversary of 9/11, we invited them to come to the embassy for the remembrance.

Our kids, eight, six, and three at the time, heard about it on the school bus. The embassy's employee association ran the school bus service that our children used. The driver and the child monitor on the little school bus, they managed to tell the kids about it, even these little kids. And it was such a big thing, as it was for everybody, all Americans in the world. The airspace was shut down. If you were overseas you were stuck. There were many Americans who were stuck in places. Most of the Americans who were stuck in Mexico weren't prepared to wait until the airspace opened up. But I think it was maybe five days or so that the air space was closed. After two or three days, they no longer wanted to keep waiting.

But in some ways they were very lucky because there were buses. And more and more buses were put on to take people back to the United States. My husband was a deputy in the American Citizen Services unit at the time. So when he does his oral history after he retires, he'll have a lot more to say about it, I'm certain. But what it did for the NAS was impact our work, because we suddenly had a whole new area of responsibility. We were

the outfit in the embassy that could process foreign assistance. And so border security became our new thing. We, the United States, wanted to stop whatever terrorism threat was on the Mexican side of the border—anything that might come across. And we were immediately given twenty-five million dollars for border security.

We had to figure out what to do. And we were not experts on border security. We have other agencies who are experts on that.

*Q: And here I just want to interrupt it with a question. The fact that you were the only office that could do typical assistance is because we had no USAID presence in Mexico.*

HASKELL: We had a USAID office, but they were very small like four people mostly advising, very little if any assistance programming.

*Q: Yeah. Okay.*

HASKELL: And it wasn't that it was more law enforcement type of assistance, which they don't do.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: So, it came to us in the NAS. We talked with the Mexicans extensively about how they would handle certain things. I did take a trip to Washington to meet with the appropriate agencies who would be part of the effort. Unfortunately, it was the middle of a snow storm and several of the people didn't show up for the meetings. But it still was worthwhile meetings with the ones that I was able to talk to. Basically, we were brainstorming the ideas for projects. What could we do? What should the priorities be? Of course, it was about goods. It was about people. And how do you prevent terrorists from getting in and how do you prevent weapons of mass destruction [WMD] from getting in. That was such a big thing then, remember, because we were also worrying about WMD in Iraq at the time. Our secretary of state had stood up in front of the world and said that there was WMD in Iraq. There were a lot of skeptical people. We decided that the things we could do would include coming up with non-invasive ways to do inspections of tractor-trailer goods movement and railcar goods movement. That would entail helping the Mexicans purchase and install and be trained how to do these kinds of border inspections. The NAS, the Customs people, and the Immigration people—they wanted Mexico to share passenger lists, manifests via a specific computer program.

That was something where the Mexicans would need to have specific software and computers and training. It was called something specific; I forget what. It was an advanced passenger information system. It's probably still in use. We provided a lot of training. These were things that I was managing the very beginning stages of, and we wanted to lay the groundwork for how to keep the known travelers out of these lanes that were obviously going to stack up in long lines as we did these more serious inspections. These commuter lanes for known travelers now exist at a lot of the border crossings.

This is where, if I can, I would like to read a small paragraph that my reviewing officer wrote. He was the DCM and what he wrote, I think, puts it a little bit in perspective.

“The rating officer accurately described Jennifer’s major contribution to this mission’s highest priority activity of the year, which was spending the twenty-five million dollars we received from Congress in November to enhance border security under our border partnership agreement with Mexico because of high level interest from Washington. I knew... I knew we could not wait and conduct studies. So I was pleased that it was Jennifer, with her administrative savvy and results oriented approach, who took the first crack at identifying and getting inter-agency approval for the activities and then putting together a procurement plan and a timeline, which I noticed Jennifer forwarded to me by email at ten pm one Saturday night. Barely three months after receiving the twenty-five million dollars. We had spent half of that money already and could point out to our Mexican counterparts and to the new Department of Homeland Security that the real progress on improving border security had happened at this mission.”

So it was something completely new that we had to throw ourselves into and figure out how to get going, and it doubled our budget.

*Q: And of course, an important aspect of your success in this particular thing was all the background you had had with GSO, administration, management of funds, and understanding how to spend quickly, but legally.*

HASKELL: Yes. And also, I think, being able to talk with all these different agencies. I think that that’s something that the State Department is really good at and in subsequent tours that I had, including one tour where I did a detail outside of the department, which I’ll talk about at a later date, I saw firsthand how the private sector doesn’t know how to do that.

In the private sector they don’t always really know that it’s important to have coffee with somebody, even if you don’t get anything from that person that time. And that if they don’t call you, you still call them in three months, and you do it again. That when they invite you for lunch, as they would in Mexico, and lunch would be at three pm and it would be this enormous spread in a restaurant and the tequila was there. And by six pm, you’re going home, thanking God, you’re going home, but the Mexicans were going back to work. So that’s relationship building. It is so important and not just with the other government, but with our own other government agencies. If you can’t have a working relationship with these other agencies, it’s really hard to get something accomplished. And that’s why it’s so important to be able to have a relationship. Even if you don’t really agree on things, or you really don’t think they’re very competent or this or that or whatever the negative thought in your mind is, you still have to work with them to get what you need. The more we can learn and teach people that, the more successful we are at our jobs of influencing people, because that’s really what it amounts to in the end, influencing people to make the decision you want them to make. It’s not telling them what to do but influencing them. I don’t know of a better way to say it.

*Q: Yes. The expression “influencers” actually is a term of art in public diplomacy.*

HASKELL: Well, we should, all—everybody in the Foreign Service—should understand the importance of that and understand why it’s important that they, even the people in information technology or facilities maintenance, understand that if they don’t know the people at the phone company or at the company we’re buying our Internet from or who controls permitting or electricity provision, whatever, if they haven’t already built that relationship with them, then when things go upside down, they will struggle to make it right.

*Q: Absolutely. And one of the things the U.S. embassy can do regardless of how much budget it has, is this convening power.*

HASKELL: Yes.

*Q: Even if you don’t have a lot of money, the U.S. embassy still has a lot of credibility, so when people get an invitation from the U.S. embassy to attend something, they come. And often they meet people they need to meet but would never have met had the embassy not been the one to put it together.*

HASKELL: That is incredibly true. I have found that some of the most important things I have been able to do were not necessarily to do anything. But I would meet somebody who wants to do something that we want them to do, that we are in favor of. And maybe we don’t have any money to do that thing. But I know somebody else who’s interested in that same project or that same thing and maybe has resources—not necessarily money but maybe knowledge and capacity building—and I can put those two together. I can facilitate those people meeting who can then go out and do this thing that we want to have happen. Even now that I’m retired that ability continues.

I have colleagues in Kinshasa who work for the United Nations. A small example was assisting the head of the office for UN Women in Kinshasa. The chief of the office, she wanted to do a project to get more Congolese women into politics in the DRC. I don’t know anything about how to do that, but I know people who do, and I can connect them. And even if I don’t know someone personally, I can also encourage her to explore websites of organizations I know exist. I’m able to find websites with resources for her. Sometimes, I’ll read about a center for this exact thing she is looking for, and I can tell her about it. I can encourage her to get her fingers into these other places that are already doing what she’s trying to do but in a different country. We all need to do that more and see that that’s valuable. Some people think it’s putting their nose in where it doesn’t belong, but no, it’s really valuable. The people find it extremely helpful to get our input. We have all these different connections or knowledge about different things.

*Q: Yes, absolutely. Well, so things are going on at once as the 9/11 tragedy is going on.*



*Looking back now on the period of time you were there, how would you describe the accomplishments? Did you set things up then that were able to be sustainable for your successors and so on?*

HASKELL: I think so. On border security, we hired another person to be a project manager for that. We had project managers on other aspects of our portfolio—someone who worked on eradication and others on interdiction or training. We had retired U.S. government people with expertise. I think I mentioned before a retired DEA agent, a retired FBI agent, and a retired CIA analyst. I hired a retired Foreign Service officer to work on border security issues. And you know, they love it, these people. They got to live overseas again; they got most of the benefits we got; and they got to keep doing this great work that they're really thrilled to do

We were working with a really great group of Mexicans, as well. I was very impressed with the Mexicans that I worked with. They were very dedicated. They were working ridiculous hours. They were trying to do the right thing, and they knew they couldn't trust everybody that they worked with. Some of them literally worked from about ten in the morning until midnight every day. And they were just super committed to making their country better. The first year I was in Mexico, the ambassador was Jeff Davidow who was a well-known, long-time Foreign Service officer. I don't think they get very many career FSO being the ambassador to Mexico. He was ambassador for four years. He was incredible. I was very lucky that the first year I was there, he was my reviewing officer. I was an FS-02. My husband was also an FS-02. I was the deputy in the NAS. He was the deputy in the American Citizen Services office. My rating officer was supposed to be the DCM.

My husband's reviewing officer was the deputy consul general, considerably lower down the totem pole. In Mexico there is a consul general for the country. We had nine consulates and several consular agents, so she was high ranking. She had a deputy, and then there were many heads of these sections. My husband was under one of those heads of a section. So he was further down in the bureaucracy compared to me. He made the observation one day that in fact the DCM's wife was a junior officer who worked for him [my husband], in which case then the DCM couldn't be my reviewing officer. So that's why I got to have the ambassador be my reviewing officer, which was kind of cool. But then the next year the DCM's wife had moved on to a different section in the consular section, so the DCM was my reviewing officer the second year. Working with Jeff Davidow was really interesting. The man knew everything about Mexico. He wrote a book when he retired about Mexico called *The US and Mexico: The Bear and the Porcupine*. It was amazing.

When he was retiring, Ambassador Davidow decided he did not want to have the normal official Fourth of July party. He had been there for almost four years. This would have been his fourth Fourth of July party in Mexico. It was difficult to have a representational event in the evening in Mexico City because the traffic was too bad and nobody would make it on time. And then nobody wanted to drive home late. Everything was kind of odd. So he decided he wasn't having a Fourth of July party that year. He saved the

representational money. Because it's such a huge embassy, with five hundred Americans or something, he had several farewell parties, despedidas, for himself. But he spread the events over several weeks, so that we wouldn't have just one event with two thousand people. He had several smaller ones, and then he would invite the people that also were new to post that needed to meet their Mexican counterparts. It was really very functional. But, he did have the embassy community Fourth of July party that year. He had a tradition every year where each section had to sing the song "American Pie."

The sections had to get together as a group and sing "American Pie." He had a gong, a big gong like from "The Gong Show," and if he thought you weren't singing well enough, you got gonged off the stage. It was hysterical. It was the families, all the little kids running around and everything. It was fun. He knew how to make a really fun weekend afternoon party. Our little NAS group, we weren't very good. But somebody in our section had a wife who was Filipina and she was a really good singer. So she tried to help us. I still think we probably ended up getting gonged off, but I don't remember exactly. I know for sure we did not win.

Another thing that I thought was interesting about the time that I was in Mexico, I mentioned before, we had this one intern who was really excited about this event that President Fox came to, but before her, we had another intern and then after her we had yet another intern. So the two years I was there, we had three interns. We had a couple of seasonal hires, too. Seasonal hires are family members. But two of these young women of the three interns, they were fabulous at what they would do, whatever we asked him to do. One of them, we did not give her anything terribly interesting to do. She had to go through our procurement records, which were in terrible shape. She went through them, and we had to clean everything up. That's not a fun job. The second intern, she got to do a lot more interesting things, including this event with President Fox. But those two women, I'm still friends with them.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: After all these years, it's nearly twenty years and we are still in contact with each other and see each other whenever we're in each other's neighborhood. I don't have that with any other interns that I encountered.

*Q: And just a question about the interns. They were regular State Department interns who were recruited, and they passed their security clearance. They had no idea where they were going to be posted or if they knew they were going to Mexico. They have no idea what kind of work they would be doing.*

HASKELL: I assume. I don't know. None of my kids ever wanted to work for the State Department [except as a seasonal hire] or be an intern, but I think the interns put their name in and say where they'd like to go. Then I suppose they're offered something. All three of them spoke perfect Spanish, which was very handy.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: One thing that was different from the other posts I had been at is we did not provide any housing for the interns. They had to find their own, and they did. And they came for three or four or five months or whatever it was. One of them ended up working for DEA as an analyst for many years. She's not with them anymore. The other one, I don't remember the actual progression of her career, but at some point she was working for Target in their headquarters on security issues.

*Q: Interesting.*

HASKELL: I don't think she's with Target anymore. I'm not sure where she is now. But in that small office, we really got to know our interns. The third intern we had, she was also very nice, but she was a bit timid and she was scared.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: She didn't quite embrace the opportunity the way that the other two did. And I think she couldn't get out of there fast enough.

*Q: Yes, some people don't realize when they volunteer to be an intern in the State Department or overseas, there's a lot of self-resourcefulness you need to have in order simply to negotiate day to day life. And some people just aren't made for it.*

HASKELL: I think that's right. I always gave the interns the chance to write cables and whatever I could give them, even if it was something nobody cared a lot about. It gave them the opportunity to learn to write a cable and to send their cable to Washington. The one intern couldn't manage it, so I introduced her to an analyst in DEA. I told her, this woman knows everything you need for the cable. You can talk to her and just write up what she tells you. Because, they, DEA, aren't writing a cable. She couldn't bring herself to make an appointment with the woman who worked in the office next door. Finally, I went with her and then I told exactly what would be interesting to put in her cable. It never happened. We never got that cable for clearance, and so she never sent a State Department cable. Everybody's different.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: We had to bid for our next assignment. We were only in Mexico for two years. We got recruited during the bid season. I think this is the way that the State Department should always try to fill hard-to-fill posts. We got recruited for Ouagadougou. We had no interest in Africa. We'd never been to Africa. Africa was not our thing. We had just learned Spanish. This, Ouagadougou, seemed odd. But somebody who had been our neighbor when we were working in Washington—we'd never worked with him—saw my name on a list of eligible bidders for management jobs, and he was going out as DCM to Ouagadougou. Of course, nobody bids on Ouagadougou. He reached out to us and told us what a great opportunity it would be.

He told us that I could be the head of the section—management, but that there was no consular job for Todd. But, there was a public diplomacy job at the FS-02 level. These were both FS-02 jobs. We were both FS-02s. So we thought about it for a while. We brought our oldest son into the discussion, because we had gone to Mexico thinking that we would stay three or four years even though it was a two-year tour. But, I did not want to extend there because I knew I was getting a new supervisor, and I didn't know how that would work out. So we decided if that went well, we could just bid on our own jobs. And we knew we would get them. It didn't work out so well.

So, it was time to go. When we put our kids in a Mexican school, we didn't really process the fact that what they call grades in Mexico is different than in the States. Kids go kindergarten, then to something called pre-first, then first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth, like that. There was this thing called pre-first, which is at the age we send kids to first grade. When we arrived in Mexico City, our oldest son had just finished second grade and the school where we enrolled the kids was a small school that went only from preschool through sixth grade. It was in an old house that had been converted. It was a very special school where they did a full day program in the primary years International Baccalaureate [IB] program in English taught by teachers that didn't speak Spanish. And they did a full Mexican public school system curriculum taught by Mexican teachers who didn't speak English. Every kid had to do both of those every day. It was interesting. When they did math, for example, the math in the IB program was much less advanced than the math in the Mexican program. And the really interesting part was history taught from a Mexican perspective. There was a different take on a lot of things.

But when we first arrived, we took our oldest son in to meet the teachers or to meet the administration to figure out which grade he should be in. We had been told that he should repeat second grade because it's not a repeat, it's really third grade. We talked about what was the curriculum content, and it sounded like a repeat to me. For whatever reason the administrators agreed that he should go into third grade, which was really fourth grade. So, he was skipping a year. We were aware of this, but I think we weren't fully cognizant of what it would mean down the road. It was never a problem. He did fine in school. He's really smart, and everything was great. It wasn't until he got to high school, I think that we started to wonder what we had done. Boys don't mature as fast, and we realized that we had taken away an entire year of him living with us, which we were sad about.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: Yeah. Why was I telling you that story?

*Q: You were getting ready to consider bidding?*

HASKELL: Oh, so we sat him down and we asked him if he could go and live in Africa and that he might never get a chance to go to Africa again, would he rather do our next tour in Africa or would he rather stay in Mexico? He had just started making friends but didn't have a lot of friends yet. The school was mostly Mexican students. It wasn't an American or international school. There were very few Americans. He immediately told

us that he wanted to go to Africa. Definitely Ouagadougou would never have come up in our bidding. Going down the list, using the tandem bidding tool where you should see the available jobs by post, we would have just kept right on going. Never would've slowed down on Ouagadougou.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: But going back to my distaste for the admin work. I thought that it might not be a bad thing to go back to doing some of the management work only if I could be the boss. And the Ouagadougou job met that criteria. I would go to a small post, and I would be the boss. My husband was willing to try public diplomacy work. There were very few bidders. I think there were three bidders on each job listed for Ouagadougou, or maybe less. We got those assignments. I think it was the first year that they had Service Need Differential [SND].

Ouagadougou had a 25 percent hardship differential at the time. And they had designated Ouagadougou as a Service Need Differential post, which, if you took it you had to stay three years rather than the normal two years and then you got this enormous amount of money. It dropped into your bank account at the end of each year. I looked at the numbers on the calculator as I was checking with my husband on the phone, asking him if he thinks we should stay three years. Asking him as I was entering the numbers and calculating. I saw the amount of money it would provide and I didn't hesitate. I told him that I thought we would stay three years. Because we were a tandem, I looked at the total of the SND and then did times two. It was a lot of money. We were probably willing to do it anyway, to stay three years, but this made us not wait until we got there to decide.

*Q: But now before you complete your decision. Were you satisfied that your kids could get education? Were there any schools or any education possibilities in Ouagadougou?*

HASKELL: I had always made friends with the people in the Office of Overseas Schools, and I never hesitated to call them. I always advise people to do this whenever they think they know something about a school because they read it somewhere. Maybe they had read the bidding tool, or the post report, or the website of the Office of Overseas Schools. I would tell people that maybe they didn't understand quite how it works. What was written in those documents, the assessment of the school, is an assessment based on a broad category of students. But if you called the people that work in this office and do the assessments, most of the time anyway, I don't know if it's the same, many of them really knew those schools very well. And they could ask about your specific kids. What's your child like? How does your child learn? What kind of interests does your child have? They could nail it down like that and tell you how a particular school would suit your child. In this case, what they told us was that the International School of Ouagadougou [ISO] was a great small school. It accommodated students from preschool to twelfth grade. Even though they had classes all the way to twelfth grade, it was not considered adequate at the high school grades by the Office of Overseas Schools. But not because the teaching and classes weren't good. Rather because the classes were very small, and because there were so few students that they couldn't offer a lot of choice. They might have had an

Advanced Placement English class but they couldn't have ten Advanced Placement classes.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: Our oldest son was going to finish eighth grade there, and we weren't too worried about the younger ones. They said school was great at the younger ages, and there were more students at the younger ages. The one thing that was a little snag was our youngest son, who had started to speak very late, was getting speech therapy in Mexico. Because we were getting an allowance to pay for the speech therapy, the Office of Medical Services [MED] got involved. At first, they told us we couldn't go to Ouagadougou because the school had no speech therapy. So, I talked to our son's speech therapist who said that he was doing super well and even if we had been staying in Mexico, she would have recommended discontinuing the therapy for a year or so and see how he did. I asked her to speak to the MED people in Washington.

She did, and they approved the assignment. But what she did do is, she made a book. She did an amazing amount of work in a spiral notebook. It was a guide that she said anyone could use to help Seth if the teachers in Ouagadougou determined that he may still needed to have some help. Considering Seth's minor speech problem, anyone could use the book—the teachers, his parents, someone we hired. So we did that. We took it with us, and we never had to use it. Years later the speech therapist contacted me to ask if I could please ask Seth if she could have the book back. She was the spouse of a British diplomat, and they were going back to London where she needed the book as evidence of work she had done.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: So, we had considered all those factors. The school was a factor. The fact that we'd have to take malaria prophylaxis was a factor. But the kids really embraced the idea of going to Ouagadougou. They started to learn a few French words. I got a language waiver because I wasn't going to have time to learn French before getting to post. As I had taken French in high school and college, they gave me a language waiver. When we left Mexico, we decided to drive out, which we could still do back then. We had our Filipina nanny, and she was going back to the Philippines for a couple of months. So we had to drop her off at the airport in Dallas, Texas. From there we drove across Louisiana and we stopped at all the Civil War battle sites. One of the Civil War era inns where we stayed had a cannon ball still stuck in the wall. Our kids were big history fans even when they were little. We drove all the way to Florida where my in-laws lived. We did our home leave and then drove up the East Coast. We went to Charleston and Fort Sumter.

We had a dog. We got a puppy while we were in Mexico, but in those days you really probably couldn't take a dog on that kind of a trip because it's hard to find hotels and other places where you can go with a dog. Now, it seems you can take dogs to a lot of places that you couldn't before. So, we left our dog with our friend, and everything was going fine.

Then was about the time to get her health certificate so they could put her on a plane to Washington. But she got sick and the vet said I couldn't do the health certificate. He said he would give her some medication, antibiotics or something, and after a few days, she would be fine and then he would give her the certificate. So that went fine. But the day for the flight was getting closer and closer. From Mexico, at the time, they wouldn't ship pets as cargo on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday because they have too much other luggage and cargo on the full, weekend flights. Indeed, at that time, when you flew to Mexico, if you had two bags to check, you had to identify one as the one they would leave behind and bring to you later because there was just too much stuff on the planes.

None of this would have been a problem except that our friends who were taking care of the dog were also departing post. So I had to figure out how to get my dog up to Washington. I was ready to fly down there and bring her back myself when I remembered that one of the guys in INL, in Washington, one of the contractors that had been a close contact, had been doing temporary duty at the NAS.

I contacted him and asked if he could please bring my dog back when he flew back that Friday. It was allowed to take a pet as accompanied baggage, but not as cargo. He said, sure. Another colleague, a local hire in the NAS, agreed to take her to the airport so Joe didn't have to actually do anything except tell them he was taking a dog. He also had to go pick her up at the airport in Washington. I was at the airport to take her from him. Your family, the dog, the orthodontist, the schools, all these different things impact your life in the Foreign Service.

*Q: Were your kids okay with the malaria suppressive, because it can be really disagreeable?*

HASKELL: Yes. We used the one that I don't know if anybody uses anymore. We used Lariam, the one that has a reputation for causing nightmares and making people crazy. You take it once a week. It didn't make anybody crazy, and no one got malaria.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I did do one thing though, which was crazy. I grew up in Oregon, and we used to go camping in the mountains and the mosquitoes would be in clouds. So when I heard that I would be going to a place with malaria I was picturing those clouds of mosquitoes everywhere. But you know, that's not the way it is.

There were very few mosquitoes actually, but they transmit malaria. It's not that there are a bazillion mosquitoes. It's just that if you get bit by one you could get malaria. I had taken with us in our household effects or consumables so much anti-mosquito stuff, like anti-mosquito candles and anti-bug sprays. I used to make the kids stand with their arms out and sprayed them, their shorts, their t-shirts with bug spray before they went to school. I was a little bit crazy.

*Q: But ultimately it worked. You didn't get malaria and you managed to do what you wanted to do.*

HASKELL: Right. We went to Ouagadougou. We finished with Mexico. Wait, there was one more thing that was kind of funny. When we told people we were going to Ouagadougou, they would often look perplexed and ask us where that is. And when we'd say Burkina Faso, they would ask where that was. Only State Department Foreign Service people were likely to know where that was, but many of my colleagues in Mexico City were not Foreign Service. They were law enforcement. When we would say, Burkina Faso is in West Africa, they would look at you and ask why? But the Foreign Service people would just ask us who had we offended?

*Q: Oh dear. Alright.*

Okay. Today is October 30, we're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell as she and her husband began a tandem tour in Ouagadougou. And Jennifer, I'm sorry, once again, what year is this?

HASKELL: 2003. We started our first assignment in Africa, which was quite exciting. The post was very small. When we arrived there were twelve U.S. Direct-Hires plus there were four Peace Corps staff. And then when we left we had thirteen U.S. Direct-Hires and still four Peace Corps staff. So we grew quite a bit. Although we had close to 250 local staff because our guard force were employees; they were not on a contract. Shortly after I arrived, within just a few weeks, I was promoted to FS-01. That was a nice thing. I was immediately in down-stretch [a position graded below my personal rank]. People often decide they don't want to do down stretches, but I've done a few of them including—well, I'll get to that later on. It seems like the higher I went, the more down stretches I did, and I found that it doesn't have any negative impacts. In fact, if you think about it, if you have more experience than the average person doing the job, you can do a really great job. And nobody knows you're in a down stretch because it doesn't say anywhere on your EER [employee evaluation report] unless you choose to say what is the grade of the job.

*Q: Let me ask a quick question here. It sounds like you're being promoted relatively quickly. And so in other words, demonstrating skill relatively quickly above your grade level, would that be the sense that you had?*

HASKELL: I didn't get the feeling that I was promoted really quickly, but sort of steadily. I guess as I got a bit higher, it was becoming a little bit faster. I think you get fewer people; there are more people probably leaving at higher grades than there are in the middle grades.

*Q: One other question of context before you continue with your actual job and so on. When you arrived in Ouagadougou, what was the sort of general security scene? How did they brief you on personal security and political stability?*



HASKELL: Well, that's a really good question because it's very different now than it was then. So thank you for bringing that up. When we arrived, the post was a twenty-five percent hardship post, but very little of that was about crime. It was about actual hardship—not really having anything to do there, can barely buy anything there, and can't really go anywhere and all of that. And I would say the biggest concern of the security office at the time was if you happened to be downtown—which was a pretty small area because it's not a very big city—and it's late, somebody might steal your handbag.

At the time, there had started to be isolated instances in the far north of kidnappings. So most people weren't really going there anyway. Although, in the end, I escorted a trip to Gan de Fabou with the seventh and eighth graders [from ISO; I guess the whole middle school trip to the far north to where there was nothing but the Sahara Desert]. And that was, evidently, not a problem for the security people because the school wouldn't have done it if it had been. So it was a lovely time to be in Ouagadougou in that it was peaceful. Everybody seemed to get along. There weren't lots of tourists, so there weren't people popping in and out.

We didn't get many visitors. We got one or two visitors the whole time and nothing particularly taxing. Now, it's a very different story there. It's much more dangerous, and they've had some really awful terrorist attacks in parts of the city where we would have been hanging out and our people were hanging out. So that was the security situation there. The bilateral relationship when we arrived was not particularly good. In fact, let me just say, I'm going to talk briefly about the bilateral relationship and talk more about the management issues and initiatives that I worked on and a little bit about helping the school and the employee association. Also about my being chargé. So those are the main things that I thought I would talk about.

The bilateral relationship was not robust. It had been bigger in the past. I think USAID had left in maybe 1995, so we had only State Department and Peace Corps, no other agency representative among that very small number of U.S. direct-hires. We weren't particularly good friends with the government. The president was Blaise Compaoré, who had been president for a very long time. Burkina was known as a place that suffered from a lot of coups d'état, and in fact they gained independence in 1960 and in 1966 they had a coup. Nineteen eighty, they had a coup. Nineteen eighty-two, they had a coup. And 1983 is when Thomas Sankara and Blaise Compaoré joined together. They were members of the military. They joined together and overthrew whoever was the guy at the time.

Sankara was the instigator of the coup, and he became the president. He renamed the country from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, which is a combination of two words from the two main languages used in the country. The name means, variously, depending on how you translate it—I think the translation that appeals to me the most, because it's how I know the people, was “land of upright people.” They are incredibly honest. I have a story about that, which I'll try to insert at some point, but Sankara moved away from the French, who were the colonial masters, and he implemented a lot of policies that we should have liked, such as literacy programs, land redistribution, infrastructure

construction. He outlawed female genital mutilation, forced marriages, and polygamy. These were very progressive policies, but he was definitely not leaning in the right direction for the global dichotomy that we had at the time.

Three years later his buddy Compaoré overthrew and killed him. It's one of those sort of prototypical African stories in many ways. And Compaoré had been ruling with a bit of an iron fist for many years. He finally had an election and was, of course, elected in 1991 and again in 1998. Then while we were there, he had another election in 2005. However, during the three years we were there, the relationship improved. At the time, we had almost no foreign assistance of any sort with them. And there wasn't a military relationship or anything going on like that. And in fact the French were the big boys on the block. It was the first time I had been anywhere where the United States wasn't the biggest diplomatic presence. The French mission was quite a lot bigger than we were.

Okay. Other issues we had with the government of Burkina Faso [GOBF]. Compaoré was a supporter of Charles Taylor who was the despotic leader in Liberia at the time. Taylor was involved in conflict, diamond trading it seems. These things sort of swirled around the government in Ouagadougou. It was not a place where there were a lot of rich people. In some countries I've lived in Africa you have these incredibly rich people, so rich you can't imagine. And there are some nice restaurants and nice stores. And that was not the case for Burkina. They really had nothing. The fanciest store in town was a place that sold nice toasters. There really was nothing "luxury" about anything in the country, nothing.

How do I want to go on with this then—let's say during the time we were there, it improved. They leaned more towards us. They were much more willing to engage with us. Um, they started to want to engage on a military basis. They lean towards us in lots of ways and it was helpful to us and it was helpful to them. So as I go through, you'll see some of the things that we worked on that came along as a result of the better relationship, including a new embassy, MCC—they were very, very enthused about the Millennium Challenge Corporation and was doing a threshold project in the second year we were there. So they were really trying to—it was like a transformation of the way they had been doing business. A lot less of the traditional stereotypical African wheeling dealing, a lot more trying to become a productive member of the African union and all those other kinds of organizations. But there were just—

*Q: What were the basic economic drivers in Burkina Faso, to the extent that it had any?*

HASKELL: That's a good question. In 2019, Burkina's human development index score was one 83 out of 189. And it was similar back then. Nothing much new has happened there. There's some agriculture, very small-scale cotton, believe it or not. There's sugar cane, some pretty big sugar cane fields, but their production was literally only sugar cubes. That's what you got. Sugar cubes. There was some mining far off, but it wasn't at the scale that any kind of other mining [that was happening in neighboring countries]. And really that was it. They had some small artisanal things that didn't really manage to be exported. They just had nothing much going on. And the literacy rate was only 20

percent. So it was really a very, very basic developing country and developing very slowly. I think it's gone in the right direction in many ways in the years since we left. I'm encouraged to see that because it is an incredible country with the exception of some of these characters that were at the top; the people are wonderful people.

And the story I wanted to tell is really very simple, but I think very indicative of [the nature of the Burkinabé people]. I used to put coins in the center console of the car, and one day I was driving to the school. I used to hand the money out to kids and the people on the streets who were selling something like cards for cell phones or different things and always smiling and happy, not actual beggars. And so if you could hand a few coins out, they'd be very appreciative. One day I went to the school and [I handed a few coins to a young teenage boy]. I did my thing at the school and I left. I was probably a couple of kilometers away from where I had handed the coins to the boy. That kid found me to give me one coin back because that one coin was a shekel, from Israel.

I had gotten mixed up with coins. But the idea that he found me to hand me back my one shekel really demonstrates what the people there were like, by and large. And they certainly didn't have any of the internal conflicts that so many countries [in Africa] have. They had somehow, amongst the very different tribes, come to understandings about how everyone fits together and understanding their history and how in history there may have been different relationships, but they've come together more as equals. It was really quite inspiring. It was a wonderful place to be. But with a very low literacy rate, not a lot of educated people, it was a difficult hiring situation. Of course, the embassy staff had almost no turnover, less than 2 percent turnover, certainly and many, many management challenges.

The previous two or three management people had been in stretch assignments [positions above their personal grade]. So they had less experience or were civil service excursionists who may have never worked in an embassy before. When I arrived, I found I was probably the most experienced management person who had been there in a very long time. I found so many things that just had never had any attention. I think that the local compensation plan was from maybe 1984, so it had been more than twenty years. The FSN handbook hadn't been updated in many years. We didn't have a human resource officer or financial management officer position at post. I covered both of those, although we had regional people. To be honest, the two regional people we had covering those jobs were brand new hires, and had never done those jobs.

So frankly, I didn't have either of those portfolios covered. The regional system didn't really work at that time. I had a lot of HR experience, so I felt comfortable with that. The financial management work, I realized I understood a lot of the basics of how it works—appropriations and fiscal data strips, et cetera. But I was supposed to be supervising a cashier, which I knew nothing about. Luckily the Africa Bureau had an office in Paris. They hire French people to work for the Africa Bureau, and they travel to help in these situations. So I pleaded for help, asked for someone to come teach me how to be a cashier supervisor, among other things. And also just to give some help to the staff. During that visit of the financial management specialist, I wrote down so many things in a little

notebook that I had with me, a little tiny spiral notebook. I carried that little notebook around with me for three years because it told me exactly what to do when I had to do certain things in the cashier software. It was amazing.

I really learned a lot, although to be honest, the most important piece of Ouagadougou to me was one of the FSNs. Her name was Marie Angel Ouedraogo, and she was the literal princess of the staff and one of the oldest on the staff. She was literally a Mossi princess. She taught me more than you can even imagine about how to do my job. She knew exactly how to teach me. I had no idea how to do a budget. As soon as I got to post, we had to do the budget [for the next fiscal year]. She did the budget; she was a financial specialist, a senior person in the financial management section. One day she handed me all this paper and some budget spreadsheets and cables. And she told me she needed me to check it for her. I said, okay. I took a ruler, an adding machine and a highlighter and a pencil home with me. Luckily, I have an MBA, so I actually knew what some of the language meant, but I had to figure out what the cables meant. I had to figure out the fact that Washington was giving us [small budget increases]. For example, they would give us three hundred dollars more on this line item and two hundred dollars more on that line item, but it wasn't always exactly that, and you had to know how to annualize things.

I had to make sure she did it all right. And I really had to check; I checked every single number. It was a terrific way for her to make me understand how that is done, how the bureau passes information and then how the post builds the budget. And I always recommend to management coned officers that one of the best things they can do is—Every management coned officer needs to have a GSO tour. If they haven't, then they're really not going to be able to be as good and as effective at their job. And they certainly can't mentor people very well if they haven't been a GSO.

I would probably have had to kill myself if I had had to be an HRO or an FMO for a whole tour because I don't like that kind of work. But having to do it as part of my larger job, I learned a tremendous amount that made me a much more effective management officer as I went up. And when the FS-01 financial management officer tries to pull a fast one on you because they don't want to buy something, I knew how to say no, no, no, no, no [because of the work I did in Burkina]. They might also say that something was against appropriation law, but I would be able to say no, it's not. So I really feel strongly for management coned people that they should try to do a job in a small post where they have to do everything where you have to have a lot of information on everything.

*Q: That is a very powerful set of substantive knowledge that you can get because so often management or fiscal officers will tell you no because they don't want to be bothered, not because the money isn't fair.*

HASKELL: Right or because they don't actually agree that we should buy that or that that shouldn't be a priority. And it is amazing how often they tried to do that with me. I always was able to push back and not be afraid to tell them to show me in the FAM [Foreign Affairs Manual]. And you better know how to understand what's written in the FAM or the FAH [Foreign Affairs Handbook]. And it's important that we [management

officers] know that, because at the same time, they think they're the CFO. The whole financial management cadre is being taught that they have more say than they do.

It was an actual effort to take some authority away from the management officer. One of the first things that I noticed in Ouaga was that our local guard force, for whatever reason that I never figured out, was on an exception rate range salary that was downward. We have exception rate ranges in our salary scales. In every case I had ever seen they were higher; I had never heard of a downward one, ever. For example, electricians often are graded at an FSN-07, let's say. If it's an FSN-07, that's not a very high salary, so you can't really hire them [as they can make more than that salary range in the local market]. You had to pay them an appropriate salary. They're still an FSN-07, but they would get an exception rate range for the salary to be able to be competitive. So it usually makes them be paid more.

Sometimes they're paid more than their supervisors because their supervisors are more generalized and they don't have the same exception rate range. But in this case with our guards, they were not even called guards, they were called watchmen. Guards are maybe an FSN-02 or -03, and watchmen are FSN-01s. Even janitors are FSN-01s. The guards' salary was appreciably lower than our scale for an FSN-01. Our FSNs had allowances [in addition to their salary]. Most local staff have allowances, and the basket of allowances can be done differently in every country. But in Burkina Faso, all the FSNs had the same allowances no matter what their grade was except the guards who were substantially, like a 1,000 percent lower, something ridiculous, which I didn't understand.

These people were supposed to be the ones protecting us. So I went through a lot of work trying to find the genesis of this craziness, going through HR in Washington and through DS [Diplomatic Security] [who paid the salaries and allowances]. And no one could answer the question. We were also in a period of very tight budgets and our staff, not just due to budget, but also due to the way that the salary surveys were showing, they had not really had much in the way of salary increases. But this seemed so wrong, and it happened at the same time that there were news articles about the State Department paying salaries less than a dollar a day. So I was able to secure a 400 percent increase in their allowance. And this is an, this is an annual allowance. They had been getting \$315 and I got them up to \$1,250, which still was not even half, not even close to what the other FSNs were getting.

There was supposedly a promise from DS that they would continue to increase the allowance further. It took me a couple of years to get to there. It's not like I got to Ouaga and six months later it was fixed. All this took a lot of work because nobody wants to hand out money. I think the third year I was there, HR in Washington proposed a salary increase of 5.5 percent but only for our highest graded FSNs, which would have been the biggest morale killer in the world for the other FSNs. But back then—unfortunately it's changed now—we were able to go back to Washington and propose that we would rather take that amount of money and spread it over all the FSNs grades equally [and that was approved]. So then they all got something like a 2.2 percent increase. That was the first time they've had an increase, any of them, in several years.

So I think that we made some progress there. But clearly we were in the process of starting to work with our economic officer to try to do— My tour ended and I had to leave, so I wasn't able to follow up on it, but it's something that I always thought you could do in any post in this situation. We were doing a lifestyle analysis. Say that Washington won't approve more money because the hiring comparators are not paying more. Sometimes that's just not right. If the comparators are also not paying anything that can provide enough so that people are not living in a mud hut [we should look beyond the comparators]. You can do a lifestyle analysis that shows how the FSNs are living, whether they can afford to send their kids to school and all these sorts of things.

We had just started to look into that when I left post, and I'm not sure how that worked out. I feel like it probably fell apart because I couldn't find anybody to replace me when I left. And so when they finally had to send somebody who had never done management before and that didn't work out. She left post. The embassy had a series of temporary people [serving as management officer]. It was a long time, about two years, before they got a permanent management officer. So that was too bad. But I was very proud of how we did succeed, at least in improving the guards allowance significantly. And some of those guards had master's degrees, maybe in English, you know. They were educated because we were a good employer and nobody ever quit. It was very, very seldom that someone left their employment with the embassy.

The second big management issue we had was health insurance for the FSNs. We had a health insurance plan at the time, but it became clear to me that the Burkinabé didn't understand what health insurance was, including those at the health insurance company. They did not understand risk management or risk pools. They didn't understand anything about it. They were literally just reimbursing people for whatever was submitted, and then they would just charge us a higher premium the next year. It was terrible. We tried to improve some of the benefits that they got, but eventually it really was clear to me that we needed a whole new contract. So the third year I was there, we, I sat down with the GSO. We had two GSOs there, which was not normal, but they had a person who was trained as a GSO for her first tour who was supposed to go to Bangui, but she couldn't go to Bangui because it was during one of the times when that post was evacuated.

I had been begging for a facility manager because the embassy compound was literally mud-walled houses that you could look at it a little bit too hard and the walls would probably crumble. So Washington sent this person to Ouaga as a second GSO, since they couldn't get me a facility manager. We talked about getting a new health insurance contract, but the GSO felt very overwhelmed. We had a contract specialist FSN, but interestingly, he really didn't know how to do contracts. One day I invited him to my office, and I pulled his chair up next to my computer. I showed him the A/OPE [Administration Bureau, Office of the Procurement Executive] website. I told him that they have contract templates and showed him the health insurance template. We opened it and we started to work on it. We filled it in page after page after page

He was astonished. He told me nobody ever did this for him before, that he didn't know any of what I was showing him. He said I didn't know that no one ever helped him. In the

end, we couldn't really use the template because we were in this situation where the providers didn't know how to do insurance. We had to submit a lot of justifications for modifications and get approval for those modifications. We did eventually get them all approved. Because we realized no one in the market knew how to do health insurance, one of the things we did was have a "super" pre-proposal conference. We went over every single clause and every single provision in the contract because they did not understand what they were getting into.

We did sign a new contract. It changed a lot of things that the staff wasn't so happy with. For example, it used to cover a hundred percent of hospitalization. Well, what was resulting is people were being admitted to the hospital for simple things. The insurance provider would reimburse for anything. You needed an aspirin, they would reimburse for an aspirin. I told them no, that it had to be prescription drugs or whatever. We had town hall meetings to discuss it all. We also insisted that the provider do something on fraud. It came to clear that they were just paying whatever was handed to them. And they told us that it was up to the embassy to make sure there was no fraud.

We told them that it couldn't be up to us to detect fraud because we were not supposed to be seeing the health insurance claims. It was not our business. It was a privacy issue. We told them they needed to have doctors look at these claims to see if they made sense. They really pushed back on that, but they eventually hired some doctors, and the first time we really knew they did it was when they told us they'd found fraud. For example, a man was submitting claims for drugs that were only used for female problems. And there was one guy who had this prescription filled seven times, et cetera. I fired seven guards in one day—or maybe it was six or four, whatever it was—because they had cheated on the prescription drugs. Some were submitting claims for people that weren't really their dependents.

So there were mixed results with the [new insurance contract], but it was overall and over the long run, a benefit to everybody. We also reduced the cost because it was supposed to be risk based and not just a pass back. The FSN health insurance was a lot of work. We had a lot of holes in the knowledge and experience of our local staff. Travel was another big one. I think that my experience had shown that that was a problem in virtually every embassy, that people didn't really understand how travel was supposed to work. They didn't really know how to do certain parts of the travel preparation. We all know how frustrating it is to work with travel. So I decided that we should have a travel training workshop in Ouagadougou because we didn't have money to send people to Charleston or to Paris where it's even more expensive.

I knew that the other posts in the area would love to have travel training. So I convinced AF/EX [Africa Bureau Executive Office] to send two trainers, and we had travel training in Ouagadougou. But one of the main things that I wanted them to cover, which was cost construction, they refused to cover. I asked them how they could refuse. They said that they just were never quite sure of it. So I decided I would do it and that it was going to be the way I knew how to do it, from the way I learned to do it. Then I had to stand up and do the whole session on how to do cost constructions. But it was great that I got AF/EX

to send the trainers because it was open to the whole region, to be able to bring twenty people from around West Africa to training they couldn't have gone to otherwise. Our plan was that the next training in Ouaga was to have been on leadership. That was another thing that was supposed to happen after I left. It was a great initiative. I thought it went really well.

*Q: One question for you here. I was involved when I was in the Foreign Service in similar regional trainings, not for management but for public affairs. And one of the benefits of regional training is all of the FSMs who stay in these embassies longer than the American officers get to know each other and they get to know fruits and weaknesses, so that when there's an emergency in one regional embassy, those FSMs know, Oh, can I borrow for two weeks FSN X in Ouagadougou who knows this really, really well. And so there are more benefits than just to your posts when you do that kind of regional training.*

HASKELL: I absolutely agree with you and it's a thing that I think that certainly Africa doesn't use well enough. And I was, I tried to be very generous with FSS that I had, especially in South Africa, to let them go anywhere that somebody needed them to, to train somebody. Sometimes it was just that they needed a really good warehouse supervisor for a week to help somebody. Okay, I want to send mine there and give him or her that opportunity to train somebody new. I was very generous about that because I knew how important it is. And when I was in Kinshasa, I tried really hard. I needed that kind of help and I begged to get that kind of help. And to be honest, I was acting, I was chargé, hey there. So it wasn't my job to do that. I simply said, "Okay, I'll roll, get the ball rolling, you handle it." But to be honest, the staff, the American staff there, didn't embrace it. So we didn't succeed. They didn't seem to think it was somehow negative to them if they needed to get some help or something. I don't know. It was ridiculous. But it is such a, as you're absolutely right, it's an excellent way to share the knowledge and experience around.

One of the things I discovered was that even though I had this whole raft of ICASS [International Cooperative Administrative Support Services] employees, not one of them knew what ICASS was, except for the financial management people. They had no idea what it meant to be an ICASS employee. So I organized a session and invited Peace Corps staff, too. I explained all about what ICASS was from start to finish. They were able to get something out of that and sort of appreciate what it meant and why it was important and why workload counts were important and how their salary was paid and all of those things. This was a time when procurement was changing, too. There was a program that had been developed, I think in Brussels, several years before called WebPASS.

It wasn't a very good program because it was homegrown, but it worked better than anything else we had. So the department had embraced it, and we were posts being encouraged to use WebPASS as a procurement software. We were not yet doing that in Ouagadougou. I told the staff we would make that change now. Because I was the certifying officer on everything, I had to see every procurement that came by and that's how I realized we weren't using WebPASS. They were still using the old-fashioned five-



part carbon forms. It was probably 2004 before I told them I didn't want to see any more carbon forms. They told me we had something like twenty thousand of them in the warehouse. I told them we would not be using carbon forms for the next twenty years [that's how long it would have taken us to use twenty thousand], so maybe we are going to just burn those or turn them into shredding that could be used by people who made handmade paper. The handmade paper there was really beautiful. We would shred things and give them all of our shredding debris.

I told them I didn't want to see another one of those forms. So the next time they brought me a file of procurement documents to sign, my mind was blown. They had printed each purchase order five times and put carbon paper between it.

Clearly my communication wasn't good enough. They didn't give me the form. I told them that was not what I wanted. I printed them one of the forms they were to use, explained that I would sign one, and that if they needed more copies, they could make photocopies. That was a real eye opener. It really made me understand the way that the country ran. It illustrated that these guys had never learned, really, how to do their work. They were not keeping up when anything changed. Their supervision wasn't very robust. Part of that was because they would always send first-tour officers who had not been an assistant GSO first. So they were THE GSO and the management officer—by the way, was doing several other jobs. So it was hard. CAJE [Computer Aided Job Evaluation] was a new position classification system that was implemented while I was there—without an HRO at post. There was a regional HRO, but like I said, she was first-tour and her first communication with us was interesting. In the beginning, after there had been no HRO in the regional position for about a year, she wrote her first email to me. We desperately needed HR assistance. Her first email, when she arrived at the regional post as she wasn't a resident of our post, was to ask me to send to her the post's awards policy, that she would be reviewing the awards policies.

I wrote back to her that we already had a really good awards policy that I wouldn't be sending her, but that maybe she might want to ask me what we really did need help on. Then she came to Ouaga for her first visit and I realized that each visit was really going to be me mentoring her. So I did the HR work myself. But I couldn't do CAJE by myself. I had a very competent FSN HR specialist. She had come over in the crosswalk from USIS [United States Information Service]. She was very good, but she needed help to do a reclassification of every position. It was going to be hard. There was a really fabulous, super experienced HRO in Dakar who was regional. He was unbelievably good. I convinced him to come to Ouaga and he helped us with our CAJE-ing. We were able to finish it without so much angst. There were some people whose jobs were downgraded, some people even lost their jobs. It was a very fraught time, and very bad for morale. It leads me into discussion of the FSN Association because we had a very active FSN association.

*Q: Now, just one second before you go on to the FSN Association. Take a moment to describe what CAJE was and what the goal of CAJE was, because this was an important moment in the Foreign Service for the local employees who were actually quite afraid of*

*what was going to happen with this new system of classifying positions from a human resource point of view.*

HASKELL: So that's right. And it just so happens that we've gone through [another change to the classification system] now. Now it's called M-Class, and they've done it again. But CAJE was the first time in my experience that we had changed it. CAJE is computer aided job evaluation, and it's a way to categorize jobs or classify jobs into grades. Then a salary would depend on the grade of the position and steps within a grade. The reason that it was done is because over time they, probably, hadn't had a new system in decades.

First the supervisor or HR person drafts a position description, which then gets classified at a grade, and everybody's happy. Except not, because a lot of supervisors were manipulating the system. Once someone figured out how to manipulate that classification system, it was possible to give a position a grade that wasn't warranted.

This was often done because you wanted the person in the position to get a raise because you liked them. Very often it was not based on super skill level or super anything. It was just that the employee was really helpful, very cheerful, they helped you out. Maybe they never said no; they came to work all the time. They were the people we wanted working for us. We wanted to help them. It's a natural instinct. Believe me, I figured out how to do it too, and I engaged. I tried not to be too crazy about it, but there were a lot of examples and a lot of inconsistencies happened around the globe for this. Hypothetical example, a public diplomacy culturalist specialist in Montevideo for some reason would be an FSN-10, while in Ouagadougou they might be an FSN-07, and it wasn't justified by anything.

So what they were trying to do was bring some consistency into the classification process. They were also really trying to make it hard for people to game the system, except that you can always figure it out. That was in 2003. So now it's 2019. M-Class came in about three or four years ago, maybe four or five years ago. So about ten, certainly less than fifteen years later, they had to do it again because people figured out the system—that if you write certain words literally into a position description. Who was the absolute master of this classification game-playing was USAID, on an institutional level.

It's amazing that our [State Department, ICASS] financial specialists or budget specialists [not the correct position titles] in our system would be maybe an FSN-08. They would get a lot of experience working for us for ten to fifteen years, and suddenly there'd be an opening in USAID for a budget specialist. It's supposed to be the same job, but it would be an FSN-09. So we would lose the employee; we trained everybody then off they would go to USAID. It was amazingly consistent. So, CAJE-ing was fraught because people were worried. In Ouagadougou we had a very active FSN association, which can be really helpful to management. A lot of management people don't like the FSN Association because an association, if they're good, will hold you accountable. So it

really is a good thing. The good ones come to you with real problems, and they don't let them slide.

If you can't fix what they are asking for, the next management officer that comes to post is going to get asked about the same issue. But you know what, a lot of times the FSN Association is, and a lot of times something really can be done about the issue. Yes, sometimes they ask for something we just can't fix at all. We've been waiting at least almost fifteen, close to twenty years for a retirement plan for FSNs that could be based in the United States. This is something most FSN associations want because their local retirement systems, or their banking systems or whatever, can be terrible and everything could be lost really easily. They just really want to have some sort of a plan that can be invested in dollars in the United States. But as far as I know, I haven't checked into it in years, but since it still doesn't exist, I assume that the IRS can't figure it out. The IRS can't figure out how we can have this type of retirement plan but not be taxing them in the United States.

I hope that Washington is still working on it because I believe that things like this can always be overcome. And it's usually a policy issue that makes it not doable and not a law issue. And even if it is a law issue, frankly write a little law that makes this particular thing exempt. It is doable. You just have to have the right lawyers with the right can-do attitude. You send it through Congress; it would pass. It would be nothing difficult. It would be simple. It would be a bipartisan thing.

*Q: Exactly. This is where it goes up to high level State Department officials who actually make a phone call to OMB and say, look, we need to fix this. Just stop being so obstructionist. It's a very simple thing. It's not costly. Just make it work. And when that doesn't happen, it doesn't happen.*

HASKELL: Well, it's a problem I've seen with a lot of people in the Foreign Service that once they're told no, they take that as a final answer, and they don't often ask themselves where that no is coming from or what is the reason behind the no, is there a way around that? My experience in this kind of effort, just from moving from post to post and seeing so many posts where things were not fixed, they often weren't fixed because people didn't want to do it. Not because they couldn't—well maybe they didn't have the knowledge, but you can ask questions and learn things while you're trying to fix something. I didn't know how to do most of the things I did where I fixed something.

It wasn't like I had gone to FSI, and they had taught me how to do that. No, I brought the problem to people in Washington. I told them this was a problem and asked how would I fix this? So, you ask somebody, and they might say they don't know. And then you ask somebody else, and you ask somebody else, and you keep pushing; and you say, well, this is ridiculous, this has to be fixable. And if you work on it the right way, you can really fix a lot of things. So I was not engaged on the FSN retirement plan. At that point, I didn't have enough of my own staff, and we were working on more basic things. So I did not take on that issue. Another management issue that we had in Ouagadougou was, as I mentioned, our building was falling apart. It wasn't an office building. It was a series of

houses that we were leasing. We didn't own them. They went across two streets, and one of the streets had been closed off to make a compound.

The Public Diplomacy [PD] office was across the street that wasn't closed off. There had been an OIG [Office of the Inspector General] inspection that resulted in a recommendation [which is more of a directive] that the PD people had to be brought inside the fence, so to speak, literally as we had a really nice fence around the compound. It was an expensive fence, maybe two- to three-million-dollar fence. It was probably worth more, maybe twenty times more than any of the buildings that the fence was protecting. At one point we had a team come from DS and OBO to do a review of our security. As a result, they proposed a \$750,000 security upgrade project. I asked what it would entail. They told me that we were going to put grills on our Chancery, which was a converted two-bedroom house. They were going to put grills on the windows. And they were going to put in some really heavy doors on some of the other buildings. I looked at them and I told them that I loved that they wanted to protect us, that I loved that they were willing to give our post that great security. But I asked them if they realized that they were going to a twenty-minute entry grill on a five-minute entry roof. I told them I would be able to attach a rope to the grill and with a little car, pull it and the wall would fall down. [The grill would be stronger than the wall it was attached to.]

*Q: Yes. But the basic problem is still there, that you were in buildings that were indefensible.*

HASKELL: Yes. So that brings us to the NEC [new embassy compound]. Ouagadougou was on the OBO list to build a new embassy. This was around 2003 when I got to post. OBO was supposed to be starting a new embassy in about 2009—six years seemed like centuries, that short time was going to feel like centuries. There had been some effort to locate a site, but in those days OBO wasn't getting sites so early. And it happened that the ambassador had mentioned to President Compaoré, or the foreign minister, that we were probably going to be needing a new embassy and that we were going to be investing a lot of money, but we would need a site. And they said that maybe they [government of Burkina Faso] could help him with that. So the ambassador brought that to me and said that maybe we could even get them to give it to us for free, who knew, it's not clear. So I started to work with the government [GOBF] about what they were proposing. They were in the process of building a new part of the city. It was called Ouagadougou *Deux Mille*, Ouagadougou 2000. They had built a new presidential palace there, and they were building new buildings for ministries all around there. They wanted all the embassies to move there, too. So they were willing to give us a twenty-acre site, a nice big square piece of African bush with no bushes.

And we thought this was a magnificent concept. OBO was not so sure. They took some convincing because they don't like a gift horse [an apparent gift that has substantial associated costs or drawbacks, especially a gift that does not fit perfectly with the recipient's wants or needs]. So, we worked on it for a long time. I had people come out to post from OBO. I hired a little plane, and we flew all over the city to see where other big spaces might be. OBO realized that that part of the city was probably the best. It had lots

of space and that maybe having a plot in that place would be a good idea. Then there was the question of are they really giving it to us, or what are the caveats? Of course the first thing OBO said was that they wanted only ten acres, that they didn't want twenty acres. This was really shortsighted.

Anyway, so I went back to the GOBF and told them that we really only wanted ten acres and that we needed to know really what was the deal. What kind of title would we get? How would it work; what would the restrictions be. Who would be on the plots next to us? What was their plan? So we resolved all of that. DS people came out for security checks of the site, as well. We all agreed, and we got satisfactory legal documents saying we owned the property. This was all quite an accomplishment. Free ten acres. Yay! Then we asked OBO if they could move us up in the line to start construction. And they said, Yes, that they would move Ouagadougou up in the line, that they would try to start in 2007. So we started moving quickly, and the first thing they wanted us to do was put a fence, a wall, a concrete wall around the site because in many places they had encountered a lot of problems with squatters when they bought a plot of land.

That was one of the reasons they weren't acquiring land so much in advance of building anymore. They had experienced that they would buy a plot of land, not do anything with it for a few years, and when they came back to build on it, they had to evict a bunch of people. That's really bad optics, and it's difficult. And you had to spend a lot of money on lawyers and things. So they wanted us to build a wall. They sent us the scope of work, and we put out the solicitation. We had the companies come in for a pre-proposal conference. [After we went over the specifications for the wall], they laughed and they laughed and they laughed. They told us that we were insane, that it was going to be the most expensive wall ever built in all of West Africa. Had we lost our mind? So I went back to OBO and told that it was going to cost \$5 million or whatever, and that frankly there was no one on the land now and that I didn't think there would be anyone on the land in two or three or four or five years, either. I mentioned that it was in a part of the city that had been reserved by the government for these properties—for ministries to build and for embassies to build. I promised them it would not be an issue. And they caved in. And so we didn't spend that money either.

But it was quite interesting working on the NEC. I got to go back to Washington and look at their initial plan, like where to put everything, where the offices would be. It was called a "block and stack" and that was fun. One of the problems that arose from that was that the health unit was too small. So what to do, we didn't have a lot of health care in Ouagadougou, and our health unit in the embassy was its own little house set up like a little hospital. It had like a little hospital room with EKGs and IVs and defibrillators. We actually had our own pharmacy. We had a room filled with prescription and over-the-counter drugs because we couldn't get any American drugs there.

*Q: Right. I hope that room was pretty well guarded.*

HASKELL: Well, it was locked up tight like a vault. Yes. And we didn't have a doctor. We had no Foreign Service health practitioner. We had a Chilean woman who was the

most fabulous person ever. She was trained as a nurse in the Chilean air force. She happened to be visiting her sister or somebody in Burkina Faso once, and she met this French guy, married him and she stayed. So, she was our nurse there for probably twenty-five or thirty years, and everybody loved her. She really was fabulous. She couldn't do everything, but she could find somebody who could. And she knew how to get people out of the country [in case of a medevac], how to work the system, which was really the most important thing. Then unfortunately MED sort of lost the plot.

The Office of the Legal Advisor started to get involved in a lot of things that MED was doing. And eventually, a few years after I left, MED insisted the embassy let her go. They asked her to prove she had training as a nurse. She was probably close to sixty years old by then, and she couldn't find the document. She flew back to Chile to look through her mom's attic to try to find documentation of this thing that she had done so many years before and she couldn't produce it. So they fired her, which I think was really awful. And then she and her husband were flying to France one day in August of 2014 and there was an Air Algiers plane crash and they were on that plane.

*Q: Oh.*

HASKELL: That was very shocking, to say the least. But back to the health unit—the health unit they were proposing for us was more like the sick room you might see in a school.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: And I said, no. I said that this was not adequate for this kind of a post. We need more. We had a USDH [U.S. direct hire] Foreign Service medical technician in Dakar who was just an incredible person. Incredible. She used to come to post to supervise our FSN med tech. We had our own med tech. He did all of our lab tests for us and everything onsite. He was also incredibly excellent. He got an SIV and went to the States eventually. I got the USDH med tech on board with this. I got the regional medical officers onboard with this. I got MED writ large onboard with us, and we convinced OBO that the cookie cutter they were using to build our embassy wasn't appropriate for the health unit. They did do better. They were going to incorporate the more robust health unit into their cookie cutter so that other posts wouldn't have to make the same arguments.

*Q: In the end. How did you get any individual to replace the nurse who had been there?*

HASKELL: I wasn't there when it happened, so I don't know. I think they have a Foreign Service nurse practitioner or physician's assistant now. But that didn't happen while I was there. That only happened, I would say in 2012 or so. I left in 2006. I only found out about it because when I was posted in Santo Domingo some people came from Ouagadougou to Santa Domingo. They told me about it. Everybody who ever worked in that embassy and knew her was horrified by the whole thing. I get it from the concept of people who've never met the person, but why would it have mattered, at that point, that

she had a forty-year-old nursing certificate. They were just worried about being sued. She saved so many lives over the time she worked at the embassy.

One thing that was interesting that came up while we were in Ouaga was the special immigrant visa [SIV] policy. At one point a FSN mentioned that they thought there used to be some way that they could immigrate to the United States, those that had been there [at the embassy] for a long time. We said that there was an SIV program, special immigrant visas. And there had not been a management notice issued about the SIV program in years. It was like, secret. Some officers didn't want us to issue one because then we would just lose our best people. I thought and said that we should if they want to go. We issued a notice about the SIV program, and we had about five people go the first year.

*Q: It's a benefit created deliberately for that purpose, and they should be able to take advantage of it.*

HASKELL: They have to know about it. Yes. It's shameful that supervisors or anybody that's in that position would want to deprive them of even knowing of the program's existence. Some other things that were interesting while I was there. I mentioned that I had to sign all the procurements and do all the certifying [of payments]. Our senior financial specialist Marie Angel Ouedraogo was an incredible woman and she really knew what she was doing. I was very busy [and the certifying was something Marie Angel could do]. So, I asked AF/EX why Marie Angel couldn't be a certifying officer. I knew that there are other FSNs certifying officers in Africa. I just needed her to have authority to certify payments up to maybe twenty thousand dollars or twenty-five thousand dollars. I told them I would certify the big payments. They thought about it and they approved it.

That was another one of those things where people might have thought that, well, FSNs can never be certifying officers. But, I justified it and asked. You can constantly be told no by people who think they know, that don't really know. Marie Angel was excellent. It really helped me out a lot. I knew she was coming up to mandatory retirement age soon. So we started talking about succession planning. And she loved her team, but she told me there was nobody on her team who could really do her job [succeed her]. And she was right.

So I worked with AF/EX [on the succession planning]. We created a new position [in the Financial Management Section], and we went out to hire. We wanted to hire somebody that could start working in the section and would have two or three years of working with Marie Angel so that when we needed to replace her, we had someone who was actually qualified. In the end, we "stole" someone from the Peace Corps, and he is still there. He has been now for ten years or more. He is the senior financial specialist. You just have to do a little bit of thinking. People who say, Oh my God, what's going to happen when so-and-so leaves? They think the world will fall apart, the sky will fall. No, just plan for it. Work on it.

Because of the improvement in the bilateral relations, we started to get a lot of TDYers [people coming to post on temporary duty], especially USAID people. They had a regional headquarters in Accra that covered Burkina, but until then they really didn't have any projects in Burkina. They started to come, they wanted to work there. We also had a defense attaché who I think was resident maybe in Abidjan. They started to come. So we had people who wanted to work on education, military assistance, trade things, agriculture. I mean we, and of course with the new NEC, we were having more and more OBL people come. We were trying to support a lot more TDYers. Our improvement in bilateral relations also had to do with the very nascent efforts to improve their democracy and their democratization efforts. They did have an election while we were there, 2005, and it was a very interesting time. There were opposition people, proper politicians ran. Of course, Compaoré won. We sent out a whole team of different members of the embassy staff, in pairs, to do informal election monitoring. It was the first time I'd done it. It was really magical. I think every American should go do that, then they're never going to not vote.

We also had taxation issues. I had known that we weren't getting any VAT [value-added tax] relief at all. Zero. But I also knew that if we're going to build an NEC, I had to get the GOBF to agree to no VAT on the construction of the NEC. And so I had started to work on that slowly. The woman at the finance ministry who was in charge of that was known locally as the dragon lady. No one thought I had a hope of getting this done and it took a long time. But I learned a lot about the Vienna Conventions; Article 47, I've got it down pat [to learn, master, or understand something perfectly]. I convinced the GOBF they were wrong in their interpretation of it. I got multiple players on my side, but I think that the most important one that I got on my side was their ambassador in Washington.

He had been the finance minister before, and I started meeting with him when he was in town and talking to him about this issue. We became good colleagues, good contacts. I let him know that I really didn't want to pull their tax exemption cards in Washington. I didn't meet him the first time and tell him I was going to pull the tax cards. I sort of worked the contact for a long time and then started to ask him what kind of benefits they had in Washington and asked him why shouldn't we have a similar benefit in Ouaga. It went on like that. And also I reminded him that we were going to build the NEC, and it was going to be a four hundred million building, or some ridiculous-sounding price—maybe it wasn't that much, I can't remember—which blew their minds. They had this picture that of course we were going to buy everything there, which isn't the case either.

We do spend significant amounts of money locally when we build an NEC, and the workers all bring significant amounts of money that they spend on local economy. I also had to work with the GOBF land office on land issues. I brought [staff from] the Office of Foreign Missions out to Ouaga, and they helped me in the meetings with the finance ministry. And it worked. They agreed to tax exoneration, which meant it would be a lot of paperwork. We had to fill out rafts of paper, and it had to be done before you purchased, something. It wasn't a tax reimbursement scheme. We had to get the papers approved at the finance ministry and then take the papers to the vendor, who wouldn't charge us the tax. And we also got the guarantee that the vendor— The tricky thing about



getting that exemption on the construction of new embassies is that it's not the embassy that is buying all those things. It's a company [hired by the State Department to build the embassy] buying those things. I sometimes wonder if our government would ever agree to these things that we're doing. Why? Because our argument was that yes, that company is buying those things, but their money is coming from the U.S. government, and therefore since we are tax exempt, so should be that company [for things purchased for our building].

*Q: Just to clarify then, when at least in Burkina Faso, when we were building the new embassy, it isn't U.S. government workers and the U.S. government flying in and doing everything. The U.S. government actually contracts with some company and/or companies to do it.*

HASKELL: Right. So there are pre-qualified companies that are U.S. companies. I believe that at some point there were six qualified companies, but really only three of them were ever doing any bidding. And to be honest, many of them, all of them, subcontract

I don't know who won the contract for the NEC building because I wasn't there anymore. But I also had to deal with the new building being built in Johannesburg and a new building being built in Santo Domingo. We have here in Brazzaville, where I am now, a Marine Guard Residence and a warehouse being built. The prime contractors often subcontract. The majority of the labor is subcontracted to others, and they're usually foreign companies. Turks are a big; there are a couple of Turkish companies that are very big in the subcontracting. And we [the U.S. government] demand that we get VAT exoneration on everything to do with the construction on those sites, even though they're being built by companies and not by the U.S. government, specifically. We've managed to do it. It takes a lot of convincing, very often. But no other diplomatic mission in Ouaga had this tax exoneration for official purchases, ever. I didn't even ask for personal purchase exoneration. I wanted the official first, but by the time I left, they had promised to also start to do the personal exoneration. Again, I don't know if it actually was implemented because I left, and then there were a couple of years of mess, so I'm not sure what happened. I hope that they kept moving forward with that.

One of the taxation issues was on the health insurance policy. They have some special taxation for a health insurance contract. And our contract was about \$249,900 a year, because we wanted a contract that we could sign post, which is one of the reasons we changed some of how the benefits were structured, to make sure we could stay under the limit for signing at post. It would have taken longer to have it signed in Washington. The way we got the contract under \$250,000 was to get them to exonerate the taxes.

So that was actually very useful.

*Q: Once you're done. The reason is because you only had contracting authority up to \$250,000.*

HASKELL: Our GSO did. We did some other things that they had never done. We did a management offsite. We did it at my house and brought the senior FSNs into this offsite. We did some strategic planning and team building. We talked about different leadership and management styles. We talked about why does the United States have an embassy in Burkina Faso? Because sometimes you don't even think about that, you know? What were our interests there? We talked about that. We talked about the cross-cultural aspects of working together. We tried to formulate some strategic goals for the section, and we learned a little bit more about ICASS. I think that off-site was well received. I didn't talk the whole time. I assigned or people volunteered to take on different aspects of the agenda. I remember the most fun we had was the icebreaker. I had chosen our Community Liaison Officer to lead the icebreaker. He decided to play Simon Says. Whenever I did an offsite again after that, I always mentioned to whomever was doing the icebreaker that maybe they should think about Simon Says. But nobody ever wants to do it. It was really fun.

So at a certain point in time, the DCM and the ambassador both left on the same day.

On July 1st, 2005. Their tours were over, and they left. And I was chargé. The Africa Bureau [AF]asked my husband to be acting DCM, which, of course, seem like a nepotism problem screaming very loud there. But they said it was their idea, not ours. There was no other way to do it at post because the two of us were FS-01s. My husband had gotten promoted as well, while we were there, and everybody else was not higher than an FS-03. The FS-03 was the IMO. They told us that they got a nepotism waiver or maybe they said they didn't have to have one. I don't know, but it was all AF's idea. They said that we could do it for sixty days. That was it. Our new DCM was scheduled to arrive literally on day sixty. For those sixty days it was—I don't know if people really think it can happen. But I think that we managed the post really well and that we worked together well. We separated the duties well. Of course, my husband had to keep doing public diplomacy work, and I had to keep doing management work because we didn't really have people to turn those duties over to. But during that time the first CEO [chief executive officer] of MCC, Paul Applegarth, came to sign the agreement for their threshold project, the grant proposal.

*Q: Sorry, what was the project for, if you recall?*

HASKELL: It was for improving access to girls' education.

*Q: For Burkina Faso, as poor as the nation is, to be able to qualify for an MCC project is a serious thing..*

HASKELL: Well, they couldn't meet enough of the seventeen indicators to get a full compact. The way that it works is if the country was on an upward trend but they couldn't meet the score for a compact, they could get what was called a threshold project. It was focusing on education. It had to be a project that could help their economic growth, and they were really not going nowhere with twenty percent literacy. They were very excited about it, the Burkinabé were. And Applegarth came to sign the agreement. Being

chargé was the first time I really needed to demarches. As management counselor, we didn't do demarches. We might talk to the MFA a lot, and we did a lot of contact work, but you didn't really get to do demarches.

I found myself giving demarches to the Foreign Minister. So it was interesting. There was a whole series of demarches that summer on UN Security Council enlargement. We were trying to push Africans onto our side, about the way we wanted it to be done. And most of the African countries were just deferring to the AU [African Union], whatever the AU would end up deciding. Obviously, we did not enlarge the Security Council, so that was probably what our preference was. There was also a famine in part of the country. It was coming across the border from Niger. USAID sent a DART—Disaster Assistance Response Team. We hosted them for a couple of weeks. We paved the way for them to find out what the issues were and how they could help and what kind of food relief was necessary. That was the first time I'd ever handled anything like that.

I was chargé for sixty days. Day sixty was a Saturday. We were having a big party at our house for some reason. I don't remember why. It was an afternoon party, and the new DCM was supposed to arrive on the Air France flight that evening. Ouagadougou airport was small. The place where you enter from the deplaning and get your bags is kind of like being in a barn. There were bugs, like locusts and things flying around, getting in your hair. It was not very spiffy and new, but it was only a ten-minute drive from our house to the airport.

So we could know when a plane arrived. We would hear it fly overhead. If there was a flight in the middle of the night, I would wonder if it was Charles Taylor moving diamonds, because there were no normal flights in the middle of the night. But we could be swimming at a friend's house near the school, and my husband would be coming in from somewhere and I was able to say to the kids that there's the plane, kids get out of the pool; we have to go home now. And by the time we got home, my husband would be coming from the airport.

So, the airport. Yes, we were having the party, and the plane came in and the new DCM wasn't on it. She called to tell us that she had missed her plane, just hadn't got to the airport in time or something came up. I don't remember what. So we went over sixty days, but I guess life went on. Our new DCM came and she was great to work for. We didn't get an ambassador for another, at least six months, maybe seven.

Also, as chargé I got to do a couple of other things. We had an American language center that was part of the PD [public diplomacy] program. It was a great program. I got to give the graduation speech when they came to the end of the semester. I did it in French because the family members couldn't understand. The American Embassy Language Center was another big positive part of being in the mission. One of the things we did was we offered for anybody who was working in the embassy to go and speak to the classes. You could choose if you wanted to speak to the beginner, the intermediate or the advanced class. I did that a few times and talked about Iraq policy and immigration and some other not-so-easy topics at the time. I remember once when mission leadership told

staff that they should all go and talk at the American Language Center, but that they didn't have to uphold the U.S. policies. This was in a country team meeting. So the meeting ended and my husband and I made a beeline for the door and said, no, they have to uphold U.S. policy. That's their job.

What my husband and I said was that we would teach them how to speak in a way that they don't feel compromises their own values. Because you can, you can speak about policies—you can say what is American policy, this is the government's policy. You don't have to say it's your own. We told him we would work with them so that they could understand how to do it. They were all first and second tour officers. And we just told him that we would handle it, but that they had to uphold U.S. policy. But I was, we were very shocked when we heard that. And if you think about it back then the big controversy at the time was that many of us didn't agree with the Iraq policy of invading Iraq. And that just seems to pale in comparison to what's going on right now. That was a good learning experience for what was coming in the future.

One thing I forgot to talk about was the right sizing report. This is one of those things that nobody wanted to do, and it was the first time we had to do it. But in order for us to get our NEC moved up, we had to do a rightsizing report. Which, for context, was basically laying out current staffing and what would staffing need to be in five years, or later, depending on when your embassy is going to be built. And then you had to justify any increases in the staffing. And all the agencies had to agree with both—current and proposed staffing. They had to say that yes, they wanted to have this many in the future. So you have to work with all agencies. But, of course, in Ouagadougou we didn't have other agencies that were going to be collocated in the building because Peace Corps was never collocated. So we were working with agencies that were bugging us to have space in the building because they planned to open an office there. But they wouldn't own up to it in Washington because they didn't want to have to put in any money into capital cost sharing. Capital cost sharing was a funding feature where for the number of positions overseas, each agency had to pay X dollars per year for a desk position and X dollars for a non-desk position. And then even more if they have desks in a classified access area.

So I did this whole rightsizing report. It was also required to justify why you were not outsourcing more services. For example, if you had a lot of electricians and carpenters and whatever, you had to justify why you weren't contracting for carpenter services or electrician services. And if you were in a post that had other agencies, you had to talk about [consolidated administrative services]. If your administrative services weren't consolidated you had to justify why not. It was during the rightsizing review and the NEC block and stack together that we talked about the health unit, because I was putting into that that we wanted a [Foreign Service] health practitioner.

M/PRI [Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation]—I don't know if that's what it was called then—but the office is where you sent your right-sizing report. They really liked my report. They loved the format, and I covered all the things I was supposed to cover, I guess. And so then they sent it out to all the Africa posts so they could see how they were supposed to do it. Of course, the next time I did one in South

Africa, they also really loved it, and they thought it was great. I didn't say, yeah, that's because I did it the same way I did before.

I mentioned that we didn't have a lot of management expertise in Ouagadougou before and so things that we had to do were drafted from scratch, occasionally edited from previous, but mostly drafted from scratch. Things like a retirement policy, recruitment and hiring policies, a cell phone use policy, travel policies, training policies, reduction force policy. By having all of these policies, we were able to reduce the perception of favoritism. If you don't have a policy on who gets to have training or how you get to have training, then everyone just sees that you send the same people or maybe it appears that you're sending the same people. In every embassy, there was a complaint about FMO. Perception was that everyone in the financial management section got to go on training more than anybody else. It's probably somewhat true, but they have to because things change constantly. They are constantly getting new software and new requirements, and they really have to know what they're doing. So that's why they go.

But just trying to improve the transparency and making people understand why decisions are made, how they're made. And again, talking with the FSN Association all the time on all these things. We had a self-help program, which was little bits of money that the ambassador could spend on approved projects. These projects could be things like building a new water pump at the well in a village, building a small school, even. You could do something like that for about ten thousand dollars. The community [that benefited from the project] had to contribute. Usually they contributed the labor, and they did all the building or whatever. And then what embassy staff did was volunteer to go do the opening of the finalized project. I volunteered to open a school in a place that the car could hardly get to. It was one of these big SUVs [sport utility vehicles]. It had to go through the bushes and through the creeks where there was no real road.

The whole village turned out. It was a huge thing. There was a feast with goats and the whole thing. I made a speech, and they made lots of speeches. It was a whole day event. It was really fun. At one point when our DCM, who was chargé, left to go on vacation or something, that was when Compaoré had his inauguration from the election I mentioned earlier. Since she was gone, I was chargé. I got to go to the inauguration as the [official, senior] U.S. government representative because Washington didn't send anybody, so that was kind of fun.

Meanwhile, as time was running down, we had to bid again. The first thing was formulating where we thought we might want to go. I was always prepared ahead of the list coming out. I used to look at the microfiche or at the staffing patterns and try to figure out where there would be jobs for us both. This time the Africa Bureau approached us and encouraged both of us to bid on DCM jobs. They told us that we could be posted close by each other, that maybe one of us could be DCM in Niamey and the other one in Bamako. They weren't promising, but they were just saying that they would try to get us close together. And we responded with a nope, we had kids. They were in school. The schools at those posts weren't good enough for high school. Our oldest was going into ninth grade and, oh, by the way, we like to live together.

So, we did not entertain that idea. And we focused our bids on South Africa and also Jakarta and Nairobi. I don't remember what else, other bids, but those were the three places that we could have said which one was our first choice, and we would have probably gotten the job. But I had gone to at least two or three conferences in South Africa. I had decided we really needed to be going there because I really loved it. We looked to see what was available there, and it was a little bit tricky.

It's funny because I remember that when I went to my first budget workshop, it was in Ngorongoro Crater in Tanzania. [There's a word that goes along with that, that's not very flattering. I think the word is boondoggle, but actually it was incredible. I learned so much and made so many important and useful contacts.] I went to Dar Es Salaam first for a little workshop. They had a three-day workshop for us for Foreign Service nationals on some finance stuff. Since I didn't know what I was doing, I told AF/EX that I wanted to attend. They told me that I probably already knew the material. I told them they thought I knew more than I did. It was fun to sit with the Foreign Service nationals and learn together. There were a couple of other first time FMOs there. Then we went on to Ngorongoro Crater [for the budget workshop]. It was magnificent.

It decided to have the workshop there because the budget director for the Africa Bureau had been the budget director for something like forty years. He was retiring, and he was also very, very sick. It was his wish to have the workshop there. In the end he couldn't go because he was too sick. But it was quite an introduction for me to a budget workshop. The next year, it was in Johannesburg. I just couldn't even believe that that was a part of Africa. So, we looked at what was going on there and bid. I had already decided that I was never doing another GSO tour. I had already done two—Prague and Tel Aviv. But I told my husband that to go to South Africa, I would do GSO again because it was the only job open that I could get. There was a supervisory GSO position. He was now thinking about changing cones from consular cone to PD cone. He'd just done a three-year PD tour. He put in his application to change cones, and it was approved. What we were looking at was me applying for the supervisory GSO job in Pretoria and him applying for the BPAO [branch public affairs officer] job in Johannesburg.

I sent an email. I always start these things way early, and I sent an email to the management counselor, with a little bit of information about my background and experience. And she wrote back and told me that she was creating a new position called deputy management counselor and that I was more qualified for that job, and that she would like me for that job. Which, of course, I was thrilled about because I didn't really want to be a GSO again. We were worried though, because this job in Joburg, the PD job in Joburg, would be a coveted job. And my husband wasn't a long-time PD-coned officer [having done only the Ouagadougou PD tour]. He had just changed cones, so we weren't sure if he would be able to get that job. But they agreed with it. The only stipulation was that the country PAO in Pretoria told him he had to live in Joburg due to evening events in Joburg that would be more difficult from Pretoria.

I was petrified that somebody from Iraq, all these people who had served in Iraq were rightly getting their first choices on their bidding. I just thought somebody was going to

see that Pretoria job and really grab it out from under me and that the post wouldn't really have a choice. But it didn't happen, and we got those two jobs. We were very excited about it. I will finish up by saying that we picked that post because we wanted to live in South Africa, but also there was a very good school [for our kids]. We wanted our son to finish all four years there because he was not the sort of kid who should move his senior year. So while we were on home leave, before going to South Africa, we got word that the State Department had changed the rules for extensions. [The new rule was that] if you weren't at a 15 percent hardship post, you couldn't extend. And Pretoria and Joburg had only 5 percent hardship. We were, like, Oh my god, what are we going to do now? But we will have to continue that in our next session.

*Q: So looking back on the Ouagadougou tour, given all of the different things you've done, first question is, did you get an award because you did so many things?*

HASKELL: I did. I did get a meritorious honor award for the taxation success and the getting the land for the NEC.

*Q: Okay. And then the other question is looking back on what you did, were there skills, talents, experiences that you were able then to use later that were helpful?*

HASKELL: Many, many, many, many. I had learned so much there because it was such a small post and there weren't a lot of people. The political officer was a first-tour officer and the econ officer was a first-tour officer. The consular officer was a first-tour officer. The GSO was a first-tour officer. So when looking at the staffing of that post there was nobody at post that wasn't my boss, didn't report to me, or I wasn't married to, except the consular officer. Well, I guess the OMSs [officer management specialist], but they were kind of a boss in a way supporting the bosses.

But anyway, it was a small post where I did get a lot of experience. All of those things that I talked about, all those issues I had to deal with, those don't come up in most posts. In most posts those issues have already been taken care of. So I really was exposed to this opportunity to address issues, many of which were brought to me; I didn't identify all of them. People would come and ask me, Why not this? Why don't we have that? Can we have more money? But what about this? People would bring an issue to me, but then I would dig in and start looking for an answer. One thing was the local compensation plan.

So we did it. I didn't even mention it, but we did update the local compensation plan, and we did update the FSN handbook. We did all those things. It was a lot of work. But it was very rewarding because I felt like everybody, especially the local staff really appreciated it. Some of them still, even now, write to me to ask me to provide them a letter when they're applying for an SIV. One of them just did it not that long ago. So I feel like I made a positive difference in people's lives. There was one thing I even forgot to mention. We used to be the provider of a lot of things. So for example, there were no post-exposure rabies vaccines. They didn't have them anywhere else in Burkina Faso, but we had them at the embassy. Whenever anybody got bit by a cat or a bat or whatever, no

matter who they were, they could come to us and we would give one to them, but they had to buy a new one to replace the one they used. They cost a thousand dollars.

*Q: Wow. Okay.*

HASKELL: But we didn't have a mechanism to accept money from them, so we worked out a deal with the American Embassy Recreation Association [AERA]. The person who got the vaccine would give the money to AERA, and then AERA would order a replacement vaccine for the embassy. We did things like that. We had a lot of folding chairs and nobody else did. So the school would borrow them from us—tables and folding chairs. One time the school was using our chairs, and one of our drivers went on a Sunday to pick them up and bring them back to the embassy. He was driving down the road, he was not speeding, and a guy on a moto came out from a side street, and our driver hit him. The guy died.

So it was a terrible, terrible accident. It was another one of those experiences that you get where you learn an awful lot about things. I had to deal with the U.S. Department of Justice. They helped me hire a lawyer. But even before all that, I had to go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because the rule was that the Burkinabé driver should have been arrested and put in jail. I went directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and talked with my contact there, who had become a very good contact. He had been the Burkinabé DCM in Washington before. His English wasn't that great, even though he lived in the United States. And my French wasn't very good, but we managed to communicate very well. And I explained to him the situation.

I asked him not to let the police arrest the driver. He explained that it was the law and that he was under Burkinabé law. I agreed that it was under their law. No problem. But I added that the embassy was hiring a lawyer for him and couldn't they just let him out? I said that we were getting a lawyer and that we would handle this all according to the law. I just asked for a chance, and they did. They let him out. I learned; I hadn't known how to do that. But I knew to call L [Office of the Legal Advisor] and ask them what to do. I explained that one of our employees accidentally killed somebody. Some people wouldn't do that—call L. Some people would just let them languish in jail.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: I learned so many things there about the tech station, right—about getting land, about the legal issues, and how to work with the Department of Justice about how to increase the allowances for the guards. How to, I don't know—I can't even say at all. There were just so many situations I had never found myself in that I didn't have anyone at post to ask, and so I had to figure it out. And I did.

*Q: Now also looking back, were your kids excited to go? Were they happy? Did they adapt well?*



HASKELL: They really loved it. In fact, when we went to South Africa, when it was time to go on our vacation, they told us they wanted to go back to Burkina Faso. We said, uh, no. To be honest, there's no reason to go there. If you're a tourist and you don't have much money, don't waste it there. But the kids loved it. It was probably the perfect time in our family life because when your kids get too old, they want to go to the shopping mall and be on their own and go to parties and that stuff. And that just wasn't going to happen there. So they were all still young enough, where parents were still the center of the universe. We should have invested in Amazon. It was a very young company then. We bought a lot of games; we played a lot of board games. We had probably twenty subscriptions to magazines, and we were reading books like crazy. That was when Amazon was just a bookstore. We spent a lot of time together as a family. The school was very small. There were only about 150 students from age two and a half to grade twelve.

I think it was probably a little hard for our oldest son because his class was only ten people. And it was sort of the African kids and the missionary kids and then Michael. He had to try to fit into those two groups. They didn't really feel like he fit in that much. He didn't want to go to Bible study with the missionary kids, and he couldn't play soccer well enough to keep up with the African kids. So it was hard.

*Q: And then the last question I have before we close is looking back on the time you were walking to group, had it progressed?*

HASKELL: A little bit. You could see little things. I seem to remember they had some new public buses. They were investing a little bit in transportation. They had a big plan for a new airport, but that still has not come to be a real thing.

It was sad. It's a sad place. I think it's better now. I would say in the three years we were there, some positive things. Burkina is on the main road from the coast, from Ghana up to Niger. All the trucks would pass through. They should have had a pretty high HIV rate, but they didn't. It was only, I think it was less than 4 percent. All in all, it was a country that had pretty high moral values. They had a lot of respect for each other; they had a respect for people. They had a problem with girls' education. That was where a lot of the foreign aid was going, towards girls' education. There were some really innovative programs.

We didn't come up with these innovative programs, mostly because we weren't big there in the foreign aid world. But the Dutch and the French and others—Canadians were there and the EU was there. So they had some really nice programs that we joined in on for girls' education. For example, if parents signed their daughter up for school, and she went to school at least X many days a month, she got to take home X pounds or kilos of mealie meal or whatever grain. And also they made it so that the parents could go to literacy classes if they chose to. There were a lot of programs like that. So it was a very basic place where, like I said, there wasn't a real supermarket. There was a small crowded street; the store was about the size of a big 7-Eleven, with two aisles of super cheap,

crappy Chinese toys that were being sold for outrageous prices. You couldn't really find most things. It was a place where you really needed the consumables.

*Q: Okay. So at this point I think then we can close the chapter on Ouagadougou, and we will pick up at the next session on South Africa.*

*Okay. So today is November 18. We're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell, who's recording from Brazzaville. Jennifer, let's just remind where you left. Where did you go and in what year?*

HASKELL: [We went to South Africa in] 2006.

*Q: Okay. And you're on.*

HASKELL: Okay, thanks. Nice to see you again. I wanted to start with something that happened during our home leave between Ouagadougou and Pretoria. It was important because I think last time I talked a bit about our bidding process, and we had been looking for a place where we could extend to do a four-year tour because our oldest son was entering ninth grade. Other very interesting opportunities we had besides South Africa were Jakarta or Nairobi, both having excellent schools and would have been really nice tours, I'm sure. But we had decided to go to South Africa and while we were on home leave we went to get together with a lot of people that we knew from when we were posted in Tel Aviv, I think. And there were others there, too. One of the guests mentioned—I think we might've been serving with him in Ouagadougou and he had left before we did—or asked us if we knew that they had a new rule that if the post is under 15 percent differential you can no longer extend?

Which was a problem for us because at the time [the posts in] South Africa was only 5 percent hardship differential posts and that would mean that we would have had to move our son, our oldest son, when he was going into senior year of high school, which we didn't think was a very wise thing to do for him. Some kids can do it, and some kids aren't going to succeed at that. So that was a concern for us before we even arrived at post. We wondered, what do we do, do we try to curtail? But at the end, at that moment, we didn't have any option but to go ahead and go. So off we went for our tour in South Africa.

I was assigned to Pretoria as the deputy management counselor and my husband was assigned to Johannesburg as the public affairs officer. In order to come to agreement for those two assignments, we had to agree that we would live in Johannesburg. I could technically have had a house in Pretoria, but we had three kids. I wasn't interested in that [living apart]. The need to live in Joburg had to do with the activities he would be doing as a public affairs officer, often in the evenings. The problem with that would be created by the commute in that direction, because a lot of people living in Pretoria, and in the area between Pretoria and Johannesburg, work in Johannesburg. That would have been an uncomfortable commute in any regard. I was the lucky drawer of the short stick, and I commuted from Johannesburg to Pretoria for four years. It wasn't so bad. I don't really

remember complaining about it. And I think maybe only four times in the entire tour did I get stuck on the highway due to some really nasty traffic issue—an accident or something. So that's really not bad. It happens more than four times a year, I think, in Washington.

The consulate did house us in a nice house that was quite close to the highway. It was an easy on and off for me to get onto the highway. It was pretty far north from where they were housing people at the time. Now they are housing people even further north. But at that time we were one of the furthest north. Of course, South Africa is a big mission; it has four posts. Each of the posts had a management officer, but of course they worked very closely with us in Pretoria. So I was very involved in all of the consulates as well—Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape town—as well as the embassy in Pretoria. We had a lot of issues in South Africa. So I'm going to lay out how I'm going to talk about this and some of the things were sort of all-encompassing and covered the gamut the whole time I was there.

Like crime. I'll talk a little bit about crime and how it impacted what we did. It had quite a large impact on the functioning of the posts, in some regard. And then there was a whole raft of management issues that I think were interesting and where we made a lot of impact, I think, positive impact on many of those issues that were ongoing. And then there were things that were outside of the specifically management realm that I want to mention. Things that I did. For example, we had a big SecState visit with Secretary Clinton. [SecStates usually go to Joburg and Victoria. So that's normal.]

That's almost like one city in a way. But then the secretary decided she had to go to Cape Town and then she had to go to Durban. So the trip grew over time. I was overall control officer, so I'll go through the visit a little bit, not in detail but a bit. And also of course in 2010, which is the year that we left, was the FIFA world cup soccer tournament and Vice President Biden came to that. I was also the overall control officer for that visit. I will talk about that. Let me start with crime because that's sort of, I think one of the main things that people talk about [with South Africa]. It's interesting to me because people who are posted there now tell me how horrible crime is.

I've been down to South Africa a couple of times in the last few years. I was posted there in 2016–2017. I have a hard time wrapping my head around this concept that the crime is so much worse than before because it doesn't seem like that to me. But the crime was instrumental in all kinds of things. Our differential, how we did our housing—everything—issues on airport transfers, recruitment was quite an issue because of the crime, and it was very different from any place I'd been before in terms of crime. There wasn't any place where there wasn't crime; it was in every neighborhood and it was indiscriminate, really quite violent.

The criminals were as likely to kill you for your cell phone as for something that you might think of as more important or valuable. It was a consideration that did enter into our lives. It was something we considered when we bid. We chose to deal with it, personally, by agreeing between us about what ways we would change our behavior and

that we would do those things without fail. And then we enjoyed our life. I will say that in no other posts in thirty years have I used a residential alarm system or locked a security gate in sleeping quarters, ever. But in South Africa we used that alarm system every night, every time everyone was out of the house, and we locked that gate every single night. Other small things that we just agreed to do were those things that the RSO was telling us to do everywhere [in all posts].

Mostly I think, things like don't stop too close to the car in front of you so that you have maneuvering room. Carjacking was quite common and very violent. So I did. And because I was driving all the time so far back and forth all the time, I tried to be very cognizant of rolling up my window, not coming to a stop with my windows down. I rolled my window up every single time and watched in the mirrors. I learned to watch the mirrors as people would come down the sides of the cars from the back, through the traffic looking to do smash and grabs. Those were also very common. So we managed, and we didn't do stupid things.

We drove around wherever we wanted to go, for the most part, but we knew better than to drive into places we really didn't know, we weren't familiar with. We did drive in Soweto, but only to the places that we knew, and so it was fine. But we didn't drive into some of the other townships that we weren't familiar with. We were known to drive through Alexandria, which is a huge township that was about two kilometers from our house. Sometimes it was a shortcut, but we didn't do it as a routine. Certainly we would avoid it, anyway. So, crime will come into play as I talk about different things that we did.

To speak more specifically about Pretoria and the management section. The management counselor was in her fourth year there, and she had never had a deputy before. It was a brand new position. I was the first one in the position. It was great having someone there who was so familiar with everything because I was able to learn a lot from her. I did spend a lot of time that year just sort of soaking in her incredible institutional knowledge. And it was hard for her having done it all herself for three years to let go of things a little bit. And I was able to spend a lot of that time working on budget issues. We split up the work. I had the financial management section, the GSO section, and facilities management.

What she decided, what the management counselor decided, was that those sections that were supervised by a Senior Foreign Service officer, she handled them. And I took the others because I was an FS-01 at the time. This was a time when the department had a lot of budget problems. I think in our mission alone, we had, at one point, a five million dollar budget shortfall that year. We had to be super creative on how to manage that. Of course, no post wants to have the way you manage it dictated by Washington, so you have to try to head that off. I think that we were quite good at it. I think the main way that we decided to handle it was through managing our vacancies. It was a big post. Of course, payroll was an enormous expense, and we had a lot of FSNs. Probably cumulatively, I'm just going to guess. We probably had around six hundred or seven hundred FSNs among the four posts.

We managed EFM [eligible family member] positions. Or we don't really have EFM positions anymore. But in South Africa we had a lot of EFMs employed because it's an English language post. They get the hiring preference. So at any given time, we would have maybe fifty EFMs working somewhere in the embassy [or consulates]. They took "normal" jobs that would routinely be FSN jobs, like in financial management or GSO or wherever, and information technology jobs, too. So we had a lot of vacancies. We managed those jobs when they became vacant. So we basically created a long list of all the vacancies and then we decided how long we would wait to fill each one. We had a plan for at what point would something in that section become critical, for how long could we manage [without filling the position]. We had to take into account when would the American supervisors be leaving and where would there be gaps and what were the experience levels of various supervisors.

And we did a pretty good job of that. Obviously, it was not the only thing we did, but I think I used that same technique when we had the hiring freezes. After I left, Pretoria had those, those four years of hiring freezes or however long it was. We did the same thing once Washington told us we could fill some positions, as we made sure we knew exactly what positions needed to be filled most importantly. We had issues related to crime that we had to deal with in the management section. One of the ones that came up really quite early on was airport transfers. There were, and still are, criminal elements who target people leaving the airport. And there have been a number of embassy community people—U.S. embassy community people—who had been targeted and robbed at that time, a couple.

Since then, it continues to happen. It goes in waves. The police crack down on it, and it stops for a while, then somebody starts again and then they have to work through it again. But the thing was that everybody had decided that we could only take an embassy vehicle to the airport. You weren't allowed to take a car service. None of us used taxis because they weren't considered [by the RSO] to be safe. But we used car services fairly frequently and they decided we shouldn't take car services to the airport, which made no sense to me at all. There was nothing to say that our cars—embassy cars—were safer. The criminals didn't know what a diplomatic license plate was. That wasn't going to stop them. So I didn't understand it.

And worse yet, I mentioned that I didn't really understand why the embassy couldn't use a car service because when I went to Johannesburg in the past for three years—at least once a year for conferences or workshops—and every single time the embassy in Pretoria told me to take a car service from the airport. And would it mean that we were going to start saying in our consular travel advisories that U.S. citizens shouldn't take car services if they came to South Africa? If they were tourists in South Africa? That made no sense. People kind of got mad at me because they really wanted to be able to take a motor pool. I really stuck to my guns though because I didn't think it was right to say that you had to take the motor pool [for safety] if, in fact, you didn't have to take the motor pool. And if we really did feel so strongly about it that we had to take a motor pool, were we going to start shuttling the tourists around? Pretoria was a huge regional embassy; we had probably dozens of people who were traveling constantly. We had a RIMC, regional

information management center. We had a marine headquarters for the marine security guard program in Africa. We had lots of other regional people that really didn't even work in South Africa much at all, who were just constantly traveling—electronic security people, et cetera. And we had a diplomatic courier hub, so it was a lot of travel.

We were a medivac center; we had everything. We had people coming in for medivacs. Well, okay, you know what? The medivac center didn't use the embassy vehicles, either. They used a car service. I really stood up on it, and they couldn't really argue about it. It worked out. And we also saved a boatload of money doing that because so many of the flights were in the evenings. Motor pool wasn't too happy because they didn't get as much overtime. But also the costs for those transfers. It's a long way to the airport. Pretoria and Joburg used the same airport, and it's a fifty dollar travel service one way. Using the car service helped to put the money onto that person's travel voucher where it belongs instead of in the ICASS workload count of miles being traveled

We also worked out which car services were considered acceptable. Basically the RSO did some vetting on the owners of those companies and how they hire their drivers. We didn't vet every driver; you really couldn't do that. But RSO checked how the company did their personnel records, and GSO sent somebody out to check the safety procedures for the maintenance of the vehicles and some things like that. It was an interesting struggle to have gone through because it was a place where so many people traveled through. The crime also really affected housing. I think in the first year that I was there, there were something like sixteen attempted or successful home break-ins or invasions in embassy official housing. One was really quite scary and awful, and it could have been so bad. I'll talk a little bit about how we changed some procedures because of some of the things that were happening. Like I said, it was everywhere. There was no neighborhood you could move to to avoid crime. We had to have some serious discussions among the country team to figure out what we could do to improve security.

And what it boiled down to was that we needed to improve our housing security in a way that DS really wasn't familiar with. It wasn't part of their standard operating procedures, but because of the facts of what had been going on in South Africa, we were able to convince them. Our RSO was fabulous. He did a really great job. We wrote cables with the rationale of what we wanted to do and why it was important. It used to be that the RSO [security standards] would only protect your house. They didn't care if your garden furniture got stolen. So the yard wasn't part of it. We had to have a wall, of course. So we convinced Washington that we should move the perimeter that everyone cared about from the walls of the house to the walls of the garden. We had entry gates, and we had remote controls to open the gates.

Those gates, the locks could be easily overcome. The criminals would just lift the gate up off of its track and then they could come right in. So we altered the alarm system, our house alarm system, to cover the gate so that if the gate was left open more than, I think it was two minutes or something, the alarm would sound. Or if the gate was lifted or was opened in any way other than by the remote control, the alarm would sound. We didn't have [residential] guards because our guards would be unarmed and all the criminals

were heavily armed. A pickup truck with a bunch of guys with big guns in the back would come barreling up to a house and demand the guard open the gate. If we had an unarmed guard standing there, I kind of hope he would open the gate because otherwise he's going to be shot. So we did not have guards at the time on any houses except I guess probably the DCR [deputy chief of mission's residence] and the CMR [chief of mission residence]. We also realized that people would open their gate—we had remote gate buttons inside our houses. They would open their gate anytime the bell rang because they couldn't see who was there.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: So we put in video bells, basically a video camera and a bell and a speaker system so we could tell people to put their identification badge up in front of the camera. DS approved that as well. South Africa was one of the few places where our houses were less fortified, let's say, than the neighbors'. Most places you can always spot U.S. embassy houses because it's got all kinds of security going on. But in South Africa everybody's house had that. More particularly, electric fencing above the walls. That was typical, but we had not been requiring it up to that point. We had a lot of houses we'd had for a long time. We had thirty or so U.S. government-owned houses. None of those houses had that electric fencing, and it really made them a target. So we got DS to pay for electric fencing and to make it a requirement. We had, at the time, a few small housing compounds, little developments.

*Q: The screen was frozen. I don't know if you can hear me. We may be losing contact. I'm going to pause the recording for a moment to see if we can reestablish.*

*Okay. So we're recording again. Just pick up where you left off.*

HASKELL: Let me think about that. Oh, housing compounds. We had a few small housing compounds where we had maybe three or five houses or eight houses, and sometimes we had maybe three houses in a compound of eight houses or something. Certainly the South Africans themselves were moving more and more into these small compounds for security reasons. We decided that we should move as many people as we could into housing compounds. But of course this is not an immediate solution because we have to go find them. And some of them we actually had to have built because there weren't enough on the market in places where we could take them at lease rates we could pay. So we had to make a whole system for assigning the houses in compounds.

Basically we decided that all newcomers would be put into compound units, if it was the right size family. And if we had some available. So newcomers always had the first shot at any compound house we had available. But what we wanted to do is lease as many compound houses we could find. As we found more, as more came onto the market, we would take them all and then we would move people from their stand-alone house to the compound. And it was assumed, I think correctly, that there would be discontent about how people [who were not newly arrived] were selected to move [into a compound].

Interestingly, it wasn't that people didn't want to be told to move; it was that people really wanted to move. So then what we did was we made a list.

We had a decision-tree for deciding who would get to move. Once we came up with the system, people calmed down, and they didn't really care as much if they moved. So it was fine and we pretty much had had it so that newcomers were pretty much going into compounds. And we had a few families that were really quite anxious to move into compounds. We were able to move those most anxious people within a few months or so. We did, and still do have about, I think it's maybe twenty-seven government-owned houses, which are all stand-alones. Although I think there is one little compound of three houses [that we own]. But we continued to put people in those places—stand-alone government-owned houses—but only people who wanted to, and it was one of those things that we asked people before they came to post, how did they feel about it? Although they didn't get a choice to not be in a compound, if we were going to put them in one, they couldn't say that they didn't want it.

The only choice there was, if we had a stand-alone house available was, were they okay with that? But the system made a huge difference, because we, for reasons I still don't fully understand, the RSO also decided that for housing compounds where we have all of the houses, we would have [embassy residential] guards, unarmed guards.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: We also had, since crime became an issue there, we had an armed response team. If our house alarm went off, we had a separate contract for armed response. They were guys with guns; they were employed by a South African security company and a lot of people use them. It was pretty common. They would come zooming to your house and you could stay in your safe haven while they would talk to you through your cell phone or whatever. And they would walk around the outside of the house and look at things and find out what caused the alarm to sound. I never quite understood how we justified having guards on housing compounds but not on stand-alone houses. It was certainly cheaper on a per house basis to have a guard post at a compound than at a stand-alone. But once we started to use compounds, we had residential guards on the compounds. They would open and shut the gate, and they would screen visitors and those things, which I guess maybe they wouldn't have been doing if we had them on single family homes. We still don't have them on single family homes in South Africa, and I actually still agree with that. I don't think it would be very effective.

*Q: Did anyone have the right or did they select to have firearms as part of protection?*

HASKELL: We had the policy that if you wanted to bring in a weapon for any reason, you had to get the ambassador's permission. And we did have people who hunted, so there were people with the hunting weapons and they had to have permission. Not very many. Just a few.



*Q: It looks like I've lost you again. Let's wait a second. We may be able to get the connection back.*

*This session will be a little choppy, but you're still coming through fine. The audio quality's fine. So let's continue as far as we can.*

HASKELL: Okay. So there were other things related to the crime issue, which we had to do. So for example, with recruitment, one of the things that was happening at about the same time that we were busily changing, was how we were managing our housing program due to the crime. We found that we had a lot of problems where people would accept a handshake for a position, and then a few weeks later they would change their minds and say they didn't want to go to South Africa because it was too dangerous. We had people literally come to post and within a week curtail because they were too afraid to come out of their house. We had a lot of people who didn't curtail but who never would go anywhere by themselves. People who would not get in their car and drive to the grocery store by themselves. Which seemed to me at the time kind of crazy because I was driving every day back and forth from Joburg to Pretoria.

But what we decided to do when bidding season came around—we did it for two or three years—we drafted a paragraph that said, If you're going to be bothered by the crime, please don't bid here. We did it because we just couldn't keep up with the people who wanted to leave or were refusing to take the job at a later date because they hadn't realized there was crime. So we had a paragraph that described the crime and described the measures we took and what would be expected of them in terms of their own safety. We told everyone that if anybody gets an inquiry about a job, they had to include that paragraph in their response. I remember at one point, somebody who worked for me sent me something he had sent to somebody. I noticed that he hadn't included the paragraph in his reply, so I mentioned it to him. He told me that he couldn't include it because then people won't bid on our posts. I told him that was the point. It was too hard to manage people who were too afraid to be there.

*Q: Here, let me ask this question before I forget. This is all of the security precautions you're taking for officers and EFMs. What about kids?*

HASKELL: The school that most kids went to was the American International School in Johannesburg [AISJ]. Even many of the younger kids and all of the older kids in Pretoria went to that school too because it wasn't really in Johannesburg. It was north of Johannesburg, in the countryside of the northern suburbs of Johannesburg.

It had a satellite campus in Pretoria that, at the time, I think kids up to grade four maybe could go there, but they didn't have to. Some parents, if they had older kids who needed to go to AISJ, they might choose to send their younger kids there, too, so they didn't have to deal with two campuses. The crime put a damper on being a teenager, and parents had to learn probably to accept things they might not have in other circumstances. So with the exception of embassy kids, including much of the diplomatic community, all the other kids that went to that school— And it was all expats; there were very few South

African kids, but there were a lot of corporate kids and different NGO kids. Anyway, they—the non-diplomat kids—lived in huge gated communities down near the school. There were sometimes more than a thousand houses. There were two or three of those gated communities.

Embassy/consulate kids that lived in Johannesburg—and there weren't very many kids in Johannesburg that weren't corporate or NGO kids—kids had a bus pick them up because we were the biggest consulate there. Other consulates didn't really have kids. If kids were going to a party, parties were usually in one of the gated communities near the school. And parents didn't want to go and pick their kid up at one in the morning or any time after midnight because it was considered dangerous to drive at that time of the night. So basically parties became big coed slumber parties. If you couldn't, as a parent, deal with that, then your kid was going to be pretty miserable. But most parents dealt with it. I would say a bigger problem than that, at the time, was that there was one class, my oldest son's class. It was a bit weird because it was about a third the size of the other classes. I think my son's senior class had maybe twenty-seven people in it while all the other classes were around seventy. That smaller class drank a lot. The kids that lived in the great big gated communities had a lot of parties with a lot of booze.

The school was concerned about that and they were trying to do the right thing. But basically the school got told by a lot of parents—to be honest, they were mainly the European or South American parents—to butt out. Those parents said that these are my kids and they can drink if they want. Wow. So it was a little scary at times. Our son didn't even really ask to go to parties, so we didn't have to deal with it much, but a lot of parents did.

You could go to shopping malls. There were a few really big malls and it was okay to take your teenagers and drop them off at the mall. The malls all had movie theaters and things like that. So, it wasn't bad. Our kids loved living there. We had one in elementary school, one in middle school, and one in high school the whole time. I think it was probably their favorite place they ever lived. The driving age was eighteen, so there was no issue about anybody driving because most kids weren't eighteen. I guess some seniors could get to be eighteen. I know that at one point some kids from the school were involved in a terrible accident. The person in the other car was some celebrity and it was a big mess. But the school had its own bus system, and it was quite large. They managed it well. Our kids, most kids who are on a bus from the embassy, our embassy, were on a bus for at least an hour each way.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: And the bus had little kids, middle school kids, and high school kids, which can sometimes be a problem.

But at the beginning of the school year, the school would do a “bus community” activity where the kids on the same bus had to set their rules. Pretty much the bigger kids got to set the rules, and little kids had to obey. But it worked and I thought it was good because

it meant that these kids, all these different aged kids, had to interact. They had to get along, and they were stuck together on those buses for two hours a day and more sometimes. Of course, as with any schools these days, it seems like there's always some problem with bullying. And so sometimes it would be a bus that would have somebody bonking somebody on the head or something, and we had to deal with things like that. But they weren't our embassy kids.

Most of the kids rode the school bus. Even the ones from the gated communities were riding a bus. They were like little vans for the most part. They weren't the typical American big yellow school bus. There were so many activities they could do. The school had fabulous after-school activities. They had buses to take kids home after the after-school activities because it was far away.

One thing that was interesting was that the RSO [regional security office] where we lived in Johannesburg, had its set of rules—where we could go, for example—and then our RSO in Pretoria had a slightly different set of rules. The Pretoria RSO told people not to drive to Joburg except by convoy. Of course, I was working in Pretoria, and I wasn't the only one. I think when we arrived there were three of us who are tandems and living in Johannesburg. And then another year went by and then there was another one. It was weird because there were four of us, yet we could not carpool. It just never worked. The only time we ever tried any kind of carpooling thing was if somebody had to put their car in the shop or somebody's car broke down or something. We would carpool in that situation, but we just couldn't get our schedules to coordinate. Everybody wanted to keep their own schedule. I left the house at 5:30 every morning and drove to the gym. I joined a gym in Pretoria, ten minutes from the embassy. So I would leave at 5:30, go to the gym, and then go to the embassy afterwards.

Other people didn't want to get up that early and go to the embassy or go to the gym, but they got stuck in a lot more traffic. Not that there was a lot of traffic, but when I would leave at 5:30 it was zero traffic going north. And some people stayed late all the time. I probably stayed later than I should have because if I tried to leave the embassy between 5:00 and 5:30 there would be too much traffic getting to the highway. So I would just leave at a quarter to 6:00 or 6:30. I think the rule we had at the time was I should be home by 7:00. That was our family rule. Dinner was at 7:00 and so I should be home for dinner. So that's typically what I did except in the occasional times when I had to work late.

But yeah, this concept that people shouldn't go from Pretoria to Joburg except in convoy seemed crazy. For example, my husband's office was in the central business district of Johannesburg, to which the Pretoria RSO said never to go there, that it was unsafe. But that was where the Joburg Public Diplomacy office was. In Pretoria we had somebody who I discovered was using the duty driver to get home, staying in the office late every day. You can't do that. That's why the government ships your car for you.

I was talking to a senior person in the embassy about the situation, and a more senior person asked why that wasn't allowed. I told them that the duty driver is for other reasons. They responded that the person's wife didn't want to drive in the dark because it

was dangerous. And I looked at them and said “excuse me, I drive home in the dark all the way to Joburg every single day. And you’re saying this person can’t drive five kilometers to pick up her husband?” They just commented that I was different. It was always a little bit weird. The crime, some people really were much more bothered by it and were unable to adapt. We did not let it bother us. We went out in the evening a lot. In Johannesburg, there were just incredible opportunities for cultural events, lots of theater and events. We did it all the time. There was one instance when my husband was driving home from his office when it was still in the CBD [central business district], before the new consulate building opened. In South Africa the driver’s side is on the right. When the car manufacturer changed the steering column to the right side, they didn’t move where the key goes in.

*Q: Oh wow.*

HASKELL: So my husband was doing what he wasn’t supposed to be doing according to our rules. He was sitting at a stoplight with the window down. He was the first in line at a stoplight when a guy came up to the window. It was an attempted carjacking. His goal was to turn off the car and take the key out. And of course my husband immediately smacked the guy and stepped on the gas at the same time and went zooming off. So it was a happy ending. But that was the only thing I would say that was a problem for us.

The most serious of the house invasions that we had was in Pretoria. One of our families, a couple, was having a Super Bowl party. They were sitting outside. It was a lovely summer night and it started to rain a little bit, so they moved inside. There were only maybe five guests left.

They moved inside the house, but they didn’t shut the doors or the security grill gates. A few guys came over the garden wall. They had pipe wrenches for weapons. One of the security measures we had in South Africa were panic buttons. Every family had one or two of them. If you were really a scared person, you could just wear it around your neck the whole time you were at home and have it always with you. If you pressed the button it would activate your house alarm. In Pretoria they were configured so that they activated the alarm so that you could hear the alarm and the armed response would be notified.

So they, the woman and her husband, and then the three guests—the intruders told the four guys to get on the floor under the table. Then they made the woman go around and show where things were in the house, which could have been a complete disaster. But it wasn’t, although I’m sure it was really very scary, but it could have been a lot worse. Meanwhile the other bad guys were going through the guys’ pockets while they were laying on the floor, looking for wallets or whatever. The guy who lived in the house had his panic bucket button in his pocket, and the guy accidentally pushed the button, which sounded the alarm. And luckily they just all ran.

So it was lucky, I mean, it was a very scary, horrible thing, and it could have been a terrible outcome. But for those of us living in Johannesburg, our panic buttons had been

set up so that if you pushed it, it wouldn't alert the bad guys because maybe they would shoot you or whatever. That was the theory. But when we saw how that worked in the Pretoria incident, we immediately had everything changed to audible. But we had a number of incidents where the robbers or burglars got into houses and stole things, people who were caught in the process of lifting gates or whatever. This was all part of what we were trying to stop, and it was after this Super Bowl party that we got very serious about how to improve the security features.

It was also why we wanted to increase the hardship differential. We felt that we should have higher than a 5 percent hardship differential. The way that they calculate a differential is based on several factors that are in a pie chart. Different factors weigh differently in the pie chart. And crime only represented, I think, 7 percent of the 100 percent. So no matter how bad the crime was, you can never get more than 5 percent differential, based on crime alone.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: We had a big effort to redo our differential report. And it was, I think, incredibly well done and well documented. We had a stack of documentation about an inch and a half thick, including newspaper articles and photos that people had taken of hijacking hotspot signs, the cables that we'd written that had to do with crime in the neighborhoods, et cetera. I was working with the Office of Allowances on this because they kept telling us that there was nothing they could do to increase our hardship differential. Eventually, I went past the analyst to the director of the office and told him I thought that was crazy, that they needed to change something because that was not an acceptable response. I invited him to come to South Africa and see for himself, do town hall meetings, meet the people, whatever. So he came. We had town halls at two of our posts, Johannesburg and Petrolia. I drove him, in my personal car, to the consulate for the town hall there in Johannesburg, and it just so happened that as we were getting in the car to drive back up to Pretoria the guards closed the gates to the consulate parking lot because there was a shooting at the on-ramp to the highway.

I didn't plan that. There were often "taxi wars." The taxi system was run like a mafia, and if one infringed on another's territory or whatever, they shot each other. And that was what was usually happening when there was shooting on the highway; it was taxis. But people get in the way and the people in the taxis, of course, were in big danger. That's when I learned about "director's points." Evidently the director of that office can assign extra points in exceptional circumstances. So our hardship differential was upgraded to 10 percent at all four posts. It took some doing. It was one of those things that I took on that people told me wouldn't work. And we couldn't try to go the danger pay route because it wasn't really that. And there were plenty of other issues we had there that added to the hardship. One of those that I'm also going to talk about now is electricity.

Electricity also calculated into this new differential because up until 2000, none of us had generators, except I think the marine houses and probably the chief of mission and deputy chief of mission houses because electricity had never been an issue in South Africa

before—not energy generation. They were selling energy to the rest of Southern Africa. Around the end of 2007 was when it was starting to get bad, the lack of sufficient electricity to meet demand. The consequences of not investing in infrastructure maintenance became evident and we started having rolling blackouts.

*Q: Cool.*

HASKELL: They just couldn't produce and distribute enough energy. There were too many breakdowns in the systems. Too many parts and pieces not working. Probably a lot of reasons for it. One problem was that people in the townships were connected to the electricity and not paying. I would never say that they were taking too much because they really couldn't. They probably had one light bulb in their shacks; it wasn't that they were using too much. It was mostly the maintenance and the breakdowns in the equipment. So they went to rolling blackouts. If it was planned, okay, fine, it would be rolling and you would kind of know when it would come. It would be two or three hours of blackout and then it would roll to another neighborhood.

And at the time they had these icons on the bottom of the TV screen that would indicate that a city was using too much electricity. You were supposed to turn things off. But more often than not, something would actually break and then the blackout could be sixteen hours or more. And for a lot of people that meant they didn't have water because the pumps that pump the water up the hills in the Pretoria area, mostly in Pretoria. I don't think anybody went without water in Joburg. But in Pretoria, people living around where the ambassador's residence was, Waterkloof Ridge, that area wouldn't have water because the pumps weren't pumping the water. Also, our security systems were electric. They had battery backup, but the batteries didn't last forever. And kids couldn't do their homework because their computers didn't work.

In February of 2008, I sent a cable to Washington asking for money. I asked for about five million dollars. I asked for \$2.8 million, I think from the State Department. And you add in all the agencies, it was about five million dollars for a generator program, to buy and install more than two hundred generators. It also included Botswana because they were tied completely to South African electricity. So our posting in Gaborone was part of this. We did all of the paperwork and then they—Embassy Gaborone—got their money and did their thing. But we successfully justified our need for these generators. I don't think OBO had ever done anything like trying to buy more than two hundred generators at once, and it was going to be a big deal. Because we also wanted it to be simple and efficient, we proposed in the cable to create a generator pool. OBO decided they wanted to size each generator for each individual house or each individual compound. Normally they just tell us to get a big one and then you move these big ones all around from house to house depending on the agency employing the officer, which is crazy. So we decided that we would have a pool and that way we would install a generator and we would never have to move it unless we were giving up the house.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: And that way also there wasn't a difference in how many and how much was paid. For instance, maybe for some reason we had a couple in a bigger house because that's what was available in that compound or whatever. And maybe for whatever reason, that generator was going to cost thirty-five thousand dollars and maybe other generators cost only twenty-five thousand dollars, and some agencies didn't want to deal with that, especially small agencies. They felt picked on if they had to pay more than they thought they should pay. So, everybody agreed, we got all the agencies to agree on this. We figured out how much all the generators are going to cost, and then we divided it by the number of total positions. That way, every generator cost the same and we never had to move the generators due to ownership issues.

And then we would maintain the pool over time. When an agency got a new put position, they would have to pay in whatever the price was at the time for that size of a generator. OBO thought it was brilliant and they were very happy with the generator pool idea. It could be now they have them everywhere. I tried to get one going in Santo Domingo, but I couldn't convince some agencies to join. But it's dumb to ever pick up a generator and move it just because the occupant agency changed. Also you can't find anybody who can deliver 200 or 250 generators and then get them installed quickly. So we had to have a schedule, and again, there was a fairness issue. Who gets theirs first? So we made a plan. Health issues needed to be taken into account. For example, did anybody have to use a nebulizer? They would get in the first tranche. After those considerations were met, we literally drew names out of a hat because we could only install about ten generators a month.

*Q: I'm laughing because I'm remembering in the Foreign Service officer test, one of the oral questions is always that they give you the problem of how do you divide up air conditioners in an African post and what criteria do you use? There were pregnant women. There are fears the ambassador needs to have air conditioners for his parties. There's the information technology office that needs to cool the computers. How do you give out the limited number of air conditioners and what criteria do you use and here it is in real life?*

HASKELL: Yes. We did it—found ways to distribute things fairly—with the housing compounds and we did it with the generators.

I think it took more than two years to finish the installations. They had to have the concrete pads poured; everything had to be done. One funny thing—our house in Johannesburg was a big house. I think what happened was they had rented another house for us, a different house, and two weeks before our arrival that lease fell through for some reason and they had to get another house quickly. So they went to somebody they knew who owned a house. The owner agreed to a reasonable price. And it was a decent house. I think it was probably our favorite house we ever lived in, even though it hadn't been made ready—no new paint, nothing.

We moved right in. I told them we didn't like air conditioners, for example. I don't think in South Africa you really need air conditioners. Maybe as time goes on you'll need them

more. But the house was thirty years old and didn't have any air conditioners. I figured the people who lived there were wealthy enough to have put them in if they had needed them, and they chose not to. So I told the GSO I didn't want any air conditioners. That caused quite a kerfuffle at the consulate because they had already bought eight air conditioners for the house. I told them to take them away and use them somewhere else. Put them in the warehouse, whatever. I don't want them. And it was strange that GSO would not do that; he refused to not put in air conditioners. I kept refusing to accept any.

Finally, the management officer there came to me and told me we had to take some, just take a couple, just do something. So we agreed to put in three air conditioners, one in each of our kids' bedrooms and that was it. I insisted that the—what do you call it? The motor that sits outside. I insisted those could not be on the patio anywhere because we hate that noise when we are outside. We loved to sit outside, and in South Africa, you can sit outside on your patio nine months of the year. And I didn't want to be listening to that noise. So we took three, and I don't know what they did with the rest, but it was really a pain. We did that generator project, and they did finally finish putting them in. Now they're standard. But the rolling blackouts affected everywhere you went.

You could be sitting in a restaurant and they suddenly would have a blackout. I remember once we had friends visiting us, and we went off to Kruger National Park. There's a little town there, where we would enter the park. We usually would leave at six in the morning and get there, to the town, about noon, and have lunch and then go into the park. And when we got there on this trip, they were having a blackout and none of the restaurants were open. We finally found one restaurant that had a gas grill and they could make us things on the gas grill so we didn't starve. They haven't really fixed their electricity problem. It's just that everybody bought generators. So it's still not a very good thing. So back to what I mentioned before, the Public Diplomacy office was in the central business district of Johannesburg, the constant PD office.

Back then we had an old consulate in the suburb called Killarney. It was just jam packed and it was a crazy place. So there was a new consulate building in the works. Before I arrived they had purchased the land, and OBO had found a contractor and all of that. So shortly after I arrived, about a year, I'd say nine, ten months after I arrived, we had a groundbreaking to mark the start of the building of the new consulate. I worked some with OBO on different things, though most of that was handled by the consulate management people. But we had, of course, the issues of taxation. I think I mentioned that a little bit on Ouagadougou. We had similar issues there. How would we make sure that the companies don't have to pay taxes as they built the consulate?

There were also some ownership issues. They had stitched together a lot of different plots to make the big plot. So those kinds of issues, I worked on them together with a lawyer. After two years the building was done, and everyone moved in. The last year or so we were there, they were working in the new building. Then my husband didn't have to drive into the CBD every day anymore. The consulate was one of those cookie cutter ones [when OBO was making all the new office buildings virtually identical]. Now the new buildings are less cookie cutter, but that was in the times of General Williams and we had



the cookie cutters. The new consulate building was right across the street from, at the time, the biggest mall in South Africa. They bought this property on top of a hill in the most chichi new neighborhood in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg.

It's a first class location. There was parking for the people who worked in it, but not more than about ten parking spaces for visa applicants. There was no consular section in Pretoria. There was a consular section in Johannesburg, and the consulates in Cape Town and Durban each had a small concert section, but the biggest one in the country was in Johannesburg. We had a lot of visa applicants and there was no crosswalk in a good place coming from the mall. People would park in the mall parking lots. I was a little worried all the time about somebody getting hit by a car because it was a big, four-lane, main artery that they had to cross. The crosswalks were not in pleasant places. People would have to double the distance to walk to go to the crosswalk.

They had opened up a new consulate building in Cape Town a few years earlier. But meanwhile the building we were in in Pretoria, that we're still in, was a new-ish building. I think they moved in in maybe 1993. It is a beautiful big building, one of the Inman-era buildings, with beautiful Jacaranda trees on the grounds. But it was built for about 125 people. We ended up with three hundred people working in it. That didn't include USAID, who was across town. It didn't count DEA who had their own office across the street. The Secret Service was down the road. The marines' regional office was down the road.

We had seven different U.S. embassy properties. We knew we needed to do something. We wanted to build an annex and the embassy lot was big enough to add an annex. I worked for a long time with OBO on how to do an annex. In the end, they decided they didn't want to do one on the embassy lot, and so then it became a problem. You have to go through the whole search for a place. And we also had a CDC office, which I didn't mention, which was getting bigger and bigger.

USAID had built their building in maybe 2001 on a big lot, and it had a big lot next to it that was still vacant. So then we decided maybe we should use that lot. And about the time I was leaving in 2010 we had settled on using that lot, but it hadn't been finalized. We were talking about how to use the lot and which offices would move and that kind of thing. But OBO was still a little bit up in the air about how they were going to do it. I wasn't there for the actual finalization of the project and the beginning of that. For the annex we had to do rightsizing. I had had to do rightsizing in Ouagadougou, I think I mentioned, so I knew how to do the rightsizing.

So my first year in Pretoria I did rightsizing, and it had to include how we were going to consolidate administrative services and how we were going to outsource some services. We had to justify every ICASS cost center—whether it would be consolidated or contracted out, outsourced. And then we had to get every agency to agree to everything. We had to address every supply or service and how many positions they would require. With capital cost sharing each agency had to pay in every year. It was a lot of work, but it wasn't hard. It was just tedious, but Washington really liked it.

They, I guess it was M/PRI [Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation] that we sent the rightsizing report to. They were impressed, evidently, with how we did it. Because I had worked on rightsizing before, that experience came in handy, even to have had the experience at a very small post. Then to do it again at a very big post was the same [but more complex]. It was only Pretoria. We didn't include the consulates in the rightsizing for this particular new building, [except in that our workload for many services included the consulates]. When I did go back to Pretoria in 2016, the building was all done and moved into. It was interesting to see how it had changed. The management officer that was there when I arrived, she was, as I mentioned, in her fourth year. And so at some point in that year during the bidding season, that fall right after I got there, we were looking for her replacement. Pretoria typically has a very hard time staffing the senior positions to this day.

And the management counselor is one that they have a hard time staffing. When you look at the list of who's bidding on it, it seems like a great group of officers. I was interested in several of them to have as a boss. I pretty much knew everybody in the management cone who was working in Africa. But in fact, nobody was really bidding on it. Everybody that sounded like they would be good for the job didn't really want it. It was just a "filler" bid. They wanted to do something entirely different. Maybe there were two or three or whatever. Maybe there are people in there I didn't really want to work for. The front office was being very gracious to include me in the whole discussion. And then, the management counselor who would be departing, she came up with a really brilliant idea.

She had the idea that we should have the IMO [information management officer]. Our IMO had previously been acting management counselor for a year or more in Nairobi. I had met him at that time, so we already knew each other. We were already working together. He had arrived in Pretoria at the same time I did. I agreed that was a great idea, and so we were to have him reassigned [to the management counselor position]. He didn't get to extend his tour at all, but after one year of being the IMO, he stepped in to be the management counselor and we were a very good team. We understood each other's strengths, and we were able to divide up the work really well and back each other up. Of course I had asked for the job, too. Washington didn't want to give it to me because I wasn't Senior Foreign Service. I just didn't really agree with that rationale. Such is the bureaucracy. After him, filling the management counselor position continued to be a problem.

I mentioned earlier that we would be able to stay only three years, but we wanted to stay four. So I was immediately looking for a way to do that.

And I succeeded because, obviously, we stayed for four years, but it wasn't easy. It took me two years to figure out how to get an extension. And we were very happy that it worked. We had figured out that the last option was that one of us would go to Iraq so the other could stay [in Pretoria with the kids]. We were not thrilled with the idea of one of us going to Iraq, but [the embassy in] South Africa was quite generous. We had sent a lot of our officers to Iraq and kept a lot of families. It wasn't easy for those families, and it wasn't easy for the posts.

*Q: Yup.*

HASKELL: And it created some problems—it didn't always work well. I was actually very happy when Pat Kennedy [former under secretary for management] figured out that there were issues with keeping families at post. [The South African government] had a policy I had never seen before or since. They must approve any new American position. Their government, the Foreign Ministry, will not let us create a new position for an American diplomat without their prior approval.

*Q: Wow. That's interesting.*

HASKELL: And we were doing this thing where we were sending people TDY to Iraq and bringing in somebody else to take their job, and having two families at post. And I don't think we were the only posts where it had become an issue. And he realized that it could be an issue that there were all these people at these posts who are under the protection of the local government, under the Vienna Convention. And they, the South African government [and likely others] didn't know we were doing this.

*Q: Yeah. That can be bad.*

HASKELL: We had to get their permission.

*Q: Yup.*

HASKELL: The Foreign Ministry there wasn't too keen on it. And they basically said no, but there were some families who were already there, and they didn't want to move in the middle of the school year. There was an eventual resolution that happened that I totally, I confess, disagreed with. In the end, after much to-ing and fro-ing and with post's support, that I didn't agree with, there was a finding that they could stay as private citizens, but under our wing.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: So we didn't have to do that. We were able to come up with another valid reason. We weren't phony-ing anything up. [Back how we managed to get the extension for our fourth year.] The DG [director general of the Foreign Service] came out to post, and I spoke with him. I told him that he had every right to change the rules, but the people who had bid under a certain situation—and I asked him if maybe he could “grandfather” those of us who bid before he had changed the rules? Nope. He wasn't having anything to do with that. And he didn't care at all that this was a bad thing for people with kids who would be in their senior year of high school. He really just didn't think that was a problem at all. We were able to work it out legitimately through ECS [employee consultation services] and the regional psychiatrist. So it worked out well in the end. But it wasn't easy. I wrote so many cables and didn't send them [knowing they didn't have a strong enough justification and/or sounded whiney].

*Q: I believe it. Yeah.*

HASKELL: Some of the other interesting admin things we had, which were problems, maybe other posts had—but we were a big post, and we had to fix issues—we didn't have a particularly friendly government to work with. The South African government has never particularly liked the U.S. government. We were a little bit on the wrong side under apartheid. While South Africans generally love Americans, the government is another story.

But we had a problem with taxes, our FSN income taxes, and whenever the taxation people, SARS, the South African Revenue Service, would figure out that somebody wasn't paying their taxes, then they would do what should be done. They would tell people they had to pay your taxes. And then sometimes our FSNs wouldn't be very responsive. It happened a couple of times, and it came out in a couple of newspaper articles. And finally with one particular employee, we decided we were going to fire him because SARS was trying to work with him, had offered agreements to lower the payments, to make a payment plan, and the guy wasn't doing anything that was agreed to. The personal services agreements that our local staff sign include meeting one's financial responsibilities, financial obligations. So it was a hard decision but we did it; we fired the guy because he was probably going to jail, and he wasn't meeting his [financial obligations]. We also knew that this was going to be a problem with a lot of our people, and we wanted them to take some steps.

There were a few employees who were paying taxes, but I didn't know at the time, I still don't know, if they were paying on their full incomes or if they were just paying some portion. I don't know. But we started looking for ways to help them while at the same time we were working with L, the Office of the Legal Advisor in Washington, to figure out how we could change things. There was a long-time precedent that we couldn't withhold taxes from the FSNs pay and send it to SARS the way that a normal employer does and that all employers are expected to do in South Africa. We needed to find a way to do that. And we knew that was going to take time, but we didn't want there to be a problem. So, what we did was, we started talking to SARS, we told them about our pay allotment system.

Our local staff could ask us to allot money to accounts they designated. We could place it into an account and then it would be transferred to SARS. It would be a voluntary allotment. Except SARS told us that while they loved that idea, they didn't think they could guarantee that the money would go to the right tax payment account. So we told them that we would continue working on a resolution to the problem. We had to find a way to do it. And for three years we worked with SARS, and we hoped we could still do the allotment system. But in the meantime, if SARS demanded payment in full, it was up to the employee to figure out how to pay it all at once, and it wasn't easy. Those FSNs who were paying had a hard time actually paying because they weren't contractors and weren't business owners. They were employees, and their taxes should have been withheld by their employer. Maybe two or three years prior to that, there had been a huge problem in London with FSN taxes when the British government found out that we

weren't withholding and that our employees there weren't really paying their taxes. The Brits weren't too happy about that, and it was a big scandal.

So luckily that was a little bit of a push for us to change things in the right direction. That was on our side for trying to get the legal office to agree. But in the meantime we came up with other justifications. For example, we had a fabulous pension fund for FSNs in South Africa. I think it's got to be one of the best private pension programs for FSNs anywhere. It's not like in Europe where the government often provides retirement. It's a private pension fund. At the time it was worth around twenty-three million dollars; we ran it very professionally. We had the board of trustees; we had employer trustees; and we had employee trustees. We had meetings; we had a professional administrator-service provider that we paid to administer the fund and to make sure we were doing everything in accordance with the South African pension laws, which were quite heavy duty. They had a lot of stiff pension funds laws.

There were a lot of rules about how to pay out when somebody died and all kinds of things. We went to classes to learn to be a trustee. They were classroom-based and you had to do them to be a trustee. I'm still very impressed with that pension fund and how it's run. I learned a lot because I was one of the trustees and eventually the chair of the board. I learned a ton about pension funds, at least in South Africa. But when an employee would resign from the embassy or retire, they would go to get their money.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: And in order to take money out of a pension fund in South Africa, you have to first go to SARS. They would provide you with a paper that said you had been paying your taxes. Well, guess what. We discovered that if people hadn't been paying their taxes, SARS would tell them they had to pay-up in order to access their retirement funds, whether they were changing jobs or retiring. And of course, nobody had enough money. So guess where SARS would get the money? They would take it from that employee's pension fund account. The U.S. government would have paid about 8.5% [of their salary toward their balance, a higher percentage of salary than the employee].

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: And I did not want the U.S. government funds to pay the employee's taxes. So I made a big deal of it, that people had to pay their taxes. We started having financial management seminars for people to learn how to manage their money. They were all living on the "float." The salaries we paid had not kept up with inflation at all. [The embassy's salary scale was] in a low percentile of the labor market. We hadn't had good salary increases. We had an excellent human resources officer there at the time. She was excellent, and she continued the fight. She managed it to the point where based on all of our justification, including the fact that our U.S. government taxpayer money was basically paying the FSNs' income taxes that they hadn't been paying because it was coming out of their pension fund account that we had paid more than half of. What they

had to do, though, to get everybody on a clean slate—this was after I left—they basically fired every single employee.

*Q: Whew.*

HASKELL: They would go get their money out of the pension fund, if they needed it to pay their taxes, or however they were going to pay, then come back, show the embassy they had paid and they were rehired. They got all rehired, except I think for a couple of people.

*Q: Wow. That's an amazing story.*

HASKELL: I'm so glad I wasn't there for that last part. That would have been really rough, but then we were able to start to withhold the tax and pay it directly to SARS the way we should have been doing it all along. It was quite a big deal. I learned a lot. I learned a lot about how taxes work and how to work with the taxation people and how do you, how do you manage these things that are really hard. And I don't think people hated this. I mean they got it; they understood, and it worked. It was a valid thing to do. And these are the kinds of things that I think that people who are in management need to learn. They should know about these case studies because certainly I didn't have a lot of experience on any of these things I was working on a lot of times.

And it would have been helpful to have had more of other people's experience to help me. For example, the furniture pool. I think I talked about the furniture pool in Tel Aviv before. I had a really good furniture pool experience. And when I came to Pretoria, I saw that we had a lot of agencies there. We were shifting furniture from house to house constantly. That was crazy. And some agencies, they owned their own furniture, and they kept their extras and a little space in the warehouse. Then they would come to me and tell me that they needed their refrigerator. I would tell them that it was not State Department or ICASS furniture, that they needed to talk to their agency. So I determined that we should have a furniture pool. I started to work with the financial management people and the GSO warehouse people and the procurement people and told them we were going to have a furniture pool.

I told them we would start slow. The first furniture pool members were the State Department and we invited other agencies to join. One woman was in my office the next day. She told me it was the greatest thing ever, that her agency had only three houses, but she wanted in. The people who understood how valuable a furniture pool was would join. But it took a long time to get others to join. When I left, it still wasn't everybody. But I was helpful. I spent a lot of time on the phone with the ICASS service center director at the time explaining why we needed furniture pools to be required.

I told him we needed a better way to do furniture pools, and that they should be mandatory for the whole world. My Financial Management Office was totally on board and there was an FSN in the Financial Management section in Pretoria who was really excellent, better than most U.S. direct-hire financial management officers. We were so

good that we abolished a mid-level FMO position. Then we made the position an LES [locally employed staff] position, and he was moved into it. It was what had been the regional FMO. He's excellent [and he's still with the embassy, doing great work]. I got him on my side because I figured it was going to be a long-term project [getting Washington to figure out how to make furniture pools easier to administer and to make them mandatory]. So I got him involved and he's also part of the small user groups that have a financial management world to work on problems and to work on future solutions.

They have user groups figuring out new kinds of software or anything that they're trying to do. Members of other groups are considered experts that have been around a long time and they test new processes. So I advocated for it with the ICASS service center director and he advocated for it with people in the ICASS service center at a lower level—those who would have to do the work for three years for mandatory furniture pools, globally. It took three years to get all the legal nonsense organized, you know, because of the appropriations of the different agencies and all this. And I'm very proud of that. I think that without Pretoria, there wouldn't be a global furniture pool.

It's not a global furniture pool, but it's a global requirement for furniture pools. It really is a much better way to manage things if you know how to do it. I know that there were some posts where they got crazy with the amounts they were using and claiming it costs seventy-five thousand dollars or a houseful of furniture/appliances/furnishings. Well, that's baloney. I don't know what they were doing, but that was baloney. It was crazy. So there is a way to manage furniture pools and manage them well. There shouldn't have been any reason for an annual payment to have been more than maybe three thousand dollars, four thousand dollars max per house [payable by each agency for each position they have at a post]. And sometimes it can be as low as two thousand dollars, but there's a way to do that. I was very happy to start the furniture pool in South Africa. We only started out the first year with six agency codes [more than one agency code with some agencies] in our post. We got more as time went on. Actually when I explained it to one of our ambassadors, a political appointee ambassador, he told me he didn't understand why it wasn't always mandatory. He said he thought it was so smart to do, and that, of course we should do it, but he didn't want to force any agency to do it. So now that it is mandatory, it works. It's much better.

One more thing about the pension fund. I have to say that during 2008, during that whole financial meltdown, South Africa was a bit insulated from the global meltdown because it had an excellent central banker. The head of the central bank was one of the best in the world, and he had been managing their main banking system so that it didn't collapse. Most pension funds around the world were taking hits and most, even in South Africa, didn't have as much growth, but when other pension funds were getting 0 or 0.5 percent gains, ours was still getting 3 percent growth even in 2008–2009. It was incredibly well run. Mainly because we had really good trustees, and we had a terrific principal officer. That's a technical term for a particular person that you have to have for running a pension fund.

It was this FSN, and, again, he was incredibly good. He could come to the board and tell us we were paying too much for the insurance benefit. Because through our pension fund, we held these insurance plans that paid for funerals and this and that, all these different things. And it wasn't coming out of any appropriated funds. We could provide the FSNs all of these as benefits because it was done through the pension fund. The principal officer was able to tell us when we were paying too much for the administrator services and that we should shop around and see if we could get a better deal. Or even maybe we don't need this administrator. We can get a different administrator. And we whittled down our administrative costs from about 6 percent or 4 percent, I think, down to about 2 percent over the course of about four years. Wow. He was excellent.

Going on facilities maintenance, we had a lot of problems with our facilities maintenance staff. It seemed like they couldn't fix much, or certainly not in a timely way. This is true in a lot of posts. They couldn't fix something in your house that was simple without making three trips. It was so frustrating. We decided we wanted to fix that. I asked the facility maintenance specialist to make a list of all the things that are the most common things needed. The little widget for the toilet or this other doohickey for the electricity or whatever. They made a supply list for the things that are the most often needed to fix something on the first trip to a house. Then we bought little trucks and had the trucks outfitted with special boxes on the back so they could keep all the little widgets in there.

And it was great. We spent about forty-six thousand dollars to buy the supply of widgets, and it was really going great. But you know, the way that the Foreign Service works, somebody new came and the new manager would decide that way was wrong, a waste of money or whatever. So when I went back six years later, they weren't doing it anymore. I was pulling my hair out. It was a great system! Why did they discontinue it? I wanted to start it again. It was frustrating. We did a lot of work on improving customer satisfaction. I don't like calling them customers because the U.S. direct-hire officers were not shopping. They were our colleagues. I prefer to call them colleagues. Most people don't understand my sensitivity to that. We developed a series of seminars, and every three months, one or two service providers, a couple of people from two different service provider sections would do a seminar. They would explain what they were going to talk about, how that thing happens, how they do it. These are the constraints that we have and then take questions. It was a great initiative. But I have to say it's like a lot of other things people would whine and whine, but when they were given the opportunity to have input, they didn't show up.

But we also did a lot of work together, as a team. We made sure the consulates were part of the team. Especially for me, the management sections in the consulates, we tried to embrace them and bring them to Pretoria occasionally and to include them by video conference in a lot more of our meetings. We listened to what they needed help with. We were able to improve the odds of their getting what they wanted/needed than if they were trying to do it by themselves. For example, we had a COLA, a cost of living allowance, which was a little strange because South Africa was a very inexpensive place to live. But each of the four posts had been doing their own COLA report. That didn't completely make sense to me, particularly for Joburg and Pretoria because, as I argued successfully,



the cities have the same greater metropolitan area. I used myself as an example, telling them that I, along with thousands of other people, drive back and forth [between the two cities] to work every day.

Now it's even more so. At the time there was still a bit of open space between the two cities. Now it's built up along the highway. It's all pretty much filled in. There is very little open space anymore. But we convinced the office of allowances that we should do only one COLA report for the two posts, and it would reduce the workload. We succeeded with that request. I think the COLA went from zero to 25 percent overnight. So people liked that, too. The exchange rate back then was around five rand to one dollar. Now it's about fourteen rand to one dollar, so it's even cheaper to live there now. Now there's no COLA, of course.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: Another good learning experience I had while serving in Pretoria was on reasonable accommodation.

*Q: Now reasonable accommodation. One second. This is for the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA]?*

HASKELL: Yes. An officer had been assigned to Cape Town who required some reasonable accommodation. I think that if you haven't ever worked on this before, you just have no idea what's involved or how to do it. Luckily, the office that deals with that sent someone out to post. She and I went to Cape Town where we checked out the consulate. We checked out the parliament building. We checked out places where this officer would be expected to do work. We checked out the vehicle situation. We checked out housing, and we did a town hall with the entire consulate community on reasonable accommodations so that everybody would understand what would be their responsibility and what is expected and not expected. We explained what the officer's responsibility was, just to try to sensitize people to it. It was a huge learning experience. Moving along. This was during the time when the Collaborative Management Initiative was implemented. It was one of those things the State Department does every five years or so. [They try to find new ways to be efficient, to offer acceptable administrative services, and encourage innovation as well as consistency from post-to-post.] This was one of those things. It was first discussed in EUR [Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs], where it was created.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: EUR invited each regional bureau EX [Executive Office] to send someone. So AF/EX [Bureau of African Affairs/Executive Office] asked me to represent AF. So I went to Bratislava, Slovakia, for the conference/workshop all about the Collaborative Management Initiative. It was really very interesting, and it gave me a chance to make my own points, bring up issues that I thought were really important. And one was that whenever they, in Washington, are creating new software—and this initiative did involve

new software—they must make certain the software captures data for the post to use. That too many times they make new software, and it's for Washington's benefit. Washington needs data to send to Congress or to put in their bureau plan or for other higher-level usages. And it doesn't usually enable posts, at the post level, to collect and use data to the best effect. I'm not sure they listened, but I brought that up as they really needed to do for us. They also needed to include overseas users in the creation of software. The best example I have of one was this. One year I was at the Management officer workshop. It must've been 2009. It was in Windhoek, Namibia. I was in the hotel restaurant getting my breakfast, chatting with the woman in line next to me, and I found that she was there to present the new EER [Employee Evaluation Report].

*Q: No. Yep. The new EER system. What is that called? ePerformance.*

HASKELL: This new electronic EER system, and I was talking to her about it while I was getting my food. She was describing it to me, how great it was. And I looked at her as she told me that it was going to be so much more accountable. People wouldn't be able to just write whatever they want, that it would all be so very accountable. I looked at her and asked her if she knew how our system works. She asked me what I meant. So I explained that I would write something and send it to my boss. Then my boss would write something and he would send it back to me. Then it goes to my reviewer, who writes and sends it all back to me. I also explained the multiple times it goes back and forth in each step. And she looked at me, her jaw dropped, and she told me no one had ever told them that.

*Q: Well.*

HASKELL: They had created a system where nothing could go backwards.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: You write your part. Rater writes their part. Reviewer writes their part. It goes to the panel. Boom. Done.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: And we were supposed to start using it that year, within a few months. It's another example of why people have to speak up and say things. Because of that conversation, it was discussed further and, while they rolled it out, it was voluntary. So basically, no one used the new system that year because it wasn't usable.

*Q: I just want to go back one second. Did you have to do very much for the reasonable accommodation for the officer with the disability?*

HASKELL: We had to properly equip a vehicle that would be used. The person needed transportation assistance but had other reasonable accommodation needs, as well. The office was on the second floor, and you can't use an elevator when there's a fire. The

house needed some substantial accommodation, so the family had to move into an apartment for a while.

*Q: So if it ended up taking quite a bit of work in order to meet the ADA requirements—*

HASKELL: Yes, it was, but none of it was outrageous.

*Q: Right. It just required a lot of time and attention.*

HASKELL: Yes. And understanding on the part of people who wanted to ask why are we doing this?

*Q: Alright. Yeah. I was in the Foreign Service when they introduced the new electronic EER system and it was a disaster. The rollout took years to work out all the glitches.*

HASKELL: It's still not perfect, but it works a lot better than it used to because they've basically given up on this concept of accountability and everybody can move it to any step they want, whenever they want.

*Q: That was essentially the problem. You needed to be able, not just to move it back and forth between the individuals, but to the panel. And then if the panel had something wrong with it, move it back.*

HASKELL: Yes. Before they fixed that, I went from Pretoria to Santo Domingo and that hadn't yet been fixed well enough. And so during EER season, since I didn't have an HRO there, so I had to sit at my desk until God knows when in the evening waiting for people to ask me to move it here, move it there. I had to be the one to move it.

*Q: Yup. It happened in my post as well. It was really hard.*

HASKELL: It's better now. Now you can assign people to be proxies, and the employee is automatically the proxy for the rater. That way the employee can create the document, enter everything in, and move it around for the rater. And then if someone is transferring from one post to another, they can pick up another person to be their proxy. If you have an OMS [office management specialist], they would be a proxy. If you have a friend who you want to be able to sign it for you, personally, you can make them a proxy.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: So it's better.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: Anyway, I'm going to stop there. Tomorrow we will move into elections, a new ambassador, SecState visit, and the FIFA World Cup.

*Q: Okay. Today is November 19, 2019, we're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell, who's in Brazzaville. Just recall the years that you were in South Africa because we're resuming with your tour in South Africa.*

HASKELL: We were there from 2006 to 2010, so for four years, and I think I've covered about the first three years, nearly. I'm going to start sort of with the last year, starting with the summer of 2009. Going through the summer of 2010. One thing I wanted to mention because it was kind of interesting and was a one-off thing. This was about the time that South Sudan was gaining independence. And interestingly, the South African government was very involved in helping South Sudan with the structure of government and getting its act together. And one office in the embassy was asked by the South African government to put together a one-day program day to hear from us, the U.S. embassy.

The political section was organizing this. They wanted to do one session on administrative matters, management matters. And so they asked me to do that. I had to figure out what I was going to really talk about. I tried to briefly go over the basic ways that we structure our embassies and how they might have fewer resources and do it a little bit differently. But one of the things that I decided to focus on was ethics, but I didn't ever use the word. I know that in my own experience, one of the things that's really important is procurement. For example, this is where a lot of countries really mess up on ethics. We tend to be better at it, I think.

But one of the things that is really important, and it's something I think we do pretty well on procurement, is not putting our local staff into difficult positions. Because in many cultures, it's not a bad thing—it's even an acceptable thing—to steer opportunities towards your family members or other group members. And I wanted them to understand that they should try to avoid that and that they needed to think in those terms when they were determining who had what responsibilities with anything to do with money, that what they really didn't want to do was to put their local staff into untenable situations where they were going to be suffering from a lot of pressure, from what's culturally acceptable pressure. I told them that if they made it clear the local staff didn't have the responsibility and that they understood they—the local staff—that they should not steer procurements to family or other group members. They don't want to lose their job, but they don't want to lose their place in their group, so don't put them in that position.

There were probably about ten people from South Sudan in the room. And they had a lot of questions, which indicated to me that they found it interesting and that they hadn't even thought about this side of how to be a government, in terms of the diplomacy side of it. Although ethics applies to everything in the government, in some ways. We took more time than allotted. I heard later that they told the organizers that of the entire day, they felt like they got the most out of that session I did because it wasn't anything they had already been considering. So I felt good about that.

Another important thing that happened prior to our last year—there were elections in South Africa and Thabo Mbeki was done due to term limits. And Jacob Zuma was the

heir apparent. It was sort of his turn. They, the ANC [African National Congress] were still doing—that taking turns for the struggle participants. And it was an interesting election in many ways. But one of the things that I noticed as elections were coming up was that there was no discussion at all about having an embassy team to observe as we usually would do. I had gotten the opportunity to do that in Burkina Faso where it was the first time I had done it. I thought it was amazing. And what we had done there, in Burkina, was we sent Americans out with a local staff member; we did it together. The local staff also found it to be really fascinating to be there, to be able to go into the polling site and observe a little bit, walk around, talk to people waiting in line, and ask them how they feel about the opportunity to vote and democracy. Would go to at least two different polling sites. So, I kept waiting for that to be a part of the discussion for South Africa.

It seemed really important for us to be able to do some reporting on the atmospherics of the voting because voting is such a big deal in so many parts of Africa and especially in South Africa. And the election was somewhat controversial.

Nothing was ever said and nothing was ever said and nothing was ever said about it. So I contacted the political counselor and asked him if he was going to have a program for informal observing. I mentioned that I thought it would be a really good thing to do. He responded that we didn't have any money for that. I told him that I would get us the money, that I could guarantee him that I could get him money for this. He seemed indifferent. I think they just didn't want to put it together because it would be a lot of work to organize and schedule and make sure that the drivers and the local staff members got a chance to vote—that we hadn't taken them away from their own voting—and how far afield were we going to send people. Would we get them hotel rooms? Election day is usually a holiday in most countries and people would have to work. So, I think they weren't really psyched to do it. Maybe they thought they would send a couple of political officers out and that would be it. But I thought it was really important for the whole embassy community to have a chance to participate.

Typically it is the Political section or the front office that drives the need or the desire for observers in foreign elections when there might be any chance that we're concerned that there might be some unfairness in the elections or we just want to know how the voting is going. Usually our own political section takes the lead. So it was extremely interesting that I, from the management section, took the lead to ask the political section and assure them that there could be funding. Interesting from a regular kind of Foreign Service process point of view.

I thought it was a little strange myself, but I felt strongly about it. I also talked to the front office about it because I wanted them to understand that they shouldn't accept that there's no money as an excuse to not do it. I guaranteed them I could get the money because I knew how to do it. I knew how to ask for money. It's one of the things that I think you hear all the time in the Foreign Service—we don't have money for that. And really the issue is, has anyone asked for money? I feel like I have met so many, particularly in management, who don't even ask. It never even occurs to them. They don't know how to

justify it. They don't know who to ask. They don't know how to do that. And it really is doable.

Obviously you can't ask for something crazy; you'll be told no. But if you have legitimate needs to meet policy objectives or to support necessary administrative support needs, you can get the money. This is true. You can even in tight budget times; there's money. I asked for what amounted to \$2.5, \$2.8 million for generators. I got it from Washington in the space of about four months. You can do it, and I would like to think I could find a way to get people to understand that they can ask for it. So anyway, I did talk to the front office about it, and I made it clear to them that if they wanted there to be a program, I would get the money for overtime and for driver overtime. It wasn't really that much money. I think about this in the scheme of the amount of money we use to operate; it wasn't very much money, but I did ask for the money. I asked the political section to give me an idea of how much they thought they would need, and I got the money in like a blink of an eye. But the best thing about it was that we had so many people participate. I think we had over a hundred people participate and we let EFMs participate. We paired up an American with local staff, and each team usually went to two polling stations in the FSN's neighborhood so that they could vote. Then we went to some different polling stations. It was an incredible thing to have that opportunity to do.

And it wasn't really that much money. Right. I think about this in the scheme of the amount of money we use, it wasn't very much money, but I did ask for the money. I made the, I asked the political section to give me an idea how much they thought they would need and I got the money in like a blink of an eye. But the best thing about it was that we had so many people participate. I think we had over a hundred people participate and if we let your fans go, we let you know that. And we paired up again with local staff and we usually went to two polling stations in their neighborhood so that they could vote and then we might go to some different ones. And it was, it's just an incredible thing to have that opportunity to do.

*Q: Absolutely.*

HASKELL: All the people that did it really appreciated it. It was an experience that everyone should have if the opportunity arises. I haven't done election polling station work in the United States, but I think that when I go back, I would probably volunteer in some way to do that when I am back living in the United States because it's really important.

*Q: Yes. And in general, when in South Africa, were Americans who were at the polling stations, was there generally a positive view? In other words, people who were voting were kind of happy that Americans were there to observe and at least, you know, be present at the elections?*

HASKELL: My experience was, yes. That South Africans love voting. Especially post-apartheid when the vast majority of the population finally had the right to vote. It's a civil right and a civil duty that they take very seriously. It's a happy time, and they didn't mind

waiting in line for six or eight hours or whatever it is. We had clipboards with a different sheet of paper for each polling station. We asked some questions, and we'd take down little quotes and things, and ask them if they had voted before, or how they felt the results would go, what would happen? Most of us were not creating a fabulous policy-oriented, strong-reporting cable, but we were learning ourselves about how important voting can be. The local staff were seeing how it happens just in their polling place, but in other places too. I think it was important. I do think that it's a good thing when we show up at a polling station, and we are sort of representing democracy. We should always be positive with the voters. We also want to find out if they had seen any irregularities, of course. But, that's not the only reason to be there.

*Q: Right. The funny thing or the charming thing about this, about Americans being present at polling stations in foreign countries where democracy is just beginning to take root and so on, you will never see Russians there. You will never see any of these authoritarian regimes troubling themselves, even to make a pretense of interest in everyday democratic things. And so it's a real difference that I think people, even in the poorest countries, understand.*

HASKELL: Yes. I saw that very up close and personal when I was in Kinshasa. I'll get to it when I talk about my time in Kinshasa because it was a big deal election. I paid a call to the Chinese ambassador to ask him how he viewed what was happening, and it was really kind of interesting, their view.

*Q: Okay. Sorry I interrupted, but your story resonates so much with my experience in the field, as well.*

HASKELL: A similar thing that we did— Many posts in Africa have a self-help program, which is just a little pot of money to use. Of course, in South Africa, where I think at the time we had around six hundred million dollars a year in different foreign assistance funding, this little drop in the bucket amount of money for self-help programs where you would try to do projects that were under about ten thousand dollars and that the community would participate in. I think I mentioned that in Ouagadougou I participated in an opening of a school that had been built with a community grant from the self-help program. So we had a self-help/community grants program in South Africa as well, but it was so dwarfed by all the other aid we did that it really was not well known. I think it was run by an eligible family member, and people didn't pay much attention to it at all.

But again, it was a wonderful opportunity for people to become involved, so I talked to the front office about it. I asked them if we could open it up to anybody who wanted to participate in the opening or closing of a project. And that started a new thing. I think our whole community grants program in South Africa was HIV/AIDS-related. It was all PEPFAR [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief] money, but we opened up public speaking opportunities for people who normally didn't get them. And of course, it was in the English language, so there wasn't a problem with it. There wasn't a problem with getting people that could speak in English. If they were going to a township or someplace

where people didn't always speak English, you still had to get a translator anyway because they wanted to speak Zulu or Setswana or whatever. There are twelve official languages in South Africa.

I felt that by using my experience, I was able to bring to the post those things that weren't already happening. The front office agreed to all of those ideas, to do them, and that they were good things. Another thing that was happening in 2009, of course, was that we had to get a new ambassador because 2008 was when President Obama was elected. We were waiting for the new ambassador to be named, and it took quite a long time to get one named. Finally he was named, and he had a family whose composition matched my family composition, three boys, all about the same age as ours. And the chargé at the time, who had been an ambassador before, was our DCM.

So she asked me to be post's liaison for the new ambassador and his wife, the liaison in terms of everything that wasn't policy-related because she and the desk would handle those issues. I did get to know the new ambassador and his wife. I had to answer a million questions, as everyone has in that situation, like what was the house like, what was in the house. And we had to work out how to accommodate the three kids. I think that over time, ambassadors didn't still have kids living at home. I say this because most of our ambassadors' residences were not set up for people having children living at home.

It was hard for those families with kids under the age of about eighteen to have a typical family life in those houses. The private living space was just too small. There often were not enough bedrooms. If they had little kids, the bedrooms were too far away from the master suite. There were all kinds of problems. So there was a problem with the number of bedrooms in the ambassador's house. They were boys ages, maybe fifth grade through sophomore in high school, let's say, or maybe junior year in high school. And the family wanted a space for gym equipment—and the equipment. Even people without kids want gym equipment these days. And they wanted to make sure that the pool and the tennis court and everything was spiffy, could be used. The kids were going to be doing all these sports, was there a basketball court at the house? We did spend a fair bit of money trying to organize the house as best we could so that it would be big enough for their family. In the middle of organizing for the arrival of the new ambassador, Secretary of State Clinton was coming for a visit, but we still didn't have the new ambassador at post.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: The visit was happening in August, which of course you know, is still transition season. The chargé asked me to be the overall control officer for the SecState visit because she knew I had a lot of visit experience. One additional complicating factor was that people who weren't transitioning were going on their R&R [rest and recreation trip].

Including the chargé, and including, for example, the SGSO [supervisory general services officer] was going on leave. We were getting a new management counselor. It was going to be, from the management section, particularly, a difficult time because we had very



few people at post for much of the time leading up to the visit. And without the chargé there, too. She came back only about a week before the visit, maybe less, so getting everything ready really was left. I think the political counselor was also changing out or was on leave.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I remember that we had taken our R&R earlier in the summer and had also gone to Washington where I met with the new, incoming management counselor. I mentioned to him that I was going to be the overall control officer for this visit because I knew he was going to arrive before the visit. I got the sense that maybe he wasn't happy that it was me, and not, maybe, him. So we pushed forward on planning for the visit. A team of two or three people came from the office of the secretary, including the Diplomatic Security people. And we were working closely with the South Africans. I had a decent relationship with the people at the MFA, which was called DIRCO, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, and they gave me good people to work with.

We were pushing forward, doing all the scenarios. We had to provide lots of scenarios. We had to provide various ideas for the activities the secretary might do and what each would look like and what was the reason to do it. So we were doing that. And of course with the time difference, everything of this nature was happening in the evenings. As overall control, I had to assign all the duties out, decide who would do what, site officers, and all the different management roles and motorcade officers and overall admin and all this. As it was summer, there was also a lot of turnover in Washington in the Africa Bureau. We didn't have any South Africa desk officers. We had an intern.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: So in many ways I ended up working more directly with the secretary's office [S] before the S advance liaison officers arrived in Pretoria. I was working directly with the secretary's office, which isn't necessarily the normal way to do it, working very directly with people right next to Secretary Clinton. Then finally our S team arrived, and I worked very closely with them to try to manage it all. During all this time, there were times when I would get calls from Huma Abedin, as I was driving home at ten at night. I would have to pull over, get out my notebook as they would be asking me about some scenario that I hadn't memorized and I would flip through and discuss why this and why couldn't we do that and is this possible? Secretary Clinton was supposed to come to Johannesburg where she would do commercial activities and maybe a PEPFAR site visit, and of course, to Pretoria. She stayed at a hotel in Pretoria, she would do government meetings in Pretoria and also another possible PEPFAR site that was also outside of Pretoria. So this was going to be a very long day.

But we were going to try to accomplish most of the visit in one day and maybe one bit in the morning, or maybe she would still have two nights—come in the evening, have a full, full day. There was a big dinner, hosted by the MFA. Whenever there is such a dinner,

the secretary usually speaks, listens to the host speak and then the secretary and her party get up and they leave. It was a whole mad dash, you know, half the people run out to get into their car and into the motorcade so as not to get left behind as the secretary's on her way to her vehicle. So we're planning all this and then about a week before arrival, the secretary's office decided that she should go to Cape Town. Our management officer in Cape Town was on R&R and not scheduled to come back until after the visit. So I pulled a supremely competent management officer from Durban and sent her to Cape Town to deal with the logistics there because they were going to have to stay overnight there. We also had a new management counselor who had arrived. The first time after his arrival that I was going to have a meeting at the MFA about the visit, he wanted to come along.

And it was tricky, but I said no. I explained that if he came with me they would be confused about who they were supposed to deal with. And that would not be helpful to us. So, he stayed back but he wasn't really happy. It was clear, he'd only just arrived. He had literally arrived, maybe a week before the visit. I couldn't give him anything to do, really, because he hardly knew even where he lived.

Since they had decided they were going to go to Cape Town, I thought, hmm, I should send him to Cape Town to just oversee things. I knew that the management officer that I sent to Cape Town from Durban would be on top of everything and that it would all be fine, but he could go and, you know, learn.

That was a very wise thing I did because I didn't have to deal with that extra stressor anymore. About three days before the visit was happening, we had been working to get a meeting with Zuma. Zuma wasn't going to be in town. He was traveling to Burundi to deal with peacekeeping in Africa. [South Africa was big on that, Africans working for peace in Africa.] And he just wasn't going to be in town, they kept telling us. Meanwhile, the chargé had come back, and she started pushing very hard on the South African government, indicating that no, it was not acceptable that Zuma not meet with Clinton. Basically, it ended up that he was going to be in Durban. He's from KwaZulu Natal. He was going to be there, so they were going to have to go to Durban. So now I was going to have them in all four places, and I had just sent, not only did I send the management officer to Cape Town, but I think I sent their public diplomacy or maybe he was either on R&R or transferring, or was at one of the other posts during the visit. I don't remember. Really the only person that I had left in Durbin was the CG [consul general].

So I talked to the secretary's people first, and then I talked to the CG. I told her that the secretary was going to Durban. She was worried, how could she do a visit, she didn't have anyone left at post except herself. She didn't have anybody to run a motorcade, et cetera. I told her it would be okay, because the meeting would be at the airport. Secretary Clinton would fly from Joburg to Durban. Only a few people you know, the ones who can't be more than three feet away from the secretary. Only they would get off the plane with Clinton and go into the airport. Zuma would be in the airport in a special room, and they would have their meeting. And that's what we did. We just told everyone that that was the way it had to work, the way it had to happen. That's the way it worked. So we did it that way and it worked brilliantly. Then they flew up to Cape Town to do their

program in Cape Town. I had the right people in the right places, but it was not particularly easy. And our new ambassador had come on the trip—

*Q: Wow. Yeah.*

HASKELL: —as an advisor to the secretary. Really it was also about seeing the house. Obviously, that was not the only reason. He was very competent and very into policy and working everything. But in the midst of it all, we had to find somebody who would take him over and show him the house, because he and his family were going to be arriving about ten days after the visit.

*Q: Wow. Wow.*

HASKELL: We didn't have an ambassador at that time of the visit, but we did have a brand new armored BMW for the ambassador. And you know, at the end of a visit we would take everybody to the airport, and pretty much the motorcade just zooms on to the tarmac and everyone jumps out of the cars as fast as they can and they all run up the back steps. Maybe the secretary would do a little press thing or say goodbye to an official. Oh, wait, I want to go back to relate one incident.

I want to go back. There was one incident, I can't remember actually if it was this SecState visit or if I was the vice president's visit a year later. While planning a visit, there was always at least one, usually more, big meeting with the MFA, including their security people and our security people and all of our policy people and our media people. It was a room with maybe forty people, and we would be asking for what we needed for the visit. Of course, our normal procedures were important. We would tell them that the secretary's traveling party would get off the plane, that they would not go through immigration, that they would get straight into the waiting motorcade which would be on the tarmac. South Africa was not about that at all. They were very protocol conscious. They wanted everything to be according to reciprocity. Well, their security sat there and told us that last week U.S. officials made their foreign minister take off her shoes at the airport.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: Yeah. That didn't go over very well. So there was a little bit of talking back and forth between the security people, at which point I told them that it was maybe Friday. It was six pm or something. I told them we would adjourn and that they should go and talk about it over the weekend and that we would meet again on Monday. And sure enough, by getting the room smaller, so to speak, by putting them in their own little space, they did agree and we got what we wanted. What we wanted was often something that we won't let anybody do when arriving in the United States, which was to get off the plane and go straight in the motorcade while somebody took all the passports to an immigration official, and that's it. So we did the visit. We had dropped everybody off. They had all jumped out and were doing their thing, mostly running to get on the plane. And of course, we had to stay until the plane actually took off, in case something happens

and we have to get them off the plane and take them somewhere. While waiting, everyone is tired and mostly just staring at each other and hoping to go get some sleep soon.

Those left in the motorcade were just those who didn't get on the plane, which was just security people and the secretary's liaison officer, and those who work at the embassy. Usually one person from the S office was still with you. One of them would have boarded the plane to go to the next stop and the other would still be there with you. We would do what we call an admin motorcade back to the embassy. It was no longer necessary for all the vehicles to stick closely together the whole way back, but we started off together and everybody knew where we were going. It was pretty routine.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: The DCM's [chargé's] driver with nobody in the car with him was first in the line of vehicles. The chargé wasn't in the car. She didn't go to the airport. The S liaison and I had gotten in the armored BMW to go back to the embassy. We were sitting in the back seat and we had a DS driver and a DS guy in the front passenger seat. And then there was a line of vehicles behind us. We were going along on a sort of frontage road that is common along airports. There was no traffic, nothing was happening. The first car stopped at a stop sign and then went ahead. Then our car had just started to move. We're barely moving, and suddenly from behind we were smacked by one of our motorcade cars. And it wasn't even the car that was behind us. In the brand new BMW.

I think what happened was that we were all just sort of starting to relax. The drivers no longer had to worry about keeping a specific distance between the cars, just someone let his guard down. And a car, two cars behind us, didn't notice that there was a stop sign and hadn't noticed the three cars in front of him slowing down and stopping. At the last second the driver swerved to avoid the car in front of him and then swerved back and managed to smack us on the back end of the BMW. It was at very slow speed, but it was quite a jolt. When we got back to the embassy, we all went directly to report that we'd had this accident. We were all worried about whiplash. And I can say that I found that paperwork just the other day, quite unexpectedly. It was the paperwork I had filed with Workman's Comp, just in case anything happened in the future with my back. After finding the paper, I wondered to myself if maybe that was what all my back and neck problems resulted from. But it's probably too late now to do anything about it because I've been being treated for years. Never even occurred to me.

*Q: Yeah. Yeah.*

HASKELL: The car didn't suffer much damage because it was slow motion, and it was an armored car so it was pretty solid. But I think we had to have a little dent taken out or I don't really remember. The new ambassador was arriving the next week or within ten days or so. But that was not the way you wanted a visit to end.

*Q: Yeah. Let me ask you a question here. This is an unusual kind of trick even for a secretary of state visit, especially to a large complex country with all of these consulates and so on. Did you get an award for this?*

HASKELL: I wrote up people for the awards. I did a lot of group awards. Let me just look. I got a superior honor award in 2009. I don't have it right in front of me, but it wasn't only about the visit but it was a lot about the visit. The nomination was very long.

*Q: Yeah. The reason I'm asking this is because most people hearing your story or reading your story might not realize how far above expectations your work on this was. And then when you add all of the other things you did in that year, 2009, it would surprise me if you did not get an award because what you're describing is so far above what would typically be expected. That just screams for an award.*

HASKELL: I will add that the promotion boards that met June or July of 2009 promoted me.

*Q: Yeah, no surprise.*

HASKELL: But it was just after the visit, right. So it was not because of the visit. I had, I think, done quite a lot of things.

*Q: Yeah. From just your description of the initiatives you took that were not typical for a management officer, like the election initiative and all of the other things where you use judgment and applied resources in very creative and efficient ways. It would just surprise me if it were not recognized with an award.*

HASKELL: I would also say just to give an idea of what came out of the visit. We did, as a result of the visit, create a new comprehensive annual bilateral consultative initiative. That was the bureaucratic way to say we were going to meet in a big meeting about once a year, the two governments. A lot of times those meetings aren't very productive. I know we have a huge one with Mexico, which I had participated in when I was in Mexico City and they're pretty perfunctory and pro forma. They seem to be much more important for the other country than they are for the United States.

Okay. So, these binational commissions, sometimes they're called. We often agree to them because they're very important to the other country and much less important to us. We kind of get our business done when we need to get our business done. And the other countries tend to use them as a "deliverable." It's a chance for us but especially for the other country to send a message that something was accomplished, that they have made an agreement with the United States to have this special meeting every year. Yes, so we did that and another result of the visit was the creation of a United States-South Africa business council.

*Q: Interesting.*

HASKELL: So the secretary had done a big commercial event while she was in Joburg and that was the outcome of that event. We also had agreed to, as result of the visit, to additional cooperation on food security and on climate change. We also were able to advance the discussions that we were having with South Africa on their role writ large in Africa.

On food security and on South Africa's role in Africa, especially on multilateral issues. That was a huge thing. We were always trying to get them to participate more by contributing more troops for peacekeeping, for example, and to be more involved in any kind of peace initiatives or conflict resolution initiatives. And so we were able to make some advances on that. The whole thing, that big visit, was done during the summer turnover. We had no management counselor, no political counselor, no econ counselor, only the intern in Washington, no desk officers while also preparing for the new ambassador. And the South African government was difficult and is to this day horribly protocol conscious so that they usually will tell us that the secretary cannot meet with the president, that the secretary of state meets with the minister of foreign affairs. That's how it works. They let us know that if their minister of foreign affairs goes to Washington, they will not get a meeting with our president. So we always had to work that, and we were able to usually work it out. But it was, I want to say it was fun, but I don't know if it was funny. It was one of those things, those visits are, I don't actually like doing visits. Who does?

But my job required it much of my career. Being management, you have to be involved in visits, although it was not usual to have a management officer be the overall control officer. That's often the DCM.

*Q: Right, exactly.*

HASKELL: The DCM might have some political officers who would do a lot of the work while the DCM just sort of pulled strings. Probably I didn't do it the way that a DCM would have done it. I was probably a little bit more in the weeds, but I think that made it easier for us to get everything done. And I did have a very good team. I was able to rely on the team to do whatever needed to be done. And you know, we got all the hotels we needed. We got this, we got that. There was the complication that I was living in Johannesburg but working in and assigned to Pretoria. The secretary was staying in Pretoria and the liaison team was staying in Pretoria.

So I had to be in Pretoria. And how would I pay for the hotel room? I couldn't get a per diem for a hotel room in the city I was assigned to. Somehow the guy that I had in charge of hotels, he was actually, I think, the admin control, was the management officer in Johannesburg. He was very resourceful and he was a good choice to do the overall admin job. He did work out some way for me to have a room to stay in Pretoria. There were times when, before the visit, the secretary's office would change something, and it could happen at two in the morning. It reminded me of when I was in Tel Aviv and was a motorcade officer, and they would make those changes to the schedule at two in the

morning. So it was imperative that I be in Pretoria in the hotel with all the others to deal with those issues.

*Q: It was particularly true of Secretary Hillary Clinton's visits that things changed on a dime even throughout the visit. One other question about the gigantic visits. I want to ask you, since you took such a large role in the management, about the public diplomacy side. Were there any aspects of the public diplomacy [PD] side of the visits that stand out in your mind?*

HASKELL: From my perspective, I always was working more on the bigger picture than on the substance of the public diplomacy, more with the logistics around the public diplomacy events/opportunities. Ensuring there were people to deal with things like how to get reporters off the plane and how we could keep them where they need to be and how do we get them where they needed to be. And there were funny little things like when the management section is ordering extra vehicles for motorcades they include getting a van for the reporters, but they needed to ensure that van had a powerful enough engine to keep up with the motorcade because they sometimes didn't. That causes a big problem when the motorcade arrives and the little press van comes up a bit late and the reporters aren't where they needed to be. So I had to work on all of this, especially as a motorcade officer. I worked with the PD section very closely to make sure things went smoothly. Another example was the photographer. We would have to make sure to have a photographer who was not in that press van but in a car further up in the motorcade so that they could jump out and run to get all the photos of the secretary getting out of the car and greeting an official and going into the meeting room and all of those different photo opportunities that are used for press.

And of course there was always the challenge of the setup in the room for press. Secretary Clinton did a lot of press conferences. Did the mic work well, was the camera in the right place. And because it was PD, if there was a big event, the chairs in the front rows had to be full.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: Even if there was a good turnout, people didn't always like to sit in the front. So we would have to be watching so that before the secretary takes the stage, that if there were empty seats, we had to run and get people in those seats.

And, you know, the people who were with the secretary didn't want to be in those seats. They wanted to stand in the back or on the side, watching her. They wanted to be there when she came down, to be able to talk about how it went while going on to the next thing. So those things were interesting. We did a meet and greet at the embassy in Pretoria. Clinton was adamant that she always did a meet and greet. And, unfortunately that day was very, very long. And there was construction on the highway between Johannesburg and Pretoria. In fact, the whole four years I was there, there was road construction on that highway because they were building, they were building the light rail.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: So, we were late, because she tended to arrive late for an event and then would still take the full time or more, making us later still to the next thing. We had an event late in the afternoon/evening. Well, it wasn't supposed to be in the evening because it was partly outside, but to get from Joburg up to Pretoria, do the meet and greet at the embassy and on to that event, it was really hairy. I remember the poor guy that I made the site officer for the meet and greet at the embassy, he'd never been a site officer before. I told him that it was an easy one, that he could do it. He did a really good job. You have to have the hold room and you have to have exactly the right kind of water and the chair and the right venue. And then you have all the kids, because she only wanted the kids for her meet and greets. So we had all these embassy kids waiting for hours because they have to be in place, and then she was late.

But we did get really nice pictures. Those kids have really nice pictures with Secretary Clinton. But you know, all the people who work on the visit get nothing.

*Q: Right? Yeah.*

HASKELL: So we ended up arriving very late to the PEPFAR project that was out in the countryside. I think it was just north of Pretoria. It was fun for me too, because my son was working as a seasonal hire and they had assigned him a job at that event. He was in high school, about to start his senior year. And he was excited to be working on a Hillary Clinton event, that he was doing a real job, talking to reporters, and directing them go here and registering people and doing all this. Meanwhile, it was getting dark, but we've managed to make it a successful event. And then from there we went straight to the hotel, changed clothes to go to the dinner, and then we were at the dinner. Of course, the foreign minister wanted to spend two, three hours with the secretary at this dinner. It was a big gala with maybe 250 people. Part of my job was to constantly be telling my MFA liaisons what was up, like that we were leaving now, and everybody on our side would be going as well. And they would just have to deal with it.

*Q: Right?*

HASKELL: I did get an award. It wasn't just for that visit; it covered many things I did. I don't know if there was anything particularly wonderful in it. It was written for extraordinary sustained performance and management from 2007 to 2009. And it culminated in "leading the team that arranged a four city visit for the secretary of state over three days." It was three days, well the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth, I guess it was kind of four days

*Q: Wow. And you know, you scarcely sleep—*

HASKELL: It was a long visit.

*Q: Oh yeah. That is a very long visit for a secretary of state. That's rough.*



HASKELL: They wrote a lot about the visit in the beginning of the nomination and continued with an awful lot of the details of the visit, how difficult it was without having desk officers and everything changing so much, and the six hour time, and all that. And then they talked also about some of the management issues we addressed. So yeah, it was good. I had a meritorious honor award in 2007 for something. I don't remember what, though.

*Q: Well, in the earlier discussions you had of your innovations in management and process and you know the integration of new types of technology in management, all of those things are award-worthy because it's so easy to either leave it to your successor or throw your hands up and say, I can't do this. We don't have the money. I don't have the people. It's impossible. I mean, another officer might just do that, but you did not, you always found a way, even if it took longer, required more justification. So on this, this is an important thing I think for people to understand that often behind the scenes it's these innovative and self-initiated activities that people don't always do. And when it is done, it is noticed and awards are given.*

HASKELL: It was good. I was enjoying my tour in South Africa. I will say that when I first arrived there, I had a little bit of an experience of, I thought the Peter principle was applying, that I had risen above my abilities because it was a space as deputy management counselor in this gigantic embassy with three consulates. And I didn't always feel like I knew what I was doing. I had to get past that in that first year. I did, I clearly did. I was able to embrace and use my experience and trust myself more. And I had a lot of support from the front office and from the management counselors to do that. People had respect, I think, for me.

*Q: I have to say here also that if I were in the Africa Bureau and I were looking for DCMS, the kind of work you have done in the course of this tour, the four years in South Africa, I mean I would be thinking of having you on a DCM list.*

HASKELL: Okay. Well, so I think I mentioned when we were wanting to go to South Africa, they had talked to both of us about it, my husband and me. And because we didn't have any desire to not live together, we weren't really interested in the DCM jobs. But AF/EX [Africa Bureau/Executive Office] did approach me and asked me if I'd be interested in being the deputy AF/EX director. They approached me about that a year before the bidding season.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: I wasn't at grade. I mentioned that I wasn't in the Senior Foreign Service. They told me not to worry about that. Yeah. I really wanted to do that job. But when bidding time came around, it was difficult for us, as a tandem, and in the end, I called up AF/EX in October of the bidding season and told them that I wasn't going to do it. So, they did recognize and include me. They sent me to different meetings. I felt very good about them asking me to participate and to take some things on. And I would say that certainly the three years I was in Ouagadougou and the four years that I was in South

Africa, my experience was that AF/EX was by far the best executive office in any bureau. And they showed tremendous support for posts. They gave people leeway. They very clearly thought posts were more important than Washington, which is what you want when you're at post. And I really can't say enough about the wonderful people that I worked with there.

*Q: Absolutely. That is a very important thing. And certainly, one source of psychic income and professional satisfaction if you're getting that from your Washington backstop.*

HASKELL: So, as I have done in the past, and months before this visit even happened—because this visit happened sort of just as bidding season was starting—I had already been looking through all the staffing patterns and figuring out where in the world we could go. My husband had changed to the PD cone only when he started the tour in Johannesburg, so he felt that he really needed a good PD job. We found that there were jobs in Madrid. There was a management counselor job for me and there was an information officer job for him in the PD section. We thought that would be a really good fit. I had also discovered that in Santo Domingo there was a management officer job, at my grade [but it would turn out to be a down stretch for me—below my personal grade]. And there was a PAO [public affairs officer] job at grade for my husband. So these were the two posts that we were really working on for bidding. And our preference was Madrid. I worked on that; I used all of my experience with how to reach out and lobby and get to the right people.

I knew I had worked for one of the guys that was in EUR/EX. He was one of the deputies in EUR/EX. I was going through him to see what the bureau was thinking. I mentioned to him that the job wasn't at grade for me [it was one grade above my personal grade]. They hadn't come out with the promotion list yet. So I knew this guy pretty well, so I called him and I asked if it was a problem for me that I wasn't at grade? And he told me that, no, it was not a problem. What I discovered later was that he had been on the promotion panel.

He knew I had already been promoted, and as near as I could tell, I was EUR/EX's candidate for the Madrid job. But then I called the DCM in Madrid, and I could tell that he had no interest in me. Wow. Really? I was surprised he had even taken the call. I could tell that it wasn't going to happen. I was not post's choice. I knew somebody who was working in EUR/PD [Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs/Public Diplomacy office], so I talked to her. I asked her if she knew what was going on, what is up with that? [How was I the bureau's choice but not post's?] You know, you have to ask people; it's all about networking. She came back to me to let me know that she didn't think I was going to get that [Madrid] job.

At which point, of course, we just abandoned ship with that and went back to the Santo Domingo jobs, which they had already been ping-ponging us, asking if we were still interested. I kept avoiding the question, but then once we realized we weren't going to Madrid, I confirmed that we wanted those jobs. And then it was a sealed deal. I think from the

moment we expressed interest, months before, they knew they wanted me, especially. So, I got promoted and I was now going to a down stretch. It was an FS-01 position. I had a lot of experience, and Santo Domingo was a difficult post for lots of reasons; it has always seemed to be dysfunctional. So, I think that they were going to take us no matter what, if we wanted to go there, so that worked out.

And as we were coming out of that visit, and we were getting our new ambassador, the FIFA 2010 World Cup was starting to be front and center. I think I mentioned before that we had already been booking hotel rooms. We were working very closely with this wonderful woman whose name I can't remember right this minute, Lee something. It will come to me eventually, who was a financial management guru in Diplomatic Security. She had come up with some incredibly valuable government-wide innovations on how to pay for as we organized the U.S. government participation in these big events. We were, of course, looking for cars because the embassy motor pool couldn't handle that extra workload. We had two things we had to think about. We had two different security-based task forces that were going to be based at the embassy. They do for major events, whether it's Olympics or maybe an APAC meeting or anything where there's a big event, especially if it's like a major sporting event where masses of the public are going.

So there were two security task forces that were created. One was for analysis of information for any security threat, like terrorism. And then there's another one which was more like watching everything and collecting what they hear, and they kind of work together but kind of not. And these were going to be staffed by many different agencies, not just Diplomatic Security. Yes, lots of agencies. So, at post we had the Secret Service and we had FBI and DEA. We had the different law enforcement agencies resident at post. So they would come into the management office to tell us on a daily basis about each person who would be arriving at this day/time and this other guy would be coming at another day/time, with constant changes. And it was months before the event when they were already trying to assign people, and people were starting to arrive to staff these task forces.

These things fell in place three months, even two months before the event. But they would switch out people and not overlap. We didn't have a Foreign Service OMS [office management specialist] in the management section. In order to get the job that I was filling, the deputy management counselor job, the management office had to give up the Foreign Service OMS position, because they couldn't get an additional Foreign Service position. So then we hired EFMs [eligible family members] to do it because we needed someone with a security clearance. We had been accommodating job-shares, which worked out really well. But at this particular time there wasn't anybody who was job-sharing. I had hired this guy who was incredibly good. I was so lucky, because you know, at this point we had a huge spreadsheet that was maybe two hundred lines by however many columns to try to keep track of the necessary hotel rooms.

And some of the hotel rooms were in Johannesburg and some of the hotel rooms were in Pretoria. Some of the hotel rooms were in Rustenburg where the U.S. team was playing their first game. And we had to think about if the U.S. team advanced in the tournament,

where would they play the next game and different things. But we knew that there would be high-level representation from our government at the opening ceremony. And in fact, I think for a long time we thought that President Obama would come. Meanwhile the management section was really consumed with this huge logistical nightmare. Remember that all these people arriving also wanted to get around town. They wanted to go to dinner and they wanted to go here and they wanted to go there and we had to have cars to take them and we had to make sure that they were safe. Crime was still a huge thing. There were two huge uncertainties about the lead up to this World Cup. One was could South Africa plausibly get all of the new stadiums done and the second one was would people be killed during the event because crime was so unsafe?

So we are working on it. One of the things that happens when you get promoted into the Senior Foreign Service, you have to take this class called the Senior Executive Training Seminar, SETS. You were required to complete it within the twelve months right after your promotion was notified. I had signed up for it in April 2010.

We knew that the World Cup would start in June, so it was not a crazy thing to do, sign up for the class in April. But, as time went on the DCM, whom I'd been working with for three years, because she had been the CG [consul general] in Cape Town for the first two years before she moved up to be the DCM—she had been chargé for nearly a year before ambassador arrived, or maybe only eight or nine months—she told me that she really wanted me to be the overall control officer for the whomever was coming as ranking U.S. representative. Whether it was going to be President Obama or whether it was going to be Vice President Biden, she wanted me to be the control. She told the ambassador it had to be me, that there was nobody else, it had to be me. I shrugged about that, and said okay, whatever. I had a goal that we should leave post, because we were departing in the summer, we should leave before the World Cup. That was my goal. But about six months or more, maybe six or eight months before the event, post management made a policy that no one could depart in the couple of months before the World Cup.

*Q: Right. It's like trying to leave before you do the July Fourth event.*

HASKELL: Actually, I've done that. I've left on July 1.

*Q: Wow. That's pretty—because it's such a gigantic thing and it requires so much management attention. It surprises me that they allow a management officer at your grade to leave before the July Fourth event, but anyway, certainly not FIFA.*

HASKELL: So at the time they were telling me that they wanted me to do this. I told them, okay, fine, but that I had this training class in April so I'll be gone for two weeks. It was a two-week class, I think. They told me that, no, I couldn't do that, that there was going to be a White House advance team coming about then. We didn't know if it would be in April, or if it would be in May, but there was going to be an advance team and that I had to not go to that class.

And one of the things about this class is that you are not allowed to cancel, unlike every other class at FSI. But I sent an email to FSI to say I would not be coming. I got a rather testy phone call from FSI or from the DG, one evening asking what I was talking about, that that was not allowed, and what did I think I was doing. I told them that it was not my problem, that it was the front office's request for me to cancel, and that if they wanted to argue, they needed to argue with the front office because I didn't really care. They did, I guess, call the front office and the front office won. But during that phone call that evening, they tried to insist with me that it was crazy, that Pretoria was such a huge post that I couldn't possibly be the only person who could do this job. I told them I didn't disagree but it was what the front office wanted, so they had to speak to them. So anyway, I was allowed to cancel and I had to reschedule the class. I think I rescheduled for January 2011 so I was already going to be at my next post, who wasn't so happy about it. They figured, why did they have to manage without me for two weeks. I explained that it was not about any particular post or about me, but that it was about the whole of Foreign Service. But it wasn't nice to get that phone call and sort of be accused of—how dare I think I was indispensable. But they did finally be quiet and called the front office, I guess.

We were still wondering who it was going to be, Obama or Biden. One of the things about White House visits is the people who were doing those visits, who were doing the advances, and the people who come and organize stuff, they were volunteers. Did you know that?

*Q: No, I did not. That's interesting. Wow.*

HASKELL: They tended to be people who worked on the campaign, and they would take leave from their job, whatever their job was. Many of them were not working in the government, and they would get only their per diem, no pay for the White House people. Now, State Department, the office of presidential travel, which is how the State Department supports White House visits, is different. They were professionals, and they had real jobs working for the State Department. The White House and the State Department's office of presidential travel would come to pos. The first batch of them was maybe three or four or five, and they would come for a week or two. We would take them to all the places we could conceivably think we might be taking the principal. At that point in time, in the lead-up to the World Cup, FIFA was being quite controlling. I don't think I'm going to go off the rails here to say they were like the mafia, or similar.

And they weren't going to cave into the U.S. government. The stadiums that were being newly built in South Africa, specifically for the tournament, they [FIFA] had all kinds of rules, really the same as we might have in building a new building. We don't let people just run around the stadium at will. I had a certain date the advance team would be in South African and needed to visit the venues. But nobody was in the stadiums and no one was allowed in. So we had to really push to get permission to take the advanced team to Rustenburg, for example, to the new stadium that was built there, to let the White House advance team see what it was like because they wanted to see where the VVIP would go. I don't remember though, I'm not even a 100 percent sure we knew yet if it was Biden

and not Obama, but the team needed to see it. There was also a new, giant stadium built in Soweto. We had to get permission to go there, as that was where the opening ceremony and first game of the tournament would be. Any place where we conceivably thought we had to show them—different hotels, and believe me there weren't hotels just waiting and with available rooms, to find the one that the advance team, especially security, would approve of and that had enough rooms. Of course, that hotel would just be for the smaller traveling party, not including the hundreds of people supporting them, who could stay in a different hotel[s].

A vice presidential visit, except for the fact that it's got White House people who are sometimes difficult, more difficult to deal with than the State Department mostly because we were the same institution, wasn't so different from a SecState visit. But a SecState visit was bigger than a vice presidential visit in some ways, including the number of people involved and things like that. But because it's the White House, it's more complicated because there's not always the same sort of a game plan that we can use from experience. We do have the office of presidential travel though, which is incredibly important to managing those visits. And we had some people who were really easy to work with and that was great.

The first advance team came and left then they came back after a week or two, but by then we knew it was going to be Vice President Biden. We picked a hotel in Johannesburg, so it wasn't Pretoria. We had looked at three or four different hotels. We managed to get rooms. It was a big fancy hotel, but not new. It was an older hotel. The vice president was coming with his adult son and one grandchild, which complicates everything you can imagine. The Secret Service would bring the special car, so that was going to be easy. But we had some movements that would be by helicopter.

*Q: Wow. Wow.*

HASKELL: We had ethics issues to deal with regarding seats at games. I had worked all this through the ethics attorneys at State, so I knew what we were allowed to do and I knew how to phrase things and make it all work as easily as possible. But there was really no provision for free tickets for the vice president's son and grandchild.

For the opening ceremony the South African government and FIFA control the plan, mostly FIFA. They had a plan for who could sit where in the VIP box and that was it, and they wouldn't let any security officers in. They told us since they were going to have security for President Zuma there that that should be enough. There were all kinds of issues that were not easy. And to be honest in a lot of these issues, like in terms of access, they said that every person entering a stadium had to have a ticket. Well, nobody was going to spend four hundred dollars to get our security people in, to get the advance people in, you know, to get the hangers on in.

So we tried our best to abide by that. We had this fabulous woman that was our Secret Service agent resident in Pretoria, and she did her best to help us. But it wasn't pretty, I mean the vice president was completely unaware of all of this, as he should be. But what

would happen was, the motorcade would drive up, and hoards of people would jump out and strong arm their way right into the stadium, without tickets. It was not pretty. One time I decided to stay in the bus because I didn't want to have anything to do with those tactics. So, I stayed in the bus for the opening ceremony, which was followed by the first game between South Africa and Mexico. And so, the vice president went to the opening ceremony and stayed for the first game. About halfway through, one of the military guys, I think, or maybe one of the communication people, came out to the bus.

He came to ask me to join them inside. He told me there was nobody standing at the gates anymore, that no one was taking tickets anymore, that I wouldn't be making a scene. So, I did go in and stand and watch at the back. That is how I got to watch most of the game. It was fun to be there. They tied, the game ended with a tie. But even before that opening ceremony, let me think, I'm going to step back a bit cause I forgot to mention this. There was a big concert the night before—I want to say was headlined by Black Eyed Peas.

We had been working with the White House on the vice president's schedule. We kept asking if he was going to go to the concert. Was he going to go? Nope, nope, nope, nope, nope. Not going to the concert, nothing. They kept saying he wasn't going to the concert, not going to the concert, not going to the concert. And then, as soon as they arrived, he was going to the concert, after they had already arrived in the country. So I want you to think about that, right, because, again, this was a concert where the tickets were, I don't know how much money, and he was not going to sit in the bleacher seats and they don't let people in without tickets. And we had the guys, you know, the medical aid, et cetera. The military had all kinds of people that run around with the president and the vice president, and they all have to be at his side at every moment. And then there was the Secret Service, and they had to be there. And we had this fabulous woman; she was a PD officer. Without her we would have been up a creek without a paddle. She was incredible. She went directly to the producer of the concert and asked for tickets in a very careful way. She did not ask for free tickets, and they did not say what the cost was, which was the only way to have accomplished this.

Later, they wanted to be paid. Now, if they had done that the day we were doing it, which was the day of the concert, we wouldn't have gotten the tickets, and let's just say we would have been toast. So, we only had to try to clean up that mess later.

*Q: Oh boy.*

HASKELL: And it was hard. I also ended up in a standup viewing box where the food was, and you could kind of wander around in there. Again, this time though, it was a military officer who told me he had money to pay for tickets and that he was buying me a ticket, regardless.

*Q: Wow. Okay.*

HASKELL: So, then some of us got in because they, the military guys, were just appalled by the way everything was going. As you know, in a visit, none of that—the demands—

was ever about the principal. They were never demanding about those things. It was always their assistants and aides that were demanding. But anyway, the concert was interesting, and I got to go. Then there was the opening ceremony the next day and the first opening game. Then the next night was the United States' team's first game. It was against England—

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: —in Rustenburg, which is a little town like maybe an hour and a half, two hour drive West of Pretoria. So what they did was, they flew. This was part of the whole like um, in the advanced team too, we had to go to see all the airports.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: There was an airport somewhere out there that people used to arrive at Sun City. If you've heard of Sun City, South Africa, it's a kind of weird resort that, under apartheid, was really even weirder. It still exists, and there was a big-enough runway out there for the rich people who would go there. So, we figured out that the plane, Air Force Two, could land and take off there and then they could motor pool or helicopter to the game. It would take too much time to motorcade from Pretoria. Although some people still had to use motor pool. In the end, the vice president and a few special people were helicoptered by the South African Air Force. But the advance team looked at me and told me that there was no room for me on the helicopter or any other mode. I reminded them that I was the one who would make things happen, and that if they had a problem and I was not there, they would not be happy. Still, they told me that I was welcome to be there, but there was no room on the plane or the helicopter.

Which actually also happened with our ambassador. They had no room for the ambassador, either. So, the ambassador was going, and he had two cars going because just before the tournament started he had decided he needed a bodyguard for the duration of the tournament. [He didn't otherwise have a bodyguard, ever.] I was able to ride in the second car with one of the local staff security people. So I got to Rustenburg. Again, it was a little bit of a scene watching all these people rush into the game even though they didn't have tickets. But at a certain point, there wasn't anybody at the ticket gate anymore. I did go up, and I did watch from the VIP hospitality suite. I never had a seat at these games with the vice president, but I needed to be there. [For example, Rustenburg is located within an area of the Bafokeng nation, which has a traditional chief who carries the title of king.]

And the Bafokeng, led by the king, owned the Rustenburg stadium. They owned land in the area that was rich in platinum. And, of course, the king wanted to meet the vice president. This was important and needed to happen. It was hard to organize, but we did finally manage to get a handshake; it wasn't an easy thing to accomplish. Also, there was a whole to-do with some of the travel party, people who didn't think they were sitting close enough to the vice president, people who thought they were very important and



needed to be there. It was fun, though, because we won the game. Oh wait, we didn't win, we tied. But it felt like a win to us to play England in soccer and to tie.

One of the meetings the vice president had was with the head of FIFA, who at the time was Sepp Blatter, who, I think, since has been completely disgraced. That was one of the hardest meetings to get and one of the hardest events to deal with because Blatter thought he was so important. Why would he, you know, why would he need to meet with the vice president of the United States? But we did manage it. I can't remember if the vice president had a meeting with Duma [Member of the South African Parliament]. I know that he had a meeting with the deputy president, who at the time was mostly Motlanthe. But the weird thing about that was that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had assigned two people to help me whose job was to get me what I needed, to work with their own government to try to make sure the vice president's visit to South Africa was successful. Remember, there were a lot of heads of state coming and it was hard to maintain our preferred, high level of acknowledgement.

I had these two wonderful South African Foreign Service officers who had been around a long time. They helped me a lot. One day, just before the visit, they came to me and excitedly told me that they had such great news. I was thinking that that didn't sound good. I knew where we were in the planning, and I couldn't think what I could possibly have asked for that would be so great. They had told us that the vice president would need to meet with the deputy president, but we, of course, were insisting on it being the president. I asked them what was so great? And they told me that they had gotten the vice president two hours with the deputy president. I knew that that was not going to happen. Two hours was much longer than the vice president would ever spend in what was essentially a courtesy call. I started working with the advance, the White House liaison. I explained the problem we had because I knew they would never agree to this. I told them that the vice president could NOT meet with the South African vice president. We managed to whittle it down to a forty-five-minute lunch. We blamed it on his schedule. And I did hear later about his comment to someone in the car, something like why was he doing that lunch and who was responsible?

*Q: Not surprising.*

HASKELL: We had whittled it down as short a meeting as we could, but you gotta do these things. When they left that game between the United States and England, in Rustenburg, they left from that airport that was out by Sun City. Lots of things happen during those visits. They always bring in a lot of U.S. military planes ahead of time that are carrying the special car, other equipment, and stuff like that. And very often our military members forget that they often need passports to enter a foreign country. We had some people arrive on those planes with no passport. We were unable to get the South African government to allow them to enter without passports, so I told them they had to sleep on the plane. South Africa's very, very sticky about these things as we would be.

*Q: You know, there's an instruction cable that your post sends to Washington, and Washington is supposed to give those instructions to every agency, every individual.*

*They're all supposed to know what they're supposed to come with. Somebody missed the trick.*

HASKELL: That happens all the time. There was also an issue about where the vice president's plane would land. There was the Johannesburg International Airport, of course, but they charge landing fees. Evidently, the U.S. government doesn't pay landing fees.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: So, I had this goal of them not having to land there in order to avoid the battle with the South Africans over the landing fees. [We had been struggling with a mounting "debt" of such landing fees that had been collected over the years and the South Africans had been demanding payment.] So, then we thought, maybe they could land at a South African Defense Force airbase right outside Pretoria, Waterkloof Airbase.

So we tried to get agreement to use that airbase but it wasn't going to work because some of the rich people with connections who were coming to the World Cup were landing there and there were going to be planes all over the apron. There was just no way that we were going to have the security that we needed for the vice president's plane in that situation. So, there was also a small private commercial airport out in the countryside closer to Johannesburg. It was called Lanseria. And they had a lot of internal flights flying around South Africa and even international flights around the region. And it was also a nice airport. If you go to South Africa and you're doing internal flights, it's a very nice one to go through because it's small and you can just zip in and out. So, we did have him land there and it was, it did have a long runway so that it could handle the plane. And that's where we went. The day came, and that was where they were able to keep the plane until time to leave. And so then the vice president left. Then the accounting started.

It's after a visit that you have to start to bill all the agencies for all these things. With the wonderful, magical way that the Diplomatic Security financial management person was able to come up with and get approved for use on somewhat shared or difficult to manage expenses was based on a process where the State Department would sort of "loan" money by paying all the bills for things like hotel rooms [where the number of room nights was changing constantly] and then we would apportion the charges based on each agencies usage. We paid the total charges for the hotel rooms [not personal expenses, of course]. So Diplomatic Security gave us a lot of funding because the hotel rooms were at least seven hundred dollars a night each.

We had to have rooms for all the hangers on that went everywhere, as well as the vice president's party, as well as the people that worked on those analytics and security teams. We had a total amount of money that we spent. In order to be certain of the rooms we needed, we had taken enough rooms and if any were left empty for a night here or there, due to schedule changes, or someone didn't show up as expected, et cetera, it wasn't a problem. So some rooms were empty. We couldn't account for all that and we couldn't tell the hotel that we wouldn't pay for unused room nights because we didn't know until

the last minute or even the next day and the hotel couldn't sell the rooms. Also often we didn't want the hotel to sell the rooms because they were in our security protected areas. I have to say that the financial management officer at post was phenomenal. She was phenomenal at dealing with all this. And I had also made her the site officer for Dr Biden, the wife of the vice president. So, she was the senior financial management person, and she was the site officer for Dr. Biden, working with Dr. Biden's staff to organize her schedule. Some of that accounting went on for, literally, years. I went to my next post and a year into my next tour I was getting questions about how different things were paid for. At which point I told them not to talk to me, that they needed to talk to several other people, that I didn't remember those details and longer had access to any records.

*Q: Wow. Incredible.*

HASKELL: Now, in addition to the vice president's visit, we were dealing with everyone at post and the World Cup in general. It wasn't just about the security teams, the analysis teams. We had a big mission with four posts. Most people were excited about the World Cup. And one of the things that came up in a country team meeting months before was how would people get their tickets. I explained that FIFA had a website where they could go and request tickets, that you can't get more than four tickets to any one game, and that you could ask for tickets for as many games as you want, but you might not get all of the tickets you requested, and you don't know which ones you're going to get. We, my family, actually did that.

We have three kids, so we were five people. We asked for four tickets for three games. That meant that not all of us could go to any one game. We did get four tickets for all three games. Two U.S. team games and one random game. I think it was Netherlands versus Denmark. We wanted to go to a game in the new, giant stadium in Soweto. And I had been lucky enough to go to the opening game and to the first U.S. team game. After that first U.S. game, I think the next game that was happening that we were all interested in was the U.S. vs. Algeria game.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: The U.S.-Algeria game was a surprise because the tie between the United States and England was a surprise. And then the next game we went to was U.S. vs. Slovenia. It was played in the Ellis Park stadium in Johannesburg, and we had paid for four tickets. [I may have gotten the order of the games wrong.] Working through the State Department's ethics office, we had figured out what was allowed in terms of accepting tickets offered by FIFA or the South Africans. Our ambassador was allowed to accept two tickets from FIFA for any U.S. game.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: And any other game he wanted to go to, he had to pay for the tickets. That was the deal. For the U.S. Slovenia game, for some reason, the ambassador gave the tickets to the consul general in Johannesburg. And then for some reason I do not

remember, the consul general decided he wasn't going, and he gave the tickets to Todd and me. So, we got to go and sit in the VIP where you sit with the other mucky mucks. We still had our four tickets, which was nice because that meant our three boys could go. One of them was still pretty little, so we got a summer intern from the consulate to go with our three boys. They sat on the other side of the stadium from us. It was nice, too, because we tied that game two to two.

So, the results were amazing for the U.S. team. I think that England must not have been doing so well because the next game we were playing, they thought they were going to play. We worked with USA soccer to see if they had tickets available for purchase by the people from the embassy, and they did. Of course, we paid for those personally. At least, we had seats that they could offer us. We had our tickets from doing it through the website, but some people hadn't done that. Others were then able to get tickets through USA soccer, which was really nice that USA soccer had a tranche of tickets that they could then sell. And the U.S. vs. Algeria game was at a stadium in Pretoria, just about four blocks or so from the embassy.

The embassy had a big lawn, so we had a big event prior to the game. We invited people, and we had the whole U.S. embassy community there. It was in a big event tent and it was great. Drew Carey came. He was the speaker, along with the ambassador. We did a solid lead up to the game, and then everybody walked to the stadium. And again, we had some help. We had four tickets, but we were able to buy one extra ticket also. The Brits had called us up at the embassy because they had all bought tickets to that game, thinking they would be ahead of us in scoring. We didn't have tickets to that game. Since the Brits weren't going to that game any longer, they had tickets to sell. So some of us bought tickets from them. There was some ticket swapping going on.

The Brits wanted to go to the game England was playing, but we managed to go with five tickets. It was the most fabulous game. It was so exciting because we won at the very last minute and the place went crazy. I was really happy watching our kids because our kids hadn't really been into soccer before the World Cup. And this was part of Foreign Service life, being able to do things you wouldn't otherwise be able to. Maybe three months or four months before the World Cup started, my husband had a brilliant idea. He bought a Wii game.

It was the FIFA World Cup 2010, and it was really well done. It had all the teams that could plausibly be in the World Cup. Some of the teams in the game didn't really make it to the tournament, but they were there anyway. And the players in the Wii game had the names of the actual players. So our kids played this game, and they learned who all the players were and who the teams were and how it works. They knew how to play soccer because they played at school. The game got them really psyched for the whole event. And so going to the Slovenia game, they were excited that they all got to go to the U.S.-Algeria game. When we won, my oldest son was amazingly happy. He said that in four years he would be going to Rio to see the U.S. win in Rio. It was a lot of fun. Four of us went to the Netherlands vs. Denmark game in the big stadium. I guess Netherlands won. And of course Spain won the World Cup. There were fan parks all over town where you

could go and sit in your lawn chair and watch the game on jumbotrons. So we watched the final on a jumbotron at a fan park.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: And the day after the final game we left South Africa.

*Q: You left post?*

HASKELL: Yes. Somehow during all that we packed out in the middle of World Cup, we packed out.

*Q: Wow. Incredible.*

HASKELL: And I have no performance evaluation from any of that time because I would have had to write it myself and I was tired. I was done. I couldn't do it, and I didn't care.

*Q: It would have been a partial you know, a performance evaluation for a brief amount of time beyond your normal.*

HASKELL: Right. I didn't have to do one. It wasn't more than 120 days, so I didn't do one. But it would have incorporated the Biden visit and the World Cup.

*Q: Yeah. I get it. I would probably have done the same thing. I would have just been too exhausted. I don't care.*

HASKELL: And when you're Senior Foreign Service, nobody does an EER just because they want to. My rater wasn't doing it because she was just as tired as the rest of us.

*Q: Right. Yes.*

HASKELL: We went off on home leave and to go to Santo Domingo, which was our next post. That is the end of South Africa, I believe.

*Q: Earlier you described how you were considered for higher level positions and that you were promoted into Senior Foreign Service. Were there any other approaches by your bureau or other bureaus? In other words, did the additional visibility of getting into the Senior Foreign Service immediately make you attractive for other jobs that you haven't mentioned yet?*

HASKELL: Nobody else reached out, and we had decided we would go to Santo Domingo. As we managed as a tandem, I was often kind of the whiner. I was the one who said I didn't want to be here or there, I don't want to do that job. My husband was much more accommodating, and this time he really wanted to go to Santo Domingo because it was a PAO [Public Affairs officer] job, and he thought that would help him get into the Senior Foreign Service, as well. So, I just went along with that program. For me it was a

management counselor job, and I knew I could do it. I knew it would be a bit of a challenge because it was a difficult post. I thought it was good to go back to a Spanish language post, and taking two of our kids. The oldest one was going off to college at that time, but we knew the two younger ones would get more Spanish. We thought that was wise.

*Q: Yeah. And you know, there are other advantages. You're close to the U.S. if you need to go back and, you know—*

HASKELL: Right. My mother-in-law was elderly and not well. She was in Florida, so we were close. That was another consideration.

*Q: Yeah. All right. Well we can, so we can conclude here today.*

*Today is January 14, 2020 and we're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell who is currently in Brazzaville.*

HASKELL: Yes, thanks. Nice to see you again in the new year. We're going to start today with Santo Domingo. I was posted there from 2010 to 2013.

I was there as a management counselor following my time as deputy management counselor in Pretoria. So by way of sort of introduction to the post, I went to Santa Domingo, I was in the down stretch [in a position graded below my personal grade]. I had gotten promoted into the Senior Foreign Service in 2009 but decided to go to the Santo Domingo management counselor job anyway because it was a very good opportunity for my husband to be PAO [public affairs officer] there. So Santo Domingo was a decent sized post with some big issues and about 175 U.S. direct hires and quite a few agencies. We had a number of law enforcement agencies there. Of course, USAID, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agriculture Service, sort of the standard crowd. We had probably 350 or 400 local staff. So it was a pretty big post at the time. It was scattered over about twelve different locations.

*Q: All within the city of Santo Domingo?*

HASKELL: Within the city, except one. There was a Container Security Initiative office that was at the port a little ways out of the city. And there were two Consular Agency locations. One in Punta Cana and one in Puerto Plata. And to be honest, I can't remember if I was counting in that number this kind of a quasi-relationship that the Public Affairs section had with an educational institution in Santiago, another city. But I think I wasn't counting the Santiago one, but I definitely was counting the Container Security Initiative location. So some of these were walking distance, one from the other. On one particular street corner we had the Chancery, we had USAID, and then we had an annex that included the Facility Maintenance section, the Defense Cooperation office, the Health Unit, and the CLO [Community Liaison office]. And then even further down that block, another block or two was the GSO [General Services office] compound with the warehouse and some of the other law enforcement agencies' offices.

The Commercial Service and Agriculture Service were in one building, too far to walk. The Public Affairs office was too far to walk. The consular section wasn't really too far to walk, but people thought it was too hot, so nobody walked. But it was a consular section was its own building down the road, too. We had a CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] contingent that was colocated with some Dominican government officers. It was just a mishmash, all really quite old buildings. And we were about to start building a new embassy. So, we had quite a number of issues. If you remember, in January of 2010, there was a huge earthquake in Haiti, which was devastating. And Santo Domingo had played a huge role in the logistics of the support following the earthquake because the airport in Haiti wasn't very useful for a while.

Things were sent into Haiti through Santo Domingo. People were brought out—people who wanted to leave, evacuated American citizens—all of those kinds of things. There were no services in Port-au-Prince. All of that happened through Santo Domingo. This is all to say that the staff at the embassy in Santo Domingo was still rather traumatized by that effort. It was still a little bit ongoing, with just a trickle of things moving through. And the people who had worked very hard through the aftermath of that earthquake were still sort of reeling from it. We also had some key positions that had been vacant for months. We had some interesting, difficult issues with EEO and sexual harassment and family advocacy.

We had a bunch of those things. I learned more about those issues while at that post than I had in all of my other posts put together. It was really very educational. I felt that I learned a lot on those types of issues. State-USAID administrative support consolidation was way behind schedule. I think it was within the first month after my arrival that I had to sign a purchase agreement for another piece of land, a site contiguous to our NEC site because OBO had decided that it was cheaper to buy land for parking than it was to build a parking garage. So we had to whip around and do that. And the local staff sort of descended on my office upon my arrival about an issue with a defunct pension fund.

Even while I was doing my consultations prior to arrival, I'd been briefed on a fuel theft issue. So I arrived with this deluge of stuff that I knew I had to take care of pretty quickly. Oh, and there was an OIG inspection planned within six months of my arrival.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: So, oh, and we didn't have an ambassador. Our ambassador had been named but not confirmed. It was Raul Yzaguirre who was a political appointee. What an incredible man. And he was an icon of the Hispanic and the Latin community. He was a founder of La Raza, a civil rights organization. He was amazing, but he wasn't at post yet because someone had put a hold on him in the Senate, a hold completely unrelated to him. So he had been holding for more than a year. He did finally get confirmed and came to post maybe three or four months after we arrived.

There were also a bunch of new opportunities that I had identified shortly upon arrival, which included some taxation issues. Land tenure/land ownership problems, more than

one. We had identified a need for a build-to-lease housing compound and that was also sort of bubbling around. We needed to work on that. We had a lot of human resources [HR] issues. There was no HR officer at post. There was no position for an HR officer, which was absolutely insane. We had some immediate need to work on some duty-free entry problems with POV [privately owned vehicles]. We had no FSN [Foreign Service national—local employees] committee. We had no rightsizing report for the new building. We just had a lot of issues. So having said all that, it was quite a three-year tour. In terms of the vacancies, there had been no management counselor for about six months before I arrived. And the person who was sitting in was the supervisory GSO who curtailed about a week after I arrived.

I don't think it was related, but you know, after my initial chat with staff—you know that after you come to post, you usually gather your section around and have an introductory chat. It was a big section, probably 150 people, and you give your philosophy of how you work and what you expect from people. He told me he was going shortly after my remarks. So then we didn't have a supervisory GSO. We had a couple of A/GSOs [assistant general services officers]. One had very little experience and the other one had some attitude issues. Like I said, we had no HRO and, of course, no ambassador. So those were kind of interesting ways to start. I mentioned the earthquake already, and we were at the stage where we were trying to do some accountability for stuff that had been either taken to Haiti or brought back from Haiti, and it was just a lot of missing things that we weren't sure where they were. We were trying to immediately start our preparation for the OIG inspection. Normally post sends out questionnaires in order to identify the problem areas so you can try to address as many of them as you can before the actual inspection.

*Q: Given the absence of a permanent personnel officer, human resources officer, weren't you able to get at least a temporary one? You know, a circuit rider maybe?*

HASKELL: No. The way that WHA [Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs] chose to work was that they really believed very much in regional services. So they have their regional center in Fort Lauderdale. We were supposedly serviced by an HR officer out of Fort Lauderdale. It didn't work. Santo Domingo was too big a post to not have an HRO. And I think that was what happened, as happens many times in a lot of posts, there was a senior FSN—

*Q: Oh yeah.*

HASKELL: And for years people had just let it all go to her and no one paid attention. And the four visits a year from Fort Lauderdale had been virtually useless.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: I figured it out pretty early on. I was going through the staffing patterns and trying to figure out what was going on. Just as you do normally when you're new. And I noticed that there were so many positions that were represented by two positions on the



staffing pattern—one at the classified grade and one at a training grade [one grade below the classification]. And I was asking what was that, why do we have all this? And it turned out that that senior HR FSN had somehow decided—she swore she was told to do it this way. But the trouble was that she did not want to believe us when we told her it was wrong. But she was making everybody who took a position take a training grade for the first year. So that meant even if the person new to the job was fully qualified they had to take a training grade.

It was a lot of money out of a lot of people's pockets for a lot of years. I tried to explain to her how to use a training grade. First of all, the position had to be advertised. We had to discover that there were no qualified applicants at the normal grade. Then we would have to re-advertise, including the training grade. And then we would have to identify which qualification it was okay to not meet and then apply the training grade. It's a process. I wasn't saying that you never use a training grade, but you certainly don't use it the way she had been. And it took me two years to get her to stop doing it. But there were a lot of issues like that happening in the HR section. So I was dealing with Fort Lauderdale. I was trying to explain to them that I really needed a real HRO, that I did not need a consultant to tell me what to do because I already knew what to do. It was that I didn't have time to do it all as a management counselor. I think after about a year, maybe less than a year, when the deputy director from the regional center in Fort Lauderdale decided to come visit post.

He was there one morning. We talked. He went around. He chatted, chatted, chatted to people all day long. Then he came back to my office about 5:30. We chatted for about a minute and a half. And then he stood up and he told me that he was there to apologize, that they, in Fort Lauderdale, had all thought I was a crazy person, but that now he realized that things at the post were actually far worse than I had intimated. So anyway, I did not let up on my request for an HRO. It was in our mission program plan. And every year I plugged it, every time I went anywhere, everything I did. I never got an HRO during my tour. I knew I wouldn't, but they have one now. So, again, it was one of those things I think we've talked about in the past. It was one of those things that, because it wasn't going to benefit me personally, a lot of other people wouldn't have made the effort. They wouldn't have bothered, but it was really necessary to clean up a lot of problems. I did also get money for an ePAP [expanded professional associates program] position. It was good.

*Q: Wouldn't it have been possible to, say, train an EFM [eligible family member] in the basics, have them go to Washington, spend a couple of months doing the basics of HR and then have them come back?*

HASKELL: Well, that is sort of what I did. I convinced Washington, WHA, to give post an ePAP position. It took a while to fill the position and get the person trained. I also worked to, let's say, convince our senior HR FSN, too, that she needed to retire and start her own consulting business. So the timing was such that the ePAP arrived at post. There was an overlap, which is hard, I have to say. It was a very hard thing to do if you were the EFM coming in to learn to do the job that the FSN was pretty much being forced out of.

But they managed it. I give them both a lot of credit. And we hand-held her for a long time. The whole rest of my tour I, and the EFM who was the ePAP, also, we handheld the FSN who retired. We would have coffee with her every three months or so to see how her new business was doing. And the ePAP, he had been a consultant, so he knew how hard it was to get a business going. I think we did a pretty good job. And I know that she, that FSN who retired, has thrived in her work as a consultant. I think she was just really scared at the beginning because she had been working at the embassy since she was seventeen years old.

So that HRO effort was incredible. It was amazing. I may come back to that in a little while. I think that the State-USAID consolidation was quite a big thing. Nothing really had been done up to that point. I worked very closely with the executive officer from USAID. When I arrived, there was a kind of a furniture pool that had been established, but it wasn't being run properly, wasn't being funded properly. And USAID wasn't in it, so we tried to regularize that and to bring USAID into it. That was about the same time that they instituted the global requirement for posts to have a furniture pool. So, everything was on my side at that point.

Of course, part of the consolidation was to streamline, to become more efficient, and to not need as many employees. So we worked with some vacancies. We had some problem employees, some problem LES [locally employed staff, same as FSNs]. We had the highest-graded warehouse supervisor, I think, in the entire Foreign Service, which is crazy. There was no need for an FSN-10 warehouse supervisor. So I don't know what was going on there. But I had, at one point, found a file in my office which detailed some things that had been going on and I couldn't believe the woman in that FSN-10 warehouse supervisor position hadn't been fired years before—years. So, during the consolidation we had to re-jigger the whole staffing pattern for the ICASS [International Cooperative Administrative Support Services] because we needed to incorporate some of the USAID people, and we needed to make it more efficient.

So let's just say we didn't need an FSN-10 warehouse supervisor anymore. Luckily, the Dominican Republic had a very good severance pay law, so nobody was too brokenhearted if they'd been at the embassy a long time. But, the severance pay thing will come up again when we talk about the pension plan. But we did manage to do our consolidation. It wasn't easy. There were some problems, there were interesting things, related to the fuel theft, that made it a little bit difficult with our motor pool because we had to consolidate the two motor pools by a certain time. And there were some other things going on at the same time. But we worked on it. One thing we really wanted to do was have a generator pool because it was absolutely insane to move a generator from one house to another just because the house changed the agency occupant. But I couldn't convince aid of that. OBO was absolutely convinced that that rule already existed, but they kept telling me they were, we're going to send a cable out about it. I don't think they've sent out that cable yet.

But you heard about the generator pool I had in Pretoria previously, so I knew how it worked and I knew that OBO was in favor of it. I just could not convince USAID's

executive officer to do it. There were a couple of big issues that I worked on pretty much my whole tour, one of which was the LES [locally employed staff, same as FSNs] pension plan fund. So they had had a pretty decent pension fund. It was basically an insurance policy that had been organized in the 1970s.

The employees contributed and the employing agencies contributed. Evidently, at some point in the early 2000s the embassy was alerted that the insurance company, called Caribalico, was not being managed well and that we should get out of it. We should somehow get out of that pension fund because it was likely to go under. There was documentation of that notification, but evidently we didn't pay any attention to it. The warning was provided by a Dominican guy who was a globally respected actuary. At some point, early on after I arrived, he came to see me to tell me about the problems. Of course, that was after I had had a stream of FSNs coming in to tell me that the issue of the pension fund was a big deal. They didn't have a pension fund anymore, and something wasn't right.

I did go back and went through a lot of papers, a lot of documentation. It appeared that in 2004 or 2005 the pension fund did in fact go bankrupt. The way the embassy handled it was appropriate. They did the right thing in that situation. They paid out the FSNs the present value of future benefit. But it would not have been easy to try to explain to people with no business or financial background, what does the present value of future benefit mean. Even still, they did it. I looked at the documentation, and they explained it perfectly. Based on my conversations with FSNs, most people, the vast majority, seemed to not understand. They didn't understand that they were given some money and that it was supposed to make up for what they weren't going to get when they retired.

To make those payouts, all the agencies had to contribute again. If an FSN had been with the embassy, at that point, for thirty years or thirty-five years or something, they got a lot of money, maybe as much as \$150,000-\$200,000. They could buy an apartment or whatever with that money. But if you had just been with them, say five years, ten years, maybe they got a few thousand dollars or something. It just wasn't very much money and that money just went right through people's hands. So they didn't really feel like they got anything. It did seem shameful that we weren't doing anything about it. The issue of a pension really hadn't been addressed since 2005 or 2006 when that payment had gone out, which had only been four or five years.

I also knew that, I believe it was in 2005, the State Department had made a decision not to allow any new pension funds overseas because they were working to make a pension fund that would be managed in the United States for local staff. So I knew I couldn't go back to Washington and ask for a new pension fund. They still haven't worked out that local employee pension fund. There still is not a decent global FSN pension fund that's being run out of Washington. As I understand it, the problems are with the Treasury Department and taxation. So I tried to figure out another way. I really looked hard about how we could fix it. One of the things that had happened after the fund went bankrupt, Washington required post to enroll all employees in the new social security-like program that the Dominican government had started in 2003, which was, at the time, considered

adequate. It was based on a model from maybe Ecuador or another country. The embassy paid retroactively back to 2003, from the beginning.

So that was another place that the agencies had to get money. When the Dominican social security plan started it looked good on paper, but the pension fund part of it didn't do anything beyond payout about fifty dollars a month to people. They didn't add anything to it. They never changed the way that they calculated the benefits. We had a mandatory retirement age of sixty-five. We were retiring people with nothing, virtually. They were going to have fifty dollars a month, and you can live on that. So it just seemed kind of shameful. I read the social security law. I read the local labor law. I interviewed all of the employers, our competitor employers to see what they did with retired people, and what they provided to their retirees. And I started to work on a solution. I had also developed a good relationship with the person in HR/OE [Human Resources/Office of Overseas Employment], the Overseas Employment people that work on our local staff compensation. I was lucky because the woman who was our analyst was a fan of the Dominican Republic. She was well disposed to helping us, so it wasn't so hard to convince her that we needed a solution to the problem, so that there would be something more for our retirees.

It took a couple of years. I had to get all the agencies on board. What we did was to analyze the severance pay law, which was part of the local labor law. It seemed to me that it could be interpreted as such that we should have been paying severance pay when we made people retire because it was a mandatory retirement. One of the things that we needed to do for Washington whenever proposing something like this, was to get a legal opinion. So, we hired a well-respected law firm that did a lot of labor work. It was hard because, of course, they were used to representing the employer and they really couldn't wrap their heads around the idea that I wanted them to say that, yes, we should be paying severance pay. Their normal approach would be to protect the employer from paying anything. I had to send their findings back two or three times before they were able to write something that was true, but said what I wanted to say.

They really had a hard time understanding that I wanted to pay out. It took a couple of years, but finally, at a certain point, Washington approved it, and all the agencies had already agreed to it. The agencies all knew they were going to have this large future liability, but they all agreed including at the Washington level. We also went back to the six or seven employees who had been mandatorily retired between the time that the pension fund had gone bankrupt and the new severance pay policy was put into effect. We called them all in one day to the embassy without telling them why. Then we explained to them the new policy and told them they, too, would be paid the severance.

*Q: Nice.*

HASKELL: That felt pretty good. Some of these people, when they retire, are going to get maybe \$150,000, which to us may not seem like a lot, but in the Dominican Republic they could start a new business or send their kids to college ten times [or ten kids] or considerably more. They could buy an apartment. They can make an investment of some

sort. It was not a lifetime pension payment, but it was way more than they had been getting. It was 100 percent more than they had been getting because they hadn't been getting anything from the embassy when they retired. So that was something that I really was very proud of.

The other thing we added to that retirement policy was a voluntary retirement option so that if people had worked twenty years and they were at least sixty years old, they could voluntarily retire and still receive the severance pay. And we got that approved as well, which helped me with my senior HR FSN so that she could retire and get her severance pay. She had also been one of those who had been paid out a significant sum when the pension fund went bankrupt. So she was in pretty good shape to start her consultancy. I told her at one point when we were studying the problem, when we decided to think about a voluntary retirement plan, that I thought it would be really cool if she were the first one to take voluntary retirement. She looked at me like I was crazy, but I just kept saying it for about two years. In the end she did it.

*Q: Along with these considerations for retirement, did many of your staff take advantage of the twenty-year visa and go to the United States?*

HASKELL: The severance pay upon retirement policy was approved maybe less than a year before I left. But there were a couple of other FSNs whose supervisors mentioned what a fabulous opportunity it would be for them. That was one thing the voluntary retirement policy was good for. Of course, nobody was forced to "voluntarily" retire, but they could read the handwriting on the wall. The senior HR specialist was very well respected in the human resources world of the Dominican Republic. She held office in the national HR association, and she was or had been the president of that organization. So we wanted to make it dignified for her. We had a big reception for her retirement, and we made it like it was totally her decision, which I suppose in the end it was anyway. We did it in the most dignified way we possibly could, but it needed to happen because she had basically become like a mafia in a way.

People didn't want to go to the HR section because they were afraid of the way they would be treated. Whenever she was on leave the tenor of the section changed 180 degrees. People seemed happier. Really, the way she had been running things, without much supervision from the management, was the fault of the American supervisors. That was often the case. It was a good thing to fix the retirement policy. Even though it wasn't a proper pension plan, it was so much more than they had been receiving. So moving on, the NEC Construction was scheduled to start pretty much upon my arrival, coincidentally. As I mentioned, I had to sign the paperwork to buy a new plot of land for parking. That was easy to do. The contract had been signed, and the prime contractor who had been selected was pretty much ready to show up and start. But there was no OBO project director yet. The construction company showed up and started doing what it does with no OBO project director in place to help from the State Department side.

One of the biggest issues with the NEC that had not yet quite been resolved was taxation. I think I mentioned it when we talked about Ouagadougou, the issue of tax-free building

of the NEC. Even though it was being built by a private entity, the U.S. government, L, the State Department Legal Office, has decided that because it was the U.S. government paying for the construction, we were paying a private company to do it, that any purchase locally should be tax-free. There should be no taxation at all on the construction of the new building. Some countries were difficult to negotiate with on this issue. I asked the same people who had helped me in Ouagadougou to come to Santo Domingo and we worked on it.

We had to go to the MFA. We had talked to their legal department. It took a while for the legal opinion. In the meantime, we were looking for an appropriate mechanism to accomplish the tax exoneration. Our personal VAT exemptions along with the embassy's official purchases VAT exemptions processes were a little bit cumbersome and often unreliable and capricious. I developed a close working relationship with the guy who was in charge of diplomatic taxation. I would have done that anyway. I had difficulties in trying to help the contractor understand how to submit the requests for exoneration for their local purchases. It was hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of purchases for very basic things like gravel, commodities and items that they needed when they first started construction and site prep.

*Q: Just to give you an idea, Costa Rica also made the reimbursement of back taxes very difficult by requiring you to save every single receipt, and submit every single receipt with the exact amount. And we would have to do these scrapbooks that included receipts from every purchase, like oil change receipt, gasoline receipt, whatever, even for when we bought groceries, a whole quarter. We brought these giant books to GSO and they would take them over to the ministry. Wow. Yeah.*

HASKELL: Yeah. Some countries don't do that—give reimbursement or exoneration of personal diplomatic purchases. South Africa would only allow reimbursement of personal VAT on gasoline, cars, and airline tickets, or something like that. Nothing else. So we didn't have to bother with keeping all of our receipts. In fact, the only place I remember being posted where we actually kept all receipts, was in Israel. There, we could turn in for reimbursement on everything. Another issue that came along on the NEC was a land ownership issue. One day, I received a legal summons from someone who was challenging the ownership of the lot, of our site for the NEC. That began a long process working with our legal office. It was a lot of just bouncing back and forth with diplomatic notes, pointing out that they had not served the notice properly, that it needed to be served through the MFA but that they brought it directly to the embassy. We did that a lot. The people bringing the ownership claim never gave up. They probably are still sending that case around.

I believe it was the IMF [International Monetary Fund] or maybe the Inter-American Development Bank. I don't remember who, that did a big study once on land tenure in the Dominican Republic. When they examined all of the ownership documentation that the government had on file, they found documentation of ownership for twice the amount of land, of territory, that existed in the country. So land ownership was a big problem there. We have more about that later on.

Another NEC problem we were going to have was an issue of traffic congestion. The new site was in a part of town where the roads are very narrow, and commuters were driving into and out of town from that area every day. I was thinking about how we had a huge consular section there, with a huge visa load—twelve hundred applicants a day, at least, were coming for their visa interviews. And there was a big American Citizen Services section with a lot of business as well. So I started to work with the Ministry of Public Works and the metropolitan traffic people—those who were in charge of regulation of the bus routes and things like that. I went to see them. I tried to explain to them why traffic was going to be an issue.

I told them that five hundred to six hundred people would be working there every day, plus another twelve hundred people at least coming every day as customers. They were astonished. Their eyes popped out of their heads. They couldn't believe it. Their jaws dropped. They asked me what I was talking about. I explained that that was our footprint. The minister of public works told me that he had thought that there would be, maybe, two hundred people. Then I mentioned the couple of choke points that were going to snarl traffic for hours if we didn't do something about it.

A newspaper article came out shortly thereafter explaining how they were going to put in a fly over and do this and that. I don't know for a fact, because it was towards the end of my tour, if they actually managed to fix the choke points. The embassy moved into the NEC building a few years ago and life goes on, so they must have been able to fix the traffic somehow. But these are the kind of things you have to think about well in advance of actually opening a building to have time to try to alleviate the problems. We tried to get them to institute some centralized bus stops that would have express buses going up to the embassy, like a shuttle service two or three times a day. We tried to make it so that people could see it as a business opportunity, as there was no parking on the street either.

Although the building was already being built, we were also redoing the rightsizing, which is of course if you remember, it's determining how many people each agency is going to have space for and where that space is going to be. It's also what their plan is for additional or reduction of staffing over the next few years. It was clear from whatever rightsizing had been done years before, was completely different from current facts. The agencies had all changed sizes in very different ways than they had anticipated. And so we had to negotiate moving agency space to accommodate these changes without changing the building.

The building design was set in stone even though it hadn't been built yet. It was not an easy thing, but we did do all of the documentation so that OBO could see the real facts, what was really happening, what we really needed. And we were able to change appropriately where each agency would be seated and how many desks they would have. That also, of course, relates to the payment for the capital security cost sharing and the maintenance cost sharing, they call it. That was a new capital fund, where agencies pay into the fund according to how many desk and non desk positions they will have.

Before I arrived, post had been working on a concept of a build-to-lease housing compound. I had worked a little bit on certain things related to South Africa even though we didn't have an OBO-owned compound. We worked with OBO's compound experts for various things, and we worked with private developers. But we never did a build-to-lease project in South Africa. However, I learned a lot about it there. So we were able to talk with OBO and to work towards it. I was impressed that they bought into it. They agreed it was a wise move because the new embassy compound was going to be far away from where our current housing was. We would still want to keep some of our current housing because it was near the school, and the school wasn't moving. But having the housing compound would reduce commuting problems if we could get one near the new embassy. We succeeded on that, and during my tour we not only identified some sites, but OBO put out a request for proposals. Post did the initial evaluation of the different proposals, but I left post shortly after that step. The build-to-lease compound was built, and people are living there now. It comprises about half of the housing, I think.

*Q: Wow, that's remarkable.*

HASKELL: Yes. So there are things that people think won't happen, but if you work on them and provide good justifications and work well with those in Washington, they can happen. We didn't move in while I was there. The S/GSO [supervisory general services officer] ensured it all went well, and they moved in while she was there.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: You did a great job.

*Q: There is a lot that happens between a plan, acquisition for land, and building.*

HASKELL: Well what we do is we tell a com, we just put out a poll to say we want somebody to build us 120 homes, with these specifications: this many two bedrooms, three bedrooms, four bedrooms, et cetera, each this size, and these ridiculous security features, et cetera. It included the acceptable distance from the NEC and these kinds of things. Then people from companies came to Santo Domingo for a pre-proposal conference, when we drove them to legit sites. They send in a proposal. Post and OBO evaluate the proposals and select a contractor, and then the contractor builds it. Then OBO signed a ten-year lease. With a ten-year lease, the U.S. government maintains it as if they own it.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: So we'd have to pay for the, have to pay for the maintenance on a ten year lease.

*Q: Oh okay.*



HASKELL: Okay. So moving to one of the biggest issues I had—fuel theft. It doesn't quite meet the standards set by the one in Tbilisi Georgia, but it wasn't a tiny thing and it was mentioned by the IG's office and FSIs [Foreign Service Institute] in training.

FSI used the Tbilisi example in the GSO training, although they also mentioned the Santo Domingo fuel theft in passing. The IG used to mention our case because he had DS/IG investigators, one in particular who was really super. That investigator demonstrated how it should be done. We pursued the case for a long time, and it was a really good example of how to work together—post and the IG's office. So about the time of that earthquake in 2010, shortly after the earthquake, our fuel supplier came to the embassy and told us that there was an on-going fuel theft happening and there was someone in our embassy participating.

*Q: Could they identify where the theft was taking place in the course of the delivery?*

HASKELL: You know, I wasn't there yet when that happened, and it was hard to get the information. All I knew was that I was briefed on it by the bureau during consultations. When I got to post, I tried to find out about it. When I arrived there were still only a very few people, maybe two or three, who knew about it and it was eight months after post had learned about it. It was mentioned in the 2010 chief of mission statement of assurance as a possibility that there was this possible theft and a remedy was offered in that statement of assurance. They proposed to do three things: to rewrite the standard operating procedures for receiving fuel, to do a reconciliation of fuel supply for January 2010, and I forgot what the third thing was— None of that had been done by the time I got to post. I felt a little bit like I was somehow being held responsible when I got there—the way I was told I had to fix it made me feel like somehow they thought I was not taking care of the issue.

So, I tried to figure it out. It was an interesting process, partly because at the time I didn't know if it was diesel or gasoline. The first thing I did was look into the gasoline because we had a computerized gasoline dispensing tank. I asked the GSO section to do accountability, a reconciliation for the past twelve months.

The A/GSO told me he didn't know how to do that. I told him it was like balancing a checkbook. Money in, money out, but fuel bought, fuel dispensed. He told me he didn't know where to start. I told him to pick a month and start, that this is the amount that you think was there in the tank at the start of the month. Then you add in what was bought and subtract what was dispensed. I explained that the reconciliation won't necessarily be precise the first month, but that after that, he could use the records to reconcile, that he could say this much out, this much in, and that he just needed to do that. Then he actually told me, again, that he didn't know how to do that. It was really frustrating. He told me he couldn't do it because the records were on the computer. I was excited about that and told him that that would make it that much easier. That's the point he told me that he didn't have any access to the computer, that only an FSN had access to the computer, a laptop.

So, I asked the ISO [information systems officer] to get that computer and to please tell me what was on it. Anyway, I did the accountability myself. I went back about three or four years and basically, there was maybe a hundred gallons missing. So, the problem wasn't gasoline. Clearly, there was no fuel theft with gas. So, it had to be diesel. I started working on the diesel. It was weird because it was as if people didn't really want to believe it could happen. No one wants to believe their employees are stealing. So they're reluctant to look too deeply. I think this is a problem in many embassies. And I certainly know I was probably guilty of it in other posts as well.

But we had to do it. I did it, little by little over time. I had to get a list of how many vehicles we had that used diesel and how much diesel they used every month. We had generators in the official buildings. We had generators in the houses. How much were they using? And the weirdest thing was I went to the FMO [financial management officer], who was excellent, only to find out that she had never been told about the alleged theft. I was shocked. They had the money. That's where you go. You look at the money. But nobody had told her about it until I told her about it.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: She and her staff really identified the diesel issue pretty clearly after a month or so. It's funny the way you learn things. Our different sub-sections often don't get along very well within the management section. And one of her staff was complaining one day about GSO. She was saying that she, the GSO people didn't know what they were doing, that she didn't understand why they were doing what they were doing with the diesel, et cetera. It was one of those kinds of things. So, when the FMO heard that she started to look into it—what she told me was that they could only identify and charge back twenty-three percent of the diesel.

*Q: Hm.*

HASKELL: So what that means is this. Under ICASS there was this big pot of money that agencies contribute to, and then we, ICASS-supported activities buy goods and services and employ people with those funds. For example, we would buy a diesel in bulk with ICASS money. Then we would charge it back to the agencies according to their usage. And in this case, FMO was able to charge only about 23 percent of the diesel we had been purchasing. Using logic, I said that means that the other 77 percent would have been used for ICASS-specific activities. So then I had to figure out if the amount ICASS was using made sense. I had to get information on how the fuel lines were running from the storage tank, the capacity of the tank, how much was in the tank. I learned that we didn't know how much diesel our tank held. What I did know was that we had been buying between ten thousand and twelve thousand gallons of diesel every month for years.

And we didn't know how much the storage tank held. We actually had to use tenth grade geometry. The tank was underground. We knew how old it was, so we could determine with OBO's help what shape it probably was. And then we couldn't figure out how to

measure its diameter because there was a filling pipe that went down to the tank, underground. We didn't know how long that pipe was. And it was funny because one of our handymen, and FSN-02, maybe, he suggested we could determine when the pipe stopped and the tank began if we put a tape measure down there, you know, the kind of tape measure that has the little hook-thing on the end. He let that hook-thing catch at the end of the pipe, *et voila*, we had that measurement. All these years, they had been using a stick to decide if they needed to order more fuel.

But they didn't know what the measurement on the stick meant. So using geometry, the stick and the brilliant handyman's idea, we were able to figure out what was the diameter of the tank. We were able to calculate that the tank was a twenty-three-thousand-gallon tank, which we checked with OBO. They agreed that we did all the work correctly. It took months to get there. After that first notification, back in early 2010, somebody at the oil company realized that they might have put the company in a bad spot by telling the embassy, and they refused to talk to us anymore. And RSO wasn't talking with management or GSO at all. They didn't seem to want us involved, but nobody but me was doing anything to figure it out. And I couldn't figure it out. I told them to stop taking delivery of fuel on Saturdays. They had not had an American present at deliveries. I told them a person with a blue badge had to be at every receipt of a fuel delivery, that it didn't have to be a direct-hire, it could be an EFM. I actually did one receipt of fuel myself so I could see how we were doing it. I climbed up on top of the tank and looked in to see if it was full, the whole thing. But, I couldn't pinpoint what was happening.

But we were still buying ten thousand to twelve thousand gallons every month. I was so frustrated because I didn't feel like I was getting a lot of cooperation, across the board, and nobody in Washington seemed to care. I was not sure if the front office believed it was actually happening. So I just told GSO and FMO to stop buying diesel. I said that if anybody ordered diesel, they would be fired.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: That was in May of 2011. In June of 2012, I went to Washington to chair a promotion panel and during that time I was there, my FMO sent me an email. She asked me to guess what she did that day. I asked her what she had done. Her reply was that she had bought diesel fuel because the tank was finally empty. So if you think about that, it was a twenty-three thousand gallon tank, and we knew we had about twenty-three thousand gallons when I told them not to buy anymore. And we'd been buying ten thousand to twelve thousand every month when we stopped buying. Just using that up, it took more than a year.

*Q: Wow. Wow.*

HASKELL: So I still wasn't getting any cooperation in actually fixing the problem, determining what had happened. And I was probably not a very nice person about it. And finally one day I got a phone call from this guy in the IG's [Inspector General] office, this DS investigator who told me he had gotten a file on his desk the day before, and what

was it all about? What was this thing about fuel? What were we doing down there? He was a little bit, you know, prickly. He should have gotten an award just for listening to me for the next hour because I was livid that nobody had been helping me.

*Q: Ah, okay.*

HASKELL: Anyway, within a couple of months, he had three auditors down there. We were digging out boxes of paperwork stored for years. After a week, a fourth auditor was requested. At one point we needed to do interviews of particular people. There were drivers, there were generator mechanics, there were people working in the motor pool office, all people that had access that could be part of a scheme. So, we got some investigators, some interrogators, I guess really questioners, interviewers, whatever you want to call them, from Washington to come down. We got a prosecutor from the Dominican government to come.

The day before the questioning was planned, we contacted everyone who had requested motor pool support for the next day to ask them to schedule or to take a taxi or POV [privately owned vehicle]. We wanted to put everybody who would be questioned in a room together where they could be watched and couldn't talk to each other. It was about eighteen people.

DEA [U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency] had a big office in Santo Domingo. It was a very active office. They had told me that we would never get anything from questioning them, that none of them were going to rat on anybody. And they were absolutely right. We got nothing. Clearly, some of these people who were questioned had to have known what was going on even if they weren't participating 100 percent. I knew who signed off on all those fuel deliveries for years. That person had to be the one.

*Q: Yeah, yeah.*

HASKELL: And because the oil company had tracking devices, one thing they had told us before I arrived was that the truck was stopping on its way to the embassy or it would be at the embassy for just a few minutes. We only had a gravity feed out of the truck, and it would take a long time to empty ten thousand gallons on a gravity feed. So sometimes the truck would only stay a few minutes and then would go on to a gas station and unload.

My preference was to fire all eighteen people because I figured they all had to have known, even if they weren't participating, and in the end, they wouldn't talk. The front office wouldn't let me fire eighteen people, but we fired six. I had already fired one generator mechanic months earlier. He had submitted claims for overtime and expense vouchers for taxis to make a weekend call that hadn't really happened, and the taxi voucher amount was double what it should have been even if he had made the trip. We paid severance to all but one of the six—the one I knew was really the one. And he never did ask why he didn't get severance like the others had. A few months later that guy was arrested by the police for other problems, stolen merchandise or whatever. But that was

like a lesson in it. I got there eight months after the embassy was told about the theft, and nobody had done anything about it.

*Q: Hmm.*

HASKELL: It wasn't easy. It should have been easier. The DS investigator that had helped me, he had told me that we couldn't get any criminal charges. The prosecutor had told us he had nothing that he could charge anybody with based on the questioning and the documentation that we had. But the DS guy was really great. He told me he was going to try to go for a civil suit against the oil company.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: The oil company had since been sold. The owner had been a big, global company, but in the meantime, they had sold to some really unfortunate small local company. The DS investigator got a U.S. attorney to take the case. I think it went to trial, or anyway, there was a negotiation as it was a civil suit. One day I got an email telling me there was a proposal from the oil company who offered to pay X dollars. They wanted to know if I thought that was a fair amount to settle for based on what happened. I was happy that they were still involving me. This is a year or two later. I told them not to settle at that amount, that it was too little. They asked me how much it should be. The auditors had determined it was a loss of at least \$1.8 million, but that was really the tip of the iceberg because we had very bad documentation, going back years. We should have had much better documentation. I'm sure the theft had been going on for many years and that it was way more than \$1.8 million. I told them that because there was an inside job—we definitely had someone participating—we should not insist on the full \$1.8 million. That didn't make sense to me. So I suggested they not let them off for less than, I think I said one million dollars.

In the end, I think that was the judgment. I have no idea if they ever paid. I don't know if the company in the suit had the means to pay. I wrote an email to the inspector general and told him that it had been a perfect example of how we should be working together. It was unfortunate it took a year and a half after the notification of the problem to get an investigation by DS and the OIG rolling. But this guy, he really did a spectacular job. The inspector general started using it in some of his remarks. I don't know if he still does because that was way back, but the fuel theft case was quite amazing. It seems small in some ways, but it would have gone on forever.

*Q: Right. Absolutely. And just leech funds and leech gasoline and just be a continual bad mark on the embassy.*

HASKELL: It was really just a lack of internal controls. That's it. Lack of internal controls. So hopefully they haven't let it slide back, to have new problems. So that's the fuel theft story.

I wanted to touch a little bit on some additional taxation issues. I mentioned that taxation on the NEC building, the new embassy construction, and the VAT issues, but we also had some ongoing problems which I spent a lot of time on with the taxation authorities.

One of the things that I was brought to my attention when I first got to post was that there were many American direct hires who had brought in second POVs [privately owned vehicles]. It was normal that each diplomat could bring in one car [POV] duty free for their personal use. But it was strange to me that the Dominican Republic was allowing us to bring in two. I also knew that the Dominican Republic government was very friendly to us and maybe that was just the way it worked. Evidently we had a list of, I don't know, fifteen or twenty POVs which had come for which the government had refused to register and issue plates. But they were still being driven around, many of them for several months or a year or more.

GSO was really anxious that I should clear this up and get those cars plated. So I made an appointment with the taxation people. Before we had the meeting, they had done their due diligence. They had submitted the case to the legal authorities and the taxation branch together, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Legal Office. They did it all correctly. We sat down and I explained our problem and asked them why they wouldn't issue the plates. They proceeded to explain to me that it was in accordance with their law. They provided me with a legal document to read. It was very clear that there were laws stipulating that the ambassador could bring in two POVs but nobody else. It was really clear. And all that time we had been relying on some weird letter that was written by the Dominican ambassador in Washington that said to let us have two cars. That's what we were relying on. So, I asked them to let us register the cars on the list, those that were already being driven on their streets, and I promised we would not ask to register a second POV again.

And they said, okay. So, we solved that issue. I think that that was pretty early on in my tour and I actually think solving it that way made all the future tax problems much easier to resolve.

*Q: There was no reason to insist that we continue to have that privilege. That wasn't normal anyway. Right.*

HASKELL: People could still get a second car; they just couldn't get diplomatic plates and it wouldn't be duty-free.

*Q: I was never in a post where anyone but the ambassador was allowed the second car or maybe the DEA.*

HASKELL: Well, that's because DEA is usually driving an official vehicle, and then they have a personal vehicle. That's usually the way it works. The A/GSO [assistant general services officer] I worked with on this issue, was on his first tour. But he had been an EFM for a while. As an EFM he had been, circumstantially, placed into some pretty big positions when there were vacancies at other posts.

He was a very good officer and I'm sure he was an excellent EFM. He had been led to believe—I'm not putting this on him—that he knew everything, that he knew what to do on every case. I wanted him to see how to do, how to think about these issues. It can't be all about being a bully and demanding what we want. That just really is not very effective.

Then we had another issue I'll move to. There was another land ownership issue. I mentioned that I would come back to the land issues. And this is, again, related to the FSN pension fund collapse. When the pension fund went bankrupt, the U.S. embassy, the U.S. government was a creditor before the court. The company, Caribalico, owed us the money that had been in the pension fund. So we were aligned with other people/entities. When the case was settled in court, the U.S. government was awarded ownership of two floors of a condominium office building.

OBO told us they didn't want the embassy to accept that, to not take it. Except the embassy took it anyway. The embassy became a landlord. Our financial management officers had to learn to do something that they'd never done before, which was accept rent. It was a reasonably nice building. And because we were so tight on space and the new embassy hadn't been built yet, even for years before I arrived, other agencies really wanted to move into that building space. The Public Affairs office wanted to move there. The DEA or the FBI or whoever—we had all these different agencies who wanted to move to that building because it was pretty decent office space, but we couldn't let them because it was not a building that would be approved by OBO or DS to move into.

We did all these studies about how much it would cost to bring it up to standard. It was not the whole building, either. Remember it was just two floors, and it was not that big of a building. So finally, I decided it was stupid to keep the building. Why were we? We needed to sell it and get out from under the work. We should never have to deal with this again since we were going to get the new building built. I knew Washington would never let us move in. So we worked through OBO and got permission to sell it. They advertised it with each floor as a separate lot. It was actually four sort of, let's call them lots, in the building. It was four office condominiums. But we advertised it for each floor, two condominium sections for the sales. And we sold one for maybe a couple million dollars. And that was great.

Then maybe towards the end of my third year, we had another buyer and we were in escrow. Then I got another one of those legal claims about property ownership. This time it was about the ownership of the two floors in the Caribalico building. But, remember, we had already sold one, and the other was in escrow. What a nightmare. We had to go through the same bureaucratic exercise of sending it back to the complainant, through the MFA, because it had not been delivered properly, in accordance with the Vienna Conventions. But, when I left post, this mess was just getting going.

*Q: Oh, I think you've paused. Can you hear me? Hopefully it'll come back. My screen is frozen.*

*Today is January 27, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell. And Jennifer, what year is it that you're starting the next tour?*

HASKELL: Starting in 2013. My new assignment in Washington was as the director of the Office of Science Technology Cooperation [OES/STC] in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. A big mouthful. And it was a two-year assignment.

*Q: Very good. All right. How large was your office within the bureau?*

HASKELL: We were about twenty people at any given time. It wasn't a very well-known office within the department or even the bureau because it didn't have a substantive specialty. It wasn't the water office or the climate office, the wildlife office or the forestry office or anything like those. What we did was integrate science into foreign policy. We did two main things. We did government-to-government dialogues through bilateral science agreements. This was sort of like the top-down push to expand cooperation between our governments, especially the governmental technical science agencies. And then we also did people-to-people work, which was more like the public diplomacy side of things, through science envoys and through a program that we called GIST, which is short for Global Innovation through Science and Technology. So those two were programs that we did that weren't really part of the government. It was more reaching out to the people, to populations. The office was divided between those two general policy directions. The office was comprised of a wide variety of employment mechanisms. We were only three Foreign Service officers.

Then we had civil servants, and we had AAAS fellows. AAAS is the American Association for the Advancement of Science. And we also had Presidential Management fellows [PMFs].

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: And we had contractors, we had USPSCs [U.S. personal services contractors]. So we were quite a ragged gang. Some of the people had been in the office for quite some time and many were pretty new. And the assistant secretary at the time had changed significantly what the work of the office was. As I understood it at the time, it had been changed a year or two before I arrived. It had, previous to that, been something more like event planning because the bilateral science agreements generally called for regular meetings—bilateral meetings—which, generally speaking, were supposed to be held every two years. The two sides would trade off which country hosted every other meeting. Some people were responsible for organizing those meetings. And there were the people who were responsible for the GIST program, which had been going on for quite some time with one implementing a partner—a beltway bandit type organization. And the money for GIST had been earmarked by Congress for that particular organization, and the money was running out.



So that was something that we were working on. We also were, of course, at different times, working on getting new science and technology agreements, negotiating agreements. Sometimes we were negotiating a renewal or an extension which usually was super easy. However, with the EU [European Union] it was problematic, and it took years. We had, during my two years there, advanced it somewhat, but I think I got a message from one of my colleagues about two or three years later that they finally had signed the renewal. The hang up had been intellectual property rights—how did the EU handle them versus how did the United States believe they should be handled for the scientists that were participating in the work.

*Q: Let me ask here, were each of the agreements bilateral?*

HASKELL: Almost all of them were bilateral. The EU, I think, was the only one we had that was multilateral. We had about sixty STAs [science and technology agreements] and many of them are not really active. We didn't have meetings, and nobody cared that we didn't have meetings. Often that's because sometimes those STAs had simply a deliverable. When you have a big VIP coming to post, and you have no deliverable, an STA works well so we would sign a science and technology agreement. At least sometimes that was the case. And often countries wanted to have a science and technology agreement but they didn't understand that there was no money attached at all. And also many countries wanted to have a science and technology agreement with the United States. But certainly by the time I was in the office we would look twice at it to confirm that we had an interest, see that there was no deliverable reason and there was a bilateral foreign policy reason to do it.

We also confirmed with our science agencies, U.S. government science agencies, to see if they had an interest in partnering with those countries' science agencies or if it was that they [the other countries] had no money to be doing any kind of projects on their own. There weren't really too many actual joint projects under these agreements. It was more that they would, the two countries, would get together and agree on topics and then they would share at the JMCs. We called them joint commission meetings. At the JMCs they would share their progress or lack thereof or new ideas and propose to each other how they might help or share information.

There really wasn't a lot of discussion, for example, about starting a, you know, three-year experimental project. That really wasn't happening much, although we had an interesting one with the Italians. There was a cooperative project based on cultural preservation, which is really a great big chemistry experiment, right? Because of how preserving these ancient things requires a lot of chemistry. There were people in both governments working together on techniques and things, but it was much more casual and personal relationship-building. These meetings were very structured, like a very traditional bilateral meeting. We had two heads of delegation sitting at the head of the table and then around the table we had the lead on each of the different topics that were going to be discussed. There were six of these relationships that were considered key—Russia, China, South Korea, India, Japan, and Brazil. And when those joint commission meetings were held, they were chaired usually by the director of the White House Office

of Science and Technology Policy [OSTP]. We did all the work of organizing in my office. We would set everything up but the chair would be the head of OSTP.

Sometimes those six were more or less active as the case may have been, similarly, with our foreign policy. So at the time we weren't having any meetings with Russia. We were having meetings with South Korea, China, India, Japan, and we didn't have one with Brazil while I was there. And with China, at the time, we had an executive committee meeting in the off years between the joint commission meetings. So we had the executive level meeting with China in the first year of my tour, and I think we had the actual joint commission meeting with China later the next year. The topics that we might cover at JCMs, just to give it an example, included things like seismology, climate, marine research, all kinds of health things from noncommunicable diseases to metadata processing privacy. There would be food security, maybe high energy physics, pandemic disease, and microbial resistance, Arctic research, agricultural issues, and earth observation.

Incredibly interesting topics that I certainly was not knowledgeable on by any stretch of the imagination. The first one of these meetings that happened after I started work in that office was with Vietnam. It was in Washington. I went to the first day and basically sat in the audience and watched to see how it worked. I sat on the back wall to see how it worked. The office was trying something new for the first time with that meeting where we had a second day that was not government-oriented. Of course, the first day of the meeting was at Main State and down where all those meeting rooms on the first floor over on C Street and on the Navy Hill side of the building. The second day was held at George Mason University, at one of their conference facilities.

We had invited some Vietnamese diaspora business people. We had invited, I think, UCLA [University of California Los Angeles] or maybe one of the other universities in California. We had some NGOs [non-governmental organizations]. We had different outside groups who were interested and that Vietnam had interest in working with. So since we didn't have any money to hand out, we were always looking for ways to connect the other governments and their institutions with others who could help them, who they could collaborate with.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I went to that second day, and I think early on, my boss, a deputy assistant secretary [DAS], told me he wanted me to give the wrap up remarks. So, of course, I took copious notes. That was one of my techniques for staying awake in meetings anyway, to take copious notes. Then I had to stand up and sort of wing a conclusion, which I think I did okay on. I think the second one of those bilateral meetings we had was the executive committee meeting with China, which is an important meeting. I think it was at a NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] facility in Greenbelt, Maryland. The National Weather Service is part of NOAA, so that was the Commerce Department. I remember that we got a tour of the national weather center there as part of the meeting. Very interesting.

My DAS told me that when he wanted me to have a formal role in the meeting, I was supposed to give a ten-minute talk on something. I will confess, I do not remember what I spoke about, but I do remember sitting in the car before I went in, rewriting it. I had a staff member who drafted the remarks. China was part of her portfolio. I knew nothing about what I was doing, so I really relied heavily on staff at the time. I had rewritten some of it and given it back, and then she had tweaked it and given it back to me. I was practicing it, saying it out loud in the car before going into the meeting. And I thought that some of it didn't sound right. So I changed the order of some of the paragraphs and made some other edits. I had really messy notes to speak from.

Anyway, I spoke pretty early on in the meeting. I did my spiel, which I think came out alright. My DAS was sitting there as the head of the U.S. delegation for this meeting when he turned to me after I finished speaking and told me that he was leaving, that he had to go back to the State Department, and that I could handle the meeting for the rest of the day. So, I did that. We had maybe twelve to fifteen scientists on either side of the table, and what did I know? I didn't know much about how things worked, and I had no understanding, no knowledge, really of any kind, at any level, beyond what I read in the newspapers about our foreign policy with China. But I did know that data sharing was a big thing that we were really interested in. We thought that the more data that was shared, the better it was for humanity. So at some point we were talking about meteorology.

I launched into an unplanned intervention about how I didn't understand why we weren't sharing data, that it should be easily shared because by its nature, by the time the Chinese would share anything it would be in the past, that we should be sharing the data so that the scientists in both countries could work with the data of the actual weather on climate work or whatever. And all of the scientists were nodding and making agreement noises. Even the Chinese scientists were saying that it made sense. That was really great. Meanwhile, the guy sitting next to me, the Chinese head of delegation, wasn't so agreeable. He told me that they would share data with us when we tell them X-Y-Z, which I don't remember. He was not a happy camper, but all of our scientists thought it was great that I even brought it up and that I pushed it and all the Chinese were happily on board with it before their boss put the kibosh on it. It was an interesting day, though. I think I learned a fair bit there on how those meetings go.

Question about the topics you had mentioned earlier. Among the topics discussed is privacy, and this was 2013. I guess 2013 was still relatively early in the period of time when we became concerned that the Chinese were tapping into our various private personnel accounts, and they were eventually found to have tapped into OMB [White House Office of Management and Budget]. Now, I'm sorry, the OPM [White House Office of Personnel Management], and downloaded a hundred million or so social security numbers and information along with all of that. Did the privacy issue come up while you were working with them? I probably wasn't clear, but it was more in terms of privacy around medical and health related things.

*Q: Alright.*

HASKELL: How to have, you know, online health records to facilitate the generation of metadata that could be used for research on health.

*Q: I see. Okay.*

HASKELL: So, but yes, that stuff was going on. That was not something they were going to have a talk about. I don't recall having any health topics with the Chinese through the STA. I could be wrong. But I think it was more along the lines of—I think what we talked about with China was wildlife, for example, endangered species. We talked about forestry, those kinds of things. None of it was too sensitive. We didn't think meteorology data was terribly sensitive. I could see how part of the problem was how that meteorological data was collected. Maybe that was the problem. I think that the Chinese were more concerned about that than they were about the actual meteorological data, and they also didn't want to set a precedent for data sharing.

The office went on. I hadn't yet been to a JCM overseas when one was set to be held in South Africa. I went along on that one as more of a sort of training/familiarization exercise, I guess, and hung out with our delegation, which was headed by our DAS. We went for the JCM but also, we have a big CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] contingent there. We had not just HIV/AIDS issues, but lots of other health related issues. So we had internal meetings with CDC about things they were encountering problems with, with the South Africans, as well as problems they were having with other agencies within the U.S. government that we could possibly help them work through. We also had some meetings with private industry in South Africa, pharmaceutical industry people, because there was big interest in pharmaceuticals and testing and these kinds of things. It was really good. From Pretoria, I took a side trip to Zambia, to Lusaka, because that is the seat of the headquarters for COMESA. It's one of the Southern African multilateral intergovernmental organizations based on the economy—the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

I didn't meet with the Zambian government, but I met with the COMESA people. And it was interesting because they had a lot of real needs. A lot of what they were trying to do was to break down the barriers between the various member states; how to move goods back and forth more easily between the member states. And part of that was agricultural trade, you know, food commodities or food products, processed food products. We have expertise in that within the Department of Agriculture or FDA [Food and Drug Administration]. We have various and sundry experts who know how to write agreements, who know how to set up processes better, and how to facilitate these things. And we actually have a program that we tried to use. I thought it was a fabulous program, and I tried to push it a lot, but it was a little bit difficult because of the funding problems.

We have a program where one of our embassies can request someone from another U.S. government agency [other than the State Department] to work inside of one of the host government agencies for a limited period of time, maybe sixty days, on a discrete project to help them do something very specific. COMESA's need seemed like a no-brainer for that program, that COMESA should request from the U.S. embassy in Lusaka that we

send someone from FDA or USDA to help them with a framework to reduce agricultural trade barriers. I knew we had people who had exactly that expertise. I did start to meet a lot of people through my work with OES/STC. You meet so many of our government experts. It's amazing. In fact, I would say that of the millions of things I learned in that job, the most important thing I learned in that job was through sitting in those meetings and listening to our government experts.

Oh my God. The U.S. taxpayer has no clue of the high level of competencies, the special knowledge, and the leadership—the people we have in leadership positions in really important science and technology fields and areas and specific programs. Those experts are earning a government salary, yet they are incredible. Sitting there, listening to this Department of Energy physicist talk about neutrinos, during the Italian JCM. I was like, Oh my God, I had just learned more about physics than I ever knew. And because I wasn't a scientist, whenever somebody would start to talk about something in a way that I wasn't sure I understood, I tended to break into the conversation and try to recap what I thought they said.

I remember there was one instance in the Columbia JCM. They were talking about, I don't know, seeds and things. When they finished I said to them that if I wasn't mistaken, they were doing a dating service for seeds or something. Evidently, I had it right, but, of course, that wasn't really how they said it. They laughed. I always took copious notes when I chaired a meeting. I chaired some of the JCMs. I went to Tokyo to chair the meeting. Our DAS was supposed to go to Tokyo, but the China JCM was happening at about the same time. It had somehow got scheduled adjacent to the dates for Japan. So he wasn't able to make both of them. The front office determined that the China meeting was the one he had to attend because it was the full JCM with OSTP. Whereas the Japan meeting was the second level, when it wasn't the OSTP-chaired one.

Because I had the minister counselor diplomatic title the Japanese didn't get upset that it wasn't a deputy assistant secretary who led the U.S. delegation. We just used my diplomatic title rather than my office director title. I had, a long, long time ago, pre-Foreign Service, studied Japanese. Of course I had forgotten 90 percent, but I had thirty-year-old knowledge and I was happy to go back to Tokyo. It was a really interesting meeting because the Japanese are really into it. We had a very close scientific relationship with Japan. It was special to have had the chance to chair it. I also got to chair the JCM with France. It was during the lead up to their hosting COP 21. It was the beginning of my working with the French on climate related things. I had some interesting discussion over lunch with their head of delegation. Later on the detail I worked after OES/STC, I worked closely with the French science counselor and her staff in Washington.

So, India. I'll talk about India. We have a very robust relationship with India on science and technology. In fact, there are two foundations that we started together with the government of India, and we put millions of dollars into funds for these two foundations to use to support innovation. These foundations are not part of the governments. They have separate boards of directors. My office was responsible for sort of managing the

bilateral relationship, which included those two funds. One fund was the IUSSTF. And then there was another one called USISTEF. I was a bit insane. One was the Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum, and the other one, I think, was like the United States-India Science and Technology Endowment Fund.

They both had money, and their goals were to commercialize technology discoveries for social impact and support innovation. They both issued calls for proposals, and they had boards that decided who would get the money and how much money. And there was a rather robust secretariat that was in New Delhi. And then there was a very tiny office in the United States that had been sort of separate. At a certain point in time, someone who was very well connected with AAAS was on the board. He was one of the board members for the United States, and he had, I think, brought that small office into AAAS. But at one point, literally on Christmas Eve, all heck broke out because there was an interpersonal issue between the board members and the executive director at the secretariat in India.

I knew virtually nothing about the structure of these organizations, the nitty gritty of how they were formed and how board members were supposed to be appointed and all of this. I had to learn it and it was Christmas Eve and nobody else in my office was there that day. I was struggling to find a copy of the agreement and then reading it and thinking that it was crap, that we hadn't been doing things right, that we needed to change it. It was clearly a mess. And the mess continued as we were trying to remedy the situation, but we [OES/STC] weren't board members. We were just trying to regularize things so that the whole thing wouldn't implode. It took quite a long time and a lot of work, a lot of phone calls, a lot of making the determination that we needed personnel changes on the board and at the secretariat. And we are not on the board.

And so how could we make that happen? And how were we finding board members, and how could we get it to work? Were we within the rules of how we were supposed to do it? In the end, I think we managed the best we could. By the time I left my tour, after nearly two years, I think we had instigated a search for a new executive director, and we had gotten some new board members for the U.S. side. We had changed the relationship or redefined and regularized the relationship between the executive, the secretariat in India and this little office that we had in the United States, which had been sort of going off on their own, each of them. The secretariat really did not like that about what the U.S. office was doing and wanted total control.

There is a website that you can go to and the one secretariat handles both of these organizations, the fund and the forum. It moves quite a bit of money every year. My experience was that the vast majority of the funding that was given to U.S. proposals were proposals by Indian nationals living in the United States, and they were doing some really great work. Obviously, all the proposals that were awarded were worthy. So India, I did go to the JCM in New Delhi. That was a huge JCM. There were maybe about fifty people on the India side, and we also had quite a number of attendees because there were some strong science relationships and some important projects on marine research, on all

kinds of health topics. Energy. We have lots of lots of interaction on science and technology with India. The relationship was really very interesting.

*Q: Can you recall any of the specific grants, any of the projects that were funded?*

HASKELL: I don't remember. I'm sure that someone could go to the website to see that. I think if you visit IUSSTF.org you can find all kinds of things—their mission statement and everything. I also was able to chair the meeting, the very first JCM we had with the Philippines, which was really interesting because everybody was so enthusiastic and there seemed to be an awful lot of mutual interest in the different things that we had on the agenda. Lots of interest in marine research, which tied into one of the things I tried to do in that meeting, which was to stop the stove-piping. Stove-piping is going to be the end of us.

I tried to get the food security people to talk to the marine security people and the marine research people and the agricultural people because, really, it's intertwined, and also the climate people. All of these things are totally—I guess the new word is intersectional, intersectionality. There's a huge amount of intersectionality with these kinds of topics. I think the meeting went very well. We had a lot of people from NOAA and different scientists on food security and other topics. Another country that we have a very close science and technology relationship with is Israel.

And again, we have a fund, another one of these funds, which seems to have been created maybe in the 1970s or '80s. This fund with Israel has a board and has meetings too, a couple of times a year, at least once a year, maybe one in Israel, one in the United States each year. Some of those board members have been board members for something like twenty-five years or whatever. And my deputy was our person that worked on the Israel fund part of our portfolio. For some reason he couldn't go to the meeting that was in Israel one year. We were also having a JCM, and coincidentally, the fund was also having a board meeting right after the JCM in Jerusalem.

I can tell you one thing I learned while in the OES/STC job, is that I like living overseas much more than I like getting on a plane, traveling for twenty-four hours to get to Tokyo, staying two nights in Tokyo, and flying back. Same with the Philippines. It was insane. Same with traveling to Israel. When we went to India, that was a long one. We had meetings for four days in India. We had only one day where we could go sightseeing, and even then, we had a dinner meeting. So that was the only sightseeing I ever did during the travel to any of these meetings. We flew from New Delhi to Marrakech, Morocco, because we had the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Marrakesh, following, right on the heels of our India meeting.

So that was a very long trip. As for the JCMs we had during those two years, that I can remember: I mentioned Vietnam and China. I mentioned France, and I mentioned Columbia and India, but we also had them with Poland and Finland. We did have one with South Korea. We did a lot of work with Indonesia. We had a JCM with Argentina, with Sweden, and we did a lot of work with Egypt. On Egypt, the meeting was in Egypt

and I had my deputy go. I was doing some professional development with him, and since we had some issues with Egypt, it was a good opportunity for him to lean in. He needed to learn how to be somebody important in the delegation. He was used to being the person who sat on the back wall and never said anything. He was very good at that. He was very good at staffing the principal, and doing all those things and sitting on the wall. I told him that he needed to learn to go and talk with the Egyptians and to get them to accept the way we insisted they handle the fund [yes, another fund], and that he could do it in a nice way that makes them want to do it. So we practiced. We had phone calls. He would make a phone call, and I would sit-in with him and try to get him to understand he was important enough to do it and that he had the authority.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I think his reluctance to step up was an experience thing. He was a civil servant. He'd been with that office not for very long, maybe two or three years. I can't remember for sure where he came from to that job, but he was a PhD chemist. That's the one thing that was interesting about my staff. Many of them were PhD scientists in chemistry and neuroscience, astrophysics and astronomy, all kinds of things. It was very interesting. Theirs was a very different skill set than we were used to having in the State Department. One of the team leads was still pretty new. She'd only been in the office less than a year, and trying to get her to understand how to write for the State Department was a bit of a struggle because she was still pretty busy doing it the science way, putting the main point at the end rather than in the first paragraph. It was hard for some of those scientists to learn the State Department writing style, but they succeeded. For the most part, they were people who, while committed to science, they wanted to be part of a greater thing. They didn't want to be necessarily sitting in a lab doing that work anymore. I don't know if any of those same people are in that office anymore.

I know that one went to the National Science Foundation. One is now in the OGAC [Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy]. And one entered the Foreign Service and went off on his first tour. One is now a government liaison for a university. One was a AAAS fellow, and he went off to a commercial enterprise, a science-based commercial enterprise, a start-up. We negotiated two new agreements, one with Oman and one with Tunisia. I think we also had a meeting with Tunisia. I didn't go. I think that one was the DAS because it was the first meeting. Also, things had opened with Cuba, and we were feeling around with that. Of course, that got axed pretty quickly.

So that's the side of the office's work that was government-to-government. On the people-to-people side of the job, we spent the bulk of our time on GIST, which was, to be quite honest, the best entrepreneurship program that the State Department had [still has] even though it lives in OES. There was a time when the seventh floor [the part of the building with the Secretary's office, all of the under secretaries offices, and also many special advisers to the Secretary of State] learned about GIST. We were called up to see one of the secretary's closest advisors to explain it. The DAS and I went. We listened to him and answered his questions. We both walked out, looked at each other, and asked rhetorically what that had been about, were they going to steal our program out of OES?



Were they going to move it somewhere where they would feel more comfortable with it? I think the ones who coveted it the most were EB, the Economics and Business Affairs Bureau. They, I think, really felt it should have been theirs.

The GIST program started in 2008 after president Obama's speech in Cairo where he made a big speech in which one of the main points about how the United States needed to help young people—all these unemployed, educated, young people in the Muslim world—find work. He said that there needed to be more entrepreneurship in these countries. It was essentially an anti-terrorism initiative. We wanted to help all these Muslim countries that weren't oil rich to establish entrepreneurship and innovation programs. The program started out working with young people in something like thirty-two or thirty-five or thirty-eight countries that were sort of at the bottom of middle income, the very bottom of middle income, and Muslim. By the time I left in 2015, we were up to maybe a hundred countries and no longer focused exclusively on Muslim countries.

We expanded considerably in those couple of years, even though we had almost no money. I think the original earmark was ten million dollars for this program. But it was all given basically to this one organization that was sort of running things however they wanted to. When I arrived, the DAS wanted to change that. He wanted us to have more influence in how the money was being managed, and what they were doing. But there was only some piddly little amount of money left. But then we managed to get \$1.8 million added to our budget. I decided not to just add that \$1.8 million to the balance left with that organization. I felt, after having worked with this one organization, which was a good organization, I saw there were just a few personality issues. That usually is the case. They were not going to change their personalities.

The people, the staff, who were working on it, were not going to be changed either, even though I went to the leader of the organization to discuss that it was not working out and why. I was told that the person they had in charge of our program knew what he was doing. But the fact was that he refused to take our guidance in any way, or to consider our ideas— We had great ideas about how to make some things work better and be able to reach more people. We'd spent all this money, and we had reached relatively few people. They were not even keeping track. We didn't know what our reach was. We didn't have any measurements. It was just kind of messy. So I thought that the best thing to do was to issue a new solicitation for running this program, even though we only had \$1.8 million to put out there.

Of course, the organization that had had the money all that time was certain that they would win the solicitation because they had this brilliant experience of all these years doing it. The problem was that they thought they would win. They knew what the budget was. Everybody knew what the budget was. That organization had a huge overhead. I guess these contracting organizations get permission from the U.S. government about how much overhead they can charge, and they had a ridiculously high overhead percentage. Of course, their budget met the \$1.8 million exactly without them putting anything into the project. But we got other proposals where the other organizations

including providing one person to work on the project, not paid from our \$1.8 million, and that they would also put in money here and there. Their proposals did not necessarily take the whole pot of money.

So we went with one proposal that we got, but then it fell through. They hadn't organized themselves well on their end. So we went with another organization, and they were fabulous. So we had little money for them, but we started working with them at the same time we still had these other guys spending the end of their money. But it went really well. So how do we do this? The first thing we wanted to do was to learn to keep track of how many people we were reaching. That was even before we did that solicitation.

When I first got to the office in 2013, just two or three months into the job was the annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit [GES]. GES was also a creation of the Obama White House. I think the first one was in Washington in 2009. They brought all these entrepreneurs, innovators from all over the world, from low income countries.

It was a huge conference of thousands of people and there were millions of things going on all over the place. And one of the things that was going on was our GIST pitch competition [pitching a product to potential funders]. It was really almost a business plan plus pitch competition because we started about six months before the GES. People sent in synopsis of their idea and then they had to send in their two-minute, business idea video. We had global, online voting on the videos. It was all done on a platform where people all over the world could watch the video and vote for their favorite video/start-up idea. Of course, in some ways it was just about who could market themselves better, who could, maybe, go to a university and convince everybody to go and vote for them.

Experts read and ranked the business plans, and those that made the cut submitted their videos. And then based on the voting and taking into consideration geographic and gender distribution, twenty teams were selected to compete in our competition at the GES. There were two categories, idea stage and startup stage. Ten entrepreneurs [or two people if there was a team involved] from each of the two categories were invited to the GES. The GIST program paid their expenses. The idea stage was for when somebody had an idea for an innovation, but not much more. An example was a team in Burkina Faso that had an idea to incorporate some sort of mosquito repellent into soap. They have a really high malaria rate in Burkina Faso, and many die of malaria every year. The team were students and they didn't have any money to even make a real prototype. But other people had ideas where they had actually built prototypes and maybe they already had a little bit of money and they competed in the startup category.

At the GES, the GIST program held a startup "boot camp" for the teams. They would learn from the experts we brought and by the end of the three-day bootcamp, they gave their pitch to the experts, many of whom were venture capitalists. The participants also had the opportunity to participate in the entire GES—networking, attending seminars, et cetera. It was a really great event with tremendous opportunities for all participants. That year it was in Kuala Lumpur and I got to go. I wondered why I was going; I didn't have any specific role there. Everybody else that we took was racing around like chickens with

their heads cut off making sure the GIST boot camp was well run, answering questions, and supporting the GIST participants.

My boss, the DAS [deputy assistant secretary] went. He was very clever. He took me so he could teach me, but he never said that. He took me to his meetings. He would tell me who they were, maybe they were angel investors, or they were from a company that was seeking innovations, or they simply wanted to ensure global innovation efforts were adequately supported. And we'd have a meeting with them. He had come up with this idea. We had received feedback from GIST bootcamp participants—we did several boot camps a year. The feedback we got indicated that we [GIST] show up, do a bootcamp, teach people things, and then go away. He wanted us to figure out how to provide ongoing support to the boot camp participants and to entrepreneurs who weren't able to attend a boot camp. He was meeting with those people to find out how they would see doing something like that, how would they set it up, what would it look like, what would it take. And most importantly, they were interested in helping us. And the way he presented the idea was to use in his pitch to all these different stakeholders—companies, angel investors, and others—the idea that GIST was a bit like the circus that came to town. We would put up a tent, do all these fancy things, and then pull down the tent and leave. The entrepreneurs would never hear from us again, there was no care for their ongoing support.

The DAS had an idea that we should have a website where people could go and find resources, ongoing support. And he was trying to find partners. One of the things I learned how to do was how to create a public-private partnership with the State Department. How do you go through L [Legal Office] and to get approval to approach foundations and companies and NGOs [non-governmental organizations] or whatever to be our partners in this venture, to have this website to provide the follow-up to these other investment we were making with the competitions, the boot camps, and some educational webinars we also did, called TechConnects. The GES in Kuala Lumpur was his debut of this idea, where he went around and talked to all these people he thought he could convince to be our partners.

I sat in on the meetings and learned how his pitch went. At one point, I was at one of the cocktail parties at the GES, and I ran into this guy who was a venture capitalist who had a company called Gust. And I thought he would make a great partner. So at the end of the cocktail party, I ran to tell my boss that he should pitch it to this guy, that I had arranged a meeting. He told me no, that I had to do it—without him. He told me it was now mine. So pretty much from there I did most of it. He continued, obviously, to pitch when he needed to or come to meetings when we asked him to and that sort of thing. But between figuring out the legalities of the public private partnership and trying to find the partners, I did that. We were trying to get people to commit to be on board as partners, but we did not ask them for money. I didn't think they would join as partners if we wanted money from them. What we wanted was to get organizations on board as partners and grow so attached to the program that if the State Department ran out of money, they would figure out how to keep the program afloat. Also, we needed their expertise for the boot camps and we needed them as hosts when our entrepreneurs came to the United States.

So we talked to them about their expertise. We wanted their expertise. We wanted some commitment of time. We wanted them to serve as mentors. If they had an innovation incubator, we want them to take our entrepreneurs into their incubator. And we even went to our, sort of, competitors, nonprofits that also did entrepreneurship programming. Our outlook was that there was so much need in the world for entrepreneurship training and innovation training and support that we could never have too many providers. So nobody felt competitive, really. Basically, we brought on as partners any appropriate organization we could get to say yes. We went out to Silicon Valley to meet with prospective partners. We had Stanford University. They had a complementary program that we got on as a partner. There were some incubators in Silicon Valley that we got on as partners. There was one guy who was the professor for the biggest MOOC [Massive Open Online Courses].

His class on entrepreneurship had something like seventy thousand students. It was legendary. He also had his own small private startup he was doing with a partner. So we had this Stanford University venture program as a partner. We had the professor's little company as a program partner and all these different partners. We did a lot of work on all this stuff. But my goal was to establish it—the public-private partnership [PPP].

But the key thing happened when Gust came on as a partner and agreed to provide a website. They built the website for us, and it was big. I mean it was a big website that provided all these different things that we wanted to do. We had to come up with a way to offer mentorship that didn't require too much human input and how to find people to be mentors who would be part of it. And it was really quite involved. So working on that program—GIST—I went to Malaysia. I went to Morocco. I went to California two or three times. I went up to New York. Gust was in New York. I went up there two or three times to discuss what the website needed to do and what it should look like. We would draw all over their whiteboard how the website needed to function. Well, we talked and they drew. There was a lot of give and take. Like this? No, we want it like this. We don't like that. Or how about like this. I also got to go to Austin. I was on a panel at South by Southwest. That was really fun. But the main thing is that this program grew and that website was an amazing part of the growth. And the program is still there, still successful. Check out the website <https://www.gistnetwork.org/>

We took the program from—I guess the way that the DAS said it in my EER [performance evaluation] that year was that we used the one-off funding, the \$1.8 million, to do the competitive bid for having the boot camps. And we increased by nearly 50 percent the number of boot camps we got for the money we paid compared to what we had been getting. And then with the website, how did we do that? Let me think. I know that we launched the website in Morocco at the global entrepreneurship summit.

We worked very closely with IIP [State's Bureau of International Information Programs]. We had these webinars called TechConnect. We did about four or five a year where there would be a panel of experts in an IIP studio. It was online live. Sometimes we would have ten thousand to twenty thousand people on. I mean, it was ridiculous. It was crazy. Usually with online programming, most people watch for maybe ten minutes and then

they drop off. But we had something like 70 percent of the people remain engaged for the whole hour. We had a huge buy-in on these things. One of the things we really liked about the idea of the website was that we were still focusing a lot on Muslim countries, and it was really hard to get women to participate in these Muslim countries.

We knew one thing the website would do is allow more women to participate, and it did. We were able to track using the Google statistics function, or whatever. We were able to track the countries people were logging on from. And somehow we got gender distribution too. And within the first few months of that website launching, we had people logging on from over a hundred countries, and we were up to something like 40 percent women. It was thousands and thousands and thousands of people. I wish I could find some of the numbers that we had. But it was spectacular. It was really much better than we ever imagined, the growth.

And it was also one of those programs that we feared we were going to lose funding for. That's the main reason we did the public-private partnership. We felt that if we got a public-private partnership going and that the partners saw how valuable the program was, that even if we lost funding, they might continue it. But somehow we keep getting funding. I'm sure they still worry that they'll lose funding, their fingers are crossed. But the program is incredibly robust. They have a new website [same address] that's better than the old website. And it really does reach people. And the interesting thing was we went from, you know, these thirty-two or thirty-eight or whatever it was, Muslim countries, and now it's pretty much everybody but OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development].

The projects we saw, the innovations were amazing. We got anything from—like in Malawi, where everybody rides a bicycle. That's how everybody gets around. And people have cell phones, and they don't have ways to charge them in their house. So this guy from Malawi developed this way to charge cell phones from the pedal power from the bicycle. And so that the bike taxis—not three-wheeled ones, but just regular bicycles, would take one person on the bike. He made a device that would be on a little carry place at the front of the bike and the device would be connected to the pedals to capture the energy. They could have one of those chargers with multiple cables, and they could charge three or four phones while they were peddling their people to their destination.

That business plan made it all the way to the Global Entrepreneurship Summit because it was going to have a real impact. We didn't have a requirement for social impact so much, but we preferred, obviously, something that would do good. It was really about the economy, about supporting innovators who could come up with something that was going to impact the economy, create jobs. We added countries in Latin America where they have a higher level of education than most of the people in much of Africa. And they had some quite sophisticated innovations, including ideas for treating diabetes and things like that. One of the winners of the GIST boot camp at the GES that was in Morocco was a team from South Africa. They came up with a fire detection system that could be effective in the enormous, well, in South Africa, they are called townships, but they are informal settlements, let's say, where you have sometimes millions of people packed on

top of each other. There are fires that happen in those kinds of human habitations, and they're very, very deadly because there's no fire service. The people are so tightly packed, and people die and they lose anything that they had. So he and his team came up with this fire detection system that could be used in situations like that that responded to temperature increase. You couldn't use a smoke detector because they use cooking fires.

And it was a detector that somehow could be calibrated so that it could tell the difference between a cooking fire and a house fire. And it had an alarm system. What it would do is the detectors would be in a network of let's say all the dwellings within fifty meters. And if it sounded, it alerted everybody in the network with an alarm. Then they could implement whatever plan they had, which is usually buckets of water to try to put out the fire. It was really great. I know that at the time the South African government was looking at buying them and installing them in Khayelitsha, which is one of the biggest informal settlements in the world. I was really happy that that project did so well. The people on that team were really smart engineers. They knew what they were doing. It wasn't as simple as, say, the bicycle charger. It was much more complicated. GIST was a really interesting program to work on. And one of the things that IIP helped us with was a video. We wanted to do something special for the launch of the website, and IIP came up with some money for us. Because GIST, I'm telling you, was just such a great program that everybody wanted a piece of it. So EB wanted it and IIP wanted it.

So IIP was generous because they really wanted to be part of GIST. And they gave us some money and also helped us with the video. They let the contract. They did the whole procurement thing. They sent the service provider over to meet to find out what we wanted. We described what we were looking for. We were a bunch of people with no idea about creating a video or anything else. IIP did such a great job of choosing the vendor. When they came back and showed us what they had created, it was incredible. We made some small tweaks, asking them to add this, expand that, small things, but important things that I think made it better.

It's about a two-minute video. It's called, "This is You." And it is a fabulous video, which you can see on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyiW98q4LI8>. There's no dialogue. It's just incredible. It's just drawings that move and words and not very many words, right because most of the people don't speak particularly good English. It's set to music that evokes the mood, and at the end it's got all the partner logos. Because it's the property of the State Department, it's available to the public and anybody could use it for anything as long as they don't cut off the part at the end with the logos. We had asked for an "evergreen" product so it wouldn't be specific to the event where we unveiled it, at GES Morocco. And it is absolutely that. You could show this for just about any effort where you want to inspire and motivate.

It's basically about this: Here you are. You have this idea. People are going to tell you that you're going to fail. But you just need help. You need some support and you need a network. And this network can take you from here to here. And we're here to help you. That's basically what it is because it never says that we're GIST, until the very end on the screen that shows the logo and has the partner. I've shown it to people when I was

discussing leadership, for example. Anybody can use it as long as they don't cut off the end of the partner, you have to leave the partner stuff on there. I was, still am, very proud of that video. We refused to show it to our DAS before the launch. I kept telling him that he was going to love it. He saw it for the first time with everybody else in Morocco. Now, he did not gush over it, but he should have.

There were a few other little things that we did in that office [OES/STP] that were interesting too. For example, while I was there, the White House did its first ever National Security Science and Technology Strategy. There are a lot of national strategies, right? National Defense Strategy, National Economic Strategy, et cetera. But this National Security Science and Technology Strategy, it was the first one. The NSC [National Security Council] sent it over to us to look at. And one thing that I found to be really crazy was that they didn't include anywhere in the document a mention of the importance of science and technology as a driver for the economy and for the development of countries. I thought that was a really huge contribution we made. We went back to them and told them they had to add that crucial point in several places.

I want to talk a little bit more about the people-to-people work we did, about the science envoys. Science envoys leveraged their expertise and networks to make connections and identify opportunities for sustained international cooperation. They would focus on issues of common interest in science, technology, and engineering fields and usually served for one year. Each year we had a little bit of money, and we would send to the White House the names of three eminent scientists or engineers who we proposed to be the new science envoys. Some had won Nobel prizes but all were really well known in their field. Of course, we would have first asked them if they wanted to be a science envoy. This small program was a huge amount of work because we had to handhold them. There was this constant negotiation back and forth, which someone in my office handled, about where they wanted to go, what would be their message, what was the point of them going to that place. And then we had to arrange the travel meetings, and, of course, someone from my office would accompany them and the embassy would support them. One of the things we learned was that it was probably better to take exceptionally well-respected scientists in mid-career.

They had sort of more interest in following up and actually doing something besides making the speech. They were more interested in fulsome engaging. So as time went on, we were moving more in that direction. And occasionally an envoy, after doing one trip, they wouldn't want to do it anymore. Some of them needed way more support than we were capable of giving. Some of the people we'd ask and they'd say no, not interested in being a science envoy. We sent envoys to many countries across Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, South America, and Southeast Asia.

I remember one time when it got kind of hairy because our envoy had gone to Morocco and developed relationships there with the government, as he was supposed to. But then there was maybe a bird flu or something. I don't remember. And Morocco was scheduled to host some important soccer tournament, but they refused to let in athletes coming from Africa. But that was not what our official policy was. But then the Moroccan government

asked the science envoy to comment on the issues. He was, of course, not obligated to uphold U.S. policy. The envoys are private citizens and not employees of the government, and he didn't agree with our policy. So we had a little bit of a mess to clean up with that one. Frankly, the guy was incredibly good and what he had to say was fine. But the science envoy program was good. It still seems to be alive. The White House would have to approve it, and even in easier times, the White House would do a lot of due diligence on the people we suggested.

We worked with the White House. For the JCMs we worked through OSTP. And we worked with other offices/directorates as well, including whoever they had organizing the Global Entrepreneurship Summit because it was still President Obama and it was his initiative. U.S. input and participation was managed out of the White House. We had to sit in a lot of meetings about that and about whether there was going to be money for it and where it was going to be and who was going to pay for it, and you know, trying to get the next host country to commit and announce it. The countries that were hosting had to pay for and organize the logistics around the venue and the bulk of the event.

What else? We had another program for what we called science fellows. And every year we would send a cable to posts alerting them to the program and asking if they would like to have a science fellow. Did they have an issue on a topic where a science fellow could help? If they did, they would send us their proposal, and then we would go to the agencies, the different science agencies and ask them if they had someone who could help. It was never a question of whether they were an appropriate expert. It was more about whether or not they would/could let the expert go to the requesting embassy for thirty to ninety days. And the real kicker was that the agency had to pay the travel expenses and per diem. So while it was a fabulous program, it didn't get used as much as it could have because of that funding factor. My tour in OES/STC was really a fabulous tour. I have to say, I learned more about all kinds of things. I had never really run a bilateral meeting in the typical diplomatic sense, but I had enough experience that it was something that I could do.

I took right to it. For example, negotiating the Oman STA. And the work with L [Legal Office]. Oh my God, we had to constantly work with L. We used the attorney with the OES portfolio a lot, because of the science and technology agreements. They were, essentially treaties. They were considered treaties even though they weren't treaties in the sense that they didn't have to be approved by the Senate. The Assistant Secretary was very interested and involved with our office. It had been sort of a backwater office for many years. And then when Kerri-Ann Jones was appointed [before I arrived in the bureau]—she was an eminent scientist herself—she took the office from being event planners to really managing bilateral relationships and she supported people-to-people programming. So the office had become a much bigger thing. In many ways, OES/STC's work was one of the best things that the State Department had going on innovation, even though a lot of other offices had tiny innovation programs, they didn't like to admit that GIST was the best.



What I haven't talked about yet is the internal management issues. There were so many different kinds of employment mechanisms and a mix of people who came for two years together with a few people who'd been there for many years. And some of the people had been there when it was event planning and they did not much care for the concept that they now had to manage bilateral relationships. I was very lucky in that one of the team leads, he was a Foreign Service officer. He was the team lead for the government-to-government work. We called it the bilateral team. He was an incredible supervisor. He was the supervisor you want to be, the one you want to have, and the one you want to have working for you.

He never seemed to be upset about things and he would teach his people. He would really take a lot of time. He never seemed rushed. I believe we like the word equanimity. He was the epitome of equanimous. He had that. His team had a lot of issues. Most of them didn't have good position descriptions so he was diligent about rewriting position descriptions and making them the same for those doing the same work. They had been pretty hit or miss all over the place. He was very fair about what were the new requirements in the position descriptions. He was generous in terms of what he would accept as meeting the requirements. For example, he required each of them to have a plan for engagement with all the STA countries in their portfolio, a plan of how they would manage the science relationship. And some of them had maybe seven or eight countries or ten countries, which is a lot, but it's science and technology, you know, it was not the first time they were doing this. But he was trying to bring those who had been pushing back on the management of the relationship [they still just wanted to be event planners] up to speed. But, I'm pretty sure if they had taken a piece of paper and written "Science and Technology Strategy for X country," he would have given them credit and checked the box on that. But they couldn't be bothered to do that.

We had people who did not seem to understand their role when it did come to event planning. Sometimes when very important interlocutors would show up for a meeting, the person responsible for the relationship wouldn't be there to greet the VIP. Or she would deal with the White House directly and not inform her boss or anyone else. I had to lay down the law that no one was to talk to the OSTP without talking to me first because I would hear about the direct communications from my colleagues at the White House. Those people understood that what the person was doing wasn't appropriate. Also, there were problems with drafting. Pretty much everyone needed to improve their drafting. The OES front office was generally appalled by what we sent forward.

I would never say I'm the best cable or memo writer. I'm a decent editor. If you give me a cable that's just ok, I can edit it pretty good. I cannot completely rewrite the damn cable. I didn't have time to rewrite everyone's work, and it wasn't my job to rewrite everything. I had other stuff to do and it got to be really depressing because every time I sent a cable or a memo up to the DAS, he would get on the phone, ask me if I'd seen it and then tell me how badly done it was. It was awful to have to say that I had already edited it and it was still not acceptable. I brought in people to give sessions on very basic writing skills. We had sessions about the purpose of a cable. We had all this professional development that we tried to do, and plus the team lead was excellent at it, too. And he

would go back and go back and go back to have them rewrite. But we just got nowhere much of the time. It was very, very frustrating and the DAS had very high standards. He himself could write an excellent cable or memo and he knew exactly what he wanted those documents to say.

And it did wear on me. I think I would have been happy to extend, but it wore on me that I took very seriously the fact that I was in charge of the office, yet I was unable to fix this problem. And while quite honestly, the DAS did not blame me for not being able to fix it, it was too much. I got a lot of high praise for management in my EERs because I did fix some things that had been long-standing problems.

He knew I was making all these efforts to try to improve things, but I couldn't help but feel responsible whenever he would go on about how terrible the products were. So I decided that I didn't need that stress for a third year. I didn't extend. But I did learn a tremendous amount from him. We succeeded in getting the public-private partnership. I learned how to do a science and technology agreement. I learned how to be an effective chair of a bilateral meeting, and how to do a good wrap up at the end. And helped people and tried to do it gently. It was really great, actually.

*Q: One way, just given the problem you have in training people to write in an action-oriented way, to put immediately at the front what the person on the other end needs to know in order to do their job or in order to carry the ball the next X number of yards. One way that they dealt with that in public affairs was they eliminated most of that problem by creating templates about every kind of event that you do. Everything from donating books all the way up to holding gigantic stadium events. And you know, you were just so limited in the amount of free prose you could write that they essentially eliminated the problem of how to write cables for most things.*

HASKELL: But then nobody learned how to write a cable.

*Q: No, and it got worse overtime. I was thirty years in the Foreign Service. I retired in 2013 and over the years as I moved up a bit and edited cables, I saw the writing get worse and worse.*

HASKELL: It was amazing how bad it could be. And the other part was staffing. I remember one of my areas for improvement was I needed to make certain that my team staffed me better because I would be in a meeting and not know the answer to something that I should have known. And the DAS, he knew that I couldn't have known everything. It was not that I should have known everything, but my staff should have prepared me better for all of my meetings.

*Q: Yeah. I ran into that again in IIP. And the answer was that I left that office because I could not knit together people who would staff me.*

HASKELL: So I will say this, I was there for two years and when I left, four people had gone and they were the correct four people.

*Q: Well, that's fortunate. That's very fortunate.*

HASKELL: But it was very hard and it's very hard to be on the receiving end of an EEO complaint. I learned an awful lot about that process, and yeah, what shocked me the most was the level at which people are allowed to make stuff up. And then you realize when you go through the process, because the State Department handles everything by mediation, you realize that they're not interested one iota in the truth. All they want is for the two parties to agree on something and get out.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: But I think that we learned a lot. I will say that I did not bear the brunt of it. The supervisor and my deputy bore the brunt of these issues. I did my best to support them as much as I could. And the OES front office supported us. Totally. But I would not say that DGHR [Office of the Director General and Human Resources] support was strong. I had to have a lot of conversations with the HR DAS to discuss the way that that office was handling these things, and it was, frankly, wrong. We would provide detailed documentation, as they requested, yet they would then question what we wrote. But they would read it, and then ask us if that really happened, as if we were lying. They weren't doing that with the people on the other side and that was very interesting. It was very stressful. There was a meeting or two where, after six hours in a meeting like that, I would literally go in a corner and collapse in a heap. I had to be so strong in the meeting and you can't maintain that level of intensity for that long.

*Q: Yeah. I completely understand. I never personally had to go through an EEO complaint, but I did have to counsel American officers whose behavior was not up to State Department standards and even that will wear you out.*

HASKELL: But even at least in a counseling session you're dealing with the truth. At least someone has bought a complaint that's valid. What we had to deal with were complaints that were completely off the charts made-up.

*Q: Frivolous. Yes. That's incredible.*

HASKELL: One example is when someone claimed that we wouldn't let the person sign up to take language. Okay. A, the person never asked. B, that country wasn't in the person's portfolio. And C, when I looked in the personnel files, the person had been hired partly because they spoke that language.

*Q: Incredible.*

HASKELL: I mean, there's lots of stuff like that, where you find yourself asking, What the hey? Where did that come from?

*Q: Yeah. Incredible. Alright, so at this point we do have to pause and we can pick up tomorrow if there were more issues in the OES portfolio that you'd like to discuss.*

*Today is February 4, 2020. And we are resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell. Let's resume with the year that you were in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC].*

HASKELL: I was posted in Kinshasa from August 2017 and I curtailed in February of 2019. But I think I should start with how I got there. So the part that we missed was climate interactive and then Pretoria. So I was assigned to Pretoria for a three-year tour and less than a year into the tour, there was an urgent vacancy announcement for DCM [deputy chief of mission] in Kinshasa. And at the time my husband knew he was going to be ambassador in Brazzaville. So he was interested in me bidding on that job in Kinshasa. I was not particularly interested in bidding on the job, but I queried the Africa Bureau to a couple of different people in the front office in the Africa Bureau. And it didn't really seem like they were that interested in me having the job.

So I felt pretty safe bidding on the job. That would make everybody happy because living in South Africa, of course, was wonderful. And anyway, long story short, they did choose me out of a few bidders to go be the DCM in Kinshasa. When I was offered the job, I told them I would only accept the job on two conditions: that I would get at least six weeks of brush-up French and that I wouldn't be long-term chargé. And they said, yeah, fine, no problem. But then just a few weeks after that, the State Department Legal Office came up with a new rule that the department wasn't allowed to send out WAE [when actually employed/re-employed annuitant] ambassadors to be chargé/chiefs of mission anymore. So the Africa Bureau's plan for who was going to be sitting in Kinshasa as chargé failed. Now just backing up a little bit here. Post's ambassador had left in December of 2016 kind of unexpectedly; then their DCM left unexpectedly, I think it was in April or the end of March 2017.

So they didn't have a front office. They had sent a WAE [a retired ambassador] who was there and did a great job for his six months that he was allowed under that program. The person they had selected to go out to take over from him wasn't allowed to go because of this new legal ruling. So, I got all my things together for the curtailment from Pretoria, and I went to Washington for the DCM/principal officer's course. As I was sort of finishing up that course and was trying to make an appointment with someone in the front office—and keep in mind that this was a pretty rough time in the department. There were a lot of vacancies, and for example, there was no assistant secretary in the Africa Bureau and the PDAS [principal deputy assistant secretary] had left.

Pretty much everybody had sort of moved up, shifted around. Everyone was in “acting” roles. And I went in for my meeting to ask what they wanted me to do. I was getting ready to do my consultations, and I wanted to see what was going on up there. It was a very short meeting, ten minutes. And they basically told me that they were there to tell me that I had to go now, that I had to get there before the end of August, that I would get no French, and I was going to be chargé. So I thought, okay, fine. Chargé, I can do that. I could manage whatever I needed to do on that. But I was really kind of not happy with the no French, because my French wasn't very good.

And this was a post that they had been adamant about needing someone with excellent French. Mine was basic, far from excellent. So I just told them I wasn't going to go. They were like, you have to go. And I said that I would not be going without French. They looked at the calendar and counted some days and told me that I could have six days of French. So I went to post with six days of French. Now, I will say that those six days of French were very worthwhile. I had some French storage from many years ago, and the six half days of one-on-one tutoring did succeed in bringing it to the forefront, even though it wasn't very useful, yet. And I did my French at the same time I was doing my consultations. I had four hours of French in the morning. And then I tried to get all my consultations squeezed in in the afternoons in order to get out to post before the person, who was there temporarily, had to depart. This was now already August, almost late August.

Since June, instead of sending out a WAE, AF [Africa Bureau] had actually taken a sitting ambassador, posted in another country in Africa, and they took him from his post and they put him in Kinshasa. I'd never heard of that before. Seems absolutely crazy. I guess they didn't have anybody in Washington who was not retired that they felt they could send. Anyway, they sent that ambassador and he was supposed to be there for three months, which would have allowed me to have most of my six weeks of French. But instead I arrived towards the end of August, after six days of French and a couple of days I had to arrange the car I had bought to be picked up for shipping, plus a small household effects shipment to be packed. I arrived in Kinshasa on a Friday and on the Monday, that chargé took me on his farewell rounds and left. So I had met a few DRC government people and I jumped in to try to figure things out. I knew whatever I knew about the DRC was what I had learned in the very few weeks I was in Washington. And, you know, the few consultations that I'd had time to do—the desk was really, really good at trying to get me up to speed. The desk officer had made a lot of appointments that were extremely important for my consultations and for my future success in Kinshasa. Basically two days after I arrived, or two business days after, I was the chargé. And I remained chargé for fourteen months. Until an ambassador arrived.

So having said that, what was the embassy in Kinshasa like? There were about 150 U.S. positions in a mix of direct-hire and USPSC [U.S. personal services contract] kinds of positions, but usually only around 130 of those positions were filled. It was a very difficult post to staff. And it was one of the posts—there aren't a lot of them—but it was one of the posts where there were more USAID officers than State officers. There was only State, USAID, CDC [Centers for Disease and Prevention] and DAO [Defense Attaché Office]. We were only four agencies. And Kinshasa has the dubious honor of being the most-evacuated post in the Foreign Service.

And it had had two, I think, two ordered departures in 2016, short ones. It was a 30 percent hardship differential post. It probably should have been 35 percent to be honest. It was an extremely low-income country, a very high-need country, low on all development indices. I think Kinshasa's official population is somewhere north of twelve million, but probably it's more like fifteen million, and it's anticipated to be fifty million by 2050. It's the second most populous city, I think, in sub-Saharan Africa. The official population of

the country itself, depending on what stats you look at—there hasn't been a census in so many years—some people/sources say the population is eighty-five million. But I found something that estimated ninety-one million, but I'm not sure how official that was. But likely it's closer to a hundred million. The size of the territory of the country is huge. It's the eleventh largest country, in area, and on the globe.

It's the size of the United States east of the Mississippi. So this is a pretty big country with an awful lot of problems. Having said that, and it being hard to staff, the embassy did have pretty decent morale. You know, at one point we asked the Resilience Office at FSI [Foreign Service Institute] to evaluate our situation. They didn't come to post, but they did a survey from Washington. I thought maybe they could come and help us out. But they did a survey and told me that we didn't need their services, that post morale was fine. I was kind of surprised by that. But there is an international school in Kinshasa that was quite good all the way through high school, quite well-managed, and the parents loved it and the students loved it. So that was an added benefit.

The DRC is a former Belgian colony. And before that, King Leopold of Belgium had laid claim to the Congo as a private concession. Then, at the Berlin conference the Europeans ratified Leopold's claim as they were basically carving up Africa. So Congo didn't do well under colonization in terms of— oh, anything good about colonization. Nothing good was happening there. It was pretty awful in fact, and after having read a good, thorough history on the subject, I understood better why there were so many problems in the DRC now. It had a lot to do with many, many years of Leopold and colonization. The country gained independence in 1960. I'm talking about this because it is important to the overall policy we were pursuing there. They gained independence in 1960, but at the time the Belgians had no plan really for granting independence. They were busily pulling resources out as fast as they could.

The Belgians devised a thirty-year transition plan. That was their plan after they saw that they would have to eventually give up colonization. But of course, the Congolese weren't that happy about that, and there were talks in Brussels about how to end Belgium's colonial rule. In the end, and after only a very short duration of talks, the Belgians pulled out of Congo with only sixty days notice, leaving extremely limited means for governance. They had not trained people to do much of anything. I think there were fewer than two hundred people in the country with any kind of higher education. The country has never had good governance. So they've had only a few presidents. It was Kasavubu in the beginning. He was overthrown by a coup d'état initiated by Joseph-Désiré Mobutu in 1965. Mobutu ruled until he was overthrown in 1997 by a rebel force from the eastern part of the country. Those rebels were led by Laurent Desiré Kabila and supported by neighboring countries—Museveni in Uganda and Kagame in Rwanda, but also by Burundi and Angola.

Mobutu fled in 1997, but three months later, he died from cancer. So in 2001, Kabila *père*, as we call him—the father Kabila was assassinated. And ten days later, his son Joseph Kabila, who was something like twenty-six or twenty-seven years old depending on what you read, was installed by political players around him. I think they thought they

would be able to manipulate him. So that really sets the scene for the more recent politics. But I want to talk a little bit more about the circumstances of the country more recently, because that's also very important when we get to what we actually did.

There was a lot of violent civil disturbance under Mobutu's reign, especially towards the end. In the 1980s even, he wasn't paying soldiers and he sanctioned "pillage" [pillaging]. There were huge incidents of pillaging throughout the city of Kinshasa. I'm not sure if it was happening in other parts of the country, but it may have been only in Kinshasa. They killed Westerners, and they looted widely; There was looting from the means of production, and they just took whatever. Mobutu not only turned a blind eye, he encouraged it. And happened again in the early 1990s. At that time there was a big exodus of Westerners from what was then called Zaire. They moved away. But even today there are still a fair number of Belgians living there.

So then towards the mid-1990s, there was the First Congo War followed by the Second Congo War. And these were all internal disturbances by armed groups. And they were enormous. They were hugely destructive to the country. They destroyed a lot of the cities in the east and in the center. And they estimate five million people died as a result, not just from the actual warfare, but from famine and disease caused by the violence and complete breakdown in governance. This is the 1990s. Also, keep in mind that this is the place where Ebola originated and identified by Western scientists back in 1976, which is when the first outbreak of Ebola was recorded. So that factors into what we were doing in the DRC. Amongst all this incredibly poor governance during their entire history arises this incredible violence happening in the eastern part of the country. Of course, the whole infrastructure system that had been built by the Belgians, which was roads and railroads, was pretty good. You could get all over the country. The Belgians had invested heavily in the minerals extraction industry. The country has amazing resource reserves of something like twenty-four key minerals.

The copper that they have is so pure it needs virtually no processing. I think it's like the purest copper you can take out of the earth of all the copper mines in the world. They have diamonds, industrial diamonds. They don't have the pretty ones you get from South Africa, but they have a huge amount of industrial diamonds. They also have coltan, cobalt, gold, tin, and a whole raft of rare earth minerals, including tantalum and lithium. They have uranium. That's where their uranium for the atomic bombs that were dropped to end World War II came from. They have awesome tropical forests and wildlife, and even oil and gas in the lakes on the eastern border. The country has all kinds of incredible natural wealth juxtaposed against horrific political problems, economic problems, and ethnic strife. Child soldiers were a huge issue in the past, as has been rape as a weapon of war, just ten to fifteen years ago, or even less. I think they finally got a grip on the child soldiers around 2012 to 2014. The military has worked to reduce sexual violence, but many armed groups have continued it.

We still see some of it, but nothing like it was before. The United Nations [UN] has done a good job of addressing the child soldier issue. During the time I was there—and these numbers are probably not far off now although they may have dropped some, which is a

positive thing—there were four million internally displaced people in the country. They were displaced primarily because of violence, not economic need, but mostly violence. There are some many armed groups that run around in the east, depending on how you define an armed group. When we would talk with analysts at the UN who were the main source of this information, we would sometimes hear there were upwards of 150 armed groups in the eastern and central parts of the country. The Kasai provinces were included in the UN numbers, which is not really the east, so I've said central as well.

There are groups called mai mai, which were started as self-defense forces for communities to protect themselves from other armed groups. But basically a lot of those Mai-Mai evolved into armed groups that then instigated the same kind of violent attacks against civilians—usually economic crime and local power grabs, sometimes ethically based. In 2018, something like thirteen million Congolese required emergency humanitarian assistance. It's a country that sends refugees as well as accepts refugees which is kind of bizarre. There are more than five hundred thousand Congolese refugees who have fled their country. And there are also refugees fleeing neighboring countries into the DRC. Remember, there are still Rwandan refugees in the DRC from the time of the genocide. And a lot of them are still in eastern DRC. People from the Central African Republic are the next biggest population that flee into Congo and South Sudanese refugees come across as well some from Burundi.

All this makes for quite a big mess. The U.S. foreign assistance at the time was about six hundred million dollars a year. About half of that was humanitarian assistance. And the other half was primarily health and education development aid. And if you factor in the amounts that the United States contributes to international organizations, primarily through the UN, our annual contribution to efforts to basically keep people from dying was about a billion dollars a year, and it's still probably close if not the same.

MONUSCO [United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo] is the biggest, longest, most expensive UN peacekeeping mission that they've ever had. And its main mandate is protection of civilians. It's not to separate warring parties because there are so many and sometimes unidentifiable. We worked very close with MONUSCO all the time. If we wanted to move around the country, very often we had to rely on UN-provided planes and helicopters. As you can imagine with that amount of aid, even just from the United States—the Europeans also have enormous amounts of aid going into the DRC—there was a huge international NGO [non-governmental organization] presence.

So, that's the backdrop. I arrived in late August 2017 when their democratic journey wasn't doing very well. Their constitution mandated elections every five years and a two-term limit for the president. Joseph Kabila was installed [not elected] in 2001 by the political characters around him when there was a constitution. They've had six constitutions since independence. And then in 2002, they began trying to figure how the country could move forward. There was a conference held in South Africa, in Sun City, where the framework for a new country was defined, in terms of what should happen. And that's when they decided there would be elections every five years. The conference



took a couple of years and then it took until 2006 to organize the first election, which was organized and managed by the UN.

So by then Joseph Kabila had already been in power for about five years. But they didn't count those five years because he hadn't been elected as president. The second election was in 2011, which Kabila kind of won. There were so many voting irregularities, ridiculous voting irregularities, but he was declared the winner. The next election should have been held in 2016, but the government and the CENI [National Independent Electoral Commission] failed to organize elections. The CENI was created under the Sun City conference mechanism. It was supposed to be independent from the government, but it was not.

When I arrived, there were three things, aside from the general running of the embassy, that were important to work on: 1) push the GDRC [government of the DRC] and the CENI to organize and hold elections, 2) resolve issues with the new embassy compound project, and 3) push the GDRC to solve the murder of two UN human rights investigators. Even in the last few months of 2017, CENI had not issued an electoral calendar. Keep in mind the elections were supposed to be held in 2016. There was quite a bit of civil unrest, starting in 2016, because the GDRC and CENI had not organized the elections. In the last three months of 2016, there had been two different stakeholder dialogues held to try to come to agreements between the GDRC, opposition political parties, and civil society on how to move forward with elections. The first dialogue failed. Then they immediately started another one. By the end of the year, on the last day of 2016, they signed an agreement, known as the St. Sylvester Agreement. That agreement indicated that Kabila could continue as president until the new president was inaugurated. That provision was upheld by the Constitutional Court. There was also mention that elections should be held in 2017, kind of. It was already September 2017 and there was no sign of elections being held.

Prior to all of this, Kabila had made efforts to consolidate his place in power. In 2015, he had a plan to hold a referendum to change the constitution to eliminate the term limits. That caused enormous civil protests. And in the DRC, people are usually killed by security forces during these protests. They're never peaceful. The security forces are pretty trigger happy, which is why there were a couple of ordered departures in 2016; they were related to this issue. There were demonstrations, and in one instance the main opposition party was demonstrating at their party headquarters when the security forces came in. They started a fire, and well over a hundred people were probably killed. I think the official estimates are something like forty or fifty killed, but it was probably really more than a hundred. There were people inside the building who were killed in the fire. It was pretty nasty. So the electoral environment was the biggest foreign policy push at the time. The GDRC and CENI simply had to get the electoral process underway. We were waiting for the electoral calendar, which would, of course, include a date for elections.

The embassy facilities. The Chancery was still the same building we were in at independence with very little money invested in it. We had created another compound, the JAO [joint administrative offices] down the road where we had all of our

administrative functions, the CDC office was there. The warehouse was there, well, we didn't really have a warehouse. It was containers. I think it was a container farm. They were breeding. I think we had so many containers stacked up. I don't know how many. It was a big compound and it was in slightly better shape than the Chancery. Nothing met security requirements in terms of setback or anything, but at least it had some space.

We also had a USAID office that was in another building a few blocks from the Chancery. That one did not meet safety requirements either in terms of egress for fire or a setback or anything like that. So OBO had Kinshasa on the list for an NEC and a site had been agreed to back in 2014 when an agreement had been signed between the GDRC and OBO for a land swap. A site had been identified and the deal was that the GDC would have the occupants of that site moved off. It was primarily government office space. Those would be moved off, along with a couple of non-government entities, and then we would build our new embassy. Once we occupied the completed NEC, we would hand over our JAO, the administrative compound, to the GDRC.

That was a swap, a no money deal. The GDRC agreed to have all occupants off the site and all buildings demolished, except one which would be used as a construction office, by March 2016. They had two years to get off. But they didn't. Some did. There was also a sweetener in there. We gave them bought and shipped nearly three million dollars worth of modular, temporary offices they could have to replace the offices that had moved. Within six months of signing the agreement we had delivered those. All but two entities did move off before the deadline. Still very much there and operating were a small government maternity clinic and—the CENI's main warehouse. So it was supposed to be my job to get them off so we could start our new embassy construction because the money was appropriated for a 2018 start.

The third thing that was important was that in, I think it was March of 2017, two UN experts, human rights case investigators, who were researching mass killings, mass graves, in the Kasai provinces where there had been for a year or so an outbreak of mass violence with sort of government surrogates against what were called the Kamuina Nsapu, which is what traditional chief was called in that area—but the “rebellion” used that title because the government had tried to dictate to the new chief that he must support the current government. The personalities in the government were sort of stepping all over the chief in that area because he had supported the opposition party. But those two experts, Michael Sharp, an American, and Zaida Catalán, who was Swedish, had been researching claims of mass atrocities in the Kasai provinces. In March 2017, they had gone missing and were murdered while following a lead. We were working together with the Swedish embassy to push the government to solve the killings. We were pushing for a proper investigation and holding accountable the perpetrators.

Those were the three primary issues we were working on, along, of course with all the usual work. But the electoral calendar had become sort of all-encompassing in a big way. Shortly after I arrived I realized that the two recalcitrant occupants of the NEC site were the electoral commission and a maternity clinic. It became clear that I couldn't press the GDRC to set a date for the elections at the same time I was demanding they move the

main CENI warehouse. I could see the headlines, “No elections due to U.S. Embassy’s demand for CENI Move Warehouse.” Also, the second headline, “Maternity Clinic closed by U.S. demands.” We were not in a good position. OBO was not happy with my prioritizing the elections over the NEC.

We simply were not going to make any positive steps if we tried to accomplish both of those things at the same time. We did keep pushing on the investigation of the murders, though progress was pretty weak. I’ll talk a bit more about that and the NEC at the end. I’m going to move now more into the electoral calendar and the elections because it took up the vast majority of my time.

The international community was pretty united that the DRC must hold elections, including the African nations. I shouldn’t say “even.” That makes it sound like we wouldn’t anticipate that the African nations would be on board. Certainly those that had diplomatic representation in Kinshasa were on board that there should be elections and that Kabila should step down. So the main points of agreement were that there must be elections and Kabila should not run. Most of the international community was pushing on this. I don’t think the Africans were pushing very hard, but the African union was pushing. They had a fabulous ambassador there. He was excellent to work with, and he was pushing on it.

The chronology was long and somewhat convoluted or complicated. The way that Kabila was still running things was called “*glissement*,” which means “slippage” in French. He was using all kinds of tactics to try to stay in power. He claimed they couldn’t have an election until they completed a census. But that would clearly take years. He would come up with reasons they couldn’t have an election until X, Y or Z was done. The one that stuck was that they had to accomplish a new voter registration drive, i.e they had to have every eligible voter register. They already had an electoral roll, but instead of just updating it, they decided they had to start over from scratch, again, taking years. They spent over four hundred million dollars to register voters. And, the CENI decided to use a system—in a country with no reliable electricity in most of the country—that was completely computerized and required ten fingerprints as well as a photo, among other data points.

This was a mess. And then there was the saga of the electronic voting machines. This took a lot of time and effort, but let me just say this and then set that aside for the moment. It was one of our talking points that using voting machines, as they were called, was a recipe for disaster. How could it work when the number of machines they were planning to buy would require each voter to complete the process in three minutes. They showed me a sample of the machine they said they were buying. I couldn’t vote in three minutes. How could a man or woman who has never seen a computer and can’t read going to vote in three minutes. Not to mention the prospects of voter fraud.

Kabila’s insistence on conducting a census led to civil unrest, back in 2015 or 2016, before I was there. Protests and demonstrations that nearly always turned violent. That’s how Kabila got from 2016 with no elections through until the end of 2018 when elections

were finally held—something that was definitely never a sure thing. He kept up a steady stream of reasons and actions that would or could result in his remaining in power or running again. He had the Constitutional Court ruling that he could stay in power until there was a new president inaugurated. So it was in his interest, if he wanted to stay in power, to keep putting the elections off.

One thing I need to mention here is that the Catholic Church is pretty big in the DRC. I think more than 50 percent of the population would say that they're Catholics. And there's a big mix of different evangelicals, and maybe 5 percent of the population is Muslims who are primarily in the east.

From the beginning I had little guidance from the Africa Bureau. As I mentioned, there was no assistant secretary, the PDAS [principal deputy assistant secretary] was acting and getting ready to depart on his next assignment. The DAS for central Africa had shifted from person to person, all acting. So after asking a couple of times for guidance and being told simply that they were there to support me, I decided okay, fine. I could take a hint, and I decided I would just do what I was supposed to do. I knew that our policy was to get the DRC to have elections, and I would just decide myself how to do that. Fine with me. Obviously, we reported what we did, and I talked with the desk officer every couple of weeks or so. But the question some people might ask is why was this so important to us, for the DRC to have elections?

Well, there were really four big reasons that DRC elections were in the United States' interest. One was the six hundred million to one billion dollars in foreign assistance, humanitarian assistance. If there was no election, nothing was going to change. We would not see any chance in the foreseeable future to reduce the amount of aid. And it was in our interest to continue the assistance for these same three reasons that it was in our interest to get them to have elections. Kabila did not have an iron grip on power. He had no one he trusted. He did not rule with an iron fist. He was not the director of violence. He stayed in power by giving people a position where they could find something to enrich themselves, by giving them a potential source of corruption and power. It wasn't that he was pushing down the power or the corruption, necessarily. I'm not claiming Kabila wasn't corrupt, but it was more about keeping people on his side by giving them these opportunities, not because they were really his loyalists. There are nine countries bordering the DRC. The Republic of Congo has had their own problems with democracy. And civil war comes and goes in the Central African Republic, which is a governing disaster. A lot of violence in South Sudan—we know what's going on there. Uganda is probably one of the most peaceful of the neighbors right now, but they have armed groups operating in the DRC whose stated goal is to overthrow Museveni.

Rwanda, where of course, there was this incredibly complicated relationship between the Tutsi and the Hutu due to the genocide. Many Hutu escaped/were chased by Kagame's Tutsi forces into the DRC and they still live there. Some formed armed groups. Plus the DRC has its own indigenous population of the Tutsi ethnic group, which is of course, in power in Rwanda. So there are Rwandan refugees who come in and disrupt things. And then Burundi has all kinds of problems too. And then there is Angola, where there are

also problems. And so if you look at all of these countries, if the DRC is not peaceful, successful, and economically viable, it creates problems for all the neighbors as well. So that is to say that if you want to have a reasonably stable central Africa, one that doesn't keep involving us and the UN who we contribute vastly to, if we want to stop all that, we need to have good governance and a successful DRC. That can only start with an election.

The third big reason an election was in the United States' interests was that a change was needed and progress toward democracy was imperative to get the DRC economy moving—to foster economic opportunity. If the DRC couldn't produce some sort of economic opportunities for its citizens, violence would continue because people were desperate and would do whatever they had to do. And the fourth reason really was wrapping the other three up together. The DRC needed to have its citizens be healthy and educated. They must have livelihoods. We needed to reduce the number of internally displaced people and refugees. That's been a U.S. foreign policy goal for a very long time. [I'm not sure where we are right now with that, though.] Our bi-partisan policy has been that stable democracies around the world are in our national interest because then we don't have to engage in resolving conflicts, and the ongoing conflicts in central Africa center on the DRC, for the most part. So it was a really big thing for us to try to do this. I want to make one point now, before I start going into a lot of the specific things that went on. And that's that when you lived in the DRC, you learned very quickly that it was virtually impossible to know the truth.

People there are absolutely convinced of things that are garbage conspiracy theories, but it's not just a couple of conspiracy theories, or three or four main ones that people believe. Every person has their own conspiracy theories and believes them wholeheartedly. No matter how good your sources are, you're not going to really know what's going on. And to be honest, some of our sources were pretty darn close to Kabila, and they did not really know what was going on. He kept everything very close to his vest. He didn't share, and he didn't trust people.

In September 2017 I decided not to pursue the NEC site problem until after they had an election. So my promise to OBO was that after they had an election, we would get the site vacated. We would get those entities still on the site off within maybe three or four months. They did not like that, but it was too bad. I mean, there wasn't really much you could say about it. While I was doing my consultations I had heard that US ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley was planning a trip to the DRC for October, which seemed strange to me, but it was interesting. I haven't read her book. So I don't know how she addresses this in the book or if she does. So why was she coming to the DRC? It was April or May 2017, Embassy Kinshasa had sent a cable to the department and the subject line was something along the lines of "Preemptive Killing of Children."

It was a cable describing what was going on in the Kasais. [There is more than one province included because while the DRC used to have eleven provinces, Kabila had expanded it to twenty-six in order to have more positions to dole out to keep people on his side. In so doing, the one province previously called Kasai was divided into three.]

The Kasais were traditionally a stronghold of the main opposition party, and the violence that I alluded to before was ongoing. Remember there was an armed group [or more than one] that was a government surrogate fighting against the Kamuina Nsapo. The Kamuina Nsapo was extremely violent and really awful. You can find many descriptions of it from some of the human rights organizations.

Human Rights Watch is quite familiar with what was going on in the DRC. But yeah, there were awful things perpetrated by both sides. The Kamuina Nsapo would drag women into the village square and then rape them repeatedly in front of their family members, and then kill her by hacking her up with a machete. The kind of atrocities that you don't even want to talk about, that you can't imagine human beings doing. So when Ambassador Haley read that cable she wanted to know what was going on. And she had very good staff and advisors. She was well briefed after that on what was going on in the DRC. And she understood that without good governance, nothing was going to stop the violence.

So she had become very personally taken with stopping the violence and the status of what was going on in the DRC. She understood the necessity to have the election. So she made a trip to the DRC. We took her first to the east because that's where most of the violence was occurring. We couldn't travel to Kasais. She would have loved to go to the Kasais, but that was just too dangerous. We weren't going to do that. So we took her to the east, to Goma, where we took her to an IDP [internally displaced persons] camp where she could talk to the women who were there and hear their stories. We took her to a child soldier reintegration center, and she heard the stories of some of those children. She got a briefing from MONUSCO [UN peacekeeping force]. And then we flew back to Kinshasa where she had government meetings. For maybe the first time all four main opposition parties were brought together to meet Haley, at my house, at the DCR [deputy chief of mission residence]. And she met with CENI, the electoral commission. She met with President Kabila for about two hours. I will say that none of us know what was said in those two hours. No one else was in the room and we got no readout. The best I got was that it was nothing I hadn't already heard.

Her meetings with CENI, the electoral commission were key. And with the exception of the meeting with Kabila, I was not cut out or a backbencher, which I've seen happen before even with chiefs of mission during VIP visits. She had me sit at her side and she listened when I passed a note. She clearly had her own mission and her own ideas of how things were supposed to go, but she didn't push it against advice. And in the meeting with the electoral commission, she told them in no uncertain terms that they need to have elections in 2018. And she made it clear. She started with pushing for elections no later than June of 2018.

But to be honest, we did not believe they could get elections organized by then. It was a country that had no logistics mechanisms. Organization of national elections was just a very daunting thing and nothing had been done except for the voter registry. With something crazy like ten thousand polling stations, with most people dispersed outside of Kinshasa across thousands of tiny population centers and no transportation network even

to distribute election materials. As she was pressing for June, I passed her a note that said I didn't think that they could actually do it by then, but they could by August. And she took that on board. Then they pushed back against August, but she told them they had to have the election in 2018 and she did not mean on December 31. Less than a week later, they published the electoral calendar with an election date of December 23. I want to add here that I also felt it was important that the DRC pick the date. Had they capitulated and scheduled the election for a date pushed by the international community, they would have blamed us for any failure, actual or manufactured.

The calendar they published was very detailed. We had known that they had the calendar ready. I had been very careful not to be trapped into looking at their calendar before publication because I knew they would have publicly stated that I had seen it and implied—whether true or not—that I had agreed to it. They had tried it a few times when I was meeting with the director of the electoral commission, Corneille Nangaa. He would call me for a meeting and then invite me into a room where they had the electoral calendar laid out on a conference table. I would avoid it and insist on changing rooms because if I had said anything or if they took a picture of me with it, they would have tweeted it and imply that the United States agrees with or approves it. So I had to be really very careful not to be drawn into those sorts of games. So whenever Nangaa talked about showing it to me, I would demur and tell him it was not for me to decide or approve, that it was for him to put out there and for the population to comment on. And I think that was actually really important that we were not seen as the arbiters of what was the correct calendar.

Now, I don't know if the rest of the international community necessarily agreed with that, but I think we all did understand that we had to be very careful to avoid tweets that claimed something we didn't really do because it would have been impossible to address it effectively after the fact. And then people would have thought it was true. The whole conspiracy thing would start up, and it was really difficult.

*Q: Did you ever find out what leverage Ambassador Haley used to get them to more or less agree to an electoral calendar in 2018?*

HASKELL: Well, I tried very hard to get a real read-out of her meeting with Kabila, but there was just nothing I hadn't heard before. So, no, I don't know what it was. I know that for myself, we developed a strategy based on sanctions against individuals. There were quite a number of Congolese citizens who had been sanctioned as individuals, mostly for human rights abuses. In fact, there are U.S. executive orders specifically for the DRC. That's how bad their record is. They have their very own executive orders for sanctions. And so I developed some terminology that was clear enough that they knew what I meant but was not overtly threatening. I didn't think overt threats would be helpful. It was a fine line.

And so I had developed relationships with several people—the chief of the national police [Dieudonne Amuli Bahigwa], the governor of Kinshasa [André Kimbuta Yango], Kabila's chief of staff [Nehemie Mwilanya], the senior diplomatic advisor to Kabila

[Bernabe Kikaya Bin Karubi] working out of the Presidency, the head of the Directorate of Immigration [Francois Beya], and with different ministers, including the foreign minister [Leonard She Okitundu]. In fact, I had hosted a representational table at the Marine Birthday Ball in early November, after the Haley visit. Up until then, my relationships were still pretty superficial. On the advice of my acting DCM/Pol chief, I invited the Okitundu, Kikaya, and Beya to join us at the ball at our table. It was a masterful move in terms of relationship-building. They had never been invited to such a thing and were really impressed. They stayed for hours. After that, we had collegial conversations.

It doesn't work to threaten people and it's necessary to have a working relationship, even with individuals in a corrupt, violent government. Otherwise, you will not get meetings and can have no influence. You can't make your points. So I just reminded them periodically that anyone impeding the democratic process would be held accountable. That was one of the "offenses" for which someone could be held accountable under our sanctions regime. And they were very smart people. They knew exactly what that meant. And so whenever there was going to be something, like scheduled anti-Kabila demonstrations, we would remind them. We tried to be preemptive rather than punitive. We tried to use the sanctions as a way to change behavior, as opposed to punishing past behavior.

I don't know that it was ever used quite like that before. It worked; I will say it worked very well. So maybe Haley did the same thing. Somewhat by coincidence, we were helped in our strategy. Let me go back a bit. Maybe less than a week after Haley's meeting with Kabila, they issued the calendar. The calendar was very complicated. It was a huge, long document the length of a conference table. And it had election day, December 23, 2018. It wasn't December 31.

At the time of publication, the opposition and civil society were angry with the date being so far in the future, and they wanted to boycott. Many members of the international community were also unhappy with the date. That takes me to another thing I need to bring up, which is that there was this movement at the time for a "transition sans Kabila," which means "transition without Kabila" in French. This was an idea held out by the opposition and civil society that a commission or council would be set up [by whom was never clear] that would take over from the Kabila government [nothing about what would happen to Parliament] and run the country while organizing elections. Very undemocratic. It was nonsense that had been dreamed up, I think primarily by this guy, Martin Fayulu who will show up later in the narrative. He was a member of some opposition party, but not necessarily a well-known, well-respected politician. Although he had had a career as an international civil servant working with the World Bank or the IMF [International Monetary Fund], and he should have been a really good guy—he was not a bad guy—but then he just went off the rails a bit towards the end.

Anyway, so there were these three things that people were pushing back against. 1) The transition *sans* Kabila idea was out there. We didn't like that at all. 2) Many did not like the date. And 3) Moises Katumbi. Katumbi had been the governor of Katanga [a province



that was eliminated when the eleven provinces became twenty-six], the location of much of the industrial mining industry. He had been a successful governor and his citizenry loved him. And it seemed the West loved him.

Katanga was the part of the country that includes the city of Lubumbashi near the border with Zambia. It is the hugely rich copper belt. And along with copper comes cobalt. So Katumbi was really close to Joseph Kabila for a long time. I think he may have served as a minister in Kabila's government. At some point something happened and they had a serious falling out. I was never able to find a single person in the DRC—not that I asked them all—who really knew what happened between them. We don't know what the falling out was about.

Kabila turned on Katumbi big time. Katumbi resigned the governorship and from Kabila's party, the PPRD [People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy]. To be honest, much of the West assumed he was the rightful heir to be president. Many thought he would be a really good president based on his performance as governor of Katanga. He was accused [likely trumped up charges] of real estate fraud, tried and convicted in absentia after he had convinced Kabila to let him go to Brussels for medical treatment. All that was before I arrived in the DRC. I disagreed with the premise that Katumbi was somehow entitled to be president. I didn't think the United States or the international community should be picking the next president for the DRC. And frankly, I didn't think he would do any better than anybody else. I never met Katumbi as he was not in the DRC while I was there, though he often claimed he would be returning imminently. He didn't because he was afraid he would be arrested and thrown in jail. Possibly the real guilty person might have been his brother. We don't know because again, conspiracy theories. He did not want to go to jail.

He didn't come back, but he was sort of running as a politician by tweet from Brussels for at least a couple of years. He was a prolific tweeter. He was in the press, what little press there was. He had quite a following in the DRC and he kept telling them he was coming back. But he was never serious. For example, at one point he told everybody he was flying in by private plane. But he didn't show up. He claimed they wouldn't let him land, that the government had obstructed his arrival. But then when we saw the documentation it indicated that he would fly from Zambia. But the information on the filed flight plan, like the tail number for the plane that he would be on, was different from the tail number of the plane he was in. And he was trying to land in maybe Kisangani instead of Kinshasa. Nothing matched. It seemed like he made problems as an excuse not to return.

There were a lot of discrepancies each time. He seemed to be giving them reasons to stop him from coming back, to say no. Even towards the end, when it was the end of the period to register as a candidate for president, he said he was coming back to register. He tried to come in from Zambia by car near Lubumbashi. Of course, conveniently there were no border agents there that day to let him in. He had film crews and everything.

It's just that every time one of these things happened, it seemed a little contrived, and he probably could have found a way to return if he had really meant to. He could have come back anytime he wanted to, but he was really afraid of being arrested. I think if he had come back, he probably would have been arrested, but I don't think anything bad would have happened to him in jail. That is, that was not something Kabila did. He was not ordering people to be killed, which doesn't mean some of his cronies probably weren't—Anyway, so that was the third thing. Some in the West really thought that no election without Katumbi could be considered a legitimate election.

So we had these issues. We had the transition *sans* Kabila. We had the date that many thought was too late, and we had the Moises Katumbi issue. And all of these things seemed to me a little hokey—not serious. First of all, when I met with the leader of the main opposition party [Felix Tshisekedi, who is now president!], he told me about the idea for a transition *sans* Kabila. To him, this was the solution. He told me that Kabila should step down even though he had a Constitutional Court ruling that he could remain until a new president was inaugurated. And, then “they”—the big “they” that no one could define—would form a committee that would run the country and organize elections. I looked at him, told him that was crazy and undemocratic. I told him I thought that sounded like a civilian coup d'état.

He was visibly taken aback. He was so taken aback when I said that. Over the next couple of months, I made it very clear to everybody concerned that a transition *sans* Kabila, as described by the opposition and civil society, was not democracy. I didn't see how anybody who saw the time as a chance for the DRC to take some steps toward democracy could support it. I simply didn't think it would change anything and probably would result in violence. But some of the international community sort of clung to it for a bit, at the same time they were complaining about the date and insisting that Katumbi had to be a candidate.

Within maybe two or three weeks of the electoral calendar coming out, we decided to publish a statement that welcomed the calendar and noted that we would hold accountable anyone impeding the democratic process. We urged them to allow peaceful assembly and freedom of speech. We implored them to avoid violence. We, the international community. I should note who that included: the European Union [EU], the United Kingdom [UK], Belgium, Germany, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Netherlands, the African Union [AU], Canada, MONUSCO, and the United States, all with representation in Kinshasa. So we were always trying to do these things as a group. We definitely wanted the EU to come in with us. Canada said they would as did Switzerland. But the EU moves like molasses, slower than molasses. They had to get all twenty-seven member states to agree to the wording before they could join, so we weren't often successful in getting the EU to sign on to our statements. So, for that first statement after the calendar was published, we went ahead with just Canada and Switzerland.

And, when I figured out that we could put out a statement locally without Washington clearance, I decided that was usually the way to go. The Foreign Minister called in the dip community [well, chiefs of mission but not the Africans or the South Americans or

the Asians or others]. We had agreed on talking points. It was not the first or the last time we did joint demarches or were called in together. We always tried to have talking points that we could all agree to.

So I gave the talking points and then the Foreign Minister turned to the EU ambassador and quite sternly took him to task. He made the point that the DRC would not be allowed to criticize the United States [and presumably the EU] the way our statement had seemed to criticize the DRC. Interestingly, the EU ambassador [who I must note was Belgian] then begged to differ by mentioning how they often demarche the United States on our position on issues such as capital punishment. But then the foreign minister turned to me, much more gently and kindly, to say how hurt he was that I hadn't spoken to him before releasing the statement.

One lesson I learned from releasing that particular statement was that it was a mistake not to have notified the foreign minister first. So from then on, whenever I issued a statement, I called the foreign minister, or if he wasn't available I'd talk to Kabila's senior diplomatic advisor. Since there was never anything in a statement that I had not said to them personally, I usually just called and told them a statement was coming out but that there was nothing in it they hadn't heard before. Basically, I think the foreign minister felt he was losing relevance if he couldn't tell Kabila that we'd be issuing a statement. That day, I knew I would be releasing another statement soon, so I responded to him that there would be another, but that there would be nothing new in it. The point of the statement was to make our position public. The foreign minister was one of the people who was surrounding Joseph Kabila when he was very young.

By now it was around December of 2017 and the Catholic Church appeared to be divided. The Church had always been active in social issues and supportive of the people of the DRC. In the case of the election, there was a division between the local church leaders [the bishops] and the Vatican. The Nuncio, the senior representative of the Holy See, was very careful in his statements. We had a good relationship with the Nuncio and his staff. We met as needed and worked well together. That specific Nuncio left very suddenly and rather secretly. It seemed that he felt threatened. The Church had enormous reach throughout the DRC with tremendous access to the people. The bishops group was known as CENCO [Conférence Épiscopale Nationale du Congo]. CENCO was quite influential. We also had a good working relationship with them. They were not always on the same page. One of them was named to be the next archbishop. There were usually at least three people in the room when I met with the leader

Importantly, the laity sometimes didn't agree with the bishops in terms of strategy or tactics. Basically the laity was more activist. They wanted to do all kinds of things that the Vatican and really even the bishops didn't really agree with. The bishops were in the middle. So we spent a lot of time going to them to ask what they were doing. What were they going to support in terms of elections, candidates, protests/demonstrations? Could we count on them for support in our goals? They would ask us what we were doing. They asked me to speak at one of their conferences. I declined, but I did tell them the direction I thought they should lead their people. The leaders of the Church wanted to be involved

in another dialogue, a more peaceful sort of intermediary role, as facilitator between parties. But I felt that that ship had sailed. Mediation was not the answer. The DRC should just have an election.

The laity were primarily activists against Kabila. They, the laity, the bishops, and the Vatican had reason to be angry. The Vatican and bishops should have been angrier. Priests were being killed and kidnapped. The Vatican was adamant they remain non-confrontational, but the laity was not interested in that. In December the laity announced they were going to start having protests once a month, and the first one was going to be at the end of December 2017. And in fact, they had a protest. And I think about, I'm going to say fourteen people were killed. It might've been sixteen. By DRC standards, that was not a lot, but it should have been zero. It was a peaceful protest. Regardless of facts, the government would claim that the protesters were not peaceful, claiming they had thrown rocks at the police and the soldiers. Wanting to avoid any discussion of what the facts were, I would just tell them not to kill people for picking up rocks. I made it my sort of standard phrase to use to just say, "Don't shoot people." I found that that phrase was more useful than any of the standard diplomatic mumbo jumbo. I would just sort of drop that phrase whenever I spoke to the government—anyone at the Presidency, the foreign minister, the chief of the National Police, the governor of Kinshasa, et cetera. I think it really made them think about what they were doing, at least a little bit. So some of our tactics are starting to come together in sort of early to mid-December.

Let me change course a little bit with some backstory. So back, I can't remember the year, but a few years ago, maybe in 2012, there was a Russian who was killed while in prison. His name was Sergei Magnitsky. And he had an American friend and maybe business partner who was completely appalled by these human rights abuses perpetrated by the Russian government over the exposure of corruption. He became an activist to get Congress to take action, culminating in a law with the intent to punish Russian individuals who committed human rights abuses, the Magnitsky Act. The law was originally specific to Russians but was made globally inclusive in 2016, known as the Global Magnitsky Act. The broader law applied to corruption as well as human rights abuses and provides for sanctions against individuals and legal entities. I don't know the act very well because it wasn't part of what I ever needed to worry about. But one day in early December 2017, I received a message from Treasury that there was someone on the pending list of people to be sanctioned that might impact our work in DRC. I give Treasury a lot of credit for the warning because sometimes they act without regard for the work of other parts of the U.S. government.

When I found out who the person was, I realized that this—although not in any way tied to the elections—could be helpful to our strategy. I realized that the sanctioning of this person, a close confidant and "money man" for Kabila, would give my sanctions ploy some teeth. It was nothing to do with the elections but the timing was perfect to sort of act as a shot across the bow. It indicated that we were serious about holding people accountable. The person was Dan Gertler, an Israeli citizen, billionaire, who was moving money for ill-gotten gains for the Kabila family. Usually if we are sanctioning the citizens of the country, depending on the relationship between the United States and that

country, we give the government advance warning. So, for example, if we were going to sanction a British person [not sure we've ever done that, but just an example], we'd probably give the Brits, as much as two-weeks' notice. We would tell them and ask them to keep it close-hold. But if it was a country we had a lukewarm relationship with, we might only give a days' notice.

And at a minimum, usually we would give the government at least an hour notice before the press release comes out. But, with DRC, I was told we couldn't warn the government at all. We were to wait until the Treasury press release was published on their website. We couldn't tell them even one minute before it became public. This was an indication that we didn't trust the government not to warn the guy, who could then move money in such a way as to make the sanctions virtually toothless. Treasury told me what day they anticipated the release, but then it was delayed, and delayed again. We were on edge. I thought it best if I was the one to deliver the news directly to the foreign minister. That would give it the most bang for the buck. The announcement was delayed again, until it wasn't. Then it was published without any warning to me. The release coincided with a meeting Kabila had called in Goma, in the east of the DRC. Everyone who was anyone was there. And the news broke when most of them were in transit back to Kinshasa. We were struggling to find some to notify. We couldn't just wait for them to find out for themselves. That would have created a problem with my relationship with the GDRC [government of the DRC]. I needed to maintain a good relationship in order to maintain influence. Not telling them personally would have been damaging our relationships with particular people. So it was pretty tricky and it just kind of happened that the announcement came at an inopportune time.

The person being sanctioned, Dan Gertler, was very close to Kabila, a very important "financier" who made it easy for Kabila's family and close associates to commit fraud in the hugely lucrative minerals industry. He helped to move money and he was very involved in the mining industry and all the corruption that went with that industry. When the moment arrived and I could finally make notification, I couldn't find anybody to tell. I finally found one minister that I knew. He was a rather nice guy [everything is relative—he presumably had blood on his own hands], and he was very pro-American. He was not a member of Kabila's party. He headed his own small party, but he always wanted to help us out. So I called him and I went to see him. I told him that I had important news to deliver but that since the foreign minister was out of town [he was actually in Switzerland, not at the meeting in Goma] and everyone else was out of town, I didn't have anybody to deliver the message. I told him about the designation of someone under Global Magnitsky. He asked who it was. When I told him it was Gertler, he was quite shocked and immediately told me that there was no way he could receive that message, that I was not telling him that. I simply had to tell the foreign minister.

I told him the foreign minister was out of town. He told me I had to tell whomever was acting. I told him that I wasn't comfortable telling that minister, that I did not have a good enough relationship with him. In the end, I called the foreign minister in Switzerland, I think. And I told him over the phone. Remember, my French was not so great, and I never heard the foreign minister speak English. Although I'm pretty sure he

must have spoken English as he seemed to understand my English when I had to switch to English. I always did as much of our conversations as possible in French. And then I would break into English if I had to. So I told him about the Gertler designation by phone. He was, as usual, very professional.

By that I mean that he had no response. He simply thanked me for telling him and hung up. I had given him the address to the Treasury website by WhatsApp. The rest of the world used WhatsApp for so many things. That was an important event. The timing was serendipitous because it really was nothing to do with the elections. But I don't think Congolese look at things like that. They think everything is linked. They didn't believe us when we would tell them things were not always linked. And in this case, I didn't even try. It was in my interest, the United States' interest, for the Congolese government and the CENI to think the sanctioning of Gertler, a close associate of Kabila, was somehow linked to what we were pushing—elections, Kabila not running, no violence.

Back to the Catholic Church and the laity's demonstrations. They were in sync with some small civil society movements [there were no big ones]. After the first demonstration, where maybe fourteen or so people were killed, they vowed to have more. The next was scheduled for a Sunday in January 2018. They planned to have one a month. To make things a bit more complicated, they held these demonstrations on church grounds. They would meet after Mass on a Sunday and then they would start walking on a predetermined route. By law the government of Kinshasa needed to be alerted whenever a group was planning a protest. The law said the mayor must be informed; it did not say he had to give permission. But the mayor at the time decided that he had to give permission. It was likely coming from Kabila. There was also the National Police.

So, there was another demonstration coming in January, I think, January 21. So in the lead up to that date we tried to think of what we could do to get the government and the security forces to understand that they really shouldn't shoot people who were demonstrating more or less peacefully.

I went to visit Kabila's chief of staff and the chief of the National Police to remind them that anyone impeding the democratic process—including the right to peacefully assemble—would be held accountable. I mentioned that they shouldn't shoot people, that no one deserves an extra judicial death sentence for picking up a rock and throwing it. I asked them what their plans were for responding to the demonstrations. This was a way to put them on the spot, to get them to say they would do the right thing and then hold them accountable. And we decided to put out a statement. This one we were able to join forces with the UK. Even though they were still part of the EU, the ambassador in Kinshasa got permission to make statements outside of the EU process.

The UK ambassador, with whom I worked closely, one of his political officers, my acting DCM/pol chief, and I huddled around a computer and started writing a statement. We knew that we wanted to say that we didn't believe that a transition *sans* Kabila wasn't democratic. That was aimed at the opposition and civil society. It would not make them happy, and it would make Kabila's team happy. We didn't want anyone to think we were

on their side. We wanted to support the electoral process. So we knew we also had to come up with a positive for the opposition and civil society.

The day before we were drafting was the day I had gone to see Kabila's chief of staff, Nehemie Mwilanya. During our conversation, Mwilanya told me that the president had issued a directive to the security forces not to shoot people. I expressed my happiness with that and asked if I could see the directive. He rummaged around his desk for several minutes but couldn't find the document.

He really did seem to be looking for something. It didn't seem perfunctory. He just couldn't put his hands on it. So the next day when we were writing the statement, I had the idea that we should include language about what Mwilanya had told me, that Kabila had directed security forces not to shoot people. It seemed to me that if that was really true, we should include it, but I wanted to see the document first. So I texted Mwilanya, told him we wanted to mention the directive in a statement but that I needed to see it first. He invited me to come immediately to his office, only five minutes away. So I did. There is often a line of people waiting to see Mwilanya, but I didn't wait more than a couple of minutes. He had the document waiting. It did not look contrived or hastily prepared.

I read it. It didn't say "don't shoot people," obviously. It did say that the security forces were hereby directed to respect human rights while maintaining public order during protests. I thought that was good enough. That was about as far as we were ever going to get. So we put that in the statement. It took a while for us to wordsmith it. We finished the statement on Friday and decided we were going to release it the next day, the day before the protest. Of course, I called up the foreign minister and I told the standard thing, that we were releasing a statement and it said nothing he hadn't heard before. I think that that statement was important because it showed an even handedness that nobody else really was doing. We were publicly and privately sticking with the electoral process.

I do have that statement somewhere. I'll look for it and when I do the editing, I'll attach it. Kabila's government was happy with the statement. The opposition was happy with the statement. And only about six people were killed during the demonstrations. "Only" is a terrible word to use in the context of people dying. Not perfect, but much better than the fourteen dead from the month before. So we were making progress. It was interesting that on the day after the demonstration, on Monday, one of Kabila's advisors requested to see me and the UK ambassador. So we met him at the UK residence and had a long meeting. He was somehow offended that we thought there were six people killed. He wanted to know who they were, what was the proof, where were the bodies, et cetera. It was clear that they had gotten the message about not killing people, and they didn't want it to be true that six people were killed. He had been sent on a mission to figure out how we viewed the outcome. I thought it was a good sign that they were trying to reduce violence.

Meanwhile, the Vatican was trying to get the laity to stop organizing events that resulted in people dying. They definitely didn't want them connected to Church property because

it discouraged people from going to Mass—those who didn't want to participate or were scared. It was dangerous. In February there was another one; it was the last one. Two people were killed, across the entire country. One, in Mbandaka, a town in the north far from Kinshasa. Evidently an off-duty policewoman, who may or may not have been mentally disturbed or drunk, shot and killed a demonstrator. The circumstances were unclear. And then in Kinshasa, a civil society leader was targeted and killed. But still the numbers were going down. Again, progress. And to be honest, after that, and up until the election, there were few if any. I won't say the word zero because there were definitely issues in Lubumbashi in December 2018 where some people were killed, but again, the circumstances were muddled and I believe it was actually police who were killed, not demonstrators.

So it's not that there were no deaths after that, but the asymmetrical use of force by the security apparatus stopped. I felt really good about that. I felt like we had a positive influence. I think it was the result of us being even handed and making it clear that we would hold people accountable. And to add here more about holding people accountable. At the end of January 2018, which was after the second protest, the UN announced sanctions. The UN also sanctions. Several of those characters that were sanctioned in the past were Congolese bad characters from the past who were sanctioned due to human rights abuses and corruption. They were sanctioned by the UN, the United States, and often the EU. So in early 2018, the UN was working on a sanctions announcement that included a number of Congolese. Now, again, none of it was related to the election. Zero. The activities leading to the sanctions had occurred years before, but the announcement was made, boom, at the end of January. So it was good. None of the people were particularly important to Kabila, but we could see that people are getting more and more worried about being held accountable.

*Q: I hear a question here. You've mentioned basically how Kabila-fils, or the son, stayed in power by doling out patronage, giving individuals access to a given industry or given area of the country or something where they could create a patronage network and get a cash cow and make it their own. Did the embassy or did we get together with people to try to sketch out who was running things? I don't mean here to ask you to go into the whole description, but was it at all important to us who was running things? Beyond knowing the inside baseball aspects of it?*

HASKELL: I think we only kind of knew, partly because the Political Chief Aaron Sampson, who was also my acting DCM, was incredibly helpful. He was very knowledgeable about Africa, about Central African political history. He had served in Uganda, and he'd been a Peace Corps volunteer in Gabon. He served in Mali and Guinea-Conakry. He had experience in human rights. I would say he is rated as one of the best political officers in the Foreign Service. He helped me considerably in terms of what I needed to know. He focused on making and maintaining excellent contacts. If he needed to know something, he had somebody he could call, and he had people close to Kabila. He was also a prolific writer. He kept the Washington audience well-supplied with all the relevant information we knew, or given the paucity of truth, we suspected or had heard about, concerning the DRC.



Aaron Sampson also had close contacts within the opposition. He knew people in civil society. He knew people with the Church. He knew who he needed to know. If somebody wants to be a really good political officer, they need to know how Aaron Sampson operated. He also wrote the cables. We did not hoard information. We did not cherry pick information to report. Because everything about the DRC was interesting to someone in Washington, we tried to feed the beast. He would have a meeting and the cable went out the next day. He didn't take three weeks drafting. I occasionally heard criticism that his cables were too long. But I will say this, we got a lot of kudos about the cables because of the huge appetite in Washington, not just at the State Department, but in many agencies. Many bureaus in the department wanted to know what was going on under Kabila in the DRC. And they loved our cables. Yes, they were sometimes longer than you would normally expect.

Usually cables are drafted and summarized to make a specific post-centered point. There is usually a certainty to the point. But that was not really possible given the nature of Congolese culture and politics. Our cables usually were reports of what people told us and often with analysis of what we thought that meant. When you take into account the conspiracy-seized society we often couldn't say what was true. We could only say what we were hearing and what we thought about it. And then that was fed back to analysts in Washington. We qualified things the best we could for them to then use their judgment.

*Q: For your purposes of promoting the election, were there any particular, I don't want to call them warlords, but you know oligarchs, or parliamentarians you had to play as well as the president's office?*

HASKELL: One of the interesting things about the DRC is that if you really wanted to make money, you didn't go into business. You went into government. Well, that's not a 100 percent. There were exceptions. Of course, there were definitely exceptions. But, for example, there were state-owned enterprises. One of the state-owned enterprises was for mining. They had a Ministry of Mines, but it was much less influential than the state-owned enterprise. And the guy running the state-owned enterprise was "making" millions and millions of dollars. I don't know where he was stashing all his money. Interesting anecdote—he had a Tesla. And he had a fair bit of control over the copper industry that produced as a byproduct the cobalt needed at the time for those electric car batteries.

Yuma was a businessman. He was not a government person before Kabila made him head of Gecamines. Yuma claims he was doing Kabila a favor. We did know him. That's another story, which maybe I'll go into later if you want to remind me. So we did know, kind of, who was into what. But I'm sure we didn't know everything, and we didn't even know enough, believe me. And, you know, there were several INGOs and human rights organizations tracking these things in microscopic detail. Aaron Sampson also had excellent connections with many of those people—including a few journalists who shared info.

*Q: Okay. Because your principal mission at this time was managing democratic elections with as little violence as possible, I just wanted to ask if moving forward there were other major players that you had to, I don't know, bring in or—?*

HASKELL: One of the interesting things about our sanction regime that applied to the DRC is that you didn't have to be in the government to get sanctioned. I didn't probably make this clear when I mentioned it before, but the reason Gertler was sanctioned wasn't for his activities in Israel. He was sanctioned for his activities in the DRC—money laundering, corruption. People knew that we were serious about the elections. I would say that what we did was we focused on several groups—the government, the CENI [the independent electoral commission that was certainly neither independent apolitical], and even the opposition.

*Q: Yes. All right. We're recording. So we can go back to where you left off. I haven't been asking questions mainly because you're providing every single detail. And the only thing I wondered about was were there other significant players, but you've explained that.*

HASKELL: So when we got cut off, I think for once I didn't keep going on forever without knowing the recording had stopped. Do you remember where I was?

*Q: Yes. It was worldwide Magnitsky. And the Israeli who had been sanctioned for his activities in the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

HASKELL: Right. So I guess my point there was that while we were trying to hold all sides accountable, including the opposition, we also made it clear to the electoral commission that they could be impeding the democratic process. We were pretty evenhanded, I think, as we did that. And because as I mentioned, there were a lot of Congolese who'd been sanctioned for other things, and we had not sanctioned the government of the DRC, as a whole, only individuals and the companies that were associated with the individuals. With Gertler there was a list of companies that were designated, as was one of Gertler's associates who I think was Belgian, who was designated derivatively.

I left off when we made that statement where we made it clear that we weren't going along with the transition *sans* Kabila and also that we would hold the opposition accountable, too. During this, maybe, three-month period that I've just covered, we had a group of about twelve that was meeting every week. And it was, you know, the chiefs of mission of the EU, the African Union, Canada, Switzerland, UK, Sweden, France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, and the senior representative of the secretary general, who is in charge of MONUSCO. And then I was also part of the group. So there were twelve of us. And occasionally maybe every few weeks we would have meetings where we also included some of the African chiefs of mission who were more active, like the ambassadors from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Angola, and Zambia, and Uganda [although he never said much].

There were a number of them, but the African Union representative came to all of these meetings. He was an important part of our effort both listening and contributing to the conversations in quite a big way. I met with the South African ambassador on my own periodically. He was one of those sort of guys who'd been in the "Struggle" and had all kinds of, you know, sage-like wisdom about how to deal with Africans. And I'd frequently ask him what he thought was going to happen. He would usually tell me to breathe, "Jennifer, just breathe." Then he would commence asking questions; he would ask me what I thought it meant when I said X, Y or Z. I would object and press him to tell me what he thought was going on. We were friends. But through this time, I mentioned before that even some people in the international community were still thinking that the date set for the election was bad and that they had to include Moises Katumbi. So during this period of time, I managed to convince them that we had to stop trying to change the date. As I mentioned we were able to convince them of that pretty quickly since it meant we would have a harder time holding them accountable to a date they didn't choose.

Their own calendar gave us the benchmarks to hold them to. We, in the international community, briefly discussed creating benchmarks. I didn't think we had to come up with any benchmarks on our own because they had them all right there for us. And also the part about Katumbi. I just constantly made the point that we were not there to decide who was or should be the president. I often made the point that if Katumbi wanted to run, he needed to return to the DRC. If he came, he came. If he didn't, he didn't. If he came and won, he won. It would be however it was. And Katumbi would tweet something and it would be brought up in our meeting. And basically we'd just mention that we doubted he'd come back unless the charges or conviction were lifted or something else happened to make him think he wouldn't be arrested. He did eventually come back, but not until after the new president was installed. So we were on the right track. We agreed—the group of the international community. We were there to support the electoral process. That was our goal, and it was what our stated attempts were about. It was about helping them meet their goals in the process.

Political space was a big issue, as our focus on protests and demonstrations indicated. Political space was a big talking point. The opposition and civil society, the people, the citizens didn't have a way to express what they felt about what was going on in their politics. And so the statements kind of helped that. I also think the even headedness and the effectiveness of our insistence that the security forces not shoot people, and that we would hold people accountable. Those interventions were key in moving things along. During this time, we were also meeting with the head of the electrical commission. He was friendly, and he continued to be friendly for a long time.

We, the group of twelve, met every Tuesday morning for months. We used the time to learn what we knew, and get as much as we could in an agreement so that when we all went out and had our conversations and tried to be influential with the different players, the different stakeholders, that we were speaking from the same page. We had an on-going discussion about what an acceptable election would look like. And yeah, everybody wanted to talk about credibility. It had to be a credible election. I pointed out

that “credible” was just an election-related buzz word that organizations around the world used. And I asked if any of them really thought there was any way on God’s green earth that the DRC’s election was going to be credible. No one did. So I suggested we stop using the word.

So it was no longer a point. But still, occasionally someone would mention that the process or the election didn’t look like it would be credible and therefore we should all disassociate ourselves from it. Then we would discuss not looking for credibility and instead look for acceptability. Semantics, I know, but it was important to our effort. So we constantly worked to stay on common ground. On any given issue common ground was proposed and then collegially agreed upon. There were no minutes or findings or signatures. It was more about how we could move forward together to positively influence an electoral process. How could we make this work? What could we agree on? They should have an election. That was the first thing we all agreed on. That Kabila should not run. We all agreed on that. There should be no violence. Everybody agreed on that. And the population should accept the result. As I mentioned before, those were the four things that we had informally agreed upon.

As we had pretty much come to agreement, we changed the meetings to once every two weeks or more often if needed. We didn’t feel the need any longer to have them every week. [Let me add here that we also talked about other issues, not just elections, at these meetings, like activities of armed groups, increases in IDP numbers, Ebola, the MONUSCO budget, various VIP visits, et cetera]. However, there were times when one or more of us would feel discouraged about some activity. In the DRC, there was no rest. It was not a place where too many days went by where nothing changed. As soon as you thought you understood something or thought you knew what was going on, something changed. Every other day it seemed there was a new wrench in it, there was a new wrinkle, there was a new problem. And when things changed, it required a new effort to try to discover what it meant. Sometimes it seemed to point to things getting worse, that the likelihood of an election was lower or that it looked like Kabila was plotting a way to stay in power. And people would feel discouraged and voice concerns that we needed to get out, to distance ourselves from the process.

*Q: One quick question. You had mentioned that there were sort of general agreements on the most basic elements of what would be required for elections in those discussions. Did you have any decisions or allocations of work in terms of election observing?*

HASKELL: Well, first of all, people weren’t convinced it was going to be an election at all. So we weren’t talking about that yet. It was too soon to talk about observer missions because that was like putting the cart before the horse. Occasionally we would talk about the various foreign assistance programs underway that were about democracy and governance. USAID had a democracy and governance program at our embassy and they worked on at least one such program together with the UK’s DFID [Department for International Development]. It was very small in terms of the money, but you know, over a number of years, it amounted to a few million dollars. They were using it mainly for

voter education, voter awareness, you know, how does one place a vote? Why is it important to vote? These kinds of things.

So by coming forward with our worries, we could uplift each other and remind each other of how important our work was when people would get discouraged. We could deconstruct what the perceived problem was. It was usually something related to what the DRC and/or CENI was doing or not doing. So we would look at the benchmarks, and we would discuss how they might be implementing something a week late, or just barely, or something. We would try to find the positive way to look at things rather than searching for ways to criticize the government or CENI or the opposition. Which reminds me—after the electoral calendar was published, Washington was focused on having benchmarks, similarly to our Kinshasa international group. They wanted to identify benchmarks and assign immediate consequences to not meeting them. We pointed out that we didn't need to do a bunch of interagency work, that CENI has given us reasonable benchmarks. And the problem with immediate consequences was that it wasn't possible to designate sanctions in a day or even a week or a month, and anything else we came up with [disinviting the DRC to an international event or meeting?] wasn't really meaningful to the people responsible. It takes a long time to affect something that matters to them, like sanctions. Also, to be honest, I didn't want to sanction anyone who actually had work to do to get the elections organized. That would have delayed the elections even more.

There was some work going on in Washington about this. The NSC was involved in it, the State Department—different bureaus, the Human Rights Bureau, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, as well as the Africa Bureau. The whole idea was that we would come up with some other benchmarks, other than what they themselves had created made no sense. So eventually that effort died, much to our relief as post wasn't really engaging on it. We didn't refuse, but we weren't working on it. It didn't seem worth the work to me when we had the calendar.

We wanted to see if they kept to their own calendar. How many times could they/would they meet the deadline. Sometimes, they were a week or so late. We didn't think that was a big deal. And we usually knew they were working on something and that they intended to complete whatever it was. Or sometimes the result wasn't done very well, just kind of slap dash. But if they were making the effort to make it at least appear that they were going along with the calendar, we interpreted it as a good sign. They weren't just completely blowing it off. It seemed to me that the Congolese themselves—even those who were responsible for organizing it—didn't know if there were going to be elections. No one really was certain whether or not Kabila would find a way either to change the constitution and run again or just dissolve the whole thing and become a dictator. I suppose there were equal chances of any of those things happening. So every time something didn't quite go perfectly, there was this sort of oh-my-God feeling that he was going to run and that he was going to find a way to do this. And many were absolutely convinced that he had no intention of stepping down, especially as things went along.

The four things we were trying to influence—the election, Kabila not running, no violence, result acceptable to the people—were, frankly, quite a low bar as far as

elections are concerned, generally speaking. And yet, few people believed it could be done. I think most, or at least some of us, really wanted it to be true, that it could happen. But we acknowledged that it would be only a small step in what would be a long, long democratic journey to get anything like democracy. But this country had never had a peaceful election before. They had never had a peaceful transition of power, ever. So they were more or less meeting the benchmarks, which was good. But it was still too soon to know if it would happen and it was still too soon to call it a bust. There were definitely times of doubt and some of the times of doubt were big. For example, I think it was in June, it might've been May, but I think it was June, Kabila replaced four judges on the Constitutional Court, as was his prerogative.

Basically, he got them to resign. Of course, they were the only four members of the court that one could plausibly imagine being even remotely independent. So this was a bad sign. We pondered about what it meant. Why was he doing this? As we were speculating and asking each other and trying to figure out what was going on, it really wasn't easy. Was it a sign that he was going to try to remain in power? Was he, maybe, getting ready to use the court to somehow find a way to change the constitution so he could avoid term limits? It could also have been that he was preparing—a bit of hindsight here—the way for a court favorable to himself or his candidate as there were people Kabila viewed as real threats who were planning to register to run as president who had issues. There were valid questions as to whether or not they were eligible to be president. And if they, indeed, registered, the electoral commission would have to take those cases to the Constitutional Court for decision.

This all may have just been much more foresight than we had been giving him credit for in terms of making sure that those cases would go his way. He also, in June I think it was, did a big military shakeup, which we all couldn't quite figure out either. He replaced some key generals in key areas. He had some retire and had others shifted to new areas of responsibility. One that he didn't shift, which we couldn't figure out why, was the one responsible in the area of Beni, in North Kivu. That was where one armed group called the ADF—Allied Defense Forces—was active. ADF had been there a long time. They were living in the jungle. They were sort of mysterious. Supposedly, no one could ever find them. They had been there for fifteen or twenty years. They had come originally from Uganda and their stated purpose was to overthrow Museveni. And they were Muslim, but not terribly ideological. They didn't have any connection to any other groups, at least at that time

They had sort of devolved and they weren't so much anymore about overthrowing Museveni. They had had a change of leadership, which diluted that motive. And it was more uncertain really what they were still doing in the jungle because they would commit violent raids and steal material and medical supplies. They would attack the Congolese military bases. It was in December 2017 they attacked a MONUSCO base and killed seventeen Tanzanian Peacekeepers. MONUSCO bases were not well fortified by any stretch of the imagination, often with nothing more than some barbed wire fencing and a few guard towers. The ADF operated in this part of the jungle where no outsiders had knowledge.

The military commander who was in charge of that area was not replaced. I asked Kabila's people why if he was reshuffling military leadership he didn't change it there? That guy had been there for three years and he hadn't succeeded in addressing the ADF issue at all. Why didn't Kabila put somebody really good in there? Of course, there was no real response. I think it was all economic related. And it was, again, what we discussed earlier about handing out positions that allowed others to engage in criminal activity whether it was extortion, smuggling, fraud, whatever. In other words, I'm not sure how hard anybody was really trying to defeat the ADF.

So that takes us up to—still in June. We had our official Independence Day event at the end of June in 2018. And I thought hard about my speech, about what I wanted to say. I had this great entry-level officer who did the first draft, Lisa Akorli. She interviewed me to find out what I wanted the theme to be and she wrote the first draft. She did a good job. We made changes to it, but she did a fabulous first draft. I talked about George Washington and how he'd decided on his own to have his own term limits, to sort of self-term limit and to go off and be a gentleman farmer and how the subsequent presidents did that, too. This was a very pointed message because the people very close to Kabila often told me that Kabila didn't want to be the president anymore, that he just wanted to live on his farm. Kabila had a huge land-holding in the east, near Kalemie. That was a common refrain, Kabila just wanted to go live on his farm. So I talked about George Washington and his self-limiting and going off to be a gentleman farmer and how Thomas Jefferson and others did the same thing.

The speech went over really well. People really got it. They really understood that my words were aimed at Kabila. Occasionally I still run into somebody who reminds me how much they like that speech, how important they thought it was. Here it is:

“Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to our celebration of American Freedom! Two hundred and forty-two years ago, on July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress signed the United States Declaration of Independence. Each year, we honor this historic moment. Americans are known for being punctual, and this year we decided to out-do our reputation by advancing this year's ceremony to June 27. Thank you for joining us today for this early fête. The Declaration of Independence was a formal statement by our nation's original thirteen colonies asserting their right to choose their own government. Today, the document remains inspiring: it declares that we are all created equal, with rights that include life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Perhaps most importantly, it states that a democratic government derives its power from the consent of its people. Citizens speak with their votes. Their votes are their voice. Good leaders listen to those voices.

George Washington, the first president of the United States, served two terms in office and then, in 1796, Washington announced that he would not be a candidate for a third term. Washington's departure set a path for the first contested presidential election in the United States followed. It was a contentious election.

Nonetheless, it was a peaceful transfer of executive power. John Adams won that election in 1796, and his opponent from that election, Thomas Jefferson, became vice president. Four years later, Jefferson was elected and became president in the second peaceful transfer of executive power. After leaving the presidency, Jefferson, principal drafter of the Declaration of Independence, eagerly transferred his energies and ambitions to life as a successful private citizen, as a farmer, and inventor, and notably the founder of the nation's first secular university—the University of Virginia. Our nation's early days of democracy were turbulent. For various reasons, the country was barely governable in some regions, and political disagreements stemming from the vigorous clash of ideas among people of character were common. Indeed, one might say these characteristics continue to describe today's American politics. But it is this spirit of debate and peaceful disagreement that forges an enduring democracy. Ultimately, open political discourse—including a vigorous free press,—while sometimes rude and uncomfortable—is what keeps a democracy vibrant; that political discourse leads to new ideas, better policies, and a stronger nation.

Over the years, the United States has worked hand-in-hand with the Democratic Republic of Congo on several priorities: including to increase economic growth and development, to improve access to healthcare and education, to promote peace and security, and to strengthen democratic institutions. The United States government is the largest bilateral donor in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We work closely with Congolese officials, teachers, scientists, entrepreneurs, and other leaders while providing approximately \$500 million in development and humanitarian programming each year. The United States government is the largest provider of humanitarian assistance in the DRC each year reaching millions of vulnerable Congolese with life-saving help. Our health programs provide one-third of the Congolese population, or approximately 30 million people, with basic health services. Our United States Agency for International Development, USAID, contributed \$8 million to support the recent Ebola response led by the Government of the DRC, and our Centers for Disease Control has mobilized dozens of technical experts who are advising both the DRC Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization.

In our engagements across this vast and beautiful country, I feel privileged to work with so many dedicated and patriotic Congolese people. I am honored to have here tonight each and every one of you — representing that impressive group. The DRC is now at the precipice of a new beginning. I believe that President Kabila can become a hero in Congolese history. He can oversee his country's first peaceful, credible, democratic transition of power. This change is not the responsibility only of the government, but of the people. Yes, change must come from the top-down through the preparation and implementation of credible elections this year. But that will not be enough. Change must come up also from the bottom. That means each and every Congolese voter must turn out and vote. And for that piece of the puzzle, I look to all of you.



Viewing this audience tonight, I am inspired by the talented leaders I see from all sectors of society, including academia, culture, business, civil society, government, and politics. And I know that there are many, many more of you across this great nation. The United States supports you as you pool your immense talents and together prove to the world that this country can and will move forward to build a strong, prosperous democracy, to use this country's unparalleled resources—not only natural resources, but the resilient, invincible Congolese people—to use these resources to the benefit of the entire population. We stand ready to accompany you toward such an accomplishment—and we know that you will make it happen.

As we celebrate 242 years of American independence, we reflect both on the courage of our Founding Fathers in charting a bold new democratic course, and on the many struggles in which our own citizens have engaged to protect and improve their republic. Those struggles continue. With the Democratic Republic of Congo's Independence Day just three days from now—and its elections just six months from now—it is our belief that Congo's democracy, too, can and will progress and strengthen itself. The U.S. remains steadfast in our partnership with you to see that happen. In the words of Ambassador Nikki Haley, "You have a lot of friends that want to see you be successful. We won't give up until you have free and fair elections. On behalf of all of the employees—both Congolese and American—at the Embassy of the United States in Kinshasa, thank you for joining us. I invite you to continue to celebrate with us. Happy Independence Day!"

By U.S. Embassy Kinshasa | 28 June, 2018 |

Another thing that we did that I think was really helpful was we repeated as often as possible, in private with people close to him, that we thought that a former president should be able to live in this country in peace and security. We said this because Kabila was known as somebody who didn't like to travel abroad, and didn't travel often. We knew he didn't want to go live somewhere else, in exile, but that he was afraid for his safety. So we would bring it up with various people who we knew could pass the message. We felt that this was a big issue for Kabila and a huge factor in his decision-making about whether or not to stick with the constitution or abandon all pretense at democracy to save his own neck.

They never pursued anything official. There was no dialog or anything. If they had, of course, we would have had to bring in Washington to do it. We had made no secret of what we were saying to Kabila's right-hand men. It was better that they didn't ask about it formally. I think they just appreciated knowing that we did not have any plans to go after Kabila. I know there were and still are many who think that is what should have happened—he should have been arrested. But if we want to foster democracy in places like Africa, it is important to get office holders to decide on their own to step down and to feel reasonably safe. Otherwise, they simply will not leave office for any reason other than in a box. Given the context of the DRC at that time, it was the right thing to do. It

may well not have been the right thing in another country or in another time in the DRC. So the Fourth of July speech was a success. I can try to attach a written copy, in English, although I gave the speech in French. I can't find a French version. So now it's about the beginning of July. The registration period for presidential candidates was about to open. It was going to be open for about four or five weeks. Also, they were starting to open registration for candidates for Parliament. Remember this is not just a presidential election. It was also an election for seats in Parliament.

But not for local elections. They hadn't had local elections in many, many years, but that was one of the things they tried to use as an excuse for not holding any elections. It was a delaying tactic. We would just tell them to go ahead with the presidential elections and National Assembly and hold the local elections after that. And they had it that way on their electoral calendar, but frankly, we knew that was not going to, at least not for years. There have been no local elections so far. One of the things that Kabila did was to call many political parties together. He had a big conference with dozens and dozens of political parties. There are literally hundreds of political parties in the DRC. There are 602 registered with the Interior Ministry. Some of these parties literally have fewer than ten members.

A lot of the parties are closely aligned with others. It's unclear why they bothered to have so many separate parties, but I suspect it was because they could then negotiate with a larger party, like Kabila's PPRD [*Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie*] to exchange some level of loyalty for position that allows for enrichment. Kabila called a big conference of hundreds of smaller parties plus a few relatively bigger ones and created a coalition of sorts called FCC [*Front commun pour le Congo*]. It seemed very shaky. And in our contact work, after this creation, it seemed like it was just in name only. It was more of a public relations move. And there was an ongoing conversation about who would be the PPRD—e.g. Kabila's—candidate. If he was not going to run, who was his candidate going to be. Because clearly he was going to have a candidate, and clearly his candidate was going to win. That was totally the conventional wisdom. And it was impossible to figure out. There was so much speculation. And people were just certain of whatever tidbit of information they got and stuck with their own guess.

In July, we knew that the UN Secretary General and the Chair of the African Union wanted to visit Kabila, together. And we believed that Ambassador Haley was considering a trip to see Kabila as well. It became very clear to me about a week before this supposed visit of the secretary general and the AU Chair that Kabila was not letting anyone visit. They were accepting no visits, which really annoyed many people in the international community who felt that the GDRC should be engaging. But if they had looked at it from Kabila's perspective, which I tried to do, it was actually very smart of him. If he had entertained meetings with these people—any diplomat but especially the UNSG, the AU Chair, and Ambassador Haley—any decision he made would have been assumed to have been influenced by those people. Kabila had seen no virtually no diplomats since December or January. I was told by his close associates that he wasn't

seeing any diplomats because he was tired of being lectured by diplomats, and he didn't want to hear from them.

And I think part of that was that he didn't want to be lectured. He didn't want to be bullied. He didn't want to be told what to do, which was all well and good. But also if he had met these people during the period of registration as a presidential candidate, whatever decision he made would be compromised in some way as not his own. If he decided not to run, people would think he was doing the bidding of the international community or the United States. If he somehow decided to run or cancel the elections, those who met him would be supremely annoyed by his defiance, which would definitely not put Kabila in a good light regarding possible sanctions.

And to me, in a way, I thought it was okay, because if he wasn't saying anything to anybody, it meant we still didn't know what he was doing. I also didn't think anybody was going to convince him of anything. He would decide for himself whatever was in his best personal interest. And I know that USUN [United States' Mission to the United Nations] was a little antsy. They kept asking me what was happening, what was Kabila going to do. They were sort of convinced that his silence indicated he was going to find a way to run. So I had to push back on them, gently, of course, to be patient. To just wait until the end of the registration period, August 8, and then we would know. Just wait. My intuition was that he was not going to put his name on the ballot. But that was just intuition; it wasn't based on anything but my accumulated understanding or feelings about Kabila, gleaned primarily from my meetings with people close to him.

So time was going along. At some point I need to stop and talk about Ebola. But not yet. So on the last day to register, we could see that more than twenty people had registered as presidential candidates. That was a lot considering that the fee to register for that race was a hundred thousand dollars. And I don't know what was going on with some of those people, because nobody ever heard of them. Some of them were members of a party that had only a handful of members. And we knew those people didn't have a lot of money, and yet they still came up with a hundred thousand dollars. A bit suspect. It was possible that Kabila or his people paid that fee to make the field big and unwieldy. On the last day Kabila still had not announced a candidate or that he was backing any of those already registered. Everyone was on pins and needles on the last day to see if Kabila was going to register.

But in the meantime John Pierre Bemba, head of the MLC party [*Mouvement de Libération du Congo*] had registered as a candidate for president. I haven't mentioned him before. Bemba was a politician. He was one of the four vice presidents under Kabila in the beginning. He ran against Kabila in the elections in 2006. When he wasn't declared the winner, he got his thousands-strong private army and brought them to Kinshasa where they engaged in open warfare in the streets with automatic weapons and even tanks against Kabila's forces. In fact, a lot of the buildings, even the buildings across the street from where I lived, were still bombed-out shells from that street fighting. And let's just say that he wasn't on the right side of Kabila anymore. Basically Kabila gave Bemba up to the International Criminal Court [ICC] and he was arrested in Brussels in 2008 on

charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes [mostly vicious massive sexual violence and looting] committed by Congolese [his] troops—billed as an armed group by the ICC—in the Central African Republic while there to put down a coup.

Bemba was indicted on many counts of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and also of witness tampering, and he went to trial. In 2016 he was convicted and sentenced to eighteen years in prison for rape and pillage committed by his troops. At the time, he was the highest-level official to be sentenced at the International Criminal Court. He was also convicted of witness tampering. He had been sitting in a cell at the Hague since his arrest in 2008. He had, of course, appealed the conviction and sentence.

The ICC heard the case and finally reached a judgment on the appeal in June of 2018. They overturned the convictions of war crimes and crimes against humanity, but they did not overturn the witness tampering. Bemba returned to the DRC only long enough to register as a candidate. Big crowds turned out to welcome him. At the airport, along the route from the airport to the location of an MLC-organized rally. There were no security forces around to hamper it. It was amazing that security forces stayed out of it. He was able to see these huge crowds supporting him. He stayed only a few days in Kinshasa and then he went back to Brussels.

So before I tell you what actually happened on the great reveal day, August 8, I need to mention that Katumbi didn't manage to register as a candidate. Also, I want to talk about the opposition a little bit. There were many opposition parties, not as many parties as Kabila had enlisted in his new coalition, but there were enough. But really only two, maybe three or four parties mattered for the opposition. At different times they would be so disgusted with something that the electoral commission did or that Kabila's government did that they would announce to us that they would, henceforth, boycott the election and the election process. There was a steady stream of boycott threats. We told them that boycotting was, in fact, impeding the democratic process, that if there were no opposition, Kabila and company would win and the opposition would be to blame.

Even if Kabila were running illegally, he could get elected. We asked them what good could come of that? It felt a bit like constant hand holding, in a way, with the opposition to keep them engaged. Our acting DCM/Pol Chief Aaron Sampson had a good relationship with Felix Tshisekedi who was the head of the main opposition party, the UDPS [*Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social*], and when Tshisekedi wanted to throw his lot in with the transition *sans* Kabila, Sampson explained to Tshisekedi that he should look at the power as he would an apple. The transition *sans* Kabila people were trying to seize power by swallowing the apple whole. When you do that, you choke and die, or in the case of DRC politics, you get shot by security forces and you lose.

On the other hand, he continued, if you eat an apple one bite at a time, i.e. go step by step through the electoral process, you can still eat the apple but you won't choke. And if Kabila was not on the ballot, really, anyone could win.

It was funny because after the election, Sampson went with our new ambassador, Mike Hammer, who had arrived not too long before the election, to greet Tshisekedi, and he took an apple to give him. Tshisekedi and his close seconds still remember that and now call Sampson Mr. Apple.

Our policy had been to encourage all sides to participate and to discourage any boycotting. Sampson's work with Tshisekedi was instrumental in keeping the opposition in the election. When Kabila didn't put his name on the ballot, Tshisekedi realized he might really have a shot at winning. That was part of our support for the electoral process. I don't think anyone thought anyone but Kabila's anointed one could possibly win. We assumed that the Nangaa of the CENI would commit the type of election fraud that would ensure a Shadary win.

So on the last day of registration for presidential candidates, they had it all on TV. They made it very suspenseful. And really, no one knew for sure. Who would be Kabila's candidate? I think two people knew—Kabila and one of his cronies. Even the guy they announced didn't know it was him until about five minutes before. It ended up being Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, who was a former minister of interior. Kabila had moved him from that ministry to be secretary general of the PPRD, Kabila's party. He was not really a politician. He had been a minister, but he wasn't a member of Parliament or a senator. He was about the only person Kabila thought of as a loyalist, but he wasn't powerful. He wasn't rich.

I think, as Kabila would figure out in time, Shadary wasn't much. It took everybody by surprise. Kabila had held that big conference, as I mentioned, to form the loose coalition callee FCC, but also at that meeting, at some point, Kabila asked "everyone" [not really everyone] to write down their top three choices for who should be president. Many put Kabila on the list. Many put their own name on the list. There were a lot of very ambitious people working for Kabila. They were not loyal to anyone but themselves, and they wanted to take over from him. Consequently, Kabila didn't trust them. And I think he worried about having anyone not loyal to him.

Many of them wanted to take over from Kabila. They saw themselves as an heir apparent. Kabila was worried that he would be turned over to the ICC, even if only to get him out of the way. And he was worried about his own safety and that of his family. That's why he didn't trust anybody. So, he picked somebody, I think, that he thought he could control and that was Shadary. This was early August of 2018.

*Q: All right.*

HASKELL: I think we can finish on Thursday.

*Q: Okay. And, um, okay. And the registration. Okay. So that closes the issue of the registration for the moment.*

HASKELL: Right. It closed, though only for the moment we thought, the issue of Kabila being on the ballot. This was an enormously positive sign in terms of the electoral process, which if you remember, was what we were supporting. We were supporting the DRC to make it through a reasonably democratic electoral process. That was the best we could hope for. And at that point, nobody could really say that Kabila would still be trying to find a way to run again because he had announced a presumed successor. Now, don't get me wrong, no one thought the actual election would be "free and fair." But, we hoped for a reasonable facsimile of a democratic process.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: There were still a lot of enormous logistical issues to resolve in order for the election to happen in December, and that was what the next stage became about. But next session I'll discuss Ebola a bit.

*Q: Very good. Okay. Excellent. So we'll end the meeting here and resume on Thursday with Ebola.*

*Today is February 6, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell, who is continuing her discussion of her time in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.*

HASKELL: Okay, thanks. I'm taking up where we left off before, when we had just talked about the registration of the presidential candidates, but I wanted to step back a minute because there was another event that happened that was very interesting and helpful in meeting our strategic goals using these different tactics that we had. So, going back to the sanctions discussion. There are different authorities under which we could designate individuals [and entities] for financial sanctions, but there is also at least one executive order [maybe two?] that allows us to place visa sanctions on Congolese individuals who have engaged in various and sundry bad behaviors, some of which can be corruption or impeding democracy. I already mentioned the GloMag incident with Gertler and how that was helpful in getting things moving forward. And then there were more United States sanctions at the beginning of 2018 in alignment with UN sanctions against Congolese individuals whose crimes had nothing to do with the elections. But, both were helpful to us in getting the Congolese government and opposition, and even the electoral commission, to understand that we were holding them accountable for impeding their own democratic election process. So, in June of 2018, together obviously with concurrence from Washington, we had decided to go ahead and place a visa sanction on an individual for impeding the democratic process. The justification had to do with some of the ways they were preparing for the elections.

Before I further explain this visa sanction, I need to go back to the electronic voting or the voting machines [known as "*machine à voter*" in French]. The electoral commission had decided they should have electronic voting, which we thought made no sense at all in a country with such a low level of electricity coverage across its entire landmass. We had tried to convince them this wasn't a very good idea and that it was surely a recipe for disaster. We pushed hard on it. We did figure some things out about how they were trying

to buy these machines from a South Korean company and how much they were paying for each machine versus how much they normally sold for. There was a lot of money spent that had nothing to do with the actual price of these machines. There were other indications of significant corruption. So we went ahead and placed some visa sanctions, but using one of the executive orders, where we were not allowed to publicly name the people that are being sanctioned. There was some leeway as to whether or not we could or couldn't publicly name people, depending on which E.O. was cited. Normal procedure is to name everyone publicly. But in this case, we did not want to name who was being sanctioned because we knew that lots of people would assume it was they who were being sanctioned, or people would assume others were. It would increase the effectiveness of the deterrent, by creating a guessing game of who was sanctioned. It would deter more people.

*Q: One quick question. The sanctions were under Global Magnitsky at this time.*

HASKELL: No. These sanctions were an executive order that could be initiated by the State Department. Magnitsky must go through the Treasury Department. The State Department can put what we call a sanction, but really it's a visa ineligibility, on individuals. These particular authorities, I can't remember much of the technical specifics. I knew just enough at the time to know what I could do, and I had excellent advisors in the embassy and in the Africa Bureau. These particular visa ineligibilities go through the Bureau of Consular Affairs and are approved by the secretary of state. As I mentioned, usually we want to name people, especially with financial sections where the world needs to know who's been designated so they don't fall afoul of those sanctions.

But with visa ineligibility, like in this case, we really felt that not naming was the way to go. Some people didn't really understand why. It was because we knew, or highly suspected, that it would create a huge buzz after we issued a press release saying that we had done this but that we weren't naming because of privacy reasons related to visas. And it was amazing. I did get called in by a number of government officials asking who it was. They often were worried it was them. Goes to show that many people felt guilty. I just told them that I couldn't tell them. I told them that those who were included in the sanctions would know because we would call them in writing to cancel their visa—assuming they had a visa. I didn't mention that if they hadn't applied for a visa or didn't currently have one, they wouldn't know, that they wouldn't know until they ever did apply for a visa. And by not naming those designated, it created this incredible social media tempest with people making up their own lists. Some lists had like seventy-five people on them.

*Q: Wonderful.*

HASKELL: Now, in fact it was one person, but it was all we needed to do. It was another huge tactic that we used to make everybody understand that they could be held accountable for impeding the electoral process or impeding the democratic process.

Now, to go back to where we left off last time, which was after we learned who Kabila's candidate for president would be, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, but first we need to talk about Ebola. In May of 2018, there was an Ebola outbreak identified near Mbandaka, which is a town sort of in the northern part of DRC, on the banks of the Congo River. The outbreak was in a village kind of far from there, but there aren't many cities out there, and Mbandaka was the largest town on most maps. The outbreak was announced just about three days before I was due to go on leave for three weeks. We brought in the appropriate officials—CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] and USAID sent specialists who worked with the WHO [World Health Organization]. I went on leave and my acting deputy chief of mission, Aaron Sampson, took over running the embassy and working with the team that was assisting the DRC in controlling the outbreak. This outbreak was in a less densely populated area and in an area where the people were familiar with Ebola.

The outbreak was brought under control fairly quickly, within a matter of weeks. Once the experts had identified what they believed to be the last case, we had to wait forty-two days to declare that the outbreak was over—that's forty-two days without a new case being diagnosed. So, we went through that forty-two-day period, which ended at the end of July 2018. I remember being at an official function, maybe a national day. And I was speaking with the health minister. I was congratulating him on stopping the outbreak so efficiently, et cetera, and he looked at me and he said to me that for the next outbreak he really wanted CDC to lead the efforts, not the World Health Organization [WHO]. I just sort of shrugged and, while noncommittal, said that sounded fine, not knowing that the next day they would announce another outbreak.

This new outbreak was in a very different place. It was in North Kivu. It was centered in a small town village called Mangina. The nearest big town was Beni.

*Q: Oh yeah.*

HASKELL: This was not a part of the country where you could safely go travel about. We talked about the violence in the east before and the ADF [Allied Defense Forces armed group] that were hiding in the jungle. This Ebola outbreak was right there. It was the first time that the population had encountered Ebola. The locals were completely unfamiliar with it. The health care providers, in what few and wholly inadequate health care facilities they had, were completely unfamiliar with it. They had no idea. Much of the area is heavily forested. It was a part of the country where the population has felt abandoned by the central government. They never received assistance to stop the violence from the armed groups, not just ADF, but the Mai-Mais [local armed groups that may have started out as defense for a home village but devolved into criminal elements]. The local governments didn't receive much money from the central government. There was no adequate schooling. They didn't have adequate health care. They felt very antagonistic towards the central government. This, combined with no previous experience with Ebola, contributed to the sense, however irrational, that Ebola was something that the central government had brought upon the population. So, when the people from the Health Ministry and the WHO showed up to help them, people really weren't thrilled.



They were often suspicious. And because of the long-term, uncontrolled violence of the armed groups, we could not rush up there as we had to Mbandaka. We had to think very carefully about how we would ensure the safety of our experts.

I had an assumption that MONUSCO, the UN peacekeeping force that was responsible for the protection of civilians and had bases in the area, would provide security. It was one of their main areas of operation.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: I assumed that they would come up with a security plan for the responders. But in fact, a large portion of the responders didn't want security because they felt that it made them a target. So a lot of the international NGOs that come in, like Medecin Sans Frontier [MSF, Doctors Without Borders] and Alima, among others—there were several different groups of experts that we hear of in these kinds of health emergencies, and some of them have a lot of expertise on Ebola after the West Africa outbreak—and they tended to not want protection. And of course, the Congolese were doing their normal thing, but they're sending additional health care workers up there who aren't from the area, which was also problematic because that part of the country, they don't have sort of a lingua franca useful in most other parts of the country [Lingala]. Rather, it's Swahili and many of the trained people that went there didn't necessarily speak the local language either, even if they were Congolese.

So we waited a few days. Our security people went to talk with MONUSCO's security people to find out what was going on. Unfortunately, our senior embassy regional security officer [RSO] was literally leaving post in just a few days and the new one was arriving. So what we had was someone who couldn't project into the future. He couldn't make commitments. He was literally going out the door when this outbreak was announced, and the new RSO had just arrived and had no experience in the DRC. He hadn't been anywhere in the country. It wasn't quite the most useful way we could start.

What we did was once I realized after a week or so that MONUSCO wasn't going to do what we had expected since they had an enormous security apparatus, and considering that we, the United States government, do everything differently than everybody else in the world, we started to try to think about what could we do. And about the same time the CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield was going to come for a visit accompanied by a deputy USAID administrator. We set up a visit to Beni, using MONUSCO to support the visit. This was all in a red zone [insecure area] that we don't let our mission employees go to. But MONUSCO knows how to do VIP visits. And when MONUSCO agreed to pick up the security, meaning we took our RSOs with us, of course, but MONUSCO organized and executed the whole, you security program—you know, pickup trucks filled with heavily armored and armed security personnel, the whole apparatus—to protect our VIPs and accompanying party on the trip to Beni.

*Q: Let me ask you a quick question, because it's on the total opposite side of the country. How did you get there?*

HASKELL: We flew, as we usually would, on UN aircraft. In this instance, aircraft from the UN Humanitarian Air Service [UNHAS]. We would routinely use UNHAS or MONUSCO aircraft—fixed wing and helicopters—to travel around the country. We flew UNHAS from Kinshasa to Goma. There were enough people in our party that we couldn't take a helicopter to Beni. We had to take a small plane to Beni. The Beni airport is not much, just a dirt airstrip, a small building that serves as a “terminal” and a small FARDC [Congolese armed forces] base. We couldn't take the roads from Goma to Beni due to insecurity in the area. While all this was going on, we also knew that we wanted to send a team of U.S. experts to Beni to assist the Congolese Health Ministry and the WHO with managing the outbreak.

Back to the trip to Beni. There were just so many armed groups attacking people on the roads that really people did not drive up there. So we took Dr. Redfield and the USAID Deputy Administrator Dr. Alma Golden with our big contingent. We had CDC people along with Dr. Redfield. We had some of the CDC people who would come with him, some from our post, and some who had just returned after having been involved in the Mbandaka Ebola response. And of course, we took USAID people. I accompanied them. We also had our brand new-to-post senior RSO. We were just on a day trip—there and back the same day in daylight hours. We had several meetings. We visited the WHO Ebola Operations Center [EOC]. We learned about what was going on. We heard from the Health Ministry officials and from WHO officials.

WHO was very adamant that they needed our experts. Really. Very adamant. I can't tell you how stridently they express themselves about needing our experts there. We returned back to Kinshasa and I had a conversation with the RSO. I told him we had to figure out a way to get our experts up there. I asked him to do a security assessment of the EOC and the area to figure out how we could make it work. Two days later, he went back with an assistant RSO and they surveyed the EOC, which had been set up in what was a brand new MONUSCO operating facility. MONUSCO hadn't even moved in yet. That was where WHO and Health Ministry responders were working from. By then, there were some two hundred international responders—not just from WHO, but also from international non-governmental organizations [INGOs], as I mentioned before, like Doctors Without Borders and Alima.

The INGO personnel, as well as the WHO people, were sort of scattered in just a few hotels, which is a very big word for a place in Beni. I think one was probably kind of a hotel and other places were less than that. There were no bodyguards or security features at all. Health Ministry people from outside the area were in the same situation. There were also Congolese to do contact tracing and safe/dignified burials—two of the most important ways to stop Ebola. And they would go out without security because they felt safer than with security, which they often thought caused them to be targeted by armed groups. That is certainly not in our way of thinking, as far as I can tell. The U.S. government doesn't believe in flying under the radar for security.

We don't believe in that. So the RSO spoke to the MONUSCO logistics people. He determined that we could send a security team there and that our experts—with a

dedicated security team—could bunk at a facility at the Beni airport. We knew we would need armored vehicles. So, we had been working with OFDA [USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance] to find a way to send three or four fully armored SUVs to Beni for our experts to use. How could we get them there? We couldn’t drive there due to the insecurity on the roads between Goma and Beni. So we had to figure out how to get them up there by truck, through Uganda or whatever. The RSO was now sending information back to the State Department, Diplomatic Security [DS]. We requested a Mobile Security Detachment team [MSD team]. An MSD team was a bunch of specially trained RSOs who come when a post requires temporary extra security. They can provide close support for what we would need. They can come with a communications person and a medical person or whatever. The team that was ready to come was about thirteen people.

*Q: Right. And you could not have gotten your armored vehicles up there because C-130s wouldn’t have been able to land.*

HASKELL: Well, they probably could have used a C-130. They are pretty magical at landing/taking off on short, bumpy air strips, but we didn’t have C-130s anywhere near. They would have had to come from Europe. You know, trying to move a Department of Defense contingent takes time—like three months. You don’t ask for it today and get it next week. This, I learned. The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance helped us. They are fabulous people. We had four OFDA positions permanently in Kinshasa and the incumbents were phenomenal. We had an OFDA office in Kinshasa because it was just constantly a disaster area. But those experts were unbelievably excellent at their jobs and often went above and beyond what their jobs were. So, we’re all trying to figure out the quickest way to get our experts up to the Ebola outbreak, to the EOC in Beni.

I had not worked on the Ebola outbreak we’d had in May—mentioned earlier—in Mbandaka. I was actually on leave on R&R for much of the key response time. I just happened to be gone and the acting Chargé d’Affaires Aaron Sampson did a fabulous job managing it all with a great group of CDC and USAID responders. So at the time I didn’t necessarily know the top experts personally. I was reading up on them. I was Googling who are these experts that we need to send, and I was getting one of them, Dr. Pierre Rollin, turned out to be somebody who had been around since the very first time Ebola was identified in 1976. And he had worked on virtually every Ebola outbreak since, and he was a CDC person. And he was also somebody, a treasure, a real treasure of an employee. I mean, you just can’t even imagine how great he was at whatever he was doing. Whether we put him in front of the cameras, you know, for press or whether he was talking at a meeting, gathering data in the field, advising governments or INGOs, or whatever.

He was technically just excellent on the whole systems thinking area of disease outbreaks. He knew how to make things happen. He knew how to get it to work. I was googling them and finding out who they were and was incredibly impressed. We had narrowed down the number of experts to send. Where we might usually send twenty or thirty people, we had it down to four and three. We told Washington we had whittled

down the numbers as much as possible to still have strong impact on the progress of halting the outbreak, that I wanted to send just four people. We needed the MSD team from DS. The team was already identified. I had gone to the foreign minister to make sure the MSD team could bring in every single item they needed without any problem. Everybody was on board. The team was packed and ready to go and they had visas. And they didn't come, but it took like a few days to get that. I just felt like we really needed to get people up to Beni. So I sent three people. They went up on a Wednesday or Thursday, along with one of our highly competent assistant RSOs.

It was about a week after Redfield came; he came on August 16. So it would have been August 22, probably. It was a Wednesday afternoon. They got up there, landing at the Beni airfield, which was a few kilometers outside of Beni. They stayed at the airfield where our embassy security team had determined was the best place for them to sleep. MONUSCO had a small facility there, with security in place. This was the best situation for them to be in. Security felt the airport was somewhat safer than in town. And the experts would be driven to and from the EOC each day in armored vehicles—provided by MONUSCO until our armored vehicles could be delivered to Beni. They were required to arrive back at the airfield before dark in the afternoon.

Their first day working in Beni went fine. Then on Friday, they were on their way back to the airport for the day. They were with an assistant RSO and were being escorted by armed MONUSCO peacekeepers when a couple of kilometers outside of the city when they saw civilians running down the road toward them. This is something that happens in Africa and when it does, you don't go there. They turn around and get out of there. So they turned around and went back to Beni. MONUSCO's mandate is protection of civilian populations, so they are the most in-the-know about the violence and armed group activity in most areas of the DRC. We found out from MONUSCO that what happened was the ADF had come out of the jungle and attacked a small Congolese army contingent based on the side of the road between Beni and the airport.

It wasn't really a military base, more like an emplacement of sorts. They are manned by a group of Congolese soldiers. It was like a little camp. There was a firefight and a number of Congolese were killed, Congolese soldiers. So, we immediately knew we had to change our plan for the experts. They went back to town, but eventually they did make it back to the airport. And the next day we had an Emergency Action Committee meeting [EAC], really a mini EAC. I haven't mentioned it but up to this point basic decision points were discussed by the EAC and recommendations made to me as the chief of mission. That next day, Saturday morning, we had an EAC and talked about what we should do.

We decided that we had to push harder to get the MSD team in place. And we wouldn't send the experts back into town, to the EOC, until we had the security team. At the time, the experts were at the airport. And we thought that the MSD team would be arriving early in the week—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, latest. That's what we were looking at. So I called up the experts and asked them if they preferred to wait at the Beni airport or to go back to Goma to wait. The experts, who were all fully aware of the danger of the

situation, of working in Beni and the general insecurity in the area, noted that the wife would be better in Goma and they'd be able to do some work remotely. That was literally the decision point.

So I quickly got on the phone and figured out that there was just one opportunity to get them on a MONUSCO plane from Beni back to Goma that day. None of the experts ever returned to Beni. It was a protracted discussion but basically because the U.S. government simply had no appetite, after Benghazi, to even stick our big toe into a security situation, the discussion went on for months. I'm not exaggerating—for months. It went back and forth at the highest levels in the National Security Council. We had innumerable secure video conferences to discuss why we needed our experts in Beni, why couldn't other countries send people, why is it important they be in Beni? The question was asked over and over again—why must it be our people? And every time I would explain that these people are the absolute experts, these people are the people that the other experts want, and that this is what we do.

At first, that first week, I was just so taken aback when DS refused, they said they wouldn't send their MSD team. They were afraid to send their people. The DS team was supposed to protect the other people. My understanding was that the individuals of the team were willing, and were set to go. But the Washington appetite for danger was zero, less than zero. I can't go into all of the details. Most of it's not classified, but it would probably be impolitic for me to disclose the details. It would be unsavory to discuss. Although I did seriously consider several times writing an op-ed about it, because it—the process and where it took us—was, to me, simply—un-American. Things that were said were absolutely unacceptable to say. And there was just so much unwillingness to send anybody to the DRC. That's really what it was about, that and the fear of having a casualty. As if we don't have people—diplomats as well as military members—living and working in dangerous places all the time. There was a lot of discussion about military support. None of this discussion was about people getting Ebola. That did not come up. Not once. It was all about the danger that was present from the armed groups.

I was not keen on a boatload of heavily armed American soldiers running around Beni. It was just three months before the DRC election. I also felt that it was simply un-doable—to try to bring in the numbers of U.S. soldiers and the equipment that was being bandied about. It would blow your mind. I said, no, we can't do it that way. The experts wouldn't even be able to do their jobs, and it would look like some sort of invasion force. That was not going to work, but I actually don't think even if I'd said yes, I don't think it would have happened. And if they had, if I had said yes, let's do that, they wouldn't have shown up for four or five months anyway. None of what I was being told made any sense to me.

It was the most stressful time I've had in my career, knowing that this virus is spreading. We're having daily meetings. I'm listening to the experts. We were, with our team advising me, the main attraction on all these conference calls with Washington. I was in so many team meetings. I learned way more about Ebola than I ever thought I would need to know, and about containing epidemics and how our response system works. It was incredibly enlightening. As you know, it's now eighteen months later, and this

epidemic is not over. And probably the experts that I know now think that it will never be over it. Now Ebola will become endemic there. So, while they have Ebola in other parts of the DRC, they mostly have small outbreaks that pop up in low population density areas. Years go by and they don't have any cases identified, but this was happening in North Kivu, a much more populated area. Beni was a big city, maybe a million people. There were little villages all over, and people transit across the border, into Uganda and back. There was trade, some smuggling, and family ties. There was a lot of population movement, of people in that part of the country, and they don't like the government.

Many people were unwilling to come forward if they were sick or if a family member died. They didn't like the safe and dignified burials. They didn't really want to cooperate on contact tracing, which is the gold standard for getting a grip on a disease outbreak. It required out-of-the-box thinking. Our U.S. government experts were the ones who could have made a difference in ending the outbreak early and saving thousands of lives. But they were in Kinshasa. They were working with DRC Health Ministry officials and trying to do some consultation by phone and email, but not our experts not being there didn't sit well with the responders who were taking the risks and were actually doing the work. Our experts finally left the DRC after several months because they were not useful there. People in Washington kept telling us to just do the work from Kinshasa—the work that they should have been doing in Beni. But I can tell you that if you are not on the spot in the operations center, no one listens to you because you're not there. It didn't work. And I have the perfect example of how it could have been. One of the problems was—all of this is like a little bit in the weeds, but it's important.

They were sending hundreds of healthcare responders—not healthcare providers, but the people to go out and take temperatures and talk to people, family members of cases, look to see if there were cases. And then there were other teams that do vaccinations because the global response team in Beni was using what had come out of and been henceforth perfected over the years, since the West Africa outbreak. There was no FDA approval. There was no governmental approval from anywhere in the world on these vaccines. But the Congolese government wanted us to use them. WHO was willing to use them. Most of the health care workers in the outbreak area—the international responders—they got the vaccine, for the most part. I mean, they were like, yeah, give me the vaccine. Because they believed, from what little data there was, that it worked. But there hadn't yet been a human trial. But they started—WHO and the Health Ministry—got “compassionate use” permission and started to vaccinate.

They were vaccinating all of the contacts of the positive patients and the contacts of the contacts. But one of the problems was that there wasn't the coordination of that at the basic level. At least it wasn't as good as it could have been. There wasn't enough oversight—the kind of oversight that you have to do in a country, like the DRC, where you have to do a little bit more handholding to get things done. In these situations you need closer supervision, with detailed instruction. You know, telling someone. “You go do these ten things.” Then when they come back asking, “Did you do those ten things? Tell me about how those ten things went.” That level of oversight wasn't happening. And that's what you need in this kind of situation. And some of the healthcare workers who

had to go out into the field were a bit reluctant, of course, because it was dangerous. They knew it was dangerous. They knew where they were, and occasionally there were attacks on these kinds of workers.

It's hard to always say that it was about Ebola. Sometimes it was just the random violence that happened there, but eventually some of the teams experienced violence, like having rocks thrown at their vehicles as they came to a village. The villagers didn't want them there because they thought they were spreading Ebola. So, after some of the health care workers stopped doing their jobs because they weren't being paid—would you do this if you weren't being paid—it was nearly impossible to get a handle on the spread of the disease. So the fact that they were not being paid was a huge problem, and it seemed like such an easy one to fix.

And the problem was between the Health Ministry and the World Bank. It was the World Bank that was the funder of this part of the response. We had a person on our team who understood exactly what was happening. She spoke the language very well and understood the dynamics that were going on, both with the healthcare workers and between the Health Ministry and the World Bank. She was a medical doctor, as well as a public health expert with a master's in public health. She had worked in Ebola outbreaks before, including the biggest one, in West Africa. She understood what was going on very well. She tried to work with her office back in Washington, to get them to talk to the World Bank in Washington. We also tried working with the Health Ministry in Kinshasa. We had a solution. Our expert was with us in Kinshasa, since Washington wouldn't help us get them to Beni, to the EOC.

The theory was that they weren't being paid because there were suspicions that some of the people on the roster weren't really doing the job. At this point, frankly, and in this situation, I didn't care if there were ten people getting paid five hundred dollars who weren't entitled to it. That minor level of corruption was not worth sinking the entire effort. I'm not a fan of corruption, but it was an emergency situation. It was urgent. We wanted to stop the spread before it became a really big thing. And I asked myself why we [the larger "we"] cared so much. I thought—and my team agreed—we should just pay everybody on the roster, and that if we could organize better oversight even that low level of problem could be minimized if not eliminated. We proposed that the WHO hire some experts—not in Ebola, not in epidemiology, but experts in, basically, management. We needed supervisors, people, who could do daily follow up with the healthcare workers. People who could assign daily tasks and then ask each team, Did you do this? Did you do that? People who knew how to do that; these lower level and, you know, get aid or somebody that pays for those contractors, some contractors to go to do that. Well, that was another thing. Interestingly, Washington was okay with Americans who were non-personal services contractors going to Beni, just not our employees or even personal services contract people.

I didn't understand that. We had Americans who were up there because they were with NGOs and international organizations. That's fine. Evidently we don't care about them. But we tried to make it work—working from Kinshasa. But it just didn't work. We

continue to have all these problems with payment of healthcare workers. We had all kinds of problems with being distributed to the families when being vaccinated or contract-traced. We needed to provide something to get them to let us take their temperature or even be in the neighborhood. There was just so much suspicion and distrust. The people doing that work would take cooking oil or rice or something like that. Okay, fine. But really these tended to be many people in the family and maybe there would be enough in the package for a week. This was not sufficient. I proposed that we should be giving them livelihood generators. We should bring to them seeds and tools for agriculture. We should bring sewing machines, give them a bicycle, give them things that are going to give them something beyond feeding them for a few days.

It would have been worth it. It would be so cheap compared to dealing with the outbreak, which will certainly be ongoing for more than a year. That outbreak response was costing hundreds/thousands of deaths and millions of dollars every month. This is ongoing. It's ridiculous. So we were trying to do these things and it was just so hard to get anyone to listen to us because we weren't there—in the field. One of those excellent people on our team eventually gave up her position. She was a personal services contractor, but she was one of our contractors. She wasn't posted in our embassy, but she was under chief mission authority on temporary duty. She left her contract and went to work for the World Bank and went to Goma and Beni, and she had that problem fixed within two months. I was so frustrated by this experience.

*Q: Now. Sorry, when you say she left and then had it fixed in two months, do you mean she was able to begin the vaccination.*

HASKELL: No, not vaccinations, but the whole payment of the health workers going out to the communities to do vaccinations, to monitor health of people who tested positive for Ebola, to do the contact tracing, et cetera.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: This was an example of an idea to fix a problem because at the base of things, right, you have to find all the contacts; you have to do the contact tracing and you have to do the contact follow up. Nothing will stop an epidemic if you don't do that. And if you don't get pretty much a 100 percent on those, and we were down in the 60 percent and 70 percent a lot. So that's too many people, too many contacts were unaccounted for.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: You can't stop an epidemic like that. And if you don't have the people out there tracing contacts, out there taking temperatures, the healthcare responders can't give vaccinations or get those who exhibit symptoms to the treatment center. They don't know who to vaccinate. They don't know who the contacts are. So, it was an example of how we could have fixed the problem of not paying those workers, because they weren't doing their jobs half the time because they weren't getting paid. If we had been able to fix



that sooner, we could have had a much better contact tracing rate and nipped the whole thing in the bud much sooner.

*Q: As far as, you know, as of now, what's the extent of the infection rate or the, you know, the percentage of cases of Ebola in that region. Is it still essentially epidemic level or where does it stand now?*

HASKELL: Well, the number of cases continues to rise, but because of the vaccine, this is fantastic, actually, without that vaccine, it would have been a catastrophe. That vaccine was very effective. The problem was that, at the time, we weren't using it in a way that enabled data to be collected. They were just doing the vaccinations as much as they could, because it might help things. Well, it did help things. And anecdotally, they were learning things. So the anecdotal things they were learning was that if you vaccinated post-exposure it worked, but they didn't know for how many days. So, if you were exposed on day one, they didn't know if it was going to help you to day 22 or day 17, or at which point it was no longer effective. Because it wasn't working if you vaccinated too late.

*Q: I see. Okay.*

HASKELL: They learned that you shouldn't vaccinate pregnant women. We knew that anecdotally. But because the numbers were so much lower than, the transmission rate was so much lower than it had been in West Africa where they had no vaccinations, we knew it was effective. And we knew that that was key. Now, another thing that was key was some doubt about the supply of the vaccine. The vaccine wasn't approved, so really, no company would have an ongoing manufacturing process. And why would they? So, it was critical that we were keeping track of the global Ebola vaccine inventory. We had a lot of meetings about the global inventory of vaccines.

The United States had a stockpile for domestic use only to use in case of national emergency. And they had expiration dates on them. The expiration dates were only six months, eight months or whatever away. The United States was contributing a lot of vaccines from that supply. But there was an ongoing conversation that was unbelievable to me. It blew my mind, the level of bureaucracy. Those doses that were donated to the eastern DRC Ebola outbreak needed to be replaced in our domestic inventory. The Department of Health and Human Services [HHS] was in all these meetings. HHS is responsible for that sort of thing. And they had a lot of money. They agreed to fund the purchase of replacement doses, boatloads of it. But there was another relatively small amount that needed to be paid by USAID. But, USAID didn't want to pay for it because there had been a rule that they couldn't pay more than 20 percent of the overall cost of the response, or something like that.

So if the cost of the response, you know, is that—I'm just doing this low numbers to illustrate—a million dollars, USAID [i.e. the U.S. government] wasn't supposed to pay more than two hundred thousand dollars. They, USAID, seemed to be compiling the numbers on a weekly basis or something, but really, the cost will be the most in the

earlier days of the outbreak. So, it was the wrong way to look at the dollar numbers. USAID should have just contributed the forty million dollars [I think it was] to make up for what HHS didn't have, and then work out the percentage at the end of the response. There was no doubt in my mind the response was going to be protracted [given the slow progress and since our experts weren't in the field] and that the overall cost and the U.S. government's total contribution would be huge. So they should have forked out the forty million dollars for some vaccines. And by the time it was all done, it would still not be 20 percent.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: Continuing with the bureaucracy. There were conversations about whether the new order for vaccines would include single dose vials or multidose files. Washington said the system couldn't handle single dose vials because of the need for refrigeration. And I would jump to say that, no, that would be easy. It would not have been too difficult to manage. It was just a supply chain, which means it was just money. The response needed the vaccines. I didn't care if it was a ten-dose vial, we could buy coolers. We could buy refrigerators; we could buy generators to run them. So it was a very frustrating time. It was the only time, of all the stressful times in Kinshasa, that I literally would pace my office and feel my blood pressure rising, my heart beating too fast. I would feel my heart beating. I was so frustrated and not being able to send the people who could make a difference.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: I felt a lot of satisfaction from my team at post, from all the team members who came from the CDC, from people that we would be on the phone with, they really appreciated how hard we were fighting to get the experts out there. They all were aware of the danger, and they were always willing to go because that's what they do, but Washington would not provide the security that would have made it safer to let them go.

*Q: We now have an AFRICOM, you know, a combatant commander in charge of Africa with assets.*

HASKELL: Believe me, they weren't involved in all of these discussions.

*Q: I'm sure you're right. But had permission been given to involve them, would that have been able to overcome a lot of the issues you're describing?*

HASKELL: Well, that goes back to what I was mentioning about what they thought was an appropriate level of intervention, with large military assets that go bang in a country about to have an election.

*Q: Okay. Yes. I understand that. But in a part of the country, so far away from the capital. And so—*

HASKELL: Do you remember the part about the conspiracy theories?

*Q: Yes. it doesn't matter. Conspiracy theories fly through the country, you know, as fast as pixels.*

HASKELL: And not only that, can you just picture it? I didn't see how it would actually work. It wasn't going to work. And in my opinion, they were saying this because they knew it wouldn't work and that we would say no.

*Q: Oh, okay. Alright.*

HASKELL: And also, even if we'd agreed, they wouldn't have shown up for five or six months.

*Q: Right. Yeah. Okay.*

HASKELL: I know that from the experts that I worked with on this, the ones who were in Liberia, in West Africa, when the U.S. military finally showed up, which was very, very late in the course of the outbreak. And for that outbreak, the U.S. military was not there for security, quite the opposite. They were there to put up tents or whatever.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: Let's just say, there's disagreement about how helpful they were.

*Q: Ah.*

HASKELL: Compared to how much of a pain in the butt they were. But that was different, because it wasn't about security. So this was going to be all about security. They were coming in, like there was a war.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: Can you imagine what those local people would've thought?

*Q: Yeah. Okay.*

HASKELL: It was a no-win situation at a certain point. And I, I finally had to tell the team that it was over. I think it was in November. I said, I can't succeed in getting the experts to Beni; there were no more avenues left for me to try.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: And it's still on—the outbreak. I think we have now got people in Goma, but still not in Beni.

If you have questions, that's fine too.

*Q: Well, the only other question I have is because the area that you're talking about, the area of Democratic Republic of Congo, is literally bordering Uganda, Burundi.*

HASKELL: —and Rwanda and Sudan.

*Q: Are we talking about a trans-border problem? In other words, was there any help or any concern on the part of those bordering countries that they needed to become involved in the solution?*

HASKELL: Well, I can tell you that every week we had a conference call, and it included the United States embassies in all those countries. They had teams set up. Our weekly conference calls always started with us. We would go first, and we would tell them what was going on—what were the numbers. How many new cases. How many new fatalities. How many vaccinations had been given, how many doses still on hand or in the pipeline. Fatalities are as high now but it's still over 60 percent fatality rate. So it's not good. We also talked about any security issues we had heard about; the call was to brief them on all the details. Washington would speak and also the embassies in all those countries and all their teams. I don't know if I ever talked more than ten minutes, probably less.

And some of those good bordering countries' embassy teams would talk for thirty minutes, twenty minutes. It got to the point where my team was like, Oh my God! Those other teams would mention every meeting they had had. I told my team once—I was joking—I told them that the next week, I wanted them to write down every single meeting they had and all that you talked about in those meetings and that I would just go on and on and we would still be on the phone two hours later.

I only mentioned what I thought was important, what people really needed to know. I didn't think they needed to hear about every meeting we had and what was said in every single meeting. And nobody ever indicated that we weren't telling them enough. But some of those other embassies really went into meeting details, maybe because they didn't really have data to report. We had deaths and diagnoses and how many vaccinations, et cetera. All of this kind of nitty gritty stuff that they didn't have. They were quite supportive of us, but they felt the need to share a lot of information. But to answer your question, it was a concern. And there were eventually a case or two in Uganda, but only a case or two. It's quite amazing the disease didn't spread across the borders.

The United States was involved in helping to prevent the spread. We sent trainers to train the border officials on both sides of the borders. How to check for fever, nothing fancy, but it must have been effective because it was a very porous border. It was not like everybody goes through a border checkpoint.

*Q: Yeah, exactly. Okay.*

HASKELL: It was quite amazing. And it was dangerous and there were attacks. In fact, just, I think two weeks ago, there was a big attack in Beni by the ADF. I think dozens of civilians were killed, but it wasn't Ebola related. It was just normal. It was the normal kind of—normal, what a terrible word to be able to use, but the normal kind of violent armed conflict that happens in the DRC. It was probably a sign that whatever reduction in violence that had occurred, say, between the time of the ADF attack on the MONUSCO base in December of 2017 until probably December 2019, was over. There had been somewhat of a pause in the number of attacks. Sometimes, what the ADF would do was to attack and they would attack a pharmacy.

They would take medical supplies to use in treating their own wounded, people wounded in attacks against the Congolese military, things like that. There is just, there was a lot of the violence in the area. You just can't say it's one thing or another. Sometimes it's political, sometimes economic, sometimes it's almost never ideological, but it is in Benny. It's not just or even mostly ethnic, although there is some ethnic violence in different pockets around the eastern DRC. It's not the main driver of violence in the east. Armed groups are often looking for money and weapons. It's one of those places where if you had no appetite to be called before Congress and asked to justify why an American got killed, then you would just refuse to allow anyone to go there, to say, nope, we're not going to help in this Ebola outbreak. But what couldn't be anticipated was that even to this day, no person carrying Ebola got on a plane and flew somewhere, which you could never have anticipated. Really, how could that be possible, that no one carried the disease outside the DRC? And believe me, it's not because of such expert checking.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: It was just an incredible stroke of serendipity, I think, that that didn't happen. Because it was completely possible that that would happen—that someone who would test positive for Ebola would get on a plane and show up in some other part of the world.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: And it didn't happen. So, in some ways you could say “yay” for all the responders, but it could just be that it happened in a part of the world where the people are so poor and so underserved by their government that they just weren't traveling. I don't know, but the area is very different from the forest and the forest people where Ebola normally is found in the DRC. The area was more populated, and people moved constantly from villages to cities and back. From close-in rural to cities and a lot of moto taxis and taxis that go back and forth from all the villages and the cities.

It is not spread like a coronavirus; it's not respiratory. It's more like AIDS in that it takes close contact with body fluids. The one difference is that you don't get AIDS from sweat, from perspiration, but you can get Ebola from it. So if you're in a taxi, a normal taxi in Africa, where there could be four or more people and you're all scrunched up together, or you're on the back of a moto taxi, you're touching the other passengers or the driver, this

is all it takes to be exposed. It's not just being in the room with somebody, breathing the air.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: It was quite an awful period, actually. I think it's a kind of failure. I feel like that, as much as I feel like our efforts on the DRC election were successful, the U.S. contribution to the Ebola response was a failure. The money and the vaccines were the only things that we contributed that were instrumental, but our experts really would have been able to help stop it in its tracks much sooner. Ebola could have been stopped much sooner. It is likely to become an endemic disease in the area, which is a horrible thing. It is a horrible disease to die from. And they never had Ebola there, that part of the DRC, before. The researchers are always looking for patient zero in an outbreak. In the instance, they think it was hunters who probably came from the center of the country to this part. And maybe they didn't know about Ebola. So that's my story in a very sanitized version, without any of my expletives. Now, we can go back to the election, where it's still August. There were things happening to review the presidential slate, the registration, to see who paid their hundred thousand francs and to make sure everybody who registered meets the criteria for running for office.

*Q: I'm sorry, what date at this point, what date had been given for the election day?*

HASKELL: It's still the same day, December 23, 2018.

From the electoral calendar that had been published early in December 2017. No dates had changed. They, the Electoral Commission [CENI] and the GDRC, had been more or less keeping to the dates. Sometimes some benchmarks were missed by a week or something, or maybe they didn't do a particularly good job of it. Benchmarks included things like determining which political parties were eligible to participate and getting all the voters registered. There were all these technical aspects that lead up to an election that are part of the benchmarks, which I could talk about more, more precisely and succinctly a year ago, but now it's two years since. So, there are fewer details in my head.

It was up to CENI to look at the registration documentation of the people who are running to make sure they ticked all the boxes to register properly and to ensure they were eligible. There were a couple of people who were not eligible, along with Jean Pierre Bemba. I can't remember lesser characters who didn't play any role but who had registered as candidates but had convictions for certain crimes on their record. But those ineligibilities were within CENI's purview. Those were pushed a bit later to the Constitutional Court for review.

Remember that back in, I think June, Kabila had changed out four of the Constitutional Court justices to be more right-leaning and less independent, shall we say. The independent-thinking ones had been convinced to retire, and Kabila put in four more of "his" people. At the time we weren't sure what Kabila was up to, but we were sure that, at the least, he was keeping his options open. Now, one of the main contenders, Jean

Pierre Bemba, had quite a following although not as many now as before and, unlike in the 2006 election, he had no army. When he did arrive back in Kinshasa to register to run for president, thousands of supporters showed up for him.

I think I mentioned already that Bemba had been convicted by the International Criminal Court [ICC] of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and witness tampering, but he had been acquitted of the war crimes and the crimes against humanity just a few weeks before the registration period to run for president. He was, however, not acquitted of witness tampering. Now, interestingly, there had been a change in the law at some point.

*Q: Sure.*

HASKELL: I think it was after the election in 2011. They have a new law, an electoral law, I think in 2015. The electoral law specifically excluded people from running for president if they have been convicted—found guilty of—corruption, a couple of other things and, importantly, witness tampering. So Jean Pierre Bemba's name was taken off the register. Amazingly, they took it—he and all his supporters—took it very stoically. There was no violence associated with it. He kept a lid on it. It's interesting because I did not personally know Jean Pierre Bemba at all, although our acting DCM did know him and did meet with him the one day he was in town to register as a candidate.

I guess when you spend ten years in prison, you change a little bit. I don't know whether or not he's still very conflict oriented. Let's say before, in 2007, when he had brought in, you know, tanks of his own and his own private army to Kinshasa after he lost the election in 2006 but claimed he won. And then there were those crimes committed by the militia under his command in the Central African Republic—the ones he was tried and acquitted of by the ICC. Let's just say he's capable of lots of things. Anyway, considering all that, his reaction to being found ineligible seemed very quiet. He didn't make any waves. When he came to Kinshasa and registered, he only stayed a couple days. Kabila wouldn't allow him to go to his home in the Gombe area of Kinshasa. It was too close to the presidential palace for Kabila's comfort. And even after being outside of Kinshasa for more than a decade, he seems to maintain control of his supporters. So, with Bemba out of the picture, the main contenders on the ballot were Shadary—Kabila's pick, and Felix Tshisekedi, head of the UDPS party and the son of Etienne Tshisekedi. There was maybe one other big name on the ballot, like Antoine Gizenga, the head of a well-established party with significant membership, PALU [the Unified Lumumbist Party] who was, at the time, ninety-three years old, in a wheelchair, and couldn't really speak or hear.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: I think I mentioned that after the accord of December 31, 2016—it was called the Saint Sylvester Agreement—about two months later, the long-time opposition leader of the UDPS, biggest opposition party, Etienne Tshisekedi, died in February of 2017. His son, Felix, took over as leader of the party. Felix was a candidate with no experience at anything but with his father's legacy to carry him along. There was another

guy who was not considered a real contender. He had only a tiny little political party of his own. His name was Martin Fayulu. There was also Vitol Kamare who was the head of his own political party which was a serious party. He was a guy who knew how politics worked in the DRC. Those are sort of the four people to watch. In November weeks before the campaign period was to start. [Like most countries, the DRC didn't have a campaign period that starts as soon as a new president is inaugurated.] The electoral calendar provided for a thirty-day campaign period leading up to the election. So, before the campaign period started, there was a meeting in Geneva with the heads of the most serious parties not affiliated with Kabila. It included Moises Katumbi, Felix Tshisekedi, Vital Kamara, Bemba party leaders, and others. The goal, which was a good goal, was to come up with one candidate that a united opposition could support to oppose Kabila's man, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, so as not to split the vote.

The result of this meeting came out as a big press release. They had chosen this guy, Martin Fayulu, to be their candidate. This was a strange outcome. It seemed bizarre because Fayulu wasn't really someone the population would get behind. No name recognition, no political history.

So, but this was agreed to, with signatures and all. Then literally two hours later, both Tshisekedi and Kamare changed their minds. They'd signed the agreement and then they changed their minds, deciding nope, they didn't want any part of this coalition. They decided they would run their own campaign with Tshisekedi as their candidate. The assumption was that with Felix as president, Kamare would be prime minister. That's the way they were going to run, and that's the way they did run.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: In Geneva.

*Q: Oh.*

HASKELL: We, at the embassy, actually didn't think that Felix should have signed that agreement. It was the reaction of Felix's supporters back in Kinshasa that convinced him to withdraw his support for Fayulu. It didn't make any sense to support Fayulu. But we were not getting involved. People were calling the embassy because the acting DCM who was also the political section chief was very tuned in, with close connections in several political camps, including Kabila's. But he quite rightly refused to tell them what to do. But, as soon as that press release came out from Geneva, the UDPS rank and file had freaked out. They couldn't believe that Felix had signed that agreement. That is why he pulled back. And it was good that he did that.

This is when the international community came back into the picture. We really hadn't been meeting very often, and we were no longer sort of on the same page. We didn't have any reason, really, to be on the same page anymore, as long as the DRC made it to the election. Going back to our goals [had to be an election, Kabila couldn't run, no violence, and the population accepted the outcome], there still had to be an election, and it had to



be peaceful with an outcome the population accepted. And we all had agreed on that and we'd continued to push that message. But you could now see where, you know, some embassies from different countries went slightly different ways. Even on the electronic voting, different countries had different thoughts about it. The United Kingdom [UK], who had been solidly with us, the crazy idea, they started to embrace the electronic voting machine.

They had a UK minister come, not a minister of state, but a lower level, came in June, I think it was, and was meeting all the usual Congolese we take our VIPs to see. She met with the head of CENI, Corneille Nangaa, who mentioned that they wanted someone, some outside organization, to evaluate their voting machine. The minister jumped right in and said they would organize that. We, at the U.S. embassy, thought that was a bad idea, a losing proposition because the problem was not really if the machine worked. The problem was more about the capacity of the voters to use it [lack of familiarity with using electronics of any kind] and the logistics in a country with little electricity, nationwide. But after that meeting, the UK ambassador had no choice but to take that on. They had the Westminster Foundation, I think, do it, which was supposed to be an independent evaluator of election things.

They pronounced the machine to be quite fine. But again, that was not our point. So there started to be a change in the solidarity of the international community of not supporting the use of electronic voting, never mind that the electoral law prohibited electronic voting. So CENI didn't call it electronic voting. They called it a "voting machine" (*machine à voter*). And they tried to call it a ballot printer. But, we knew it wasn't just a ballot printer because it was capable of transmitting the results by Internet and the company that makes them actually makes a different machine that is only a ballot printer. The machine CENI bought did print a card with the voter's choice on it, which was then to be deposited into a box, but there were no receipts for the voter to take.

Back to Felix's campaign. Felix, didn't run a particularly good campaign, from a technical perspective. He just had no message. Fayulu ran a better campaign, but the bar was low. He was not in favor of the machine. So he was like telling people that they should boycott. Although, because Fayulu was not in favor of the voting machine, he was telling people that they should boycott the machine and write in his name on a piece of paper, which, of course, would have guaranteed that their vote wasn't counted. It made no sense. He also tried to incite his people sometimes by telling them to burn the machines. This is all crazy stuff, boycott, burn, things that don't produce a democratic outcome. Meanwhile, Felix was sort of out there doing his thing, but he had never been a politician, never had a real job before. Didn't have much education. In fact, that was one of the things that was out there, that he also wasn't eligible to run because supposedly his educational credentials were falsified.

He had graduation documents from schools in Brussels. And people said that they weren't real. But his candidacy was not disallowed by the Constitutional Court. So I guess they decided to accept whatever they were. Felix didn't really know how to campaign. He was out there campaigning for like two weeks, the last two weeks of the

four weeks. He had no election “machine.” But he had tremendous name recognition because of his father. And he waited too long and registered far into the registration period. The names were on the ballot in the order the person registered. The first one who registered was the first name on the ballot. So, I think Fayulu was number four on the ballot, but Felix was number thirteen of twenty-one. Fayulu had a media presence and was out there doing things. He had adopted some sort of a hand motion, something like “vote for four” while holding up four fingers. And then there was Shadary, Kabila’s guy, who was sort of campaigning, but really just seemed to think he was anointed and would certainly win. It was said he was hanging out in bars or something, already calling himself the president. Shadary’s behavior didn’t go over well with Kabila.

Oh, I want to mention another important point. I think it was in October 2018, the Electoral Commission made a decision that because of the Ebola outbreak, they were going to postpone the election in North Kivu. Actually, I don’t think it was all of North Kivu, but it was certain parts of the province. The election would be delayed because of Ebola.

*Q: Oh, Oh.*

HASKELL: This was because voting brings people into close contact with other people, both in line and in transportation to the polls. Some people felt that this would be a legitimate reason to postpone the entire election, and while the decision was a little bit questionable, there have been many countries that have held legitimate elections even though the entire country couldn’t vote. Maybe not Western countries, but I think Nigeria had a big election where people couldn’t vote in the northeast or northwest due to insecurity caused by Boko Haram. Also, I believe that Boko Haram may have had control of the local government there. That election was basically a democratic election. So it wasn’t the first time such a thing had happened. From a public health perspective, the decision wasn’t silly or even suspect. But some people said it was just because that part of the country probably wasn’t going to vote for Kabila’s guy. The conspiracy theories really were out there that there were other reasons besides public health for canceling the election in that area. There were political conspiracy theories about it.

In terms of delivering election materials to the ten thousand or so polling places around the country, MONUSCO did help with logistics—in the beginning, in the east—at the request of local leaders. They used their airlift capability to deliver some of the election things—things like the folding cardboard paper booths and other supplies. But Kabila got mad about that and told them they had to stop. Kabila was adamant that the DRC could manage the election without any international help whatsoever, including from the United Nations. We offered assistance to get paper ballots printed. CENI kept saying it was too late to get paper ballots printed. But we felt that there were a couple of vendors that could have done it. But they steadfastly refused help.

They went on about their business and figured out how to get materials out there to the polling places, and it seems like they succeeded. In terms of observers, none of the Western countries were sending observers. To be honest, CENI would not have

accredited them. By this time in the process, Nangaa, the head of CENI, had become very dependent on the president's pretense of impartiality. He had become unfriendly to say the least. He didn't want to meet with us really, although he still had some of our USAID elections experts working with his team. USAID had a democracy and governance section at the embassy. They were excellent. Those experts were a huge help to us in the front office in being able to tell us what they thought was really going on inside CENI or in different places around the country.

Back to observers. The Catholic Church had said they were going to send out some ridiculous number of observers, something like forty thousand, because there were ten thousand +/- polling stations. They wanted to have four observers per polling station. That would have been great! Some were getting training, some probably with our USAID democracy and governance funding. Remember, these would not be international observers. They were local observers. Supposedly, all these observers were going to have a cell phone, so they could take pictures of the documentation of results and send it back to a central collection point. This documentation would serve as a check on validity of the vote. There was supposed to be this kind of preparation and deployment of observers to ensure a fair and democratic vote. But, in the end even the Church in the DRC, CENCO [the council of bishops] reported that they had only ten thousand observers, which is not forty thousand. We found out later from sources inside CENI that fewer than five thousand people had been issued observer credentials. So, relatively speaking, there wasn't really much observation going on. And I need to note that a new U.S. ambassador arrived at post the third week of October 2018.

*Q: Uh, huh.*

HASKELL: Going back a bit, in September I had been told I had to take my home leave or I would lose it because I had arrived at post on direct transfer. I thought that sounded crazy since we had no ambassador in the midst of the election lead-up and the Ebola outbreak. But anyway, they told me that I had to take home leave before the end of September. I scurried around and made plans. Got travel orders and tickets, made arrangements with my family back in the States. The double absence [meaning post would have no assigned ambassador and no assigned deputy chief of mission at post] was approved by the Africa Bureau [AF] and by the under secretary for Political Affairs [P], per protocol. Then it came back that the under secretary for Management [M] refused to approve it. It was really annoying to me because M was not responsible for approving the double absence, but rather was only responsible for approving my days out of the country. As chief of mission, I wasn't allowed to leave my country of assignment for more than twenty-six days for personal leave, twenty-six business days. I had, of course already taken an R&R, and it is mandated that home leave be at least twenty business days. So, I would go over the twenty-six days and needed M approval for that. It should have been pro forma. But instead, M decided I couldn't take the home leave I'd been told I must take and had been approved by AF and P, because he didn't think there should be a double absence. For the record, every time I left the DRC it was considered a double absence.

So I had to cancel my trip, but at the same time, the Bureau of Human Resources [HR] in Washington was insisting that I had to take home leave. I felt that M had basically usurped AF and P's authority. But no one wanted to stand up to M even though they had already agreed to the double absence. It was not a sign of the department caring about people. Kinshasa was definitely a place everyone needed to get out of fairly often. But HR continued to tell me I needed to go. They even offered to get a waiver to take less than the required twenty days. I had over two hundred home leave days on the books, days of paid leave I had earned over the years and been unable to take. [There is no compensation for home leave upon retirement or resignation.] So getting me special permission to take LESS than the requirement was not attractive.

*Q: Cool.*

HASKELL: I thought about it and tried to find a reasonable solution—a time to take the home leave when it would be better for post. I kind of agreed that my taking home leave at the time was not ideal for post. It made sense to me that I should take my home leave in March because that would be after the elections, after the inauguration, after three big meetings outside the DRC that either the ambassador or I were required to attend. I had no personal reason to want to go in March. But that would have meant that I would have “lost” my final R&R, also not an attractive option, unless Washington approved an exception. So, I asked for that exception.

In the end, I didn't get any exceptions. The new ambassador finally scheduled his arrival. I got new plane tickets and left for my home leave a week after the new ambassador arrived. I scheduled my arrival back to be just before the elections. However, in December, CENI pushed the elections back a week to December 30, due to a suspicious fire at the main CENI warehouse in Kinshasa, which, coincidentally, was located on property that the GDRC had agreed to trade to us to build a new embassy on. Many believed the fire was likely set intentionally by or at the request of someone in either Kabila's crowd or in CENI in an attempt to have a valid reason for a postponement of the elections. That didn't work as Kabila himself told Nangaa that the election must happen before the end of the year, which, as you might remember, was what Ambassador Haley had demanded. So, I arrived back from home leave about a week before the vote. There had been many things going on in my absence. The new ambassador was only able to present his credentials to Kabila the same day I arrived back in town.

In the weeks and months before I left on home leave, we had been dealing with a credible terrorism threat to the Chancery building. That situation escalated and then disappeared while I was gone. It had been a very close-hold situation. They actually closed the embassy for a week because of that threat. But since I wasn't there, I can't speak authoritatively to what actually went on. I don't really know about that.

But we had, a couple of months earlier, decided that, based on the history of the DRC with election-related violence, we were going to request an ordered departure in advance of the elections. There had never been a peaceful election or peaceful transition of power in the DRC's history. While from what we knew about the current situation, we didn't

think there was going to be violence, we also knew better than to think we knew what was actually going to happen. Washington supported us on this. The election is supposed to be on December 23. So, we knew that we would need to get everybody out [family members and non-essential personnel] probably a week or two before election day. We tried to make sure the kids could finish their school before the holidays. While I was gone, they finalized the ordered departure dates. While I was in New York about to go to London to see my son for a few days en route back to post, I got an email asking me to please come back to post, to please change my arrival date. This was because I would be “caught out”—unable to return to post without the department’s permission. When a post goes on an ordered departure, no one can go/return to post without State’s permission. At that point I was scheduled to return about four or five days after the ordered departure took effect. I said no. I was supposedly the DCM. I had just been chargé for fourteen months. If the department really didn’t think I needed to return, then so be it.

My point was, why should I shorten my well-earned, deserved leave and a chance to see my son, whom I hadn’t seen in quite some time? There is a reason Kinshasa has an entitlement for an R&R every year. People need to get out of there, and the Ebola thing had really stressed me out. So, I didn’t change my date. But when I was on my way back, I was flying from London to Paris and then changing planes in Paris. And I was literally on the plane to go on to Brazzaville. I happened to look at my phone before turning it off, as I sat down in my seat after stowing my carry-on luggage, and there was a note saying the Regional Security Officer [RSO] was urgently trying to get in touch with me.

*Q: Oh.*

HASKELL: So, I called. He asked where I was, was I already on the plane, was the door closed? I said, no, and he told me to get off. I was astounded and asked him what he was talking about. Now, it just so happens that I went on a seven-week period of leave with only carry-on luggage. No checked bag.

*Q: Huh?*

HASKELL: Yes. He told me to get off the plane, but he couldn’t tell me why. I certainly couldn’t second guess that. You can’t say no I won’t because who knows what he’s talking about. So, I went up to the flight attendant and apologized profusely but told her my employer would like me to stay in Paris one more night.

She looked at me like I was a crazy person. She told me I couldn’t get off. I mentioned that they hadn’t finished boarding yet. You haven’t closed the door. She said, “But you have luggage.” I told her that I had only my carry-on. They were so annoyed at me, but they did it. They got me off. But it was crazy. I got off. I was standing in the Paris airport and thinking to myself, “Now what do I do?” So, I went to find a place to sit where I had wifi and I called the embassy’s travel agent to ask them to find me a new flight out the next day. They told me they couldn’t get me to Kinshasa but that they could get me to Brazzaville, which is across the Congo River from Kinshasa.

That was fine with me, great, even. My husband was living in Brazzaville. And I would be able to spend the night there and get a boat across the Congo River to Kinshasa the day after. I found a room at an airport hotel and shortly after checking in, the ambassador in Kinshasa called me to ask if I could go into central Paris that evening to meet with Peter Pham, the U.S. Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region [in Africa] who happened to be in Paris. So, I took a cab into town to meet him and then cabbed back out to the hotel. As it was, I was glad I hadn't said too much while speaking on the phone to the RSO as the guy sitting behind me on the plane turned out to be a reporter from the Financial Times. He asked me where I was going, why I was getting off, and I just told him my employer needed me to stay another night in Paris. The whole getting-off-the-plane experience was very bizarre.

And why was it necessary? I'm going to get some of this wrong. But it seems that the day before, someone—might've been Fayulu—was coming back from campaigning, arriving at the Kinshasa airport. There were many supporters at the airport and along the single route from the airport back into Kinshasa. It was normally anywhere from a one- to five-hour excursion to get to or from the airport to Gombe, the section of Kinshasa where embassies were, where diplomats lived and where many high-level government officials lived and had their offices. It was an hour at four in the morning. Every other time it took longer. It was really not very far, but there was only one road, and it went through a densely populated part of town, just chock-a-block with people and trucks and buses, and everything you can imagine in a huge African city. It was a true African commuter nightmare. And there was no other way, except theoretically one could get on a boat and by the river, but then you need a car at the other end to get you from wherever you got off the boat to get to the airport. There was no dock or anything. It was more or less wading ashore.

So, whenever somebody wanted to create problems, they created problems on that road very often. And the UDPS [Tshisekedi's party] headquarters were on that road, along the way. Anyway, the day before there had been big crowds, not demonstrations or confrontations, but just a lot of people. I guess we had some people, maybe one of our assistant RSOs, at the airport at the time that had happened. This was the day before I was supposed to arrive back in Kinshasa. That A/RSO felt very threatened. Also, our defense attaché was in a car coming back from the airport during this particular time. She had felt threatened, even though no one was attacking anyone. It was just a lot of people. Frankly, it was probably uncontrollable if something had gone amiss. So, I guess they thought that that might happen again. So, they pulled me off the plane. But I made it back to Kinshasa and resumed duty as DCM. I had been DCM for a week before I left.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: There was a lot of talk about the fire at the CENI warehouse. It was very suspicious. And Nangaa, head of the Electrical Commission, went to Kabila to tell him they had to postpone the elections because of the fire. Kabila told him there would be elections and that they would be that year. Remember Ambassador Haley said, "—and I

don't mean December 31." They had the elections on December 30. Meanwhile, all of our families and non-essential personnel were on ordered departure.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: So, they have the elections, and we're all waiting for the results. I am pretty sure that there was no one in that country who thought anyone but Shadary would come out of that election as the president. I think even the other candidates themselves thought that whatever they wanted to have happen was not what they thought would actually happen. I think they all thought that regardless, in some way the outcome would be manipulated so that Shadary would win.

*Q: Right?*

HASKELL: The elections happened; the people voted. But CENI didn't announce any results. And they did announce results and then they didn't announce results. And we think the Iowa primary was bad. There were all kinds of things going on. Everyone was trying to find out what was happening. There was a rumor that Fayulu had won. Remember we were in a country where you never know what the truth is. And everything that I'm telling you about how this went down in the end, is not complete. There are still many pieces, key pieces, of this that we don't know for sure.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: Nangaa, the president of the Electrical Commission went to Kabila and asked what to do. He went to others and asked what to do. He wondered if he could announce that Fayulu had won. All of this was very, very quiet. Nothing was coming out. Nothing was happening. There was no announcement. This was all just very quiet, little rumors. Everybody was scrambling, you know, clamoring for the results. Meanwhile, Fayulu was claiming success.

Time was moving along and there was still no result. Eventually the Electoral Commission announces that Felix Tshisekedi had won the presidential election, which might have been true [laughs], or not. Fayulu made quite a hullabaloo. But, interestingly, he did not have a lot of supporters shouting for him.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: The Fayulu supporters were not really freaking out. I mean, there was a lot of social media yapping and other media. Yap. Yap. But really there was no violence. There was nothing happening, yet Fayulu was yammering on, just really making a lot of noise because the election had been stolen from him, he claimed. The inauguration was slotted for maybe January 11 or something like that. But in the meantime, Fayulu files a claim contesting the result.

He contested the result to the Constitutional Court. He went to organize his papers as evidence and gave the documentation to the Constitutional Court. So the court met. Everyone was on pins and needles. And so far, no violence. This was political officer heaven. We were waiting for the court's decision. They were meeting; they were hearing this or doing that. They met some more, and then on Saturday—I don't remember the date—we are all still on pins and needles, and we didn't have families at post and a lot of the mission was still on ordered departure. We were kind of hanging out. And that evening we suspected there might be an announcement and several of us were at the ambassador's residence waiting to hear what the decision would be. It got later and it was put off. It was delayed by hours and hours. Eventually, the court came out of their chambers and read their decision. They did not accept the contestation, they didn't agree with the contest and Tshisekedi was the winner. Okay. So the process has been followed.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: Absolutely. The DRC's own electoral process has been followed. Now, Fayulu was still mad, and he was still making a lot of noise. Even now, years later he is still mad and making a lot of noise, and still claims he's the rightful president. But he's saying that now into a very small room, so to speak. Whatever energy, whatever juice he'd had before died very quickly. Not his own energy, but that of most of the people who have been supporting him. So it was a question, you know, a lot of people in Washington really felt that the result as announced was a travesty and that it wasn't a "real" election. Some people in Washington thought that it was clear that Kabila had stolen the election by giving it to the opposition. Let that sit a minute.

I didn't understand, you know, I didn't really understand what they were talking about, given the history. But they were very angry, a lot of people in USAID. There were many contentious conversations, a lot of problems in the interagency as they tried to agree on a U.S. government statement about the results of the election. We, post, of course, had drafted something that we'd sent back to Washington. Normally, if we wanted to put something out locally, we didn't need State's approval, but you don't do that in this situation. This was an election. And if they, in Washington, have an interest, they get to craft the statement. So, the NSC was having interagency meetings with the interested agencies to figure out what to say. In my experience, USAID likes very long press releases, one, two or even three pages. The State Department is more about one-page press releases. Personally, I like a one paragraph press release, but okay. So, we had written something very carefully. Our draft was not congratulating Felix.

Our draft statement welcomed the process. We said something like, "Yay!" I don't remember verbatim what the draft said. But essentially we said, "Yay, the court made a decision. They had followed a process." That was sort of the first paragraph. And in the second paragraph we congratulated Joseph Kabila for being the first DRC president to peacefully hand over power. And he really rated that. No matter what you think of him, he did that. Okay. We were still trying to get a statement out. I was getting closer and closer to inauguration day and there still hadn't been a statement from the United States.



This meant that we had yet to influence a final outcome; it meant that anything could still happen, even no inauguration. Things could have suddenly gone upside down.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: At this point, I have to say that some people in the State Department that maybe I don't always agree with really turned out. They stepped up and did the right thing. They got tired of the interagency blah, blah, brouhaha and wrote a statement that was virtually what we said, but shorter and frankly, better. They said exactly what we wanted it to say, and they published it. Here it is:

“The United States welcomes the Congolese Constitutional Court’s certification of Felix Tshisekedi as the next President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC]. We are committed to working with the new DRC government. We encourage the government to include a broad representation of Congo’s political stakeholders and to address reports of electoral irregularities. The United States salutes the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for their insistence on a peaceful and democratic transfer of power. We also recognize outgoing President Joseph Kabila’s commitment to becoming the first President in DRC history to cede power peacefully through an electoral process.”

*Q: Beautiful.*

HASKELL: And wow, was USAID unhappy. The statement did not include what USAID had been insisting on in the interagency meetings. And really I agreed strongly with what State did. This was done at the under secretary/deputy secretary and secretary of state level. This was truly a foreign policy issue, not a foreign assistance issue. Secretary of State Pompeo, decided in the end, as he should have, and it was a perfect statement. Maybe I shouldn't use those words. USAID in Washington was convinced that Fayulu had won. We at the embassy were certain that there was no way to know the actual truth of the vote count. There were already fraudulent ballot counts circulating. The statement came out the day before the inauguration. I strongly believe that our statement was instrumental in making Kabila feel comfortable in handing over power on inauguration day.

Although I had done so much in the lead up to the election, getting the international community on the same page, keeping us all on the same page when it really counted, managing Washington with regard to sanctions, to benchmarks, to communications—all, of course, alongside our acting DCM/Pol chief and some fabulous USAID people [who I don't think agreed with their Washington colleagues]—I wasn't invited to the inauguration. Our new ambassador went. And because he knew the opposition, Felix Tshisekedi and his closest advisors quite well, the former acting DCM—now back to being just the Pol Chief Aaron Sampson, was invited. I would not have pulled that back from him for anything. His contributions to the success of our policy were amazing, and he deserved to go. So they went in person—the ambassador and the pol chief. But I have to say, I was watching it on TV in the embassy, and I had a better view than they did. I

was WhatsApping them throughout the ceremony to let them know what was going on, telling them who was arriving, where were people sitting, et cetera. They couldn't really see those things from where they were seated. I was doing a sort of play by play. When Kabila arrived I reported that he looked happy to be there, that he was doing this. And then there was Felix Tshisekedi. I thought he looked weird. He looked really fat. He looked like he had gained forty pounds. I wondered what was happening. He's a big guy anyway, but it was crazy. His clothes were too small. And then I realized he must have a huge bulletproof vest on under there.

So, okay. The ceremony started, and I have to say it was really well done. And I know some people think I'm crazy, but I believe that Kabila was very happy doing what he was doing, giving it away—the symbols of the office, the power. In the DRC, they actually have accoutrements they give away, almost like royalty. You know, they have a scepter and a sash. Just the way he was transferring these things to Tshisekedi said to me that he was happily doing it. You know, he'd already had his last review of the troops and all of that. And he just, his demeanor seemed different than all the other times I'd seen him on TV or speaking or whatever. [I had had only one meeting with him.] It was just very good. Then Tshisekedi gets up there to make his speech, right. So he's speaking, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I'm thinking, Hurry up, already. And he keels over. He had collapsed! Oh my God, how could this be? What was happening? Well, clearly this vest he was wearing was too tight.

So Tshisekedi was down for like five minutes or something. People rushed to help him. No one informed the audience or anyone what was happening. I'm sure some people thought it was all over, that he'd been poisoned or something. Congolese really believed in poisoning as a means to get rid of adversaries. We all wondered what was going on. Tshisekedi gets some water and he pops back up and finishes his speech. Believe me, the rest of the speech did not need to be made. The end of the speech was useless. It was all so bizarre. So, he was president and I think he was completely and utterly astonished by the whole thing, absolutely astonished. I don't think he thought in a million years, nobody thought in a million years that what was happening would or could happen. A peaceful transfer of power through a democratic process. Meanwhile, people in Washington were still convinced that this election had been stolen from Martin Fayulu. It was a conversation in local social media for months. But really in the immediate aftermath, there were all kinds of people swearing that they had the true vote count. And Moises Katumbi provided to the Catholic Church some documents he claimed were actual ballot tallies. It was a ploy to continue the uncertainty, to not embrace the concept that they had an election, the opposition won, and there was no violence. And notably, Kabila handed over power after refusing to hold elections for two years.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: You know, Tshisekedi was sort of stunned for a few weeks while he was trying to get a grip and it took them a long time to form a government. I left post. Okay. I left on February 22. I told the ambassador the day I arrived back, December 22, that I was going to retire and that I would leave on February 22. He was not too happy about it. He

decided that the way to try to convince me to stay was to tell me that he needed me to be the bad guy, because he needed to be the good, friendly guy. He needed me, as his DCM, to be the bad guy. And I told that I had been a management counselor for many years and that I was done being the bad guy.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: But also, more importantly, I had just come back from seeing my dad. It was that trip that many of us eventually take where a light bulb goes on. I realized that seeing my dad once every two years or so was just not good enough. He was close to eighty years old and, while still capable of managing their affairs, there were small things that indicated I should be going to Oregon to see him and his wife much more often. I needed to be paying more attention to their situation. Plus, our youngest son had had a few issues that were not resolving and were concerning. So I wanted to be able to see my family on my schedule, not on the Foreign Service's schedule. And certainly not on the schedule that would have been dictated by the workload in Kinshasa. Also, while the family issues were paramount, I think being in the position of chargé for that long [fourteen months], as chief of mission, where I actually had the ability and authority to do what I thought was right—I knew what our policies were, I even made some of them, and I was able to manage things as the decision-maker—I think to then change over, to be the person who basically pushes paper and enforces someone else's decisions, I didn't want to do that. That just didn't sound like something I wanted to do anymore, ever again. But really it was about my family. My dad, my son, and, of course, I hadn't been living with my husband for two and a half years, and I was done with that.

I had originally thought I would retire in 2015, after my tour in the Office of Science and Technology Cooperation. I lasted four more years of service. Just to be clear, though, about the DRC elections. I think that there is still a lot of chatter about Kabila being the puppeteer of Tshisekedi. I really want people to understand that Kabila's party [PPRD] won the majority in the Parliament. So that party has a say in who fills the cabinet, who will be prime minister, et cetera. That is politics. And interestingly enough, it took them about four, five, six months or more to agree on who should be prime minister. In the end, it was someone that Tshisekedi had put forward early on. This says to me that Tshisekedi was holding his own in those discussions.

*Q: Hmm.*

HASKELL: Tshisekedi did not just acquiesce to Kabila. And they didn't form a full government until August, eight months after the inauguration. That was because there was so much negotiation about who would get what ministry.

So, then people will say that Tshisekedi is meeting with Kabila. Again, that is politics. Kabila's party has the majority in the Parliament. The PPRD had maybe four more seats [don't quote on that number, I don't remember if that is correct] than the UDPS, Tshisekedi's party.

*Q: Yup. Yup.*

HASKELL: Now, does Tshisekedi have a hope in hell of changing the world in the DRC? No, he does not. He doesn't have the power. His power base is not strong enough to get much done.

He, a year ago certainly, was really wanting to do the best he possibly could to cut down on the corruption. I think he still honestly thinks that, although I'm not sure that some of his close compatriots do. But he can't jettison those people because they will go over to the Kabila camp, and then he'll be in trouble. It really is a game of survival for him. In fact, literal survival. So, he's not probably going to make huge changes in the DRC, but it's this tiny, tiny step of going in the right direction on what's going to be a very long journey towards democracy. Before I left post, I was speaking with Kabila's senior diplomatic advisor, who was a very educated and astute person who I don't believe was corrupt or is corrupted to this day.

I agreed with him that—and many of us that were in the mix of it believe this—that if somehow the world had insisted on Fayulu, if somehow Fayulu had actually somehow been pushed on Kabila— Let me rephrase that. There was no way it was going to be Fayulu as the next DRC president. Fayulu was Katumbi's guy. And if you remember from before, something happened between Katumbi and Kabila that created an enormous problem between them. And there is in my mind, no way Kabila would have allowed Fayulu, Katumbi's stooge, to become the president. And if so, the choice was not Fayulu or Tshisekedi. The choice was Tshisekedi or an annulled election.

*Q: Yeah. Okay.*

HASKELL: I firmly believe that if Kabila had not had the option for Tshisekedi, he would have annulled the whole election. And if that had happened, there would have been massive civil protests and a lot of bodies stacked up in the streets.

*Q: Yup.*

HASKELL: And to boot, nobody really knows the correct vote.

*Q: To this day. They still don't know—*

HASKELL: And it is not reproducible.

*Q: Yeah. Beautiful.*

HASKELL: So that's my story on the DRC elections.

*Q: So there was a change of power, a peaceful change of power. And although he doesn't have much of a following or much of a base on the government, certainly not yet,*

*Tshisekedi, by the mere fact that he occupied the office and was directly subordinate to Kabila, managed to make, you know, a small step.*

HASKELL: Well, one thing to keep in mind is that Tshisekedi was never subordinate to Kabila, not any more than any other DRC citizen. His party won the second largest number of seats in parliament. Only four fewer than Kabila's.

*Q: Interesting. Okay.*

HASKELL: Now some people who don't quite always understand the nuances of the DRC will say that Tshisekedi's party did not come out so closely to Kabila's party in the parliamentary elections. They will say it was not true because the FCC [Common Front for Congo], the big coalition that Kabila tried to form back in June 2018, that I mentioned before, had a lot more seats altogether. When you add all those parties together it was far more than Tshisekedi's party. But that coalition was and is really loose, and not a single one of those candidates campaigned under the FCC banner.

*Q: Oh, okay. Yeah. So the FCC is out there if ever someday they might decide to use it.*

HASKELL: Well. Yeah. Sort of. Or, I think that the people who decided to sign on felt like it was in their best interest at the time, when they thought Shadary was going to win.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: So will Kabila come back and run again? Maybe. He can. Nothing says he can't. So, that's another thing people will say, that Kabila will just run again and come back into power. Well, it's the rule that he can. Okay. We have to stop trying to choose people's leaders for them.

*Q: Yeah. Well, quite a story.*

HASKELL: It was an amazing tour. It really was. I mean, the extent to which I probably showed up there, very naively thinking that the United States didn't have much influence there. And what I discovered was that we have influence, but you had to know how to wield it. You couldn't be a bully. That kind of influence didn't work. It really was about figuring out how to give them a message that would accomplish what we wanted, yet that wasn't telling them what to do. And we had to figure out to tell them why it was in their interest to do something, not in our interest, but in their interest, which, in the end could be in our interest. We went over that earlier, why was it in our interest, the United States' interest, for there to be elections in the DRC. Elections where Kabila didn't stand, there was no violence, and the Congolese population accepted the outcome. So, I don't know if I have anything else to talk about on this country, on my tour there, but it was quite a culmination of my career. I know that I have left out/neglected several important stories, such as what happened in the quest to find the murderers of the two UN human rights investigators, more about the minerals industry. I've made no mention of Virunga National Park and mountain gorillas or other wildlife. What about electricity and the

mighty Congo River. What about the real story behind all those internally displaced people and the various incidents relating to them. There are so many more details about how we did our jobs, the importance of how we worked with the Congolese, particularly how we learned NOT to lecture them. I believe that was key. What about so many other important aspects of the DRC? It's just so much to remember and to try to put into context in a cogent way.

There is one thing I haven't mentioned that was meaningful to me, even though I had nothing to do with it. At some point in 2018, I forget the date, I was privileged to pin the Legion of Merit medal to the uniform of French General Bernard Cummins at a ceremony organized by our defense attaché's office. At the time he was the deputy force commander for MONUSCO. But the medal honored his contributions to work done together with United States armed forces while he was stationed with U.S. military in Florida. Somehow, that recognition of cooperation with our allies was special to me. And certainly, it couldn't have been presented to a more honorable and deserving soldier than General Cummins.

While there were countless people who made our successes possible, I would like to give a few shoutouts to some who made huge contributions. In the embassy, Aaron Sampson and his political section. USAID's Democracy and Governance section and their leadership. CDC's incredible team and USAID's team, so fabulous on the Ebola outbreaks. Props to the embassy's security section for keeping us safe and working with everyone to be sure we could do our jobs. And special thanks to several people in the international community without whom we wouldn't have been able to keep everyone on the same page—African Union Ambassador Abdou Abarry, European Union Ambassador Bart Ouvry, UK Ambassador John Murton, South African Ambassador Abel Shilubani, Canadian Ambassador Nicolas Simard, Swiss Ambassador Siri Walt, Swedish Ambassador Maria Haakanson, French Ambassador Alain Remy, UN SRSG Maman Sidiku, and especially UN SRSG Leila Zerrougui. The United Nations was/is a tremendous force for good in the DRC. I am very proud to have participated in something I think was tremendously consequential and gives a country and its people who had little hope a bit of hope for a better future.

*Q: Today is February 25, 2020. We're resuming our interview with Jennifer Haskell. Jennifer, just remind us what year we're in as you begin.*

HASKELL: Okay. So, I'm going to talk about my tour that spanned August 2015 up to the beginning of June 2016. It was a detail outside of the State Department. I'll start with how I got that job, because it's not always apparent that people can find these opportunities. I had been the office director of the Office of Science and Technology Cooperation in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environment and Science [OES/STC]. At the time, I was looking for what to do next. I had decided not to extend in that position, and I wasn't thrilled with the options on the bid list. I was staying in Washington because my husband was about to start a position as a deputy assistant secretary [DAS] in the Bureau of African Affairs [AF]. So he was going to be staying in Washington. I was just not interested in doing any of the things on the bid list, all very

management cone kind of style things. I did bid, but not with any kind of intention and there wasn't anything on the list I really wanted. Consequently, I didn't get any of them, of course. I made no effort to get any of those jobs. I think people probably thought I had something else nailed down.

But through various coincidences it became clear to me that I could request an outside detail of my own choosing, not something that's on the bid list, under "details." So I went to talk to Human Resources [HR] about that, with the senior level HR people. And they confirmed that I could go out and find my own detail and that it could be within the government or not in the government, just about anything I wanted. Then there was a process they told me to go through to actually get it approved. So in OES/STC I had made a lot of contacts in the U.S. government science and technology agencies. So I made appointments with many of them—the Department of Energy, the U.S. Geological Survey, the climate change research office attached to the White House, those sorts of offices. I also talked with the World Resources Institute and the U.S. Institute for Peace.

I can't remember them all, but I went to many different go-sees, mostly trying to decide if I was interested in them. I felt very confident that I could get a space pretty much wherever I wanted, but most of what they offered wasn't something I was that interested in or that I thought I'd be successful at. At one point during my tour in OES, I had gone to a day-long program at the Smithsonian called The Age of the Anthropocene—all about climate change. And I had seen a very brief presentation, maybe just twenty minutes, by this organization called Climate Interactive, where they presented very quickly, their computer simulation called World Climate. It's meant to teach and increase climate change awareness and what it takes to address it. I was so impressed with the people who did the presentation, their enthusiasm, their passion, the simulation, the whole package.

In a very short time, they were able to give a lot of information. I literally chased the guy out of the auditorium to give him my card and to get his card. He paid me no attention. We simply exchanged cards. I just kept that card. This was before I decided to pursue a detail. So that was one of the outside-of-government places I decided to try. I just cold called the guy by email. They had worked some with the State Department, with the office of the Special Envoy for Climate Change, specifically during the Copenhagen Climate Summit in 2009, the one where President Obama went and then tried to salvage the outcome. Climate Interactive's [CI] simulation was used by the Americans in those last-minute negotiations to try to come up with some sort of a positive outcome. The aides who were working with President Obama would come out of the meetings and go to the Climate Interactive people to ask what might the climate outcome be if X, or Y, or Z actions were taken.

And Climate Interactive would enter it into the simulation, which is not just an educational tool, but also a sophisticated scientific program that could do heavy duty analysis. The software used for the climate change awareness game, the simulation, was actually a policy driver. And it was being used for that at the time. They could input parameters and out would pop a determination of what the temperature increase would be by 2100. Something like that. So I sent the co-director I had seen at the Smithsonian an

email introducing myself, telling him I was a senior Foreign Service officer. I have an opportunity to do detail. I'm interested in working with you. Are you interested? So we had a phone call and he was very excited and indicated they would love to have work with them.

We went through the process, which wasn't that difficult. Basically, Climate Interactive had to write a letter requesting me, which of course I drafted at his request. Anyway, it was approved. And even before I started the detail, before I finished my tour at OES, I had some phone calls with Climate Interactive team members as I started to learn more about what they were doing. I participated in conference calls and learned more things about the organization and their work. It was really very interesting and exciting. Even during that time, I was able to identify ways I could be useful. For example, when I asked a simple question like how many people have you reached with your climate stimulation, they didn't know. So I suggested they should start figuring that out. That that would help them find a way forward.

I told them they needed to have a way to keep track of the numbers of people reached and where. I suggested they go back and try to figure out where they stood at that point, and they did. They were having a program up in Boston to teach people how to facilitate World Climate, the simulation/game. And I got permission from my boss to go up to Boston. Climate Interactive paid for it, of course, and I had to include it as invitational travel on my financial disclosure form. Anyway, I went to Boston, and I participated in the facilitation training and met some of the people. One thing that was interesting about Climate Interactive was that it didn't have an office. It was completely virtual, and people live wherever they live. The people who actually get paid by Climate Interactive were living mainly on the East Coast, several were in Boston, North Carolina, someone in New Hampshire or Vermont.

I was the only one in Washington, DC. Some of them had other work. Some of them were college professors, and they were working with Climate Interactive on the side, but their academic work was very tied into climate change. And that was where the expertise came from. So, I was going to be working from my basement with whatever I had. I had to buy a laptop. I had to negotiate how they would compensate me for the use of my cell phone, local transportation to events, and for any office supplies or specific things I needed for the work with Climate Interactive. Those kinds of things. And I started to work with them without very much structure. It started off really well. As I said, it's an organization that creates scientifically rigorous tools that help people see the connections between policy scenarios and what works to address climate change.

And it's very interactive. In the game you have teams, like the United States, the European Union, China, a group of other developed nations, one of developing nations, et cetera. So there were about six or seven groups. Participants were assigned to a group and each group adopted the policy position and negotiated with the other groups to see how to get temperature rise down to two degrees fahrenheit or less. That was the goal at the time. It was a lot of fun. It was very successful. At that time it had been played with everyone



from, literally, climate scientists to sixth graders. The scientists found it enlightening. They often don't know about the policy end of things or how the negotiations are done.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: From one end to the other, sixth graders to high-level policy makers. And it was very revelatory. It could be done with the general public in many different kinds of settings. I learned to facilitate World Climate. I also learned how to teach others to facilitate. One of the things I did was I did webinars. We got to the point where we were having a webinar about once every two weeks to teach people how to facilitate it. The goal was to get World Climate to spread organically around the globe. Keep in mind this was just a few months before COP 21 in Paris in 2015. That was one reason Climate Interactive kept the simulation free. Anyone could [and still can] download the software to run it, take a webinar to learn how to facilitate it, and organize their own event. But there was no organization when I started to work with them. One of the first things I was able to help them with that I felt was a really positive contribution was they had been invited to go to New York and present their analysis, using World Climate as a policy tool to the UN Secretary General's office. I think they met with a deputy secretary general.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: So, they hadn't done anything quite like this before. They were very excited to be doing it. And it was in the lead up, I think it was in August of 2015, and it was the lead up to Climate Week in New York, which is done the week before UNGA [United Nations General Assembly's annual meeting]. So the UN Secretary General's office really wanted to see what Climate Interactive's software was saying about what could happen in different scenarios and how that would fit in and help them make policy decisions. It was a very positive opportunity for Climate Interactive to be influential, for their work to be very influential. So they sent to me their presentation draft, what they were planning to present. They had their PowerPoint presentation already. And I had a look at it. The thing that jumped out immediately was that it was something like four pages long—text and mostly small graphs—and the result was at the end.

Certainly, that was not how we would do it in the State Department. You don't know how much time you're going to have. You may be slotted in for a thirty-minute meeting, but they may be running late or just lose interest after ten or fifteen minutes. You don't know if they will be enthralled and give you more time or if they have something more important to do next. I explained that they might get longer, but they might also get less time than they expect, so they needed to say the most important thing in the first slide, right up top. So I re-jiggered the order of their presentation, which they didn't understand at first, but they were willing to have some faith and they did it that way. They ended up getting an hour of time.

*Q: Wow*

HASKELL: Which was really great. I felt very happy and that this had been a positive way for me to contribute, and that it gave them some faith in my ability to help them, that it was positive that they had taken me on.

They weren't paying me, keep in mind. This was costing them virtually nothing; they were getting me free. And it was quite satisfying for me because climate change was where I had decided I wanted to put all my efforts and that if I was going to retire, I wanted to be working in the climate change field. After that, the next thing was coming right up—Climate Week. Climate Interactive didn't have a media person on staff. They had informal contacts with a few actual media people. You would hear someone from Climate Interactive speaking on NPR [National Public Radio] or something, but it was media flying by the seat of their pants. Very haphazard.

So, I started suggesting that they needed to have a better media presence in order to have a better way to get their messages out. I'm not a public diplomacy [PD] officer, but I am married to one, which was helpful. But I asked the OES/PD people if they could give me a list of media contacts who might be interested in climate issues, which they did. But that wasn't enough, because if those media types don't know you, it's hard to get to talk to them. You need that personal contact as well.

*Q: Sure.*

HASKELL: So I had this list of media contacts, but it would have been sort of like sending resumes out blindly, the same kind of thing. So not very useful in the short run as it would have required a lot of contact work. But, luckily, one of the donors that funds Climate Interactive's work had recently started funding a climate change media organization.

This woman told the Climate Interactive co-director that she knew the group and that would ask them to help get CI's message out. She said she could get them to do it pro bono. The co-director mentioned this on a CI staff conference call, but they seemed reluctant to grab this opportunity. While they were discussing it, I was Google-ing it, and I could tell that the group, the people in the group, were the real deal, that these people knew what they're doing, and that this is a really fabulous opportunity. So I told the people on the call that we needed to look seriously at pursuing this. They seemed kind of reluctant, but they agreed to do a call with the media group. [I can't remember the name of it.] So, we did the conference call with this group. I was very impressed with the group during the call. Maybe the call was on a Thursday, the Thursday before Climate Week. And I had already drafted a press release. After finishing that call, we had our own CI staff call to discuss amongst ourselves whether we wanted to go ahead. I was surprised that the CI people were clearly not leaning towards using them.

I jumped in and told them that they really needed to try this, that I thought it was a very good opportunity. They finally agreed, and we sent them our draft press release. Then Sunday, three days later, there it was, on the front page of the New York Times, above the fold, an article on climate change quoting Climate Interactive's analysis.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: It was then picked up by something like six hundred other media outlets around the globe. It really was a “wow.” I was pretty proud of myself. I felt that I had provided some really good advice. And I sort of saw that this was a way that I could contribute with this organization, was with this kind of experience and knowledge and advice and sort of almost, like, consultation. But on a daily basis I was sort of floating. I didn’t get any real direction. They would just suggest maybe I could write a blog.

But I was not an expert on climate change, and, frankly, I was very intimidated by all these people who were. And I wasn’t sure how to write something meaningful. I hadn’t anticipated this being part of my work. I had sort of looked at this assignment as an opportunity to learn things, to provide whatever knowledge and experience I had while making contacts in the climate change realm. But on a daily basis there just wasn’t a lot of guidance. And I started to feel fairly early on that I was a little bit like an intern. In my experience, many interns aren’t given meaningful work. Much of the time an intern’s supervisor is giving make-work or the intern is valiantly trying to figure it out on their own. I started to work a lot on World Climate, the simulation/game. And I discovered that CI had connections with people around the world, like in Argentina and Europe and different places, that didn’t really know how to facilitate the game.

So, I started to build relationships with them. I tried to help them by giving them ideas for events, how to reach out more. We also started a process for translating the game into other languages, finding people who would do it for free because we didn’t have the resources to pay. As I mentioned, this was prior to the COP in Paris. Of course, the French were working very publicly on many things for about a year ahead of the event. They were trying to build enthusiasm, to get everybody pumped up. It was still the Obama Administration. And as we came closer to the COP, which was in December of 2015, Climate Interactive was planning who on their team would go to Paris. I was not invited, although I wasn’t told that I wasn’t invited. I was not included in any discussions on it.

I was being held on the outside, not really part of the team. I had started to feel more and more like that, which wasn’t a warm, fuzzy feeling. It was a very small organization. They had, counting me, only ten people at the time, and it was an extremely flat organization. There were two co-directors who were incredible people—really smart, really knew what they’re doing, really dedicated—that were still “do-ers.” Even now, years later, they are still do-ers. They weren’t focused on directing traffic so to speak. They did direct a little bit, but mostly they were a bit reluctant to let go of doing actual analysis and creating content, et cetera. I sometimes suggested slightly different ways for the organization to be organized, or how work could be structured or what events might be helpful or contribute to decision-making. I wasn’t necessarily as much of a do-er. At that point, I didn’t see myself as able to contribute significantly to their work, to the content of what they were doing.

My experience in the Foreign Service had been to move up, to come up with ideas, and to guide and lead and delegate. So as the COP in Paris got closer, I asked what their media plan was. They told me that they were just going to do it themselves, that they would get to Paris, they would meet with some reporters. They would just have coffee or something, not much more than that. I asked them why they weren't reaching out to the climate media group again, and they said that they preferred to do it themselves. I argued that as it had been so successful the last time, why wouldn't they do it again? I reminded them of how good the group was.

So, they did reach out to them again, finally. And during the Paris COP the climate media group was incredibly helpful and successful. The press they put out for Climate Interactive generated over 2,500 media hits where Climate Interactive's analysis was quoted, even more than during Climate Week.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: That was a lot, that was really a lot. And Climate Interactive started getting so many requests from media that I basically started steering it. I would take the calls and set them up with somebody from Climate Interactive who could do the interview on the radio or whatever. I did a little bit of that. And it ended up being so important to increasing their level of influence. It was a very small organization that was clearly gaining a lot of influence. That was a very positive thing because their work was and still is really important.

Accountability, you know, positive accountability amongst the group at how to improve things. What we should remember, the organization is virtual. We didn't see each other at the office every day, so they have an offsite every year where they bring everybody together for three or four days. I went to the offsite, and it was a really good meeting in that it was about three days of really solid idea generation and accountability, positive accountability among the group, asking each other, could we do more? There were a lot of great ideas about adding to the repertoire of content. But what I heard during that whole time was the group agreeing we should do this thing or that thing that would provide new or better information or analysis or educational content. These were really great ideas that were doable. But, every time someone would bring up an idea like that, someone would remark that we didn't have the resources to do that. That was probably true, but it was a theme that I thought was the most important thing I heard while sitting there for the three days. So my contribution towards the end of this offsite was to bring into the discussion how clear it was that this organization really had the ability and expertise and an incredible opportunity to provide valuable information to the world, to many, many organizations that needed to have this kind of science-based climate analysis. I mentioned that they had recently gained tremendous influence, but that they now had an opportunity to be even more influential in this field. I noted that they couldn't continue to operate exactly the same way they were then. I reminded them that we had heard during all of the discussions during the offsite that people want to do more, but there weren't enough resources. That meant not only money, but people. I encouraged

them to decide whether or not they wanted to stay the way they were and limit their influence or if they wanted to grow.

It was a very hard question for them. I know that they have more employees now, but they're still basically virtual and they're moving along. Since I worked with them, they have perfected another simulation on energy, En-ROADS, and brought it out to the public. It's been launched. They used to use it themselves, but it took really smart computer whizzes to use it and come up with outcomes. Now it's more user friendly. You can download the software; you can do simulations with it. So they've moved forward with that, which is really great. They have incredible people working for them. Some of them don't get salaries from CI. One of the founders of the organization and a key player is an MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] professor at the Sloan School of Management, MIT's MBA school [Masters of Business Administration].

He uses World Climate and En-ROADS all the time in his classes. These tools are extraordinarily influential. Another one of the main Climate Interactive staffers is a professor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. The two co-directors were protégés of Dana Meadows, a renowned expert on systems thinking. These were [and are] top-notch thinkers. All of these people had their own sort of CI specialties, and mostly worked on different things. For example, they had made connections with Mohammed V University in Morocco. The government of Morocco had made a decision to position the country towards sub-Saharan Africa. They had a goal to become Europe's gateway to sub-Saharan Africa, especially economically and commercially. The Moroccans had to have been talking with Climate Interactive about the possibility of a grant of somewhere around a million dollars for CI to take the World Climate simulation Africa. I learned this when I first started to work with CI.

I thought that that sounded like a perfect thing for me to be very involved in, because I had worked in sub-Saharan Africa. I had a pretty good idea of how things worked in Africa. I had contacts. And certainly, in the beginning, CI had seemed enthusiastic that I could participate in that project. But as they got closer and closer to signing the grant agreement, I was told that I would not be working on it. And I was stunned. They told me they wanted me to work on "the rest of world." So they had a million dollars to work in Africa, in a relatively short time frame, yet I was being told that I would work on the rest of the world with zero funding unless I found my own. I found this rather dispiriting.

*Q: Well, let me just ask a question. These professors have connections through, you know, these huge universities and the university alumni, and they, at no point even tried to use their university connections to get a grant or you know, a donation from some big donor to do it? I mean, it seems surprising.*

HASKELL: Funding was somewhat haphazard. Up to that point, money seemed to come through serendipity. They would meet someone who had money or knew someone who had money, or one of the staff—paid or unpaid—might write a grant proposal for something specific they wanted to do. There wasn't a funding, or development, plan. They would talk to someone and someone would provide some money to the

organization. It didn't seem to be by design. It was one of the things I asked about early on, because I was in Washington D.C., and I wanted to know who had contributed funding. I felt that that was important as I went around to different events or programs or meetings. I figured that I could sign up for events, request meetings with whomever I wanted. And it was important to me to know who had already contributed. I didn't want to broach the funding subject not knowing whether or not they had already contributed. Also, it would have been bad form not to know in order to thank those who had should I meet them.

I sort of struck that off my list of things to do because I couldn't get a list of donors. It wasn't organized. Or maybe they just wanted to keep it close-hold. I don't know. So it was disappointing that I wasn't able to help them fundraise because I wasn't going to go out there with no knowledge. Also, fundraising is not something I enjoy doing, so there was that, too. Don't get me wrong, but it seemed like something that I could do as part of any conversation that I had. I think they had some funding from some big companies or organizations, but they didn't really want to share the information. And occasionally I would hear from a foundation that wanted to learn about what we did, so what I would try to do is set up one of the co-director's to speak with them. I know there was one family foundation, I can't remember the name of the foundation, but they specifically wanted to know more. Their board had decided that they wanted to get more into climate change and they wanted to become more informed. They had heard about Climate Interactive and wanted somebody to come and talk to them.

So I set it up. I always try to set up people in the organization who were really knowledgeable, not myself, but people didn't really jump to do it. It was a little bit hard to get people to show up and give this possible funder what they needed.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: I started to realize that I had made a mistake in the way that I had formed my detail. At the time, I thought I had found my dream job. And they had seen it as something positive dropped into their lap, something they hadn't anticipated—free senior executive level assistance. And neither side thought about delineating expectations on either side. This was a hard lesson to learn because I really believed in their work. I still really believe in their work, but I couldn't fit in in a way that was meaningful to either side. And so they started to pull back a little bit. I continued to push on things that I felt would be useful, but in a way that wasn't their style. So, for example, I connected with Al Gore's group Climate Reality, which has an office here in Washington. It wasn't difficult to get an appointment. And they already knew about Climate Interactive's work. They had worked together maybe in Dubai. However, there hadn't been any follow up. So I met with them and proposed that since they had a global network and Climate Interactive was a very small organization could Climate Reality recommend World Climate as part of their public education events?

Now, the first step was getting them to say that they agreed that our product was important and that it should be used and, hopefully, that they would say they would at

least let people know. They mentioned that they were having their first 24 Hours of Climate Awareness event and they asked if Climate Interactive would participate in that. Since there was no downside, I said sure but that I'd check with the CI leadership. I passed the request for us to participate in some way on the Climate Reality program, and they said, sure. They said that I could do it, as if it was a no-brainer and I didn't need to ask. I mentioned that there was a form to complete and promises to make. Again, I was told to just do it. So, that was not like the State Department, right? No approvals necessary. No clearances! So I signed, committing Climate Interactive to participate in the 24 Hours of Climate Awareness event where Al Gore was scheduled to be live in Paris.

I felt like I was laying the groundwork for future mutual cooperation, but it seemed that Climate Interactive wasn't sure if they actually liked Climate Reality all that much because they hadn't followed up after the last joint event. But I felt like if we wanted them to pay attention to Climate Interactive, a small organization not led by a former United States vice president, there needed to be something in it for both sides. I thought, well, we need to do their event, then we'll be in a better position to follow up with them again about them using World Climate or at least spreading the word about our product. That sort of thing. I wanted one of my contributions to Climate Interactive to be helping them understand more about contact work, something we're generally very good at in the Foreign Service. That's what we do, right, contact work. And we know that the first time you meet somebody, you don't necessarily get something. You gotta have coffee maybe five or ten times before you get what you need.

I'm not picking on Climate Interactive here, but it seems like that's not the way that the public or the private sector works. They want something the first time they meet, or they move on. So, I had thought that community colleges would be a really nice fit for World Climate. I had travelled to India for meetings while in an OES/STC job. There was another conference going on at the same hotel and I had met a guy who worked for the American Association for Community Colleges, which had an office in Washington, D.C. So I thought to myself, let me go talk to him. So, I made that appointment and I went to talk to tell him about Climate Interactive and World Climate. Turned out that he was not the right person to talk to, as happens in contact work, but he seemed to think people would be interested and told me he would connect me to someone else.

That took, maybe, a month or so, or two months, for me to hear back from him. And then it took some more time for that person to respond to my email. She didn't really jump on the idea. She maybe sort of pushed it off a little bit, but she didn't completely say no. So, as with any contact work, I kind of kept at it, pinging her every few weeks. Eventually she came to me and told me that I really needed to speak to yet another person. So, I searched for this third person on Google. She was on the faculty of a community college somewhere in the midWest. I don't remember exactly where. But she was a person who was influential in another association of associations.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: Which is a huge thing, right? They had about two hundred associations as their membership. And it was a membership that was very inclusive, for any association that wanted to address sustainability. So it was a very good fit. And she was interested in hearing about World Climate because it can be used in so many situations, from a coffee in a private house to a course in a museum, in whatever kind of situation. It could be tailored to fit. You could do a quick one in twenty minutes, but the really good ones could easily use two or three hours. You could do it with one person, maybe if you were showing somebody really high up and important, or just your friend. Or you could do it with groups where each group has ten or twenty or thirty people. You could even one in front of 250 or 300 people and have every group be quite big.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: World Climate is very adaptable. She was willing to hear about it. So once again, I reached out to the other members of Climate Interactive to get somebody to be on the information call with me. I preferred to do it that way, because if this woman started asking questions about the data behind the science, the science behind the actual simulation, I was not the one to answer that authoritatively. So, I asked somebody I thought would be really good at that. She was a university professor and used World Climate in her classes and was one of the scientists who worked on the computer program behind World Climate. She said okay. She wasn't really very happy about doing it, but she agreed. Then when I made the conference call, the other person wasn't picking up the call. I think her name was Debbie Rowe. I was bummed because I thought it was all dead, but then, finally after ten or fifteen minutes, the call went through, but this was after the Climate Interactive person had lost patience and didn't really want to do it anymore.

I convinced her, though, and I managed to get everybody on the phone call. And that phone call was very interesting. Debbie Rowe was very interested in learning more about World Climate and in possibly recommending it to all the associations in the association of associations. And the Climate Interactive person who had been reluctant to be on the call was incredibly helpful. It was really a good contact made. This was something that had taken months of contact work to get to, and this was something I wanted Climate Interactive to understand. So, on the weekly team conference call I went over how I had made that connection. Now, admittedly, we hadn't gotten anything from it yet. And I then already started to wind down on my assignment with Climate Interactive so I made sure to connect her to someone else she could reach out to at Climate Interactive. I sent her lots of information and the link to the website. However, later, while I was in Kinshasa, I received an email from the Climate Interactive co-director that I worked with most, asking me for the name of that person. I was able to look back in my emails and find it. I hope he was able to contact the woman so important to the association of associations and get World Climate on their agenda. I guess it was a tiny success, in that someone from Climate Interactive remembered there had been a connection made, but they weren't grabbing and going with things at the time.



*Q: All right. A quick question here then. Among the many groups that you reached out to, did you try to reach out to the State Department, Public Affairs office? They can, through their own distribution system, get the average citizen level game out to United States embassies, to public affairs offices. Some will say yes, some will say no, but it will certainly get it out to other countries. And then people interested in stopping by a U.S. embassy to see what they can find out about climate change could possibly use it.*

HASKELL: So, I did work on that, but it was very difficult because, you know, there were all these rules or whatever about using your position for personal gain.

*Q: Oh, yeah.*

HASKELL: So I had to be very careful about it. Yes. I still had access to the State Department's global email system. I was still a State Department employee. I didn't go the Public Diplomacy route. Though maybe I should have. I tried to go the ESTH [Environment, Science, Technology and Health] officer route.

I sent emails to a lot of ESTH officers telling them about World Climate and asking if they were interested in learning more about it. I told them I could make phone calls or a video call. I could teach them how to facilitate or we could do a webinar as an event. I really got no traction there. I asked the Foreign Service Institute [FSI] if I could give a presentation to ESTH officer course students. Of course, they have their curriculum set up years in advance, or whatever, so they said they didn't have time for it. So, then I asked if we could make a non-required event, maybe at lunch or something. They agreed to that, that I could come at four when they normally leave. I agreed and we set that up. Not many people actually stayed after class to do it. But we had enough people with two or three people in each group. Although not all the participants were from the course. Some of them were people on the faculty or whatever that had heard about it. I ran World Climate for them, and they really enjoyed the simulation. I don't know if any of them took it and did anything with it.

Let me go back to the Climate Interactive World Climate in sub-Saharan Africa project. I was on Climate Interactive staff conference calls every week, plus some random conference calls. I usually would listen to what they were doing, but I wasn't involved in the planning or executing of much of it.

But occasionally I would interject because I felt that I had something of value to provide. At one point, they were talking about the African countries where they were planning to start the World Climate project. And I interjected that for any success in Africa, they needed to include Nigeria and South Africa. I told them that wherever else they planned to work, if they wanted to make a worthwhile climate change awareness and education intervention in Africa, they needed to be going there from the beginning, because they were the most influential countries in Africa. And I noted that they didn't have time—only one year to spend the million dollars in grant money—and they had very few people, maybe two, working on the project. I told them they probably don't have time to create their own network, that they should find an existing network, and that there are existing

networks, and that I could help them with that. I mentioned the State Departments YALI network [Young African Leaders Initiative], which has networks over most of Africa. But they didn't ever ask me to introduce them or anything about it. Then, maybe a month or two later on one of those conference calls, one of the people from Climate Interactive who was not working on that project, was super helpful to everyone, told us how she had been speaking to somebody on the faculty at a university in New England. She told us how that person had told her all about this interesting group called YALI and how useful it might be to those working on the World Climate in sub-Saharan Africa project. I was only slightly annoyed. I refrained from saying, "I told you so." But I hope they did finally reach out to YALI. I don't know if they did.

I continued to try to encourage embassies' public diplomacy and ESTH officers to use World Climate, everywhere in the world. One thing I did was organize an event with USAID when they were bringing all of their environment people to Washington for a big conference. There were maybe 200, 250 people. I got a space on the agenda and asked one of the founding co-directors to come to Washington to do it because I wanted it to be done really well. I knew that I wasn't going to be the best person to do it in that scenario.

*Q: You couldn't answer the questions about methodology, the data, et cetera.*

HASKELL: Exactly, and I wanted the person to do it who had so impressed me that day at the Smithsonian, who had really made me want to learn more about it. He had an incredible stage presence and enthusiasm. So, he did come to Washington, and I was sort of the go-fer. I arranged everything, preparing documents and then organizing the materials for the event; I handed stuff out to the tables. I was really the intern. We had only an hour, and there were so many people that we had to do a modified version of the simulation just to give them a taste of how it could work. I have no idea if anybody ever used it.

Meanwhile, I continued setting up the bi-weekly webinars, occasionally sending out tweets about the webinars trying to get more followers, trying to just spread the word more. We came up with some ideas. We knew who were some of the people who were facilitating in different places around the world who were really good at it and had made a lot of contacts and were doing two or three or more World Climate events a year. So we came up with two ideas. We had expert facilitators, and we had what we called World Climate ambassadors. I identified who they should be. And then I asked them if they would agree to have their names on the website as an expert facilitator so that if somebody wanted to host an event but didn't want to facilitate it themselves they could find somebody in their area.

Then with the World Climate ambassadors, it was more exclusive, like a guy in Argentina, a guy in Denmark, a guy in Sweden, a woman in Nepal, somebody in Turkey. I reached out to these people who I knew were good. Also, the Climate Interactive team was helpful in connecting me to people they knew who would be good World Climate ambassadors. A lot of those people still are doing it.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: If you go on the website, you can see that these programs still exist. So, I feel very good that these things that we worked on, that I sort of pushed and glued together, are meaningful and lasting. I know that when I started with Climate Interactive, they calculated that maybe they had reached a couple of thousand people with World Climate, the role-playing climate simulation game.

And now, or at least last time I checked a few months ago, there had been well over thirteen hundred events in ninety-three different countries with over sixty-two thousand participants. In the year that I was there, there were over three hundred World Climate events, and we had reached more than fourteen thousand people in fifty-one countries. So that was big. We went from barely knowing what had been done to those numbers by the end of the year that I spent there. I think I really did have an impact in getting World Climate out there and getting Climate Interactive to understand why it was valuable to keep track of it. Anyone can organize, host, and facilitate a World Climate simulation. It's free and no permission necessary. You can download the software, and you can learn to facilitate and do it. After your event you can go on the website and put a pin in the map and enter how many people participated. They have a Facebook group and they have a Twitter account. I follow them still and it's quite active. The staff has expanded a bit, but mostly it's the same people still pushing it.

It's nice that it's been successful. I still don't think they're big enough. I still think they need an executive director. I still think that they could be more influential than they are, but they've made a decision. It's not just floundering.

It's such a great organization. And I'm glad I had that opportunity, but I learned a lot. I learned that I don't like working in my basement. I found out something about myself that I didn't even know, which was that I often process information by walking down the hall and talking to someone and that I answer my own questions by going to somebody else's desk, sitting there, talking to them, listening to myself say it out loud. And then sometimes I figure it out and walk away and the person I went to see hasn't said a word. You just can't do that working in your basement. And I realized that I didn't want to be an intern and that I was terrible at being an intern. I was really bad at it. I know I had this perception of myself as being the same way I was thirty-five years ago where I was willing to do anything.

Not anymore. That was very clear, that I didn't want to do that. And I missed having authority. It's not that they didn't give me authority. Evidently, I could have done anything I wanted to do, but I wasn't good at that kind of lack of structure. And the State Department is very structured. I could have gone to World Resources Institute, but to be honest, I found that very intimidating because those people are all scientists or academics, really big policy wonks. I wasn't sure what I could do; I would have had to define it for myself. I would have to do research. I'd have to write about it. I'd have to get it out there. And I wasn't sure I really wanted to be that academic. That's not what I do

well, and it's not what I'm interested in doing. Even though that would have been a fabulous opportunity. Think what that would look like on my resume, you know?

I also discovered that at that time, I don't know if it's different now, that the climate change world is pretty closed. That one of the biggest problems that they had, and maybe they still do, is talking to normal people and allowing people like me who was more of a normal person. I'm not a scientist or an activist. Maybe I wanted to be an activist, but I wasn't an expert in any way on the issues. Even though I knew a lot about it. I actually completed a four-class university certificate course on decision-making for climate change, which I did in the evenings while I was in Santo Domingo. I had learned tremendous amounts from those classes. It was an excellent program that doesn't seem to exist anymore. So I did have some grounding in climate change, but I didn't have a lot of experience and nobody in that realm knew me. If they didn't know you, they just didn't know you, and there wasn't an easy way to get in.

So that was disappointing to me. I worked a lot with the French embassy during this time because it was before and after the Paris COP, and they are the equivalent of the ESTH officer. I did a World Climate simulation as an event for them. I had made contacts there when I was at OES/STC, as I co-chaired the joint commission meeting with France, together with someone from their Foreign Ministry. I had a lot of really good experiences working with Climate Interactive, despite the disappointments. I feel like what we did was worthwhile. I set up and facilitated, together with someone else from the Climate Interactive, a World Climate event at the Koshland Science Museum. People don't know about Koshland Science Museum. It's in Washington, D.C., downtown. I think it's on Fifth street or something. It's part of AAAS.

Another thing we did. From my OES/STC days, I had made contacts through my work in OES, especially with AAAS. Koshland is a small museum, with wonderful programming. I called them up, and we just got on their calendar for an evening event. People signed up. We did not have a lot, maybe ten or twenty people. And they were just from the general public. And it was a broad spectrum of people, from tourists who signed up to families with teenagers, and like that. It was a diverse group. We did a program like that. And while we did several events like that, which I thought went well, I really felt that the World Climate simulation needed to be introduced to the private sector. I had contacts at the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], also through my work at OES. I arranged a meeting with my contact at EPA to introduce him to World Climate. I mentioned that they were having a climate leadership conference in Seattle in March of 2016 and that maybe he could arrange for Climate Interactive to have a side event. There would be a lot of private sector people there, plus quite a few local government people from around the country as well.

They told me they would love it if I went and did a World Climate event. So, I convinced the co-director of Climate Interactive that CI should pay for me to go out to Seattle to make contacts in this new market, so to speak. I had the opportunity to talk to a lot of private sector people about World Climate. I don't know where that went in the end because these kinds of contacts are the ones that take time. And I was with CI less than a

year. I got to do a lot of things that I think exposed a lot of people to World Climate, but I didn't get to see, in the end, how it actually impacted people. I knew from my own experience that people who have participated in a World Climate simulation often do have new ideas about climate change. This was also something the more academic staff at CI had found through actual surveys. As part of the webinars where we were teaching how to facilitate, we discussed the importance of a debrief at the conclusion of the game. It seems that people understand more about climate change and difficulties in working internationally to address the issue.

With regard to trying to get the State Department to use World Climate, I didn't feel like I got the response that I would have liked. To me, it seemed like a complete no-brainer. It was free. And it was a program you can set up to promote our current policies at the time. It would have been such an easy thing for the public diplomacy or ESTH sections to do to promote climate change awareness among not only the general public but also to governments—getting the different countries to buy into the different proposals. It didn't feel like I made that impact. I did feel like the contact with Climate Reality was good. I also made contact with a group called the Alliance for Climate Education, which was a teacher-based group. And some of them participated in the webinar to learn how to facilitate World Climate. I made contact with the Clinton Climate Initiative, but Climate Interactive had already worked with them once and didn't seem interested to pursue it again.

Again, that was how they felt, that they had made a one-time shot at and then didn't want to get involved again. But I kind of brought it back and reminded the Clinton Climate Initiative about World Climate. And also, I had made contact with another group called the Global Issues Network, which was also an education-based network working with international schools to introduce issues through education or clubs or whatever. That was kind of funny because when I first contacted them, the name of the contact seemed familiar to me, and when I spoke with the woman on the phone, we tried to figure out where we knew each other from. This was in 2016. What we figured out was that when I was posted in Tel Aviv, my oldest son had finished first grade there. This woman's husband had been the principal of the high school—the American school. And she had been a teacher at the school. That's how we knew each other's names. We both had felt like we had heard of each other before.

*Q: Interesting.*

HASKELL: So, it's a small, small world, you know. Overall, I think I could have been more effective in my work with Climate Interactive if we had delineated more clearly what I was supposed to do from the beginning.

*Q: Although, you know, it's funny, everybody talks about American inventiveness and you know building something in your garage and scaling it up to a world level or national level. This seems like the perfect kind of thing that could really take off. If there had been enough energy among even the ten people who made up the initial organization.*

HASKELL: They had energy. They were all very busy doing what they thought was important. I think that the hard part was them knowing how to reach out to additional demographics, different sectors. Some of them were very good at facilitating World Climate. They could do the presentations to anybody. But beyond that, they needed some help to make contacts and understand how to use contacts.

And again, the State Department was disappointing in more ways than one. Climate Change was clearly in the QDDR [Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review]. There were points on climate change. At one point, I had to start to think about what to do next, when the detail with Climate Interactive ended. I had originally thought I would extend it for a second year, but given the issues I've already discussed, that was not something I was willing to do and probably not something they wanted either. We had agreed that if they asked for another State Department person on detail, it needed to be someone at a much lower level, definitely not Senior Foreign Service, maybe not above the grade of FS-02.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: I think someone at that grade would have been a better fit. The State Department had put my detail on the bid list, and I did get a couple of people asking me about it. I told them that as they were senior level it was not likely a good fit.

So, I started looking for what I was going to do next. I immediately signed up to be on a promotion panel and was accepted to be on the promotion board that evaluated management, consular and economic officers to get over the threshold into the Senior Foreign Service.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: So, I was looking forward to doing that, but that was only for a couple of months, so then I was trying to figure what to do next. And I was really at a loss because once again, there wasn't anything I really wanted to do in the department.

I guess I had decided I wasn't ready to retire. At least I was no longer sure what I would do if I retired. I had been thinking that I could get into the climate change world, retire, and go on working on those issues somehow. And that just didn't seem plausible at the time.

So, I was floundering a little bit trying to find what to do. I became aware of a possibility that I didn't think I would want. I had decided I didn't want to do management work anymore. But then the management counselor position in Pretoria came open unexpectedly. Somebody died, which was unfortunate. In a complete surprise to myself, my reaction was, oh, I could do that. I had been the deputy management counselor for four years. I knew so much about the post, the embassy. It had been about six years since I'd left South Africa. I felt like I knew the space. I knew people. I knew the local staff. I knew the issues. And I suddenly felt like that's the job I want because I could—after

having had that job where I felt like I hadn't been as effective as I wanted to be. I wanted a job where I knew I would really have something positive to contribute and make some real progress. It was a hard decision because my husband needed to stay in Washington because by then he was a deputy secretary in the Africa Bureau. And of course, he wanted to keep doing that. So, I bid on that job. It was harder to get than I thought it was going to be. But in some ways that wasn't a bad experience. The person who's going to go out as DCM was still in Washington and unbeknownst to AF/EX [the administrative office for the Africa Bureau], she was doing interviews of the two bidders. There were just two bidders.

I had a lot of connections in the Africa Bureau at the time. And I sort of heard through the grapevine that, after the interview—which I thought I'd aced—I wasn't her choice. I wondered how that was possible. I was clearly the best choice. So, I contacted her and asked if I could see her again. You can do that. The first interview had gone very well, I thought. And yet, somehow, I wasn't her first choice. I had other contacts, in Africa Bureau and people serving overseas, kind of AF people. So, I had heard that people in Pretoria, maybe weren't interested in me for the job, that somehow they thought I was at fault for whatever was happening, for whatever shape the embassy was in six years after I'd left. I was lucky the person who knew this had worked with me at the time I was posted in Pretoria before and she tried to explain that that was just crazy.

She gave me a heads-up that I needed to know that this was the word coming from post. So that's when I decided to go see the person who was going to go out as deputy chief of mission. I simply told her I wanted to talk to her again. Since she had done the first interview very professionally, with a list of questions, she was clearly trying to do it the proper way, by asking bidders the same questions in the interview. It was fine, but I really needed her to know me better. That second meeting turned out to be an hour-long conversation where it became clear to her that I would be a huge asset to her because I had been there before.

I knew a lot about the politics and the economics of the country. And I had the incredible management experience that she wanted. And she knew there were a lot of issues, that there had been a months-long vacancy because the incumbent had died. There were problems in other parts of the embassy as well. I think she decided that I could help her. Long story short, at one point I asked AF/EX what was the status of deciding who would get the job. He said that maybe they should probably think about that and see who bid. And I told him, just so he'd know, that the interviews were already done. Anyway, I got that job. I did the promotion board, and then went to Pretoria. I had sat on promotion boards before, and that one was really quite an experience.

*Q: So, it wasn't the first time doing this threshold board. Now, just one quick thing about promotion boards. As I understand it, you go in and at some point, someone from Human Resources comes in and tells you how many people can be promoted. So, at some point when you begin sifting the wheat from the chaff, you know how many you're going to have to reject, in essence.*

HASKELL: I think it was true in the past that they told the panels exactly the number beforehand. But both times that I sat on a board, it was no longer like that. So, from at least 2012, when I did my first promotion board, which I chaired, it wasn't like that. What would happen was a bit convoluted. There were ways of doing it where each panel member had to rank people, assigning each person a number one through ten.

The board received the files in groups of something like forty. And then each of you get to give this many ones or this many twos, this many threes, this many fours, et cetera. There is some scientific word for that kind of distribution. I can't remember it. And then the board would sit together, and each member would tell the others what number each had given to each specific person. So, I would have said that I gave him a one, that one a four, the next a six, or whatever, using exactly the distribution of ones, twos, threes, et cetera, up to tens. Then we would average it out for each file. But each board can figure out how to do this, because you end up with a lot of ties, with more than one person having the same total. We had to break the ties. Each board member also had to rank order the files individually. And those rankings had to be reconciled so that the board has just one ranked list of everyone that was judged to be promotable. That is the time that the board sends the list to the powers that be. They then came back to the board and told us to take a closer look at this particular group, from person X through person XX.

Depending on how many people were in the cohort, it could be a group of ten, or twenty, or even fifty, I suppose. The board interpreted those instructions to mean that the cutoff for the number of people promoted was somewhere in that range, and they wanted us to look hard at that group to make sure that we were certain of the order. These people would have been very close in the assessment, maybe even tied among ten or more of them at some point in the process. So, we would want to ensure the best of that group were really ranked at the top. The people above that group we assumed were going to be promoted, and at least some of the people in the group would be promoted, but we didn't know how many. That's the way I know that we had been doing it. So you don't know exactly where someone gets cut off.

Each board really did do the discussions, and came up with its procedures for breaking ties. The board could choose to put more emphasis on certain things. There are guidelines you had to follow, of course. But outside of those guidelines, you still had to break ties. And so how do you do that? Each board needed to have three or four mechanisms within which criteria could be used to break ties. Only one wasn't enough because several people, maybe four people might still be tied after applying more than one criterion. So, then you had to have the second, third, and fourth criteria, until you could rank the people one, two, three, four, five, like that, in a group.

There were many criteria to consider using, but the important thing was to be consistent. You could see how many hardship posts [and what differential level] they had served at. You could see who had studied a language [and how many]. Service in Iraq and Afghanistan, at the time, were part of the guidelines that you had already followed. And after applying those criteria, you could still end up with a tie. So, you, you could come up with more, but you needed to have them sorted out before starting the ranking exercise.



Most boards probably have similar kinds of criteria. Another might have been had they served in Washington. It was really whatever the board members thought was important for the overall experience of the people in the cohort and that all board members agreed on. All the board members were experienced people. So, it seems to work, and you know people try hard. Some people tried harder than others to remember not to bring into the discussion things that you were not supposed to. Occasionally somebody just couldn't keep their mouth shut, and they would tell us something that we then had to put our hands over our ears and say out loud some nonsense syllables "la la la la" to keep from hearing what they're saying.

*Q: Wow, I didn't do that. Tell things from personal knowledge, even though you don't see the name, somebody figures out who it is or says, Oh, I knew this person or something, which you're not supposed to say while on the board.*

HASKELL: Right. But we knew the names of every person. We had the entire performance file. It would be hard to take the names out of every document. And, inevitably, there were people that you rated among the files, or reviewed or served directly with. And there is the recusal process. People always wonder if you should do that or not, recuse yourself or ask that someone be recused. I can tell you that the year that I was promoted to minister counselor I requested that someone be recused.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: People often think that if you recuse yourself or someone asks for someone on the promotion board to be recused from decisions on them, personally, that maybe the person being considered did something wrong or made someone mad or something negative—that the person being considered has asked for a board member to be recused because he or she knows something negative. But, I still got promoted. The board doesn't know why someone asked for a board member to be recused. In fact, when you request a member be recused, you can't say why. You just have to say that you don't want this person to be involved in the decision-making on my part. I also recused myself one or two times between the two different boards that I sat on, in cases where I didn't think I would be really objective. But sometimes, to be honest, if you recuse yourself on a particular person that says something in and of itself. It makes the other board members read the file more carefully.

*Q: Oh, okay. That's interesting.*

HASKELL: But I can also say that the time allowed for reading the files made it difficult for us to read thoroughly. No one should consider sitting on a promotion board while continuing to do their "day job." It is too hard. Even when you were doing only the promotion board work, sitting there from eight am to five pm, you were exhausted by five pm because it was so intense. Some people think that they'll just work until eight pm every night [reading files for twelve hours], but you really couldn't do that. Even when you were stopping at five pm, you could sometimes realize that you had just put the last ten files in the do not promote pile. Realistically that was because you started to get tired.

If you were paying attention to that, you would stop there and review those last ten files again in the morning.

That wasn't so great. I mean, you had to be very serious about it. So you had to realize when you did that. And then you had to go back and put those files at the top of the stack to be reviewed again. I found myself doing that occasionally, putting some back in the pile because I didn't feel like I had really been fair. If I couldn't remember having just read them and what I thought about them, I knew I wasn't focusing. One thing that's good about having five or six members on the board was that surely you had thoroughly read any given file. At least one person read a file really carefully. And if the rest of the members seemed to be saying something that one who'd focused disagreed with, they would ask us, Hey, did you see this thing in the file?

I'm like, Oh, I didn't see that. Oh my God, let me go back and look, and then you go back and leave it on, you're horrified. You know, that maybe you thought this person was promotable, but you missed this other whole thing because of the way that the files are laid out and, um, you don't have time to read all these awards, for example. And also my personal opinion of it is if someone does something, a word with you better be in the ER, so then you don't have to read the award. Absolutely. So then why were the awards? Right? It makes no sense. Right? The whole point of getting the award is so that you can distill it into the, uh, the evaluation so that the evaluation reveals and makes you get public recognition for it, right? Yeah. Maybe a little money, maybe not. But I mean, so I never really looked at awards because I felt strongly that if it was an award where they would be in the ER, but you know, there's other things, um, that side of the file, literally that are very important, ah, that you might not think you can see like disciplinary actions and those kinds of things that you need to take into account.

And one thing I thought was really interesting was the difference in the panel members of how to consider disciplinary actions.

*Q: Mm hmm.*

HASKELL: There were some people who felt that everybody deserves a second chance. And there were some people who felt that, no, we have enough people who are qualified and who needed to be promoted, who are excellent and who didn't do anything that resulted in a disciplinary action. So, too bad.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: Yeah. You know some disciplinary actions are worse than others. And there are few enough disciplinary actions out there that if you have one, it means you really messed up.

*Q: Oh yeah, no question. I mean, you know, it could be something where you had too many security violations.*

HASKELL: But separate, that's a separate look.

*Q: Oh, okay.*

HASKELL: Once you have the rank order list, they bring to the board a book of all the people that were in the cohort you were assessing. Usually each panel would assign one member of the panel to check all those people who might be promoted to see their security history. It really didn't help us very much. If someone on the list to be promoted had an infraction, it usually wasn't that big of a deal. It wasn't really telling. I suppose there are out there, people who have really messed up on that, but by and large people are pretty good about security. What tended to be on the list were things like someone didn't file their financial disclosure in time, or they had some sort of financial mis-affairs of some sort, and occasionally there would be an EEO issue or sexual harassment issues. [EEO and sexual harassment issues might have shown up in the performance file as a disciplinary action.] Those are the kinds of things that we saw there—some worse than others, of course—and not very many. The hardest part about being on a board is doing the low ranking. The low ranking is really hard, and it can take as long for the board to get the low ranking and do the letters they have to do as going through all the files. It can take days to get the letter right because the letters have to be in conformance with rigid rules.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: The rules include what you can say in the letter, or in other words, why someone can be low-ranked. What a lot of people don't understand is that you cannot be low-ranked based only on areas for improvement or whatever they're called now. The only time that might be allowed is if you had the same area for improvement several times in a row, and even then, you can use an area for improvement only if it was mentioned in the body of the performance evaluation. Most raters or reviewers don't do that. Nobody told us that when we were writing evaluations that that was how it worked. And very importantly, board members had to be able to identify something in the performance evaluation that illustrates or relates to that area for improvement you were trying to use as a justification for low-ranking. And especially, there couldn't be a positive example in the body of the evaluation about something that was then noted as the area for improvement.

*Q: Yeah. Did you end up sending any back or is that a step before you see it? In other words, sending something back because they violated some aspect of how you're allowed to write them.*

HASKELL: Well, that was supposed to be checked by Human Resources before the file was sent to the board.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: And you don't have time, frankly, to sit and count whether or not examples of all six competencies were there.

*Q: No, I understand. Yeah.*

HASKELL: It was a very good process but too time consuming. It takes up so much of our life between the work requirements statements, properly documented counseling, and writing the evaluation, and then the promotion boards' work as well. But the process is prescribed in the Foreign Service Act. Not the entire process, but it says promotion must be an internal process, internal to the State Department. Now the requirement for a public member on each board was interesting, too. Some public members are incredibly helpful. The one we had on one of the boards, she was okay, but she just really had no reference for any of our work. I think she was maybe an elementary school teacher and had no prior experience with diplomacy or the Foreign Service at all.

Others had been on boards many times. The public members on the threshold board really understood what was at stake. On the threshold board I was on, the public member contributed a lot, and he wasn't shy. He was perfectly comfortable telling us when something made no sense to him. He would ask us why we would think or do this and then explain what he heard from what he was reading. We would put things in context for him. But it was productive to have had that kind of a person there. So, I finished the promotion board, and I had to take FACT [Foreign Affairs Counter-Terrorism] training, which was five days of anti-terrorism or terrorism avoidance training that we had to do. Before, it had been required for people going to Pakistan, Iraq or Afghanistan, and probably others, but the department had decided everybody should have it, but everyone couldn't do it all at once.

They had decided for whatever reason that anybody going to Africa, no matter which post, would have to get it before going to post. I had always wanted to do some training like that. I think it was, for the most part, well done. They had definitely included lots of lessons learned from problems that had occurred in real life in the past—things that could benefit you in your life. Things like how to get out of a smoke-filled building without dying. Those cases are often people getting lost, not being able to find a door out or not knowing where a door was, or getting separated from others. We learned what turned out to be such a simple solution, but nobody had ever taught us this. There were a lot of great aspects in the medical part of the training.

We had a whole day of medical training. It was about treating victims of blasts, like IEDs [improvised explosive devices] or other terrorist attacks. They told us they didn't even teach CPR [cardio-pulmonary resuscitation] anymore. Rather, they taught us how to put in what they called a "nose hose," but it was a thing that helps the victim breathe. It also pulls or pushes the tongue out of the way so they can get air. And then after making sure the victim could breathe, it was basically about stopping the bleeding. It was pretty much how to get victims onto a helicopter. It wasn't about people who might have had a heart attack or a stroke or something like that. But it was really interesting. And they had these incredible mannequins that were lifelike. They weighed as much as a real person and had

injuries on them in places you wouldn't expect. It was supposed to teach us that we had to look everywhere to find that life-threatening injury and do what needed to be done. It was useful.

We had the car driving segment, which I enjoyed, but mainly because my dad had taught me pretty well how to get a car out of a skid, to control a car while driving fast, including zigzagging and cornering. They no longer teach people to shoot. I thought that was wise. They had discovered that there were only three kinds of people: people who thought they already knew how to shoot and did, people who refused to touch a gun, and people who wanted to learn but were crazy. So, what they did was they tried to teach us a bit about how to recognize the sound of different types of guns and how to recall events. How to say what happened first and then and then. Without warning us a car came screaming up and three guys got out and did a few things very quickly and then left. We were asked to relate what happened. Eyewitnesses have different recollections for sure.

Some people remembered that it was heavy arms fire, but others said that it was a pistol. Even remembering how many people were there or what kind of car it was subject to debate. It taught us to be aware that this is a problem, not remembering things. They taught us what kinds of things can be protective against gunfire, what we should hide behind. Would a piece of concrete help you? How much would it help you? How much does the metal of a car body help you, or not, as the case may be? And the interesting thing was that the thing that absolutely could save you from a bullet was a sandbag. Really, it's a sandbag. I had no idea. So, they were fun, interesting things to learn. It was a little bit worrisome to think we had to learn this stuff, but it was interesting.

And on the final day they have a complex simulation. They have built a village, a market. They have people they brought in to play various characters. Each of us was assigned a role. Maybe you were an embassy officer, and somebody was a security officer, et cetera. You were given a task, maybe to go meet with the foreign minister or with a local source or to visit a foreign assistance project. Or maybe you were sent off to meet with the opposition somewhere. So off we went to role play, knowing that at some point, something would happen, and we were expected to demonstrate what we had learned all week. We had to follow all the things we had learned to get ourselves to the helicopter in the end.

*Q: Right.*

HASKELL: The simulation went through about half a day of role-playing, including running to avoid gunfire, hiding, making it to the safe haven, putting on personal protective gear. It was also about how to follow directions to get that helicopter. Could you even really climb into the helicopter yourself? It was a bit of scramble as it was high off the ground with no steps. It was a very intense week. And then I went off to Pretoria. So, I want to, I think, go ahead and move on and talk about Pretoria.

*Q: Yes. Do you want to take a quick break, or we can just go on?*

HASKELL: I'd rather go on. So, in August 2016, I flew off to South Africa. Of course, I had been posted there before from 2006 to 2010 as deputy management counselor. I was very happy to be going back. I had really enjoyed my tour there, and we had a lot of issues. The same kind of issues we had always had. And then of course there were the inevitable new ones. It's a big mission. The embassy and three consulates probably total four hundred or so direct-hire Americans. And if you took into account family members, it was probably over twelve hundred Americans. I don't remember the number of local staff, but it was certainly more than the number of American direct-hires. The United States hasn't had a very good relationship with the government of South Africa. It's a very difficult relationship in terms of access and influence.

*Q: Yeah, I have talked to other people who have served in South Africa, and they all say the same thing. That the government turns out to be extremely protocol conscious, extremely bureaucratic, more than you would expect, correct?*

HASKELL: Yes. Now, the actual people—South Africans—love us, for the most part. The job can be more difficult, and you can feel less influential than you might in many other African countries. But in my second tour in Pretoria in the management counselor role, I was very happy that my team—the section chiefs who were pretty senior and pretty experienced—were all quite good. We identified issues we were able to work on. I think the best thing about having a competent senior management team was that I didn't have to do all those things in the weeds that you so often have to do. As a senior officer, you always think that you are supposed to be the leader, setting the overall direction and those kinds of things.

But we often would get totally bogged down in doing the nitty gritty stuff, unable to address the larger problems. But I was able to do that there. And that was exactly where my skills were being used well—the complete opposite of what I had experienced just previously at Climate Interactive. So, as a team we were able to address the actual concept of who is the team. We worked on changing the silo effect of the State Department. It's not just the State Department, of course, but we are very siloed. The State Department had been talking about getting out of the siloed organizational trap the whole time I had been in the Foreign Service. I was in the State Department for more than thirty years. So, I tried to get my team to embrace the concept that the team was in fact horizontal, not vertical. For example, the heads of the different management silos—human resources, financial management, general services, et cetera, the leaders of those groups—their team was not the people below them, rather that their team was their colleagues who were also the heads of those management subsections. The employees comprising each subsection also constituted teams, but they were not the primary team of the subsection chiefs. If we could figure out how to make that work, the lower level teams would then begin to work better together. In every embassy I've ever been at, there were varying degrees of cooperation—or lack thereof—among the different management sub-sections.

So, very often, just as an example, the people in the financial management office may harbor unpleasant thoughts about the general service [GSO] section. They would

complain that GSO never sends them the right paperwork or that they are too slow or don't answer questions promptly. This kind of lack of cooperation is usually mutual. So, we had an offsite where we talked about this new team concept. By the way, I didn't make this up. I got it from a book. I bought a copy of the book for each member of the new team and required them all to read it.

*Q: It wasn't Gallup's StrengthsFinder, was it?*

HASKELL: No. But we did use that system in our country team offsite that same year. The book I used was by a guy named Patrick Lencioni. It's called *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. It's very well done. I had read a lot of management and leadership books, and that one really resonated with me.

*Q: Just a quick question, because I took part in the StrengthsFinder as well and was not terribly impressed. What did you think of it?*

HASKELL: I wasn't impressed either, but you know, probably the main reason I wasn't impressed was because they identified in me a "strength" that was something that I found completely undesirable. I thought to myself that that was not a strength for anyone. And I think it was something like that I needed to feel important. That's not a strength. That's just awful. I didn't and don't want to be that way. It didn't make sense to me. I refused to put it up on the little sticky note during the group exercise.

*Q: I also didn't like mine and didn't think it was entirely accurate.*

HASKELL: I still don't know how that would be considered a strength.

*Q: Yeah. And they have locked lots of other odd things like "woo-ers," people who go around and try to romance things out of other sections by using flattery. All sorts of odd "strengths" that you wouldn't want to be known for.*

HASKELL: Right. I agree. I wasn't thrilled with it, but we did use StrengthsFinder for the offsite with our country team. That offsite was valuable. But not because of the StrengthsFinder session. Maybe if you remind me, I can talk about that later. But the management section—we did an offsite early on where we talked about this new team concept and tried to agree on whether or not this was something we wanted to try and how we would do it. I, of course, had in my head how I wanted our offsite to happen—what my goal was for the day. As the day went on, I realized that that wasn't the way it was going to go and that I needed to embrace where they were going.

*Q: Oh, interesting. Okay.*

HASKELL: And because they were going in the right direction in terms of agreeing to just try this new team concept, I realized I had to let it evolve organically. I thought I knew the way to do it but that wasn't the way they came up with. They had a different way to do it, and it was a fine way. I just had to remind myself that I didn't need to

hammer at them to get them to do it my way, that going in their direction was the best thing I could hope for—that they were embracing something and they were moving forward without being led by the nose. I thought that that was really good. They discussed what would be the biggest positive thing we could do as a management section to change the perception of service provision, and what was the best way to do it. They agreed on that.

Sometimes people had a very negative outlook of service provision that was not actually deserved. So we discussed how we could change the perception of the service the most effective way? They came up with this great idea that the best way to address that would be to make certain that in the first sixty days at post people should receive the most excellent service we could possibly do. I thought that was great. And so, we started to try to work on that. They also said that they felt they had gotten so much out of the offsite that they wanted to do it every six or eight weeks.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: And they said that we should do it on a Friday, the workday ended early. And they do not want to do it in the embassy. They wanted somebody to volunteer each time to host it at their house. And then we would all sort of bring food. So, we did start to do that

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: I felt that was a positive sign because it meant that they were getting enough out of it, and they didn't think it was baloney.

*Q: That's fascinating.*

HASKELL: Not everybody was completely wedded to the concept. We had one person who would show up and just sit there. I told him that he had to come, he had to pay attention, and to please contribute because he had important experience and viewpoints to share. One of the things we implemented was what we would discuss at weekly meetings. The management sections at every embassy had a few regular meetings, especially one that included other agencies, such as a weekly meeting where management liaisons from each agency was invited to participate.

That was one of those meetings that if you didn't routinely have one, you would get dinged by the inspector general when you had an inspection. Those meetings were somewhat helpful, but most people really didn't like them. But we had to have them. We actually created a second weekly meeting that we wanted to be more useful. It was a smaller group. It was mainly just the same group I had identified for the offsite, as we didn't include the other agencies because we were trying to solidify our own team first, on how to work better together. People were required to show up. Each time there would be a particular discussion topic. It was the place that people needed to bring a problem



that they were having. And they needed to ask their colleagues—those in their new primary team, this horizontal group—for ideas.

*Q: Correct.*

HASKELL: We would tend to think that I should stay in my lane and not get out of my lane. So, we made an agreement. I told them that they all had served in several embassies, they had opinions about how we should be doing things, and that they had to say it out loud, respectfully. And we had to listen and hear what was being said, also respectfully. No one was required to do what was being suggested, but this was a way to get more ideas on the table. And it was a way to start to build confidence in each other, to trust each other, which was a big part of this whole effort to change the team. We had to trust each other.

*Q: Now this team building is just the Foreign Service Officers or was it also the locally engaged staff?*

HASKELL: It was me [the management counselor], the deputy management counselor, and the whole group of senior direct-hire Americans. It was just that group, plus the management officers from the consulates. It was the same people I had included in the offsite where the decision was made to pursue the new team concept. Because my whole goal was to get that group of people—State Department colleagues, the State Department senior management section team to feel that they were, together, their main team and to look to each other to succeed.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: Part of the effort was holding each other accountable but not in the way we usually interpret that. I know that those are the words I used with Congolese in Kinshasa to mean that if they didn't do the right thing, we would sanction them. But in this context, I meant that we should hold each other accountable from the perspective of noticing if your colleague, really your team member, seemed to be having a problem. Like was their section falling down somehow and people were noticing it and it was affecting the perception of service overall.

So, it was not to tell someone they were screwing up and to get with the program. But it was to note that it seemed someone was experiencing some obstacles and could we, the team, help them? It was to ask each other if we could help identify or solve the problem. Was there a way we could change a process amongst ourselves to effect a positive change? That was what we meant by accountability. Again, these were not my original ideas. This was all from the book I mentioned. But everybody had read the book and bought in, or at least pretended to. We moved in that direction, and we were making progress. At each of these meetings, people would bring issues. I tried to guide the discussion, to bring people in, to ask them to offer their thoughts out loud. And I would call people out, to ask them if they had experienced a similar problem. Had they served at

another embassy where there had been a similar problem to what your colleague is talking about?

This was a chance to talk and to trust that no one would get mad at you. No one would belittle you. No one would bully you. No one would think you were crazy because we were there as a team to help each other. We were there to support each other, not to say unhelpful things, such as you don't know what you're doing, or you are terrible at your job. Yes, sometimes those things have been said in State Department meetings. Those are kinds of awful things that happen. We also were dealing at the time with the hiring freeze after the start of the Trump Administration. The infamous hiring freeze which affected us tremendously because South Africa had an enormous number of eligible family members working in the management section, even in roles traditionally held by local staff. It was that way because of the family member hiring preference, and it was an English language post. So, for example, we had family members working in the financial management section in jobs that happened to become vacant and if they had the relevant experience we would hire them into what we would normally fill with local staff.

We had some fifty family members employed throughout the mission. We couldn't fill any of those positions that went vacant. And many of the family members were leaving at the end of their spouse's tour, in just a few months. We were trying to figure out how we were going to be able to get the work done without filling those positions. Even though they were traditionally local staff and they weren't subject to the hiring freeze, Washington made the determination that it wasn't about the nature of the job historically, but rather who was in the job at that moment in time. So, we decided not to deal with it the "normal" way, which was to muddle along. Rather, we decided that each team member should identify the tasks, the duties that their subsection absolutely had to do, and then each week one or two people shared their list during that new meeting.

They would present what they had identified as the three or four most important tasks, or whatever number they came up with, but it couldn't go on forever because that would have eliminated the objective right there. But then we, the team, would critique their list. Some people really felt that our number one duty was to make sure that the front office got what they wanted. I felt somewhat differently in this instance. I asked, was that really true? For example, I asked the information technology person if the "must do" task was really keeping the front office happy or was it keeping the computer system up and running so that everyone could do most of their work?

*Q: Oh, okay.*

HASKELL: Some people took it a little bit as sort of "suck up" exercise, and I really wanted it to be a wake-up call to people. I wanted them to know really which services simply had to be provided, and what could we get away without doing. Could we justify what we were doing when we were really short and didn't have enough people. And we had just started with that. Everything that I'm talking about, we started as a result of the management section leadership offsite.

Then, post had the country team offsite that I mentioned before. It was a very good offsite. It was huge. It was the biggest country team offsite I had ever encountered. And we did include local staff. We had more than just the section or agency heads. We had other people we thought would benefit from being there and could give input that would be useful. We came up in the end with three or four things that we were going to move forward on and identified who would be responsible for each of those things. Of course, a lot of things ended up in the management section. One of those main goals was increasing and improving local staff engagement.

Engagement. Okay. That's a big, fancy word. We, in the State Department used it a lot, but it was also about—in that particular post but I feel to be true in a lot of posts—local staff. That was, especially if they had been around for years—they feel disrespected. They feel unseen. They feel that they don't have any influence and that we come and go. They just keep plodding along. In South Africa, it had developed into a problem where we could not have an event to try to bring people together that wasn't during work hours, because the local staff would not show up. Okay, there were always three or four people, you know, who had become friends with the Americans, and they would show up. But we could not get the vast majority of local staff to show for something they were not getting paid to do. And that was, to me, a sign of a lack of feeling of belonging. So, we were sort of tasked with how to do something about that. We tried to figure out ways to do that. And we went with a multi-pronged effort that we thought would address these issues.

*Q: Okay.*

HASKELL: Because I had enduring relationships with local staff from my previous tour, I worked well with the local staff committee. I mentioned that they needed to do a survey, that a survey done by the Americans would not be taken seriously, that local staff would likely view it as more of the same, blah, blah, blah and that nothing would change. I felt that if the local staff really honestly wanted to address the issues, the committee had to address the issues. This is a mistake we make a lot, we just forget that the local staff had their own influential people and that we needed to engage them. I felt that the local staff committee should do a survey and find out what the members felt were the problems, what were the insights that would help us address issues—together. I didn't want it to be a been-there-done-that experience for the local staff.

We also wanted to figure out how to engage local staff on innovation. I know this is also a buzzword, and I hate using buzzwords but we had decided as part of our overall way to improve our management services to take advantage of something that the M/PRI office [Office of Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation in the Bureau of Management Affairs] had called a tune-up process. This was where they would send some people out to post who would look at processes and then provide advice on how to be more efficient. It was expensive. But we had decided, after having read reviews from different posts who had used the service, that our mission would benefit from it.

Let me explain M/PRI just a bit. That was the office where the State Department would figure out the “right” size for each embassy by working with that embassy and the

agencies with presence there. Posts had to do a right-sizing exercise every five years or so, or if there was a new embassy building in play. But M/PRI had come up with this idea of a tune up process. Now the tune up was [I don't know if it still exists] a process that wasn't perfect. One of the things that was problematic as far as I was concerned was that they were using a "beltway bandit" company to do the tune ups, which was not ideal because they didn't know anything about an embassy or how they were supposed to function.

But because there were other embassies that had had impactful results, we decided to do it, keeping in mind that maybe ours would have a narrower focus. But one of the elements they offered that many of the other embassies hadn't taken advantage of was this idea of a sort of competition, called an Innovation Challenge, to encourage innovative ideas to solve problems. I can't remember what they called it. They organized the first step before they finished up their visit to post. We started with a management staff because I could be more directive with the supervisors, if needed. As in, we are going to do this.

We told the local staff—and we purposely made the teams only local staff—that they should form teams, identify a problem that could be addressed by the Management section. The teams had to form themselves. They could include members from other sections or other agencies. It didn't matter. And I really encouraged them to be inclusive, but that didn't work out as well as I had hoped. It could have one iteration. I also made a rule that team members should be people who had been working at the embassy less than ten years. I know that to say that people have been there for as long as ten years sounds crazy, but that's how our embassies work. I wanted new-ish people on these teams, and no Americans.

Each team had to identify a problem, and they had to figure out how they wanted to fix it. Then they had to make a pitch. They had five to ten minutes to make a pitch, describing the problem and their solution. We had only four or five teams, but I liked that we had five teams. And I liked that the teams came up with problems that weren't necessarily in their specific section.

*Q: Interesting.*

HASKELL: And all of the issues they identified were legitimate. We had a panel consisting of the acting DCM and a couple of others, including me. We listened to the pitches. We also let anyone who wanted to attend, so there was an audience. We had this idea that there'd be a winning pitch, but in the end we didn't really stick with the competition format. Every team had done so well and was so insightful in what the problem was that we wanted to move forward on all the teams' ideas.

We asked all the teams to move forward with their solutions. Two teams identified similar issues, so we asked them to work together. So then of course we had to very carefully address how they could do this work as it wasn't necessarily in their job descriptions. I met with each team and told them they needed to talk to their supervisors,

get agreement on how much time they could spend on this project, have it included in their work requirements, and agree on how much time they could spend on it, maybe two hours a week or five hours a month or whatever their supervisor agreed to. And if what they were working on was not part of their responsibilities, they had to go to the responsible section chief and get them to agree that the team could work on the issue and that they would support them and participate.

And then I would meet with them once a month or so to see how they were doing, to assure them we supported what they were doing. We would give them ideas for next steps.

*Q: Now, the one question I have about the whole process is did their recommendations require additional resources?*

HASKELL: Yes and no. As a quite experienced management officer, I would say that one thing that people have the wrong idea about was that there was no money. There was money. For much of the past twenty or twenty-five years, there was nearly always money. But people seemed to get it into their heads that there was never any money to do anything that they were not already doing. This was not strictly true. You could always ask the bureau for money. You could do that. Of course, you had to justify it. And it was not that hard. I knew what our budget was for our post. So, for example, one team identified that we had a terrible SharePoint site. They were not an information technology team.

I was so impressed because they had done the research and found a post that they thought had a really excellent SharePoint site.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: So, I suggested they find the local staff member who was responsible at that embassy for that SharePoint site and we would pay travel and per diem for them to come to Pretoria to help our staff improve our SharePoint site.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: The teams had identified issues that we could address. And the people who were participating in the Innovation Challenge believed that they could have influence. They were learning that they could do something to change things. I felt that these activities were things that could be ongoing. It didn't need to be one time shot—that if they could see a problem and succeed at changing it for the better, it would really change the dynamic between the Americans and the local staff.

*Q: Absolutely. Yeah.*

HASKELL: For that reason, I was very sad to leave so unexpectedly. I was looking forward to working on this issue of local staff engagement for another two years. I had

also been asked by the Front Office to help other sections that were struggling for various reasons. For example, one particular office that had to work collegially with other agencies had gotten a bit off track in its own organization. It had somehow managed to grow to too many people who were doing things that probably should have been done by others or didn't even need to be done at all. Maybe there was a bit of overreach. And, there was a real problem between the leadership and the rest of the employees in that office.

So, I worked individually with the leadership on how to try to address their own shortcomings, sort of coaching, using my own experience to prove they might try to get things back on the right track and to meet obligations of the office. I also prepared a presentation to the whole group, including the leader to try to acknowledge that there was a problem and provide a framework for them to think about the problem in a grand scheme sort of way. We talked about the world and global change and how that affects individuals and how we could apply that to ourselves. And how could we then look for ways to acknowledge our reactions and find solutions to the problems that could be created, things we didn't even know were affecting us but clearly were.

We tried to sort of bring it down closer and get people to talk, to get people to say, Well, I think we should be doing things like this or like that. Even though we can't always do what our subordinates think we should be doing in the way they think we should be doing it, if we can't hear what they're saying, then we can't even start to address the issues.

*Q: Correct.*

HASKELL: It was a long session, two or three hours, but they seem to really benefit from this effort. Sometimes the way to get started is to get people to realize that somebody genuinely understands that they are in bad straits here and acknowledges that there is a problem with the leadership. And it also made the leader listen and hear all these same things, for him to think that maybe he could change his approach by having this understanding of how things affect people. That they have so many things in their life that they don't control.

My presentation for that was a mix of things I took actually from a Tom Friedman book, *Thank You for Being Late*, and also from Patrick Lencioni's *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. That notion of team was really a very good one and that team was totally functional. Maybe if I had stayed longer, I would have seen more results from our efforts. All of these things that I felt, and still do feel, really good about having started, I felt, and still feel, terrible about abandoning. By then my husband was being confirmed as ambassador to the Republic of Congo, and we had worked out how we would see each other between Pretoria and Brazzaville. I thought it was a brilliant plan at the time. There were direct flights from Joburg to Brazzaville three times a week. And I figured I could go once a month for three or four days for two months and then the third month he would come to visit me.

That plan seemed fine. Then one day we saw coming through our inboxes, an urgent vacancy notice for DCM [deputy chief of mission] Kinshasa. I instantly hit delete with no consideration whatsoever. I mean, zero interest. I didn't even open it, but of course my husband was not at post yet. He hadn't been confirmed yet, or maybe he'd been confirmed, but he hadn't been sworn in. It must've been not quite yet confirmed as it was in maybe April of 2017. I had been in Pretoria less than a year. However, a day or so later, my husband sent that urgent vacancy email to me and told me he thought I should bid on it. And I wrote back a solid no, I didn't want to do that. He kind of kept sending it to me for a few days. And he kept making arguments about why it would be better if I lived in Kinshasa than in Pretoria. I would just be across the river. It would be so much easier to see each other. We could see each other so much more. And I could see that it was going to be very hurtful to him if I didn't look into this. So I sent an email to someone in the Africa Bureau Front Office expressing vague interest.

And an email was written back to me that was not very encouraging. That email was immediately followed by a second email that said that they knew why I was interested and that they were not going to consider that. Well, that really annoyed me. So, I wrote back that I would never bid on a job I didn't think I was qualified for.

*Q: Wait. The second email is assuming you just want to be close to your husband and you have nothing to do with—*

HASKELL: —with my being a good fit for the job. I sent another email to somebody else that I knew had recently been in Kinshasa asking what it was really like there. The message I got back was that I should just stay in Pretoria and enjoy it. People were not giving me any indication that they thought I would get the job, nothing like, oh, you should bid. No you-would-be-great-there comments.

So, I thought, Okay, this is great. I'll bid on it. They won't select me. Everyone's happy. I tried and that's the way the cookie crumbled. But to bid, I had to get approval from the chief of mission in Pretoria. So, I went to talk to the chargé d'affaires because our ambassador, of course, had left due to the change of administration and our DCM was chargé. Her first reaction was that, no, she really needed me there, in South Africa, that I was doing all these great things. But then she stopped herself. And I have to say, she was fabulous for this. She told me, no, she wouldn't put her own needs first and that I was the right person for that job.

And I told her that I wouldn't have considered bidding on the job if it hadn't been for her. Working for her had been one of the best experiences in the Foreign Service because while she was clearly the boss, she used my expertise very well.

She understood that I had pretty good experience in the country, South Africa. She knew she could ask me for advice about things outside of management. She wrote in my performance evaluation that I was part of her kitchen cabinet. She went directly to me to be acting DCM when the other, long-term acting DCM wasn't around. She wasn't allowed to make me acting DCM for a long period because my husband was the deputy

assistant secretary [DAS] for southern Africa and Washington wouldn't allow it for nepotism reasons. It was because he would be the chargé's reviewing officer on her performance evaluation. So it wasn't until my husband physically left that desk to get prepared to be ambassador that they would let me be acting DCM. She seemed annoyed by Washington's decision on that, but okay, fine.

So, she used my expertise more informally. The person who was acting DCM was someone I had worked with before, who had been my supervisor before, and who also had a lot of respect for my knowledge and experience. She didn't feel the least bit threatened by my inclusion in the inner circle, so to speak. It was a very collegial arrangement.

We had some other senior section heads who were problematic, who made the chargé's life a bit more difficult. I tried to provide useful advice. We had some big, hairy issues that came up in terms of sort of family advocacy issues, really unusual things. They were able to rely on my experience in those issues, which I think was helpful. I had a very different approach on how to handle some of it, different than she might have had on her own. And I think our strengths were complementary for working together. She could have contacts with certain people, and I would have contacts with other people and kind of make sure that things stayed in the right lanes and that we each remembered our role. I had had more experience in these issues than many senior officers have. It's not a kind of experience one would wish to have.

We had many issues in Santo Domingo, obviously they're not things you can ever talk about, but collectively it was a lot. So I kind of knew how to work with it, where to go for resources. I always wanted to work compassionately and to not be judgmental. Not that the chargé was judgmental, but she didn't have the experience necessarily to know some of the different avenues we could take. She did a fabulous job of handling it, but I think it was good to have us as a team doing it. Anyway, the chargé had given me the opportunity to see the value that I brought to the leadership team. And so that's what I meant when I said I wouldn't have even considered bidding on the Kinshasa job if I hadn't been working for her. I mean, when she said to me that I was the right person for that job, I knew she knew what she was talking about. And I thought, okay, fine. I can do it then. But I did bid on it thinking I wasn't going to be selected. Eventually, the Africa Bureau proceeded with phone interviews, done by one of the DASs.

The questions in the interview played to my strengths in a way that maybe wouldn't always have been the case. She did some what-if scenarios, how would you handle this or that, or the other thing. And I had experience in those things. So, I was able to say, well, this is the way I think and the way I might handle that situation, based on experience. They offered me the job. I really wanted to stay in Pretoria, and also there were some aspects of the job that I was a bit worried about. One of them was that they had said excellent French was mandatory. That was one of the reasons I thought would knock me out of consideration, because I did not have excellent French. My French was rusty and old and had never been good, let alone excellent. So, when they offered me the job, I said I would take the job on two conditions—that I would get at least six weeks of brush-up



French and that I would not be long-term chargé. I knew that there was no ambassador assigned to Kinshasa and no one in the pipeline.

*Q: Oh.*

HASKELL: And they told me no problem, that they already had the next temporary chargé lined up and that that would not be a problem. They also said there would be no problem for me to get the brush-up French. I curtailed my tour and my departure from Pretoria coincided almost exactly with my husband's arrival in Brazzaville. He actually flew to South Africa and stayed with me for four or five days. Then we flew together to Brazzaville so that I could be with him on his first arrival. That was nice. We also were able to take our dog to live with him while I was in Washington for my DCM training and for what I thought would be six weeks of French. My husband brought her, the dog, across the Congo river when I arrived in Kinshasa so she could live with me.

While I was in the DCM/Principal Officer course, I went into the Africa Bureau front office to meet with a DAS to ask what my instructions were for Kinshasa and what were the big policy and management issues I would find there. The DAS was quite busy and when she got to me, she told me that she had only ten minutes with me before she had to leave for an official event. She told me that she was there just to tell me that I had to go to Kinshasa before the end of the month, that I had to go without any French brush-up and that I would be chargé pretty much upon arrival.

*Q: Holy cow!*

HASKELL: I just looked at her and told her that in that case I was not going. Then, after a beat or so, I decided that the chargé thing was doable but that I simply wouldn't be able to do the job without the French, that I would fail. You know, no U.S. embassy has a translator or interpreter for the chief of mission. It just doesn't work that way. So I just said that I'm not going. She told me that I had to go. I said, again, that I was not going without French, that that was the deal. I agreed to be chargé. That was my compromise. The DAS got up and looked at the calendar. She counted days and told me that I could have six days of one-on-one French.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: So, I got my six days of French while I was doing consultations. Then I jumped on a plane and went to Kinshasa. I arrived on a Friday. On Monday, the temporary chargé took me with him on his farewell calls with the government, and then I was chargé for fourteen months. It wasn't that the bureau had acted in bad faith. It was that the State Department's Legal Office had cracked down and said no more retired people could go out as chargé. That change happened just two or three weeks after I had accepted the job.

Evidently, the Kinshasa didn't have senior people at post that the Africa Bureau felt could be put into a long-term chargé role. The ambassador had left in December 2016,

and the DCM had left a few months after that. Both had left unexpectedly with only one to two weeks notice. So the post was in a little bit of a pickle. They had already had a retired ambassador as chargé for six months, and I was the one selected from their urgent vacancy notice for a DCM.

The Legal Office's decision on retired people being chargé meant the bureau couldn't send the person they intended to be the chargé, and I wouldn't arrive for a few months. So, they took a sitting U.S. ambassador in another African country and sent him to Kinshasa until I could arrive. He was supposed to be there for three months, which was going to allow me to get my French and then go to post. Instead he was there for two months and they sent me with six days of French. Upon my arrival at post, I immediately set up a one-hour French lesson for every morning, first thing. So that is my one year, a little bit less, about eleven months in Pretoria and how I got to Kinshasa. I think I had set in motion some fabulous initiatives in Pretoria, and that I would have had a wonderful tour with some contributions that I think would have benefited post. But in the scheme of things, I think that the Kinshasa tour, which I already talked about, allowed me to have even bigger contributions if you look at it from the perspective of maybe the number of people who might have benefitted. And the job in Kinshasa was much more external, not solely internal.

*Q: And in the end, there really is ferry service back and forth from Kinshasa to Brazzaville? Or was that talked about but didn't really exist?*

HASKELL: So, ferry is a big word. The two cities are located on the Congo River. For people who've never studied the Congo, the river comes up from the Atlantic coast. It goes up a long, two hundred-mile stretch of rapids where elevation is gained. Then it opens out into this big broad what some people call a lake but traditionally was called Stanley's Pool. It is there the river suddenly gets quite wide for a bit and then continues north, eventually curving around east and back sort of south.

The two cities are located where the river starts to widen out. So it's not too wide near the ports. Each of the cities has a port, which they both call The Beach. There's no beach. And they're not directly across from each other. Once you're on the water, the distance between them is a couple of kilometers. In an embassy speedboat the trip is eight or nine minutes. There are commercial boats that you can take, but it's not easy. It's time consuming. It's a bit crazy expensive, maybe twenty-five bucks each way. But you would have to show up at the port two hours early, get in line, do paperwork. This would be even if you used the embassy's expediter. The embassy on each side has expeditors to help embassy people cross. We had people crossing three or four days a week, and, also, there were boats taking DPO [diplomatic post office] and pouch mail across. Brazzaville gets its DPO mail through Kinshasa.

As chargé I had someone to help us get across the river, but it felt wrong to use an expediter on a Saturday morning. And then the hours of the port on each side were only nine am to four pm, except Sunday, when it was nine am to noon. Once I tried going across for a day trip. It wasn't worth it. I had to get permission from Washington every

time I left the country, right. And because we didn't have an ambassador in Kinshasa, every time I left, it was a double absence that required approval from all kinds of high-level people in the department. So, it was a big hassle the whole eighteen months I was in Kinshasa. I was chargé for fourteen months. I went to Brazzaville only five times in those eighteen months. I think that included when I flew up from Pretoria with my husband for his initial arrival at post as ambassador. My husband was able to come a lot more because he had a DCM who could be chargé while he was out of the Republic of Congo.

So, each embassy has a boat, more than one boat. We didn't tend to use the public boats, which were probably not the safest boats. Right. Although, the whole time I was there were no boat incidents that I heard of. But, for example, the public boats don't necessarily have two engines, and the Congo River moves. The currents are to be respected. And the rapids, literally, you can see them. If you ask a random Congolese what would happen if the boat motor broke down, they will tell you that fishermen will come to save you. I wasn't so sure. The fishermen are in pirogues—a canoe made of a hollowed-out log with no engine. Our embassy boats—the ones we owned had two engines. And the embassy boat pilots who were embassy employees had been trained on safety. And the engines were supposedly well maintained.

Even now that I'm retired and not working, I go over pretty often from Brazzaville to Kinshasa because I have a medical appointment over there every so often and because the Lebanese guy who does my hair does such a great job. Because there were more than a few people crossing regularly—mostly some political officers, some folks from the defense attaché's office, and USAID officers. They come back and forth fairly often. So I am able—any embassy person could—to cross on an embassy boat that's going/coming. In that case, there is no charge except to the official party that scheduled the trip [i.e. State, Defense, USAID, et cetera]. But it's not like anyone can use it for pleasure activities. I'm told that in "the old days" people took the boats out from sand bar trips and even water skiing on the river. However, because my husband Todd was the ambassador in ROC, they would send a boat for him no matter what. So he would come over on a boat around noon on many Fridays, just as the embassies were closing. And then he would go back on Monday morning on the nine am boat, often after having meetings at the embassy in Kinshasa. USAID, CDC, and DAO were all also working in the ROC, so the meetings were always legit business.

This worked out well for us, but it was far from ideal. There were many times when we couldn't see each other because one or the other of us had work on the weekends. Or if his DCM was on leave and there wasn't a good choice to be chargé. When we had the ordered departure around the elections, neither of us could cross the river for a good six or eight weeks. So yeah, this concept that it's so easy to cross, well, not routinely for weekend visits, let's say.

*Q: Yeah. I already sort of heard it was not being as promised. And we've already talked about your time in Kinshasa and the period going up to the elections, the transition. Looking back on that now, since you're still in the region, and you're still going back and*

*forth to Kinshasa, is the DRC, the Democratic Republic of the Congo a little more stable now, given that they did have a relatively peaceful transition?*

HASKELL: I would say yes. Does that mean things have changed significantly? Not so much. Conspiracy theories are still a dime a dozen. There is still violence in the east, not as much violence in the east, but unfortunately the violence in the area of the Ebola outbreak is still ongoing. That's a place where some of the violence has historically been pretty bad. It was quieter for quite some time. And then lately it's really erupted to be much more violent again. And it does impact the response to the Ebola outbreak. Sure, it's interesting. When I go to Kinshasa, I have a very limited circle. There are security measures. For example, you're not allowed to take taxis. And I'm not official, but I'm kind of official because I'm the wife of the U.S. ambassador in Brazzaville. Blah, blah, blah. It's been difficult from that perspective.

I'm trying hard to not have an impact on Embassy Kinshasa. The places I usually go, if I walked, it would take me ten minutes from the port, but they don't want me to walk from the port to that office. And they don't like us to take taxis. They feel a bit like they are responsible or that they want to do me a courtesy, not just because I am the wife of the ambassador across the river, but because I was the charg  . For now we've kind of worked it out, and not just for me. We've worked it out for anybody who does want to do it because people from Embassy Brazzaville want to go to Kinshasa for various non-tourism reasons.

What the two embassies have done is made an agreement that a boat will go across on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and anybody who has a reason to go can go on the boat. This should make it easier for everyone, except that Friday doesn't really work unless someone is going only one way as the boat pilots' hours are the same as the embassies, which close on Fridays some time just after noon.

When I go, I walk around a relatively small area near the embassy where I can go to my medical appointment. I can go to the supermarket. I can even get my haircut. I can meet friends at restaurants. And that works out well. But it hasn't been easy, and it often sometimes feels that getting back to the port to catch the boat at three pm is a bit messy. To avoid my walking to the port, I usually stand on a street corner and wait for whomever is supposed to pick me up. Sometimes wires are crossed or things come up but I am unaware. I will be very happy to be done with the whole thing and to not be in Brazzaville anymore.

But, back to your question. What I hear when I am in Kinshasa is that everything is worse. Everything is more expensive, that Tshisekedi and his cronies are more corrupt than Kabila was/is, and that Kabila is really still in charge. But these things don't make sense, though it is more expensive. The prices have gone up. I'm not entirely sure why. It is true that there are going to be people who are corrupt.

And I think I mentioned before, I don't think that Felix Tshisekedi is a horribly corrupt person. He certainly wasn't when he took office. And I think it will be very difficult for

him to remain completely non-corrupt, and that's just going to be a fact of life. I do not believe that Kabila is the puppet master of Tshisekedi. Many people think that. It's not true. I don't have secret sources; I have only my instinct and my experience there. And what I find through the grapevine is that I'm right. That, in fact, Kabila's crowd is not as powerful as the general Congolese population thinks. Not as powerful as the outsiders who think they know everything. It's not necessarily true. But people are worried about things. There are lots of problems for the everyday person and even for the rich people, too.

For whatever reason Tshisekedi's Administration has decided to improve the transportation network all at the same time, over much of Kinshasa. Well, in Gombe anyway, where most of the government ministries and international community lives and does business. They're building flyovers and doing other roadworks. You can imagine that has caused horrific traffic problems. Our embassy people who live in certain neighborhoods are enduring four-hour commutes. That has caused problems. The embassy has tried to institute flex-time and shuttle systems to try to alleviate some of the impact. It's not perfect over there, but it's also not awful. And I think that from the perspective of their step forward in democracy, which was the whole policy goal for the time I was there, it's kind of working, which is the only thing you could hope for.

*Q: And then the other, the last question that I have is now that you really are retired, where do you see yourself? Does your husband plan on making this his last assignment or has he made up his mind? When your time is your own again, and you're not necessarily going to the next post with your spouse, where do you see yourself?*

HASKELL: My husband's tour is supposed to end this summer, but there are a lot of problems with that. A few years ago, the State Department came up with a new rule that chiefs of mission couldn't depart post until their named replacement is confirmed by the Senate. This has been a real problem. We have some chiefs of mission who have been in place more than five years because there is no replacement. I was in Main State this morning waiting for the shuttle and met the person. Someone joked that the person was now the dean of the ambassadors, because they'd been at post longer than any other currently sitting ambassador. It has been more than five years or something with no one lined up to be confirmed. So, this could happen to him because it's an election year. And things are so difficult and so not normal that the processes can't be relied on.

My husband has his onward assignment, but I told him I didn't want him to be ambassador again. Basically I said he should bid on a detail in the United States, or if he wanted to stay overseas, I would love to go to Vancouver, Johannesburg or Cape Town.

*Q: Wow.*

HASKELL: It was a very small selection that I agreed to, but he did get an onward assignment that I'm very happy with. It's just really iffy; it feels "iffy" whether or not we'll be able to go.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: So then if it's true, there's a lot of decisions to be made too, because also with the election year, you know. It's true that there's a lot of decisions for us to make. With the election year, we don't know what will be happening. Where do I see myself? I can say that I have a newfound respect for EFMs [eligible family members]. It sucks. I really would say that as much as I love supporting my husband, I am not a fan of being an ambassador's wife. There's really just too much expected, things that are no one's responsibility, but they think must be done. So, I have sort of put my foot down and refused to do some things and that probably doesn't win me friends or fans.

I don't like living in the big house at all. It's not my house. We have a very tiny space in which to actually live. It sounds like a first world problem, I know. One thing I always wanted to do was to learn pottery. So, I've taken up ceramics. But I can't really do it at home because it's messy. What am I going to do in this giant house with no place to call my own, where I can be messy? So I'm not happy about those things. I have been thinking that I'd like to do something where I can share my experience and leadership expertise. I have discovered that I will never market myself. I'm not good at that. I don't really want to have my own business.

I don't feel like I have any terribly unique insights to offer, so, I don't want to start my own leadership theory thing. I don't want to write a book. I just want to take what I know and share it. And, since I have some already existing sort of leadership gurus, I would rather just take on their thing and use it, but you have to get certified to use their material. The one I'm most interested in isn't doing classes this year. They're not providing any training on the facilitation of their theory. So I'm doing pro bono work with an English club that is sponsored by the Public Diplomacy section at the embassy. It is young women who want to practice their English. They meet once a week, but once a month, I attend their meeting, and we talk about leadership, courageous values-based leadership.

The first session was about fifty people. I told the organizers that that was too many. I didn't want to stand up in front and lecture. I wanted it to be a place where we can engage in discussion. But, they insisted the first one be big so people could decide if they wanted to continue to meet with me. I agreed but said the next sessions have to be down fifteen people or less. So that's what we're doing now. And they seem to like it. I will keep doing it as long as they want to do it and I'm in Brazzaville. We do it at their pace. I've offered to help the Management Counselor in Kinshasa. She does some professional development things with her staff. But she's super, super overcommitted and I'm not sure she'll have time to get anything organized. She's always got vacancies with people on medievac, or leave, or curtailing.

My husband and I are always thinking about where we want to retire. Being from Oregon, I am a huge fan of the Pacific Northwest and especially Washington state. I like the Seattle area. There are reasons not to buy in Seattle proper. My husband is not yet a 100 percent convinced, but he's willing to consider it. I think we both agree that we don't

really want real cold, but I'm willing to go with temperate. He would rather have Florida, but I am against Florida for climate change reasons.

He sometimes seems to prefer renting, but I've been living in somebody else's house nearly my entire adult life. I want my own house. I want my own home where I can do whatever I want. And where will our children be living? We have three boys; they're all adults now, and living in different places. One's in New York, one's in San Diego right now, one's in Austin, Texas. And, they are going to move. We should never move where they are because then five years later they will move. We should move where we want to be and then visit them often. So that's a theory, and I don't want to live in the Northeast because it's too cold. I think he hasn't figured out yet what he wants to do when he retires. And so that's a little bit of a problem. He hasn't embraced that yet.

*Q: Great. Now, are there any parting thoughts about the State Department, its training, its recruitment, its management that you want to sort of leave behind for those coming after you?*

HASKELL: In the just over thirty years that I worked for the State Department things changed so much, so many times. Think about the changes in the tenuring system during that time. It was ridiculous. Right? Then there was that really bizarre period of time, when, for less than a year, they changed all the three-year tours to four-year tours and the two-year tours to three-year tours, which made perfect sense. But because some people whined, they immediately changed it back.

I do think that the State Department senior management is very incestuous. We are regulating ourselves. There are good things about that, but I think the worst thing about it is that we tend to be wedded to the status quo because we came from there. It's a little bit like politics. We need change. And yet, we don't. Even if we find a person who's been around for a long time who wants to make a change, has a new outlook and a vision, it's hard for them to find the support to effect a change. They need to make something happen. And we have this tendency to just rename things. These are not useful things. I like it when people try something new. Very often it fails, but I believe in failure, I believe in trying, even if it's going to fail. It's bad, often, for those people caught in that failure, though. And then we need to make sure that their career isn't harmed by that. I think that we are completely overtaken by appearance over substance sometimes.

After I finished my detail with Climate Interactive, I tried something. I tried to use what I had learned about Climate Change and take it to the department. I went through the QDDR [Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review] and taking it at face value, proposed a small program I could do for the Africa Bureau on a Y tour [a temporary one-year tour]. I noticed in three different places, the QDDR stated that everybody in the State Department should learn about climate change and be able to have a conversation at the dinner table about climate change and be able to address and to understand the impacts of climate change on everything we do. And I proposed this to the Africa Bureau where I felt I had the most contacts and understood the issues and the region well. Where I could apply the things I had learned, both in OES and in my time with Climate

Interactive, to help posts figure out how they can do that. I was absolutely shut down, disrespectfully, I felt.

I met with a high-level official who knew me tangentially. But I felt like the person didn't understand that I was also a minister counselor [MC]. I was spoken to as if I was an FS-03 with little experience. And the answer I got was that they didn't have a desk for me. As an MC management coned officer, I knew full well that the desk is never the problem.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: It was an absolute shut down. No one embraced the concept and they clearly thought the QDDR was meaningless, that it was just an exercise to tick a box. We do many, many things to tick a box. And if we're going to do them, why not use them? [It occurs to me that the person who did that shut down was also the person who told me they wouldn't consider me for the Kinshasa job because they knew "why I wanted that job—." Hmmm.

These are the things, like the training that the department developed during Secretary of State Colin Powell's term, some really excellent training opportunities. I will say that personally, I didn't use them well. I would go to the training. I would listen, take notes, go back to post, and never look at the notes. I never implemented anything. I was very bad about that. When I figured out that I did not do that well, I tried to figure out why. What was it about the training that I got at the Foreign Service Institute [FSI] that didn't change my behavior? I think it was because in few, if any, of the training courses that I went to, did the course materials and presenters show me how the concepts could affect me in my life. There were no stories. Stories teach people things. I really believe stories teach people. And that, if you present only a theory, it's often difficult for people to understand how to apply it.

*Q: Exactly. Or case studies. Yeah.*

HASKELL: And a case study is nothing but analyzing a story, right? So, I think that was really a problem. Even in something simple, like a class for management controls, they will teach you to do this, and do this, and do this. And then you go to post and maybe try to implement that thing, but you don't really know how it affects what you're doing. Some illustrative stories, situations that have actually happened at a post, would give the class participants much more understanding of how the class concepts apply to them. Otherwise, and I think this happens all the time, many people will not effectively integrate their learning into their doing. They are more likely to ignore that little red light that goes on your head when something isn't quite right. You ignore it because now you don't know what to do, or it's just problematic. You think maybe it'll make you look bad. We have a lot of that, "Don't make me look bad."

*Q: Oh, my goodness. Yes. That's for sure.*



HASKELL: When you find a problem in your post, often the leadership doesn't want it to be exposed. Instead of embracing your responsibility and doing your job. Instead of understanding that they'll get credit for doing their job and correcting problems, they don't want any issues to be exposed. They might want you to do something about it very quietly, but they certainly don't want it to be exposed. And really, they just don't want it to be true. They would be very happy if you could make it not true. These are problems we have as an institution. I do think about leadership things, we are very much about saying and doing it, but not so much about living it.

*Q: Is there an example of that? I understand the principle of what you're saying, but in your experience, is there something that comes to mind?*

HASKELL: When we see over and over again, people being promoted who do not exhibit the kind of leadership we pretend to promote, this is not good.

*Q: Okay. Yes.*

HASKELL: And leadership isn't just keeping your people happy. Sometimes leadership is making decisions that make them decidedly unhappy, but for the right reasons. And I think this is a problem. I do not believe that we have embraced courageous, values-based leadership. So what we have done is made leadership about making sure people like me.

*Q: Okay. Yeah.*

HASKELL: I also actually have a problem with the concept that ambassadors and DCMs have to have a bad guy and a good guy.

*Q: Yeah.*

HASKELL: That is just wrong.

*Q: Okay. Yeah. I understand that as well.*

HASKELL: I think we just have a weird concept of what exactly leadership is.

*Q: Okay. Yeah. As much as, um, Colin Powell tried to introduce more training and leadership. Yeah. Yeah. It still hasn't quite taken hold as much as it could.*

HASKELL: We haven't been particularly good at identifying good leaders.

*Q: Yeah. Okay. I understand. In that case, I would say, unless you have any other insights to share. I want to thank you on behalf of ADST, for taking all this time, for going into the detail that you have to explain how people work in the management cone and why the management cone activities are so important to conducting foreign policy overseas. And we will conclude here. Thank you.*

HASKELL: I am honored to have served as a United States diplomat and I thank you all at ADST for undertaking this important work. And for including me.

*End of interview*