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

JAMES HEG

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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is November 15th and we're beginning our first interview with Jim Heg. Now Jim, where and when were you born?

HEG: I was born in July 1951 in New London, Connecticut, which was the main Atlantic submarine base of the U.S. Navy. My father was a career naval officer.

Q: Okay, so he was on duty there?

HEG: He was on duty there. He commanded a submarine rescue vessel, the *USS Sunbird*, and the escape training tank at the sub base. I'm not sure which he did first.

Q: Did you stay very long in New London?

HEG: I don't remember that part of my life but I think we stayed there until I was three, when we moved to Norfolk, Virginia. My father was assigned there as commanding officer of the *USS Tigrone,* a diesel submarine.

Q: How long did you spend there?

HEG: We spent about two years at Norfolk.

Q: So you're still quite small.

HEG: I wasn't old enough for school, but my first memories are from when we lived in Norfolk.

Q: Where are the first memories of school and so on?

HEG: In 1956, when I was five, we moved to Newport, Rhode Island. My father was assigned to the U.S. Naval War College. I went to kindergarten in downtown Newport. I guess at that time kindergarten was not part of public school, or maybe it was, but we lived in temporary base housing at Brenton Village, for one year. Then we moved into a house that my parents bought in Middletown the next year, and I was there for first,

second, and third grade. Because I was part of a baby-boom bulge, they needed a third first grade, so they reopened a one-room schoolhouse called Paradise School. We had a separate entrance for boys and girls. It's still there as a historic monument; it's really cool. And then second and third grade I was at the main elementary school, Aquidneck.

Q: Where do you end up in permanent status? How many schools did you go to as a kid?

HEG: Starting with elementary school, I went to first, second, and third grade in Newport, then fourth and fifth at Groton Heights Elementary in Groton, Connecticut; my father went back to that area. Groton is right across the river from New London so it's basically the same place. Sixth through ninth I was in Fairfax County public schools; my father was assigned to the Pentagon. We then moved to Los Alamitos, part of Orange County, California, and I went to 10th and the first half of 11th grade, then we moved back to Fairfax County and I graduated from Jeb Stuart High School in Falls Church – which was renamed Justice High School in 2017.

Q: How would you describe the experience of high school from the point of view of a Navy brat?

HEG: When I went to high school in Falls Church, I was pretty well acclimatized though it was a much bigger school than my intermediate school. But I knew a number of kids and it was a system I was used to by then. Going to California was a real culture shock. For one thing they start high school a year later in California, so I had two years in a row of being at the bottom of the food chain.

Q: Meaning you could not really be expected to run for class president or be the head of a club or something like that?

HEG: Yeah, but it was more like – the older classmen were always lording it over you. It wasn't a big deal, and I didn't have aspirations to be class president or anything like that. I was more interested in getting to know my new environment. Certainly, when I moved to California, it was very different socially. At the time I went to Jeb Stuart, it was considered fairly preppy. There were a lot of well-to-do kids; certainly, that didn't include me but there were people whose parents were in Congress, that sort of thing. In California, it was much more working class and socially it was divided into the "surfers" and the "cruisers", a dichotomy with which I had no experience. So, it took me half a year to find the little niche of people who actually read books and were interested in things beyond surfing and cruising.

Q: Before we go too far into the later high school years, you were also in high school during the Vietnam War? How did that affect things?

HEG: Correct. It had a huge impact on me, frankly. I was very aware of current events. I started reading news magazines when I was 10 or 11. I remember the Berlin crisis, that's the first thing I remember. Some time around the Cuban missile crisis I started reading Time magazine every week. My parents got it and left it around so I would pick it up and

read it. Then of course the Kennedy assassination – shocking, everyone was glued to the television for four straight days; it was unprecedented. I was very interested in all of it. I was also interested in geography, maps, history, the whole kind of stuff that Foreign Service officers get interested in. The Vietnam War, I followed it all the way from the beginning to the end, really.

Nineteen-sixty-eight was a shattering year for me. I was in my junior year in high school and at the time I had some aspirations to follow my father into a naval career. I had thought very seriously about that. But when Walter Cronkite came on TV during the Tet Offensive (and I believed I watched this) and said it doesn't look like we're winning the war, we have to come up with some other solution – which was then followed very quickly by the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the riots in American cities, and the turmoil of the Democratic convention and the counterculture and everything else, it was all swirling around me. I felt more and more unmoored from what I had clung to most of my growing-up life, which was the structure that my father and what he represented had given me. I didn't want to lose that entirely – I still respected it – but I wasn't sure I could live up to it with all the doubts swirling around me. I think that changed my trajectory a bit.

Q: Were there other kids in your family?

HEG: I had two brothers, both younger.

Q: So they're kind of watching and wondering what's going on?

HEG: They were younger so they were assimilating in a non-verbal way. How they ended up responding was somewhat different from how I ended up responding. Of course, my youngest brother was eight years younger so it was quite a difference; I'm not sure he was really attuned to what was going on. My middle brother is only two years younger so he was very aware of things like the draft and all of that, as we got older.

I guess I disappointed my father by not applying to go to the Naval Academy, but that wasn't a big deal. I did apply to colleges, and I got into both Rice University and the University of Washington. I was thinking Texas, I don't want to go down there, it's not cool. My father convinced me I should go there because it was a much smaller school and I would get a better education. He was right. University of Washington is a good school, but it's enormous. That's the state he's from, that's how that came into the picture. My father felt strongly I should not attend a college near home. He had left Washington state when young to travel all the way across the country to attend the Naval Academy. But I also applied for and was accepted into the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). This was what I was going to do. Then I started to have doubts about that. At some point in my senior year, I told them "I don't think I can do this because I don't know whether I can live up to the commitments that entails. I'm too uncertain about where things are." Meanwhile, I was politically drifting a little bit to the left of center – I'd always been a little bit center-right. My father was very disappointed, but we got through it somehow. Summer of '69 was when I graduated.

Q: This is from high school.

HEG: Yes, Stuart, we graduated in Constitution Hall, that was pretty cool. Some of us had peace signs on our black robes; I wore one. My father was, like, grrrrrrrr. He still gave me a nice watch as a present.

Q: Before we leave high school, were there any teachers or clubs or moments that were beginning to motivate your interest in international service?

HEG: I didn't find many of the social studies teachers terribly inspirational with the exception of a history teacher I had in California, who was really a college-level kind of teacher. I don't know why he was teaching high school. I took a modern world history class from him, and it was fantastic. It really led me deep into the material and got me more and more interested in that stuff. But for the most part, high school was not high quality. I had an excellent math teacher my senior year, studying calculus. I had a good English teacher junior year, but for the most part I found it mediocre. Now, it was better in Virginia than California because the students were smarter on average so the discussions were more erudite, but I didn't find most of the teachers terribly inspirational in either place.

Q: You supplemented yourself, the teaching you were getting in high school, with your reading and so on?

HEG: Yeah. I read an enormous amount. I read history, I was interested in military history and Civil War history. I read fiction, a lot of adventure – naval and science fiction. I just read and read and read. We didn't have video games in those days.

Q: Reading was one of the potential past-times because other than sports, there weren't that many visual kinds of games on your TV or whatever, some kids maybe had ham radios. But other than that, if you weren't going to read you were going to be playing sports or a musical instrument or something.

HEG: I played sports, but not organized sports (except Little League and Boy's Club football before high school), more informally, on the playground. I played board games – chess, checkers. I played war games and things like that. I also worked during summers, in the fast food industry, and after school for much of my senior year. It was a good way to earn spending money and also to get me out of the house.

Q: I meant to ask, did your mother work at all during this time?

HEG: She did not. She was a full-time homemaker. My mother worked as a business skills teacher before she was married. After I left home, she took a job as a teacher's assistant at a local elementary school. My parents had a fairly traditional marriage, but it was unusual in several respects. One is that my father was a northerner from the Pacific Northwest, from Seattle; my mother was a southerner from North Carolina. She was a

Baptist and he was a Catholic. That was not normally done. So, it was an interesting marriage. They had a wonderful marriage, but they bridged two worlds, really. The Pacific Northwest is not exactly like the Northeast, it's a more remote part of the country with its own culture. They're not really interacting with the South the way people in Pennsylvania do or something like that. The first time my mother went out there, it was apparently a real eye-opener for her.

Q: I imagine, just the topography and climate.

HEG: Growing up, my father had to promise to raise the kids Catholic because that's what you did in those days, and my mother reluctantly went along. So, she would go off to a Baptist church and we'd go to the Catholic church. That was the most unusual part about it. We'd go visit my mother's relatives in North Carolina, and there'd hardly be any Catholics there at all. Some really tiny church or something like that. Also, you could see the last vestiges of segregation in North Carolina. My grandmother and my step-grandfather had a woman living with them named Louise, who had been in his family for generations. His family knew my grandmother's family from when they were little. Anyway, Louise could not read or write. She lived in the family. She cooked brilliantly. She was the sweetest lady to the kids. But she didn't have a free life. She was totally dependent on them because she had no ability to go out and get her own job. Now to my grandmother's credit, after my step-grandfather died she paid for Louise to learn to read and she got her own job and became more of a free person. That memory stuck in my head, living through the civil rights era, that I actually knew something about what it looked like.

I don't remember seeing signs saying "white only" or "colored only"; that was more I think farther in the Deep South in Mississippi or Alabama, I don't remember seeing that in North Carolina. But it was probably understood, it didn't have to be articulated.

I should mention a couple of things about the summer after my high school graduation. The summer of 1969 was noteworthy because of the moon-landing. I remember that very clearly. We went to Florida and visited my aunt and uncle in Daytona Beach and we sat and watched the moon-landing. It was one of the most fascinating things I remember. The other thing about that summer that I think is noteworthy – some friends and I used to go to a record store in downtown Falls Church. At that record store, they were advertising tickets to a music festival along with bus transportation. Very low prices, $6 a day. So, we went to Woodstock, and it became this fabulous camping experience. Three days of music. Exhausting. I was awake when Jimi Hendrix did "The Star-Spangled Banner." Then the bus miraculously appeared – we had lost it long before we ever got to the park. I slept all the way back to DC. We had to get out and walk about 10 miles, the traffic going to the event was so heavy. To this day I've never run into anybody in the Foreign Service who was at Woodstock.

Q: Your parents always had the expectation for you that you'd go to college?

HEG: Oh, yes. Even though my father never did complete his degree. He had gone to the

Naval Academy but had to leave because of eyesight and poor grades in math. Then he went to Bethlehem Steel, and when the war came, he finagled his way back into the Navy. During World War II he was a reserve officer and he was able to convert that into a commission, and he was in for almost 30 years. He showed a real drive and stick-to-itiveness because he wanted to be in the Navy, and they told him he couldn't. He ended up finishing his bachelor's degree at night at George Washington University (GW) in the early '60s, while he was at the Pentagon. He'd go to the Pentagon all day, then go to GW, and then come home and study; it was a very busy time for him. I didn't appreciate as much then as I did later how motivated he had to be. He went on to get a master's degree in international relations at the same night school.

Q: He had the 30-year career; did he do anything else after he retired from the Navy?

HEG: Yes. When he retired from the Navy, he worked for the National Science Foundation (NSF). In the last few years in the Navy, he was in the office of the secretary of defense working on polar programs. Then he was asked by NSF to go work for them for a while. He was doing pretty well. His polar work in both institutions was largely diplomatic, and he would work with colleagues from the State Department. That later became a bond between us. He even had a mountain in Antarctica named after him. My youngest brother was in high school in the DC area and getting into trouble, so at some point my father decided to pull up stakes and move out to the Seattle area, which he always planned to do but he had delayed it because he was enjoying his work with the NSF. But when my brother needed a drastic change of scenery – that turned out to be 1975 – I was already finished with college, so I joined them out there, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Q: So now you graduate from high school in '69 and you go to Rice University, which is a part of the country you've never been even though you were in a Navy family. Rice might not be an entire academic city but it's not a small university.

HEG: No. Physically it's big. There were around 3,500 or 4,000 undergraduates at the time, more like 6,000 now. They had several thousand graduate students as well. But the class sizes were far smaller than at a state university, and were all taught by full professors or associate professors. You did not have graduate students teaching a 300-level class, something I was later asked several times to do as a graduate student.

Q: Before we go too far, what was the demographic at Rice when you arrived in the late '60s?

HEG: It was mostly white. There were some Asian minorities, but not many. Some Mexican and black students, but not very many. It was about two-thirds male. Its claim to fame was engineering, although they had strong departments in other areas. It was basically two-thirds students from Texas, one-third from other states. I would say most of those other states were southern and mid-western although there were some from the East Coast. I was really pleasantly surprised by how friendly everyone was. It was just delightful, because in the Washington DC area I found kids were often stuck-up, they had

elites, the social stratification was based on how much money or political power your parents had. When I went to Rice, maybe some of their parents had money but none of the students had any. It's not like today where you go to a university and people have lots of stuff; we had nothing. If somebody had a six-pack of beer, everybody was all over it, the rumor would spread all over the place. You're living on very little money.

Q: Of course, the speed of life was somewhat slower than at university today because there was no internet, no personal computers.

HEG: We didn't even have calculators. In fact, late in my freshman year we were doing physical chemistry and we had to do some labs, and we had to do long division to figure out the stuff, and somebody found out there was a Wang terminal in the space science building, so instead of doing these meticulous long division calculations you could just punch it in, so we would always go over there to do it. That was an amazing discovery. But no, it was slide rules and writing things out in long-hand, no word processors.

Q: And Texas Instruments was just getting going with the hand calculators.

HEG: Exactly.

Q: When you arrived, what did you think you would specialize in?

HEG: I really didn't know. I was oriented towards history but I was open to the social sciences as well. First year I took English, a world history class, math, chemistry, and somebody convinced me to sign up for a French class, which actually was a huge mistake. I'd had some Spanish in high school, and I should have continued with that. What I found in French class was that most of the other kids had already had high school French, and the teacher would teach them and they'd go at their speed and I couldn't keep up. Rice is a hard school, we had a lot of work, had to write a lot of papers and take a lot of exams. It was competitive, much more competitive than anything I'd seen in high school. I had to struggle just to keep up. I was able to get a C in French class the first semester but then I had to drop it; I took an anthropology class or something like that to replace it.

But I enjoyed English class because it was taught at a very sophisticated level and we read poetry, plays, novels, and it was all fantastic stuff. History I enjoyed although the grading of the exams seemed arbitrary and ideological to some extent; if somebody didn't agree with your analysis, they would give you a lower grade. What the hell is this? So that steered me a little bit away from that. But it wasn't until sophomore year I was able to get into political science, economics, that kind of stuff and that's what I ended up concentrating on. I ended up taking classes in both economics and political science. Economics I continued with because I did extremely well at it. I was able to get really top grades without working very hard so I figured I must have some sort of talent at economics. And I liked it okay; I thought political science was intrinsically more interesting but it was also less rigorous, there was no methodology to grab hold of – with the exception of a class on election polling and how they study different parts of the

electorate. I became interested after that in elections and trying to gauge the demographics of different states and all of that. That continues to fascinate me.

Q: While at college do you join a fraternity or get involved in other activities on campus?

HEG: Rice does not have fraternities; they don't allow them. They have what's called residential colleges, based on the system at Oxford University; the social life of the university is built around them. When I was a student there, they were all-male or all-female; there were five male and two female colleges. They've all now integrated. I find it hard to imagine that because my whole experience was that you're either at the men's college or women's college. There were rules that women's colleges were locked down after certain hours, men couldn't be in the dorm after X hour, and in the women's colleges, female students could not ever lock the doors to their rooms. It was a very 1950-ish kind of thing. That didn't stop us, but it was definitely more challenging than it is now.

Q: Students, even busy students on work-study, are going to find a way to socialize. The administration may find ways to diminish the opportunities, but they're not going to stop them.

HEG: Right. It was a difficult numbers game there because of the five-to-two ratio, but I seemed to do okay.

Q: Had you begun thinking about what you were going to do beyond college? Especially since when you were going to graduate, there's the draft issue as well.

HEG: Because of the draft, I was basically focused on going to more school. I was thinking my career pattern was to go to grad school. Which is silly because that's not an end-point, just another input. But I didn't want to think beyond that and I figured if I stayed in school, I wouldn't be drafted. That changed a little bit; I don't remember what year Nixon instituted the draft lottery (I was a junior or senior) but it was weird because you could find out what your number was before you decided to keep your deferment. Somehow, I was able to find out that I had a very favorable draft lottery number, and then decide to be 1A instead of whatever the student number was, so I just exposed myself to the draft that year, because it was very unlikely (the war was already winding down) that they were going to reach my number, somewhere in the upper 200s.

Q: You still had not had any international contact that would have made you start thinking about Foreign Service or international service?

HEG: No. In fact, I had never been outside the United States until one time in my senior year, some of us decided on the spur of the moment to get in a car and drive to Mexico. We went down to Laredo and crossed into Nuevo Laredo. I didn't speak any Spanish to speak of even though I'd had a little bit in high school. But the guy with the car did, so he navigated us around. We just went to some little villages.

That was the first time I'd ever been outside the United States. I had no awareness of the Foreign Service, absolutely none. I was taking political science just because I was interested in it, and I was in theory interested in international affairs, but I wasn't aware of a concrete path to make a career out of that. Whereas economics looked maybe more solid. So, when it came time to apply to graduate schools, I applied entirely in economics. I was accepted at a number of places, but the places that accepted me, none of them offered me any money or financial aid, and this was a real shock because I had never really thought through the process. I didn't realize that if you go off to grad school, if you don't have any money, you're going to have to take on a lot of debt or work at night or whatever. It wasn't like the ride I had where my dad was basically picking up the tuition. I helped a little bit because I won a couple of academic scholarships, and worked over the summers, which took the sting out of some of the money he had to pay because I dropped out of ROTC or didn't go into it.

When I realized I wasn't going to get any money, I didn't know what to do. When I graduated from Rice, I had no plan. I ended up doing some menial work. I went to work on a power-line job. They were hiring college students that summer so a number of people at Rice who didn't know what they were going to do – that wasn't so unusual in the early '70s. People were semi-disengaged from the work-a-day world. The counterculture was like, "That stuff is over there; Archie Bunker does that stuff." There was no connection. But I did that. I painted houses for a little while. And I took the civil service exam.

Summer went on, and I needed something more solid, and I got offered a job at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, as a GS-7 (general service rank), a contract negotiator. I was what was called a "buyer" for the Air Force, part of the Air Force Logistics Command, and there I was, in a huge hangar that had been turned into an office.

It was my first experience with a bureaucracy, and that was definitely one. It had offices, divisions, bureaus, and all of that. It was a civil-military organization because they had military and civilian bosses in parallel. I was buying spare parts for the F-5 (fighter plane) and T-38 (training plane). The thing I really remember that struck me the first year I was there (I was there two years), the 1973 Middle East war, the Yom Kippur War. We're there in a U.S. government military organization and the first thing I remember is they declared a world-wide minimize, which meant we couldn't use the phones or fax machine or any electronic communication whatever. It wasn't until years later I found out what that was; this was a nuclear alert that Nixon and Kissinger had undertaken in response to some moves the Soviets were doing with an airborne force. When the Israelis surrounded the Egyptian tank divisions on the east side of the Suez, the Soviets had apparently threatened to intervene. So, they just shut down all electronic communication at all military bases. But we didn't know what was going on, all we could do was process paper but we couldn't talk to anybody or negotiate anything. That went away after a little while. Then it turned out our C-5 (cargo airplane) fleet was completely ground down by the air bridge. We had set up an air bridge to take ammunition to Israel on an emergency basis. I guess the C-5s were running flat-out, only stopping in the Azores. They were taking enormous quantities of ammunition because the Israelis had expended all of their

ammunition and were in danger of being over-run. That wore out the C-5s like crazy; they're very heavy, intricate aircraft. They took everybody in the whole building off of whatever they were doing and we were all buying C-5 parts for the next three or four months. It was amazing.

The other thing I remember from that time was the fall of South Vietnam. That was a shock for everybody, but a lot of people working there had been in Vietnam. This was my first sustained contact with people just a couple of years older than me who'd been in Vietnam. It was a very sad time. People had spent years of their careers in various capacities, whether military or support or whatever, so many different types of jobs people had to do over there. That was something that really impacted me. I had opposed the war nominally, I had marched against it, but at the same time I felt really bad that the country had just failed. I had a really ambiguous sense. There was no joy in me about that. There were people I knew who thought it was great. Now, I was pretty happy when Nixon resigned. But I wasn't at all happy when Saigon fell.

Q: The end of an era and of a huge American involvement.

HEG: Exactly, the end of a huge American involvement but the first time in my historical awareness that we had failed. I grew up with my father having been in World War II, which was the most massive, successful war we'd ever fought. There was no question of us losing wars, up until that point. It wasn't clear that we had lost it, it was just that we had walked away from it. We weren't even there on the ground when it happened. But I was around people who had lived it, and it was a tough time for them.

Q: Sure, and probably had lost people they cared about to a cause that ended up being basically lost.

So there you are, GS-7 procurement clerk in Texas…

HEG: And I got promoted to GS-9 after my first year. It was a little more money, but we weren't paid very much. I was living paycheck to paycheck. I had more money than I did in college but I wasn't by any means well to do. Still driving a really old car and all this. So, I decided to have another stab at going to grad school. Instead of applying to all these fancy schools, I decided to apply just to the University of Washington where I could maybe get in-state tuition, if my father could figure out a way to claim we were from there. I got in there, and I got an offer of a teaching assistantship. That came along with in-state tuition. So okay, I could go to grad school and afford it and pay for my own place and all of that.

Q: And the University of Washington -

HEG: It was a good school. It was much better to be a grad student there than an undergraduate, because the grad classes were small and you're still around really smart people. That's one thing I've taken away from Rice, I just like being around smart people. Everybody at Rice was smart – a lot of lazy, smart people but still.

So, summer of ‘75 I drove my old Toyota Corona beater from San Antonio all the way to Seattle. That coincided with when my dad retired from NSF; he and my mom and brother moved out there. It became the new center of gravity for my family, all of a sudden; instead of going to the East Coast, we’d go to Seattle. I’d been there not as many times as I wanted to but certainly when we were living in California, I’d been up there several summers and I just loved it, such a beautiful area and I had nice relatives there. So, I thought it was a very attractive idea to go to grad school there.

Q: Once again, take a minute to describe what the University of Washington (UW) was like as a school when you arrived.

HEG: It’s very large but it’s beautiful, architecturally stunning. It’s a semi-urban campus. It’s not in a downtown like Columbia but it’s surrounded by an urban area, it’s very appealing visually. I didn’t get a sense for the entire university right off the bat, it was too big and overwhelming. But as I spent time there, I was teaching undergraduates so I got a sense of what their lives were like and that sort of thing. The economics department was fairly impressive. The courses were very rigorous; I had to work pretty hard. The incentive was, if you don’t keep grades up and basically get As in the core courses, you’re not going to keep your money. That was my motivation; I wanted money. I had no super plan. I guess implicitly you’re on a Ph. D. (doctorate of philosophy) track and I guess I’d thought I’d find something to write a dissertation about, but it wasn’t something that really gripped me. It was more like, I have to keep moving along this track, otherwise I’m going to lose my money. I still didn’t have any vision of the Foreign Service at all; in fact, it was probably receding because I wasn’t taking political science or any of that, and not hearing about international diplomacy anywhere. It was basically learning about neoclassical economics. I was studying a lot of micro-economics and things like that.

Q: Had the game theory stuff and econometrics, did you at least see the beginnings of that when you were studying?

HEG: Oh, econometrics was going gangbusters and I had to study that a lot – statistics and econometrics, very rigorous stuff. My strong math background from Rice was very helpful, it gave me an edge over people who had had weaker math preparation. I was able to meet those requirements without too much difficulty, though it was still a lot of work. But if you were struggling with the basic concepts, it was really hard. That gave me the edge to keep my assistantship, certainly.

The way it worked at UW was, it was on a quarter system. About four quarters in, if you met the core requirements and certain electives, they would give you a master’s degree. So, here’s when I encountered the Foreign Service. A close friend of mine (still a close friend) was in the program with me, but his goal was just to get the master’s. He had already applied to join the Foreign Service. I didn’t know about this when I first knew him, but the first quarter of the second year he started talking about how he might be leaving, so I started looking into what this was. I actually moved into the house where he

was living with some other guys, then as soon as I moved in, a few weeks later he left to go to A-100 (Foreign Service orientation class). I was really curious about this; I didn't know anything about it. So, I started looking into it. I kept chugging along in grad school, but I took the exam. You know how that goes, it's a couple of years process, at least it was in the '70s. The exam was hard, but I passed it. Then they did the oral exam – I guess now you have to come to Washington, right?

Q: I'm recalling yes, but I don't know if they offered it anywhere else. I took the exam in the early '80s and the only place you could take the oral was in Washington. I think it's changed now, but at the time you were taking it that's correct, you had to go to Washington.

HEG: No, no – when I took it, they came to Seattle. They wouldn't come to every city but they would come to certain major cities around the country. Before I took the exam, I asked Tim (my friend), what sort of preparation he did for the exam and he said "Read The Economist every week, cover to cover." That's what I started doing. I just started really paying attention to all these world problems out there, interesting stuff. That (and contract bridge) probably impeded progress on my dissertation. But as I said, I wasn't that dedicated. So yeah, I went through the process, compartmentalizing that process from continuing to study, because I didn't know where this was going to lead. I didn't know if I was going to be successful in the economics area or Foreign Service – but it gave me an option. I found out later in my Foreign Service career, you always want to have options. If you're dead-set on this job or that bureau, you're often going to be screwed and disappointed. But if you have options, that's what you want. You have another place to go.

Well, this gave me an option and also something interesting to think about besides what I was actually doing. I found the process, filling out the security form and the medical thing, particularly difficult. I had had a lot of allergies when I was a kid, and they wanted all kinds of documentation that I wasn't still having problems; it was hard to come up with it. I was pretty healthy in those days and didn't have those problems, but when I was a kid I was pretty sickly. I eventually got through that.

Q: As detailed as the security form was, it's not as detailed as it is now.

HEG: Oh, I know. They keep making it more and more onerous, even from one renewal to another. I updated my security clearance the year before I retired so it's still in theory valid if it needed to be activated. I had it in mind then to be in the WAE (while actually employed) program but with the hiring freeze and everything, I don't think about that much anymore.

Q: One very funny aspect – I did the exact same thing. I had my security clearance redone one year before I retired. By the time I completed that form in 2012, some of the places I had lived as a student or grad student have been torn down.

HEG: Having to find all those addresses of every place you'd ever lived – even my parents couldn't come up with some of it. They could come up with the street but not the house number or something like that. People didn't used to have records that went back that far, there were no digital records. So it was tough.

Q: But you filled it all out, and got it in.

HEG: In the meantime, I was chugging ahead. I passed the three field exams you had to get to be admitted to the Ph. D. program and then I came up with a topic which was in the anti-trust area and passed the general exam for the Ph. D. But then I started to flounder. The people I wanted to help me advise on it weren't too interested, they were doing contract work with the business community. Other people who were helping me were only intermittently available, and it was an intractable topic and I wasn't focused – I had other things to do besides work on it. I was getting disillusioned with it. So, Christmas-time of '78, I actually got a call from the Foreign Service inviting me to an entry class in January. I was sorely tempted but I decided I might be able to make enough progress in the next six months to turn the corner on the dissertation, so I asked them if I could defer it, and they allowed me to do that. Unfortunately, the next six months I made no progress. So, when they called in the summer of '79, I said yes I'm going. I spent four years in grad school there and didn't get the Ph. D., but I learned a lot of economics and got the master's degree and found out what I wanted to do.

Q: When they offered you employment, was it in a particular field? Or at that time were you just entering and they would determine which cone or specialty later?

HEG: No, at that time they took very seriously the fact that I had economic credentials. It's waxed and waned over the years. I can remember one point in my career where that was actually positively ignored – in other words, it was considered unfair to other applicants to take into account the fact that somebody had a graduate degree in economics or whatever. But at the time they said it was very valuable and they wanted me, and that was one reason; the economic cone made sense to them and it made sense to me, so that's what I went in as.

Q: Great. Now you're going to move all the way to Washington DC from Washington state.

HEG: Which I was familiar with already. I wasn't terribly thrilled about Washington DC, but on the other hand it was just to go there for training. I didn't really think about living in Washington DC again, although that eventually became part of it.

Q: What did your parents think about this?

HEG: I think they were impressed. I think my father became more impressed later on as my career became more successful, but they were supportive. My father had had a career in government service; this seemed like a good thing. I'm sure there was some regret that

I hadn't finished my doctorate (and I felt the same thing), but on the other hand this was an opportunity I didn't feel I could pass up.

Q: How large was your A-100 class?

HEG: My A-100 class was about 35. It was unusually small. It was one of the last classes under the old system, before the Foreign Service Act of 1980 – it was August of 1979. We were called the "Fighting" 142nd Foreign Service class. Then a year later they turned the odometer to zero and all the class numbers started again, so my class number never meant anything to anyone down the road.

Q: What was the breakdown demographically?

HEG: I would say it was at least three-quarters men, maybe more. But there were definitely women in there, and a couple of minorities. It wasn't uniformly people from white Anglo-Saxon backgrounds. It was also geographically somewhat diverse, though I'd say the East Coast probably had a preponderance. There were some people that were going in to be tandems; their spouses were already in.

Q: Average age?

HEG: I think it was around 30, and I was 28 so I was a couple of years below the average age. There were a few people younger than me as well. Most people had had some sort of life experience after undergraduate work, including military, some of them.

Q: What did you think of the A-100 experience when you went through it?

HEG: I didn't have much to compare it to. It was a socialization thing. You had to wear a tie and all of that, and that was new to me. I hadn't worn a tie for years, maybe when I was in high school or some sort of church thing. It was useful; I think it's a good thing that they do that because you've got to get used to dressing for work. If you don't make the A-100 people do it, they'll never learn to do it. I know there are problems at the workplace where people don't dress appropriately and it's harder and harder to get a grip on it if they haven't already socialized that internally. So yeah. There were many interesting speakers. We got to go see different agencies around town. I started learning more about the government, things that I didn't know much about – the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), the Treasury, all of these different places. So yeah, I was very interested and tried to participate. Also, the role-playing games – there were these games with this guy called Vic Junioroff in Ruritania.

Q: That game lasted quite a while.

HEG: It was amusing. I thought it made sense to come up with these scenarios, because you've got to figure out what you're going to do. I liked a lot of the people in my class. We did our offsite at the Hilltop Hotel in Harper's Ferry. Even then it was a kind of crumbling mansion, we played poker all night. We had fun.

Q: You mentioned it was a socializing experience. Was it also bonding? Did you end up staying in touch with some of those people?

HEG: To an extent. It was much harder to keep in touch with people then than it is now. We didn't have email, Facebook, any of that. But for a few years when people were back in Washington they would get together. Over time, it deteriorated a bit. Then later when people were able to be in touch through the GAL (global address list), those of us that remained figured out who was still around. I wouldn't say it was a strong group that hung together. For one thing, it was too small. There was a fair amount of attrition going forward. I was by far the longest serving member of that class; I think the last eight or nine years of my career, I was the only one left. I wasn't the one that achieved the highest level, because there was a woman who had been an ambassador, but I think she left around 2010. Once she finished that job, she left. So, I was a dinosaur at that point.

Q: At that time right before the passage of the Foreign Service Act, how did they explain to you the bidding process and your assignment process?

HEG: It's interesting. Now they have all these traditions, they have Flag Day and all of it. There was none of that. The coordinator and the deputy, a guy named Brooks Rampelmeier and Eric Tunis, they would take people individually aside and talk about what you wanted to do. They'd go through the list and try to come to some sort of consensus. In my case I indicated I was terrified of the language requirement; I was petrified that I wouldn't get off language probation. Partly this was because I was traumatized by the French experience at Rice. But I decided if I had a shot at any language, it must be Spanish because I had some high school Spanish – which was basically worthless but at least it gave me some sort of start.

Q: Did they have you take the MLAT (Modern Languages Admission Test) at that time?

HEG: They did.

Q: Do you recall if you had a high score?

HEG: I think it was a medium score. Like a 62. So, I wasn't judged a genius at languages, but I wasn't a hopeless case either. I wanted to go to a Spanish speaking country; my philosophy has always been, if you have something really hard to do, just get it done. I didn't want to have this facing me for a long time. I wanted to go to a Spanish speaking country and because of economics, I was interested in a country that had economic importance. Venezuela was on the list, and at the time they were a really important source of oil (they still are but much more then). So, voila – I was going to Caracas.

One thing I wanted to point out about the year I was in A-100, 1979. This was a year of enormous world turmoil. That was the year they took the hostages in Iran. That was going on as I was being inculcated into the Foreign Service. This was something everybody was aware of. It really put you inside - "now I'm one of them." You could

immediately identify with those hostages. They were in our profession, the profession I was training to enter. It was quite something. There were other things going on; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when they killed Ambassador Dubs. The sacking of our embassy in Islamabad. It was a scary time. I thought that was useful context.

Q: Sure. How did people take that? Obviously other people in your A-100 were seeing the same thing.

HEG: People were concerned. I don't think there was any fear. It was like a redoubled sense of mission. Gradually, over the year, we saw that the country as a whole was paying attention to what we were about to do. There has always been a lack of visibility for the Foreign Service, but during that time the Foreign Service was on the news every night. Ted Koppel got his start with this. It was in everybody's living room. We had a sense that somehow not only was it intrinsically important, but that people were becoming aware of what we were about to do.

Q: Now the assignment – you discussed what kind of assignment you wanted with your career officer and personnel officer, and you mentioned some place Spanish speaking. What came out as a result of that?

HEG: I was assigned to Caracas, Venezuela, officially as a visa officer. But it turned out fortunately for me that Caracas had an informal rotation program. I can't remember if I knew this in advance or if it became clear to me when I got to post, but I was going to be given the opportunity to spend a year in consular work and then a year in economic work. That was a very appealing thing.

Q: Before you go further, can you give us a sense of Caracas as a city when you arrive in – is it '79 or '80?

HEG: I arrived in spring 1980. I did ConGen (Basic Consular Course) and Spanish and A-100, that took me from August to April, I think. Caracas was a modern-looking city with modern buildings, but it also had slums on the hills which I guess people called *ranchitos*. It had tremendous traffic because the government subsidized gasoline to the point where it was something like 20 cents a gallon. So, everybody and his brother was on the road all the time. They tried to do something with alternating even/odd license plates but all that did was make people buy two cars. You'd get on the road and almost immediately be in a parking lot. It was extremely congested.

The other thing I remember about Caracas and Venezuela as a whole is that it was extremely expensive, because they had a very overvalued exchange rate. There was tremendous traffic in Venezuelans traveling to Florida to go shopping. People would make their living by going to Florida, buying things, and bringing them back and selling them because of the differential exchange rate.

Q: That continued by the way all the way up to my first consular tour in 1984. Venezuelans were famous for the two-week or one-month stays in Miami to gather all kinds of stuff and go shopping and go back.

HEG: Right. When I was doing visa work, I learned that there were people who had tourist visas who had their children enrolled in Miami-Dade public schools. They'd go back and forth, but their kids – I guess they had nannies to look after the kids. They really wanted their kids in U.S. rather than Venezuelan schools. These were the rich people, of course. Venezuelans were fairly well to do, at least the ones that applied for visas in those days. Most of them were considered good cases unless you had some red flag come up.

Q: Were there any concerns about terrorists or so on in your consular work?

HEG: I don't recall a specific concern about terrorism but I do recall concern about Iranians or anybody associated with Iranian interests. There was a real focus on Iran of course because of the hostage crisis. We were always on the look-out. I remember I had a family come to the window one time, presenting four or five Iranian passports. I thought, "Here I go! I'm going to strike a blow for the U.S.!" I refused them all. Then later the consul-general had to reverse the case because it turned out they were members of a protected category, the Bahai faith. I learned a lesson there; I thought any Iranian was bad but it turns out there were Iranians we were supporting who had Iranian passports. But most of the difficulty in visa work was associated with third-country nationals. There were a lot of other Andean-country nationals living in Venezuela at the time. It was considered a place where you could get work and the standard of living was higher, so a lot of Colombians, Peruvians, Ecuadorians would come and live in Caracas. We also had a lot of Italian and Spanish expats living in Venezuela.

Q: Did you find that the information and interviewing skills you were developing in the consular section served you well for the next year doing economic work?

HEG: I found it served me well throughout my career. I had had very little experience dealing with anything foreign. I had not lived abroad. I had not even traveled abroad to speak of. To have to exchange information in a foreign language and be face-to-face with someone from a different culture in a different language was for me incredibly useful. It got me over a major hump, because I had had no experience up to that point. I think for me that was the very best way to start out. It wasn't easy; we had a huge workload. The visa demand was very high, so it was the sheer volume of work that kept us busy, sometimes in the rush periods until 7:00 or 8:00 at night.

Frankly, we were getting very little guidance or support. We were first-tour officers basically on our own. We supported each other, and the FSNs (Foreign Service nationals) supported us. That was the way it was. There was not a lot of contact with the rest of the embassy when I was in the NIV (non-immigrant visa) section except when they wanted a visa favor. Unlike today, there were not really strong rules about what we used to call *palanca* or visa referrals. So quite a few influential Venezuelans would call the ambassador if they needed a visa at the very last minute, and then they would almost

always get passed down. This was a matter of some aggravation. In fact, we had one visa chief who was only there for a couple of months because he ran afoul of the front office over this issue. He didn't want to accommodate this because it was very disruptive to the regular working of the office.

After five months, I was transferred from NIV to IV (immigrant visa), where I was assigned to be the chief of the section. I was the only American, but I had a team of experienced FSNs there. We did notarials and immigrant visas. I guess in those days we could actually approve petitions and issue immigrant visas in the embassy. I think that's no longer the case, and the petitions have to go through USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services). Most immigrant visas now are consolidated into one country or post in a region. I think in Scandinavia now they're only in Stockholm.

Q: You're right, the same thing was true in Jamaica a few years later when I was working in a consular section. If they met the criteria and did the medical test and there were no other issues, you could issue an immigrant visa to them.

HEG: Yeah. This was the source of some aggravation to me at times because there were some applicants I did not want to issue to because they had clearly violated the terms of their previous non-immigrant visa or something like that. There was one Armenian who had overstayed a transit visa in Los Angeles and had changed status, got a petition. I tried to not issue it but there was an enormous amount of political pressure put on, and I had to issue it. The grounds are basically, not being a public charge or violating certain statutes. Other than that, you don't have the discretion you do in non-immigrant visas. There were a number of Cubans as well in there for immigrant visas. They all wanted to live in the U.S. – if they couldn't go to the U.S., the Cubans would go to some other country in Latin America, and then try to get their immigrant visa there.

One of the fun things in IV was meeting some of the Major League Baseball players from Venezuela who were applying to become permanent U.S. residents. A real standout was Dave Concepción of the Cincinnati "Big Red Machine." I chatted with him about the great 1975 World Series (I had rooted for Boston) and he said it was a great experience.

I learned a lot in IV about being a supervisor and having to learn from the people that are working for you in that office. We had several ladies who had worked there many years and knew the ins and outs. They were so kind in telling me when I was doing something wrong. I loved those ladies; it was great.

Q: That's generally true for all first-tour officers. Many of the people working in that section have been there for many years and can really be a help to you when there are all kinds of issues that just don't look right on the surface.

HEG: Yeah. One thing I got to do during that half-year that I found very interesting was the consul-general assigned me to take the lead on the consular package. I didn't know anything about it, but it required a fair amount of analysis and more of the economic type skills that I had developed, and I found it very interesting.

Q: Take a moment to describe the consular package.

HEG: Consular package – the details are vague in my mind, but it was an examination of the workload in various aspects, and how it had changed over time, and what the waiting times were, this and that and the other, the average characteristics of applicants. It was designed as a tool to allocate consular resources.

Q: And in a lot of cases, to argue for more consular resources.

HEG: Exactly. One thing that's different from today is first-tour officers, untenured officers, if they had to work overtime to finish their job, they basically just worked the overtime and then got paid. Now, I understand there is this culture where you have to get overtime approved in advance. So, you go to your boss in advance and ask for the approval of the overtime, usually you get told "no", so it's a stark choice of either don't finish your work, or do it for free. So nominally they're eligible for the overtime but I think it's been in practice taken away.

Q: That was true even in 1984 at my first post. You simply didn't have an expectation of getting overtime and it was frowned on to even ask for it.

HEG: Yeah. But for us, living in a very expensive city – it was so expensive that I had to have my mother send me a shower curtain because I really didn't want to pay the price of buying a shower curtain in town. Everything was prohibitively expensive. We did go out to eat every once in a while, but you couldn't buy clothes or anything, they were just way too expensive.

Q: Then you switch into the economic section.

HEG: Yes, and I got over there. We had a very experienced economic minister-counselor, Ken Skoug, and we had an experienced 01, Tom Gewecke, who was really on top of the whole Venezuelan economy, followed all the financial stuff. Then we had Paul Wisgerhof who was the petroleum officer. That was really the sexy stuff because of the Iranian oil crisis and all of that. So the ambassador focused a lot on the oil issue, and went over to PDVSA (Venezuelan state-owned oil company) all the time. I understand PDVSA has now been politicized and run down under Chavez and Maduro, but back then it was *the* premier, most efficient, and most respected institution in Venezuela.

When I first got into the Econ office, I was given these fairly routine duties like writing reports on industry. I did that reasonably well. I worked on the health agreement and on some socio-economic data, tried to write some reports. I wrote a few Airgrams (remember those?) on Venezuela's bloated and inefficient steel and aluminum industries. They liked my writing and encouraged me to do more, so I looked for things to work on. Then in the summer, Tom Gewecke left and his replacement came. I don't remember his name, but he didn't speak Spanish very well and didn't have much of a technical

economic background. So, I basically stepped into the vacuum and started doing financial reporting.

What I was seeing was that there was capital flight going on, what they called the *fuga de devisas* (capital flight); money was flowing out of the country faster than it was coming in. The central bank was having to subsidize the bolivar more and more to keep it from declining in value. At the time, the bolivar was fixed at 4.3 to the U.S. dollar, but was greatly overvalued at this rate. That was why domestic prices were so high. So, I was writing these reports that interested Washington and my boss was happy that I was doing it. We got to a point where I became convinced of what was going to happen, and I said, "If this continues like this, Venezuela will have to devalue the bolivar."

That was another educational moment; the ambassador spiked that cable because he considered it "alarmist." Maybe it was alarmist, but maybe eight months after I left, the bolivar collapsed. I knew what was going to happen but I wasn't able to say it because it wasn't part of the narrative the ambassador was projecting about Venezuela. Our interests in Venezuela at that time were basically strategic. They had the oil, but we also wanted Venezuela a strong bulwark against Communism, Castro, and all of that. Central America was starting to heat up and there was concern about the stability of the region and Venezuela was seen as a key lynch-pin ally against Cuba and Nicaragua. So that was where the ambassador's focus was. He'd been in Eastern Europe and was really a Cold Warrior kind of guy. That was Ambassador William Luers. I assumed that was why he wasn't interested in actually saying what was going to happen to the Venezuelan economy, but maybe he really didn't think it was likely. If you're not trained in economics and don't see these trends, how they eventually have to come to an end, then you don't really believe what the data imply.

It was interesting to be able to predict something like that even though I wasn't able to formally report it.

Q: You knew or did you know about the dissent channel?

HEG: I vaguely knew about it. It didn't seem like it was the sort of thing you would use it for. The dissent channel had always been explained in terms of people who opposed our policy in Vietnam or something like that, a big thing. Not some little, the ambassador doesn't like your cable – that would seem maybe a little bit petty. But I was very junior; how far do you stick your neck out at that point?

Q: I understand.

HEG: It was something I got over pretty quick. Okay, I'll just keep reporting this and somebody else can draw the conclusion, right? There are other ways to skin a cat. Nobody said I couldn't report on the financial stuff, they just didn't want me to draw the conclusion that it pointed to. And I got to work on oil when Paul was away, that was interesting. I got to go to the Orinoco and tour the oil sands area. Venezuela was sort of a disappointment to me culturally. It didn't seem to have a very high cultural level. It was a

beautiful country but people didn't take care of it. I'd grown up with Lady Bird Johnson and controlling litter, and people would throw litter all over the place, there was not this concern for the environment that we had learned over the last 20 years. That was disappointing.

Q: As you're approaching the end of this tour, what are you thinking about in terms of the next tour? Are you beginning to have thoughts about where your career would be going?

HEG: I was looking forward to the end of the tour because Caracas – it was a noisy city, your nerves were always on edge, and with the traffic and everything, I was sort of looking forward to going to a different region of the world, but such was not going to happen right away. I did take a vacation in the fall of 1981 and passed through DC on my way back to post. I went to entry level in personnel, and I was basically given two choices: I could go to Managua, Nicaragua, or I could go to Managua, Nicaragua.

Q: Okay.

HEG: They wanted me there. I had the Spanish. They wanted me in an econ job. I wasn't thrilled with it, and it was a dicey place at that time. We had a hostile government, the Sandinista government.

Q: What year do you depart Caracas?

HEG: In April 1982.

Q: Okay. And Somoza had already been overthrown.

HEG: He was overthrown in 1979. That was another thing that happened the year I entered the Foreign Service, it was just turmoil everywhere.

Q: Yes, the Sandinistas had just consolidated their position in Nicaragua.

HEG: Yes. El Salvador was starting to become a major sore point with the guerrilla war, and Nicaragua was seen as a major supporter of the FMLN (Farabundo Mari National Liberation Front) in El Salvador. The Reagan administration had just come in with a very robust, anti-Communist stance. This was where it was happening, this was the crunch point between Communism and the U.S., right there in Central America. I was going right into that. I went there and found it was a huge advantage not being a first-tour officer there. It seemed that when I was in Nicaragua, there was a tremendously high attrition rate among first-tour officers, people leaving the service for various reasons. A lot of the reasons were unrelated. One person talked to a reporter out of school – reporters were all over the place there because Central America was a big deal – and that got into the paper, something on internal deliberations in the embassy, so he left. Somebody else had weapons in their household effects, so they were out. Some other people just didn't like our policy in Central America, all of this. I felt that, having a tour under my belt,

with all this pressure swirling about I was a lot more able to deal with it than I would have been had I gone there for my first tour.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you arrived?

HEG: It was Tony Quainton, who later became director-general; a very talented and wonderful man. He stayed most of the time I was there, he left just a couple of months before the end of my tour. I was there from May '82 to June '84.

Q: As an economic officer.

HEG: As an economic/commercial officer. I had to do some commercial work because FCS (Foreign Commercial Service) of course doesn't position itself in some of the smaller countries; they get to pick and choose which ones they go to. After criticizing the Foreign Service for not doing adequate commercial work, they left us holding the bag in the less-desirable countries. I guess that shift to the FCS happened when I was in my first tour in Caracas, because I think my boss had been doing commercial work and then they sent a commercial counselor. He was kind of upset about that because he liked doing commercial work. I had never been taught anything about commercial work, so I didn't miss it but he liked it because he had been doing it in his career, then suddenly FCS took it over. Anyway, we had a commercial library and so I had to operate that. Basically, I was an FS-4 (Foreign Service officer grade 4) working for an FS-2 section head. I was doing economic reporting for the most part. While I was there the Sandinistas inflated their currency tremendously, and surprise, surprise, it drove all the products off the market so you couldn't get anything. I would write reports about that and the source of the shortages and the reports were well received. I wrote a little bit about oil. I got to know the private sector people pretty well. The private sector was still, it hadn't been collectivized or anything but a lot had been appropriated by the Sandinistas. But they were still able to operate because I don't think the Sandinistas had enough confidence in being able to operate the economy by themselves. So, the cattlemen and people running the coffee plantations and all of that were still in business. They were in effect the political opposition, the part of the political opposition that was able to continue to operate. So, I was able to talk to them, and they became important contacts. One of them, the head of the Cattlemen's Association, Enrique Bolanos, later became president of Nicaragua. We were trying to buck them up, because they were getting discouraged and would plead with us and encourage us to invade and kick the Sandinistas out. We were not wanting to do that, that wasn't our policy at the time – but we were not in favor of the Sandinistas and what they were doing either. We were in opposition but not trying to overthrow them.

I mentioned in connection with the Nicaraguan private sector that they had been subject to confiscations. The takings by the Sandinistas that began in 1979 eventually became known as *La Pinata*. Well, it turned out that a number of victimized property owners were U.S. citizens. Upon arrival in Managua, I was asked to organize and assess several drawers full of unfiled correspondence related to their claims. This task was frustrating, sheer drudgery. I responded to incoming new correspondence and made representations

on behalf of claimants, usually with no success, given the state of our relations with the Sandinista regime. I do recall that, in at least one case, I was able to get a confiscation reversed on behalf of a U.S. citizen.

I was also able to talk to some people in the Sandinista government. I found throughout my career as an economic officer, that in countries where there is suspicion about the U.S., I had better access to the economic ministries than the political section had to their foreign ministry. The foreign ministry wouldn't even talk to our political section, but I could go over to the finance ministry, the agriculture ministry, and some people would talk to me. I was able to get pretty good information on that side, whereas the political section had virtually no access.

Q: In these early years of the Sandinistas, what was your impression of their economic team and what their plans were?

HEG: My impression was they didn't know what they were doing at all. You can't inflate the currency to that extent and impose price controls and expect goods to stay on the market. All they could do was requisition corn and beans and make them available on a rationing basis, and everything else was basically hidden or gone, no formal market. You go to a restaurant and open a menu, and you say "What about this?"

"*No hay*" (there isn't any).

Q: By the time I got to Costa Rica in 1986, Nicaragua was known as the country of "no hay", there isn't any.

HEG: Right. There was a tremendous black market in the Nicaraguan cordoba, as I recall.

Q: Cross border smuggling and all sorts of things.

HEG: I remember the one nice thing about Nicaragua was being able to travel to other countries of the region. Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala – they were really nice countries to travel in for a weekend or whatever, I really enjoyed visiting them. Costa Rica in particular was extremely pleasant after being in Nicaragua.

There was political hostility in Nicaragua. You had these groups called the *turbas* (mobs), these were young kids in their teens with AK-47s and they'd go round chanting slogans and burning tires in the road, it was sometimes scary. There was tremendous tension between the church and the Sandinistas. Nicaragua's an incredibly Catholic country, by far the most Catholic country I've ever been in. The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is like Fourth of July and Thanksgiving all rolled into one. Every household celebrates with shrines and dinners. Meanwhile, you've got this Sandinista junta that's oriented towards the Soviet Union, Cuba, and East Germany, and they're very suspicious of the Catholic church. Bishop Obando y Bravo became a de facto opposition leader even though he was not overtly political, but he was not going to be pushed around either.

So, we started getting CODELs (congressional delegation) pretty often. One of the things I had to do was be control officer for CODELs. I remember CODEL Solarz and CODEL Sensenbrenner and this and that. They would come down and they would all want to do basically the same thing. They would want to go to La Prensa, the one newspaper not controlled by the Sandinistas, headed then by Pedro Juaquin Chamorro. They would want to go meet with the junta, which I didn't have anything to do with, the political section tried to do that. They would want to meet with Bishop Obando y Bravo, and then usually somebody from the private sector. Then they would leave. I don't know if they were scared or what but they would never ever spend the night in Nicaragua. So, these things soon fit into a routine pattern and would run like clockwork. Land in the morning at dawn, run through this same basic schedule, and leave at the end of the day. Then they'd go back to Washington and speak in the debates going on and say, "I was in Nicaragua and I can tell you this and that and the other." It was really a very heated political debate in Washington between the Democrats and Republicans over Nicaragua policy.

I remember one Codel visit coincided with the sabotage bombing of oil tanks at the Nicaraguan Pacific port of Corinto, one of the opening moves in the Contra insurgency. The Ambassador accompanied us to Chamorro's office at La Prensa. The next day, La Prensa printed a photo of us on the front page, right next to a photo and article about the Corinto attack. Ambassador Quainton was none too pleased about that juxtaposition.

Some CODELs would come and try to or actually meet with the Sandinistas without any embassy presence, because that's how divided politically people were over this issue.

A real crunch point came when we invaded Grenada, because Grenada was seen by the Sandinistas as one of their allies. There was Cuba, Grenada, Nicaragua, and then they had their guerrilla force in El Salvador. And we just took military force and knocked off the Grenada regime.

Q: This is 1983.

HEG: Yes, November I believe. That was an interesting time because that's the same time they blew up the barracks in Lebanon; another shocking event. That was shortly before the Marine ball which made that a very moving event. Back to Grenada. The Grenada invasion terrified the Sandinista junta. They sent out these *turba* mobs to demonstrate in front of the embassy. They weren't threatening, it didn't look like they were going to try to attack us – although we did get into some really difficult exercises where we burned most of our classified. We had to be ready. It was a flimsy temporary embassy, it wasn't a permanent embassy, so they could have come in and kicked the walls down. I remember going to the basement, burning stuff. We were keeping our classified holdings down to an inch or two at the most. This was probably about that time when tensions really got high.

I believe our DCM (deputy chief of mission) Roger Gamble called the junta and said if these *turbas* didn't go away, we were going to send some planes over. The next day, they were gone. They were on the other side of town; these guys were scared. That kind of made us feel 10 feet tall because somebody was standing up for us. There was really

nothing protecting us other than what we would do to them if they did anything to us. It wasn't like we had any intrinsic fortification there; as I said, the embassy was very flimsy. It was very instructive, stressful in many ways, but a very interesting assignment.

In Person, ADST

Q: Today is November 16th and we're resuming with James Heg, and he does want to review a few things from the previous interview.

HEG: Thank you Mark. Before we go on to the next phase, I want to add a few things to my tour in Managua. As I indicated, Managua was the center of attention in Washington and around the world. It was a geo-political crisis point, so there was a lot that was going on in those two years, and it was hard to remember all the important points. One point I wanted to make was that within the embassy there was a lot of internal policy discussion and debate. Ambassador Quainton had his views, but he certainly tolerated a lot of discussion, and he welcomed it. Things sometimes got fairly heated. On the one hand you had a fairly robust anti-Communist stance by the Reagan administration; on the other hand, we were in a profession where people were trying to find areas of common ground and negotiated solutions to seemingly intractable problems. So, you had a division in the embassy between people who wanted a more hardline stance towards the Sandinistas, and those who favored a more conciliatory "let's find some olive branches to get them to the negotiating table." Based on my exposure to the concerns of the private sector and the alarm they felt, I was a little bit on the harder line side. But I was so junior, I was more a witness than a participant in these high-level debates. But one time, I was selected to be a rapporteur in an internal embassy retreat where all the more senior people got together for many hours and just debated the course ahead. That was a fascinating experience for me as a second-tour officer, and I wrote it up. I was heavily complimented for getting it more-or-less accurate, and nobody really had any corrections to my report.

Another thing I wanted to point out was during my tour in Nicaragua, Pope John Paul II came to Nicaragua, and he was a geo-political force unto himself, and a major figure in the latter part of the Cold War. His visit was the occasion for an enormous outpouring of Catholic energy inside Nicaragua which very much alarmed the Sandinistas, and exposed deep divisions within the society. There was a major outdoor mass where Sandinista militants ended up performing some sort of march during communion, and it was considered sacrilegious by the Catholics, it was a very tense time. I remember in the reporting cable that the country team put together about the visit, the ambassador called it "How many divisions does the pope have?," quoting Stalin. This tells you the atmosphere of those days.

The last thing about Nicaragua I wanted to point out, in the latter part of my tour there were several rounds of expulsions. I can't remember who started it, but we expelled some of their people from their embassy in Washington, and they then expelled some of our

people. It got so at one point, we were told to pack our own bags and be ready to leave at a moment's notice. I remember we passed a fairly tense weekend before things settled down and we didn't have to leave, but it got that close. The Sandinistas also ordered the closure of our AID (U.S. Agency for International Development, also USAID) mission – we had a very large AID mission when I was there, and it all went away during those years.

Q: Now, as you're planning or thinking ahead for the next tour, are you talking with anyone? Or are you thinking about your future career and where you want to position yourself?

HEG: I don't remember having any mentor or anybody I was getting a lot of advice from. I was very anxious to get out of Latin America and experience a different region, and I think during that time at some point I got a line on a job in Malta. I was interested and had some back and forth, but that didn't really go anywhere because I was ordered peremptorily into this thing called the career mid-level course, which at that time became mandatory for people at the end of their second overseas tour. So whatever plans I was making just went by the board. This was a six-month course, so if you're leaving post in summer, you're dumped out into the winter cycle at the end of it, and that's what happened.

Q: Can you describe the course? It was eventually dropped after many evaluations said it was not helpful or not effective.

HEG: I had a very favorable impression of the course and I think – the division was by cones. I recall that the political cone officers were offended that they were asked to study quantitative methods in their core course. I think we economic cone people were very pleased with our economic training – it was quite sophisticated and advanced. I also enjoyed the opportunity to have electives; I took electives in intelligence and political-military affairs, and I was interested and engaged in both of those. The economic course was very interesting. We had an exercise where we evaluated the Margaret Thatcher economic program in Britain using sophisticated economic tools, and learned how to apply those tools to other situations. We also used an IMF (International Monetary Fund) flow of funds analysis, which could be applied to less developed countries, and I wrote a paper about Nicaragua using that. In addition, the course was a good opportunity to network. There were a lot of people from different second tours all in the same general cohort. It was a much broader peer group than I'd been able to develop in my small A-100 class. So, there were people that I kept in touch with as the years went on. After that, I went to work in the department so some of the people that came out of the mid-level course were in different jobs around the department, so that was a useful network right there.

Q: How were they deciding, how did they present to you what your opportunities would be after the course?

HEG: They didn't present anything to us along those lines. They told us we could take

lunch hours or free time to go to the department and try to work on another job. This was my first exposure to the you're-on-your-own, thrown-into-the-deep-end aspect of mid-level assignments. I had made up my own mind that if I was to work in Washington I wanted to start in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB). I went and had some meetings with EX (executive office) and I think I had an eye on a job in the Office of Development Finance (ODF), and interviewed for that job but it ended up going to somebody else who had a little more experience. They offered me a position as staff assistant in the EB front office. I took that job, and that was the best thing for me at the time.

Q: It's not abnormal for someone coming back from two tours overseas to move into a staff job in the department; often it gives you the opportunity to see how entire bureaus work and work with the policy-makers on the seventh floor.

HEG: Absolutely right. I had no knowledge of how policy was made in Washington, how the economic bureau worked, how it related to other bureaus, and how the seventh floor structured its requirements and distributed them among the different entities in the department. This was a completely analog era, so much of my job was to walk paper around to make sure it went to the right place. If I was on the morning shift – this was a shift job, so I would either work morning or evening shift. Morning shift, I would go upstairs to the Ops Center, unlock the safe, and pull out all the paper the seventh floor had distributed. Among them were taskings for briefing or action memos that had to be developed by different offices in the bureau. Then I would have to task these to different offices and make sure deadlines were met, then get the paper signed by the deputy assistant secretary (DAS) or assistant secretary as appropriate.

This was the first time I'd run into any sort of computer in any of my work. We had a primitive tasking computer where we could list the incoming task, put an assignment on it to an action office, and put a due-date, and then could update that every morning and print it out. We couldn't send it anywhere; there was no network or anything, but we printed it out and distributed it to the different offices in the folders they had in the front office. To amuse ourselves (the staff assistants), we would come up with catchy covers for the list that would tee off on some cliché like, people would talk about meetings that were "principals only," so we would put a picture of the meeting at Yalta and have Churchill turning to Stalin and saying, "I thought this meeting was principals only?" We used a lot of humor because there was a lot of tension and we were always under tight deadlines.

It was particularly difficult because when I first got there, the bureau was in a bit of flux. I think a political appointee assistant secretary named McCormack had just left and he was a protege of Jesse Helms, and had created a lot of turmoil in the bureau. So, Elinor Constable was acting; she had been PDAS (principal deputy assistant secretary). She was an amazing woman. She had been in the older Foreign Service where women had to resign when they got married, and then she came back in once it was allowed to be a married female Foreign Service officer. She was an economic officer, highly competent, very operational. She brooked no slackness; she was a very strong leader. I really enjoyed

working for her. Halfway through my tour, Doug McMinn came in as assistant secretary. He was very good. Mostly focused on trade – this was the beginning of the Uruguay Round, so he was busy making sure the State Department had influence in that process. When I was first in there, the other staff assistant position was vacant, so what Elinor would do was appoint some young officer within the bureau for a week at a time to come up and be temporary staff assistant. So, every week I had to train a new staff assistant and this went on for three or four months; that was difficult but it also allowed me to get to know these other young officers very well and that was another network for me. It also enabled me to learn my own job very quickly and to get some kudos from my bosses who could see I was doing a good job.

Q: That job lasted for just a year?

HEG: Just a year. This was in the time when George Shultz was the secretary. He was a brilliant economist, but he was surrounded on the seventh floor by mostly political officers in the secretariat. So sometimes in the economic bureau we had a tough time getting issues to the secretary, because they would be screened out by political officers who didn't see the intrinsic importance. I remember one instance, there was a protectionist move by Commerce or maybe USTR (Office of the United States Trade Representative) to put high tariffs on Brazilian shoes. This was a section 301 footwear or something like that, it had some name like that, and that was the name of the action memo we were trying to send to the secretary. They just rolled their eyes when they saw this; they couldn't understand why the secretary of state should deal with some issue like this. In fact, it was going to create a huge blow-up in our relationship with Brazil and we had to fight, I had to carry paper around to try to convince the seventh floor to get this in front of the secretary. Of course, once he got a hold of it, Shultz understood immediately, he grasped it without any hesitation, but this is the kind of thing we had to do. This goes to the asymmetries we had vis-a-vis other more strictly economic agencies in town. They could go directly without friction up the line and present issues and get phone calls made, whereas we had a very difficult time moving our issues up the line because they had to compete with Russia, the Middle East, and all these other sexier geo-political issues that were occupying people's time.

Q: As I recall, section 301 is a dumping issue. It's when there is some evidence that a country has subsidized or in some way lowered the price of a commodity and was -

HEG: And is selling it below cost. I believe that was the cause of this proposed action. Frankly, many of those actions in the past have been politically motivated rather than motivated by hard data. The fact you're not competing well was often used as the evidence rather than hard cost data or anything like that. I remember that situation very well.

Q: Often when you have been a staff officer in a bureau, you have an easy time finding your follow-on assignment, if not in the Washington side of the bureau then in an overseas assignment as an econ officer. Is that what happened with you?

HEG: What happened is during the time I was in the front office I got to know the deputy assistant secretaries very well, and they controlled the offices in the bureau. I still had my eye on the same office, the Office of Development Finance, that I had applied to before, so I made another run at it. This time I had more backing and I was able to secure a position in ODF. The office was dealing with international financial assistance, relations with AID, with the multilateral development banks, with Treasury, and those sorts of things. It was a very interesting job for somebody interested in economics.

Q: To what extent did EB have the lead on any of these topics?

HEG: EB had the lead on aviation negotiations and I think on maritime transport negotiations. They had for a while the lead on trade but when USTR was created (before I got there) USTR took the lead. On international financial issues, generally Treasury had the lead. But State had equities and there were interagency groups too. If there was interagency disagreement, we had to fight pretty hard because the asymmetries of being able to escalate disputes were such that we had to have really good arguments in order to be heard. I found it was very interesting to concoct such arguments, and I was often successful.

Q: Okay. The reason I asked "what did EB have the lead on" was because often if your bureau is not the lead on a topic, you can get sidelined pretty easily.

HEG: We had the lead within the building on these issues. One of the problems State had was there was no such thing as "a State Department position" on any issue. You would have the functional bureau – usually EB on an economic issue – having a principled position, then you would have the geographic bureau adopting a political "clientitis" type position, "you can't do this to my country, otherwise the relationship will suffer" – this kind of argument. It would often come from ambassadors at very high levels, and this would affect our policy towards foreign assistance when we were trying to exert some sort of conditionality or even a modicum of discipline in the case of countries like Zaire, or Zambia, where they would just take the money and run.

Q: How was the interaction with USAID?

HEG: USAID is a world unto itself. It has all these procedures and structures and it's hard to penetrate. They really were not too happy to have other people minding their business. You have to develop the expertise to have some value-added, and you have to have some good ideas. I was able to get on some delegations with them to go to Paris for the Development Assistance Committee, and another one to reschedule debt for Sudan, I think. At that one, I offered to write the cable and AID said "we'll do it." A couple of weeks later I'm back in the office and my boss comes to me and says "hey, you've got to write a cable on this meeting in Paris."

I said, "They said they were going to do it."

He said, “Yeah, but they haven’t done it and they’re not going to, so you have to.” So as usual in that kind of situation, my notes weren’t what they otherwise would have been, but I was able to come up with some kind of report.

Q: That was not uncommon. Suddenly the night before you’re faced with having to write it after all because there was a misunderstanding, or they’re just not doing it.

HEG: Yeah. One of the powers we had was a veto power. There was an interagency group about assistance programs. There was a program for I don’t remember what country, but it didn’t have enough conditionality and it seemed to be a give-away. Under the program, the country wasn’t expected to undertake any policy reforms. So, I went to my boss and said, “This doesn’t look very solid; what do you say we just veto it?” and he agreed. So, they had to go back to the drawing board. We had some negative power within some of these interagency groups that depended on consensus. I think more than AID, I was dealing with Treasury on the multilateral development banks. Treasury is a very hard-nosed agency which tends to look askance at the State Department in general and any sort of involvement in particular. Again, the trick is you have to know what you’re talking about and have some value-added. You have to be willing to do whatever needs to be done within a delegation or a process so they start taking you seriously.

Q: Were you able to make contacts or networks within some of these other agencies that helped you?

HEG: I got to know the working-level people and I was able to go to my boss and use his contacts at higher levels to get things done. One important thing about Treasury is you have office directors and DASs (deputy assistant secretaries) who are there for a while and then go off to the multilateral institutions, the IMF or World Bank or the multilateral banks as executive directors. It’s like State in the sense you can’t depend on the same person being in the job for a long period of time. I respected Treasury because their people were economically savvy but I felt I could stand my ground with them; it was an interesting experience. We had these multilateral groups which would decide on how we would vote on multilateral loans, and also on bilateral assistance. I remember one where we were voting on food aid for Iraq (this was the mid-’80s); apparently we were sending a lot of food aid to Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. Nobody saw much problem with it at the time, but later on those looked pretty shaky because Saddam Hussein was no friend of the United States. But this was a way of sending exports abroad, government-subsidized exports as food aid.

Q: At that moment Iraq was in a war with Iran, and we tilted towards Iraq; that might explain why we were more willing to provide that regime with some aid.

HEG: Yeah, the holdover from the hostage crisis was still very real. Though I was not making policy for Iran, I saw a lot of this stuff move through the process.

Q: Did any of your issues go as far as having to be resolved at the National Security Council (NSC)?

HEG: Not to my knowledge. The National Security Council in those days was not much of a player on economic issues. They were dealt with either directly by the Treasury and State and AID, or occasionally issues would rise to a State-Treasury breakfast that was an ongoing thing we organized in EB every two weeks – Shultz would meet with Jim Baker, who was then Treasury secretary. EB's policy planning office would write a memo but other offices would contribute, and that was a vehicle for getting issues to the secretary that he could raise with Treasury. Occasionally we would put issues affecting our equities in ODF about banks or AID.

Another issue I followed in that office was the budget process. This was the era of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings, the automatic sequestrations. There was a great deal of budget pressure and this affected our foreign assistance budget, so I was in a working group within the building working on foreign assistance budget issues with Skip Boyce and Bob Bauerlein; it used to be called D/P&R (policy and resources) up in the deputy secretary's office, I think Whitehead was the deputy secretary in those years. Things would pop up, like OMB (Office of Management and the Budget) wanting to score some of our loans in a very harmful way that would greatly expand the budget impact of a particular foreign assistance program, which meant it would be subject to draconian cuts because the bigger it is, the more it's going to get cut. I had to draft some memos that were signed on the seventh floor over to OMB to try to get them to back off. This was successful; they weren't expecting State to rise up and oppose this, it seemed like a very technical idea they could just slip through. We caught it and stopped it.

Q: Take a second to explain what scoring means.

HEG: Scoring is how OMB measures the budget impact of a particular program. If it's just a straight-up grant, like $1,000,000 to another country, that $1,000,000 equals a million dollars. But if it's a loan program with stipulations for flexibility on paying back or various possible interest rates, then there's a much more elaborate calculation that has to be made. A promise to pay can be scored as money in hand, or as nothing. I think what they were doing was proposing to move from scoring it as money in hand, to scoring it as nothing, which would greatly inflate the budget cost of a loan program.

Q: Interesting. It sounds like you got to use a great deal of your economic background in very practical ways in EB.

HEG: I think I was able to use the analytical way of looking at things. I don't think I was using demand and supply curves or econometrics or anything like that, but thinking analytically about issues and trying to derive policy solutions. That's where I thought my rigorous economic graduate training was useful and I always found it useful in any context – if you think analytically, then you can reason your way through issues. I've always found that to be advantageous.

Q: During this period as you're writing these things and they're getting more sophisticated and people are trusting you more, did you win any awards?

HEG: No; the whole middle part of my career was an award desert. I wasn't getting awards and I don't remember anybody else getting awards either; it just wasn't a thing. Later on, it became a thing but in the 1980s it was not a thing. I didn't know much about awards. I did get an award on my first tour in Caracas for my financial reporting. After that, it was a long time before I got another award.

Q: The other biggest way to reward an officer whose work your superiors like is to help with your next assignment.

HEG: Right. This was very useful to me. I'd gotten help with my onward assignment from the EB front office to go to work in ODF. When it came time to get an onward assignment, I was ready to go overseas after ODF; I stayed there for two-and-a-half years, so I could get back on the summer cycle. Actually, I had an agreement with an EB office director who was going to Korea as econ counselor; he had a position opening as the financial analyst or financial economist, and I was keen on financial work so I asked if I could have that job and he agreed he would put me in that job. But once he got to post, he found out that the entire agenda with Korea was trade, and that his trade officer was not up to snuff. So; what he wanted to do was put another trade officer in the finance job, so I got snookered out of that. But that turned out, as it always did, to be a good thing for me, because then I turned my attention to a job in Paris at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It just so happened that one of the DASs in EB, Dennis Lamb, was going out there as ambassador. He was the second-to-last career ambassador to the OECD, before they started making it political. He had been the trade DAS, but he and I worked closely together when I was in the front office on several issues. I guess he respected me, because when I indicated interest in the job, he was very receptive. Then when I went to Paris for AID meetings, I met with him at the OECD and that clinched the deal, so I ended up getting that assignment to Paris.

Q: What I wanted to ask here was, had you met your wife yet?

HEG: Yes, I had been married since the end of my first tour, so I had two kids at this time.

Q: Was your wife working while you were in Washington?

HEG: No, she wasn't.

Q: I imagine she was happy to hear about going to Paris?

HEG: She was. My assignment to Paris was a position called investment policy adviser. I was in a section of the mission, a multilateral U.S. mission, a section run by a Treasury officer called finance and enterprise affairs. I was in charge of committees dealing with investment, maritime transport, competition policy, tourism, and I was deputy representative on the capital movements committee.

Q: What year was this?

HEG: This was 1988. One thing I'd like to mention before going to Paris – this position was not language-designated. So, I did not have any French. But I had a wonderful office director, Shaun Donnelly, in Development Finance and he let me go early so I could have 13 weeks of French before I went to Paris. That was incredibly useful because I was able to begin to use the language and to work on that and turn it into a full proficiency by the end of the tour.

Q: That kind of fulfilled the problem you had had in college, that overcame the problem French had become.

HEG: Exactly. By the time I tackled French again, I had experienced what I thought was a strong and robust Spanish program at FSI (Foreign Service Institute) and I had the confidence to do the French. I found French more difficult than Spanish, but on the other hand I was able to advance in it and eventually use French, so that's right.

Interview session February 12, 2018. HEG by remote video from Monterrey, Mexico

Q: So, let's follow you to Paris and how that worked out.

HEG: Paris was a terrific assignment. Multilateral diplomacy was very different from what I had experienced before. Much of the work involved talking to other delegations. The OECD is an international think-tank for developed countries. Most of them at that time were European, although we also had Japan, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Much of my time was spent preparing for committee meetings where delegations would come from Washington, often from offices in EB with which I was already familiar but also from other agencies, and would come to these committee meetings with their counterparts from capitals in these advanced countries. In advance of the meetings, I would talk to people in the OECD secretariat about the agenda, and to other delegations about the points their delegations were preparing to make. I'd try to prepare our delegation for the meeting. During the meeting I would contribute substantively where I was able, as well as normally writing the report of the meeting.

Q: What were the goals the U.S. had, or what were the goals for your position?

HEG: The general goal for all of our positions at the OECD was to expand the scope of market opening around the world, whether in trade or finance or services. This was part of the broad post-war agenda of liberalization. The OECD was kind of the church of that. The Reagan administration had led a strong effort to move the world away from the 1970s paradigm of infant industry protections and capital controls, and toward a system of open markets and free trade and investment. It was an exciting time intellectually – we were pushing a strong coherent policy agenda across the board and largely succeeding. I came in at the end of this period, when protectionist pressures were rising in the U.S. The Reagan administration had just months remaining. The worm was already turning a bit. As I arrived at post, Congress had just passed (and in an election year Reagan felt compelled to sign) the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, which set forth measures to be taken against countries with which we were running large trade surpluses. This was a basically mercantilist approach. In my initial meeting with Ambassador Lamb (who had been DAS for trade in EB), he said he felt a bit like Colonel Nicholson in Bridge Over the River Kwai, watching the structure he was nearly finished building get blown up.

Our job was to push for broad liberalization while at the same time (unfortunately) we had to defend parochial U.S. interests that sometimes conflicted with that goal. There were certain policies we had that didn't really measure up, but due to political constraints, usually in Congress, we couldn't sacrifice to the altar of multilateral diplomacy – we had to fall on our sword and defend them. I'm thinking particularly of anti-dumping, which has already come up once. We had a knock-down, drag-out about somebody wanting to write an OECD report about anti-dumping policies among member countries and our government said, "no, we're not going to have a report on that." I interpreted that as meaning it wouldn't survive the scrutiny of daylight.

Anyway, there was a lot of peer pressure where a country in a particular committee, a country's "recent measures" as they were called, would be reviewed and then other countries would ask searching questions about their consistency with OECD undertakings. It was like a Senate hearing, very interesting. There was a lot of scope, particularly in the investment and capital movements committees, where the representatives were from the delegations and not from capitals, where you could actually be the person asking the questions. It was very stimulating work.

I should mention here because it took place early in my tour that France hosted the G-7 Summit in July 1989. That was the occasion of the bi-centennial of the French Revolution, the storming of the Bastille. President Mitterand pulled out all the stops for the glory of France, and himself. He had a huge new arch constructed at La Defense across the Seine from the suburb of Neuilly, directly in line with the Arc de Triomphe and the Louvre. This was to be the site of the G-7 Summit itself. He also had the large glass pyramid constructed at the Louvre along this line, as the museum's new entrance. Everyone in our Paris missions was assigned to work on the summit. I was paired with a colleague from the bilateral embassy's economic section, Mike Glover, to be site officer for the Arche de la Defense. The arch was under construction until just about the last minute. Mike and I attended some meetings and a few times visited the site and milled around, but we could not accomplish much given its chaotic state. Then when the White House advance teams arrived, we were basically told to get lost. We ended up not attending any of the Summit events. On July 14 I decided to go down to the Place de la Concorde and pick up my G-7 badge as a souvenir. The streets and the plaza were so densely packed with people that it was quite an effort to get to the embassy's Talleyrand building, where the credentials were available. I have never seen anything like that in Paris, before or since.

Q: At that time in the late '80s, there was still this concern about what became known as petro-dollars or euro-dollars, in other words many billions of dollars outside the control of the U.S., floating out there as hard currency.

HEG: I think those issues were discussed in some of the erudite financial committees where Treasury would come, but I wasn't working on those directly. What I remember is a lot of discussion of Japan and its Japan, Incorporated type market, and MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) and how it was getting away with keeping our products out while they were cleaning our clock on autos and this and that. It's amazing to look back now at how concerned everybody was, because the Japan problem basically went away a few years later, partly because of demography and partly just because of the slow-down of their economy, they weren't such a big threat any more. But everyone was scared of Japan while I was there.

One of the two other big issues that occupied us was the single market of the EU (European Union). Actually, it was the EC while I was there, the European Community, but the introduction of the single market was scheduled for the end of 1992. All of a sudden, on January 1, 1993, many of the barriers among the countries of the EU would be eliminated. There was a great deal of concern this would create a Fortress Europe that

would keep our products out and harm our trade interests. There were things they were proposing to do that would have harmed us, and one of them was this thing called the Second Banking Directive, where they were going to require "mirror-image reciprocity." Because of our federal system there were ways they could harm us and we couldn't really retaliate because certain banking functions were regulated at the state level. In fact, our federal system caused us significant problems on negotiating on investment in general and in trade in services because certain areas were either regulated by states rather than the federal government, or we just couldn't undertake to bind the states to anything less than a full treaty. Very few things in the OECD would rise to the level of a full treaty where you have to go to Congress to get a vote. Think about that now (laughter). It just isn't happening. So, we would have to try to get people to do agreements that didn't require that level of legal commitment. But we got a lot of criticism of our inability to speak for our sub-national units.

The other big issue was NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). NAFTA was still in its formative stage, but the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement was entered into during the time I was at the OECD, and there was a lot of examination about what that meant by the other countries. We had our own issues with Canada, most particularly their restrictions on investment to protect their "cultural identity". They were terrified of being swamped culturally by the U.S. But they were never really able to point to anything specific that we were doing to them; it was more just a fear. So, they were trying to keep these potential restrictions on the books so if something ever came up, they could invoke these restrictions. We found this sort of reservation to be a huge potential obstacle to liberal investment; a situation that inhibited the liberalization effort that the whole organization was undertaking, because if you have a reservation on a broad scope of area, you're not ever going to liberalize it. If you have specific reservations for specific problems that have been identified, that's one thing. Then you can argue about removing those. Canada had a general reservation on inward indirect investment. That's a huge topic. That means any sort of investment into Canada would be potentially covered by this reservation. They could allow or not allow, but there was no certainty.

The final really big area we dealt with at the OECD was the collapse of the Soviet bloc. After the Cold War ended – a truly momentous event – and we had countries in Eastern Europe, particularly the Visegrad countries – Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary – that were seeking information and policy advice on how to set up or re-start a market economy. The OECD really mobilized to try to help these people. A lot of ad hoc committees were set up to advise them on setting up a capital market, banking system, investment rules, property rights rules, and all of these things. Quite a bit of work was done and I was working in support of that in connection with the investment and capital markets committees.

In connection with the end of the Cold War, I remember that a big international meeting of western and former Soviet Bloc leaders took place spring 1990 in Paris at the Kleber Center, which ended up creating the OSCE (Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe). I saw all the traffic and commotion outside near Charles De Gaulle Etoile. Among the leaders who attended was Margaret Thatcher, who shortly after was deposed

as Conservative leader and Prime Minister in the UK. During those weeks I would go to the kiosks every Sunday and buy the London Times, to read about all the political intrigues that led to her downfall. In that time the British political journalists wrote brilliant prose, I had never read anything as good in newspapers.

One other thing I might mention that was a big deal during my years in Paris was the first Gulf War. One of the features of the first Gulf War was that people in Washington were very worried about Saddam Hussein engaging in retaliatory terrorism against our airlines. Now, after 9/11 it's hard to look back and figure out what they were worried about then because he never did anything like that – but maybe he intended to, but it didn't happen. There was in the recent past the Lockerbie bombing which I remember very well because I had just gotten to Paris. That was a terrifying event.

But the consequence of the Gulf War was for several months, no-one from Washington would fly across the Atlantic to attend any committee meetings. So those of us in the delegation, instead of supporting these people coming over, instead had to be them. We had to sit there and take the microphone and often very technical issues that – it's one thing to support a technical person coming over, but it's another to act in their stead and really have to speak authoritatively on technical issues. One I remember was the Maritime Transport Committee where I was the delegation's supporting officer, and no one was coming over. We had a very isolated position on some issue connected with the UN (United Nations) Liner Code Review Conference because we had not signed up to it. Nevertheless, as a member of the committee we were expected to agree to whatever position they came up with. I can't remember the details, but we did not agree with the consensus of the committee, and there I was, not an expert on the issues, but I was expected to withstand the pressure of all of these experts, most of whom had come from their own capitals – these were not my colleagues from other Paris missions but were experts from London or Copenhagen or Tokyo or whatever, and they were all zeroing in on me as the guy that was holding up this whole process. I was told by Washington to fall on my sword, and that's what I did. It was stressful because these countries were our friends. I didn't feel like I was getting any joy out of snubbing them, but I was carrying out my instructions.

Q: In your instructions, did you get detailed talking points you could use? Or were you expected to improvise?

HEG: Oh, no – they would provide me with detailed talking points, but talking points only take you so far. If you're in a back-and-forth kind of situation where your position is being picked at and queried, you can reach a point where you lack ways to respond to endless questions. You can see this with some politicians: if all they've got is the talking points, they can rapidly be taken out of their game because they lack sufficient background knowledge to pivot and be able to counter some unexpected line of questioning. Also, just the sheer amount of technical material that I was expected to absorb, it was quite difficult.

A final comment on a couple of other aspects of my USOECD tour. First, the year would climax with a three-day OECD Ministerial, usually in the May-June time frame, where cabinet-level officials from member states, and some other invited countries and observers, would gather in Paris to address the goals and objectives of the organization for the following year. This was always a big deal, and everything else stopped so all hands could prepare for the participation of the U.S. delegation. We would be assigned various tasks, such as control officer, site officer, note taker for various meetings, etc. The actual meetings were often pretty dry, as we had to allow all 25 or so member states to have their say. All speeches were simultaneously translated into French or English (the two official languages of OECD), as the case might be. If I attended, as the speakers droned on, I would often listen to the clear, crisp international French translation rather than the English as a way of improving my listening comprehension. The real action during the ministerial was the bilateral meetings among member states, and a lot of the preparatory work involved setting up these meetings that the Washington based delegation had requested, as well as determining appropriate venues. Our ambassadors, first Denis Lamb and later Al Larson, would spend much of their time during the meetings helping arrange and then attending these bilateral meetings.

Early in my USOECD tour, U.S. representation at the annual ministerial was robust, drawing such figures as Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady and Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher, as well as U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills. State normally was represented by the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, Richard McCormack during my first two years, and Robert Zoellick during the final two. As I recall, I was normally assigned to look after these officials. Initially, the Treasury Secretary would head the delegation, and was accompanied by a number of other senior Treasury officials. As time went on, the Treasury Secretary stopped coming and this began a long decline in Treasury's overall engagement in the OECD. This was unfortunate from my point of view, as Treasury had substantive weight on many items of the OECD agenda.

Q: This was a three-year tour?

HEG: No, four years. This was still in the days when you could extend for a fourth year; I did that and almost everyone else did because of course Paris was a very nice place to be, number one. Number two, the OECD was uniquely organized in terms of a place to work. You could always predict months ahead of time when you were going to be busy and when you weren't, because the year's meeting schedule would be put out and you were responsible for a certain number of meetings. And you were told when the ministerial would be. So, you could tell when there was time you could take vacations, and late July and August were almost always completely free. So, planning family travel was much easier in that job than almost anywhere else. Being in Europe for the first time, we took advantage of it, it was great.

Q: With four years in the OECD and development of your understanding of a lot of these technical things, were you thinking of following up in that same area, or were you tempted by other regions, other topics?

HEG: I was in a fairly wonkish kind of work and I was starting to feel I needed to break out of that. I needed to do something very different from what I had been doing. Economics was great but I could see that advancement required me to have more general abilities and experiences. So, I was looking for something new to do. One thing I did was put in my bid for a principal officer job on the border; I was bidding on Nuevo Laredo which was an FS-02 job at the time. I think. I was interested in that partly because I'd done my undergraduate work in Texas and I thought I understood that region fairly well, and I spoke Spanish and all of that. Much later I came to understand that Consular Affairs controlled those border consulates completely and that I had nothing they would value other than enthusiasm and language. They were very polite, but I never had a chance.

At that time, USOECD (U.S. Mission to the OECD) was part of the European bureau and there was an office, EUR/RPE (Bureau of European Affairs/Office of Regional Political-Economic Affairs) that was backstopping the OECD along with the European Union and other international organizations in Europe. There was somebody in that office (I've forgotten who it was now) who was trying to help me find a job. I was interested in finding another job in Europe because I felt that if I gave up that toehold, I'd end up going to Latin America and I'd never get out. A fair number of people, that's what they want; they stay in Latin America and just do Latin America. But I wanted more variety in terms of my assignment pattern and I wanted to expand on my toehold in Europe. It was hard. I was also getting to the point where I was feeling like I should be promoted soon; I was an FS-02 and I'd gotten an MSI (meritorious step increase) the year before, so I was looking at what sort of job I wanted to do that wouldn't be beneath where I thought I should be.

It was a fairly long process to find the right position and eventually EUR/RPE identified a political position in Turkey. It required 44 weeks of language training, which kind of was off-putting and also kept it from being over-bid. I was not in the political cone but it was attractive to me because it was in the European bureau and it was doing something different. It was also a stretch job, an FS-01 position and I was an FS-02 so I had to wait until March or April before they would panel me. They had to use something called the "silver bullet"; it was very arcane how they used to do those stretch assignments and I'm not sure it's the same way now. Anyway, they finally paneled me so I was assigned to three years in Turkey via 44 weeks of language training.

This was at the old FSI in Rosslyn; this was the last year anyone studied there before they opened the new Shultz Center in Arlington. It was a pretty dismal place to study at any time in the latter years because they weren't renovating or fixing anything. In addition, 44 weeks of a hard language was difficult. We would call Turkish a Teflon language as opposed to Velcro because you would forget almost everything as soon as you heard it. There were very few cognates. They gave us a list of mostly French cognates on the first day, and that looked pretty appealing but that was the end of it, that was the last we ever saw of anything remotely familiar. Compared to French and Spanish, the department was less organized; there was no method as such. The written materials were sort of in process. The faculty was much smaller. They were very nice teachers but I never felt like this was a well-oiled machine the way French and Spanish had been. In addition, we had

only five students in the class. There was a division between two or three who were exceptionally strong at languages, and then the rest of us. But the teachers would teach at the same level to all of us, which de facto becomes the level of the smartest or most talented language students. Two of the five students later worked with me in the Ankara political section, human rights officer Janice Weiner, and labor officer Dale Dean.

I found the whole year quite a struggle; it was difficult. We were given the choice of either being assigned to Washington for the year, or coming on TDY (temporary duty). I found the TDY option very attractive because you could get per diem, and even though it was on the sliding scale and reduced over time, a lot of the housing costs were offset. We found a foreign service officer who leased us his house in Alexandria for the year. I had a hard time with Turkish; I worked really hard but it was never coming together. I eventually got a 2+/2+ (speaking/reading scores) and unfortunately the gap between that and a 3/3 is enormous. I was able to understand and read a certain amount but it wasn't fluent at all. It wasn't like you could just pick it up and run with it like a 3/3 means. In those days, they automatically waived it; they're not going to send you to another six or eight months of Turkish, it was just, "go to post and do the best you can." That was one of the hardest things I've ever tried to do in the Foreign Service, studying Turkish.

Q: Did you ever use it again later?

HEG: After my assignment in Turkey? A few times in Turkish restaurants I trotted out a few phrases. I went to Turkey with my wife in 2011 and we stayed there for 10 days. I was able to produce a little bit, but for the most part no. Being a Teflon language, it kind of just goes away, whereas I could pick up French or Spanish years later and there'd still be a lot there.

Q: I wanted to mention so we can keep track of the recordings that today is February 14th, 2018 just so that we have it recorded. (HEG by video from Monterrey, Mexico)

HEG: -Before we get to Ankara, I should mention that, while in Turkish language training, I walked into class one day on a Monday and found out I had been promoted to FS-01, which was a fairly significant step in my career. But it's odd because that could never happen now; nobody told me over the whole weekend. There was no social media, no email, nothing, and no-one called me. Very few people knew my phone number because I just arrived for TDY, so I didn't have a lot of visibility at that point. That was a very important step, and meant I was at-grade when I got to post.

Another thing, just an anecdote, that's always struck me about the Orwellian nature of the Foreign Service. When I left Paris, I chose TDY rather than assignment to Washington for the 44 weeks of language training. I had a wife and two kids and the Paris GSO (general services office) issued me these things called GBATs (Government Bill of Airline Travel), which meant you got an extra suitcase. So, we had air freight, our regular baggage allowance, and four extra GBAT suitcases to go live in Washington for essentially a whole year, and that's all we had. When the year came to an end and I went

to the department to go to Turkey and I wanted to get GBATs to take an extra suitcase for each of my family members, they said "no, we don't do GBATs; we've never done GBATs, this is a figment of your imagination." Just a lesson that always stuck with me. It was the "we've always been at war with Eastasia" kind of stuff that you get. Just one of the challenges of this career.

Your experience with the GBAT or the permission for extra luggage is one of those things that I experienced as well, depending on where and when I was going and a whole series of factors, sometimes I could get it, sometimes I couldn't, and it wasn't always clear to me when? Go ahead, you're now in Turkish language training.

HEG: I finished up, and I had to go to post without reaching my language proficiency, which during those years wasn't that uncommon, especially for a language like Turkish where, if they left you in there until you got a 3/3, you might never get to post. Now, apparently, they are making it much more difficult to get out of language training without the 3/3.

So, I went to Turkey, which was a fascinating time. This was 1993, just after the end of the Cold War. Turkey struck me as the geopolitical center of the world; that's how all of us felt in the embassy. There were conflicts all around Turkey. The Soviet Union had just collapsed. The Middle East as usual was in turmoil. Greece and Turkey were at loggerheads. The Balkans were in flames. Turkey was involved in all of these conflicts basically, and essentially had no friends. Nobody was friends with Turkey, except kind of the U.S. Turgut Ozal had been the president of Turkey before I got there and he improved the relationship with the U.S. quite a bit. When I was there, there was not a whole lot of anti-Americanism. They didn't like all of our policies, but it's not like what you read about Turkey now where people are very hostile to the U.S.

Q: Interesting you mention that; Turkey is one of the classical cases of public affairs challenges where we work generally well with the government since it's a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member. There's always friction but since we had bases there and Turkey as you say is such a geopolitically important country, we generally manage to find a way to work with the Turks on important political and military matters. But when it comes to our popularity, we've never been able to move the needle on popularity with the population. The only other thing I wanted to mention, when you said Turkey had no friends, I don't want to argue but was this a period of time when Israel was quietly cooperating with Turkey on security matters?

HEG: Yes. I was going to get to that. Turkey and Israel, because both were essentially friendless in their region, they gravitated to one another. It was quite interesting. Now that we're on that, I can comment that they had military exercises together. The Israeli air force would fly in Turkish airspace because it was much more ample than what Israel has. Many Israeli tourists traveled to Antalya, which is a beach resort on the southern coast. I think all of that is out the window now, but it was an interesting feature of Turkish foreign relations.

Within the U.S., Turkey was very poorly understood in our political system. In fact, we had groups in Congress that were aligned with the Armenian and Greek lobbies that were actively opposed to Turkey and tried to get the U.S. to take a harder stance vis-a-vis Turkey in the region. That made our job doubly difficult because you had this noise you had to fight through to get people to understand the importance of working with Turkey.

The internal situation in Turkey was in turmoil. There was a major insurgency, a PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) in the southeast under Ocalan. This was a very bloody affair. It generated a lot of issues concerning human rights because as usual with a civil war, people's rights were not necessarily respected. The Kurdish issue has always been controversial in Turkey because they see Kurdish nationalism as an existential threat. Turkey sees all kinds of things as an existential threat because of what happened after World War One, when the victorious powers negotiated the Treaty of Sèvres and basically divided up the country, and gave a piece to Italy and to Greece and this and that and the other. They always have it in the back of their minds that that's what people are trying to do to them, so the paranoia's very deep.

The Ankara political section was headed by Bob Pace my first year, and Richard McKee during my final two years. My job there as political section deputy was not only supervisory; I was managing the embassy's coverage of all these regional conflicts. It was absolutely fascinating, completely different from anything I'd ever done before. We had these special envoys for Cyprus and for Nagorno-Karabakh; both were active conflicts. Nagorno-Karabakh was actually a war going on when I was there. The Armenians had launched a military offensive to connect this Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan to Armenia. They drove a corridor through Azerbaijan to connect to Nagorno-Karabakh. Washington got quite alarmed that Turkey, which was close to Azerbaijan, might intervene. We stayed in really close touch with the foreign ministry and the ministry of defense to make sure that wasn't happening. We were able to do that, but it was the kind of situation where people are on the edge of their seats. Turkey was very upset because they saw it as unprovoked aggression on the part of Armenia, which had always had historic issues with Turkey, and against Azerbaijan which they saw as a brother Turkic country. After the Soviet Union collapsed, many of the newly independent countries of Central Asia were Turkic. They had distant ethnic and linguistic ties to Turkey, and Turkey under Ozal and subsequent secular governments saw this as a geopolitical opening for them to expand their influence. In a business sense, I think they did; Turkish businessmen were all over Central Asia in the years after the Cold War. Turkey expanded its economic reach that way, but in other ways I don't think they had as much in common as they thought because Turkey was a much more sophisticated country than most of the Central Asian countries.

Another way we thought Washington didn't quite understand Turkey was because of the prominence of the new relationship with Russia. As you may recall, they broke Russia and the former Soviet states off from EUR and created this S/NIS (Secretary/Newly Independent States) structure under Strobe Talbott. There was a sense in our embassy – we took on board some of the Turkish paranoia; you always get a little clientitis – that maybe the tendency in Washington was to be a little bit too pro-Russian and a little bit

negative to Turkey's interests in the Caucasus region for example. There was this idea of the "hidden hand" that the Turks talked about, where the Russians were using Armenia and other countries to block Turkish influence. It was really murky. I'd actually go talk to the Russians about this stuff because they had an embassy there. My main interlocutor there would even ask rhetorically, "What is to be done?" It was all a brand new world, really fascinating.

One time, early on, Strobe Talbott came through Turkey on the way to a big trip through the former Soviet Union. Victoria Nuland was with them (she later became very prominent); it was a huge thing. I was named control officer for it; administratively it was quite a bit of work. They did come and get the Turkish perspective but I never got a sense of how they folded that into their overall thinking at the end of their trip.

Another thing I was responsible for was Turkey's relationship with Europe. I stayed in close touch with European diplomats in Ankara to get their perspective on Turkey. For big countries like the UK (United Kingdom), France, and Germany, the issue was potential EU membership. For the smaller countries, specifically the Scandinavians, they were only interested in human rights. There was nothing else they were really interested in. We tried to get them to take a broader perspective; the security interests of the West were also important in Turkey.

Speaking of human rights, one of the officers I supervised was the human rights officer who had to write the Human Rights Report every year. This was an incredibly fraught document because the Turks would take umbrage at huge swaths of it, and we had to bend over backwards to give them credit where credit was due, otherwise the document would be incredibly damaging. This officer – very courageous, she actually won the Rivkin Award (for constructive dissent) based on my nomination – Janice Weiner, she had developed incredible contacts in the Kurdish community, with human rights NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and among the Turks themselves. She knew more about human rights in Turkey than any of the do-gooder Scandinavian countries did. So, they would always come to her to figure out what was really going on. We amalgamated objective information from all sides, whereas they had this confirmation bias where they just wanted to listen to one side, the people complaining about (often justifiably) the human rights problems in Turkey. That was another fraught element.

The first year I was there, the European Union started negotiating a customs union with Turkey. This was technically an economic issue (and I was an economic officer), but the substance basically always boiled down to human rights. The main objections in the European Community were about Turkey's human-rights situation, not about their economic policies. In effect, I became one of the lead embassy officers working on this issue even though I was now in a political job; that was another interesting aspect.

A few things about the embassy. This was a time of great technological change in the world. This was the first embassy I worked in where we had any sort of email or computer. We had Wangs, and we would draft our cables on these – word processors are essentially what they were, they weren't quite computers. They were way more than what

we'd had before which was electric typewriters that I was never very good at using. We had one internet terminal in the entire office. This was a big office, we had nine officers and two FSNs and two OMS (office management specialists), and we had one terminal where there was this crude email system. We would take turns sending emails to our parents or whatever (it was many time zones away); it was fascinating. Another thing about it, we and Moscow were the two embassies in the EUR bureau that opened on Saturday. The front office would completely open up on Saturday and we in the political section were expected to staff up. We didn't have to go in every Saturday, but we had to have a critical mass, because they tasked us constantly with all kinds of things, drafting cables, making phone calls, whatever. So, we would go in most every Saturday; sometimes you'd be there until three in the afternoon. That was about the only embassy where I'd worked where that was the case; this was just routine. They had to get special permission I think to do that, because there were overtime implications for non-tenured officers.

Q: Was one of the reasons they opened on Saturday because the Turkish government was working Saturdays?

HEG: No. Under the secular Ataturkist government (I don't know about now), they kept a European Monday-through-Friday schedule. It was nothing like what you would experience in Afghanistan, where Friday was the only day we got off. Saturday and Sunday were the two weekend days in Turkey.

The argument was that there was so much going on in and around Turkey that we had to have that extra time to work on it. For the front office, I think Saturday was one of the few opportunities for them to kick around ideas among themselves. So, we would get drawn into discussions with the ambassador and DCM about particular policy issues, because they were normally so busy, they didn't have a chance to reflect. It was an incredibly busy embassy.

They had a female prime minister by the way, Tansu Ciller. That was a unique thing for that part of the world at that time. She was friendly to the U.S., but she looked out for her own interests. When I'd been there about a year, she appointed as foreign minister, a guy who'd been a very strong anti-U.S. nationalist and hard over on the Cyprus issue. His name was Mumtaz Soysal. That created a huge amount of consternation in Washington. I had to write cables to explain where this guy was coming from and suggest approaches for people to deal with him.

I guess the Cyprus issue was the biggest headache I had. From the beginning Greece and Turkey had gone to war in 1974 over Cyprus; the Turks invaded and split off the northern half of the island. Greece and Turkey each have narratives about the other that are completely incompatible. It reminds me of some of the polarization in the U.S. political system now; there's no middle ground for these narratives. These are the only two countries that have each fought their war of independence against the other; it's hard even to imagine how that came about. Historically, that kind of explains why they're so estranged. The Turks said they invaded to rescue the Turkish Cypriot population from

what they saw in effect as ethnic cleansing, and the Greeks say it was unprovoked aggression. The U.S. took certain policy decisions in that period that in effect alienated both Greece and Turkey. We didn't prevent the Turkish invasion but then we put an arms embargo on Turkey. Huge amounts of bitterness resulted on both sides of the Aegean for years and years after that.

So, there's this negotiating process that seems to be endless; it's still going on now, where you've got a U.S. special negotiator and a UN negotiator and all of that. I was constantly dealing with these negotiators who would come to Ankara. In those days, there was no official email so every time these negotiators, whether it was Cyprus or Nagorno-Karabakh, came they would get all these NIACT (night action) immediate cables that would come all hours of the day and night, and I would have to go in and get them and take them, because I was always the control officer for these guys. I was constantly driving into the embassy at all hours to get these things; it was amazing. Now, that doesn't really happen, unless the messages are highly classified. They had to be picked up and the communicators had to go in to get them.

Q: Let me ask a question. Right, NIACT-immediate means that not only must the communicator go in and get the cable, but the communicator has to notify whoever is the first line officer to take a look at it because that officer has to determine whether they need to wake the ambassador up or the DCM. What you're saying is this was kind of an abuse, because the data and actions required really were not immediately required; they could have waited until the morning.

HEG: Yes, but they were in the nature of instructions for these negotiators who may be meeting with their counterparts at the beginning of the next day. So, if they had a breakfast meeting, they had to get the thing at 9:00 or 10:00 at night (I think we were seven or eight hours ahead of Washington). So, what seemed like a reasonable time to send this thing from Washington's point of view was not so great for us.

It's always been thus, but email has tremendously reduced the amount of that stuff. It's been a long time since I saw a NIACT-immediate cable and I just retired a year-and-a-half ago. They just don't happen the way they used to.

Stuff just kept happening, it was like firecrackers going off all the time in Turkey. During my second year, I think in the summer, the Turkish DCM in Athens was assassinated by a Greek terrorist group, November the 19th or something like that. Somebody walked up to the DCM and shot him in the head. It was really a scary time because they could have gone to war. This wasn't the only time they could have gone to war when I was there. The idea of two NATO allies fighting each other is not a pretty thing to think about. People get very excited in Washington about that sort of thing. That was a tense moment.

Another thing we had going on was in Iraq, there was this effort to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq from Saddam Hussein with air cover; it was called Operation Provide Comfort. The political section was not in charge of that on the substantive side because we had a separate political-military section across the hall, much smaller – they had three

officers. We worked with them closely but every year the Turkish parliament had to renew Operation Provide Comfort. As I explained, they are deeply suspicious about any sort of Kurdish anything, so the idea we were protecting these guys who may or may not be allied with the PKK who may or may not want to break off part of Turkey and form their own state – this was highly controversial. Every year the political section had to mobilize (I think they got the econ section involved as well) to go talk to many members of parliament about maybe supporting this thing. It was always a very close vote. The consequences of losing one of those votes I think we saw later on at the beginning of the Second Gulf War when the Fourth ID (infantry division) was prevented from entering Iraq through the north because the Turkish parliament wouldn't approve it. So, these things are non-trivial; this was very heavy lifting. I just remember going in – this was not our issue, but lobbying these guys in the Turkish parliament. Turks are not easy people to persuade of anything; they are very strong-minded people. It was fascinating.

Another thing going on was Bosnia. I don't know if you remember just how ugly the Bosnia situation was, but this was when Sarajevo was being shelled by the Serbs. I remember this horrible day when some artillery shells blew up a school or hospital or something. Christiane Amanpour came on CNN (Cable News Network) and blasted the entire UN system and everybody else. It was really horrific. Well, the Turks were very upset about what was going on in Bosnia. The Bosnians were basically part of the old Ottoman Empire, Muslims, and they saw them as their people. These are all frozen conflicts from after the end of World War One, when Communism came in and froze all these disputes in Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, and elsewhere. All of a sudden, these conflicts were all popping one after another. With Bosnia, we had to calm the Turks down. I guess Richard Holbrooke came in and became the EUR assistant secretary at some point along there. He eventually did the Dayton agreement. The Turks were enormously grateful for that; before then, it was just open season on all the Muslims in Bosnia, the tremendous atrocities that took place. I remember Holbrooke came to Ankara with Izetbegovic, who was the Bosnian president, and had this big event in a hotel. It was fascinating to attend; you could see the Turks were so grateful for what we had managed to do. How many times in your career do you get to say "The U.S. did a great thing here and people really appreciate it"? A few other times, but not often. Usually, it's people complaining about us.

A little bit more on Turkey but I don't want to forget talking about living in the country and what Turks are like as a people. It was absolutely remarkable. The Turks are among the most hospitable people on Earth. I felt treated as a guest everywhere I went. If you're a foreigner, you're treated as a guest. The country is incredibly orderly. This was in the '90s when the crime rate in the U.S. was still pretty high and you had crack cocaine problems in major cities. You could walk around in Turkey with the exception maybe of parts of Istanbul any time of day or night and feel perfectly safe, far safer than I would have felt in any major city in the U.S. It was a remarkable feeling like that. Then the food. The food in Turkey is outstanding, one of the great cuisines I've ever run into. Then the history of Turkey going back to the Hittites, layer after layer of civilizations since the dawn of time. So, traveling around Turkey was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. We'd take the car and drive off and I'd combine it with work. I'd get permission

to go give a talk in Izmir – we used to have a consulate there but they closed it right about the time I arrived. The natural beauty, the Graeco-Roman ruins, the Islamic culture – it was just the most rich and varied place I'd ever been. I loved it; it was a wonderful place to do a tour.

Getting back to substance – during the last year I was in Turkey the European Parliament finally approved the customs union, which was a major win for us. I think to some extent the Turks were grateful for our support on that as well. I was there during a very positive period in U.S.-Turkish relations and we were able to deliver some things they wanted in both Bosnia and Europe, and we thought the trajectory was positive, that Turkey would gradually get more and more integrated with Europe. This was our policy objective; we thought anchoring Turkey to the West was in ours and Turkey's and Europe's strategic interests. We had a hard time sometimes persuading particularly the French and Germans to see things that way, because they had domestic political issues preventing them from viewing Turkey as favorably as we did. The Germans had the big Turkish minority – the German embassy had very long visa lines, the only time I'd seen another country had longer lines than ours. I ended up getting a Superior Honor Award for the customs union, which ended the award desert I had experienced for a decade.

Another issue I should mention is political Islam. This was starting to appear on the radar screen when I was in Turkey. We didn't really see it coming, partly because everybody whom we talked to was an Ataturkist, a believer in the secular state. The secular state as such was a fragile thing; I could see that when I was there. This is a country that was 99 percent Muslim. I am speaking of it as it was, I don't know what the rules are now. Proselytizing another religion was illegal. This is a very odd form of democracy from our point of view. There were only three legal religious minorities, the Armenians, the Greek Orthodox, and the Jews, and this is because they were established in the Treaty of Lausanne, the follow-on treaty after the end of the Greek-Turkish war of 1922. So, Catholics and other Christian religions were basically limited to worshiping at embassies and things like that. They would have churches – the Vatican embassy in Ankara was also the Catholic church, because that was about the only place where they were allowed to have a church. The Italians also had a Catholic church in their embassy which for an American was interesting.

But at the same time, the secularist elite, the educated Turks we were dealing with, were very secular. The women were not wearing head scarves. As far as they were concerned, this was a done deal; the Islamic political system was never going to come back. But I could tell it wasn't that easy. There is no corresponding tenet in Islam to "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and unto God that which is God's." There's no separation there; the religion doesn't acknowledge that space, so in some sense the Turkish system that Ataturk created was always a bit artificial.

It was also very weak. The Turks were doing better, economically weak but improving. But the political parties were self-ossifying, the secular parties. They would do well but the leaders would never step aside as they aged. You had the leaders of these parties that would get older and more decrepit, and whenever somebody else who was younger and

seen as a possible threat to their power, they would be purged and kicked out. I think this is part of what happened to the Ataturkist state. In December of ‘95, about six months before I left, there was a national election. This new Islamist party called “Refah” (welfare) ended up getting the largest share of the vote.

This was a stunning development. Refah was led by this guy named Erbakan but it also had a leading guy who some of our people had some contact with, Abdullah Gul, who later became the president of Turkey. He as I recall was a fairly reasonable guy, but people were scared of this development. They thought that sharia law was going to be immediately imposed and all of that. So, to prevent them from forming a government, the True Path Party that was in power at the time under Prime Minister Tansu Ciller formed a coalition government with their main secular opposition, which was the Motherland Party that had been Turgut Ozal’s party. But this coalition couldn’t last; in the last few months I was there, it collapsed. After I had left, Ciller actually formed a coalition with the Refah Party, which then ended up getting torpedoed by the military, which was still very powerful and thought they had to take a stand against letting Islam back in. Who knows, they weren’t exactly wrong, because you see what happened later. Erdogan in the last decade, he did great things for Turkey. I went back in 2011 and the economy was far more developed than it was when I was there in the early ‘90s. But I could tell, the internet censorship was already very high at that time. Since then, things have gotten worse and worse. The anti-Americanism is far beyond anything I knew when I was there.

So, Turkey’s not headed in the direction that we wished it would at the time. But it is still a very important country.

One more thing I should mention that happened in the last six months I was there. A dispute erupted between Turkey and Greece over an Aegean island which the Turks called Kardak and the Greeks called Imia. This nearly led to a shooting war. It’s a little uninhabited island right off the southwest coast of Turkey. Things were really tense. The Greeks and Turks both said it was theirs, and they were sending warships. We were trying to translate all these articles in the newspapers that reflected Turkish government opinions to try to get a grip on what they were thinking in the government, because this was the kind of thing where they were too busy to talk to us. It was a crisis, really difficult.

One more thing, more of a generic Foreign Service issue. During the years I was in Turkey, this was the nadir of our resource situation in my career. It’s like today where they were trying to reduce the size of the Foreign Service workforce through attrition and the promotion numbers were taken way down, so people were getting selected out at the senior threshold in large numbers. This caused me fortunately to put my desire for a quick advancement into the senior Foreign Service on the back burner. If I hadn’t done that, I wouldn’t have made it because the promotion numbers were so bad in those years. We also had government shutdowns for the first time. I remember in November ‘95 I think there was a shutdown. We were told to furlough 10 percent of the people in the embassy. I think in Washington they furloughed 90 percent of the State Department. So, we were working but had nobody to talk to back there. Terrible.

Dick Moose was the Under Secretary for Management. He came out to Ankara and had a meeting with some of our officers, and he basically explained to us that not only did we have to do more with less, which was the mantra in those days, but that the future of the State Department was to provide platforms for other, better politically connected agencies in Washington to represent themselves overseas. So basically, we would just operate the embassy as a platform and say the Department of Commerce which had more of a constituency would actually come and do the work. That was a very demoralizing idea. I don't remember ever hearing anything as negative as that during my career. Fortunately, we all stuck it out and things got better down the road.

Anything you want to ask me about Turkey before we move on?

Q: I don't think so, other than you had mentioned the discord between Turkey and Greece over that rock, that tiny island. How was it resolved?

HEG: I think the way a lot of these things are often resolved, that people just stepped back from the brink. Countries initially in these kinds of situations stir themselves up and get more and more angry, and then at some point they stare into the abyss and then they walk back. One thing I remember – there may have been some really high-level interventions from U.S. people. I was pretty plugged in there but I didn't know everything that was going on. I was feeding information to the front office on what we could figure out, but I wasn't always being told what they were doing. I'm sure the front office was active trying to talk to the very senior members of the government, but I don't remember getting briefed on all that on a daily basis.

Q: One of the reasons I ask is because you would think from the outside that it's unusual that two NATO allies could get so quickly to the brink of war between themselves; I think it's one of the arguments that's been made in favor of NATO, that having both Greece and Turkey in there allows the U.S. to have more influence in resolving these kinds of disputes. Whereas had Turkey or Greece not been in NATO, it would have been much more difficult.

HEG: I think that's absolutely true. Both sides have attempted to use NATO as a forum to try to get its case made against the other. The Aegean in particular is an issue where the Greeks are always claiming that the Turks are flying into their territorial airspace, and the Turks are claiming a certain amount of the space is international. It's a very complicated situation because the Aegean islands that are Greek go all the way up against the coast of Turkey. Then you've got to wrap in all the aviation regulations both civil and military. That stuff, the direct NATO stuff was handled in the pol-mil section so I didn't get involved in that technical level, but I knew it was almost an intractable set of issues. Both sides being incredibly suspicious of the other made it always a hair-trigger. You're right about the NATO membership.

Interview on rest of Turkey, Washington Assignments 1996-2000, February 21, 2018. HEG by video from Monterrey, Mexico.

HEG: – I'd like to go back to my assignment in Turkey and add a few points that are worthy of mention in my view. The first would be the embassy leadership we had there. It was fairly strong. The initial ambassador was Richard Barkley, a well-known European hand. He had been ambassador in East Germany before. His DCM was Jim Holmes, a very old-school kind of guy. I had a lot of respect for him, I learned an enormous amount. He was a very hard worker.

In the middle of my tour, which was '93 to '96, Ambassador Barkley was replaced by Marc Grossman, one of the most well-known figures in recent Foreign Service history. It was a real experience to work for Ambassador Grossman. He was just a ball of energy in Turkey. He had been DCM there previously so he knew the country well. The last year I was there, Jim Holmes was replaced as DCM by Frank Ricciardone, who later became ambassador to Turkey and also was a senior adviser on Iraq to the Iraqi opposition. When I was working in London, I would see Frank in the cafeteria because he would be in London meeting with Iraqi dissidents before the second Gulf War.

One anecdote from early in my tour. The first time I went to Istanbul from Ankara, I took a train. It was like stepping into the 19th century, it was a really old-timey train, could have been in Murder on the Orient Express or something like that. It was the most amazing experience to do that. The train gets to Haydarpasa on the Asian side of the Bosporus, an incredibly elaborate and ornate Ottoman train station. Then you get on these boats and go across the Bosporus. I remember, that was awe-inspiring, one of the most beautiful things I'd ever seen. That made me feel like "this Foreign Service stuff is great!" It was just a transcendental experience, almost, it was so beautiful.

When I was on that trip, I was meeting different people the consulate was introducing me to. One of them was the chief rabbi of Istanbul; the Jews, Armenians, and Greeks were the three recognized minorities. I was going to have a coffee conversation with the rabbi. It turned out he didn't speak English and my Turkish was not good enough to carry on a meaningful conversation with him, so he spoke in Ladino and I spoke in Spanish, and it was mutually intelligible. It was fascinating, Ladino had been the language of the Jews of Spain when they were expelled in 1492 and many of them had come to the Ottoman Empire, who gave them refuge. This had been like 500 years ago and they still spoke Ladino in the Jewish community of Istanbul. Then it was mutually intelligible with the Spanish I learned at FSI, another amazing thing.

The third thing I wanted to mention was a policy issue. Toward the latter part of my tour, Ambassador Holbrooke decided one way to get some leverage on the Cyprus issue was to support Cypriot accession to the EU. I thought that was a bad idea, because it would just introduce another obstacle, another member state into European Union opposed to Turkish entry. At that time, our paradigm was that eventually Turkey would enter as well. You had sort of a Greek veto already on the table, and I was very concerned that the Greek Cypriots would be a second veto. I didn't formally dissent, but I argued fairly

strenuously that this was a bad policy decision on our part. I was overruled, but I think subsequent events have shown that it was not a quick path to a Cypriot solution. That's all I have to say on that.

The last thing has to do with Armenia. I think I talked about Armenia earlier, the hot war going on when I got there. Later on, there was a cease-fire, but Turkey had closed its border with Armenia, not allowing trade to go back and forth. The U.S. government was anxious to try to persuade Turkey to reopen the border, because realistically Armenia's only alternative was to turn to the Russians, and even the Turks could see that. So, we worked with the Turkish foreign ministry to see if we could find a way forward. I was working with some of the smartest diplomats I'd ever worked with in the foreign ministry of Turkey in Ankara, trying to solve this. They actually were creative and forthcoming; they had meetings with the Armenians. But ultimately, they could never get past the issue of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Armenia simply wouldn't make any moves about the territory it was occupying inside Azerbaijan. But the political climate improved enough that, subsequent to my tour, they were able to do the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline through that region, another of our big energy objectives that I think was a consequence of having at least semi-civilized if not peaceful relations in that region with Armenia.

That's it for Turkey, I hope. I may think of other things later. It was fascinating.

Q: As you approach the end of your tour in Turkey, what are you thinking about as a follow-on at the time?

HEG: I was basically not sure what I wanted to do. I ended up going back to Washington and took a job as deputy director in the Office of Brazil and Southern Cone Affairs (BSC). That was a return to the Latin America bureau which was called ARA (Bureau of Inter-American Affairs) at the time. My first two assignments had been in that bureau overseas; this was my first time working in Washington in that bureau. I saw an interesting connection between Turkey and Brazil, Argentina, and Chile; these were all what we used to call middle-income developing countries. In synthesizing my economic and political experience, I thought that set of countries and issues was very interesting and very important. These countries were big enough to get attention and to matter in international diplomacy, and yet they would have some distance to go before they would take their place alongside countries of the OECD, for example. [Turkey was in the OECD but as a special case. I was at the USOECD during the last days of the "Turkish Consortium," an OECD body for helping the Turks sort out their economy.] In Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and countries like that, OECD membership is something to which they aspired. Later, Chile became an OECD member, and we supported that. It required a certain level of political and economic attainment. So, I was very interested in going to that office and working in those countries.

It was an interesting time in Washington; I hadn't been in Washington for a while. Peter Romero, who had made his name working on El Salvador in the early 1980s, was the DAS, and Dave Rogus was the office director. A Brazil hand, Dave led the section with a

professional substantive focus and encouragement of a jocular informality among the desk officers. The first year I was there was '96/'97 and the big thing on my plate as deputy director was the scheduled state visit of the president of Chile. His name was Eduardo Frei. I'd never done anything on a state visit before. It turns out it's a huge deal. People work on these for months and months and everybody gets wound up. There's protocol and the White House and NSC and the seventh floor, everybody just micromanaging this stuff. I had to support my Chile desk officer, Jim Roberts, and we had to work through all these different issues. Of course, you've got this thing about "deliverables" whenever you have a major visit like that. What are they going to say they accomplished? What will be the big outcomes of the visit? I can't remember the specifics of everything we did but one deliverable the Chileans wanted that caused us a huge headache was – I don't know if you remember this, but in 1989 there was a big brouhaha between the U.S. and Chile over grapes. They had sent a big shipment of grapes up to the east coast of the U.S. because they grew them in the winter when we didn't have any grapes, and there was this report or rumor that someone had detected cyanide in those grapes. So, they were pulled off the market and cost Chile some $300 million worth of revenue. This was not only an economic thing for them; this was a pride thing. They were insulted to their core by this. Of course, you know how the U.S. is; nobody gave a damn. "Suck it up, buttercup," right? So, we had to fight to lower their expectations because this just wasn't going to happen. Nobody was going to go to the Hill and get a $300 million appropriation and nobody was going to stand up and apologize for something that happened five years ago; it just wasn't going to happen. But this made some of the atmospherics around the preparatory meetings somewhat difficult.

The visit ended up going well. It was in February '97, and it was kind of fun because some of us officers in the section got to go to the White House, not for the state dinner itself but we got to go for dessert. (Laughter) I put on a tuxedo and went to the dessert. Bill Clinton was running around, and Yo-Yo Ma played at dessert. Tremendous! One of the cool things you get to do in the Foreign Service, you get to live above your actual station in life. I didn't have to pay for it or anything, I was just there. Great.

Another thing we had – during the period I went into that office, the Clinton administration was starting to spend more time focused on Latin America. I'm not sure what induced this. But Clinton appointed this guy, Mack McLarty, as his special envoy, and they launched this thing called the Summit of the Americas. The idea was to come up with a Free Trade Area of the Americas within 10 years. They were very excited about our countries, Brazil, Argentina, and particularly Chile because they had formed this economic grouping called Mercosur, the Southern Cone market. Chile for some reason was outside of it, partly because they saw themselves as superior or something. But anyway, they were associate members but not full members, but Brazil and Argentina were. Part of our job was supporting McLarty when he went to talk to these guys about the Summit of the Americas process. A lot of the issues we dealt with in the southern cone were economic issues and my background in that area was particularly useful.

In Brazil, we had a large number of trade complaints; I'm sure many of them are still unresolved. For example, Brazil was very upset about the fact we wouldn't let their

orange juice into the U.S. We had this protectionist policy with the Florida growers. The U.S. is always very sanctimonious about open markets and all this, but we have areas where we're not so liberal. Several of these happened to affect Brazil. The other thing about Brazil was that their trade ministry was combined with their foreign ministry into a single organization called Itamaraty (I think this has split up since then). They had the kind of attitude that the French used to have, making trade discussions highly political. Remember when they used to talk about French obstreperousness? This was a common concept in the 1980s and 1990s, the two words would go together. Well, Brazil was very much like that. They would be instinctively anti-American because whatever you would try to do with them, they would bring up all these complaints, constantly. Yet we did work with them on a lot of stuff. Brazil was seen as on an upward trajectory, as was Argentina.

Argentina, we had a major problem with them on intellectual property protection, IPR (intellectual property rights). I think there were $500 million worth of U.S. pharmaceutical materials that were pirated, something like that. It was a huge thing. Argentina wouldn't move on this. On the desk, we're trying to protect Argentina from people who just wanted to wipe them off the map because of this. PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America), the big pharmaceutical lobbying group, was incredibly powerful in Washington at that time. We had meetings with them, and actually at some point we imposed sanctions on Argentina, and we went along with it but we mitigated it. This is how you often have to operate; you're not going to be able to stop the freight train but you slow it down. USTR and Commerce wanted to take away all of Argentina's GSP (Generalized System of Trade Preferences); we got a scaled-down package where some of their preferences were taken away and some were left, with the understanding they were expected to improve.

Also, after the state visit, I visited the Southern Cone. This was one of the great trips of my career, because I got to go for two weeks to Santiago, Buenos Aires, then Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brasilia. I spent a weekend in Buenos Aires and another weekend in Rio de Janeiro – it was just fantastic, because I had never visited these vast, important countries before. Very interesting substantively as well. For example, in Argentina I had to have meetings with them on this IPR issue, basically deliver tough demarches. My first opportunity to come as an official from Washington and see how that felt, as opposed to just taking care of visitors from Washington or delivering demarches from an embassy. You have extra clout if you're traveling from Washington to another country because that's seen as "this guy made a special trip to tell us this." It really came home to roost in Montevideo because on the desk we had one officer who did both Paraguay and Uruguay, and Paraguay was perennially unstable. They always had difficulty, they had dictatorships and coup rumors and this and that. They also had a lot of crime in the "tri-border area" (up against Brazil and Argentina), all kinds of bad stuff, drug smuggling, ties to terrorism and you name it, it was all going on in that corner of Paraguay. Ninety percent of the attention in Washington was on Paraguay. It turned out that when I went to Montevideo, I think it had been years since any U.S. official had visited. Probably since the Uruguay Round (of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT, forerunner of the World Trade Organization) was launched in the mid-'80s, it was insane. So, I was just

surrounded by the most senior members of the government, all hectoring me about why nobody ever paid attention to them! It was a remarkable experience, really.

Brazil, I was just stunned by the scale of it. I thought Brasilia looked a lot like Dulles airport, glass and steel, what once looked modern and now looks long in the tooth. I was never really attracted to the idea of doing an assignment in Brasilia, but I understand it's a good post for families. But I didn't know Portuguese anyway, so it was not in my lane. I met a lot of really good officers who staffed those embassies who later became very senior, especially in the Latin American bureau. So that was a good trip to make because when I eventually came back to the bureau later, these people knew who I was. In São Paulo, I remember attending a lunch in a restaurant high up in a skyscraper, with 360 degree views. I was just amazed and somewhat unsettled to see urbanization, concrete and steel, as far as the eye could see to the horizon in all directions. What a vast city, one of the largest in the world.

One other anecdote about that trip. When I went to Asunción, Paraguay, I stayed in this older hotel. They had a little restaurant where you could get dinner or a drink. The hotel had a portrait of Stroessner on the wall. He had been this dictator for a long time. But he had also harbored Nazi war criminals. He remained popular, obviously. This was long after Stroessner was gone but his portrait was up in the hotel. I thought that was interesting and a little discouraging; he was kind of a bad guy.

This is quite an interesting exercise for me, to go through and try to make coherence out of all the things I went through. I'm very grateful for the opportunity.

The summer at the end of my first year in BSC (Brazil/Southern Cone) we had a very large turnover of our desk officers. We lost the entire teams who worked on Argentina and Brazil, two officers for each country. Lo and behold, President Clinton decided he was going to visit Argentina and Brazil in October. So, we got these new desk officers and immediately they're like deer in the headlights, thinking about getting ready to staff out what needed to be done for this trip. It's odd. I've been at embassies where the country desk devolves all the work for such a trip onto the embassy, but our attitude for whatever reason was that we knew a lot more than they did, we would control the policy and the pen, and we were going to do all the papers. So, we took all this work unto ourselves. It never occurred to us to task Buenos Aires and Brasilia with doing the papers. We were going to do the papers, but we had these brand-new officers; how were we going to get them up to speed? I don't remember quite how I did it, it was a lot of work, but somehow, we got through it. It wasn't that easy, people ended up working really long hours for several months. But after the new desk officers finished that exercise, they knew their stuff because they had been through a really intense school.

The president also went to the southern cone in April '98 for the Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile. That was another exercise, we had to staff out the bilateral portion of that. So, we had a lot of business with the White House and NSC that year. We often got the impression that they were more focused on our region than the seventh floor at the State Department was, where the focus was more on Bosnia, Russia, the Middle East and

that sort of thing. But the NSC was quite focused on what we were doing, and we would get calls from them all the time.

I should mention that in my first year in BSC, we had the transition of secretaries of state, and Madeleine Albright came in in early 1997, taking over from Warren Christopher. That was an interesting transition from the point of view of being in the building, because things went topsy-turvy completely. This was not so much on substance, but on process. Madeleine Albright had very firm ideas about what she wanted, but those ideas changed every time she went on a trip. She wanted cards, and this, and that. So, our people were in a high state of flux for a long time trying to adapt to these evolving demands from the secretariat. It was different, Warren Christopher and his apparatus were just not that demanding. We didn't have process issues before, we had substantive problems but the process issues weren't there. All of a sudden, process became a huge thing. It was very time consuming. This was in a day when the technology was still rudimentary. We were still using Wangs. Toward the end of my tour there we started getting a few PCs (personal computer) but the Wangs were already out of date and yet everybody had to stay really late at night trying to print these little cards, and it was hard to do.

One thing I did before the president's Brazil/Argentina trip in the fall of '97 was to go up to the UN General Assembly in New York. I went there both years, but the second year was more important because Madeleine Albright had bilateral meetings with the foreign minister of Brazil and Argentina, preparing for the trip. I went up and volunteered to be the notetaker for these two things. I was in these meetings in the Waldorf-Astoria, and it was quite interesting. One of the problems I had was that my hotel reservation got screwed up; I got to New York and the hotel where I thought I was staying didn't have any reservation for me. During the UN General Assembly, it's really hard to find a room. So, they let me stay in a room at the Waldorf-Astoria that was assigned to a much more senior officer but who was away. So, I got to spend a night in a suite in the Waldorf-Astoria, and that was pretty cool.

During that year we had a financial crisis in Asia, financial meltdowns in Korea and Thailand and places like that. This affected the outlook for our countries, particularly Brazil. Brazil was seen as vulnerable. So, I started going to meetings to see what we could do to prevent contagion, so the Brazilian economy wouldn't be shocked by the same kind of thing that was hitting the Asian countries. I remember one of the things we did was to try to back off of some of our trade demands on Brazil and give them a little more slack. We had our own disputes, I don't remember what they were, probably steel and things like that. But we decided to back off and give them breathing room so they didn't have to worry about that pressure at the same time they were trying to make sure they didn't get under the contagion. I think that worked at least for a while.

Again, Argentina was looking pretty good but after I left BSC they crashed out of their fixed-exchange-rate system and have once again fallen off the trajectory we and everyone else always expected they would be on. We thought finally, Argentina was going to become the country it always should have been. Fabulous resources and a very talented population, but it's never really gotten its act together. They were doing pretty well in the

mid-'90s under Carlos Menem, and we saw them as an up and coming regional power but after they crashed out of that fixed-exchange-rate mechanism, I don't think they've gotten back on track.

There were jealousies between Brazil and Argentina and other countries. When Clinton was going down to these countries, we would try to do different things for them, deliverables. Some had to do with selling fighter jets to Chile and doing something about major non-ally status for Argentina and something about a UN Security Council seat for Brazil, and they were all jealous of each other because of this, so a fair amount of diplomacy had to be done. We didn't have the same goodies for everybody. Like running an embassy housing pool, everybody sees everybody else's housing as better than theirs, nobody's happy because they all see somebody else has a better deal.

So that was an interesting experience. I had tremendous respect for Assistant Secretary Jeff Davidow who was running the bureau at that time. He was a fantastic guy; wonderful sense of humor, very approachable. Of the senior officers I've worked with, he was one of the very best. He went on to be ambassador to Mexico and had a tremendous career. I just wanted to mention that. Before we end, I'll say I was then heading to another job in the department, in the Office of European Union and Regional Affairs, EUR/ERA. That led to another action-packed couple of years.

During the second year of my work as deputy director in Brazil/Southern Cone, I was looking for another assignment in the building. I ended up getting hired by EUR/ERA, the regional affairs office of the European bureau. They handle the European Union, OECD, the Council of Europe, and the G-8 (Group of Eight). I was hired as deputy director. The way the office was divided was that one of the two deputies did the European Union, and the other deputy did the OECD, Council of Europe, and G8. Well, Tony Wayne, who was the PDAS in EUR at the time, wanted to reorganize that office and make it more a functional division with a political and an econ deputy. I was hired explicitly to carry out that reorganization, and in fact the job wouldn't have been as attractive as it was had that not been on the table. So, when I went in initially, I wasn't working on EU affairs, but within the first few months several of the officers doing economic issues on the EU moved over to work for me. The reorganization happened during my first year in ERA, when Joe Dethomas was director. Dick Morford replaced him for my second year.

It was quite a good job. The relationship between the United States and the EU at that time, the two-way trade and investment relationship, was about $1.2 trillion a year – one of our largest economic relationships. It was a good responsibility. This was the first time I'd been back in my economic cone in six years, because I'd done a year of Turkish and three years in Ankara as a political officer, then two years as a multi-functional officer on a country desk. I believed that this was a smart thing to do because they had this new multi-functional promotion thing. It turned out not to be as smart as I thought, because unless you were a DCM or principal officer, the multi-functional thing really didn't help you that much, but I didn't find that out until a little later. Fortunately, I was able to recover in time and my move back into the econ cone was ultimately successful.

Right after I moved to EUR/ERA, the attacks occurred in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. This was a huge shock in the whole department. There was a town hall meeting led by Assistant Secretary Marc Grossman and things. Nobody had any idea what this would eventually lead to, but it was a real harbinger of how the future would unfold.

Some of the issues I dealt with in the first year I was in ERA. The Russian financial collapse; we had Under Secretary Stu Eizenstat who was E (Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs) at that time. We got him to chair this body in the OECD called the Executive Committee in Special Session (ECSS). They were dealing very closely with the financial crisis. Stu had a voracious appetite for briefing materials. Every time he went to a meeting, we had to put together a briefing book four or five inches thick. It was an amazing amount of work we had to do to put that together.

We had two U.S.-EU summits every year, which seems like a lot and it turned out to be too much for the U.S. government, because during my tour there they suspended the second summit and only had one. Preparing two summits a year is an enormous amount of work. The amount of attention a U.S.-EU summit gets in U.S. newspapers is practically nil. It's a real snoozer of a topic for the U.S. press so they don't ever attract any attention. But they were important events. The December 1998 one dealt with the financial crisis and how the U.S. and Europe could work together for financial stability. This is the same crisis that had caught up Brazil and Argentina when I had been in BSC (Office of Brazil and Southern Cone Affairs), it was still reverberating.

Trade disputes between the U.S. and EU took up an awful lot of my time and the time of my unit. There were things like bananas, exports of U.S. hormone-fed beef, hush kits on aircraft. Hush kits were devices some of our older airliners would use to meet noise reduction requirements in the EU. The Europeans wanted to mandate how we reduced the noise, but we wanted to just meet the requirement in the most economical way possible. They wanted to ban hush kits and try to force us to only fly modern aircraft over to Europe, which would have been expensive for our airlines, who wanted to extend the life of their existing aircraft. Eventually it got to be a case in ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), and we got involved in it in our office. We eventually pushed off any decision by the EU to ban these devices until of their own accord the airlines modernized their aircraft. That was quite a bit of work.

There was a threat to cut off U.S. beef exports over the hormone issue. I had to coordinate with USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture). We got a partial settlement that avoided the cut-off. We had another emerging dispute over bio-technology, genetically modified organisms (GMOs). When I went into that office, I'd never heard of the issue, and by the time I left it seemed like that was all we were working on. That's still going on I believe, although the European Union lost a WTO (World Trade Organization) case over it. They still are making it difficult for us to export genetically modified foods.

While I was in ERA, there was an effort to launch a new trade round. Our PDAS, Tony Wayne, decided to go to Seattle to the meeting, so we had to brief him up. The whole

thing was a big failure. He didn't blame us for it, but it was a major set-back to the world trading system, the rioting that took place in Seattle. The fact that the developing and the developed worlds could not come to a consensus – there had been this idea there would be no more "green rooms" where the U.S. and the EU would stitch up how a trade round was going to be, so now everybody had to be open and transparent. But unfortunately, what that did was make it almost impossible to get an agreement. If everybody gets to be in the room and have a say, you never get to consensus.

I also mentioned I was working on the OECD. What I inherited was a project to reduce the organization's budget by 10 percent over three years. This was a major, painful, agonizing exercise because there isn't a lot of fat in the organization; it's just salaries and pensions and that sort of thing. We had to gradually slice away at different, lesser-priority activities, but everybody had a constituency for some program the organization was involved in. It was very painful. We also led an effort to get their pension system from a pay-as-you-go to an actuarially sound system. That was another painful exercise but one that I think was helpful to the future of the organization, because pay-as-you-go means you don't know whether you will have enough money the next time or not to meet the pension bills.

One of the interesting things I was doing in ERA was outreach, going to talk to people about Europe. One time I went to New York to talk to the BCIU, the Business Council for International Understanding. Twice I was invited to the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to discuss the U.S.-EU transatlantic relationship. That was very interesting. They seemed to be very attentive, much more than I remember college students being.

One thing that happened while I was in ERA was the launch of the euro as a virtual currency. It was not yet a note-and-coin currency, but I guess the existing currencies in the euro-zone locked themselves together at a fixed exchange rate which was subsequently turned into the euro. Britain and a few other countries stayed out of that arrangement, but at the time we thought it was a huge deal, a major innovation for the future.

Then of course Y2K (the year 2000); when I was in ERA in the winter of 1999 everybody was up in arms about the possibility of a complete meltdown of world computer systems. We had all these working groups about Y2K. Then it turned out to be a complete damp squib and nothing at all happened. It seemed like just one of those hysterias that sometimes the department gets itself wrapped up in, and it turns out to be nothing. Or maybe the computer scientists did such a good job that nothing happened.

Toward the end of my time in ERA, Tony Wayne switched from being the PDAS in EUR and went over to be EB assistant secretary. That was quite a remarkable thing because Tony was actually a political officer. But he became extremely interested in economics during his time working on the U.S.-EU relationship, and he provided excellent leadership to the EB bureau. I'll talk a little bit more about that in the next segment. His replacement, Charlie Ries, was an econ officer and he was exceptional as well. He had

been the econ minister-counselor first in Brussels at the EU and then in London. Very strong leadership there.

On a personal note, during this time I was going through a divorce, and it was a very difficult time for me. That was in the background. It didn't really affect what I worked on but it just made everything a lot harder.

Toward the end of the time in ERA, I was getting out of that and starting to look ahead to my next assignment. I tried very hard to get a principal officer or DCM position.

Q: Let me interrupt one second. Before we go too far into the machinations of your next assignment, I just want to ask a couple of quick questions about EUR/ERA. You had all that experience in Turkey; were you also dealing with the Turkey-EU issues? Was there anything salient about that for you in this tour?

HEG: Not directly. That was more in the political than economic lane. I was interested and I would read the traffic on it, but the question of Turkish EU membership seemed to be moribund during this time because France and Germany were completely intractable over it. Those two countries really didn't want much of anything to happen in that regard, so it was kind of discouraging for anyone who had hopes for Turkey's future with the West. One thing about Turkey that did happen, though, was a huge earthquake in Turkey, in I think the summer of '99. This was a major disaster, and we in ERA worked with the European Union to try to mobilize assistance for Turkey. We didn't have an AID mission in Turkey but we also worked with USAID to send this humanitarian relief.

Q: The other question I had was, to what extent did you have the lead on topics, and USTR, did you work with them closely? How did that relationship work?

HEG: We worked very closely with USTR on all of the trade disputes. We tried very hard to provide value added so they would include us in their deliberations. I think for the most part, we succeeded. It's not always easy to get them to be collegial. We did not have the lead on these issues, but on the other hand we had the apparatus in Europe, we had the mission in Brussels, we had a lot of talented officers who were willing to work with them, and we also had the embassies in the member states. So, we would pulse the member-state econ officers to help us work these issues, and it was a real network that came about. I continued to be in that network on my next assignment, too.

Q: You're now thinking about how you're going to bid and the next assignment.

HEG: Right. I decided I wanted to go back overseas, because I had done two back-to-back assignments in the department. The only place to go from there if I stayed in the building was the seventh floor but I didn't really want to do that. I had too much on my personal plate to be able to work those kinds of hours, so I didn't do that. My first goal was to see if I could get a DCM or principal officer job. I competed for a CG (consul-general) position in Calgary but, ultimately, I didn't get it. I experienced getting on a short list, which was not easy to do. Then I was recruited by Charlie Ries'

replacement in London, Peter Chase, to be the econ counselor there. I leapt at that chance; that was in some ways a real dream job. So as often is the case, what I thought I wanted didn't turn out to be as good for me as what I actually got. The assignment in London was a real jewel, I would never have wanted to not do it.

During this time also I opened my six-year window to get into the Senior Foreign Service. The first few times, I was not successful because as I said I had not even been doing work in my own cone for a long time. The multi-functionality of my other jobs was not competitive with people in actual DCM or principal officer positions. That said, it was a valuable experience for me and ultimately helped me make it. At the time, it was sort of an anchor holding me back.

Q: We should say here just briefly that the rate at which you had been promoted is pretty fast relatively speaking. So, you were rising and had every reason to expect you had a good chance to pass the senior threshold.

HEG: That's right. I talked earlier during the Turkey segment about the effort by management to reduce the size of the Foreign Service officer corps by slowing promotions. So, for that reason, I tempered my expectations for getting a quick promotion. I was reasonably fast up to FS-1, but then it became clear I wasn't going to get a quick promotion into the Senior Foreign Service because opening my window in the mid-'90s was virtual suicide. I didn't have a strong enough file to make it through the narrow promotion numbers that were being issued, so I held off opening the window until after I got to Washington. Then I opened it, but then again it took me a few times before I became competitive. It was a fraught time career-wise; this is when your kids are heading towards college age and that sort of thing.

Anyway, I went to London in the summer of 2000. That was a terrific place to be at that time. I guess President Clinton and Tony Blair had the pragmatic left-of-center "third-way" (a mix of free market economics and government regulations) kind of partnership going, and so the relationship was very friendly. Also, under Tony Blair, Britain was fairly prosperous; it was doing well economically. I know they'd had trouble in the early '90s when they crashed out of the European exchange rate mechanism and all that, but they were golden when I was there, and it was an exciting place to be. There was a great deal of continuity between what I had been working on in ERA and in London. Now that Brexit has happened, it's hard to remember that back then most of the econ work we did with Britain was EU-related. We were working with Britain not only as a window on the EU, a sympathetic window in most places because they had more of a free-market, free-trade orientation than some of the continental European countries, especially France. But also, we could talk to them in a way we couldn't talk to the continentals. Our mindset is much more similar. Britain is not America – it is a true foreign country; you live in Britain and you realize, this is not America at all. The mentality is different, but not as different as it is on the continent. We got along very well with the people in Whitehall, it was a real joy to deal with people in the Foreign Office and HM (Her Majesty's) Treasury and all of that.

We worked on these U.S.-EU trade disputes – again. For example, the bananas dispute – we objected to the EU restricting imports to those from its own colonies in the Caribbean – I think that was settled while I was in London. The export tax subsidy issue called the Foreign Sales Corporation (FSC). That turned into a big WTO dispute. We also had "open skies" negotiations with Britain. I think that eventually got folded into a full open-skies agreement with the European Union.

Q: One second, take one second to explain what open skies means in this context.

HEG: Open skies means our airlines can land and take off without restrictions throughout the European space. I think there were restrictions on cabotage; in other words, we couldn't land in London and then pick up passengers and fly them to Glasgow. But from the U.S. to anywhere in Europe, we could fly and land. The most difficult issue on open skies in Europe was Heathrow Airport, one of the busiest airports in the world but it only has two runways. So, the number of slots available for landing and take-off is extremely constrained. If you stand at the airport in Heathrow, you can see stacks of planes coming in one after the other. It's just the most amazing sight. They keep trying to build another runway but environmental opposition keeps coming up, and that's been going on for decades. Before the negotiations were concluded, I heard it said that the Heathrow problem was similar to the "final status of Jerusalem" in the Middle East talks.

Airbus subsidies were another big issue that was heating up when I was in London. The U.S. accused Europe of subsidizing Airbus, especially the A-380, the big new giant airliner they were about to introduce. The Europeans and Brits and everybody accused us of subsidizing Boeing through defense contracts. So, it was this back and forth. It got very heated and I think we eventually launched a WTO case.

We worked a lot with the Brits on European Union agricultural policy. They had the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and when we launched the new WTO round, that became a big issue, to try to decouple the subsidies the Europeans gave their farmers from production, so you didn't have this artificially stimulated production being dumped on the world market.

During my first months in London, the 2000 election happened. This was pretty amazing because we had an election party, and it went on all night. At 8:00 in the morning, they still didn't know who the president would be, and everybody just went home. It was the most surreal thing. It was like a week or two before they finally sorted that out. A few weeks after the election, right after the Supreme Court had decided that George W. Bush was the new president, Bill Clinton came to Britain on one last trip. He gave a speech in Warwick, at the university there. I was assigned as site officer to the university. I didn't end up doing very much because of course the White House advance staff comes in and shoves you aside and takes over, but I got to fly on a helicopter from Hyde Park to Warwick to go to the speech. That was a great experience. To see Tony Blair and Clinton on the stage for the last time and you knew this was the end of a friendly partnership, both ideological and personal, they were very close. After there was a reception with people like Stephen Hawking. That was an interesting time.

Our ambassador changed of course. A new ambassador came in under Bush called William Farish. He was very close to the royal family.

One event I remember that was quite intense during the first year in London was the foot-and-mouth (what we call hoof-and-mouth) disease outbreak. This generated hysteria all over the country. They made you walk through these little trays of some sort of disinfectant whenever you went anywhere.

Q: This was also called mad cow disease.

HEG: No, Britain had had an outbreak of that a year or two before. During that one, before my time, people wouldn't eat British beef for a while because they were afraid of infection. We had a pub in the basement of our embassy, and they made hamburgers. The embassy had all the Brits coming in to eat our hamburgers because they didn't want to eat their own hamburgers. Foot-and-mouth, a different disease that affected only animals, necessitated massive culling of UK cattle herds. I guess Agriculture had the lead but we worked on helping them do some of the reporting on this issue.

I also remember it rained for ages. It was probably the wettest fall and winter in 50 years, the winter of 2000-2001. It was a real wet introduction to Britain.

Everything changed in September of 2001. This was a complete and utter revolution in the whole way our work was done. On September 11, 2001, I was in Geneva attending a conference of American trade officers in Europe. We were at the headquarters of USTR at the WTO in Geneva. We were discussing various trade issues and the pending launch of a WTO round, when the DCM at the mission (U.S. delegation to the WTO) there came in and told us that a plane had hit one of the World Trade Center towers. We went downstairs and found a TV, watched another plane hit the other tower, and that was the end of the conference. Nobody was going to go back to the meetings. We all went back to our hotels and tried to figure out how to get back to our respective posts. We had people from Spain and Germany and Ireland and Britain and all of that. We didn't even know if the planes would fly. I was wondering, can we get through the Channel tunnel? It was a very confusing time. If they had done anything in Europe, one single attack anywhere in Europe, that would have shut down aviation in Europe as well as in the United States because in the U.S., you couldn't fly for three or four days after the attacks. We would have been stuck, but fortunately airports stayed open and we were able to get back to our posts.

Immediately, the whole agenda of what was important changed. We still had to do the trade issues and the WTO stuff, but our main focus became financial issues. This particularly was because London is a huge financial center, and the emphasis from Washington was to crack down on the financing of terror operations. We had UN resolutions governing Al Qaeda and the Taliban, to try to choke off their financing. We would freeze assets of different individuals and groups, but the way we did it, we wanted to freeze them and make joint announcements with the UK because between New York

and London, that's where most of the world financial system was. So, a lot of our work was trying to get these coordinated announcements to happen. I was working more with Treasury than the Foreign Office on this. Our own Treasury Department would be trying to work directly with the Brits, but they were in the wrong time zone.

The U.S. and UK had somewhat different legal systems for making these decisions. We both had to go before a judge to get an asset freeze decision approved. But our judges, we were able to go in and present classified information in closed court. In Britain, there was no provision for that. So, their judges also tended to be skeptical of what we were telling them. The Brits would go in and say, "The U.S. is telling us X" and the judges would say "C'mon, I don't believe what they are telling you." The UK officials had to go through a lot of contortions. We worked very hard with the Brits and Washington to try to get some common understanding of procedures; over time it got better and better. It was a lot of intense work. When a really high-profile announcement had to be made – I remember particularly one that happened right before Christmas 2001 – I spent just hours on the telephone trying to get these things coordinated so the announcements could be made. Because everybody had the feeling that if daylight opened up between the U.S. and UK, the whole system would be gamed or wouldn't have the same effect, whereas if we could stay in lockstep with them, it would be effective.

This involved work not only with HM Treasury and the Foreign Office, but also the Home Office which is where their equivalent of the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) is, Scotland Yard, and some staff at 10 Downing Street. It was a very high-profile effort.

When I arrived in London, I was assigned to attend the monthly meetings of the American Bankers Association (I believe it was then called), normally held in Canary Wharf. Before the September 11 attacks, the meetings were fairly dry and perfunctory, and I normally had little to contribute. After the attacks, however, the bankers were very interested to know more about U.S. government efforts to ensure financial stability, and ways London might back up New York as two of the world's key financial centers. I solicited and obtained some useful talking points from our Treasury Department to brief the bankers.

We did agree with the UK that it was very important to try and launch the trade round. That the trade round now hasn't come to fruition doesn't change the fact that at the time, it was seen to be a very important step for preserving financial stability in the face of these terrorist attacks. Everybody said, we can't let the terror attacks stop our efforts to manage the world economy. So, we and the Brits both pushed hard to keep the Doha Round on track, and I believe that fall they finally got the agreement in Doha to launch it.

One issue almost derailed the agreement. The property rights for medicines and things like that; there's a term for that but I can't remember what it is.

Q: Intellectual property?

HEG: Yeah, intellectual property. There's a specific trade term that refers to that – TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights). Anyway, the issue was what to do about AIDS (acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome) in Africa. We had to come to some special understanding about that with the Brits and others. I remember working on that fairly intensively.

One of the things that was really delightful about working in the UK on economic issues was that they would hold these conferences at a beautiful estate called Wilton Park, down in Sussex. We would go there and the Brits would send people from the trade ministry and Foreign Office and we'd have diplomats from all over the world and trade officials from Europe, and talk about things like trade and finance. I went to three or four of those, and they were among the best experiences I had in the UK. One of the things that was so great about them was we could actually socialize after the sessions with the people from Whitehall. London was so expensive, my colleagues in the Foreign Office and HM Treasury could not afford to live anywhere near their office in Central London, so you could never get them to go out for a drink or to come to an event in the evening; they had to get on a train and go ride for an hour to get home. But at Wilton Park we all stayed there, and everybody gathered at the pub after the sessions. It was really great.

We worked on Afghan relief and reconstruction as well after the invasion of Afghanistan. I was called on by the front office (with many others) do to outreach to the London Muslim community during this time. There was a lot of propaganda that the U.S. was going to carpet bomb Afghan civilians. There was a real hysteria about the U.S. planning to turn Afghanistan into some sort of parking lot. The front office asked me to talk to a group of Pakistani bankers; it went pretty well. I explained we weren't after the people of Afghanistan; we were just trying to get rid of the terrorist elements. They seemed to be fairly receptive. It helped my case that the Northern Alliance (forces opposed to Taliban rule) with U.S. advisors had just retaken the important northern Afghan city of Mazar-el-Sharif.

Another issue we worked on was conflict diamonds, the idea that the diamond trade in Africa was being used to finance terrorism and crime and overthrow of governments. We and Britain were very cooperative on that because they had so many ties with their former colonies.

Q: If I'm not mistaken there's a bit of a diamond market in London.

HEG: Yes, there is. I had occasion to avail myself of it. I'll explain later.

Just to mention, the quality of the leadership at the State Department during this period was unparalleled, especially for an economic officer. It was just fantastic. We had Al Larson as the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs. Tony Wayne was the Assistant Secretary for EB. We had Charlie Ries as the PDAS in EUR. It was terrific. Then we had Colin Powell of course as our Secretary, who was really inspiring. Marc Grossman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, was outstanding. I had worked for both Grossman and Larson when they were ambassadors. I don't remember a period when the overall

level of quality of our leadership was as good as then. Then there was a lot of energy in the department because of responding to the September 11 attacks and all of this. We didn't have the sense that globalization was on its back foot. It wasn't evident yet that the global trade system wasn't going to be able to achieve consensus on the Doha Round because of the democratization process. There was still a great deal of optimism. It was a great time to be in the Foreign Service.

I should mention the euro currency issue. There was a split in the UK government between Gordon Brown and Prime Minister Tony Blair about whether Britain should join the euro. Gordon Brown was the Chancellor of the Exchequer; he was fairly skeptical about the euro. He came up with these series of tests, like five or six, that the euro would have to pass before Britain would agree to join, and they never achieved that. One of the things I did predict for Washington and our EU Mission in Brussels was that Britain wasn't actually going to join the euro any time soon. That view met with a fair bit of skepticism – even disappointment among some quarters. For whatever reason there were people that thought it would be a great idea for Britain to join the euro. I don't know why they cared on behalf of the U.S. But people felt they had a stake in it. Yet, it was clear if you looked at what Gordon Brown's policy was, he wasn't going to get swept up in any kind of enthusiasm, and Blair was not in a position to override the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this issue.

Q: A quick question: for a long time, the pound had been used as the currency for one or another natural resources or basic materials, commodities. Was it still the currency of exchange for some commodity or other?

HEG: It may have been, I don't really recall. There were certain commodity exchanges in London. There was a coffee exchange. I don't know if it was an actual metric for that or not. I never got involved in that. It was still about $1.50 to the pound when I was there. I think it's quite a bit weaker now.

A couple more issues. Once the Doha Round was launched and I think I mentioned the CAP in Europe, the common agricultural policy. We worked with the UK to try to get the EU to change its policy on the CAP. Britain didn't really favor it, and they were trying to isolate France in the EU to get them to back off on their insistence on retaining production subsidies. There were really tense moments between Blair and the French premier; we covered a lot of that in our reporting. I even would go to Number 10 Downing Street to get the scuttlebutt.

I should mention, on September 11th, 2001, after the attacks, the outpouring of sympathy for the United States was overwhelming. The embassy was on Grosvenor Square. People were coming in and laying flowers by the statue of Franklin Roosevelt. The mound of flowers and other things left there was just enormous. They had special events, like a service at St. Paul's Cathedral to acknowledge the victims of the attack. Quite a few Britons were killed in the September 11th attack, so it was really an attack on everybody, not just the U.S. That was a moment when the Brits really stepped up and were very supportive of the United States. We did a fair bit of outreach to thank people for their

support. There were a lot of invitations related to that, to go and make remarks and things like that. It was an intense time not only from the work standpoint with terrorist finance and things like that, but the public diplomacy part was quite significant as well for the entire embassy.

When the Iraq War came, there was quite a lot of debate about it in Britain. Tony Blair stuck with us, we had the Stevenson moment at the UN and all of that. In Britain it was quite unpopular. They had very large demonstrations against the war when I was there. At one point I was sent out to engage in a debate, I think in Northampton, with fairly virulent opponents of the invasion of Iraq. It was quite an experience. I was defending the policy as a Foreign Service officer does and I didn't give any ground, but it was quite heated. People were getting very wound up about it.

Another issue I should mention. There was a time when our relations got very tense. This was over steel. President Bush in, I think 2001 or 2002, imposed tariffs on steel imports because there was a feeling that these imports were coming at such a fast rate, it was disrupting our economy. There are these stipulations in the WTO when you have disruptive flows, you have tools you are allowed to invoke temporarily to deal with it. Well, the British got very upset about these steel quotas and tariffs. They felt we were betraying our common understanding about free markets. They were really, really angry with us and I had to deal with that anger, going to the Foreign Office and trade ministry. It was difficult.

In the fall of 2003, President Bush came and we had to try to make sure the steel issue didn't become a big public brouhaha, disrupting his visit. One thing we were able to do was to get Washington to issue a series of exceptions on British specialty steels, which took a lot of the sting out of their anger, and it didn't become a big issue for the visit.

I got to be at Buckingham Palace for his arrival. The Brits pulled out all the stops. They had all these guards and special British units in red uniforms and horse-drawn artillery. It was one of the most incredible military displays I'd ever seen, very colorful and exciting thing to get to do.

I mentioned the diamond market in London. I actually got remarried when I was there in 2003 to Janet, an Americanized Brit who had grown up in New York and New Jersey. I went to the City to buy the diamond ring. The only way I could afford it was to figure out a way to not pay VAT (value added tax) on it. So, what I did was I invited Janet to go to Geneva for the day and while we were in the airport I went to Inland Revenue and filled out the paperwork to export the ring, and took her to Geneva. We did some shopping and had dinner, and later that day we flew back to London with the ring on her finger. I had been able to export the ring from the EU and save hundreds of pounds in tax.

We launched a development dialogue with the Brits, so we began to have regular conversations about development issues in different parts of the world. Like USAID, DFID (Department for International Development) had a presence in many countries, but there had not been a mechanism for formally exchanging policy ideas. We began to

encourage USAID people to come over and have consultations with DFID people, and that was a useful thing.

After the Iraq invasion, on a personal note my son was in the Marines at the time. He went in with what was called Task Force Tarawa. He was a corporal of an artillery unit. During that first 90 days or so, I was on pins and needles reading every scrap of information I could about what was going on over there. We had embedded reporters with the units; one guy from the New York Times was with my son's unit, and one time he wrote a story about a *fedayeen* (suicide troops) attack where they were, and that really shook me up. It's something to have a kid in a war zone like that. He turned out okay. He was an enlisted Marine, but he later got into the Naval Academy and got a commission. I'm grateful to the Marine Corps for that.

After the Iraq invasion, we worked closely with the Brits on Iraq reconstruction. They had conferences to try to get countries to pony up money. I think initially it was fairly successful. Also, debt relief was something we worked on. I know Saddam's government had piled up a lot of debts with the U.S. for things like agricultural imports during the previous years.

I think there was a big failure of a WTO ministerial in the last year I was in London, so we worked with the Brits to pick up the pieces on that. The EU had a new project for a satellite called Galileo, and our Defense Department was concerned this would menace the integrity of our defense communications in the event of war unless certain safeguards were taken, so we had to work closely with the Brits on that issue; I think that was eventually solved. We had visits by senior people like Charlie Ries to work on that issue.

We had to do a lot of outreach on the GMO (genetically modified organisms) issue once the U.S. decided to file a WTO case. That was sometimes fraught because it was the whole "frankenfoods" mentality where people thought GMO crops would lead to genetic mutations and bad stuff. What they didn't realize was they were feeding their animals with GM grains and were then eating the meat, but nobody ever cared about that. The French were using GM enzymes in their wine, but that never bothered anybody either. It was just eating the direct food, they thought it was dangerous. There's no evidence.

Almost at the end of here but one more issue I might mention. In the last year I was in London, there was a big aviation emergency I think around Christmas in 2003. We got some information about a terror threat which was so acute that we sent people to Heathrow Airport to screen passengers before they got on any U.S. airline. This is something that was difficult to persuade the Brits to go along with, because it was their airport. But the politics and sense of emergency in the U.S. were such that we wouldn't take no for an answer. There was a lot of telephone work and after-hours phone calls over that. It's hard to remember but everybody was on edge for several years after September 11th, fearing that another shoe was going to drop. It was quite worrisome.

I don't know if I mentioned this earlier, but in the year after the September 11th attacks, I finally got promoted to the Senior Foreign Service. I think the intense work we did on

terrorist finance was certainly something that pushed my candidacy forward for that promotion. It was incredibly gratifying when it happened.

Q: Is there anything unclassified you can say in terms of examples of working with the Brits on drying up or freezing terrorist financing?

HEG: Nothing comes to mind other than the remarks I made about the need to work together to find a way around their inability of their judicial system to deal with classified information. I don't remember enough about any particular case to discuss it at this point, even if I could. Usually, the information that decisions were based on was classified, but the names weren't because they eventually went on some sort of UN list. I couldn't tell you who any of those people were now, but periodically they would come up with these lists and we had to make sure our two governments announced them at the same time and got the UN and the rest of Europe to follow along.

Toward the end of my time in London I started looking for another job. Again, I was interested in DCM or principal officer positions. I thought I was in a pretty good position particularly in EUR because I was well and favorably known not only to Charlie Ries but also to Glynn Davies who had been DCM in London for three years before going back to be a DAS in EUR. I was on the shortlist for some very appealing positions but eventually ended up as minister-counselor for economic affairs in Mexico City. At this point I'll stop and talk about that next time.

Q: Today is May 2nd (2018); we're resuming our interview with Jim Heg as he completes his London tour and gets ready for his next tour in Mexico. HEG by video from Monterrey, Mexico.

HEG: First I want to talk a bit about how I got from London to Mexico City. As I said before, I was promoted to Senior Foreign Service during my tour in London. I started feeling toward the latter part of my assignment in London that I was as close as I ever came in my career to being a bureau insider, an insider of a geographic bureau, because looking back four of my last five assignments had been in EUR, USOECD (U.S. mission to the OECD) at that time being an EUR assignment. The PDAS of the bureau, Charlie Ries, was somebody I had worked with in my last assignment in the department. He was a very strong economic officer and took great interest in working with you. Then another DAS in the bureau was Glynn Davies who for the first three years of my assignment in London had been DCM. So, I felt as strongly positioned as I ever did to get a plum assignment. I bid on a number of DCM/principal officer jobs. I think I was considered strongly for three of them; FAO Food and Agriculture Organization Rome; U.S. consul-general Istanbul; and DCM in Stockholm.

The Stockholm job got to the point where I was interviewed by the political ambassador there. That was very appealing to me because it at that time involved a year of Swedish, though they've eliminated that now. My daughter was going to be a senior the year after leaving London so I thought it made an enormous amount of sense to go back to

Washington for one year so she could finish high school there, and then go off to Sweden. It turned out that the ambassador who interviewed me, all he was interested in was my previous experience as a DCM. I could tell from the get-go I was doomed. Regardless of all the support I had in the EUR bureau, it was his up or down vote that was decisive. There was somebody else competing for the job who had some experience as a DCM already. I learned a painful lesson there; in order to be a DCM, you have to have already been one.

That left me hanging. I had interviewed in EUR for several office director positions because I was thinking the best idea was to go back to Washington so my daughter could finish high school. But I never got any traction on the ones I interviewed for. I had bid earlier in the cycle on Mexico City, partly because I had to fulfill distribution requirements. I was a fair-share bidder so I had to bid on a certain number of hardship posts. I can't remember what else I bid on, but Mexico City was a 15 percent differential senior officer MC (minister-counselor) position. So, deep in the cycle I called and asked, "Is this job still open?" They had somebody they were looking at but weren't too keen on him or her – probably a stretch bidder. That bidder went away as soon as I jumped back in, so that's how I ended up accepting an assignment to Mexico City.

The physical transition from London to Mexico involved a home leave. I think I mentioned last time, I got remarried in London and inherited three step-children. I had two of my own, one of whom had gone off to the Marine Corps and one other who was still living with me, my daughter who had one more year of high school. We suddenly found we had no place to go; there were too many children, and we were living a nomadic existence in the Pacific Northwest, visiting alternatively relatives and national parks and other kinds of scenic sites. My wife was trying to do remote editing and media research for clients in the UK, she was driven crazy because at that time there weren't that many internet sites, especially in eastern Washington or Oregon. She was trying to download things at these office stores and things like that, it was really difficult. She finally decided after that summer that we were going to have to get some place to live in the U.S.

When I went to Mexico, the president of the country, Vicente Fox, was the first non-PRI (Institutional Revolution Party) since 1910. I think two or three years before I got there, there had been this historic shift away from one-party rule.

Q: And when did you arrive?

HEG: In summer 2004. Fox may have taken over in 2000 or 2001. At the end of my tour which turned out to be two years, his term was up at the same time mine was. I suddenly found this was actually a pretty good job. It was the second-largest U.S. export market, and a huge investment relationship. I had a 10-person section. It was unusual; I had many more first- and second-tour officers and entry-level officer than I had in London. That was actually quite refreshing, because some of the mid-level officers in London-- you ask them to do something and you might get push-back. You have to sort of churn on it to get them to do what you want. But the first- and second-tour ELOs (entry level officers)

would just go do it; I thought that was terrific. I spent a fair amount of time cranking up the reporting program, getting people out, making contacts, meeting all the vice ministers that were in my purview, things like that.

The ambassador at that time was Antonio Garza who had been the treasurer of the state of Texas or something like that. Anyway, he had a family background on the U.S.-Mexico border; he was a Bush political appointee. The DCM was Steve Kelly, a long-time professional. I got along pretty well with both of them although I gradually found out that they did not get along very well with each other. I never really got to the bottom of what that was all about, and I tried to stay out of it. It led me to scratch my head sometimes about what was really going on.

One of the big things the ambassador wanted us to work on was policy reform, trying to get the Mexicans to make their economy more competitive. We had this initiative called the Partnership for Prosperity (P4P), and I worked closely with the commercial section to try to get the private sectors of the U.S. and Mexico to talk to each other. When I talk about U.S. private sector, I mean all the U.S. businesses in Mexico. They and the Mexican private sector apparently spent a lot of times in the years before that complaining about each other rather than trying to work together to solve problems. Ambassador Garza would do breakfasts at his residence where he would get people around the table who didn't normally talk to each other about policy issues. It felt like safe ground for them, so really sensitive topics like allowing foreign investment in the oil sector or liberalizing things were discussed. We didn't necessarily achieve breakthroughs but we made some progress.

Q: Let me ask here, did the status or regular consultations on NAFTA have any activity while you were there?

HEG: Yes. We had at least one formal NAFTA ministerial while I was there. I think it was in Acapulco, we supported that closely. But informally we worked on a lot of NAFTA issues with USTR because NAFTA was an agreement in progress; there were a lot of thorny trade issues that had never been sorted out. I had to work with both Commerce and Agriculture on these. It was interesting, at Agriculture I was used to working closely with USDA people in Europe because the Common Agricultural Policy was such a central part of the global trade round and all of that. But I found in Mexico, the agriculture attaché was a wonderful woman but wasn't really used to working with State. When I was trying to cooperate with her and have joint meetings, her initial reaction was suspicion that I was trying to hone in on her turf. I was able to win her over and we became very close colleagues after a while. Sue Heinen was her name, she was terrific, but she had not been exposed to the kind of horizontal cooperation that I saw as important to do our job and had experienced working in Europe. She saw the value of it after a while. I would always take her on any meetings where I discussed say Doha Round agriculture issues or anything like that.

On the bilateral and NAFTA side, we worked on IPR issues. There were a lot of pirated CDs (compact disk) and movies and pharmaceuticals in Mexico. We couldn't stamp it all

out but we did a lot of public diplomacy to try to raise awareness of the issue. We'd keep raising IPR with Mexican officials and urging American companies to bother to report these problems to us, because a lot of times Americans just write costs like that off as a cost of doing business and don't tell us about it. We worked certain trade disputes. There were issues concerning tequila, pork, cement, this weird one called bone-in beef, and rules of origin. Then we helped get some increased access for U.S. fruit exports, which benefited my home region here in Washington state where there are a lot of apple growers, so I continuously brag about that since then. Then there was that trucking dispute, we didn't resolve that. We were supposed to let Mexican trucks into the United States under NAFTA but we did not let them in for a long time because of the political power of the Teamsters and the trucking companies. I think we helped move the process along toward eventual resolution; I think a few years later it was resolved. Then there was high-fructose corn syrup. You see how technical some of this stuff got. All of these issues had to be dealt with one-by-one. We did make a lot of progress, especially working closely with our agricultural attaché.

In fall 2004, soon after I arrived, we had a visit from Secretary Colin Powell. I did not have a role in that, I think the political minister-counselor was assigned to organize it. But, I remember the "town hall" meet- and-greet he did in the atrium. Powell was treated like a rock star by the embassy staff. Some were literally swooning; he was the most popular Secretary of State I ever saw. Anyway, soon afterwards, Powell was replaced by Condoleezza Rice in early 2005. She decided to make her very first foreign trip to Mexico, and I was picked to organize the visit. The Secretary's advance team was new and very nervous. They picked over every tiny detail and were intensely focused on "optics," the images that would emerge from various events. Everything had to be just so and tightly scripted.

Then, after the advance team had left, and the evening before Secretary Rice was due to arrive, I was called over to the Mexican foreign ministry (*Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*, (SRE) to meet with the Chief of Protocol. I don't remember his name but he was pretty high up, a venerable gentleman who had been around a while and was senior to the people I had been dealing with directly. Incidentally, this was my first exposure to SRE but the contacts I made on this visit came in handy later when I was acting DCM or Chargé d'Affaires (CDA). So, the Chief of Protocol met with me alone and basically wanted to change around major aspects of the whole program that had been worked out by the advance team. I was flabbergasted; this was quite impossible. The Secretary's staff would have blown a gasket if I had even communicated this idea to them. The protocol chief was very insistent and all I could do was stubbornly stand my ground for what seemed like several hours, that sweeping changes could not be made to the program this late. He finally conceded, and I got in my car to drive home. I encountered the usual very heavy traffic on Reforma (a major and often traffic-choked avenue that I had to navigate to and from work every day). Another driver tried to cross the stalled lanes blind and hit my car in the side. I had to sit and wait for the Embassy's mobile patrol and the insurance guys (not the cops, nobody wanted them) to arrive (it was agreed to be the other guy's fault) while I was in a state of advanced exhaustion. It was quite late when I finally got home.

Then the next day, I accompanied the embassy motorcade to the airport. The ride back into town was wild, memorable. The airport was quite far out, and most of the route was on elevated concrete freeways. The motorcade flew at breakneck speed, chased by a swarm of *paparazzi* on motorcycles, all trying to photograph the Secretary through her car window, and shooting past and around the usual heavy traffic with police escort. The visit details are now hazy (I remember a meeting with Fox at the Presidential Palace) but it was an overall success. I received valuable assistance from my capable staff, notably Tom Reott (editing note: he later became Economic Minister-Counselor in Mexico City himself).

I mentioned becoming an Acting DCM at various points. One of the most memorable was a two-week stint in June 2006. During this time, drug cartels assassinated the police chief of Nuevo Laredo, on the Rio Grande across from Texas, on the day of his inauguration. This highlighted a situation of deteriorating law and order in northern Mexico, but also represented a security crisis at our consulate there, which at the time had no RSO (Regional Security Officer) presence. I coordinated with the consulate and Washington to deploy some temporary security personnel. I also formed a small team from our Political and Narcotics Affairs (NAS) sections to generate ideas for how Ambassador Garza could offer assistance to the Mexican government. Early in the following week, news broke that the head of security at the Mexico City airport had been assassinated. This second blow plunged Mexico into a national crisis. Fortunately, we soon were able to present the Ambassador with some options for assistance we could offer the Mexican government. He agreed to present many of them to the Mexican government, and they were very receptive.

We had a really bad hurricane season in 2005. You will recall that Katrina hit New Orleans in late August. Then the giant Hurricane Rita hit Texas and Louisiana in late September. In late October, Cancún was devastated by Hurricane Wilma. Large numbers of American tourists whose hotels were destroyed or damaged were left stranded, many taking refuge in makeshift Mexican shelters. The embassy came under enormous pressure to assist them and get them home. Unfortunately, many of the stranded Americans had overblown expectations of what we could do, given that Mexico was a foreign country that at best would give equal priority to its own citizens. Our office was in charge of the aviation aspect: coordinating with Mexican aviation authorities about the airport and arranging for special airline rescue flights. I coordinated with Washington from Mexico City while our aviation officer deployed to Cancún and worked at the airport. Consular section sent teams down to liaise with affected American citizens and look after those that had suffered harm. Eventually we cleared up the situation, but it was a tense and difficult time.

In January 2006 I was CDA because the DCM had scheduled to go to the retirement seminar when the ambassador just decided to leave. So, I was named as chargé d'affaires in this enormous country with nine consulates and everything else. I thought that was pretty cool. It's one of the first memories I have of being named chargé although I don't

have any paper on that. That never could have happened in the European Bureau, for reasons I will explain later.

The one thing that happened that week, we got a report that armed men driving Humvees had crossed the Texas-Mexico border and were invading the United States. On the surface it looked like an armored Mexican attack on U.S. soil. So, what did I do? I picked up the phone and called the foreign ministry and went "WTF, guys, come on!" They of course denied they were attacking the United States, which probably wouldn't have been a good idea for them. We both looked into it. I guess what the Mexicans and our border patrol jointly determined had happened was that some Mexican bad guys had gotten these vehicles and staged this cross-border attack for whatever reason – maybe to snatch and grab somebody or to push some drugs across the border. That was one of those moments where you can see yourself in this historical position, when a war starts and all that.

Other things we accomplished that year – we got a major aviation agreement done with Mexico. Aviation was a huge issue when I was there. It started with a focus on what's called MANPADS (man-portable air defense system), these shoulder-fired missiles. We couldn't really get the Mexicans at first to lower their suspicions about cooperating with us on these things. They were all about sovereignty, I guess it goes back to the Mexican-American War and all of that. We found that when dealing with straight economic agencies – finance, economy, trade – they were fully professional, even the energy people. There was no suspicion or any kind of lack of cooperation based on nationalism. When you got to political or security issues, even though Vicente Fox was more pro-U.S. than the PRI had been, the Mexican officials were still very suspicious. We handled this question in the economic section because we had general civil aviation responsibilities, and because we had no TSA (Transportation Security Agency) rep at the time in Mexico. We did eventually get an agreement on MANPADS. And then the last year I was there we got an overall bilateral aviation agreement which was something our people in EB had sought for many years; that was a big deal.

I might mention that my colleague in the political section in Mexico was Leslie Bassett who later became very successful. Steve Kelly ended up leaving in the summer I left, even though he wasn't scheduled to. He and the ambassador had some falling out. So, Leslie took over as DCM in Mexico for two years after being minister-counselor for political affairs. She went on to be DCM in Manila and Seoul, and finally became ambassador to Paraguay. She and I had initially run into each other in Nicaragua back in the early '80s, so it was very interesting to work with Leslie. She later had a wonderful column on leadership, I don't know if you ever read it.

Q: I am interested in the column; I haven't read it but I'm going to note it.

HEG: I think she has retired now in the last year or two, so I don't know if it's still up, but just some wonderful tidbits and anecdotes. She would post these three or four times a week. It was on the intranet not the internet, so I don't know how you find it. It was great.

Just a comment about travel around Mexico. Mexico's a wonderful country to travel in but when I was there it was difficult for two reasons. One was they had not yet privatized and deregulated their internal air travel so it was more expensive to fly to say Monterrey inside Mexico than to fly to Houston outside of Mexico. So, we did as much travel to places like Arizona and Texas, and also to visit the kids in college, as we did inside Mexico. Also, in Mexico, the traffic to get in and out of Mexico City was horrendous. We went to Acapulco a few times, which you can no longer do now because of violence, but it's a beautiful place. We also went to a number of other places. Each time we would leave the city it was a major chore and you risked getting caught in these traffic jams for hours. It was a headache. We're back in Mexico now – my wife has since joined the Foreign Service – and she's posted to Monterrey. Air travel is so much easier and cheaper so Mexico's improved quite a bit in that respect, and we've been able to visit a lot of places that were out of our reach before. The exchange rate is more favorable to us too.

I don't know if we should do Jamaica now or another day; there's a lot to cover there. So maybe we can push that off to the next time.

Q: That's fine, if you have a lot to cover there. The only other thing about Mexico during this period – other than NAFTA I think we also had a border consultation group. Was that strictly for security or did that also bring in some economic issues?

HEG: It brought in economic issues. I had some interaction with them. But they were mostly up at the border consulates, I think. A retired colleague of mine who I'd worked with in Nicaragua, David Randolph, was involved in that. I saw him in Mexico City a few times and I consulted with them. We offered to help as much as we could but the Foreign Commercial Service and Agriculture, the people who were really in the business of resolving granularly detailed issues, were probably of more use to the border people than we in the economic section more focused on broad policy. Yeah, I was aware of it, I can't remember what it was called. I think there was a guy on the Mexico desk that runs that or was liaison with it.

Q: The last question is, if you were to sum up what the major development was in the Mexican economy that you followed or saw by the time you left.

HEG: The integration with the U.S. and to a lesser extent Canada was proceeding fairly visibly. They'd opened up huge numbers of U.S. box stores, so you could go to Costco or Sam's Club or Walmart and get just about anything you wanted. It became an easy place to live a fairly middle-class life not unlike the U.S. apart from the horrendous traffic. I guess some U.S. cities, Seattle, LA, are choking to death with traffic, and Washington DC is no picnic either. While there was continuing illegal immigration into the U.S., the demographic transition had started setting in and I think that is one of the strong explanations for why there's a lot less Mexican immigration into the U.S. now than there was 15-20 years ago. You don't have all these jobless teenagers running around so much because the family sizes are smaller.

Apart from the economic stuff I think the drug problem has gotten worse, but that wasn't something I had any direct involvement in, except for those brief periods when I was in the front office. Obviously, the drug stuff was very salient to the mission as a whole.

One other observation I might make about Embassy Mexico City is that I was struck by the fact (I don't remember any other embassy like this) where although it was a U.S. embassy, the common language of people in the embassy was not English. I think the presence of Hispanic officers in the law-enforcement community was so extensive and there were a fair number of Hispanic Foreign Service officers and the like, so people would just use Spanish all the time. This kind of got the locally employed staff off the hook so they didn't have to use their English so much. I think it bothered me on a principle level. I had no problem; my Spanish was fine. But this is the U.S. embassy guys, come on! (laughter) I guess English is not really our official language, although in practice it is.

Q: We can tie things up here.

Q: We are resuming our interview with Jim Heg. Today is May 23rd (2018) You can begin. (HEG by video from Chelan, WA)

HEG: Today we'll continue with my onward assignment from Mexico, which was deputy chief of mission in Jamaica. As I mentioned, my assignment to Mexico City was for two years. So, I was bidding in fall 2005. Once again, I sought a DCM position, and bid on such jobs in both EUR and WHA. Unlike during my previous bidding cycle, I quickly found I was getting no traction in EUR. When Condoleezza Rice became Secretary, she brought people over who had worked with her at the NSC and put them in charge in EUR, the so-called "baby DASs" (because they were under-ranked for those positions). My mentor DASs in EUR had moved on, and the new ones didn't know me from Adam. In WHA, I think I bid on two DCM positions, Jamaica and Dominican Republic. Down the road they asked me which one I would prefer, and I said Kingston.

Anyway, I was shortlisted for Kingston and offered an interview with the incumbent ambassador, Brenda LaGrange Johnson, who would be in Washington in the near future. DCM Steve Kelly helpfully suggested I go to Washington officially and debrief State and other agencies like DOT (Department of Transportation) on lessons learned from the recent Wilma situation in Cancún. I carried out this assignment and also interviewed for the Kingston DCM job. Brenda and I hit it off and I was named to the position. She was a Bush W. political appointee, who used to claim to be the only Republican woman from New York City. That was a very productive trip for me in another way, as I was able to visit my son in Annapolis where he had just recently started his Plebe Year at the Naval Academy.

Q: Repeat what year you arrived in Jamaica.

HEG: I arrived in Jamaica in summer of 2006, after a two-year assignment in Mexico. Kingston, Jamaica was a big mission, we had about 86 direct-hire Americans and close to 200 local staff. Plus, we oversaw around 90 Peace Corps volunteers. So, it was a big responsibility. It was an MC (minister-counselor) DCM job, not an OC (counselor), so it was one of the bigger missions in the region. I think one reason I was able to ace into it, in addition to my sterling qualifications, was that unusually it was almost impossible for anybody that owned a dog to be assigned to Jamaica unless you were willing to leave Fido behind. At the time, there was a rule that the only dogs that could be brought into Jamaica had to be domiciled in the United Kingdom. They were a former colony of the UK and trusted the animal health system of the UK, but they wouldn't trust dogs from any other place. So, lots of dog-owners may have been screened out of the competitive process.

Having realized I temporarily didn't have much influence in the European bureau, I was looking in the bureau I was already in, WHA (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs). I'd done three assignments in former colonies of Spain and I felt like culturally it was interesting but marginally less interesting having done it three times. Jamaica was attractive, especially after serving in the UK and having married a woman from the UK. I was interested in seeing what a former British colony was like. So, Jamaica appealed to me, even though I realized it wasn't going to be an easy job – and it wasn't. At the time (it's probably still true), the travel posters make it look like a tropical paradise, and that was something we had to fight against continuously. But the city of Kingston itself is not a tropical paradise. It's a pretty gritty and somewhat dangerous city.

Q: Yeah. A quick note – you arrived literally 30 years after I spent my first tour in Jamaica, and I don't think Kingston changed all that much.

HEG: No. I don't think Jamaica changed all that much, either. My general sense was that it was a dynamically talented population but the people with moxie and get-up-and-go all left and they went to the diasporas of the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain. London, Toronto, Miami, New Jersey, that sort of thing. I met a lot of talented Jamaicans in Florida when I would go for medical stuff there. There was a thriving group of talented Jamaicans there. The country just doesn't have the kind of governance that allowed the domestic economy to really take off.

As I mentioned, the economy was not strong. It was built on three stools: the bauxite industry which was in decline; tourism, which was also in decline because of the bad publicity from the crime; and the remittances from the diaspora, which during this period was also in decline. So, they needed to find new ways of boosting their economy, and I'm not sure they ever did. We worked on some ideas with them.

Ambassador Brenda Johnson and I got along extremely well. She was interested in and good at public relations and outreach, and she did a lot of that. She was also good with the elites of Jamaica, who were quite influential in parts of the U.S. where the diaspora was. I concentrated as DCM on internal management and foreign policy issues. That was a division of labor that worked out well.

To backtrack a bit, preparation for my job consisted first of the DCM course, which was partly at FSI and partly at an off-site in West Virginia. I thought that was a very good course. I think that's where the department was putting and needs to put its maximal training effort. There's so much you need to know as a deputy chief of mission, and they only have a couple of weeks to teach it. The problem is, you've got to know all this stuff but especially if you're working for a political ambassador you've got to be able to explain it all to them, because they're in this two-week course too but they have no context or background for what they're being taught. I don't even know how it works, the ambassador course for non-career ambassadors. I don't know how they get anything out of it. It takes all you've got for a multi-decade career to really understand what you're up against in the front office of an embassy.

That was a good course, and great networking – getting to know my colleagues, people who were going out as DCMs at the same time, that was really cool. Now that I was in the age of email, I could message people and ask for advice or share ideas. That was something fairly new at that time, maybe had come in the last five to seven years. Before that it was really hard to keep in touch with your networking colleagues when you were overseas.

When I arrived, Brenda had been there for a year, and she knew the place pretty well. She was not running the embassy in a hands-on management way. The embassy was in the final stages of a move from an old chancery to a new one. In other words, the brand-new NEC they called it, new embassy chancery or compound, that was under construction in a part of Kingston a bit to the north of the existing one. The existing one was in two different places; there was an office building where we had a couple of floors, and that's where the chancery was. Then a few blocks away was another building with the consular section. The consular section was an outsized part of the mission. It was a very deteriorating facility by the time.

Q: It was a deteriorating building when I worked there in 1986, so I can't imagine what it was like by 2006. Also 20 years earlier they had begun the search for a new embassy compound, and the ambassadors I worked for were busy in identifying a location for a new embassy. It only took 20 years.

HEG: I think the ambassador prior to Brenda Johnson, Sue Cobb, was instrumental in closing the deal on the new embassy. She stayed very involved in it as well as in all affairs concerned with Jamaica. Sue and Ambassador Johnson were close partners during the time I was at Embassy Kingston.

We had to do all the things you have to do for a new embassy building, the punch-list and check-list, getting everything organized for moving all of the material and classified and sensitive equipment over to the new embassy. This took four or five months. I think it was December when we were able to move. The process was advanced when I got there but we were in the final accelerated stage where you really had to keep moving fast to keep up. We were having meetings all the time.

As we moved into the new embassy, which took place over several days – we had to get everybody involved including all the consular officers to escort the classified and sensitive equipment and make sure nobody was playing around with anything we were taking into the new embassy. We had quite an organizational task to give everybody their own escorting assignment. It was kind of a party atmosphere. Everybody dressed in jeans and pitched in, it was fun.

We got into the new embassy and discovered a number of things that were perplexing. The people who had made decisions years before, none were even identifiable much less around to answer questions. I just remember one of the things that was really strange was that the front office suite, a secure area, didn't have any way for somebody outside of it to call in to try to be admitted. There was no phone, no buzzer system, nobody had thought that necessary, and yet you couldn't just allow people to just walk into a CAA (controlled access area) like that – you had to have some kind of buzzer/identification system. Nobody had bothered to think of that so that's one of the things we had to get fixed.

Another one I had to deal with that really disappointed Ambassador Johnson was that her office was considerably smaller than it had been in the old, crumbling facility, and she no longer had her own conference room. These were new OBO (Bureau of Overseas Building Operations) guidelines that drastically shrunk the size of front offices and really took away a lot of the perks of being an ambassador by making it more utilitarian than a display of your rank and position. So, the ambassador's new office was actually quite small. I thought that was a mistake. An ambassador's office should reflect the importance of that position. But, nobody asked me.

There was a suite where two OMSs (office management specialists) would sit and my office on one side and the ambassador's on the other. Then there was an office for a staff assistant which we had for a while (I'll explain how that disappeared). That was the front office suite. There was no conference room for the front office per se. The ambassador had been quite used to having meetings in her conference room, eating lunch and having people in to have lunch with her. It was a great disappointment to her when she found out that it wasn't going to be like it was. She liked the new embassy but it was a downgrading of her physical environment.

For me, it was fine. I didn't have my own conference room and my own office was a little bit smaller but not drastically smaller than it had been, although I used to have a table in there for meetings and I didn't have that any more. The embassy looked great, it was very attractive – if you go into any recently constructed new embassy, you get an idea of what it looked like.

The biggest problem we had was the consular waiting room was about half as big as it needed to be. Considering the burgeoning visa demand, you know about visa work in Kingston – that's the whole shebang as far as the Jamaican population was concerned. They don't care about any other aspect of embassy business; it's all about visas. The Jamaican press reports on how everybody's treated at the embassy on a continuing basis.

So, we had really – the consular section had a difficult time working through how to deal with a waiting room that was half as big as it needed to be. The low capacity meant fewer applicants could be admitted, which meant others would have to wait outside in long lines, under the sun or rain. Public complaints in the press and elsewhere mounted

One thing they tried to do was to introduce the locally employed staff (LES) to doing shift-work so everybody cross-trained on NIV and IV (immigrant visa) and then would spend part of their time doing one, and part of the time doing the other. That sounds great on paper but the LES were not all that interested in more drastic change. Moving the embassy itself was a drastic change for many of them; it completely disrupted their commuting pattern. Some maybe had to commute across a gully; you remember, when it rained the gullies would flood and then you couldn't get across or traffic would stop completely. We started work at 7:00 AM; because of that we worked until 4:30, so by that time you had put in a full day. By the way I would get these snide phone calls from Washington, "Oh, you're home already" when I'd gone to work at 7:00 and they're going to work at 8:30 or 9:00. Why would I want to stay late at the office if I'd been there since the crack of dawn? They would just be sarcastic with snide comments.

Then we had a ceremony to open the new embassy. I don't know if you've heard of General Williams; he was a very senior –

Q: Actually, I have. The word mercurial comes up.

HEG: Yes. He was eccentric and kind of domineering. The one thing I remember, he came down and attended the opening ceremony. That was quite a thing because we had the prime minister of Jamaica, four or five former U.S. ambassadors – it was a big deal. General Williams was there and before the ceremony he did a tour of the new mission. For some reason they constructed a health unit which was pretty enormous, and we only had one local (Jamaican) nurse, and he just blew up because that was way too much space. He lived in this world where the goal was to get everything down into as little space as possible but somehow nobody told him about this or it had slipped through the cracks of his vigilance. He didn't have anybody to be mad at because none of us had anything to do with the decisions about the new mission, but he was definitely upset, he saw this huge health unit that was several times bigger than it needed to be for the staff we had. That's the one thing I remember about General Williams during that visit.

In terms of where I lived, it was unfortunate. A few years before I got there, the embassy had decided to sell the DCM residence which it owned. So, they were leasing a property on Jack's Hill which was a beautiful building designed by the architect Earl Levy who also built the Trident Hotel on the north side of the island. It had these coney castle-like features on it. It was a beautiful house, and my predecessor and his wife loved it. They didn't have any children, and they reveled in this architectural beauty. But we had kids that needed to come and stay with us; none were living there full-time (they were in school) but the bedrooms were in some cases separated from the main house by outside walkways, and we didn't feel like that was very secure. Plus, when it rained it was like most of the house was basically outside. If you've seen the movie *Key Largo* with louver

doors and everything, it was like that, so the rain was coming right in. That's how this house felt. So, we arranged to have the management officer look for a new house for us and we found one of comparable size but much better equipped that we were able to move into in December at about the same time we moved into the new embassy. The new house was in the same area of Jack's Hill that the other house was so we didn't have to change our position too much. In fact, we ended up living right above the residence of Portia Simpson Miller who was the prime minister of Jamaica at the time. That was her personal residence, not the official prime minister residence.

I talked about the visa demand; it was going up like 20 percent a year when I was there. We had 10 first-tour ELOs in the consular section. It was a huge group of entry-level officers. Most were housed at this place called Powell Plaza which was this hotel they bought on the other side of town and they named it after Colin Powell because he was from Jamaica. It was an endless management nightmare to get to all the things that needed to be fixed in Powell Plaza. Fortunately, through hard work, our management officer Eric Flohr was able to get a lot of those things settled during our tour. It was way on the other side of town, so for all the ELOs, if it was raining, they ran into the gully problem. They just couldn't get across. And in the evening, the same thing. For some reason, eight or nine out of the 10 entry-level officers were female. They had particular problems in Jamaica because when they were driving their cars, the squeegee guys and others would start harassing them. It was very uncomfortable for quite a few of them. They'd go to Burger King and people would recognize them as vice-consuls, you're really under a microscope there especially if you're working in the consular section and known to be a visa officer. It was tough on them.

One of the things we had to deal with was a public relations issue completely manufactured by the press when we moved to the new embassy. That was this idea that somehow people were entitled to free parking when they came to apply for a visa. This had just seized the imagination of the entire island and the press was haranguing us about what were we going to do about providing free parking to visa applicants. Well, I'd never heard of this issue, I worked with consular and public affairs and was told that no-where in the world did we provide free parking for visa applicants. This is not something you are entitled to. But they got themselves all wound up about it. I had Eric, the management officer, scout around the neighborhood to find places where commercial parking could feasibly be set up and that seemed to come about somehow. The complaining went away after a while, but the first few months I was at the embassy I'd go to receptions and everybody would ping me about parking. That was the narrative in the papers; we didn't have an articulated plan for free parking and we needed to have one. It's a very small community. Everybody knows everybody else in Jamaica, everybody gets seized with the same subjects. It's really an interesting microcosm, like a Petri dish almost.

Q: Was one of the issues you dealt with the question of drugs, drug transshipment, and drug gangs?

HEG: Of course. We had a large law enforcement presence at Embassy Kingston. We had ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), CBP (Customs and Border Patrol), the

Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the U.S. marshals – I think we were one of only two or three embassies around the world with marshals. The marshals were there to chase down drug kingpins and fugitives hiding in Jamaica. The whole country was politically divided between the People's National Party and the Jamaica Labour Party, each of which had associated "garrison communities" controlled by gangs. This had been the case for decades, going back to the '70s and '80s at least. So yeah, an awful lot of our work was drug-related, and also corruption related.

But before I went to Jamaica, I consulted widely in Washington. At that time there was a new assistance program called the Millennial Challenge Account (MCA). Money was made available to developing countries that wanted to do economic reforms but didn't have the necessary financial wherewithal. But there were certain conditions you had to meet. One of the key ones was you had to have a strong anti-corruption policy. Jamaica looked like it could really benefit from the MCA but unfortunately its inability to come to grips with corruption was a key impediment. My predecessors had beat their heads against the wall trying to get Jamaica admitted to the program and they had not succeeded, so rather than do that I decided to try to enhance our efforts on the anti-corruption side. One of the things I did was work with our NAS (Law Enforcement and Narcotics Affairs) officer to reorient some of their money from straight counter-drug to more anti-corruption efforts. The other was to work with my counterparts at the UK and Canadian high commissions to pursue tripartite initiatives. We came up with a program. It was interesting when I was there, the police were thought to be very corrupt whereas the military, which basically consisted of one regiment, was fairly clean. So, we would often consult with the military on things normally we would have gone to the police about, but we didn't trust everybody at the police.

When I was there, the marshals were able to extradite several drug kingpins. They would identify them and get the Jamaicans to arrest them. We would have to go in to persuade the Jamaican authorities to agree to extradition, which was not often that easy but usually they eventually bowed to *force majeure*.

During the first year I was there, there was an outbreak of malaria which hadn't happened in Jamaica for a very long time. It was a mild form of malaria, but a couple of embassy people playing golf got it. It apparently came in from Haiti. It was not the virulent kind of African malaria, basically a kind you could get in Haiti. Some of us were taking anti-malarial medications. I wasn't a golfer so I wasn't quite as worried about it.

One thing that came up in spring 2007 was that Jamaica was scheduled to host the Cricket World Cup. Now, we're not a cricket playing nation but Ambassador Johnson was quite seized with this, very anxious that we look into the security aspects. I could see eventually that we were going to have a large number of people coming into the Caribbean region from South Asia, India and Pakistan, to attend these matches. It hadn't been that long since 9/11 (terror attacks of 11 September 2001) and we had a war going on in Afghanistan and terrorism was a world threat. So, she was right.

Let me digress for a minute. When I mentioned preparation for the job, as well as the DCM course, a second aspect had been consultations at SOUTHCOM (Southern Command). I think Admiral Stavridis was heading SOUTHCOM at the time. He was pretty dynamic. He got on the ball with us and helped us. It was actually not Jamaica hosting the Cricket World Cup, it was a coalition of Caribbean islands and they would have matches in different places in the Caribbean. One of the things we got them to do is to get together and institute an advanced passenger information system so people could know who's coming and going on these airline flights to attend these cricket matches. When the World Cup happened, my wife and I went to Ireland vs. West Indies which lasted all day. I'm quite a baseball fan but I have to admit that cricket, though it looks superficially like baseball, I never really understood it. I sat there all day and by late afternoon, I really understood how cricket worked. But after that, it's all gone. I can't tell you a thing now about how it works. It's kind of like a hard language; unless you constantly work it, it just goes away. I think most of these kinds of sports you have to grow up with them to really grasp what they're all about.

During the first year I was there, I was chargé for about 10 weeks. Ambassador Johnson was from New York and had a lot of interests there, and it was easy to fly, there were direct flights back and forth. That gave me a lot of experience at running a mission. I'd been chargé in Mexico for one week but this was a much more extensive experience. There are lots of receptions you have to go to, especially if you're the chief of mission in Jamaica. I mentioned that we worked starting at 7:00 AM; well, the Jamaican receptions would start at 8:30 or 9:00 PM and go on to all hours. If you're the chief of mission, you can't just go and leave; they put you at the front table and the press is all over it. The society pages in Kingston covered the diplomatic corps like it was part of the entertainment of the island. They would comment on what people wore and who was and wasn't there. It's the one place I've been where you'd get your picture in the paper all the time. It was very peculiar. it's not like Central America where everybody has this guayabera informality; everybody in Jamaica for business wore dark suits and ties in this sweltering climate. Just this British inherited thing, never let them see you sweat, right? I invested in some really light-weight cotton suits so I could keep up; it was pretty hot all the time at these receptions.

Some of the things I did on representation were meaningful. One was I attended as chargé the funeral of a Jamaican soldier who was serving in a U.S. Army unit and was killed in Iraq. That was a huge event. It was absolutely essential we show presence, so both I and the public affairs officer and several other officers were there right at the front. It was a very long service and it was very hot, but it was really important to do that.

I remember going to a remembrance event – I guess they had a tomb for soldiers killed in World War One, because the Jamaicans provided troops to the British army in both world wars; it was very significant for them. Since Ambassador Johnson wasn't available one year, I went to that and it was quite moving.

Moving towards summer 2007. Portia Simpson Miller had inherited the People's National Party (PNP) from P. J. Patterson, who had been prime minister of Jamaica for like 15

years. The PNP had run Jamaica almost continuously for nearly two decades. She was a very gregarious, outgoing person. In fact, I met her before going to Jamaica at a reception at the Jamaican embassy in Washington when I was having consultations. When she found out I was going to be the DCM in Kingston, she just came up and hugged me. It was very friendly. She wasn't a terribly efficient or effective prime minister; things didn't seem to be working very well. She called a snap election for late summer 2007, and there was a two-month period of electioneering. It was very tense on the island. All of a sudden all of these garrison politics started bubbling up; murders started happening in different neighborhoods and you'd get the sense the gangs were out there. Our RSO (regional security officer) was very vigilant about trying to let everybody know where it was and wasn't safe to go. Sometimes the fast road to the airport was off-limits, for example.

In the middle of the election season, I guess early August 2007, I took some leave and came back here to Washington state. While I was up here, a big hurricane started heading toward Jamaica. Turned out to be Hurricane Dean and it was looming as a category four bomb, heading straight for Kingston. I was out exploring the country one day. When I got back my wife told me the embassy had called and the ambassador wanted me to come back to help lead the embassy through this crisis. She had gotten me on a flight over the mountains to Seattle and then on the red-eye hypotenuse flight all the way to Miami, which took all night to get there. Then I got into Miami and sat for a couple of hours and then got into Kingston; I was exhausted. But I had to go directly into meetings at the mission, monitoring the hurricane. I also had to go home later and try to hurricane-proof our residence because this thing looked like it was going to wreck a lot of things and flood people's houses and everything else. I was trying to get all of our personal property up off the floor, so I was up late into the night doing that.

Meanwhile, we had authority to do a voluntary departure of non-essential personnel. So, our management officer managed to get places on aircraft for most of the dependents in the mission, spouses and children mostly. Most of them left. My wife wasn't allowed to come back with me because we were already under this voluntary departure. So, she had to stay back in the U.S. because until that was resolved, they weren't allowing dependents to come back to the island. Then we decided that, rather than shelter in place in their house, the ones staying needed to come and shelter in the new embassy. They put a bed in my office to sleep. I guess the ambassador had the same thing. What was really unusual was that the head of the Peace Corps wanted to bring his people in, and they ended up coming and staying in the atrium in sleeping bags. There were like 90 of them, which turned out to be kind of awkward; we didn't have the facilities for that many people to be living in the embassy. Fortunately, the emergency only lasted a couple of days. The hurricane was bad but it wasn't quite as devastating as it had originally seemed it would be. It didn't obliterate everything, there was a huge amount of flooding and a lot of – the poor streets, you could barely drive on them because huge potholes opened up after the hurricane because they were so poorly constructed and maintained. It did a huge amount of damage to the island, maybe $100 million or something like that.

Soon after that, the election happened, a couple of weeks after the hurricane. I think they postponed it a week or two to let everybody settle down again after that crisis. It turned

out that Miller lost the election and the JLP (Jamaica Labour Party) came back into power, the first time in 18 years. Bruce Golding was the first JLP prime minister since Edward Seaga, who had been prime minister during the Reagan administration. I think he and Reagan had been quite close during the Cold War.

Portia Simpson Miller had been developing country oriented, G77 (Group of 77) "we're a developing country, we're going to vote with other developing countries in the UN, we're not going to follow U.S. guidance on international issues, we'll follow the G77." So, we were looking to the JLP as maybe providing a closer relationship with the U.S., like Seaga had a closer relationship during the Reagan administration. This was during a Republican administration under Bush. But we in the embassy thought trying to get some help to Jamaica after the hurricane would be a great opening to closer relations with the country. In fact, Bruce Golding made a formal request to us for increased assistance to deal with hurricane damage.

We pressed the case as hard as we could, and got absolutely no response from Washington. They couldn't care less. Their whole attention was on other things. Something we fought against most of the time we were there was that within the Caribbean, Haiti got 95 percent of the attention. Haiti was a constant crisis, and all the oxygen in the Caribbean affairs structure was sucked out by Haiti. So, we were always trying to make policy and coordinate among our agencies at post ourselves. We very seldom got encouragement, help, or advice from anybody in Washington. It was like we were on our own. It was kind of sad. So, Washington basically turned their back on this new government in Jamaica. It was very unfortunate. USAID was able to bring in some standard relief supplies right after it, but the kind of reconstruction assistance that would be a follow-on to really help the country, that was not forthcoming. They just wouldn't do it.

Q: Did you have a USAID office in Jamaica?

HEG: We did. We had programs. They were fairly low-level. I think they'd recently been cut back pretty hard. A year after opening the new embassy, we had to get permission to build an AID annex within the compound. The mayor of Kingston gave us a hard time on that one, we had to fight tooth and nail to get him to sign the permission. We eventually built a new AID mission within the embassy compound. It was a separate permit process. While I was there, we had a RIF (reduction in force) among AID employees, and it was damaging to morale throughout the embassy. The local employees didn't see any difference between them and the ones working for AID, they just saw Americans coming down on them and breaking promises and all this. They would complain about things that happened years or decades ago, how they'd been mistreated by this or that person. We had no idea what they were talking about but they were current grievances as far as they were concerned. We had a workforce that was always a bit sullen and resentful. We did what we could but it was tough. The AID reduction in force was a low point. Toward the end of my tour our AID Mission started ramping up again; I think they saw the error of their ways after a while. During the first year and a half, Washington paid no attention to Jamaica and in fact was cutting back.

The anti-corruption thing continued. This tripartite effort eventually got them to remove a corrupt police commissioner, and we got them to pass a proceeds of crime act so the government could take proceeds of crime (cars or whatever) that were used in the commission of drug crimes and sell them to finance some of their law enforcement activities.

The next exciting thing was in either 2007 or 2008, a counter-terrorism issue. The United Kingdom had extradited to Jamaica a guy named Sheikh Abdullah al-Faisal, a Jamaican national who had been in prison in the UK and converted to Islam and became a sheikh. I think if you remember the shoe-bomber, well this guy was his mentor. He was a big deal. They sent him back. He was living somewhere on the north coast, but our security people had to spend a lot of time watching him and figuring out what he was up to, working with the reliable parts of the Jamaican authorities that would cooperate on this, to make sure he didn't start anything. So, the war on terror came to Jamaica.

I mentioned how on hurricane reconstruction assistance Washington had turned its back on Bruce Golding and the new government. Well, this is Washington for you. In the next few months, they came up with a pot of money they wanted to use to help countries in the Caribbean (and maybe Central America) to resettle criminals we had deported back to these countries. We wanted Jamaica and other countries to accept these aid programs so that they could take care of these guys we were kicking out of the U.S. after they served their prison sentences. Well, Bruce Golding would have none of it. I don't think Washington could connect any dots, but I'm pretty sure the way we treated them after he took power had something to do with it. There was also a resentment about having to take all these people back; they didn't have any choice. But to voluntarily participate in this AID program, I guess in his mind (and some of the other Caribbean countries') was tantamount to an acceptance of this stream of deportees they didn't feel they should have to take. I imagine this is an issue that still goes on in the hemisphere. I know we're still deporting a lot of people.

Q: Did anything happen? Did any of the money get used for that purpose?

HEG: No. In spite of enormous pressure on us to get the Jamaicans to participate in this program, they would not.

This brings up something I found both in this assignment and the next one. You have an ambassador in a country who's a political ambassador; basically, Washington will not lean on the ambassador. They will lean on the DCM for these kinds of unpleasant things. You really get it from all sides. The ambassador no matter how well you get along with them (and I got along great with Ambassador Johnson) are always looking to you for problem-solving advice, fixing things. Everybody below you brings you the hard problems. Like during the Hurricane Dean thing, Washington was constantly trying to micromanage the mission's response to the hurricane. So, I spent half the time on the phone with busybodies in Washington rather than dealing with the crisis; it was really frustrating. But I think that's almost inevitable because of the way we go about

scapegoating people after crises. Everybody's covering their ass left and right, and I'm sure that's what was going on back in Washington. I think it just gets worse and worse; later on, I'll talk about some even more egregious instances of that.

One thing I should mention about Hurricane Dean is before the hurricane hit, we prepositioned consular officers with satellite phones, several to Montego Bay on the northern side and also to the Cayman Islands. We were not responsible for the Caymans diplomatically, but apparently, we were for the consular function. So, the consular section was responsible for dealing with American citizens in the Caymans. I don't think anything exciting happened but they were in those places while we were riding out the hurricane.

I think in the second year I was there, I was working with an econ officer. We had a small pol-econ section by the way; the pol-econ chief was Lloyd Moss who'd been DCM in Belize and some other small posts, a good guy. Then we had a fairly low-ranking mid-level officer who did the econ work and another who did the political work. So, I worked with our econ officer. Nate Carter, who came to me one day and said there was a Ponzi scheme going on in the Jamaican financial system similar to the one that had basically devastated Albania soon after the communist government had fallen. It wiped out large numbers of people. He warned me that if things continued as they were, Jamaica would possibly suffer a similar catastrophe. So, we went into the finance ministry and briefed on this. They woke up and took action, I think the thing got fixed and they rolled up some of these schemes that were out there. That was one of the things that was good that we did.

Q: I'm surprised there was nothing done about the hurricane. Did anything in the long run ever materialize for that?

HEG: Yeah, there was another hurricane the next year; I'll get to that. It got better. But by then, the damage had been done in terms of the relationship with Bruce Golding. He was a prickly introverted humorless guy, and I think he felt like we had disrespected him. I don't think we could easily claw our way back from that just by doing the right thing the next time.

One other thing that developed partly as a result of this reconfiguration of the visa section and consular section, we developed an enormous visa backlog. At one point, we had the fourth-longest wait time in the world. This led to, among other things, the elimination of our rotational front office staff assistant, for us a great loss. We got what's called a CMAT (consular management assistance team) team to come out and help us. They completely undid this scheme we had set up where people would do either all NIV or all IV. They helped us to start getting permission to get a call center set up. What people would do in Jamaica, they would call in for multiple appointments to get one appointment. So, these appointment requests would pile up. We had no way of separating the duplicates from the real ones. Part of this visa backlog was a phantom of a pile up of enormous numbers of visa requests that we couldn't make sense of. We got Consular Affairs Assistant Secretary Janice Jacobs to come and visit, and during that week persuaded her to give us

permission to open a commercial call center where people – instead of requesting directly to the embassy for a visa appointment – would go to this call center, and the call center would sort this out. That had an enormous effect on our appointment system, and the backlog mostly cleared. But for a while the problem was so acute that I was going down to the visa section every week for a meeting where we were trying to sort out different ways of getting through this problem.

The summer of 2008 there was another hurricane, Hurricane Gustav, which was a rerun of Dean. Only it came on so suddenly, we couldn't organize any kind of departure. The track of the hurricane had been over Haiti and it appeared to be heading north, and then it just did a complete turn in the middle of the night and headed straight for us. It was one of these things where you could never predict because it didn't follow the path it was supposed to. By the way, I learned in Jamaica in the summer months to watch the Weather Channel like it was CNN or something. I didn't care what was happening in Russia or China or Israel; all I wanted to know was what sort of blob was forming out by Africa and marching west? This was just a few years after horrendous hurricanes like Rita and Wilma and Katrina had hit.

So, we had another hurricane. I took leave earlier so it would be less likely that I'd be jerked back during a hurricane, so I was there when Gustav hit. It did a lot of damage and flooded the entire eastern end of the island and cut off large numbers of towns. But this time we were able to get like $5 million of reconstruction money pledged. That felt good, that we were able to do that. It's just I regret that we didn't do it when it could have done the most good for the relationship with the government. I think Bruce Golding was not unhappy to get the money but I don't think he felt close to us. He went out of his way to cozy up to Cuba during that period, just to sort of stick his finger in our eye. That was kind of surprising because Edward Seaga had been an implacable foe of Communism. I don't think Golding was interested in actually cozying up to Castro; I think he was just doing it to annoy us because he was still resentful.

One of the things we did in 2008 was host an HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome) chiefs of mission conference. We had chiefs of mission from all over the Caribbean region come to Kingston and talk about combating HIV/AIDS. One of the things about the Bush administration, they spent an awful lot of money on combating HIV/AIDS and it was a very robust program. The U.S. was in the leadership role all over the world; that was a good thing we were doing. I think in 2009, right before I left for good, I attended another HIV/AIDS conference in St. Lucia, which gave me a chance to see other parts of the Caribbean.

I might just mention how beautiful Jamaica is. It's got its gritty aspects, particularly in Kingston and some other towns. But the island is extraordinarily beautiful. The Georgian architecture is just amazing. We just loved going to places like Firefly, where Noel Coward lived. In Kingston there was Devon House which was a masterpiece of Georgian architecture. They had coffee and ice cream and you could buy souvenirs; it was a great place to go for an outing. Treasure Beach, and the Jamaica Inn, which I think featured in some Ian Fleming stuff. It was just fascinating.

Q: Did you ever go to the Blue Mountains, take a walk out there?

HEG: Yes, I visited one or more coffee plantations up there. I also went there once with the Hash House Harriers; I wasn't really a member although I guess I got inducted into it, but I only went once or twice. One of the things we did was a run up the side of one of the Blue Mountains. Absolutely beautiful. And the coffee was great, but it was a very niche kind of coffee and I think the Japanese buy almost all of it, so it was hard to get export quality Blue Mountain coffee. We had a source where we would buy and take to the U.S. when we would go home for presents to people, but you couldn't find it in the U.S. anywhere.

The music. Reggae is everywhere. In fact, I got really sick of reggae because everywhere you went on the island, they would be cranking out the Bob Marley hits that everybody knows. That in their mind was what all the tourists wanted to hear; if you're in Jamaica, you want to hear Bob Marley. I learned there was a lot more to reggae than Bob Marley, I learned about Jimmy Cliff and people like that. I actually saw Jimmy Cliff at a reception we had for the international Olympic commissioner; there he was, big as life, at the reception. I'd already seen *The Harder They Come* so I was really impressed to be in the same room with Jimmy Cliff. The other musical talent on the island just blew me away, too, like you go to any church service, the choir in the church service would be on the caliber that we would think would put you on Ed Sullivan or anything like that. Unbelievably good. The talent was incredible.

Q: Speaking of which, did you get to go to any of the Christmas pantomimes?

HEG: I don't recall going to Christmas pantomimes in Jamaica but I did in the UK. I loved those. It's probably similar. I may have gone to a Christmas pantomime in Jamaica but I just can't recall, but I do recall very well going to them in England.

The Beijing Olympics was a huge deal. This was the advent of Jamaica as a world track and field superpower. This was the Olympics where Usain Bolt won gold medals in the 100 and 200 meters. One of the things about the Beijing Olympics; the Chinese embassy had a big reception before the Olympics to get everybody excited about what they were doing. They tried to pass around propaganda against Taiwan and this kind of stuff, give people CDs that had the messages they wanted. It was awkward.

After the Olympics, Usain Bolt became overnight a superstar on the island and internationally. I think it was during a period when the ambassador was away and I was chargé, he came over to the embassy with his entourage; they needed visas to go to the U.S. He already had a visa. So, what he did was come up and hang around in the front office with me for a while, while his people were getting visas. I got to spend about half an hour with him. He was a really nice guy. Huge – really tall. I have these funny photographs of me, half as tall as he is. I really enjoyed being with him, he wasn't stuck on himself at all. Maybe later he got that way, but this was soon after he became world famous and he was just a regular guy.

The 2008 U.S. election was a big deal in Jamaica. They were super-excited that Barack Obama was elected. There was dancing in the streets. I think they drastically over-estimated how this would impact their personal lives, but the amount of media attention on the island for the election was enormous. We had an election-night reception. I did some TV interviews during it, trying to convince everybody we weren't going to have a complete upheaval in everything we did. Mostly, it would be continuity. I think even people in the U.S. didn't really believe that, but it's actually true. Not that much changes when you get from one president to another, even if the narrative is that it's black and white, George W. Bush – Barack Obama. Most of the things we did were similar.

Brenda Johnson, our political ambassador, was asked to vacate her position on inauguration day. There was a procedure in place to appeal that, and she decided to exercise that appeal because I think there was an event coming up involving a visit by the King of Spain; she was very close to the Spanish ambassador and wanted to be involved in that. That was the main reason, just a month or two after the inauguration. Washington didn't rule on her appeal until maybe like 10 days before the inauguration, then they turned it down. It turned out there is an awful lot of stuff you have to do when an ambassador leaves post. There was a whole round of calls they have to make on the dean of the diplomatic corps (awkward at this time because the dean was the Cuban ambassador) and this and that and you have to meet with the foreign minister and prime minister and host a farewell reception and attend receptions hosted by others. All of that had to be compressed into this very short period of time, and I was obviously heavily involved in helping organize that. It was quite stressful. The Ambassador could not understand why the transition team waited so long to deny her request for an extension.

So, on inauguration day, I went to the airport with Ambassador Johnson. She gave an interview on TV. I was sitting there with her and I talked about the continuity thing again. But I was looking at basically six months of being chargé because there wasn't anybody named as a new ambassador and wouldn't be for quite some time.

We had a bit of a crisis in this period. The new embassy interface with the electric grid somehow fried and failed. We had a couple of generators that were built-in and we had to rely on generator power, but the generators were not designed to be run continuously for long periods of time; they were for short-term emergencies. One of them actually failed, so we were down to one generator and were having trouble getting Washington to focus on this issue. I had to work with Eric Flohr, our management officer, to tell Washington basically, "Hey, we're going to die here if you don't come down and help us fix this! The lights are literally going to be turned off!" We finally got somebody's attention, but again we were at the end of a long chain of indifference.

There was never a dull moment in Kingston. The economy was getting worse in the last year. We tried to get experts from Treasury and USAID to come down and give the Jamaicans some ideas on how to get more tax revenue and boost agriculture production, things like that. We were trying to give them not just money, but help them figure things

out. It was pretty late in my tour that we were doing this, I don't know what the result was. We tried.

One of the interesting things that happened in the final months when I was chargé was that we started having joint exercises. One of the most interesting ones was a thing called Beyond the Horizon where for six weeks the U.S. Army South would send in these different groups of military people to do humanitarian projects on the island. Those were terrific. I visited a few of those and they were getting along great with the local villages where they were working. There was great opportunity for our own military people to be in the field doing real work and not just be on some military base.

Another one we worked with the law enforcement people was called Operation Jolt which was designed to interrupt these criminal gangs that were running lottery scams out of Montego Bay. One of the things they would do is get – I don't know if you've seen them in convenience stores, they have this thing where you fill out a little piece of paper and you can win a car. Well, people would give their name and address and phone number and all this stuff, then a lot of this data was sold to these gangs. I guess this also happens in Nigeria. Gangs would fight over these lists and shoot each other to try and get a hold of these names, because they would run these scams using telephones in the U.S. So, we were trying to disrupt those.

There was an Operation Riptide, trying to disrupt the guns for ganja trade between Haiti and Jamaica in the Leeward Passage. Some more anti-corruption stuff targeting the police.

One last big crisis before my tour was up; I'll talk next time about how my next assignment came about. I think it was April 2009, there was a hijacking of a plane at Montego Bay airport. I was on the phone all night with Prime Minister Golding, the Ops Center, and the FBI hostage negotiating team in Washington. The FBI team in Washington worked with a U.S.-trained Jamaican team on the island to end the incident. They got this guy to get off the plane and give up his weapon. That was pretty intense. It's the middle of the night. The plane's been hijacked on the northern part of the island. The prime minister was calling me on the phone, right? I was able to do something for Bruce Golding finally. We hadn't succeeded earlier.

Personally, this was a good assignment for us. I think I had two kids in college, one at the Naval Academy in Annapolis and one at Rice University in Houston. Jamaica was a good place from which I could attend college events and things like that. Particularly at Annapolis, there were lots of things you wanted to go to. There was no tuition there but they had these weekends, football weekends and parents' weekends and this and that. It was actually damned expensive to go up there for a weekend; Annapolis is really expensive when something's going on at the academy. But it was a great time in our lives to do that.

Right before the end of my tour in May 2009, both my son and daughter were ready for graduation, and I was able to go to both of their graduations. The Naval Academy has

something called Commissioning Week, which is fantastic – parades and Blue Angels fly-bys and everybody throws their hat in the air. That year, Barack Obama delivered the commencement address at the academy. Our naval attaché, a guy named Dominic, can't remember his last name, had been at the protocol office at the Naval Academy before coming to Jamaica as the attaché. I told him that my father had gone there and so he arranged a VIP (very important person) package for us where we got in all this stuff we normally couldn't have gotten into like a lunch at the commandant's house, special seating for the Blue Angels, and all of that. My father was just over the moon! That was probably one of the finest things I was ever able to do for my father. I owed him a lot. I owe a lot to Dominic for being in the right place at the right time and getting us into these special events.

My daughter graduated from my alma mater Rice down in Houston. That was fun. The thing was, had I been in another bureau, I might not have been able to do this because WHA at the time had no double-absence rule. I was the chargé, there was no DCM. Now, I guess we had an informal acting DCM, Lloyd Moss the pol-econ chief. In fact, when I left, he became chargé because there was nobody to replace me right away. I would have had a much harder time if I'd been under the next regime in EUR.

I think I'm done here for Jamaica. My next assignment is Oslo, Norway. I'll either do that, another one like this, or else I'll wait until you get to Washington.

Q: I was thinking about this since I had been in a consular assignment in Jamaica 20 years earlier, and the remarkable thing is, I didn't have many questions for you because the situation was exactly the same. The only difference, sadly, is there are more drugs and drug gangs now then there were when I was there. There was a great deal of crime when I was there in '86 to '88, but it wasn't very heavily drug related. Drugs had still not gotten into the Jamaican economy nearly as much as they would later.

HEG: I think most of the drugs were being dealt with when I was there was marijuana, I don't think they were dealing with opiates or anything like that.

Q: Okay. I also recall being briefed at SOUTHCOM about trans-shipment locations and having seen Jamaica on their map, but maybe it had changed or it had been reduced.

HEG: One interesting thing when I was there was that we didn't have very many U.S. citizen prisoners in jail in Jamaica. The British had a lot. Apparently, it was because British citizens would try to be couriers from Jamaica to the UK, whereas our couriers would do it mostly from Colombia or Mexico, not from Jamaica. So, we didn't have that kind of direct smuggling. I think more our drug problem was the Jamaican gangs involved in narcotics trafficking in the U.S., and some of their kingpins would flee to Jamaica to stay out of jail. There was high-quality marijuana too, being trafficked.

While I was there in the last months, it appeared likely we were going to indict this kingpin named Christopher Coke, nicknamed Dudus. He was in one of the gangs that was traditionally supported by the JLP, the ruling party. So, this was going to put Bruce

Golding in an extremely awkward position. That created a host of problems for my successor. I knew this was coming, but it didn't break before I left so I didn't have to deal with it. I was reading about it afterwards in the news; more than 70 people were killed in the violence sparked when the Jamaicans started trying to arrest Coke. It was a big deal.

Q: Today is June 20th; we are resuming our interview with James Heg as he reflects on his Jamaica tour.

HEG: Last session we covered my tour as DCM in Kingston, Jamaica, from 2006 to 2009. I just have a couple of things I want to add to what I said last session. First, I want to comment on the DCM residence staff, in particular a noteworthy individual who served as our butler, named Randolph (I can't remember his last name). He had been butler to DCMs going back 25 or 30 years. Everybody who's been DCM or ambassador in Jamaica in that period knows him. He was a gentleman of the old school. I think he learned his craft under the British. If you've seen the movie, *Remains of the Day*, where everything had to be done just so, this is the way he waited tables. He was a great joy to all of us but in particular for my wife who was a British national originally. She would have afternoon tea in the gazebo and he knew exactly how to serve it. He had not had someone to serve tea to for a long time, because American ladies don't normally understand what afternoon tea is all about. It was a match made in heaven. Randolph for all I know may still be there, but he was probably in his 70s at the time he worked for us. He had some health problems we helped him out with. His two favorite things were overproof rum, which meant like close to 100 proof, and these unfiltered cigarettes. It's amazing he was alive even then. He was wonderful.

The other thing was a key milestone that happened in the first few months of my tour there. In October I was informed to my surprise that I was promoted to minister-counselor (MC), which I did not expect. I'd only been in grade for four years, and I knew how competitive it all was. I hadn't been a DCM. I was in a DCM position which was a minister-counselor-level job because of the size of the post, but it wasn't heavily bid at that level so I was lucky to have it. And then boom, out of the blue, without having to sweat it, I became a minister-counselor, which basically set me for the rest of my career. As somebody told me a few years before that, "Once you're an MC, you don't have to sweat the competitive pressure constantly. You can do what you want to do." That gave me that freedom for the rest of my career, it was terrific.

Q: The process for minister-counselor goes to the D committee?

HEG: No, it's just another promotion board. The thing is, you have 14 years from when you cross the threshold to serve in the Senior Foreign Service, but there's a sub-TIC (time in class) at seven years where you have to make it from OC (counselor) to MC. I still would have had three more tries so I wasn't really sweating it. I definitely sweated the 01 to OC board in 2002 because I would only have had one chance left. This one was very gratifying.

Q: When you say once you reach MC, you can do whatever you want – that means most jobs that you would be looking at are no longer linked to a cone?

HEG: Partly that. Also, that you don't have to worry about the promotability of a job. You can pursue your own desires. You don't even have to worry about whether it's at grade. There's a great deal of fungibility at the senior level between OC and MC jobs. In fact, I didn't really care whether a job was OC or MC once I made it to MC, because I was still going to be an MC. As it turned out, the next two jobs I had were OC down-stretches, but I felt they carried a significant amount of responsibility and were jobs I wanted to do. That's the kind of freedom I'm talking about. Not having to worry about the competitive pressure of up-or-out. I knew at the end of 14 years, I was out, but that was a fine time horizon for me.

Interview on 2009-2012 Assignment to Oslo, June 20, 2018, in person at ADST

How did I get from Kingston to Oslo? In the fall of 2008 – and this turned out to be the last truly competitive bidding season I ever had to endure, and probably one of the most fraught – I was just finishing up one DCM job and felt like I had one more in me before turning to something else. So, I tried my hand again at looking at jobs in the European Bureau, as well as in the western hemisphere, although in WHA I was mostly interested in jobs in Canada. The one I centered on there was in Toronto, the CG job there. I ended up on three short lists, CG Toronto, DCM for the U.S. mission to the FAO in Rome (which I bid on the previous time), and Oslo. So, three short lists. Oslo was my preferred, but fortunately but at the time it seemed very unfortunate, it was decided the last of the three. Of course, I couldn't turn down anything that was offered, I had to take whichever one was offered. Turned out the first one decided was Toronto, and I was not picked for that. Then I wasn't picked for FAO Rome either. Oslo didn't come up for decision until early December so the whole fall cycle I'd gone through this agonizing process, then I had to think whether I wanted to risk hanging out for Oslo, because there were other non-DCM jobs offered to me. One in South Africa in particular that my wife and I agonized over, a bird-in-the-hand kind of thing. But I couldn't pass up the opportunity to go for the Oslo job.

At the time there was no ambassador in Oslo because it was at the end of the Bush administration and the beginning of the Obama one. So, the decision was up to the assistant secretary, who was Dan Fried. I didn't know Dan; I'd never met Dan Fried and in fact, I never did meet him until much later. He interviewed me on the phone, and he pressed me on whether I'd had any "war service", you know Iraq/Afghanistan kind of stuff. I said, "Well, no I haven't but I've done a lot of differential; I've had five straight years of 15 percent differential." I guess that was reasonably effective in keeping me competitive. We had a good chat. Then he asked me to send him what he called testimonials. This was a very interesting request. What it meant to me, was firing off every artillery shell that I had. You can only do that once in your whole career, but I reached out to every senior person I had ever worked for, and I had quite a few contacts like Al Larson, Marc Grossman, Shaun Donnelly. All these people, I asked them to put in

a good word for me. They all knew Dan Fried, he was very well known in that generation of officers. Shaun even told me later that he and Dan Fried didn't get along very well, but he put in a word for me anyway and Dan was a professional so he put his feelings for Shaun aside. I got a call in mid-December saying I got the job. I was thrilled, that was great.

One of the cool things about getting Oslo from Jamaica is you get a once-in-a-lifetime benefit of the clothing allowance! This is something that means nothing to somebody who is not a State Department Foreign Service Officer, but I mean most people never sniff at something like that. In fact, I think in nominal terms it hasn't changed since like the 1970s, it's still $1,000 or so, but it's just the fact of getting it!

Q: One of those rare, unusual benefits that you have to blow the dust off of the old manual to find the citation.

HEG: But it turned out to be very valuable. That was the nadir of the recession of 2008. I went to visit my father in Seattle in winter 2008-09 with that $1,000 in my pocket and I went to places like REI and got all the Smartwool stuff. People were discounting on top of discounts on top of discounts, just trying to stay alive. So, I got probably twice as much winter clothing as I could have gotten at any other time, with that allowance.

Q: Was it a language-designated tour?

HEG: No, it wasn't. That turned out to be okay. Norwegians speak exceptionally good English; I'd say at least 4/4. When I was there, up to about age 60. My wife and I went on a Baltic cruise and there were a lot of elderly Norwegians; most of them didn't speak much English at all, so we had a lonely time at the dinner table. We were surprised, we were used to Norwegians all speaking perfect English, but there was a generational divide.

I depended on having Norwegian-speaking officers on my staff. It was very important, particularly in political and consular and public affairs, to have people who understood Norwegian. There were things I couldn't do. I couldn't go to public meetings and understand discussions, but that was okay, those are usually boring. If they were held with the diplomatic corps, they were always conducted in English, because English was the common language of the diplomatic corps in Norway. It was an easy life from that point of view. I did try to take a few Norwegian lessons, but they just didn't pay off.

Q: Frequently a DCM unless you have unbelievable levels of energy doesn't have time for that.

HEG: No, I was fully occupied with regular work.

Why was I so interested in Oslo? Several reasons. One was I have Norwegian heritage. My great-great-grandfather was a Norwegian immigrant to the United States. He was a colonel in the American Civil War, led a Scandinavian regiment, and was killed at the

battle of Chickamauga, when my great-grandfather was only two years old. He was within that Norwegian-American world a hero, and there is a statue of him in front of the state capitol in Madison, Wisconsin. I had visited Norway from London. My dad paid for us to go there as a wedding present. I'd been there before and met some people in the ancestral village and all of that. But it just seemed like a really cool thing to go back there.

Also, I'd been a DCM in WHA and I was interested in book-ending that with a DCM position in EUR, my other bureau. I always thought a post like Oslo was just right. You could never be ambassador there; it was always going to be a political appointee. So. a DCM position in a country like that, an important NATO ally, was like the highest career aspiration you could have. It was like Turkey, on the flank of Russia. The no-language thing was appealing to me because when you get up to that age… I'd been in 30 years at that point, it's really hard to learn languages after a while.

Geographically, it's a fascinating country. It's huge in terms of the length of the coastline and the amount of sea area it controls. The sea area is like seven times the land area. If you spin it around, the top of Norway hits Sicily. It's a large country geographically even though the population isn't that much bigger than Jamaica, I think Jamaica's about 3,500,000 and Norway maybe 5,500,000. Like Jamaica, it's a country where everybody at the elite level knows everybody else, very incestuous, kind of parochial. The Norwegians are very sanctimonious in many ways, very proud of themselves, very moralistic. They always engage in peace activities like the Oslo process, this and that and the other.

I wrangled back and forth with EUR about when I was going to arrive. I told you I attended the graduations of my daughter and my son in May, my son from the Naval Academy, my daughter from Rice University. Well, my step-son David was about to graduate from Sandhurst in England as an officer in the British army; that was early August. I was requesting that I arrive in Oslo after that. But they said no, it's already vacant, they'd already let the DCM and the ambassador go. Unlike my ambassador in Jamaica, the ambassador in Norway had been allowed to stay until the end of the school year, he had kids in school, so he had one of the few excuses they allowed. He and the DCM had left by early July. So, they told me to come in mid-July, then they let me go to England for the commissioning, which was a fantastic event.

When I arrived, the public affairs officer was acting as chargé briefly, and she turned the letter over to me and I was then CDA. The ambassador had been named, Barry White, who was a lawyer from Boston who had been one of the early contributors to the Obama campaign. He was a very smart man and he and I got along very well. But he wasn't yet confirmed by the Senate when I arrived, so I was chargé. I had to deal with a number of things initially on my own. Of course, I had just finished a five-month stint as chargé in Kingston, so I had my sea-legs.

Q: Remind me, what year did you arrive as DCM in Oslo?

HEG: This was July, 2009. One of the first things I had to deal with was an official visit

by U.S. NATO ambassador Ivo Daalder, who was a policy wonk, very energetic guy. He had an intense series of meetings with all kinds of people in Norway. It was a great way to introduce myself around town, to accompany him to all these meetings and get to know senior people in the defense, security, and diplomatic levels which were very relevant to everything I would do on the policy side.

Soon after that, there was a group of congressional staffers from the House and Senate who had been invited by the Norwegian government to go on a trip to northern Norway. There was one seat for the embassy, and with encouragement from the political section I took that seat. I figured, if I didn't do this trip now, when the ambassador arrived, I might not ever be able to do it. This was my window, so I did it. It was a fantastic trip. We went to Bodø, which is kind of the northern place where Norway's air force is based, and Tromsø which is a town even farther north. I think it's the most populous city north of the Arctic Circle in the world. All kinds of scientific research goes on there and also a lot of skiing. Then Kirkenes which is right on the border with Russia. We had a meeting with the Norwegian border police and soldiers who patrol the border there.

Q: This is an interesting moment. What does the northern border between Norway and Russia look like? Is it barbed wire and heavily guarded? Or not quite so, given how far north it is and what it takes to maintain people up there.

HEG: I think during the Cold War it had been fortified like that, but by the time I was there it was not. It was a bleak, snowy plain. There's only one road that goes there. I didn't actually go to the physical border on this trip, but I did on a later trip. There are just some striped poles and you can step across. I had my picture taken standing on the border (on the second trip).

Wrapping up the visit to Kirkenes, the Norwegians took us out crabbing in a fjord, where we caught and then feasted on enormous king crabs, which actually came from Russia. I remember the pace of this trip was tremendous, and I remember feeling very tired at this point.

Then we went to Svalbard which is this interesting archipelago way north of Norway. It's Norwegian sovereignty but governed by an international treaty that gives mining and other rights to international interests. The Soviets set up two big mining operations there during the Cold War, mostly for strategic rather than practical economic reasons. After the fall of the Soviet Union, they both closed their doors because they just weren't making any money, they were there to be a counterclaim to Oslo's sovereignty, to have a Soviet presence. Up in Svalbard, we saw very interesting things. By the way, when we were up there it was daylight 24 hours a day. A shocking thing. This was in August, we arrived at 2:00 AM and it was blazing sunlight. The locals there hate summer because their children will never go to bed.

They have a seed bank up there that you may have seen in the news in the last year or two because there was some sort of flooding that they were afraid was damaging it (it wasn't). We toured that. They have a satellite tracking station which we also toured. They have a

polar university where a lot of research is done. Though we didn't see one, they have a lot of polar bears there. We took a research vessel up to Pyramiden which was one of the abandoned Soviet towns. We toured that and our guide had a shotgun with him because you can't go anywhere without a shotgun to protect you from the bears. We didn't see any but we definitely had the sense they were in the vicinity. Pyramiden was interesting because they had statues of Lenin and red stars; it really is a time capsule out of the Soviet era. It's a ghost town, too. I understand that the Russian government has sent a few people back there to try to claim it's still an ongoing thing, but I don't think it is.

That was a great trip. I got to know the geographic extent of Norway in the north through that.

Coming back to Oslo, in September of that year we had national elections, always an important thing for an embassy to cover. Norway's a heavily democratic country, it has four or five political parties. The level of consensus is very high so the difference among these parties is much smaller than what we get in the U.S. Nothing like the Democrat-Republican polarization – particularly now. In the U.S. it was polarized then; it's much more polarized now. The differences and nuances between these parties were very small Going into the elections the so-called Red-Green coalition, the socialists and an ecological party, was controlling parliament. During the elections they lost the popular vote but retained power because of the distribution of seats, so it was sort of like "Oh, well Trump lost the popular vote but he still won the election." The rules of the election are the rules of the election. The prime minister was and remained Stoltenberg, who is currently the secretary-general of NATO. He's quite an accomplished guy, a humorless, very dignified gentleman, conveys a certain amount of gravitas.

Another issue I had to deal with soon after arriving and during the period of national elections: the Obama administration announced its new policy on missile defense. You may recall, that was quite controversial because some people said we were pulling out of Poland and this and that. I don't remember the particulars but what I do remember is the roll-out of this was botched in Washington because by the time we got the demarche and delivered it to the Norwegian defense and foreign affairs ministries, it was already in the press. This is highly embarrassing, when you're overseas and something like that happens to a NATO ally, but what are you gonna do?

Another issue soon after I arrived was the Middle East peace process. The U.S. relationship with Norway had been fairly strained under the George W. Bush administration and the Middle East was one of the issues that was dividing us. Norway had strained relations with Israel as well, particularly after the Gaza conflict in the winter of 2008-09; I guess there were civilian deaths in Gaza that year. There had been major demonstrations in Oslo against Israel in that winter which turned violent, unusual for Norway, and which had to some observers heavily anti-Semitic overtones. I think some of the immigrant population had been involved.

Q: Quick second – immigrants in Norway were from Muslim countries, I imagine?

HEG: Yes, from Afghanistan, Iraq, countries like that. It was a small minority but growing rapidly. Not as fast as in Sweden but a similar kind of growth, and a similar lack of true assimilation. The Norwegians had a basic skepticism towards Israel anyway, they felt they were occupying Arab land and preventing the Oslo process from going forward. So, we had to urge the Norwegian government to support our efforts to re-start the peace process in the face of their skepticism. But because they were favorably inclined towards Obama, they did listen to us. They went along with it a little bit.

We had issues with Iran. We had a policy of engagement plus pressure, and had to get other allies including Norway involved. We had the F-35 joint strike fighter where Norway had committed to buying a certain number of them, but we needed to keep them in the queue because the cost of the fighter overall depended on how many the allies would buy. The cost overruns on this aircraft were terrific.

We had policy differences over cluster munitions, which Norway wanted to ban altogether, worldwide. We didn't want a complete ban. Not sure but I think it had something to do with our defense plans in Korea; we didn't want to tie our hands there. Anyway, we had to push back against their efforts to ban cluster munitions.

Q: It's an interesting point about the exception for Korea, because the same exception existed when we refused to join the agreement on anti-personnel landmines. In essence, the U.S. no longer uses anti-personnel landmines and in fact in a lot of countries works to remove them; the exception is the Korean peninsula.

HEG: Yeah, I may be conflating the two but that was my recollection of one of the reasons we didn't want a complete ban. One can imagine it also may have had something to do with Israel but I'm not sure.

Of course, there were always issues with the northern flank of NATO. Norway felt NATO never paid enough attention to its northern flank. Compared to the Cold War, the U.S. was not nearly as present up there either, so the Norwegians felt they were alone holding the bag. We had to hold their hand on some of that. The British defense draw-downs weren't helping. I think during that period they retired the Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft so the allied presence in the sea and air just wasn't there as it had been before and the Russians were starting to become more aggressive; they were starting to fly their bombers down along the Norwegian coast, their "Bear" bombers, so the Norwegians would always have to intercept them with their F-16s.

Getting back to my job as chargé, I was coordinating with Ambassador-Designate White beginning when I met with him in June, while he was in the ambassador course and I was in consultations. My wife and I had lunch with Barry and Eleanor at Main State, and we got along well; that was a good start. Then he had been nominated to be ambassador and we needed to get *agrément* (official host government acceptance of an incoming ambassador) before we could schedule a hearing in the Senate. But we were told by the Norwegian government that we could not get *agrément* until the King of Norway's vacation ended on August 7th. That just about coincided with the end of the congressional

term; they were about to go on recess. There was like a 48-hour window between when the King got back from vacation and when Congress went on recess. So, we had to work with protocol in the palace and protocol at State and everybody on the Hill to choreograph this thing, to do a hand-off because if we couldn't get *agrément* and post it before they went on recess, Barry White's position in the hearing queue would be way off into the distance. We managed to pull it off. We managed to get the King to do that first, jump the queue on the *agrément* request. Then we got the news back to State and they got it to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee immediately, got Barry into the queue right before they went on recess. He was able to have his hearing in September and he was very pleased with that, and so were we.

So, we started creating 30-, 60-, and 90-day plans for when Ambassador White would arrive. There's a huge amount of work getting ready for a new ambassador. Janet and I had to work with the residence staff at Villa Otium, which is this enormous residence in Oslo, to get everything ready. Since the previous occupant had had a bunch of little kids, there were a lot of modifications we had to do, changing things out, fixing things.

If that weren't enough, on October 9th, when I was still chargé, it was announced Obama would receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Now, this had never crossed my mind and most of the rest of us hadn't even considered this to be a possibility. In fact, the morning of the announcement, a few hours before we learned of it, we had a discussion at our morning press meeting and the PAO (public affairs officer) said she'd picked up this rumor. We discussed what rational basis this could have. We couldn't figure it out – President Obama had just become president; he didn't have what one would call a track record of accomplishments, so we couldn't understand how this could be true. And yet, it turned out to be true. So, we were shocked. I was due to attend the opening of the Storting, which is their parliament, that day as chargé, a very solemn event. I think it was the only time I arrived in a vehicle flying the American flag while I was chargé. Before I went, I had to go to the palace grounds across the street from the embassy and do some press interviews; the Norwegian press wanted a comment. The PAO forced me to do it; I didn't have anything to say. So, I mumbled some stuff about this being a great honor and a surprise. We had no guidance. In fact, the President wasn't even awake. We had to react to it before Washington even knew about it. So, I managed to mumble enough stuff to get through it without embarrassing ourselves.

Then after I got back from parliament, we did a conference call with Ambassador-Designate White and his comment was "Holy shit!" He was the incoming ambassador, right, and didn't know when he was going to get there but soon after his arrival the President was going to land on him. Even though he hadn't worked in our business, he knew enough to know that that was going to be a huge thing.

Q: Be sure you've got that black tie and tails.

HEG: This led to very intense daily conference calls with key members of the country team, coordination with the White House, and we had pre-advance and advance teams. It was a complicated situation because it wasn't just a bilateral thing. Normally you have

the host government and the White House, but here we had the government of Norway, the Nobel Committee, and the White House. The Nobel Committee is part of the Norwegian establishment, but it doesn't consider itself subordinate to the government of Norway; it considers that it controls the Nobel process, et cetera. In the face of this, we had to confront White House reluctance to do traditional events that Nobel Peace Prize winners always did. The White House was very parsimonious with President Obama's time. Nobel Peace Prize winners always attend a lunch with the King. You'd think they'd say "we gotta do that"; well, no, they weren't going to do that. Yeah, I know. They weren't gonna do it. Press interviews – they weren't going to do them. Everybody wants to interview the Nobel Prize winner; forget it.

The other complication was the temporal proximity to the Copenhagen climate summit, which ran from December the 7th to the 18th. The Nobel Prize was on the 10th. We knew the date of the prize, but nobody knew what President Obama was going to decide to do about the Copenhagen summit. There was always a risk it would either interfere with the 10th or that somebody would decide that's too many trips too soon within the same area, so something would have to go. That was a source of anxiety, plus it pulled resources that we might have drawn on from other posts that we couldn't, because everybody was being sucked into Copenhagen. As you may remember, Obama ended up going to Copenhagen after Oslo, he went toward the end in an effort to try to rescue the failed negotiations. I think they pulled out some sort of statement that was agreed to but it was far less than what had been originally sought.

So, Ambassador White was able to arrive on October 29th, which left him about five weeks before the president's visit. He arrived on a beautiful sunny day and I took a number of members of the Country Team out to the airport to meet him and his wife Eleanor. That was the last sunny day we had for several months. One of my concerns was not only how to get the Ambassador up to speed, but also to make sure he had a role in the whole Nobel Prize ceremony and things like that. We seemed to have gotten him into enough stuff.

Q: Was it considered by either side that the ambassador was here, he step in for the president in the lunch with the King?

HEG: I don't recall that. It's all a blur. All I remember is the president didn't want to do it and we had to deliver a very negative message on that. They probably canceled the lunch. We had to fight to get a meet and greet for President Obama with Embassy staff; we got some pushback on that but they eventually did the meet and greet which was very gratifying to us. Obama was very popular among the embassy staff and people were happy to meet him and Michelle. Michelle was very gracious.

Right after the ceremony, that same afternoon, my wife and I flew to Seattle for my father's 90th birthday. Soon as these guys were on their way out the door, I was out the door, flying Icelandic Airlines over the pole basically.

The president's visit, looking back on it I believe there were two reasons they gave him the Nobel Peace Prize. One was he wasn't George W. Bush; they really didn't like President Bush, the Norwegian establishment, so just not having him as president made them giddy with happiness. I think later on they probably learned he was just a human being like everybody else. The other thing is I think they saw that as the one way they could ensure President Obama would come to Norway. This is a theory on my part; you give somebody the Nobel Prize, it's very hard for them to reject it out of hand and not even come. In fact, he gave a super excellent speech, one of the best I've ever heard him give, paradoxically on the need for the use of force occasionally in international affairs. Instead of being seen as a Gandhi type who was just going to lay down all the weapons, he had to convince his audience that yes, I'm a peaceful guy but sometimes you have to use force. This was the same time period where he rolled out the new Afghan surge strategy. If you go back and read Bob Woodward, the intense debates going on about the Afghan war policy all through the first year of Obama's term culminated at that time.

The president's visit helped strengthen the Norwegian-American relationship enormously, after the years of the George W. Bush Administration when they just hadn't been very close.

In January, we had this big conference in Oslo, a seminar on the NATO Strategic Concept. It included not only NATO countries but the major neutrals; Austria and Sweden and Finland. It was interesting for me because I knew some of the European diplomats who were coming to this, from jobs I'd had before. I suggested to the ambassador he host a reception concluding the conference; he agreed. That was a big hit with everybody. He had a wonderful residence and it was a way of showing a certain amount of leadership in the Western alliance, just made everybody really happy.

Madeleine Albright came to this. She was no longer secretary of state but I was the one that greeted her on her arrival because the ambassador was coming back from a trip and arriving late. I had dealt with Albright before when she was secretary and I was attending meetings with her with the Argentine and Brazilian foreign ministers in New York. I found her to be so much more relaxed and open and friendly when she wasn't secretary any more. She was like a different person, gregarious, open, happy. The weight of the office was off of her and she was a delight to be around.

During this period in early 2010 we started getting some counter-terrorism issues. We had Islamic radical-related threats in Norway. We had some U.S. Marine exercises in northern Norway called Cold Response, which had been suspended since 2005. I guess an indication of the coldness of our relationship with Norway that these hadn't happened. I think they're still going on now. The resumption of Cold Response was taken by both sides as a signal of a closer relationship.

During this time, after the President's visit, Ambassador White and I sorted out our priorities and we got along very well. He focused on outreach, energy issues (dealing with petroleum companies and other business), and minority affairs, religious minorities in particular. The ambassador was of the Jewish faith but was interested in reaching out to

all religious minorities and did a number of events, "*iftar*" (meal in Ramadan breaking the fast) dinners, inter-faith dinners, trying to get the squabbling elements of the Oslo Jewish community to talk to each other, Protestants and Catholics. He would have events with clergy from all over the place. Nobody else in Norway was doing anything like that. Norwegians are not naturally outgoing, friendly people and they don't try to get other people together like this, this is a very American kind of thing. It was a unique role he played at Villa Otium.

I focused on policy, and I was happy because compared to Jamaica, Norway was a rich policy environment. Norway is small but they were involved in every policy issue around the world. They had resources, diplomatic clout, they were smart and engaged. Just about everything that was happening in the world, we dealt with. It was very interesting for me. And of course, internal embassy management, there was quite a bit of work being DCM. I had some issues to deal with, particularly the first year, with the management section. We had poor ICASS (international cooperative administrative support services) scores when I came in, I put a lot of effort into improving them.

Q: ICASS is the overall management of the embassy including other agencies besides State.

HEG: That's right. There's an annual survey of customer satisfaction for all kinds of different services that the embassy provides. Those scores are compared with a region and around the world, and we were below average both within our region and around the world. We got those up so the situation was reversed during my tour; that was good. We had a quality of life council come up with different things just to brighten things up. "What bugs you?" and people would say the cafeteria, whatever – just have a way of listening to people.

I mentioned earlier that we had some CT (counter-terrorism) threats. During this period there was a disruption of a plot by three Al Qaeda would-be terrorists in Oslo. This required a certain amount of effort on our part to energize the Norwegian security people because they were on their back foot, "It can't happen here" kind of thing. They were starting to get the idea they weren't immune because in Denmark I think they'd already seen what was going on down there with the Mohamed cartoons, they were having some serious threats in Denmark. Denmark is very close to Norway; the Norwegian language is basically a branch of Danish; they were ruled for 400 years by Denmark so it's not like the other side of the world. But still, there was inertia. I worked with our security people on this stuff. We started seeing the need for more regional cooperation, both with our own embassies in Nordic countries and also to try to get the Nordic countries to work closer together. We worked, we got EUR and S/CT (Bureau of Counter-terrorism) to agree that we could host a regional CT conference in September 2010. We had people from the Nordic embassies come to Oslo and we had conferences and some meetings with Norwegian officials, tried to get people sensitized to the idea of regional cooperation.

Another thing I had to deal with in Norway that I had already been dealing with from the other end of the telescope in Jamaica was the new embassy project. In Kingston, I arrived

four or five months before we moved into a new embassy. Here, we were still trying to get the permits for a new embassy. We had a site purchased and picked out, but there had been and continued to be serious issues with the neighborhood and the city. The neighbors did not want the embassy to be there because they thought it would attract terrorists, people would go there trying to kill us and unable to kill us, would kill them. This is some of the blow-back from our post-9/11 heightened security concerns, it blew back on our ability to build this new, safer embassy. The original embassy was in an excellent location right across from the palace and in walking distance to the foreign ministry, a super place. It just didn't have the set-back. Like in London, I was happy to be in the older location rather than the new one, because we had just a great ease of getting around. You didn't need to get a car or train to go anywhere, you could just walk down to the foreign ministry. As long as you get there by 4:30 because after that, nobody would be there. (Laughter) Norway's a very advanced country but they don't work very hard. State Department people are there till 8:00 at night, well forget about it in Norway, you had to make a special effort to get a hold of somebody in late afternoon.

We had to push to get a frame permit for the new embassy. We had to deal with the city and the foreign ministry, and we finally secured funding from OBO for a $240 million project.

Moving into the fall of 2010, we had what I've always thought of as the "twin crises." The first that exploded in our face was over our Surveillance Detection Unit (SDU). In the wake of the embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, I think our after-action reporting had determined that those embassies had been surveilled at length before those attacks. So, we determined as part of our effort to protect our embassies, we would set up units, usually of nationals of the country, to patrol the general vicinity of our embassy to see if other people were trying to surveil our embassy. Now, Norway had a paranoia about spy scandals. There had been some major spy scandal in the middle of that decade and I can't remember any details, but it created a huge frenzy in the country. So, there was a tendency to fly off the handle at any sort of spy scandal. Some Norwegian newspaper reporter had been sniffing around and started noticing; somehow, he picked up on the idea that this unit existed, he didn't understand what it was about, but he started following some of our people. The RSO was -

Q: To be clear, the surveillance unit is an American group that operates with the permission of the Norwegian government.

HEG: That's right. Though some of those permissions are informal, as I learned. The RSO was told that there was this guy sniffing around. I told him to deal with it. I didn't get the impression it was a major deal. Then all of a sudden, a story broke in the newspaper about this unit we had that was surveilling Norway. The name "surveillance" meant that we were conducting surveillance on Norwegian soil against Norwegians. It created a tempest in a teapot, a huge media firestorm if you can consider such in a country like Norway; they were obsessed with it for a while. We tried to explain we weren't surveilling anybody, we were trying to find out if people were surveilling us. But you know how hard it is to explain something like that. If you have to explain it, you're

already on your back foot. We had permission from the Norwegian government but it turned out it was a semi-informal relationship that had been established between RSO and elements of the Oslo and federal police. It wasn't a signed MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the foreign ministry. So, we were able to get some indications of an understanding, but the foreign ministry was able to claim they didn't know anything about it and we were doing things without their permission. So, while Barry was away, I got hauled on the carpet and this pompous Norwegian leaked that to the press and made himself into some sort of hero. We gradually tamped it down. I went and gave a scripted deposition to the Norwegian police who were tasked with investigating this. It was one of these things where I would give a testimony, they could ask any questions they want but I wasn't necessarily going to deliver any more than what I did. It was like seven or eight pages of prepared text. Everybody thought I was brave for going and doing this but it was easy; we had a well-prepared statement. I presented it orally to the Norwegians and it seemed that, after I did that, things seemed to go back into the toothpaste tube.

But while this was still happening, the WikiLeaks came out. A huge number of diplomatic cables were dumped on the market. Many of the early cables we had written in Oslo were published in Norwegian newspapers. But I guess dealing with Washington was the most difficult thing because we were tasked with tracking every single mention of this stuff in the press and collating it against stuff we had written. So, we had several officers spend all their time on that, and we didn't have that many officers, it wasn't a big embassy. Two things I remember. One, we got complimented by the people in the foreign ministry for how well we wrote (laughter). They were really surprised at the balance, sophistication, and quality of our writing. I guess they thought we were a bunch of rubes or something. But the other thing, the scope paper we wrote for the president's visit, it was extremely laudatory about Norway. There was one little nugget in there about sometimes they were off the reservation about the Middle East policy, something like that. Stoltenberg took umbrage at that and complained to the ambassador! This is the Norwegian mentality; you go for that one little thing. This was a complete whitewash of Norway except this one little element, and they glommed on to that. "You don't like us, do you?"

One of the things about Norway that was unique is just how expensive it is. It's extremely expensive. We made do with -

Q: Let me ask, because of the expense, did you have a consumables shipment?

HEG: No consumables shipment but we had periodic shipments from Ramstein; you could order things in advance. You couldn't go to Ramstein and shop there, but they would deliver things. There was this place in Copenhagen called Peter Justesen I think, where you could order liquor and wine at duty-free prices. This stuff would also be delivered in the embassy and you could pick it up. We entertained but only in our residences. I had people over for lunch for discussions but I could never take people out to restaurants. The Norwegians would take us out to restaurants, though. They must have run up fabulously large bills. Norwegian restaurants were excellent but you couldn't afford to eat in them. A hamburger and a beer would cost you $50.

It was a wonderful country to travel in; I got personal and official travel. One time the commandant of the Marine Corps came and I flew in his Jetstream to Trondheim where we toured the caves where we have Marine prepositioned equipment. That started in the Cold War, and Norway was so anxious to have us keep doing that, that they paid for it. It's like a physical manifestation of our commitment to Norway. Kind of like how the Poles wanted to have our missiles there, Norway wants to have our prepositioned equipment there as a tangible link to U.S. security guarantees.

As I mentioned, I made another trip to the Russian border. This was the Arctic Ambassadors, a little group that met periodically of countries that had Arctic interests, members of the Arctic Council – which interestingly doesn't include Iceland because Iceland for all its fame as a cold country is all below the Arctic Circle. They may be an honorary member. We made a trip up to Kirkenes and this time we went to the border and had our pictures taken. Ambassador White was out of the country at that time so I went as chargé.

Personal travel was wonderful. We did a cruise on the Hurtigruten which is this mail steamer that goes all the way up the coast. I went to Kirkenes a third time on that, as well as places in between. Took a trip to the Lofoten Islands in the northern part of Norway over Labor Day weekend one year, one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen, entirely above the Arctic Circle. And many other beautiful places in Norway, it's a great country when the weather isn't too bad. But the winters are interminable. You can get snow in October and sometimes it doesn't melt until May. Norwegians have this saying that there are two seasons in Norway; green winter and white winter. In Western Europe, many people take off all of August. In Norway, they take off all of July because August is already a fall month, starting to rain and get cold.

Moving into the last year, one of the things we were dealing with in 2011-12 was the Iraq tax. We were sending so many officers to Iraq and Afghanistan, that meant there weren't enough mid-level officers to fill available positions. So, we were filling mid-level reporting positions in political in particular with ELOs. When you have only three or four officers in a section, that's an enormous degradation of your capability because you need everybody firing on all cylinders. Especially in a country like Norway, where we were involved in just about every demarche on any subject around the world, even though it's a small country and a small embassy we were deluged with demarche work. Nobody ever thought "Norway's got too much work so we're not going to send them this demarche." It was, "Oh we've got to get the Norwegians involved, they've got money and are involved."

So, we had to work hard to get these people up to speed really fast. It caused some strain in the political section, our political counselor was under a certain amount of strain in that period. It was rough.

Then the Libya crisis came up in spring 2011. We were successful in persuading Norway to deploy, I think, six F-16s out of Crete. We were getting a lot of small contributions

from allies in this operation. A few months after they started there was some domestic politics going on that caused the government to wobble on its commitment and we had to intervene heavily to steady them. They decided to continue their commitment. This required close cooperation between the DAO (defense attaché's office), the political section, and the front office.

Another challenge in the last year was the visa waiver program. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) decided that Norway was a poster child for laggards in Europe in terms of signing information-sharing agreements that were required under the visa waiver program. I think there were two of them in particular, HSPD-6 (homeland security presidential directive) and PCSC (preventing and combating serious crime). Now, don't ask me what those stood for exactly, but they were requisite agreements that had not yet been signed. DHS was actively threatening to revoke Norway's visa-waiver status if they did not sign these agreements. The Norwegians had been dragging their feet on this because the people in Norway in charge of these issues, the security agencies, didn't care about the visa waiver program. This wasn't part of their equity. It was important to the business community and the foreign ministry. We had to figure out a way to take this to the people who cared about it so they could put pressure on the security agencies; that's what we ended up doing. We had to break a little bit of crockery and we had Ambassador White raise this at a very high level. They were taken aback and they got annoyed with us for pushing on some weird issue they'd never heard of, but at the end they were able to persuade the security agencies to engage in these agreements.

Also, Stoltenberg wanted to go to Washington; he was invited to visit the White House in October 2011 and we used that visit, the quest for deliverables, as a lever to try to get them to sign. We got at least one of the two agreements signed out of that. The ambassador was away so I signed for the United States; that was pretty cool. The other agreement was signed a few months later. I only found out much later when I got to France three years afterwards that there were other, larger European countries that were even more laggard than Norway, but I guess because of their size they were not being threatened with the revocation of their visa waiver status. That really annoyed me. The people at State on the desk were not backing us up on this. They were just standing aside saying, "Well you guys have to fix this because otherwise they'll take away your visa waiver." That was unthinkable for a close NATO ally like Norway. We had a close security relationship, they were a NATO flank, very friendly. To take away their visa waiver would have been unimaginable. Plus, we couldn't have handled the work. We had no ability to ramp up our consular operation to do visas, but nobody ever thought about that.

Summer of 2011, you probably remember the name of Anders Behring Breivik. July 22nd, he went on to the island of Utøya and massacred a whole bunch of young Socialists political cadre, young people.

Q: This was their youth meeting.

HEG: Right, of the Socialist Party, I think. It was Stoltenberg's party. It was a huge crisis for Norway. I was on leave when this happened, so our political counselor was the acting DCM. The embassy was always heavily engaged and actively monitoring, offering support, but there wasn't much we could do, particularly once they figured out there was no Middle-East connection. The initial reaction was this is a Middle-Eastern terrorist act. But it rapidly became clear it wasn't. All I could do is wring my hands from the U.S. but there wasn't anything the embassy could do either. They were busily wringing their hands, too.

Q: It was criminal activity, the Norwegian criminal justice system had to deal with it.

HEG: Exactly. But the U.S. never accepts that so people from Washington were pushing to do something, what about this or that? The amount of work was still huge.

A couple of months later I attended a conference in Stockholm on countering violent extremism, this new pro-active program to try to get into immigrant neighborhoods in Europe and work with local authorities to keep people from being radicalized. This was a semi-sensitive thing around Europe, because we were trying to engage in outreach in areas where a lot of these countries were not engaging themselves. It could be seen as an interference in their domestic affairs. I think it was just getting off the ground at this time so I don't know what the ultimate evolution of this program was, but we were worried about making too many commitments. There was a great deal of zeal coming out of Washington when it was first launched, we had to caution people about it.

Another crisis about the new embassy. We'd already been dealing with the city and federal government, and now the county of Oslo threatened to revoke our frame permit after we'd already awarded the contract for building the embassy. This required more interventions and we finally got that cleared up. We broke ground on the new embassy the day before I left post in May of 2012. Which sounds great, and it was an accomplishment, but it took five years before the embassy opened in May 2017. I'm glad I didn't have to agonize through all those years.

Q: A quick aside; the terrible thing about slow-building buildings is that as time goes by, you find you need to make changes because the situation's changed. For example, in Norway, they may have had a complete telecom revolution and now your wiring is no longer good enough for the level of telecom that Norway is going to offer, and so on.

HEG: I'm almost done here but the DCM residence in Oslo is a magnificent building. We bought it in 1947 for $40,000. It's a beautiful example of Scandinavian early modernism. It's distantly related to the Bauhaus type movement in Germany. Fantastic house. It was a listed property so we could only make modifications in consultation with the city. My wife and I enjoyed it immensely, it was tremendously gratifying to live in a house like that. We had a view of the Oslo fjord and could watch cruise ships. The fireworks at New Year, it was just tremendous.

Toward the end of the tour, we had a visit by relatives of somebody who had been DCM in the 1950s; I think they had lived there as children. They came and visited us and told us about the history of the house. Apparently in World War II it had been occupied by German officers. I also heard stories; the foreign ministry building had been used as Gestapo headquarters. They talked about how the Gestapo would ride their horses right up the steps into the building. Amazing stuff.

The last issue leads into my next session; this was dealing with Afghanistan. Discussions with NATO and Norway became more and more fraught toward 2011 and 2012 as our draw-down of the surge approached. Our troop commitment was about to peak and then come back down. I don't know if you remember, President Obama announced he would start drawing down troops in September of 2012 which was seen as political because of the elections in November 2012. That created a certain amount of controversy. That was earlier than allies thought we would do it. There was concern in Norway and other countries that we were going to pull out enablers they depended on, for air support, medical and other logistics support. Norway had 500 troops in Farah province which is in the west of Afghanistan. It's fairly isolated. They needed a lot of hand-holding. We had visits first by the deputy NATO rep to Afghanistan, Mark Jacobson. I went with him on a number of meetings. Then SRAP (Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan) Marc Grossman, who I'd worked with before in several capacities, he had taken Ambassador Holbrooke's place after Holbrooke died suddenly. I picked him up at the airport and went to meetings with him. This got me more and more engaged in Afghanistan. I'll talk next time how this led me to actually moving to that assignment; Kabul was where I went after Norway.

I should mention in this context and as a wrap-up to Norway that I particularly enjoyed working with the Norwegians on NATO issues. Norway was a small country but had a strategic position and well-thought-out views on alliance issues. Before meetings of NATO Defense or Foreign Ministers, and before Summits, I would take my political-military officer, usually Auden McKernan, to meet with senior officials at the Defense and Foreign Ministries to go over the agendas and report back to Washington.

Q: Today is July 12th, (2018); we are resuming our interview with James Heg as he begins his eventual tour in Kabul. (Recorded in person at ADST.)

HEG: Last time I discussed my tour in Oslo, my second as a DCM. It was the latter part of that tour when I became interested in the possibility of an assignment in Afghanistan. Heretofore, I had never eagerly sought service in one of the war zones; in fact, I had carefully avoided staying off of the fair share list throughout the first decade of this millennium and tried to stay out of the firing line. Particularly because most of that was about Iraq, and I didn't really feel like the embassy in Baghdad was a place I wanted to work. I couldn't figure out what I could accomplish there. Everything I'd heard about it made me not want to do it. But when I was in Oslo, I began – I was doing political-military (pol-mil) work a lot with the Norwegians, NATO stuff, and that was an

area I carved out to work on directly with our pol-mil officer. Our discussions with the Norwegians became a little fraught towards the 2011-12 cycle.

We had more and more visits related to Afghanistan that I was involved in, including those I mentioned earlier with Mark Jacobson and Marc Grossman, who wasn't as upbeat as Mark, but he still got me more interested in the issues. I was trying to figure out what to do after Norway. I originally had my eye on a position as DCM to the U.S. mission to the OECD; I'd worked at the OECD mission previously and had also worked on it from Washington, when it was still governed from EUR. So, I felt really qualified for that, and it would be a different kind of DCM position. But what happened was, the incumbent who was due to rotate in 2012 TICed (Expiration of Time in Class Limit) out in the summer of 2011, so that became vacant off-cycle and I missed my opportunity to bid on it. Then, I spent the last year in Norway trying to figure out a plan B. I wasn't guaranteed to get it, but at least it was something I'd had my eye on for several years.

That searching combined with the new engagement between Norway and the U.S. over Afghanistan led me to start looking into it. Then, the U.S. special forces nailed Osama Bin Laden on May 2, 2011 and this made me feel like maybe we were accomplishing something over there finally, after all these years of frustration. I was feeling a little relieved that this OECD thing hadn't come through, because six years as a DCM is a lot. There's a lot of complicated, draining personnel issues that you have to deal with, a thankless kind of grinding you have to do. You get to do the most fascinating stuff, but it's also the undercurrent, this other stuff, very difficult.

Also, under nepotism rules my wife Janet, a very capable person, was not able to work at either of the two embassies where I was DCM. So that's like six straight years where she was frozen out. She was interested in joining the Foreign Service earlier but that wouldn't work out because we would never be assigned together. So, I was looking at what path I could follow where she could actually engage in employment with the State Department in one form or another. I didn't want to go back to Washington because I figured that would be like I would be "on the beach," as my Navy father used to say. I would never get off until I retired. I didn't have a house in Washington, it's expensive; I remembered well the grueling interagency process. So, I really wanted to stay abroad until I was done. The extra money was very attractive. As I started looking into the incentives there was the possibility of a linked assignment that would get me out of having to bid again; I began to read the cables about Afghanistan assignments, I discussed it with Janet who was surprisingly receptive. She was interested because she could actually work in Kabul; as long as you didn't have children to look after (ours were grown), your wife or husband could accompany you and do an EFM (eligible family member) job. So that was very interesting for her.

Also, I was attracted by the fact that there was a transition in the embassy that year. I guess Ambassador Eikenberry was departing and Ambassador Crocker was coming in. Ambassador Crocker had a wonderful reputation; he was one of the great Foreign Service officers of any generation, and the opportunity to work for him seemed terrific. In

practice, what I understood of morale at the embassy under Eikenberry, it wasn't that great, so the chance to not work under Eikenberry was also attractive.

In May 2011 I indicated interest in a Kabul assignment to the OIP (acronym for the organization at State that administered assignments to war zone countries). I didn't specify which job but there were a couple which I was willing to look at. I thought I would hear back right away because you hear that if you send your name in, you're on the next plane over. But it doesn't work that way. I spent several weeks not hearing anything from anyone; I thought they're not interested, I stick my neck out after all these years, and nothing. But two weeks later I was contacted by an old colleague of mine, Hans Klemm, who was the head of the rule of law – he was actually an ambassador who had been in East Timor, and was then head of the rule of law section in Kabul which also did the drugs. He saw my name around, and he told me they were asked by Washington to do the vetting for the assignments. The people doing this were almost about to leave, because of the one-year assignments, but he offered to be helpful in finding something that was good for me. I told him even though I was an econ officer, the kind of econ work they were doing wasn't up my alley. Mostly dealing with difficult development issues and also almost intractable corruption issues, and I had not spent a lot of time doing econ work in those areas. But on the other hand, I had recent experience doing pol-mil work with the allies in NATO, Norway in particular; I thought that could be useful. He agreed. He also said they were attracted by my executive experience. I late found out why that became so useful, because the structure of the embassy is such that they need as many pinch-hitters as they can get for these higher-level positions.

So, in July 2011 I was assigned as pol-mil counselor, which was only an OC job and I was an MC, but I didn't care because the job was enormous; it had like 25 people in the section. Much larger than a typical State Department office, and it was in a war zone. So, I thought it would be fascinating, and I was right. I never regretted that job, I thought it was the most interesting job in the whole mission. Then I was able to obtain a link to be the economic minister-counselor in Paris as my onward after Kabul.

Q: That was your linked assignment?

HEG: Yes. I had also served at USOECD, done several jobs dealing with the EU and other kinds of economic jobs that were relevant. I had a 3/4 in French, though it was old and I would have to retest. So, I was basically a slam dunk, and I didn't have to compete with anybody. After a few weeks of being vetted by Paris, I got the link. That was it; that was my exit strategy from the entire program because at the end of the Paris assignment, I was done anyway. But that's as much as I wanted to do.

Q: The Paris assignment, was it going to be a full three-year assignment?

HEG: It was a three-year assignment. I was in a position where the expiration of my 14-year OC/MC TIC and my age TIC were exactly coincident. Either way, I was done in the 2016 cycle. In actual fact, I was ready at that point, I didn't aspire to stay on any longer than that. But the beauty of Paris was I could expect that Janet would be able to

work. We were thinking about her reapplying for the Foreign Service, but whether or not she did, she could certainly get employment in one of the missions in Paris; there are three U.S. missions. Maybe not now, I think we pulled out of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). We may still have a mission there even though we're not in, that's kind of a weird thing the U.S. does; it goes to the meetings even when it's not a member.

Q: We pull out officially but retain observer status.

HEG: Anyway, being a DCM I had to finish the EER (employee evaluation report) cycle in Norway, but they wanted me in Kabul no later than July 2. Those assignments take precedence over everything and you have to get there when they tell you. In order to get a reasonable home leave and consultations, I couldn't fit in the two or three weeks of training that are required for Afghanistan or Iraq, the Afghan Familiarization and the "crash and bang," the Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat (FACT) course. So, I worked out that I would do those TDY from Norway in January of that year, then fly back to Oslo to finish my assignment. Then after the EERs were put to bed in May, I would leave and go do consultations and home leave; it worked out that way. So, I took those courses. Crash and bang was a lot of fun. There were things that were relevant and some that turned out not to be relevant. Particularly the driving; we weren't allowed to drive at all in Afghanistan, but it was still great training to have. I think I'm a better driver because of it. The Afghan Familiarization was very useful because I didn't know much about the history of the country. We read some fascinating books and had a lot of speakers that had served there, it was really engaging.

One problem I had getting orders to go to Afghanistan was that I needed my wife to be on my orders. The process of allocating spousal assignments is very slow. So, it wasn't until February of 2012, that is after I'd already had the training, that my wife was designated for an assignment in the public affairs office in Kabul, so I could get orders. Until you get orders, there are lots of other things you can't do. It was kind of nerve-wracking. I had to put pressure, "Look I can't get orders because of this" then they pinged the people working on spousal assignments. There was no problem with my wife, it was just bureaucratic. I never figured out what the slowness was. I'd had my assignment since the previous summer.

So, I did Kabul consultations in DC in late May 2012. It was complicated because the Chicago NATO summit was going on at the same time and a lot of the people I needed to see at DOD, State, and other places were not available. I had to schedule things around the availability of people and wait until certain people got back, because I really needed a thorough briefing on all the issues, a huge number. The first important issue was the proposed bilateral security agreement, which is a status-of-forces agreement. This is what we needed to provide immunity for U.S. troops after 2014, when the total combat role was ostensibly handed over to the Afghans. We were going to keep an extended presence of some sort and we needed an agreement to govern that. This was the issue that led to the pull-out from Iraq in late 2011; we had never been able to get an agreement with the government of Iraq on immunities for our forces. Without those immunities, we couldn't

have forces in the country, because they could be hauled before some tribunal for God knows what.

The second most important issue in consultations was what enablers would be provided to the government of Afghanistan for its forces post-2014. There was a real inter-agency struggle going on. I guess Defense and State were on one side of it, and the NSC on another. The NSC basically wanted to draw a line under our involvement in Afghanistan.

Following these consultations, I had home leave and we spent it in Washington state. We had to come up with the consumables, we had to do air freight and assure nervous relatives. Everybody was like, "What the hell are you doing, going to Afghanistan?" Because the news was all negative. There was a lot of negative news, but it didn't accurately reflect the personal danger you were in as a Foreign Service officer, just more like there's stuff blowing up and people getting killed. It was a kinetic war zone, but we were pretty well bunkered in. I was assigned to an apartment rather than a hooch, on the third floor of a hardened embassy residence building. That made a huge difference in the quality of life. People in a hooch didn't have a kitchen, they had to go to the dining facility. We went to the dining facility, but often we took the food back to the apartment and ate with knives and forks and real plates as opposed to the paper and plastic stuff they had.

All right, so what kind of embassy was this? It was an embassy on steroids. There were five ambassador-level leaders in the embassy. When I arrived there, Ambassador Crocker was the ambassador. The deputy ambassador was Ambassador Cunningham. The assistant chief of mission (ACOM) was my boss, Hugo Llorens, who had been ambassador in Honduras. In charge of counter-drug and rule of law was Steve McFarland, who I had worked with in my second tour in Nicaragua; he was the desk officer for Nicaragua back in the early '80s. The fifth ambassador-level position was CDDEA (Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs), it was all the economic and AID programs. The State econ people plus the USAID people were all under that and it was Bambi Arellano who was an AID officer, I think.

Then in the country there were five regional commands (RCs). There was RC North, East, South, Southwest, and West, and each of those had a Foreign Service officer as head of it working in parallel with military people. The section I was assigned to run was pol-mil (political-military). It doesn't even exist anymore but we had somewhere between 25 and 27 people in it, it was very large. We had 10 FSOs, four of whom were embedded in military commands, so they weren't in the office but they reported to me. We had a military officer assigned to our section, Charlotte Wilson; she worried about things like civilian casualties and exchange programs, she was great. We had an exchange officer from the UK, who worked on demining projects. We had an OMS, and an EFM (eligible family member) secretary who did the Leahy vetting.

Q: Take a second to explain Leahy vetting.

HEG: Leahy vetting is a law where if you're sending foreign security officials to training programs in the U.S., you had to make sure they were not violators of human rights. This was a complicated thing in Afghanistan, particularly because it appeared to our leadership (I never found out the truth to this) that the military was de facto exempt from this, that if they sent people off there was nobody questioning them, but if we sent people, they had to be vetted out the wazoo. Now, I don't know, but we had to do the vetting regardless, we didn't get to quibble about it.

Then we had what we called 3161s which were contract employees. I'd never heard of this before or since, but it was a special contract where you have officer-type people, they're not in a career, they're in a temporary position. But there were many people as I understood later in war zones who'd done these 3161 jobs over and over, to the point where some of them probably shouldn't have stayed over there so long, because there was a growing sense that two or three years at most was as much as any person should ever put themselves through this.

Our section reported to the ACOM (assistant chief of mission), Hugo Llorens, with whom I'd worked before in WHA. He basically was the equivalent of a normal DCM; in other words most State sections – consular, admin, political, pol-mil, those kinds of sections, and RSO security – were all under his direct supervision. The one exception was the economic section, under CDDEA leadership.

Q: A different wire diagram from just about any other embassy.

HEG: Absolutely. This was a very different section that I was asked to lead from any other I'd ever seen before or since. The diversity of people from all these different backgrounds, many of whom are not State Foreign Service officers but from other organizations or capacities. It was a really interesting and rewarding experience, to have all these different people together. They were all in this big bullpen, it was like nobody even had a cubicle, just a bullpen with work stations all the way around and then a big table in the middle for meetings. I had a little closet office in the corner. Even my deputy didn't have a private space; she was just to one side. If she needed to counsel an employee, she would kick me out of my office and ask me to leave for a while so she could do that. I was happy to let her take that on.

What was the policy environment when I was there? We had a lot of actors within the U.S. government all pushing and pulling on Afghan policy. Within State, the people were in SRAP, the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, nominally part of the Bureau of South & Central Asian Affairs (SCA), but in actual fact almost completely autonomous.

Q: To be sure, the Bureau of South & Central Asian Affairs (SCA) was its management or admin support, correct?

HEG: I'm not sure. We had a separate entity called OIP. Maybe it was only for personnel, maybe other things other than personnel were done by SCA but the interface I had was

OIP. They did assignments to any war zone embassy. I guess when I was there it was just Iraq and Afghanistan but later it expanded to other embassies not in south Asia. Iraq was not in SCA anyway, it was in NEA (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs).

SRAP at the time was Marc Grossman; I knew him from several previous assignments. Actually, when I was on Washington consultations in May, I went to one of his staff meetings and piped up that this was my third time working for him, and he thought that was funny. Then we had the Defense Department, a major player, so I spent a fair amount of time in consultations talking with them. Of course, the embassy was a major player, Ambassadors Crocker and Cunningham were vocal and strong advocates for their views in the process. The NSC was a challenging entity to deal with. Many of their people were younger than the rest of us and much more politically minded about what the president wanted, where his comfort zones were. They were often prone to micromanagement, what we called the "5,000-mile screwdriver." I didn't experience this first-hand but I understand they would call up three- and four-star generals and try to tell them what to do.

Q: An aside; you are probably the 15th or 16th person talking about the NSC under President Obama in the same way. In Gates' memoir, just about anybody who dealt with the Obama administration at a high level had the same complaint about the NSC.

HEG: After the assignment in Kabul, I read Gates' memoir and I was nodding "yes" the whole time. Before I went, I read Bob Woodward's book, Obama's Wars, which really in detail went through all the policy back-and-forth about the original surge decision and all of that. That was really essential background, to understand where the White House was coming from. Basically, the Obama presidential campaign held that this was the "just war" and the other (Iraq) was the bad war, but once the administration came into office it really didn't have a plan for what to do. A lot of that was invented after the fact, it wasn't like Obama came in knowing what he wanted to do about Afghanistan. He didn't trust what the military was recommending.

Another actor was the CIA. They were not a policy organization, but they had a big role both on operations and on analysis, so we engaged with them quite a bit both in Washington and in the field.

The situation was basically that in December 2009 Obama had ordered the surge of 30,000 extra troops to go to Kabul. This took place around the time I was in Norway when he came for the Nobel Peace Prize. He actually gave a fairly stern speech about how we need to be willing to stand up for our security interests which was consistent with this decision. The surge withdrawal was to begin in summer of 2011 and I guess it did. So, the context for my assignment was the beginning of the draw-down. While I was getting close to my assignment, the president announced that the completion of the surge withdrawal would take place in September of 2012. That was controversial because the military had wanted to keep the surge in place at least in part until the end of the fighting season. In Afghanistan you have fighting seasons which are basically March or April until the weather closes down in November. That was several months of fighting season

in which we were not having surge forces still in the country. Also, there was a certain political optic to it because the presidential election was November 2012.

There was to be what they called a milestone in June 2013 towards the end of my assignment. I guess there were five milestones and each one involved turning over security responsibility for a different part of the country directly to the Afghans, so they would be in the lead on military decisions. The fifth and final milestone would be June 2013, so that although our forces would still be operating kinetically, they would not be in the military lead in any part of the country after that. Then looking ahead, we had the April 2014 Afghan election which was fraught because we didn't know what Karzai's attitude was going to be. He was a very difficult leader.

Then of course, the end of 2014 had been determined by the NATO summit as the end of coalition combat operations and the transition to a train/advise/assist role for the military. The missing ingredient in that was the enduring presence number, the number of troops that would remain in Afghanistan after the end of 2014. The lack of this number affected a lot of things while I was in Afghanistan. The White House wouldn't tell us how many troops they would allow to remain.

Q: Was there a reason other than they were still chewing on the decision? Did you ever find out why?

HEG: Well, I never got the direct story on it, but my understanding was part of it was the military felt they needed a certain minimum number of troops to have any sort of role other than force protection. One Marine general in Helmand told me one time that below a certain level, you just have "shitters and eaters", you don't have anybody that can do anything. Whereas the White House saw it in much more of a political optic. They wanted to get as close as possible to his vision of ending two wars. This was the mantra; President Obama is going to end two wars. So, there was a lot of tension there. I wasn't always involved in the direct discussions, although the lack of a decision had major impacts on some of our activities.

Conditions at the embassy; constant construction. It was a huge construction site. There were two halves of the embassy; Great Massoud Road cut it in two and then there was a tunnel in between. There was the old chancery which was the original embassy that I guess had been stormed in 1979 when Ambassador Dubs was killed. Then there was a new chancery next door where our office was and the ambassador's office. The old chancery was still used for meetings and that's where the administrative section was. Then there were hardened apartment buildings – everything on the other side was not hardened, so the people in hooches and offices over there, if there was a drill or an attack, they had to get into shelters with sandbags and other barriers. We were in the green zone, checkpoints all over the place. Dogs would sniff every vehicle and several times in several places, Hesco barriers. We were guarded by armed Gurkha troops who marched along the walls, which were covered with concertina wire. Everybody had complete confidence in the Gurkhas, nobody would have had the same confidence in the Afghans. Things that were going on in the country, made you wonder if they were reliable or not.

Unlike Iraq, we still had a van shuttle service to and from the airport though I think later on, that ended and they switched to choppers. We weren't that far from the airport but a few choke points along the road were a little nerve-wracking. During the year between when my assignment was made and I got to Kabul, there were two major attacks on the embassy, one in September 2011 and the other in April 2012 where rockets were fired into the compound. A lot of lessons were learned in that period. I guess the first one caught everybody flat-footed. It took hours to establish accountability, nobody knew where to go. By the time I got there, things were tightened up and you had to get immediately to a safe area and establish accountability to your organization. Fortunately, during my tour, there were no direct attacks on the embassy (which I was grateful for) although there were constant plots and threats. I was in a position to know about a lot of these, so it was interesting to say the least. I was very glad that I was in an apartment as opposed to a hooch; a lot of people weren't. I think a lot of the construction going on was to build more hardened residences for people. I don't know how that turned out because the size of the embassy eventually got shrunk to the point where I don't know if they needed all the construction they were doing. It was like being on a college campus, a combination of a campus and a minimum-security prison and construction site. The prison part was to keep people out rather than keep us in, though we were kept in pretty well.

There were a number of political conditions around our jobs that affected what we did; I'll tick off some of them. The ground lines of communication (GLOC), the logistic lines between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the roads over the Khyber Pass as it were where all of our supplies had to be trucked in – when I first got there, those were closed because there were some incidents in Pakistan which really angered the Pakistanis. I don't know if this was the particular one but I do remember one, an officer shot a couple of Pakistanis in the street in Islamabad and somehow had been let off the hook, so there were these riots and they closed the GLOCs. That led to shortages in our commissaries and our food facilities. That was lifted shortly after I got there, fortunately.

There was constant shelling across the border; the Pakistanis would fire artillery into Afghanistan because there were terrorist groups targeting Pakistan, using Afghanistan as a sanctuary. That was paradoxical because there were Afghan terrorist groups (the Taliban, Haqqani Network, and others) using Pakistan as a sanctuary to attack Afghanistan.

There was a really fraught issue with detainees. The Afghans wanted us to turn over the Taliban prisoners we had, particularly at Bagram, to Afghan control, but the Afghan government had no legal authority to hold prisoners that had not been convicted of some sort of crime. So, we were unwilling to turn them over unless we had assurance that they wouldn't release these people who would then turn around and become a threat to our forces. I didn't work on this issue but at times it threatened to break down everything, so it was an important backdrop to mention.

Another thing we did work on a bit through reporting, a really difficult issue especially in the first half of my tour, was green on blue attacks, or insider attacks, where Afghan police or military would turn their weapons on NATO forces and kill Americans or Europeans. There was finger-pointing back and forth on this and everyone got really spun up. The Afghans would say "Your forces are insensitive; you don't regard our customs as worthy." I'm sure there was some truth to that, the grunts weren't that sensitive and probably didn't trust the Afghans and didn't treat them with respect. There was mutual miscomprehension. On the other hand, I don't think the Afghans were good at vetting their own forces. There was a huge increase in the size of the Afghan military in this period, the idea was by the time we left they were going to have a big, capable, very expensive military, so they were sucking in all these people and probably not checking them out. So, some of this insider attacks stuff was not just people upset because their pride was hurt or whatever, they were people who were actually in there to do that.

There was President Karzai's paranoia about just about everything. At times he would accuse us of instigating Taliban attacks or being allied with the Taliban. It was impossible to get on the same page with him most of the time.

Q: What do you suppose put him in that frame of mind? He'd been in office too long and was just aging, or was there something political about what he was talking about?

HEG: I would draw several strands on this. One is based on my experience in Turkey, the kind of Middle-Eastern/South-Asian mindset; paranoia is kind of built into it. Look at Erdogan now and his paranoia, and the deep state. All this "deep state" stuff comes out of Turkey, right? He'd been our guy from the get-go in the early 2000s when we first went in after 9/11. For a while, we basically ignored what was going on due to the Iraq build-up. Then all of a sudden, we paid a lot of attention to Afghanistan. You remember the 2009 election where Holbrooke was working to have a fair election where Karzai wouldn't just automatically be re-elected. He was forced into a run-off and he was deeply bitter about that. He was a Pashtun, there's a tribalism in Afghanistan way beyond anything – well, we're developing it now, between the left and the right – but this is an ethnic tribalism where his Pashtun identity was maybe stronger than his Afghan identity. We were working with all kinds of groups and maybe he thought that was not necessarily what he wanted to have happen. He was very worried about what happened if he wasn't president any more. There was this image of what had happened to Najibullah, the Soviet-supported leader; he had been able to survive for several years after the Soviets pulled out because they were providing a lot of assistance but a couple of years after the pull-out, they stopped the assistance and he ended up being hung from a lamp post. That was Karzai's worst scenario; he was really worried that might be the road down which he was headed if we pulled the plug on him. He didn't trust us.

And maybe this is another reason, the U.S. political ambivalence about the whole Afghanistan situation. I grew up during the Vietnam War, where everybody talked about the war, it was on the news all the time, all the politicians talked about nothing else. The Afghanistan war, nobody talked about; it was like it didn't exist. I don't remember any major speeches by President Obama about Afghanistan when I was there. The

presidential election campaign of 2012, neither Romney nor Obama ever talked about it. It was eerie. You just wondered, does anybody know that people are actually dying over here? They were. We were getting in the first half of my tour 10 or 15 Americans killed every week, which is a lot less than Vietnam but compared to what we normally get in combat, it was a lot.

Then we were working in the embassy for Ambassador Cunningham's vision of the hub-and-spoke model. I should mention, I said Ambassador Crocker was the ambassador and he was meant to stay for at least two years, but his health was deteriorating so shortly before I got there, I found out he was slated to leave. He left less than a month after I arrived, but it was still a pleasure to have a chance to meet him and serve under him even briefly. Ambassador Cunningham, a very different kind of person. He was much less effusive in public than Crocker, but they were both highly capable. The embassy work conditions were very intense, we worked six or seven days a week. We nominally had Friday off, the Muslim holy day. But if we had visitors or Washington wanted us on the STVC (secure tele-video conference) or something, we had to work on Friday as well. You'd work 12 hours a day. The compensation was you didn't have to spend any time commuting, you're like a five-minute walk from your office. There was a lot of camaraderie, everybody was in the same boat. It wasn't like Embassy Paris, say, where everybody goes in different directions and you have nothing to do with each other. You would see people at dinner or other places.

One of the incentives there was you either got three R&R trips, or two R&Rs and three regional rest breaks, which meant a shorter trip within a shorter distance. What this led to was an enormous number of absences in the staff all the time. This was where I came in; I was called upon to move up to be acting assistant chief of mission quite a bit during the tour. I didn't get to always spend time doing my own job.

The definition of a tour was you had to be in-country 300 days and a wake-up. A day in Afghanistan was defined as either waking up or going to bed in Afghanistan. People counted this very carefully. You couldn't add up your times away on leave to be more than 65 because then you would not complete a tour. Without completing a tour, you would owe all kinds of money back to the government for all the benefits. In practice, there were a few ways around it. I managed to get a few days consultation here and there in Washington that counted as official time so I could have meetings there. I was pretty close to 300 when I finished.

There were plenty of different diversions people engaged in at the embassy. For me, it was exercise, going to the gym, shopping in the bazaar, buying carpets (the carpets and other things were magnificent and much cheaper than anyplace else). We had a bridge club, played bridge a couple of nights a week, that was great fun. Not many people play bridge any more but we had enough, we really enjoyed it. The political-military section had a happy hour every Thursday night, the equivalent of a Friday night in the U.S. That had been going on long before I took over the section but I continued it and we became a social center for the mission, people would come over after work on Thursday and hang out. There were quiz nights every other week. This became a huge thing – it was a huge

thing when I got there and remained a huge thing. Different groups of people usually but not always by section would form teams and become very competitive. Our section had been the perennial champions of quiz night the year before I had gotten there; we had several people who left just as I arrived who were trivia nuts and could answer almost anything. Pol-mil struggled for a time but my crew soon returned to being highly competitive. We won the night a number of times, and that meant your team organized the next quiz night.

I should mention that in a one-year assignment, when you get there you meet all these people when you first arrive and a couple weeks later, they're all gone. So, if you don't figure out where things are and what's going on within a couple of weeks, you don't have anybody to ask any more because everybody's starting to be newer than you are. It was very different from a normal embassy where you can be a new guy for months; here you had to stop being a new guy within a few weeks.

Because I had my wife with me, I was there for Thanksgiving and Christmas while some of the other bosses would go away. So, we would have things out by the fire pit, try to gather together all the chickens that didn't have any relatives to be with. We had some really good times at Thanksgiving and Christmas, forming our own family as it were and getting together. People would bring food and drink and have a wonderful time, people would play guitar and it was really nice.

A bit about the work of my section, pol-mil. The big thing on our plate was the Bilateral Security Agreement that I mentioned before, the BSA. This was a mega-status of forces agreement; it had to cover all kinds of things. My deputy, Kami Witmer, had come out of Turkey where she had been a pol-mil officer, and there was a major status of forces agreement in Turkey that requires constant management. She'd worked on that, so she became the substantive expert; I gave her the lead on the details of the negotiations for the BSA. We had a lot of senior people involved but she was the one that worked on the nitty-gritty, the nuts and bolts. She was so good at it. We also had a State Department lawyer who worked on it with us, Sam Woodworth, and so we had a good team.

The main issues were immunities for the troops. Also basing, what bases would we be allowed to use after 2014. This was a chicken-egg kind of thing with the enduring presence number; we didn't know what the number of troops we would have would be, therefore it was difficult to be precise about what our basing needs would be. I think we wanted a certain footprint but if we didn't have enough troops to make that feasible, then we couldn't ask for that. We wanted exemption from taxation for our contractors and troops and forces. This was a chronic issue we had with the Afghans while I was there; they were under tremendous budget pressure, they didn't have enough money to run their government, so they were always trying to find ways to make more money. They would try to tax even military supplies coming in from Pakistan or wherever, and contractors and other people supporting our forces and our embassies, and we pushed back on this. That's why I was really happy I wasn't in the econ section because they would have to go to the ministry of finance and complain about this stuff. It was like beating your head

against the wall, they would stop one thing and then start another thing somewhere else; it was a never-ending shell game.

Formal negotiations on the BSA began in late 2012. A very senior officer, Ambassador James Warlick, was assigned as the BSA negotiator. These negotiating sessions went off and on throughout the rest of my tour and finally concluded in the spring of 2014, after I'd left. They were suspended at one point over this detainee issue I mentioned where Karzai was so upset about us not wanting to turn over prisoners without conditions that he just said "We're not doing this BSA right now." We were under a lot of pressure from Washington to conclude this agreement because without it, we couldn't promise to support the Afghans after 2014. It was like they had a gun to their own head and were threatening to pull the trigger half the time. We knew they had no capability of surviving on their own for any length of time, but we wanted to give them the wherewithal that they could.

On the BSA, my role was to brief senior visitors and military officers including four-star generals like General Allen and General Dunford, the two commanders of ISAF when I was there. ISAF is the International Security Assistance Force, the multilateral command. The U.S. command was called the USFOR-A, which was a corps command, I guess. General Allen and General Dunford were the commanders of the entire multi-national force. General Milley, who later became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, took over USFOR-A while I was in Kabul. They were like God. I've never seen the kind of authority that they were able to exert in their world; there's no parallel in our world. People can push back in the State Department in a way the military just can't.

Incidentally, I should mention that one of my jobs as pol-mil counselor was to pay attention to the military and what was going on strategically with the war. To do this, I maintained contacts at ISAF HQ, notably with the political advisors (POLADS) to the ISAF Commanders – General Allen (Mark Chretien) and General Dunford (Carter Malkasian). I attended meetings with then CENTCOM commander, General James Mattis, and General Sean McFarland, the Operations Deputy to the ISAF commander who had been an architect of the Anbar Awakening in Iraq. I attended a major conference between ISAF military leaders and the Afghan National Security Forces on the transition to Afghan lead on the battlefield. This line of activity sometimes led to unique opportunities, such as an invitation to attend the change of command ceremony for Generals Allen and Dunford. Six four-star generals were present at that event: in addition to the incoming and outgoing ISAF commanders, these included Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey, Commandant of the Marine Corps James Amos, Chief of the Afghan Army Staff Sher Karimi, and head of the NATO Joint Forces Command (based in Brunssum, Netherlands), General Hans Domrose from Germany.

Q: So let's talk about the pol-mil Section you led.

Right. Our pol-mil section was divided into teams. One was called ARROW; that stood for Alliance Relations and Removal of Weapons. There were several major tasks for the ARROW team. The main one was the sustainment of the Afghan national security forces.

The Chicago summit in May 2012 took major decisions about how this whole process would go forward. One was that after 2014, the allies would together pony up $4.1 billion every year for an unspecified period to sustain the Afghan security forces, that is the police and army, so they could stay in the field in a more robust position than the resources of the country would allow, to defend against the Taliban. The issue we were asked to sort out with the allies was how these funding streams would be governed. There were three essential funding streams. The lion's share would be the U.S., at least $3 billion, probably even more. Then there was the rest that were allies, the Europeans in particular, and other NATO allies. Then there was a smaller stream from international organizations. Mostly probably for police assistance. We tried to start a process in Kabul to figure this out. I had close partners in the DCMs from the Danish and German embassies and the defense attaché from the UK, and many other embassy representatives. We had a small group and would then expand it and have a plenary where the Italians and Turks and others would all come and be there. We called this larger group the Kabul Friends of Chicago because we were tasked to come up with a plan to socialize with NATO and then engage with the Afghans on.

The major difficulties we faced were inter-allied. Germany and some others wanted an overall mechanism with authority over all the funding. Three guesses what the problem with this became. The U.S., especially DOD, didn't want any foreign authority over our own stream, but we wanted oversight authority over the other streams. So, we wanted to shape how the whole thing worked but didn't want anybody telling us what to do with the money we were planning to provide. Most of the countries rolled over on this but the Germans were very difficult; they were being very German about this and couldn't understand why we weren't doing it fairly and couldn't be collegial and treat everybody the same. At State we could sort of see their point of view, but people at the Pentagon, pffft, they just wanted to write off the Germans and walk away.

Eventually we got things moving; we wrote a joint paper and shared it in NATO and then it was presented at the ministerial in Brussels in December, and they liked it. We were making some progress. We still hadn't engaged the Afghans. When we started to engage them in early 2013, we found – as often was the case with the Afghans – that they didn't have very much bandwidth. They didn't have many people who had the capacity or the time to engage in this. It took a long time to find a couple of interlocutors who were senior enough to be influential but were also capable of engaging. We found one or two in the foreign and defense ministries. This process was ongoing at the end of my tour but I think we had moved the ball farther and I assume at this point something came through on this, because the Afghan forces are still being sustained.

Then we had more discussions in NATO in spring. This took a lot of time because we had to have all these meetings with allied countries. I'd been dealing with NATO issues in Norway and we had a NATO conference in Norway, and I was conversant on these things by the time I got there, which was very helpful.

The second issue the ARROW team dealt with was police assistance. There was an organization in Kabul called the International Police Control Board (IPCB). It was an

effort to convert the militarized police – basically, the Afghan police was a paramilitary organization. They would actually fight the Taliban and the Taliban would attack them. It wasn't like they were out there shaking down people for speeding. It was very different from what we think of as police. The international effort was to move them from being militarized to a normal police force post-2014. Soon after I got there an active energetic woman from the UK, who had been the DCM at their embassy, took over as chair of this IPCB. She immediately encountered resistance and efforts to undermine her from the EU countries and the European Commission which controlled the money for this. They wanted EUPOL, the European police organization, to control the whole process. We had to join with the UK chair to push back on this hard because it was unacceptable to us to have this whole thing controlled by the EU when we were putting up some of our money. We didn't put up as much money as some of us would have liked, but our understanding was that INL (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs), had been burned on police assistance in Iraq, so Bill Brownfield (INL assistant secretary) didn't want to get too heavily involved.

We did work a lot with the ministry of interior, which controlled the Afghan police. They eventually formed a 10-year vision plan for moving this thing forward, so we had some progress. There were a lot of fraught meetings of this IPCB and I had to go to them.

Q: What was the outcome in terms of the management with the EU making demands? How did you resolve it?

HEG: We forced it into compromises where there would be joint meetings where we'd make decisions instead of just the EU. It was constant effort; they were driven by bureaucratic imperatives. They had to consult in the EUPOL framework and member countries didn't want to then have to consult with other people. They felt our financial contribution wasn't commensurate with the kind of say-so that we wanted. That's probably true. But our military was supporting the Afghan police in different ways with training and equipment, and that wasn't being taken into account by the Europeans.

The third issue our ARROW team was dealing with was clearance of land mines. This was one of the more fulfilling things we did. We had roughly $30 million of programs we managed in some sort of cooperation with the Pol-Mil bureau in Washington to fund NGOs like the HALO Trust that were clearing mines that had been sown by the Soviets during their war in the '70s. They were all over the country, huge minefields that were out there killing Afghan civilians and preventing people from using big swaths of land for agriculture. These programs paid Afghans through these NGOs to clear these mines all over the country, and they were making tremendous progress. One of the most gratifying things I got to do, I went out with the HALO Trust to see some de-mining operations up in the hills north west of Kabul in an area towards the Salang Tunnel. This was early in my tour; later in my tour they would have never let me do this. I'll explain that later; it became much more difficult to get out. But we went in an armored convoy, me and some of my officers on the ARROW team, to this and we had several helicopters escorting us, flying figure-eight formations over the road. I thought that was pretty amazing, that I was being escorted by two helicopters. I participated in a ceremony in this village called

Istalif, where we turned over a bunch of land back to the village that HALO Trust had de-mined. All these tribal elders, guys with long flowing white beards, and they were very friendly, a beautiful setting. It's one of the most special things I ever got to do, I felt like hey we're not just killing people, we're saving lives.

One of the less pleasant aspects of this is there were a lot of bureaucratic struggles between the office in the Pol-Mil Bureau in Washington that managed these programs and our team. That bureau was used to having its way with whatever country it had programs in, but we had a big enough operation in Afghanistan that our team wanted a say-so. So, we had a joint understanding, a joint decision-making process. But they were always at loggerheads about who to award money to; there were some organizations we liked that they didn't and they wouldn't agree to give money even if those organizations were the most economical ones. At one point it went to the deputy ambassador who refused to back us up because she didn't want to get into a fight. I had to be on the phone a lot with the director of that office, that was a grinding unpleasant business. He was supporting his people and I was supporting our team, and our team was out there in the bush as it were. Some of our guys went to our projects in places like Helmand province, it was kinetic out there. Some were ex-military.

The next team in pol-mil is called SCOUT, Security Cooperation and Operational Unity. This was more or less what one might call our reporting unit. We didn't have a big reporting unit like the political section did, but we had some issues we had to report on. We were responsible for relations with the ministries of defense and interior and the national security council of the Afghan government. Any time there were senior meetings with these people, we had to send along an officer to meet and write a report. I'd go see vice ministers and bring a SCOUT officer to write it up. We covered all kinds of issues like green-on-blue attacks and the BSA, reintegration, all these kinds of things. This was one of the more gratifying aspects, a traditional Foreign Service contact and reporting kind of function which I'd done my whole career so I really liked that. They would serve tea and figs and this stuff, in fairly opulent offices.

Under SCOUT we were also responsible for embassy aspects of visits by senior DOD officials. We had people like Defense Secretary Hagel, Deputy Defense Secretary Carter, Under Secretary of Defense Miller, and from the NSC people like Thomas Donilon. We also had the Senate Armed Services Committee. The political section would take care of the Foreign Relations Committee staffers and congressmen and we did the Armed Services ones. We had to coordinate with the military on these visits, they would have meetings that were purely military but then would also want to have meetings with civilian ministries. We were involved and Ambassador Cunningham wanted to be at these all the time. He insisted on being at them and it was good that he did because the military could have easily just cut him out if he hadn't been firm on that. So, that involved a lot of reporting and back-and-forth coordination work.

We had a lot of misunderstandings with the military's visitors' unit because they wouldn't tell us things, or tell us wrong things and we'd find out at the last minute that somebody

was going to some ministry and we had to plug in and get over there and make sure we had a note-taker. The military would not write up any of those meetings, it was up to us.

SCOUT was responsible for our support of the program called the Afghan Local Police (ALP), which was a special program run with our special forces military people to have local militia-type police who would be like minute-men, farmers in the village who would pick up their rifles and man the walls when the Taliban were coming to attack because they couldn't depend always on the army or the militarized ministry of interior police to be responsive. The Afghans were not very mobile and tended to want to defend some fixed post and wouldn't move around much. This was a constant headache for our military people, to try to get the Afghans to move around and not just sit in some fortified position and wait to be attacked. The Afghan Local Police was a growing program which had quite a bit of promise; we supported it whole-heartedly. It had the potential of greatly increasing rural security. It did so in some areas. But you had the usual problems. In some areas it was well managed by uncorrupt officials, and in other areas it was poorly managed by corrupt officials. Mixed messages. Also, there were constant attacks on the program from human rights NGOs who thought it was some sort of method of suppressing the Afghan people, which it wasn't, but we had to push back on that.

The SCOUT team would write reports on substantive issues, and a couple of these got the military a little upset. There were big programs to assist the Afghans with counter-IED (improvised explosive device) programs; IEDs were the main source of casualties both for the coalition and for Afghan forces. The methods of trying to prevent or minimize casualties from IEDs were complex and ongoing. We would go and ask the Afghans how these programs were going, and we would get stories about things that weren't working very well, and we'd put them into a report. "We met with people at the ministry of defense and they told us X, Y, and Z," put it in a cable then send it to ISAF for clearance. We would get back complaints that we were "grading their homework" because we weren't in charge of the assistance programs. All we were doing was reporting what the Afghans were telling us, but it wasn't always consistent with the narrative they were telling their own bosses, you see – good news goes up and bad news goes down. A different culture entirely. We got along with the military most of the time and I think they respected what we were doing, but at the same time some of them got their backs up. Sometimes we had to resort to sending our reports in as record emails rather than as cleared cables, because they simply refused to clear. It was not for any substantive objection, they wouldn't tell us what was wrong with it, but they complained that we were "grading their homework," not staying in our lane as it were. We didn't agree. Our lane was to report what the Afghans were telling us, right?

The final component of SCOUT's work, which was very important, was supporting the BSA. When Kami was away or even when the negotiations were on, SCOUT would provide assistance to the negotiating team.

Then we had a team called COMPASS, which is unusual. COMPASS stood for Civil-Military Plans and Assessments. This mostly consisted mostly of 3161 officers, not all of them but most of the ones we had were working in this area. They came out of the

State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. Their main product was the Civil-Military Framework. This document pre-existed my arrival, but we were responsible for its care and feeding. It was a constantly updated document that the military and civilians signed at the top, say by General Allen and Ambassador Cunningham, and would agree on the overall country strategy. What are we trying to do? What were the areas of effort?

Most of the time, it was a real snoozer, so when we were called upon to update it (which we usually were after major conferences such as the Chicago NATO summit, or the Tokyo summit, which was the equivalent on the economic side), based on the outcome of those things. Then we had to take it to every part of the mission, military and civilian, and get everybody to clear it. Nobody wanted to read the plan. In fact, once Ambassador Cunningham told us we'd have to put on our body armor to go see them (laughter). I didn't do this personally. I had to read the document and sign off on it, but I didn't have to carry it around like our COMPASS people did. It was a tough slog, but it had to be done. Another thing COMPASS did was manage certain stylized meetings between the embassy and the military command. The major one I recall was called the nine by nine, which was chaired by Ambassador Cunningham and General Allen. It would have a very set agenda with PowerPoint slides. It was a snoozer, but it had to be done just right because if not, people (especially on the military side) would get very upset. No surprises at all, it had to be choreographed just perfectly. After General Dunford took over in spring 2013, these came to an end, and after that point, we had no senior structured dialogue at all with the military. We eventually got agreement on a new structure, but I think I left before I ever saw how it worked.

There were sub-institutions that, every once in a while, came in very useful under the civ-mil framework. One time there was a big dispute between our USAID mission and the special operations forces (SOFs). DOD had a lot more money than everybody else. They were out in these provinces where a lot of the rest of us couldn't go. Late in my tour, especially in the wake of Benghazi, many of the PRTs (provincial reconstruction teams), were pulled out. So special operations had a bunch of money it needed to spend before 2014 arrived and they started doing economic development projects without consulting with USAID. It created a huge brouhaha within the mission that, somehow, I was called upon to sort out. I had to get these hot-headed people to sit down and point out to them that we have this civ-mil framework and different organizations; why don't we schedule a meeting of this particular committee and sit down and rationally sort this out? That's what happened. Instead of having these people just screaming at each other, which is what was taking place at one point. Nobody wanted to be told no, that they couldn't do something.

I said we had some people embedded in different military commands, one of which was working on reintegration. That was a program we were helping fund which would take Taliban who didn't want to fight any more and put them in a quasi-witness protection program kind of thing. We would settle them somewhere and give them the tools and resources to create a peaceful life and get out of the war. This was somewhat effective; as I understand it there were maybe 5,000 former Taliban who had been processed through

this. We had a couple of officers embedded in the Force Reintegration Cell run by a UK general. One of my roles was to go to meetings of the Joint Secretariat of the Afghan High Peace Council where, with other donors, we would push back on some of their bad budget practices, where there was a lack of accountability and transparency about where donor money was going. This was fairly dry stuff, but the overall reintegration effort was worth doing. These embedded officers reported to me, so I got frequent updates on what they were doing. There was a relationship to a program called Reconciliation, which the political section next door was in charge of, the overall effort to have peace negotiations with the Taliban. While I was there it never amounted to much but it was a major priority of the Obama administration, they really wanted something to come out of that. That was an exit strategy from the whole situation. You still read in the paper now about these efforts to start peace negotiations.

Now, moving beyond the pol-mil section, as I mentioned I had to be acting assistant chief of mission (ACOM) quite a few times, during four or five different periods when Hugo Llorens was either gone on leave, or called up to be acting deputy ambassador. So, I would go in and I would have to chair his section chief meeting every day; we had daily team leader meetings within pol-mil, with section heads with Hugo, and then weekly meetings of everybody in the pol-mil family. If I was acting ACOM, there was also this daily meeting in the front office called small group. Normally, the political and pol-mil counselors didn't go to that because the ambassador wanted the ACOM to represent them. But I went to small group whenever I was acting ACOM. That could be a very fraught meeting depending on what was going on. It was the one place where the senior leadership at the embassy just let you have it. If they were frustrated or upset, they didn't hide it in small group. They would normally not show their feelings about what was going on in larger gatherings, but you didn't want to go in there not having done something they had asked you to do. It was a really high-pressure place, and they were under far more pressure than anybody else. Most of the time small group was okay, but that was where the Kabul embassy circuit breaker was.

Two major things I had to work on as acting ACOM. One was during the December holiday period. I was acting for Hugo and we were preparing for the visit of Karzai to the U.S.; he was going to visit President Obama in the White House. This was a big deal, very fraught; I don't think they liked each other very much or trusted each other. We had to make it all work. Ambassador Tina Kaidanow, who had come while I was on leave in September as the deputy ambassador – I should back-track and say my first few months were kind of idyllic because Ambassador Crocker left and we didn't have a two-layered front office, so things were fairly smooth. But once I came back from that initial leave in September, Ambassador Kaidanow was there and all of a sudden there was a much more complicated front office, and there were a lot of communications problems within the front office which ended up sometimes getting blamed on other sections. Things were a lot different when I came back. Those eventually got sorted out. Anyway, Ambassador Kaidanow was the chargé and I was the ACOM, and we were jointly working on this visit. Almost every night we had to do STVCs, these secure video conferences with the NSC. The NSC was just apoplectic, the hand-wringing would go on and on and on. Then we brought in Afghans to have conferencing with them. This was continuous throughout

Christmas and New Year. I couldn't bring anybody else with me to the STVCs, I had to do it myself alone because the White House didn't want a lot of people involved. It was me and Ambassador Kaidanow. There was a lot of paper we had to prepare and a lot of logistic stuff. I had to make sure all the details were tasked and followed up. We had to pay for all of their travel, arrange for all of their visas (and they kept changing their team, the party that would accompany Karzai) so it put a big burden on our consular section, which was under my authority as acting ACOM. As I mentioned, we did have good holiday celebrations, but most of that period was far from restful for me. Very busy.

The other one was in March, I was acting ACOM and Secretary Kerry made his first visit to Afghanistan. That was busy because his staff, who he brought from the Senate, didn't know what to expect. They were really nervous about going to Kabul. Secretary Kerry had been to Kabul a number of times as a senator but that's very different from going as secretary of state. We were dealing with all this nervousness, I had to chair all these big count-down meetings. One issue that was particularly fraught was this public event that Kerry wanted to do, where he was going to meet with different Afghan entrepreneurs and handicraft people, and he would go from one to the next to the next. This is a concept that Kerry liked that he had done in other places. Ambassador Cunningham didn't want to do it. But he didn't want to engage directly with SRAP, so I had to deal with SRAP and they were screaming at me on the phone, and I said, "The ambassador just doesn't want to do this, we have to come up with something else." Eventually, Ambassador Cunningham caved and they got what they wanted, and it worked out fine, but I was sandwiched in the middle there. The visit actually came out really well. We organized everything perfectly and the staff was amazed there hadn't been disasters. One of the nice things about Afghanistan is people's expectations are so low that if they come out having a good experience, it's just woah!

Q: So the nervousness of the staff was security basically, not that meetings would not go according to plan, or am I misunderstanding?

HEG: I think it was both. They were unsure of the secretary's role as opposed to being a senator. As a senator, you're your own boss, an autonomous entity. But he was responsible for carrying out administration policy now and had to make sure he got everything right, so they had to know what they were supposed to say to everybody and how much preparation they needed, the publicity needs were different. Secretary Kerry was very supportive of the mission in Afghanistan. His parents were Foreign Service officers. He actually did a video town hall with the mission before he came out to give us a pat on the back, that was really nice. Then he did a town hall during his visit which was very gratifying. He was really engaged during that part of his tenure, very enthusiastic about things.

One of the sad elements for me about that visit was that there was a young Foreign Service officer in public affairs who sat very close to me during these countdown meetings, Anne Smedinghoff. She was an integral part of this project that worked out so well for the secretary, about meeting Afghan people, who came into the compound to set it up and show him what they were working on, what they sold. A few weeks after that,

she was killed by a bomb in one of the provinces. Very tragic. She worked in my wife's section; everybody was broken up. It was a terrible event.

That was the straw that broke the camel's back in terms of security and restrictions on our travel. It had begun with the Benghazi event in the fall of 2012. People became much more nervous, there was a lot more fear of being second-guessed after the Accountability Review Board led to the firing or demotion of several Foreign Service officers, including ones who were not directly in the line of responsibility for security issues. But they were nevertheless expected after the fact to have known about those issues. Now, the nervousness became greater and greater. Early in my tour I was able to travel much more easily than later on. In July I went to Bagram. In August I went to Helmand province, in September to Mazer-i-Sharif in the north. In November I again went to Mazar and then up to the border with Uzbekistan to meet the DCM from Tashkent who came down to talk about logistics issues; we were trying to export NATO retrograde equipment through Central Asia. Then to Bagram again in December with Ambassador Warlick. During that trip, we visited the detention facility (what to do with detained Taliban prisoners was an issue in the BSA) and the drone control room. In February I went to Herat and in March, Farah province. But toward the end I had a number of planned trips that were scrubbed by the RSO in the different regional commands, not based on anything that alarmed the military – I would always go with the military – but RSO personally didn't want responsibility for any chief-of-mission person traveling in their region that they might ultimately be second-guessed for. It was immensely frustrating. The only trip I got toward the end of my tour was when I was asked to escort CODEL Donnelly with a bunch of senators, Senator Donnelly from Indiana and a number of others, to Kandahar and Helmand. All these other trips – I was supposed to see a graduation ceremony for Afghan Local Police, something we worked on in pol-mil. When they finished training, they would have ceremonies where they would be presented with credentials and would line up with food, something that would be interesting to go do. I never got to do it because three or four times my trips to accompany the U.S. military to these events were scrubbed by State Department security.

I just wanted to mention one thing. My wife Janet was in Afghanistan with me and early in the tour she passed her exams for the Foreign Service. She was asked to escort the Afghan National Youth Orchestra on a trip to the U.S. She took them to performances at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. She got the young musicians back to Afghanistan without a single one of them absconding. One of the problems was always you'd send Afghan groups to the U.S. and they would frequently bail and disappear into the general population because they didn't want to go back to Afghanistan. She got them all back. During this period, she was offered a position as a Foreign Service officer. So, she left, shortly before Anne Smedinghoff was killed and started A-100. She attended Anne's memorial service in the State Department that was attended by John Kerry. He also swore her class in; he was very involved in a lot of aspects of Foreign Service training.

Interview on 2013-2016 Paris Assignment, Recorded February 19th, 2019, Heg by video from Monterrey, Mexico.
Q: How did you get your next assignment? What were your considerations in bidding and lobbying?

In summer 2011, I had linked my Kabul assignment to a follow-on position in Paris, as minister-counselor for economic affairs (EMIN for short). The possibility of linking to an onward assignment was one of a number of incentives for duty in Afghanistan at that time. During my Oslo tour, I had begun to think about the end game for my career. This put Paris on my radar screen because I was interested in the DCM position at USOECD, but that opportunity disappeared when the incumbent retired a year before the end of his tour.

About this time, I began to explore the Kabul option, and discovered the possible link to EMIN Paris. That job would take me to 2016, when I would have to retire, for both age and Time in Class (TIC). I had French, good relevant experience, and the multi-mission environment enhanced the chances that my wife could get a job without running afoul of nepotism rules. It seemed like a great exit strategy for my career. Paris DCM Mark Taplin approved the linked assignment, and I was paneled in summer 2011.

My wife Janet had joined the Foreign Service while we were in Kabul, and left about two-thirds through the year to attend A-100. After that she was assigned to a year-long staff job in the Bureau of Consular Affairs in DC. I knew I would have to go to Paris alone for at least the first year, but we hoped she could get an onward in Paris for the last two. We spent some months on pins and needles awaiting that decision, but fortunately the Entry Level Division of the Bureau of Human Resources ended up assigning her to a two-year consular tour in Paris 2014-2016.

Q: You had been in Paris a long time ago. Did you need to brush up your French?

My old score in French had put me on cycle for the Paris link, but I was informed I would have to retest. I then enrolled in a year-long intermediate distance course with FSI during my last year in Oslo. This involved written work assignments plus one hour a week on the phone with a teacher. I then attempted to do a walk-in French test at FSI during my May 2012 Kabul-related consultations in Washington. However, because the Chicago NATO Summit happened that month, I could not confirm availability for the substantive consultations I needed until very late. So, it was also not until late in the day that I knew when I would be available for a French test. When I finally asked for a specific date/time for the French test, I was told all slots were already full. Once I got to Kabul, the intensity of work there left little time or energy to study French. I finally scheduled a French test during my brief May 2013 leave to visit Janet in Washington. In the month leading up to that, I would spend evenings and Fridays walking around the Kabul compound listening to tapes of Pimsleur and my old FSI French course grammar drills. The night before the FSI test, Janet and I took my French teacher out to a bistro in Washington for a meal, conducted in French of course. I did not tell Madame I was testing the next morning and we had a relaxed conversation. It certainly helped me prepare for the next morning and I

miraculously passed with the full proficiency score required. Madame was very pleased after the fact. I had feared I would be late to Paris due to the need for brush up FSI French training but luckily this did not happen.

Q: So, then you arrived in Paris when?

I arrived in Paris in early September 2013 after splitting my home leave between our Chelan WA home and Washington DC, where Janet was working. The full title of my new position was Minister-Counselor for Economic, Environmental, Scientific, and Technical affairs. A real mouthful, but people called the section "Econ" for short and my position "EMIN." I had two FS-01 deputies. One headed the Economic Unit with four FSOs, and the other the Environmental, Scientific, Technical, and Health Affairs Unit, or ESTH, with three FSOs. Three to four local staff supported the section, one of whom, our protocol assistant, Irene G, had worked with me at USOECD years before. Our super office management specialist (OMS), Zenni Toledo, looked after everyone extremely effectively. We had a large, cavernous office space reflecting the various downsizings our section and the Embassy as a whole had suffered over the recent decades, notably from the wholesale transfers of personnel to the former Soviet Union countries, the departure of the U.S. Treasury office, and the Iraq/Afghanistan "tax" – which were positions moved to staff the large embassies in the war zones. The Paris Embassy was old and elegant. I had a large corner office with a fireplace, which I never used, a private bathroom, and window views of the Place de la Concorde and – in winter – the Eiffel Tower.

Q: What sort of housing did you have?

I received a large and very elegant though not totally practical apartment in the 16th Arrondissement, with a nice view of the trees in the *Bois de Boulogne*. The apartment was not particularly close to the embassy but ironically it was right across the street – *Rue de Franqueville* – from the OECD where I had worked 21 years ago. I commuted initially by Metro, which I found very crowded and unpleasantly hot in the late summer. Fortunately, a neighbor whom I had met at Amcham told me about the 63 bus. The western origin of the line was just two blocks from the apartment, and from there I had a lovely daily ride into work along the left bank of the Seine, getting off at the National Assembly and walking across the Pont and Place de la Concorde to the Embassy.

When my household effects arrived, I had difficulty working and then coming home to the many boxes waiting to be unpacked. Fortunately, Janet came over for a week to celebrate her birthday, and helped organize things. The carpets we had bought in Afghanistan fit the place like a glove.

Q: As a minister counselor, in addition to the two units you supervised, I imagine you had many other responsibilities?

Turning back to my work, I learned that in addition to my supervision and guidance of ECON, and chairing the weekly Economic Cluster (at which other agencies such as USDOC, USDA, FAA, NSF and NASA participated), the EMIN in Paris bore

responsibility for supervising our four American Presence Posts (APPs), located in Lyon, Toulouse, Bordeaux, and Rennes. Ambassador Felix Rohatyn created the APP program in the mid-1990s with the idea of maximizing U.S. presence throughout the "hexagon," as France is sometimes called by the French. APPs are very small posts, with one American officer and two-three locally employed staff (LES).

From my point of view as EMIN, the APP responsibility had pluses and minuses. On the plus side, visiting the APPs was an opportunity to get out of Paris and travel to other regions of France. The APPs also provided some (though very limited) reporting assistance to the Econ and ESTH Units. On the minus side, I found remote supervision, even with occasional visits and phone and email contact, to be less than ideal. Making it even less ideal, the APPs worked mostly with public affairs on outreach and public diplomacy, and with the Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) on business promotion, and those organizations were more familiar than I was with APP activities and programs. (When I arrived, the APPs had a limited consular role, but this was phased out at the end of my first year.) And, my section was responsible for the organization of twice-yearly conferences of APP officers and principal officers from the two consulates – Strasbourg and Marseilles – that were supervised by the DCM. These conferences, held in Paris, lasted several days and involved significant commitments of time by one of our officers and our OMS, who were already stretched thin.

It was difficult for me to judge the overall utility of the APP program. Nevertheless, the role fell to me to be the program's main advocate and defender. Various actors in Washington would express skepticism about the program from time to time, or casually ask whether we needed all four of the APPs. When this would happen, the front office would look to me to provide the rebuttal case. I would attempt with various degrees of success to get quantifiable evidence of APP value from colleagues who managed actual programs with the APPs, and do the best I could to make the APP case. During my last year, the officer position at APP Toulouse became unexpectedly vacant. Toulouse is the site of Airbus and represented important commercial equities. However, the European Bureau (EUR) refused to allow us to refill the American position, wanting to move it to another country. This would entail closing the post. I backstopped a front office effort with EUR to keep the post open. Eventually it was agreed to keep Toulouse open at least until after the 2016 election, staffed only with local employees. I see now that APP Toulouse was later closed for good, as it is no longer listed as a U.S. post in France.

Q: How had Paris changed since your previous tour at USOECD?

Coming back after 21 years was almost surreal. I was in a completely different stage of life, parent of grown children instead of very young ones, and as a senior instead of a younger mid-level FSO. I had of course made a number of visits to Paris in intervening years, but spending a few days is very different from residing in a place. One difference was that the city was noticeably brighter than before. Many public buildings and monuments had been cleaned of soot. The Paris Opéra in particular was utterly transformed compared to two decades earlier.

Another difference was that the French had adopted American practices that they used to laugh at – such as bans on smoking in bars and restaurants, and mandating unleaded gas. Also, French officials were much more approachable and less arrogant, more cooperative and less anti-American. It was like – since the days of Mitterrand – French officials had figured out they didn't have all the answers and that they could gain by learning from and cooperating with the U.S.

During my first tour, English was not much used by ordinary people in Paris. French officials would more or less insist on conducting business in their own language. Coming back, I found use of English to be pervasive. Although I did have some official meetings in French, many more were in English. And in stores, and restaurants, for example, staff would normally switch to English at the first hint of a non-French accent. It was sometimes difficult to use French in Paris, much easier when traveling in the provinces.

Q: What were your relations like with the front office? What were their expectations?

The Ambassador, Charles Rivkin, already due to leave, was remaining in place pending his confirmation as Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs back in the department. Mark Taplin, an experienced public diplomacy officer, was Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM). Mark had been in place for three years and had been due to leave in summer 2013, but his replacement had suddenly resigned, so Ambassador Rivkin had asked him to stay on for another year. Until his departure in November, every week, Ambassador Rivkin would hold a skull session with me, Mark, and Political Minister Counselor Jonathan Cohen – now U.S. Ambassador to Egypt. Because of his upcoming assignment, Rivkin would often focus on economic issues, which meant me. I had not done strictly economic work for seven years, and the Ambassador was relentless in drilling down on issues related to the French economy. Yet, somehow, I managed to hang in there. Those were times when my graduate training in economics came in handy. Mark was an old school Foreign Service Officer like me, and we got along well.

Q: What were the major issues you dealt with?

The most salient issue when I began my tour, and remaining prominent throughout, was the effort to negotiate a comprehensive trade deal between the U.S. and the European Union (EU), called the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Negotiations had begun in June 2013, just before I arrived. TTIP was meant to cover a multiplicity of areas, including tariffs, non-tariff barriers (NTBs), regulatory convergence, and investment rules. Going in, I was somewhat skeptical of this project. We had tried to launch such an effort, then called TEP, or Trans-Atlantic Economic Partnership, back in the 1990s. It had failed due to weedy regulatory problems, state/federal issues, and lack of political support on both sides. This time, the negotiation had begun with a lot of momentum. The U.S. negotiated directly with the European Commission (EC) in Brussels, but the major EU member states like France had an important role. Dan Mullaney of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) energetically led our negotiating team. Dan spoke excellent French, and we supported several visits by him to France each year.

The EC had made the initial proposal to negotiate TTIP. However, as often happens, European non-governmental organizations (NGOs) mobilized against the project and the EC adopted a passive public approach. Given our usual activism, the U.S. soon became the de facto *demandeur* for TTIP, which weakened our negotiating position. We in Embassy Paris were tasked with selling the broad concept of TTIP, an EC initiative, to France, an EU member state.

During the negotiations, the EC and EU member states focused on issues of abstract principle while we sought solutions to concrete and specific problems. For example, the EU complained as I recall that "only" 37 of our 50 states had ratified "Most Favored Nation" (MFN) rules – I think it was in the WTO – so that the TTIP would apply to them. We said, show us where you have problems with particular states among the 13 and we will work on solving them. The EU never did mention any, but they would not stop harping on the issue.

The European NGOs had a long list of bogeymen with which to frighten their publics, much of it related to supposed food safety: chlorinated chickens, hormone beef, Monsanto herbicides, genetically modified (GM) "frankenfoods." They falsely alleged that we sought "regulatory harmonization" which, they claimed would lead to a "race to the bottom" wherein superior European regulations would be replaced by loose U.S rules based on unbridled capitalism. Actually, studies showed U.S. regulations were weaker in some areas, but stronger in others. In autos, for example, our regulatory systems were quite different but they resulted in nearly equal levels of car safety. What we sought was mutual recognition, not harmonization. With the EC not trying very hard to counter the propaganda barrage against TTIP, it was hard for our message to get through the noise. Oddly, unlike my previous tour, it seemed to be the German public more than the French that was most wound up against any economic agreement with the U.S.

France had a couple of particular sensitivities in the TTIP negotiations. One was agriculture, of course. As a long-time proponent and defender of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), France was loath to accept any sort of agreement on farm products approaching full laissez-faire. The other issue was audio-visual. France has long subsidized and protected its film industry. At the launch of negotiations, France announced that "audio-visual" was an untouchable red line. Our negotiators did not have the French film industry in their cross hairs, and chose to assume that the French red line did not extend to the digital sector. This ambiguity, and the extent of TTIP coverage of agriculture, would have had to be settled in the end game.

As negotiations proceeded, France and other EU member states began to voice serious concern about a "lack of transparency." The problem stemmed from the Commission's unwillingness to share negotiation documents and texts – for the justified fear that they would be leaked and stimulate more NGO opposition. The member state officials could see the documents, but only in Brussels and only in a secure reading room. For some reason, the French and others began to complain to us about the situation. We of course were unwilling to share our own texts. At one point, I think we offered to set up secure

reading rooms in member state embassies for joint texts. I can't remember if this was actually done, but at some point, I heard the texts were so boring and technical that few member state officials actually would read them.

In my last year in Paris (2015-2016), the approaching U.S. and French elections more or less convinced the two sides that the deal would not be done until after these contests were decided. The French grew more and more skittish about supporting TTIP. The negotiation was later put in the deep freeze after Trump's election.

The other big issue I was dealing with from the beginning of my tour was the ailing French economy. Socialist Party President Hollande was elected in May 2012, and instituted a policy of increasing France's already high level of taxation. He also attempted to increase government spending, but this was constrained by the EU's Stability and Growth Pact – which required member states to keep budget deficits at or below 3% of GDP. The result was very low to zero GDP growth and rising unemployment – 10% in 2013, rising to 11% in 2014. France's debt grew to equal its GDP. The result of all this was deepening unpopularity for Hollande and his government.

The U.S. became concerned that France's economic malaise could undermine strong French military and policy cooperation in Africa and the Middle East in particular. Because of Britain's declining military capability, France had basically replaced her as our most reliable and useful ally in dealing with international security issues. Washington was also concerned that deepening weakness in the French economy could contribute eventually to another Eurozone crisis, which could in turn again destabilize the world economy.

To work these issues, I developed contacts in Bercy – the treasury and economic ministries – and in the Elyseé Palace and we reported on the French economic predicament. In August 2014, Hollande made an economic U-turn, announcing the intention to pursue pro-growth reforms. Prime Minister Valls reshuffled the cabinet, and appointed Hollande's economic advisor, Emmanuel Macron, to replace left-leaning Arnaud Montebourg as economy minister. I had been in several meetings with Macron at the Elyseé when he received visitors from the U.S. Treasury, NSC, or Council of Economic Advisors (CEA). He was smooth and articulate, usually friendly, though one time he expressed anger at a $9 billion U.S. fine on French Bank BNP Paribas for sanctions violations.

Macron spent 2014-2015 putting together a package of reforms that came to be known as the Macron Law. There was considerable opposition in the French parliament. In France, any effort to reform the sclerotic economy arouses stiff opposition from special interests and often street demonstrations. Hollande's predecessor Nicolas Sarkozy proposed to raise the French retirement age from 60 to 62, and was met by massive protests and demonstrations from college students, of all people. During the period when Macron was trying to put together his reform package, I recall an op-ed in Le Monde that said each special interest in France had constructed its own "Maginot Line" around its special benefits and protections.

In the event, Macron had to invoke a device called "Article 49" to pass his reform bill in August 2015. I can't remember the details but this was a "silver bullet" style legislative device available to the French president to break parliamentary deadlocks, but usable only once a year. The Macron Law reforms really didn't amount to anything decisive. Much of the bill contained measures permitting things that Americans have taken for granted for years, such as Sunday opening hours for stores in select tourist areas, and legalizing intercity bus transportation. A follow-on reform package developed during the next year was unsuccessful. France's already tepid appetite for economic reform, as with its lack of enthusiasm for TTIP, waned even further as the 2017 presidential election drew nearer, and especially after Macron left the government to form his own political party.

I accompanied the ambassador or senior visitors from Washington to meetings with Macron while he was Economy Minister. He knew who I was. One morning as I walked across the Pont de Concord from my bus stop toward the Embassy, Macron and his entourage were walking across the bridge in the other direction, toward the National Assembly, and presumably from the Elyseé Palace, located just down the street from the Embassy. He saw me and greeted me warmly.

Macron, following his surprising ascent to the Presidency in 2017, is now facing violent street protests – the so called "Yellow Vests" – showing that the French economy is still facing the paradox that although it does not work for many people, opposition to its reform is still strong.

Q: You were there for the big commemorations of the D-Day 70th anniversary?

As 2014 began, the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of D-Day, in June of that year, loomed as a major challenge for the entire Embassy. This would be the last big anniversary at which appreciable numbers of now very elderly D-Day veterans might be expected to attend, giving the occasion extra salience. As planning developed, we learned that President Obama, as well as the secretaries of state and defense, and members of the joint chiefs of staff all would attend, along with two large congressional delegations (CODELs). This became an all-hands affair for the entire Paris embassy, plus a number of officers from the constituent posts. Mark Taplin, Chargé d'Affaires (CDA) following the departure of Ambassador Rivkin in November, led the operation.

Mark assigned me to coordinate the two CODELs and allowed me to pick a team from among members of the Econ section staff. Weeks of full-time preparation followed. The French were anxious to finalize delegation lists but the House and Senate of course did not focus on the trip until very late. Much of the information we received early on from the military escorts turned out to be wrong, and many things kept changing. In the final weeks, we learned that the Senate would send CODEL Leahy/Heller, with 24 senators, all Democrats. Apparently, some interparty rancor had caused the Republican senators to beg off the trip. On the other hand, House CODEL McKeon/Pelosi would come with a bipartisan delegation of 58 members. These were large and very senior visiting delegations, and we had to prepare while squeezed hard on local resources and attention

to our problems because the President and his advance teams demanded absolute priority. Not least of our challenges was planning and coordinating movement of our delegations in buses from Paris to the Normandy landing beaches amidst massive traffic and checkpoints on route.

When the commemorations finally began, the Senate contingent only attended events held on June 6 itself, the actual anniversary date of the landings. These included the U.S.-French ceremony at Omaha Beach, and the international ceremony at Ouistreham, site of Sword Beach. The Senators had their own ideas and did not always follow the script. The Omaha commemoration was the earlier one, featuring speeches by Presidents Hollande and Obama. When it ended, our plan called for immediate departure for Ouistreham because of traffic. The President was soon on his way to that venue by helicopter. However, the Senators wanted to visit the cemetery before leaving. This was quite understandable but put them in jeopardy of missing the international event, because late arrivals would supposedly not be admitted. After a tense bus ride, we barely were able to deposit the Senators at the Convention Center in time, accompanied by a control officer. There was no room in the ceremony for me or other accompanying Embassy staff.

As the rest of us waited at a nearby café, about half way through the ceremony the control officer phoned frantically, saying the Senate delegation was verging on walking out. Apparently one or two of them had been on a previous D-Day trip maybe 10 years before, and remembered their bus getting stuck in a huge traffic jam after. A walkout by a part of the U.S. delegation of course would have been highly embarrassing, and with encouragement from us the control officer talked them out of the idea. However, when the ceremony did end, the Senators insisted that their bus leave right away and not follow the instructions of the French police. They passed around the checkpoint and, somehow, they got away with it. I was in one of the two House buses and we followed along, avoiding the traffic along with the Senate.

The House CODEL was bipartisan and far more relaxed than the Senate. There was comity among members from different parties. The House group’s program spanned four days, with two movements out of Paris, while the Senate just attended the June 6 events. On June 5, the House group attended a very friendly ceremony at the National Assembly, on June 6 the Omaha/Ouistreham program, on June 7 a ceremony at the American Military Cemetery at Suresnes, and on June 8, a trip to Sainte-Mère-Ėglise, to view a spectacular parachute drop featuring DC-3 aircraft, the same ones used in 1944. The House aircraft met the CODEL in Cherbourg for the return to the U.S. after the jump, and we took a train back to Paris from there.

The whole D-Day 70th celebration, blessed with spectacular weather, was a very moving experience, and supporting it was one of my career highlights. The French, up to and including Hollande, were vociferous in expressions of gratitude for our role in the liberation. Out in Normandy, American and allied flags were everywhere, draped on farmhouses and flown in villages. The veterans were present in some numbers and mingled with the members of Congress before the Omaha ceremony.

I mentioned earlier that Ambassador Charles Rivkin had left in November, and DCM Mark Taplin became CDA. During that winter, Mark asked me if I wanted to take turns with the Political Minister Counselor Jonathan Cohen as acting DCM. At that time, I demurred. I wanted to get into my new job, and the memories of Kabul, where I was often pulled in to be acting ACOM, were fresh. However, Jonathan Cohen left post soon after D-Day, and I became acting DCM, and remained in that position until late August. Mark did not want to move out of his office, so I occupied the large and very elegant Ambassador's office next door.

There was little respite for Embassy Paris after the D-Day events. Summer 2014 was extremely busy. As time went on, Mark devolved more and more work and responsibility onto my shoulders. We were dealing with a series of global crises that went off like a string of firecrackers. The U.S. sought close engagement and cooperation with France on every one of them.

I should mention that Secretary Kerry throughout 2014-2015 visited Paris about every two to three weeks. He used the vacant ambassador's residence as an eastern state department, to hold meetings, mostly concerning the Middle East – Syria and, the Israel-Palestine conflicts in particular. Sometimes he would fail to consult or even invite the French, which annoyed Foreign Minister Fabius no end. These visits were a huge burden on our embassy staff. Most often, reporting officers from the depleted pol and econ sections were repeatedly pulled off their normal jobs to work exhaustively long hours on Kerry's visits. This continued through the crisis summer of 2014. I should mention that promotion boards essentially gave no credit to the officers who spent so much time and energy supporting these frequent trips. Few mid-level officers were advanced in rank during my Paris tour though most were excellent.

Q: So, what were the crises you dealt with during that summer?

I'll tick them off one by one:

Ukraine: After its shock annexation of Crimea, Russia began to support armed separatists in the eastern Donbas region of Ukraine. Washington sought strong sanctions on Russia, but the French expressed skepticism about our intelligence on Russian involvement and were reluctant despite repeated demarches the Department at high levels directed us to make. Many of these instructions were not front channel. French resistance finally began to crack after July 17, when a surface-to-air missile downed a Malaysian airliner over Ukraine, causing many deaths. They became persuaded that Russia was indeed behind the insurgency and agreed to implement tighter sanctions.

Israel/Gaza: Israeli actions in response to cross-border attacks from Gaza led to violent street demonstrations in Paris and other parts of France, many with anti-Semitic overtones. We convened several Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meetings to assess our security. The situation also led to several short-notice visits by Secretary Kerry,

including one with less than 24 hours' notice, to attempt to negotiate a Gaza ceasefire using the Paris residence as a meeting venue.

Iraq: ISIS emerged out of nowhere in early 2014, overrunning territory in Syria and Iraq. The situation became a crisis in June when the Iraqi army in effect disintegrated and ISIS captured Mosul. Baghdad itself appeared under threat, as were the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq. Washington directed us to undertake heavy and urgent diplomatic engagement with the French to provide military and humanitarian assistance to Iraq. The French readily agreed, and they even conducted coordinated joint airstrikes against ISIS.

Syria/Libya: Both these countries spiraled into chaos that summer, resulting in more diplomatic interaction with the French. On Syria, the French remained sensitive over President Obama's abrupt cancellation of a planned September 2013 joint strike following Syrian use of poison gas. In Libya, we helped the French evacuate their embassy in Tripoli.

Sahel: Al Q'aida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) was active in the Sahel region. During summer 2014 we supported French counter-terrorism operations in Mali, Chad, and elsewhere in the Sahel, including southern Libya.

Ebola: A major outbreak in west Africa threatened millions of lives during summer 2014 and became a top U.S. national security priority. We worked with France and the UK on a division of labor in helping the three hardest hit countries. We concentrated on Liberia, the French on Guinea, and the British on Sierra Leone. Differing methodologies led to misunderstandings and pressure from our NSC to get France to "do more." Eventually we were able to "bend the curve" on the epidemic.

As acting DCM and briefly Chargé d'Affaires, I was at the center of non-stop activity on all these issues. My partner on many of them was acting Political Counselor Kim Krhounek, who also had a very busy summer. My depleted but capable ESTH staff had the lead on the Ebola issue.

While all these crises were unfolding, and with summer staffing gaps and secretary visits, we also had to prepare for the pending August arrival of the new Chargé d'Affaires (CDA) Uzra Zeya. Mark Taplin departed post for good at the end of July, signing Mission France over to me as CDA for the week before Uzra arrived. We also were expecting a new ambassador – Jane Hartley had been named – to arrive several months later. During my week as CDA, I had a French protective detail accompany me to and from work. I recall I also had to do a high-level demarche at the Elyseé Palace concerning an arms control issue that had arisen with Russia.

Q: What sort of preparations did you make for the new ambassador and DCM/CDA?

Well, I drew on all my previous front office experience and the talented acting staff assistant Julian Hadas, as well as our great protocol assistants, and front office OMSs, to prepare an extensive schedule of introductory calls for Uzra's first weeks. We also had to

plan for a major program for her to travel to the south of France in mid-August after one week on the job to participate in the 70th anniversary commemorations of the Operation Husky Allied landings in 1944. During this trip, Uzra would meet with a number of allied and North African leaders, and those encounters required briefing materials. We also began to create 30, 60, and 100 day plans for Ambassador Hartley's initial periods at post. Our management section was busy with extensive renovations to the Chief of Mission Residence (CMR) on the Rue Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

When Uzra arrived, I met her at the door and turned the mission over. She "hit the ground running," as the old cliché goes, and was very satisfied with the arrangements we had made for her. The various crises continued and I remained acting DCM until late August, when I finally got my summer leave. Janet arrived in Paris in late September to take up her two-year assignment in the consular section.

Q: After the busy summer of 2014 in the Paris front office, you returned to your regular job? Did the focus of your work change?

Yes, I returned back upstairs to my EMIN office, dealing with TTIP and the problems of the French economy. I was soon engulfed in a mushrooming financial crisis in Greece. During early 2014, the Greek economy seemed to be on the mend after undergoing a crisis in 2011-2012, which led to a second Eurozone bailout of Greece. However, the Greek economy again dipped into recession in the last quarter of the year, resulting in the election of the left-wing Syriza Party that formed a government in December. The new Greek parliament rejected the terms of the Eurozone bailout, notably targets for budget deficits and debt levels. Negotiations proceeded between Greece and the "Troika" – European Commission, European Central Bank, and the IMF – to try and patch things up with a new bailout. But the Troika had suspended second bailout payments after the Greek repudiation of its terms, and this worsened the economic crisis.

The crisis became most acute in early July 2015. Greek Prime Minister Tsipras traveled to Brussels for make-or break bailout negotiations. The Troika presented him with its bottom-line terms, and Tsipras brought them back to Athens, announcing that he would submit them to a public referendum. This shocked the EU and the sense of crisis reached a fever pitch. There were openly expressed fears that Greece would have to crash out of the Eurozone and revert to a greatly devalued drachma. The vote soon came, and Greek voters rejected the terms overwhelmingly. Germany in particular reacted badly, advocating harsh terms which may well have driven Greece to bankruptcy.

Washington, particularly the NSC, viewed this evolving situation with growing alarm. Memories of the 2008 financial crash were fresh, and the fear was a Greek Eurozone crash-out would damage the global economy. I and my EMIN counterparts in Berlin and Brussels frequently participated in secure video conferences called by the NSC. These also included Embassy Athens, and State and Treasury in Washington. I remember frequently noting some tension between the NSC and Treasury. Treasury was not accustomed to having the NSC intrude on its lead role on economic issues, and the NSC view tended to be more political than economic.

The Greek economic crisis was dealt with at the highest levels in Europe. July 2015 negotiations were conducted by PM Tsipras on the Greek side, with European President Jean-Claude Junker, IMF Director Christine Lagarde, ECB President Mario Draghi, President Hollande of France, and German Chancellor Merkel on the other. My job was to stay in close touch with the French, share their thinking with the video conference participants, and share U.S. policy thoughts with the French. Of course, we were not in the Eurozone, but Washington thinks everything is its business.

My main contact on Greece was President Hollande's economic advisor at the Elyseé Palace, Laurence Boone. She had replaced Emmanuel Macron in that position in summer 2014, and is now chief economist at the OECD. I also discussed Greece from time to time with officials of the French Treasury, but with Hollande calling the shots for France, Boone was the most important. She was terrific, giving me ready access despite how busy she was, even when the NSC would convoke a conference with little notice, as was not infrequent. We and the French were on the same page, wishing to avoid a Greek crash-out. I would encourage Boone to have Hollande stand up to Merkel and favor a negotiated solution, and keep her abreast of contacts by senior U.S. officials with key players in the crisis. A resolution finally came in mid-July 2015 following all-night negotiations in Brussels. Greece ended up basically accepting the deal on the table before the referendum, but Tsipras saved face through his initial display of defiance, and was not punished, as Germany had been advocating.

Q: Greece is reportedly doing much better now. When did the Paris Climate Conference come into the picture?

As 2015 proceeded, the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21, to the Kyoto Protocol) loomed larger in the Mission. This conference was very high profile because its stated purpose was to produce a new agreement limiting carbon emissions. The target was to keep atmospheric CO2 concentrations at or below 2%. The ESTH section, under my supervision, headed by the experienced environmental officer Kirsten Schulz, had the lead on COP21 preparations. However, it was clear that eventually COP21 would become an all-hands exercise similar to D-Day 70th the previous year.

Since my arrival in Paris, I had sought to beef up ESTH staffing resources in anticipation of the conference, eventually adding a new FSO position and an eligible family member (EFM). Embassy Paris had three major tasks leading up to COP21. First, we needed to engage in intensive diplomacy with the French to ensure we were on the same page. Initially, this was quite a hard sell. President Hollande had made COP21 his personal project, and he was eager for a strong climate agreement. The Obama Administration, however, recalled what had happened to the Kyoto Protocol in the Senate – it was defeated 95-0 back in 1998. As a result, it was unwilling to commit to a binding agreement, which would have required Senate ratification. We supported many visits by U.S. Climate Negotiator Todd Stern to iron this out and he eventually succeeded in bringing the French around. I attended some of these sessions but mostly left them to Kirsten, who was much more up on climate diplomacy than I was.

Our second task was organizing the logistics for our participation, which would include President Obama for part of the conference. COP21 eventually spanned 13 days (November 30 to December 12), involved 40,000 delegates flying to Paris from around the world – not counting all of the large entourages accompanying world leaders, and was held at Le Bourget, well outside Paris. Personally, I was skeptical of the giant conference model of combating climate change. I would occasionally query my ESTH staff on what was the carbon footprint of COP21, seldom receiving a coherent reply.

The Embassy's third COP21 task was to create a so-called "Action Agenda" – a set of activities and projects hosted or sponsored by Ambassador Hartley to highlight U.S. commitment to combat climate change, such as hosting a reception for former VP Al Gore.

I was away from post during the last couple of weeks leading up to COP21, because my father was terminally ill. When I got back, I concentrated on making sure our people out at Le Bourget had everything they needed. At the end, COP21 resulted in the Paris Climate Agreement, later repudiated by the Trump Administration. I understand the U.S. still leads the world in carbon emission reductions this millennium, due to the fracking revolution, with its substitution of natural gas for coal.

Q: Paris became a pretty dangerous place for a while, didn't it?

Yes, though not so much for us at the Embassy. Still, we were deeply affected by the seemingly nonstop series of terrorist attacks that rocked France starting in January 2015 with the massacre of the Charlie Hebdo magazine staff, and the attack on the Jewish grocery in Paris. Charlie Hebdo was a satirical magazine that seems pretty raw and in-your-face to American sensibilities, but is valued by the French as a symbol of republican values and resistance to orthodoxy in whatever form. At some point Charlie Hebdo offended Islam as it had every other religion, putting the magazine in the ISIS crosshairs. Our local employees were particularly shocked by these events, which led to a three-day police manhunt for the perpetrators that played out on national TV. Many displayed the slogan "*Je suis Charlie*" (I am Charlie) for months afterward. The attacks caused us to hold several Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meetings to assess our security posture and the safety of American citizens.

The next major incident occurred in August 2015. A terrorist attempted to shoot up the "Thales" bullet train from Brussels to Paris. Three American passengers, two of whom I think had military training and experience, stopped the man and prevented a bloodbath. Subsequently, President Hollande presented the three Americans with medals, and Ambassador Hartley honored them in the atrium of our Embassy. It was a proud moment for our country.

Then on November 13, as we were ramping up seriously for COP21, coordinated attacks by ISIS terrorists at the National Stadium, the Bataclan Theatre, and Parisian cafés killed 130 people and wounded 350 more. One American died and a few more were injured. We

held nearly constant EAC meetings at the Embassy through the weekend, and conducted nationwide accountability exercises for all U.S. employees. The atmosphere was very tense, and for a time it was not known if COP21 could proceed.

On Bastille Day, July 14, 2016, DCM Uzra Zeya invited many of us to watch the fireworks from the roof of her residence near the Champs de Mars. As we were watching the fireworks, word arrived that yet another big terror attack had taken place in Nice. A Tunisian had driven a truck through a large crowd assembled to celebrate Bastille Day. Eighty-six people were killed, including three U.S. citizens, and over 400 wounded, including Americans. We had to push through large crowds to get to the Metro station and then home. I was up most of the night on the phone conducting accountability for my section, other economic agencies at post, and the four APPs elsewhere in France, and I spent much time in EAC meetings over the next few days. My wife Janet, who was working in American Citizen Services, was sent down to Nice to look after American casualties and their families.

Q: Your tour was winding down after COP21. What other issues did you handle?

Data privacy was a big one. Back in October 2015, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) overturned the Safe Harbor Agreement under which data flows between the U.S. and the European Union were determined to comply with EU privacy regulations. After the disclosures by Edward Snowden on electronic surveillance in 2010, Europeans had become increasingly critical of Safe Harbor. I should say that France, while it condemned the Snowden stuff in public, actually was fairly understanding, while Germany, for example, was hysterical. The ECJ decision imposed a three-month deadline on negotiating a new U.S.-EU agreement. Failure would threaten billions in two-way trade and investment.

There followed intense negotiations between the European Commission (EC) and a Department of Commerce-led team. We supported several visits of this team to Paris to consult with the French as a major EU member state. In February 2016, just before the deadline, the U.S. and EU reached a new agreement called “Privacy Shield.” Despite this, criticism continued in Europe. Ratification of Privacy Shield by the European Parliament (EP) was on knife edge several times. On these occasions, I was asked to raise U.S. concerns with the Elyseé Palace on an urgent basis. My contact there was Phillipe Legalise-Costa, who later became France’s Ambassador to the EU. France proved very helpful, and the EP finally ratified Privacy Shield in summer 2006.

The last big issue was Brexit. On June 23, 2016, the British people voted narrowly but decisively in a referendum to take their country out of the EU. This result shocked and angered French officials. When I spoke with Legalise-Costa at the Elyseé about it, he was livid. Phillippe had made his career working on EU issues. Remember the history – France had not been keen on UK membership in the first place, and De Gaulle had vetoed it twice, in 1963 and 1967. Once a member, the UK had opposed French positions on many issues. The Brits were critical of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), dear to French hearts. Under Thatcher, the UK demanded and got a significant budget rebate

which the French saw as special treatment. Britain had favored broadening EU membership to include Eastern Europe but not the deepening integration among existing members favored by Paris. The French watched as English replaced French as the main language of the EU in Brussels. So, the French felt like they had been putting up with Britain for decades, only to find that their reward was Brexit, which they believed threatened the whole European project.

My colleagues at the British Embassy (just down the street) were likewise shocked. I had attended the Queen's Birthday celebration at the UK residence just 10 days before the referendum, and no one expected a Leave vote. As usual, our NSC got spun up and convoked several secure video conferences, but these soon petered out. It became clear early that there really wasn't anything the U.S. could or should do. My reaction to Brexit – I had spent four years in London focused on the UK's role in the EU. Britain had been our most like-minded member state, a very useful window on what went on in Brussels. I saw Brexit as leading to the eventual loss of our understanding of and influence on the EU. At the same time, I was aware from my time in London of the ambivalence and even antipathy many British people felt toward Brussels, which they resented as imposing rules on them without any accountability.

Q: Did you retire from Paris, or return to the U.S. for any final activities?

The end of my Paris assignment meant retirement. I turned 65 in July and under the rules I had to leave the service at the end of that month. My Time in Class (TIC) would have expired just a couple of months later. In fact, I was happy to call it a day. I had a very long career and I was satisfied I had done the things I wanted to do.

As my retirement approached, I received several favorable career acknowledgements for which I remain very grateful.

First, for a visit by John Kerry on June 3, DCM Zeya had arranged with his staff for the Secretary personally to present Career Achievement Awards to me and to two other senior officers about to retire. Sadly, one of the other officers, Barbara "Babs" Aycock, with whom I had worked closely, was dead within a year of an as yet undiagnosed cancer. Second, in late June, DCM Zeya hosted an elegant dinner at her residence for me and Janet, including my visiting son and daughter-in-law and other guests I had suggested. Third, Ambassador Hartley invited Janet and me to a private lunch at her residence. We ate outside on her veranda on a gorgeous day.

The *pièce de résistance* was a formal retirement ceremony that Ambassador Hartley held July 6 in the Talleyrand building, with its baroque splendor. Friends, colleagues, and contacts attended from the Embassy and outside. As Ambassador Hartley was making remarks, four of our five children walked into the room. I have never been so surprised in my life. Two of the four had flown to France from the U.S. and the other two from England. Janet had secretly coordinated their attendance. It was a very gratifying moment. The Ambassador presented me with a U.S. flag that had flown over the Paris Embassy on July 4.

So, I turned in my credentials at the end of July and left the Paris Embassy for the last time. After another week, I flew to our home in Chelan, Washington. My wife remained in Paris for another month. She is still in the service, and later I joined her at her onward assignment in Monterrey, Mexico and subsequently she was assigned to Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.

Wrap-up Session, recorded May 17, 2019 (Heg by video from Chelan, WA)

Q: With 20-20 hindsight and having had a few years to think about it, let's begin looking inside the department. In your recollection and reflection, how good was the training you received, both language training and leadership training, area training, in preparing you for what you would need to be able to do any of your jobs?

HEG: My initial training I think was quite good. A-100 was a really good socialization into the culture. Then ConGen taught us what we needed to know getting into the visa section. My Spanish course was excellent. I was able to get the 3/3, most everybody else did as well. It was still a shock to actually start using the language, but I had enough to get going with. I understand that the romance languages aren't as successful now as they used to be, I don't know why – we used to do a lot of drilling in language training and I don't think they do that as much anymore. I think that's a real detriment. People are not succeeding at getting their 3/3 score nearly as often in French and Spanish as they used to.

Q: One of the changes I know they made because I took Spanish and then I took a Spanish refresher is, you're right, they don't do as much drilling. They do much more throw the student into discussion very early, force them to use the language. That I found to be not as helpful as drilling.

HEG: Right. The drilling generates the automaticity, the switches in your head, the substitution drills and that sort of thing, so you don't have to think about it. Part of using the language well is not having to think about what you're saying before you say it.

Q: One other question then while we're on the topic of language – when you took your MLAT, was it predictive of how well you would do with language learning?

HEG: I think so. I got a medium score and I think I was not one of the genius language students, but I wasn't one of the laggards either. Of course, as I got older, language learning became harder. I was in my 40s when I took Turkish which is an incredibly hard language; I really struggled with that. Part of it was I was older, and part of it was how difficult it was and how they didn't have the kind of method they had in French and Spanish. It was a much smaller department, and they were writing the textbook as they taught it. So, we didn't really have a book.

Q: Would you also recommend that a fair amount of language training be done in country?

HEG: I don't know. I never did that. I'm not sure that would be cost-effective. I don't really have an opinion on that.

Q: Did you take part in the senior seminar?

HEG: No. When I became eligible for it, I was in long-term Turkish language training linked to a three-year assignment. In those days, the policy was they would only recommend people who were newly minted 01s. By the time I got out of Turkey and tried to bid on it, I was told I was too long in the tooth to be considered. I thought that was unfair, but there was nothing I could do about it.

Q: Continuing with the internal aspects of the department – the evaluation system. Were you satisfied with it, or do you think it needs some changes?

HEG: I don't have any bright ideas how to improve it, but I was never terribly satisfied with it. It was difficult both as a rater and as a ratee to have an honest process. Suppose I was rating someone; I knew that any negative comment at all would sink that person's career. It's so over-inflated. They keep changing the form all the time (including in the last year of my career), but that doesn't seem to correct that fundamental problem. I don't really know what the answer is. Maybe checking certain boxes, you can only check so many, but big posts and small posts would be different situations. Another issue is, in my experience, many FSOs are reluctant to either ask for or give honest feedback. Counseling sessions either don't take place, or are not documented. This leaves rating officers in no position to document poor performance in the annual evaluations. The assignment process ends up being a de facto performance management system. Strong officers get better assignments, and promotion boards make inferences from an officer's assignment pattern.

Q: When the department finally adopted new technology that made information exchange easier – BlackBerry, classified and unclassified email – did that make for an easier time for your job? Or did it just expand the amount of information to fill the vacuum?

HEG: I think overall it made the job easier. Once you can go on the internet and look information up, it was much easier to get facts at your fingertips, much easier to communicate with Washington and posts. In the old days you were cut off; you would communicate with the desk through official-informal telegrams. Phone calls weren't secure so you would only use them for the most basic administrative stuff. Yeah, it was a huge improvement. At the same time, it led to increasing micro-management from Washington. So, you had to take the bad with the good.

Q: Speaking of micro-management, Bill Burns just came out with a new book and one of the areas he suggests for improvement at the State Department is de-layering. When you were out in the field, was it frustrating, how many layers you had to go through before you could get an answer or assistance?

HEG: I found that more true in Washington than in the field. When I was in the field, I knew exactly who to call about things. I'd use the consultations process to go and meet the right people. But in Washington to get a decision in the inter-agency process, other agencies you were dealing with – Treasury, USTR – people could just walk into their boss' office and ask the question and get an answer. We had to go through many layers. We had so many bureaus and the division between the functional and regional.

Q: While we're on information, did the increased use of social media change how you did business in your job?

HEG: I'd say social media came along quite later in my career, Facebook and Twitter and all that. I think the State Department was even slower to adapt than others. So, by the time it became prominent, I wasn't really in the forefront of making it happen. When I was econ minister-counselor or DCM, the public affairs section would normally handle that stuff. I didn't get too involved in it. I didn't join Facebook until after I retired, to keep in touch with my friends and colleagues, but I wasn't on it when I was working.

Q: With policy process especially in your higher level jobs, did you feel you had enough access to understand what the policy was that you needed to carry out?

HEG: It varied among different administrations. There was a lot of policy clarity at least in the economic policy area during the Reagan Administration; they had a very clear policy agenda focused on free markets. I think it got more fuzzy over time with Bush Senior and Clinton administrations where they seemed more transactional and pragmatic than ideology-driven. We had more of a road map in the '80s than later on.

Q: While you were in the field, did VIP visits become easier or harder? Did they produce more or less? How did you see that over time?

HEG: It was very different in different posts. I don't remember getting many at all in my first tour in Venezuela. In my second tour in Nicaragua, which was prominent at the time because of the Central American conflict, we got constant CODELs. They were not useful to us. They were people coming to say they had been there, they would come down in the morning and leave in the evening, they didn't want to spend a night there. Everyone followed the same basic agenda. Then they'd go back to Washington, it was highly polarized at the time, and whichever side of the aisle they were on, they'd just say "I've been down there and I can tell you this or that."

Q: Okay. How did you deal when you were in higher level jobs with giving bad news?

HEG: I tried to take a direct approach. I was usually the DCM and I had to go to the ambassador behind closed doors and just tell him, "We have a problem here" or something like that. I didn't see sitting on stuff to be very useful. I needed somebody to confide in often, and other than my wife the ambassador was often the only one.

Q: Did you follow a particular management style for dealing with difficult individuals? Was it simply acquired skills over time?

HEG: There's a lot of learning by doing in dealing with difficult personnel issues, but I always tried to partner with the management officer, both because that was the person who had the substantive knowledge of the regs but also because they had the access to people in Washington to consult with.

Q: What was your toughest sell as an officer?

HEG: I'm not sure I understand the question.

Q: You would get a demarche or a policy request that you had to either convince a foreign government or secure something from a foreign government. What do you recall as your most difficult one, and how did you handle it?

HEG: One of the most difficult ones I remember was when I tried to sell this George W. Bush decision to put steel tariffs on when I was in London. The British were apoplectic over it. We had these talking points, but we were laughed out of the room when we tried to use them. It was really difficult. Finally, we just persuaded Washington to give some exceptions to British specialty steels and we used the leverage of Bush's state visit.

Q: I was curious in the overall career. Looking at that moment and today and the imposition of tariffs on steel now, is it more or less the same as far as you can tell, or are there differences between that moment and today?

HEG: I think today the use of tariffs is much more widespread. I'm glad I didn't have to go and explain those to our friends and allies. I don't have much sympathy for China, but the rest of it I'm not sure is a great idea.

Q: After your assignment in Afghanistan, what do you think of U.S efforts today to negotiate a peace deal with the Taliban?

I agree that some sort of negotiated solution is desirable, but I do not trust the Taliban and believe they are bad people. I am concerned that we appear to be leaving the Government of Afghanistan out of the talks. This is what we did in Vietnam, we left the Thieu government out of the talks with North Vietnam. That did not end well. I hope for the best but I am very concerned the Taliban just want us to get out and will not keep any of their agreements.

Q: If you were giving advice to somebody coming into the Foreign Service now, what sort of preparation or study or talents would you recommend they develop?

HEG: A study of history and culture is highly important. It used to be very much emphasized in the entrance exam. I think that's fallen off a bit, partly because it's not being taught well or regarded anywhere near as important. I think somebody famous

recently said in the practice of politics and diplomacy, people are using historical knowledge to make decisions. If you don't understand history, you don't really understand where people are coming from. I think it's not just current events, you have to have context for the present, which is history.

Q: Of course, every new administration or even during administrations, reorganizations took place in the State Department. If you were going to give it a basic appropriate organization, how would you recommend that?

HEG: Hard to say. Bureaucracies are inherently bureaucratic; you can move the boxes around but you're still going to have the same problems. One thing I would have liked to have seen more of is closer integration between public affairs and policy. Often in my career, even after USIS (U.S. Information Service) merged into the State Department, they were operating in different lanes. The public affairs people really didn't get policy and vice-versa. I think if you had those people better integrated, instead of having separate public affairs sections, have public affairs office inside the policy office.

Q: This is the last question, a little bit whimsical, but looking back on your career, did one of your interlocutors, a foreigner you had developed a professional relationship with, ever tell you something you found particularly telling or useful in your work?

HEG: A foreign interlocutor?

Q: Yeah, maybe somebody in the foreign ministry or the econ ministry, someone you had a working relationship with.

HEG: Particularly in some of the more advanced countries I served in, I learned a tremendous amount from some of the diplomats in the Foreign Office and Treasury in Britain and in the economic ministries in France or the defense and foreign ministries in Norway. Just the way they practiced, their professionalism – I can't point to anything specific but I had a lot of admiration for my interlocutors over the years. One Turkish diplomat comes to mind: Selim Karaosmanoglu, whose last name means "son of the black ottoman." Selim was my main Foreign Ministry interlocutor on issues involving the Caucasus. I found him highly creative as well as informative and collegial.

Q: The final question, looking back, are there other recommendations or reflections you'd like to share?

HEG: A couple of things. One of the perennial problems of the Foreign Service is compared to the military, the lack of *esprit de corps*. People are proud of their individual unit and there's cohesion within an office or embassy, but not so much organization-wide. Sometimes you feel, it's so competitive that people see each other as adversaries. The military, there is a pride in the Navy, "my father was in the Navy". I never felt that in the State Department. Colin Powell tried to inculcate it, to some extent he was successful but it wasn't sustained I don't think.

A couple of things I noticed over time, some of the younger officers compared to when I came in, in my day back then, if the ambassador or DCM invited you to an event, you were expected to go. If you received an invitation to a reception, you were expected to be there. It wasn't really optional. Now, there seems to be an attitude that anything after hours is up to you; if you don't want to go, you don't. I don't know at what point things shifted, but there's really not that same sense of this being a 24/7 career, more of a nine to five. One of the corrosive things I think, it used to be like when I was a first-tour ELO, if we had to stay late to finish our visa work or something, we got paid the overtime we were entitled to. Now, overtime is normally only payable if you get permission in advance. Nobody wants to give permission to pay overtime because the attitude is you should just get your work done during the regular hours. So, people are just leaving at 5:30 or whatever the quitting time is, whether their work's done or not. Especially the younger ones. I don't think they learn the kind of approach they have to have when they're more senior and say the ambassador says, "I need X by tomorrow" – you don't really have a choice, you have to stay until X is produced because the ambassador isn't going to say, "Oh well, you had better things to do." You better learn those lessons early.

Another issue I think needs more attention is curtailments. I found that over time, especially in this millennium, that people can curtail at the drop of a hat. If they didn't like their assignment or supervisor, they just call the CDO (career development officer) and say "I'm unhappy, can I leave." Nobody ever says no. So, you have a lot of staffing gaps, particularly in places with language requirements. In my day, I don't remember people curtailing at all unless they were curtailed for really serious performance issues.

Q: All right. If that wraps up your thoughts we can end here.

HEG: I enjoyed this process and my career, and I'm happy to have had the chance to look back on it.

End of interview