

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

**AMBASSADOR THOMAS N. HULL III**

*Interviewed by: Daniel F. Whitman*  
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## INTERVIEW

*Q: We will first identify ourselves. I am Dan Whitman and am interviewing Ambassador Tom Hull. We are sitting in a town in Southwestern New Hampshire. Ambassador Hull what is the name of this town?*

HULL: It is Grantham, New Hampshire.

*Q: Grantham, New Hampshire.*

HULL: Eastman Village, Grantham, New Hampshire.

*Q: Today is January 8, 2010 and the new decade. Ambassador Hull can we start at the beginning, and can you tell the reader something about your family background.*

HULL: Sure. I was actually born in upstate New York in a little town by the name of Niskayuna because my father was working there in the Second World War.

*Q: Can you spell that for the transcriber?*

HULL: Sure, Niskayuna which I presume is an old Indian name near Schenectady. My father was there in that part of the world because he was working on the first American jet engine as an engineer for General Electric during the war. He was actually from Oregon and northern California. My mother was from Massachusetts. Her family was an old Mayflower family going back to John and Priscilla Alden. Interestingly the family for generations never moved more than 15 miles or so from Plymouth, Massachusetts, until my grandfather in the early 1900's moved to Boston. My mother grew up there. As soon as my parents could move after the war, my mother wanted to go back to the Atlantic Ocean, so we moved back, and I grew up in Marblehead, Massachusetts. I then went off to boarding school up in Maine at the Hebron Academy where I am currently on the board of trustees. From there I went off to college at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania. After that I joined the Peace Corps and went to Sierra Leone and thus begins my career of international service.

*Q: Excellent. Well let's get this full juice out of the fruit here. Do you have any recollections that stand out at Hebron Academy or Dickinson that comes to mind as either out of the ordinary? What was the type of experience you had in Secondary school and in college?*

HULL: Well at secondary school it was an all boys school, so it was a rather miserable experience without any girls around. A lot of hard academic work. Maine is a very cold place, but there was a lot of joy skiing and playing soccer and all the things you like to do at an adolescent. I was not a classroom star. In college I gave little attention to academics and a lot of attention to meeting young women whom I had not had the pleasure of meeting in high school, and socializing. Although ironically about three years ago Dickinson named me one of their 25 most influential alumni over their last 200 and some years of the school's history, including me with people like James Buchanan who was a disaster as president, and other people. I thought that was consistent; another was Chief Justice Roger Brooks Taney who was also a disaster. But they were influential in negative ways. As I said to the college, I take my nomination to represent the fact that the college emphasizes international service and what I embodied was somebody who engaged internationally somewhat successfully in my career.

*Q: You modestly understate that, but we will get to the details later.*

HULL: But I was a voracious reader when I was young, and I took an interest in the foreign service as so many people did. You mentioned you interviewed Aurelia Brazeal who was influenced by reading The Ugly American in the late 1950's, and that book really kind of peaked my interest how I as an American can do better than the people who were portrayed in The Ugly American. And of course the inference of the Ugly American

is we wouldn't look so ugly if we had better public diplomacy. But also I got some career booklets and things about the foreign service. I decided when I was an adolescent that this might be an interesting career. Not the career I was necessarily seeking because I had other areas of interest, law and so forth. I thought I might become a lawyer, but certainly becoming a diplomat was something of interest to me early on.

*Q: You say high school, or adolescent.*

HULL: I probably read *The Ugly American* when I was in seventh or eighth grade.

*Q: Well that is useful. For bibliographies of people who are interested in this line of work.*

HULL: In fact there was just an article, I have it around the house here. If I stumble on it I will share it with you. Somebody wrote we just had the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Ugly American*. It did influence a generation of people. It was a best seller.

*Q: So that would have been the 1950's.*

HULL: 1958 or so. '57 or '58, I don't remember exactly when it first came out when I was in seventh or eighth grade.

*Q: So at this time you jumped in it, looking back that was a formative thing.*

HULL: Very formative, yeah.

*Q: Well on to Dickinson and girls.*

HULL: Well not so much the girls as the wonderful social life. Actually I had very little tolerance for anything I was required to study, and a great deal of interest on things that I was not required to study, so I pursued my major of history with a lot of gusto but you know, I resisted science and mathematics and all those things.

*Q: Ah but you didn't resist your major.*

HULL: Of course not. I was the kind of person that wanted to study what I wanted to study and not what other people wanted me to study.

*Q: I remember doing that, but never living up to it.*

HULL: But from there I joined the Peace Corps which was especially formative in a number of ways. Of course I met my good wife in the Peace Corps because she was a fellow volunteer.

*Q: The year?*

HULL: Well she came a year after I was there. I joined the Peace Corps in 1968, and she joined in 1969. I was fortunate in a sense that I had a temporary medical deferment from the military, and therefore was no in danger of being drafted, so I had a lot of options when I left college. I could go into business.

*Q: I have to ask, did you graduate in '68?*

HULL: Yeah.

*Q: So did I.*

HULL: Good year, like vintage wine. But I wasn't in danger of being drafted. I learned that because I had a draft physical when I was in college. I was forced to have a leave of absence from my college years for a semester since I was on some social and disciplinary probation from the college.

*Q: We can go into that or not. Put a footnote later if you want.*

HULL: So I knew I was safe from that so I applied to graduate schools, business and the Peace Corps. I was offered a job with a major life insurance company. I said, "So I really want to do that as a living?" Then I could go get a masters degree in American history and was accepted at a major university. I really don't want to do that right now, how about some adventure. I was really surprised that the Peace Corps invited me to join and subsequently....

*Q: Surprised?*

HULL: Well I didn't have any international background. I was an undistinguished student and so forth. But anyway I had the good fortune that they said here is a live one who we can send to Sierra Leone. Of course like anybody being sent to Sierra Leone in those days nobody knew where in the world it was. You grabbed the Encyclopedia Britannica in those days. First the map and then the Encyclopedia Britannica where the first sentence said, "Sierra Leone which is also known as the white man's grave."

*Q: Because of the malaria, right?*

HULL: Because of the malaria in the colonial era had killed, that means missionaries, colonial administrators did not last very long. Everybody who has ever served in the Peace Corps has had that same experience of having to explain to their parents why they were going to the white man's grave. Before we could Google a country we went to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

*Q: That didn't daunt you.*

HULL: It didn't daunt me; I thought it was a great adventure. I wasn't motivated very much by idealism. I thought it would be great if I could teach some people, but I was primarily interested in the adventure of going to Africa. That is where a lot of other people came burdened with all the encumberments. When you joined the Peace Corps you were given something like 100 pounds of stuff to take. I was amazed that other people brought lacrosse sticks and golf clubs and what have you to Africa. Anyway, but that was a very important experience. We gathered together in Philadelphia for staging before being sent to Sierra Leone where we were the first group to be trained in country. Up until then they had been trained in the Caribbean and the United States. It also came about three months after a coup d'état there in which a person, who ostensibly won an election a year before had not been recognized as the winner, had been put into power but they were very paranoid about foreign mercenaries, what have you. We gathered in Philadelphia. It happened to be the Fourth of July so we all went over and saw Vice President Hubert Humphrey give a speech at Constitution Hall, and then that night they put us on an airplane from Philadelphia, a 707 that flew non stop to Sierra Leone. We didn't know the plane had that kind of range, especially when it was packed full of Peace Corps volunteers because this was one of the larger Peace Corps contingents in the world in Sierra Leone. You could scarcely go thirty or forty miles without running into another Peace Corps volunteer. It was a very dense concentration.

*Q: Was this a charter plane?*

HULL: Chartered plane. It was World Airways. It did not re-fuel. We were landing in July which was the middle of the rainy seasons when they had these horrific monsoon storms. As we approached our plane was being tossed around and so forth. We thought we were going to die. Then we landed and our plane was surrounded by the Sierra Leonean military with lots of guns. We were told we could not get off the airplane. We thought it was nice that they sent out the army to welcome us, but then they came on board with their guns going up and down the aisles checking to make sure we were not armed. What had happened was that they did not get permission for us to come into the country as a Peace Corps group until after the plane was in the air. The ambassador at the time, Robert Miner, persuaded President Shaka Stevens that these were just Peace Corps teachers and not mercenaries, and that they should be allowed to come in. He had agreed. However Sierra Leone being inefficient and the airport being across the harbor by ferry, word had not reached the harbor that this plane should be allowed to land. As we found out much later we were denied permission to land but we were out of fuel so we landed anyway. We didn't have enough fuel to go on to another airport anywhere.

*Q: I guess the adventure was well begun.*

HULL: Yeah, so the adventure was well begun. So we spent four or five hours on the plane it seemed like, and they finally let us off once everything got clarified and we started a very interesting time. But at the time a lot of Peace Corps volunteers were leaving the country because of the turn over at the time. A number of them were arrested because they had diaries. These paranoid police and soldiers thought that these were really spies collecting information about Sierra Leone. So it was a very delicate. The First

few months were a very delicate period as the new Shaka Stevens regime settled into power.

*Q: Any second thoughts when you got into this unexpected...*

HULL: No, not from me. I was naïve enough. We were all very enthusiastic about what we were going to do in this new adventure. But without going into a lot of detail in the course of this I made very good friends with a fellow named Roger Cohen who was a communicator at the American embassy. He was my age and from my part of Massachusetts. Because of a little snafu in my training I ended up having to spend a week or two extra in Freetown and stayed with him in an American embassy apartment. Drove around in his American Embassy convertible. Enjoyed his air conditioner, washer, dryer. We became good friends. So I actually spent a lot of time whenever I was in Freetown in the course of years with people from the embassy, became friends with the ambassador. He had Jill and me to Christmas dinner for example. He wrote me a glowing recommendation to graduate school which I think was very instrumental in helping me get into graduate school. But I also made lots of friends in the embassy. The DCM later became an ambassador. So did also the political officer who gave me some self-help funds to build a school. So anyway, I got a lot of insight on how embassies operated and enjoyed the people in the embassy and thought this would indeed be an interesting career, and not nearly as onerous as being in the Peace Corps where we lived in a very rudimentary village level.

*Q: Hold on for just a moment. You got funds to build a school?*

HULL: Well, what happened in this particular instance is USAID had given the steel structure for a school and the village had erected the steel structure, but they couldn't afford any cement to build the walls. And the school was run by the Catholic Church which ran a lot of the schools. I was teaching in a Catholic primary school and so they came up with a proposal. I took it to the embassy and sold it to them, and we got the cement and finished the school. It was great. It gave me insight on how some of these things work.

*Q: Just a note on the village. Were you far from the capital?*

HULL: Well I was within a day's drive going on local transportation which was basically riding on the backs of pickup trucks, that sort of thing, but not far away. I think one of my favorite memories was once my friend, Roger, decided that he wanted to go up country and see somebody, and he decided to take me back to my village which was pretty remote. My first year I was the only Peace Corps volunteer who had ever served there, No running water, no electricity, just a very basic life. But once when I was down in Freetown for a Peace Corps conference or something, Roger decided he would drive me back in his Peugeot convertible over the dirt roads to the village. He had this big golden retriever. As you know Africans are kind of sketchy about dogs anyways, very fearful. For good reason because of rabies and other things. Roger had this exotic dog for Africa which was a golden retriever, and so we drove up to my village with a two-seater, Roger

and me with the dog behind us. Being on dirt roads we put up the top to the convertible. Whenever I came back to the village the people immediately emerged to see what the foreigner had brought with him because if I had gone to Freetown I would have picked up food supplies and what have you. So I got out and Roger got out, and then this big golden retriever. You never saw people disperse as quickly as the people in this village did. Another odd thing that we had about 30 or 40 miles up the road from me was an agricultural experimental station where there was a USAID employee from one of the universities in Virginia. He had brought a red Corvette Sting Ray to Sierra Leone. My village was odd in that the main road was paved. That was because my landlord was the minister of education and he had arranged for enough money to pave the road through town. So people were pleased with that road, not only for the transportation but because they could lay out their rice to dry in the sun, their freshly washed clothes to dry in the sun and so forth. But the insensitive American from Virginia, when he got to the edge of town in his Sting Ray and saw pavement, he just floored it. So I can always remember him driving over the rice, driving over the clothes, and being left as the symbol of America in town to explain why my compatriot was driving over all their stuff.

*Q: Your reading of The Ugly American came back that day.*

HULL: Yes, absolutely. But another up country visit I recall, there was a town nearby. The town where Jill lived and taught. She taught in a women's teacher training college. I would have to go down to that village to get my mail because there was no mail delivery to my village. I got a lot of mail because of my parents. The Boston Globe had a deal whereby they would send the Boston Globe, every weekday and Sunday edition, overseas for one dollar for an entire year to Peace Corps Volunteers. They would come by sea, and so when the ship came in, 30 days of newspapers would arrive at the post office for me to read. I would have to bring a back pack and haul these things. But I would go down to this town of Port Loko where the mail would come in. There were about five or six Peace Corps Volunteers in various schools in this town, so I would stay with some Peace Corps friends who are still friends to this day.

On one occasion the American Ambassador decided to come up and visit us all and have lunch with us at one of the Peace Corps Volunteers' houses. There were interesting characters in town. One of them was a person who was suffering from leprosy, most of his nose had been eaten away. He was known among insensitive Peace Corps Volunteers as "Old Faceless". He would have this scarf that he held over his face, and then he would pull it off and if you gave him some money, he would cover up his raw face again. I can remember we all said we hope "Old Faceless" doesn't show up when we are having lunch. Sure enough there he was. He knocked on the door. We sort of explained to the ambassador who this was. The ambassador very graciously got up from the lunch table, went out, greeted this man, gave him some money and everything else. I said, boy, if I am ever an ambassador that is the sort of person I want to be. Wow, that is not the ugly American, that is the way Americans should be. So that made a lasting impression. There were of course many others.

*Q: You said he was interesting. Were there other reasons other than his condition and his remarkable figure?*

HULL: Memorable certainly. There were a lot of interesting characters in town, sort of odd people but I was struck, and that was sort of my exposure too to the American Foreign Service. Ambassador Miner like so many American ambassadors in that period had so little African experience. He had been ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago so that sort of counted as African experience, but in the 60's there were very few Americans with any experience in Africa. Then we had a lot of ambassadors who simply came to Africa and learned on the job.

*Q: Sierra Leone only had their independence less than ten years before.*

HULL: Absolutely, and there were ambassadors who perhaps accompanied an assistant secretary of state on a trip and therefore were deemed to be experts on Africa when in fact they had done little more than make a trip.

*Q: Richard Nixon in '57 I think as vice president went to advise his boss President Eisenhower what to do about these imminent independences. Nixon convinced the executive branch of government to create an Africa bureau knowing nothing. This is an example of what you had, the executive branch of the government to create an Africa bureau. But knowing nothing. This is an example of what you had.*

HULL: Exactly. You read memoirs and things of people who served in Africa. It is interesting what little knowledge we had of the continent which was not surprising. It was where the great white hunters went and missionaries and not many other people. Very little commerce except maybe Liberia where we had rubber plantations.

*Q: Europeans knew their way around.*

HULL: Right, but Americans not so much. So I was happy to gain some expertise in Africa because I was interested in Africa even before I joined the Peace Corps, but I knew very little about it. But to make a very long story short, I was extremely grateful for the extreme generosity of people who lived in my village. I was really taken aback, as everybody is who serves in Africa, about how generous people can be who have so little. In fact if you go to the back page of the current issue of the Foreign Service Journal, you will find a piece by Bob Griffin who went to some refugee camps in Ethiopia or in Djibouti, refugees from the Ogaden which led the fighting in Ethiopia. It is talking about how they gave him this watermelon they ground, you know how generous people can be. I think that is true throughout Africa. So I always felt that I wanted to give back in some way to these people who had been so generous to me. So it is one of the reasons I eventually maneuvered to go back there as ambassador when I might have gone to any other place. But we will come to that story later on.

*Q: You said it was adventure, rather than idealism, but I see a creeping idealism.*

HULL: But there is still a lot of adventure, and certainly a lot of gratitude. It really did open my eyes. It is true culture shock for people coming straight from the United States going to live in an African village. I can remember a guy who was doing really well in Peace Corps training until he was sent out. Part of the training was to live with a local family in the village you were going to be assigned to. This guy from Oklahoma was doing just terrifically until he went to this village and had to eat with his hands. He could not visualize people without eating utensils. He said he would rather go to Vietnam than that. So there is often for people a breaking point when you have to live at that level. In the foreign service you don't live at that level. You live among the elite of a country usually.

*Q: Although if you are a good diplomat there are these brief moments when you do go to the villages.*

HULL: Oh of course, but to live there day in and day out at the grass roots in Africa, for me it was also something I felt that was very valuable as a Peace Corps and as a diplomat was the fact that I had lived at the grass roots level in Africa. So as I dealt with the elites in countries I was always cognizant of the fact that there is a vast number of people in Africa living at a subsistence level or below who we were not necessarily interacting with except through our USAID or Peace Corps programs. You know a surprising number of diplomats are former Peace Corps volunteers in Africa and I think that really strengthens our abilities. I often see a difference with those who don't have that grass roots experience especially in the very poor countries. Not necessarily in South Africa for example or a situation like that, but in some of these destitute countries. Sometimes you can't avoid it. People are living at impoverished levels all around you, but I think it is very hard to understand that daily struggle to survive unless you have been immersed in it.

*Q: So years later if you do have the privilege of air conditioning...*

HULL: You understand how it is to live without air conditioning, how to live getting your water from the river and everything.

*Q: So President Kennedy was really on to something when he created this.*

HULL: Oh absolutely. I must say again to make a long story short, we just succeeded in November getting the Peace Corps to agree to return to Sierra Leone after 15 years away. But that is another story we can get to, because a former colleague of yours and mine is now head of the Peace Corps, Aaron Williams. Interestingly his chief of staff is Stacy Rhodes who replaced Aaron in Pretoria as head of USAID. Now I know we can have separate discussions on that.

*Q: No, Aaron was quite a remarkable figure, but for the reader's sake we are talking about an experience the ambassador and I shared in the late 90's in Pretoria, but that leaps ahead in our chronology.*

HULL: Right, that is a digression, we are digressing, but I worked as a primary school teacher, had terrific students, and to this day I stay in correspondence with some of those students. Some have unfortunately died, but again later on in life going back as ambassador, that was a tremendous asset having people who lived at the grass roots whom I could talk to and get unvarnished insight on how people were looking at the country and not necessarily through the eyes of people with vested interest in government or economic positions.

*Q: We won't dwell on whether this was idealistic or not, but it sure was very smart.*

HULL: Well it was sure very useful and if it was smart, it was accidentally smart. One does not have the foresight to know one will come back as ambassador, but even when I was in the Peace Corps talking to Ambassador Miner I thought it would be interesting to come back as ambassador, to the country you served in as Peace Corps.

So anyway the Peace Corps experience was terrific. We had interesting people. The guy at the head of our program was a guy by the name of Joe Kennedy who was number two in Africare when it started up and stayed at the head of Africare. I believe he is still on the board of Africare. My regional director was a guy by the name of Alan Alemian who went to work with Joe Kennedy at the beginning in Africare and stayed for many years. He later came to my swearing in as ambassador.

*Q: So what was the relation back then?*

HULL: He was country director back then as part of the Peace Corps staff. Joe Kennedy was the director of the Peace Corps program in Sierra Leone. Another interesting crossing paths in life was Walter Carrington who was my ambassador in Nigeria and my predecessor in my current professorial position. But he was the very first Peace Corps director in Sierra Leone in 1961. Sierra Leone was one of the seven original Peace Corps countries, and Walter Carrington was a young African American, a Harvard law School graduate who was on the anti discrimination commission of the State of Massachusetts. The Kennedys saw him as a comer and had some political designs for him. Bobby Kennedy at the behest of John Kennedy offered him the Peace Corps directorship, and he went out and started up the program. He and I are in contact as are a number of his original Peace Corps volunteers from 1961. It is interesting that all these people stay in contact.

*Q: Bobby Kennedy was attorney General, so what was..*

HULL: This was at the campaign period but Bobby Kennedy had many other political responsibilities.

*Q: He was never official.*

HULL: No, but Sargent Shriver was and he was also part of the family. Carrington had worked for Kennedy on the campaign, and they wanted to reward him with something.

*Q: So he had a close association with the family.*

HULL: Yes.

*Q: Very interesting, and Carrington later was ambassador to Nigeria among other things.*

HULL: Well an interesting part of his career, he was named ambassador to Senegal by President Carter. He was confirmed by the Senate and sworn in, and went to Senegal as ambassador, but the election had taken place. Reagan was elected, so although he got to Senegal he never actually presented his credentials, he was recalled.

*Q: Oh my God.*

HULL: So he calls himself of course, Ambassador to Senegal which in our eyes he was, he was confirmed.

*Q: For a few days, yeah.*

HULL: He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate, sworn in, but never got to present his credentials.

*Q: That would have been 1981.*

*So anything to add Ambassador Hull about your Peace Corps experience? Anything of a personal nature happen during this period.*

HULL: Well I always felt that the best souvenir that I brought back from the Peace Corps was my wife, Jill. We got married shortly after returning from the Peace Corps, in fact within a month.

*Q: Well wait. She started a year later than you did.*

HULL: Right, so she curtailed and only did one year in the Peace Corps and I did two.

*Q: A year is a lot. It is plenty.*

HULL: Right. I had the good fortune to be admitted to Columbia University, so we knew pretty much what we were going to be doing, and she obtained a teaching position on the southern fringe of Harlem on 110<sup>th</sup> Street in a private experimental school, the New Lincoln School very close to Columbia. The Rockefellers had funded the school and there was part of the ethical culture society that ran it, and it was a fascinating school that mixed a lot of children of very prominent New Yorkers with lots of scholarship students from Harlem. So it was a fascinating social experiment.

*Q: So it was in the southern part of Harlem but it was not entirely people from Harlem.*

HULL: Exactly, in fact a lot of kids got mugged for their lunch money as they came out of the subway to go to school. It was a tough neighborhood and we didn't have much money and Jill used to walk across 110<sup>th</sup> street every day until finally one of the superintendents that maintained one of the buildings came out to her after she had been accosted and said, "You know we really like having you walk through our neighborhood, but we are not going to be able to protect you." So after that she started taking the bus. Quite often the police would cruise with her because being white in Harlem in 1970 was not common, and you sort of stuck out as somebody who might have some money in your purse or something.

*Q: Sure, I sort of remember being in that myself once or twice. Now were you doing history?*

HULL: Well I was admitted to a joint program called Education and International Affairs, It involved getting two master's degrees, a Master of Arts in International Education and a Masters in International Affairs from the School of International Affairs at Columbia. Now it is the School of International Public Affairs. The Master's degree in international education was from Teacher's College at Columbia. So it was a joint program in two schools at Columbia. I also picked up the certificate in African Studies from their Institute of African Studies, since I specialized in African Studies.

*Q: Do you remember what you had in mind? Were you intending to teach?*

HULL: I was intending to go back to Africa to work. Possibly with USAID, possibly with USIA or the State Department. But then I also started working on a doctorate in international education at Teacher's College. I finished all my coursework and did all but my dissertation in terms of getting my thesis approved and was working on that At the same time I was trying to join the foreign service. I took the foreign service exam a couple of times and didn't quite pass it. The third time I did. While I was doing that I interned at the Institute of International Education (IIE) in UN Plaza which among other things ran the Fulbright Program. Then I got a job with them, so I was sort of studying and working as well as having worked constantly in the libraries at Columbia when I was a graduate student. At IIE I administered Fulbright graduate programs for countries like Sweden, Afghanistan, and Germany which was very interesting. But I quit that job because I wanted to make more progress on my dissertation. But I said to them if you ever create a job that is involved in developing new programs, I would be interested in coming back. Lo and behold they created a position called Vice President for research and planning or planning and development or something like that. It turned out to be a two person office, the Vice President and myself working very closely with the President of IIE at the time because that was an initiative of his so he wanted it to succeed.

*Q: So you were doing this while you were working at Columbia?*

HULL: Well I had done all my course work, so I was just trying to juggle doing a dissertation and working. That was an interesting job because Senator Fulbright had left the U.S. Senate. If I recall correctly he was defeated. He went to work for a law firm. He was very elderly of course. But he worked one day a month for us. I was assigned to be his control officer and set up his appointments for us. He was to help us in raising funds for program initiatives.

*Q: So you got to know him.*

HULL: I got to know him a bit. One of the things I always had to do was schedule an afternoon nap for him, which being young I found rather odd. Now that I am older, I think it is a delightful idea that he would come to New York and nap.

*Q: What time did he nap?*

HULL: Sometime after lunch, like 1:30 or 2:00 in the afternoon. I would have to schedule a one hour nap for Senator Fulbright. So he was doing that for us. So that was one interesting aspect of that job.

*Q: So he was doing fundraising for IIE, is that it?*

HULL: For IIE, because they were largely dependent on State Department for Fulbright funding and on USAID for other types of exchange programs. As was their neighbor the African American Institute where I also had worked a little bit on a book entitled, Formal Education in African Development. I did nothing more than proofread the text of this little tome, but you see I am acknowledged down there as one of the people who worked on this thing. I didn't really make a significant contribution but it gave me exposure to AAI, because I had to work at AAI on this thing.

*Q: You are not the only person I have known who has worked both at IIE and AAI. Were they in sort of competition?*

HULL: No, AAI was specific to Africa, educational exchange with Africa and also had a piece of the international visitor program and so forth with their Washington office. But they did similar things, but IIE was global and they were very specific to Africa. So I had a little exposure to the non profit world of international educational exchange while I was in New York. As I said I was very interested in, well I should say I thrived at Columbia. I just found it a wonderful university. I loved their libraries and all their resources. Where else could you ride on an elevator with both Margaret Mead and Zbigniew Brzezinski at the same time. That sort of thing, because they had all these marvelous professors.

*Q: Did you have that experience?*

HULL: Oh yes.

*Q: Margaret Mead and Zbigniew Brzezinski.*

HULL: Absolutely. And she always walked around with this big staff, a wooden staff. Not a people staff but a wooden staff, so she was always very distinctive.

*Q: The queen of the elevator.*

HULL: She was elderly at that time and Zbigniew Brzezinski of course had this close cropped haircut, buzz cut which he still has. But there were people like that all around, and some very prominent professors. I was in a special program called the International Fellows Program at Columbia, which selected a small number of people to be in this program. It had a different professor every week. The Stanley Hoffmans of the world would come in from Harvard and from Columbia, major universities to give a lecture to us every week. Then we would go down to Washington and we would have these phenomenal meetings with all sorts of people who had memorable things to tell us. We would go to the White House. It was a very elite sort of thing. I can remember some of them very vividly. I can remember Congressman Gerry Ford telling us that Nixon should resign in a private meeting. Watergate had reached the point where Nixon should go, but he certainly wasn't saying that publicly.

*Q: This would have been in '73 or '74.*

HULL: Yes. '72-'73. It was the Watergate era so it was very exciting. We met a large number of senators. I remember Strom Thurmond standing up explaining why he was opposed to integration, to busing. Because if you remember Strom Thurmond had a succession of wives and he married this young beauty queen and started propagating with her. So I can remember him telling us how he wasn't opposed to integration; he just wanted to see his little children having to spend so much time on a school bus every day. I can remember us going to see John Warner when he was Secretary of the Navy. Somebody at that time, one of the people in our group, asked him at the time there were a lot of problems in Italy between Italians and U.S. sailors.

*Q: The Ugly American again.*

HULL: I remember John Warner explaining the only problem was the Italian fathers didn't want their daughters dating black American sailors, and not really understanding the depth of the racial problems they were having in the U.S. Navy. Not so much problems with Italians as within the navy itself.

*Q: So John Warner kind of missed the...*

HULL: He kind of missed it, yeah. We always found people who were a little tone deaf. The one meeting we actually didn't get was with Henry Kissinger. We were at the White House that day waiting to meet with Henry, but suddenly he had to be upstairs for a news conference. A little news conference at which he announced "Peace is at hand" in Vietnam, when it wasn't. A memorable time. I can remember when we went to see the New York Times bureau chief, Scotty Reston. I can remember my group asking Scotty

Reston why the New York Times did not diversify and hire somebody like John Anderson, who was doing a lot of Watergate exposés in his column. Why didn't they include his column in the New York Times op-ed page? I do remember Scotty Reston saying, "John Anderson, great fast ball, no control." So anyway it was a fascinating program. We went everywhere in the U.S. government and met people at very senior levels. The head of the program at Columbia for us later became ambassador to Sweden. He was a political appointee. There was lots of interconnection, old school ties sort of thing.

*Q: You went right directly to the senior seminar sort of.*

HULL: Yeah, kind of. You only did it for one year but because I was hanging around writing my dissertation, they used to let me come every year with them on their trips to Washington. Just great exposure to how Washington worked.

*Q: You say it was an elite program, how many people approximately?*

HULL: Oh probably about 15. I am trying to remember, one of them because we only had a couple of African Americans in the group. One of them was in the foreign service, became ambassador to Nigeria. I think he was a DAS as well. I will think of his name later. Anyway it was a group at that level. They came from all the schools in Columbia, the medical school, the social work school, the Teacher's College which is where I was from when I did it, the School of International Affairs graduate school. So people brought into the group an interest in international affairs but great diversity of academic backgrounds.

*Q: Would such a background be possible to acquire these days.*

HULL: Well I would assume so. The program is still actually run by a friend of mine, Ambassador John Hirsch who was a predecessor of mine as ambassador to Sierra Leone, a long time foreign service officer. He runs two programs, one with Occidental College where they come to spend the semester studying the UN in New York, and also he runs this program at Columbia University.

*Q: You seem to be in touch with many people from that period.*

HULL: Well people I have known over the years. John Hirsch was also my DCM in Somalia and he was also consul general in Johannesburg in the early 90's. He might be somebody you would like to talk to. John is a great intellect. He would be a super person for you.

*Q: OK. Well we are overlapping projects here.*

HULL: Sure. Meanwhile I said I was interested in the foreign service. I had passed the written exam and had to go down for my oral exam. I also explored other places like USAID. USAID called me up and said, "We would really like you to join our training

program.” I am forgetting the name of it. It was a USAID program and we want you to be a human resources specialist in terms of higher education. I said, “Wonderful.” Then they called me back the next week and said they decided they weren’t going to hire so many human resource specialists. They were cutting back on education, but it would have been nice to have you. Of course I had not quit my job at IIE. I had gone down because the CIA was interested in having me do something, but we had a falling out. They wanted me to take an oral examination or do an oral test just for their records on my skills in French. I told them I did not want to embarrass myself, and that my French was not that good. If I joined them I would want to study French before I went anywhere. They were very miffed that I was so insubordinate that I refused to take their French test. So that was the end of it for me.

*Q: A great turning moment in history.*

HULL: Right. And, at the same time these happened, I passed the foreign service exam and they invited me to have the oral exam where I had something of an advantage because the head of my oral panel had been the PAO (Public Affairs Officer) in Freetown when I had been a Peace Corps volunteer, and before he joined the foreign service he had gotten his doctorate at Teacher’s College at Columbia, and then there was some other third thing we found we had in common in our backgrounds. So he was a BEX (Board of Examiners) for a number of years because he had a heart problem. So he was nice to me.

*Q: Had you known each other in...*

HULL: Well I had known his APAO more. In those days we had two officers in Freetown and many other places. Now we have one.

*Q: Maybe in Monrovia there are two.*

HULL: But anyway, I had known him a little bit. Not as much as other people, but we had all these common friends like Ambassador Miner.

*Q: Not well enough for him to have to recuse himself.*

HULL: Exactly. In those days they probably didn’t recuse themselves. So that was probably a bit of an advantage, but also I think they were glad to have a live one who knew something about Africa.

*Q: Yeah, not that many.*

HULL: And also knew something about international education exchange and that stuff, so my background meshed very well. I only blew one question in my foreign service exam, and it still lives with me because my answer was right and theirs was wrong. Which was the question was something along the lines of you had proposed some sort of program for a country in Africa, hypothetically. The country’s government was very excited about it, but unfortunately Washington did not have sufficient funding to fund the

program, so how would you explain that Washington, our rich government, was unable to fund this? I said, "Well I would tell them that Washington could not fund this because Congress would not appropriate special funding obviously." They said, "No that is the one question you got wrong. You never blame Washington." "*I spent my whole career blaming Washington.*" It is funny what sticks out in your mind from that type of experience.

*Q: Well if you can't blame Washington what in heaven would they have you do?*

HULL: I don't know. You are a BEX alumnus at that type of question.

*Q: They would have advised you to say this is a misunderstanding.*

HULL: Or it is our fault here at the embassy, who knows.

*Q: And they used the word "wrong"?*

HULL: Yeah you should never blame Washington.

*Q: OK, that is a good one.*

HULL: Rather than tell the truth. Fall on your sword before you blame Washington.

*Q: Well that is a great lesson.*

HULL: It sort of gives you a perception of the State Department but of course it was a USIA panel. But at that time the Bureau of Educational and Cultural affairs was still in the State Department.

*Q: CU I think it was called.*

HULL: You are right, it was CU back in those days.

*Q: So this was in the Carter period?*

HULL: This was actually Gerald Ford was president when I joined the foreign service.

*Q: Whom you had earlier met in a closed session.*

HULL: He was House minority leader.

*Q: So you passed the exam. It sounds like you had a rather incredible array of possibilities, three or four or five possibilities.*

HULL: Several possibilities, but USIA was the one I was most interested in. I didn't apply to the State Department because I was interested in the education and cultural

dimension of foreign affairs. In fact one of the people on my dissertation panel at Columbia was Charles Frankel. Charles Frankel, I am gazing at my bookshelf here. I guess his book is in my office in Boston. Charles Frankel wrote a book called The Neglected Aspect of Foreign Affairs, which was about the educational/cultural dimension, because Lyndon Johnson had appointed him Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. He later became the head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, but was a leading philosopher, a great man and wonderful person. I had studied under him at Columbia. He had resigned after one year as Assistant Secretary of Educational and Cultural Affairs in protest against the Vietnam War. So he was a man of tremendous integrity. He and his wife were later murdered in their bed by a home intruder when I was serving in South Africa for the first time in the late 1970's. It was a major tragedy.

*Q: In New York?*

HULL: Well, north of New York. They lived in a suburb up in Westchester County I believe it was. Or across the river from Westchester Country. In any case that was another influence I had was having studied with a former Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs. I understood that exchanges were administered overseas by USIA so that was my interest in joining USIA. Unlike many people going into USIA my background was not journalism. My background was more in education and cultural affairs.

*Q: As it was supposed to be.*

HULL: I want to make it clear that once you were in USIA, the people who were on the faster track were those on the media side, at least in those days at USIA. I don't think that always held true. I don't think it held true in my case. I had to adapt of course.

*Q: It was an articulated principle certainly in the 80's.*

HULL: But I never served in an information officer position or assistant information officer position. Partly because I fast tracked very quickly in USIA by taking assignments nobody else wanted. We will get to that later.

*Q: Again this is about you not me. I went into USIA with exactly the same intentions and background as you and I never had a CAO (Cultural Affairs Officer) position, never. I had only IO (Information Officer).*

HULL: I never had a CAO position either. Well, I had an A CAO (Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer). We will get to that. So anyway, to the great dismay of the president of IIE I had decided to leave my position, because he had nominated me, because he was a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, he had nominated me for a junior membership on the Council of Foreign Relations. So he was very miffed at me and withdrew my nomination and all this sort of stuff.

*Q: Miffed that you were going into the foreign service?*

HULL: Well it was under kind of his initiative, this office and what have you. Wallace Edgerton was his name.

*Q: That seems a little narrow minded.*

HULL: In any case I tried to point out to him I was happy going into the foreign service. I was not the only one to go from IIE to the foreign service. There were other people in the organization I knew at the time who later joined the foreign service.

*Q: Well of course that is intuitive. People tend to their own role in life. So you joined in seventy something.*

HULL: '76, the bicentennial class. That was kind of exciting. I remember we got to go up to the balcony of the State Department and watch the fireworks over Washington for the Fourth of July. That was really neat. It was the first time they had lasers and stuff because they really went all out for the bicentennial of our country.

*Q: The USIA, no wait was it CU at the time?*

HULL: Right, it was part of the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs but of course all classes did their USIA training and then they joined the A-100 course .

*Q: So there was no separate building.*

HULL: Was it A-100 or A-200?

*Q: Well now they call it A-100.*

HULL: I guess it was the A-100 course.

*Q: So that building on Pennsylvania Avenue was not yet in use.*

HULL: No, we were on 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue, but because we were in the A-100 course, they routed everybody in the course over to the State Department at FSI (Foreign Service Institute).

*Q: OK, got it.*

HULL: Very ecumenical sometimes.

*Q: OK, so you did some training I guess.*

HULL: Yes, very good. Small class. People like Linda Jewel. Bill Barr was a good friend in that class. But we had had all of our USIA classes, so we were very close too. By and

large very distinguished people. One of the most fascinating losers we had was a very impressive African American journalist, claimed to be an author who lived in France by the name of Duke Williams. On one level he was so impressive, but very superficial in everything he said about his past was a lie so you could never tell where the truth was. But he had some whacko off the wall ideas. One that always lingers with me we went over in our course to the CIA for a briefing. The Deputy Director of the CIA gave his briefing and then asked if there were any questions. Duke raised his hands and asked the director of the CIA what kinds of efforts the CIA was making to contact extra terrestrials and other kinds of aliens beyond our own Milky Way or whatever. Of course all the rest of the people in the class cringed. The people from USIA especially drew down in their seats at this question. But then we were all shocked because the guy from the CIA talked as if they were actually doing something. And in hindsight given some of the revelations, he may have been looking beyond our own universe.

*Q: Mr. Williams might have known this?*

HULL: Who knows.

*Q: He just guessed it?*

HULL: He had a very short lived career. He was one of the few people I have ever met who was not tenured.

*Q: That takes some doing.*

HULL: Gerry Hutchel was the one. He worked under Gerry in Ouagadougou and Gerry very conscientiously documented this guy's deficiencies. It was funny, when I became PAO in Ouagadougou, this is getting a little ahead of the story, but I get off the plane and the one person I always used to tell stories about because there were many of them was Duke Williamson. Who should greet me as I am getting off the airplane in Ouagadougou, but Duke Williams. Gerry had left long before. That is part of the story. Duke married a USAID person. While he did not have a job with USIA, he was in this limbo grieving to USIA. He was being selected out, there is Duke on the tarmac to greet me. Oh my god how far do I have to go to get Duke out of my life. It is funny. He was a great guy socially but he had this life that was so much fiction.

I remember when I was a junior officer and they handed out our assignments. They said to me, "Tom, we are going to send you as a public affairs trainee to Kinshasa because it is a great career post." I thought do I really want a great career, but I will go where ever they send me, and it will be interesting. Duke was being sent someplace in Africa. We were the two people in our class going to Africa. So we went to meet with the African Area office. They had us meet with the executive officer in AF, John Garner. Duke and I sat down in front of him, and he said to Duke, "What have you done in your life?" Duke told him how he had been a radio broadcaster and an author in Paris and had written novels. All these mythical things that he sort of apparently never really did. I knew it was all a lie and am sort of sitting here going, "Oh my God, here goes Duke again." Then this

guy turns to me and says, “That is really impressive. Have you done anything with your life?” I could have gotten up from this chair and strangled this guy. I did want to go to Africa.

But after the training, I must say the A-100 was very valuable for me. A lot of good friendships, one of which is the Nolan brothers, Steve and Rob Nolan who were in my class among others. One of the reasons they were good friends was that when they were teenagers we used to go to the beach together in Sierra Leone because they were college students, and their father worked in the embassy in Freetown when I was there. I have known these guys since they were adolescents basically. They were only like four years younger than I was but they were in college and I was in the Peace Corps. But they were friends of my friend Roger who I had met in the Peace Corps and who sort of had given me the introduction of what Peace Corps life was like. Roger eventually quit the foreign service and went to run a bar in Maine. But he found it too cold and came back to the foreign service and ultimately retired I guess a year and a half ago after finally making it into the senior foreign service which was pretty good for a guy without a college education. He was an IT guy.

*Q: Well fascinating. You were assigned to Kinshasa.*

HULL: I was assigned to Kinshasa, went to Kinshasa as a public affairs trainee, which meant that in those days in USIA the idea was that you would rotate among all the offices of a USIS operation and of the embassy as well, which rarely worked out because there were usually vacancies and you had to plug people in to fill vacancies. But in my case it actually did work out pretty well. I had my very first PAO was a fellow named Jim Connolly. Jim was a fast track riser in the foreign service. Kinshasa was a major post at that time. There were two great civil wars in Africa in the 60's: Biafra in Nigeria, and the Congo civil war. The U.S. had put Mobutu in power pretty much and strongly supported him. So we had a major USIA operation there with a lot of branch posts in places like Kisangani and Lubumbashi. The intention was for me to be a public affairs trainee for one year in Kinshasa and then move on and become the Branch PAO in Kisangani. We had a pretty good and interesting staff. We had a CAO by the name of John Keller, who was a dedicated cultural affairs officer and then left and became a professor at Penn State in American studies. We had a vacant ACAO position, so I spent more time as the exchanges officer than anything else while at post there. but I also worked with our AIO, who I guess was acting IO for a lot of the time. Her name was Rosemary Crockett. So we got to become good colleagues there. Eventually an IO came in, a fellow by the name of Fred Lasore. We had a great program officer, a guy by the name of Jim Hogan. I got to know his brother pretty well, John Hogan who was a Peace Corps director in Ouagadougou later on when I served there. He became chief of staff with the Peace Corps which gave me a nice connection with the Peace Corps for awhile. These were wonderful people to work with, great colleagues. But Jim Connolly was pulled from post because they wanted him to be PAO in Moscow which was really a big job in USIA in the 1970's. They sent him off to learn Russian. He had no aptitude for languages. He never succeeded in getting his 3-3 in Russian, so they decided to break his assignment. He decided to retire from USIA and go work at his alma mater Notre Dame. He was

replaced by another PAO by the name of Robert Dumas. Robert Dumas claimed to be an illegitimate descendant of the great Alexandre Dumas, and was quite a character. He came from DCM in Ouagadougou to be PAO in Kinshasa. He always felt he had been stabbed in the back and was always resentful that he was not made ambassador even though he had what was then one of the major USIA PAO positions at a very substantial post. We also had a regional librarian there, we also had an American secretary, Adele Sorentino. It was a very active post. In fact my programming highlight while I was there was John Hope Franklin coming out as an academic specialist. I was very attentive to John Hope Franklin and by coincidence my mother-in-law was visiting. John Hope Franklin, if you know him at all, he loves orchids and is a real naturalist when it comes to plants and everything else. I remember since both he and my mother-in-law were from Illinois, sending them off to the botanic gardens a couple of hours south of Kinshasa. You could not imagine two people more unlike, but they really hit it off and had a great time. But that was one highlight of working there, We had a very interesting ambassador, Walt Cutler. Ambassador Cutler went on to become ambassador to Saudi Arabia and other things, a very distinguished career. While I was there I learned of some of the agency sensitivities. We had a USAID director there, very substantial organization. They had a mission director by the name of Fermino Spencer, who always felt he was more important than the ambassador, one because he had a lot of resources and a big operation, but two his personal foreign service rank was higher than the ambassador's foreign service rank. This was always a tension but it really became a tension that drew everyone's attention in the mission when Fermino decided that because he outranked the ambassador he should start flying the American flag on his car driving around town. Whereupon Fermino was called on the carpet and told that he could take the flag off his car or he could leave post. So that was an introduction to the USAID-State Department tension which as a USIA person was interesting to watch from another dimension.

Also very memorable was my first weekend there. I had a friend from the A-100 course who had arrived a couple of months before me as one of the junior political officers. Our first weekend there he and his wife decided to take my wife and myself on a picnic to the countryside along the Zaire River. At the time the Shaba war was going on, and the borders were closed to the country. What we didn't know is he was driving us to a place that was under the control of Mobutu's notorious paratroopers. When we showed up in our embassy vehicle without a driver, just sort of on our own, they sort of took us hostage until we would pay them off. Of course neither of us or our spouses really wanted to pay them off, but my friend's spouse was very pregnant, so that was a consideration. So we spent hours, at least a couple of hours with these guys haggling with them. They said, "Well you must have something for us, otherwise we will probably arrest you as spies or something." "I am sorry we don't have anything for you," we said. At the same time unfortunately a Zairian commercial truck came wandering down the road into their area. Once the guys saw the soldiers he immediately did a u-turn because he saw these guys were going to steal all of the goods out of his truck. So they grabbed me and they told me follow that truck. With a gun pointed to my head I was told to drive the vehicle and catch the truck. I knew that it probably wouldn't be a good idea to catch the truck because if I did they probably wouldn't want a witness to what they were doing. So I very slowly drove, and they drove off. But anyway they eventually brought me back. I think in the

end my friend had a couple of packs of cigarettes, and so for the price of a couple of packs of cigarettes they ultimately gave us our freedom. I thought nothing of it. I thought this happened all the time in the foreign service.

*Q: It did happen to me in Kinshasa in 1980 just as a visitor, but did this change your thinking about a future in the foreign service?*

HULL: Oh no, I thought it was part of the great adventure of Africa.

*Q: Would you have given the cigarettes up front knowing what you know now?*

HULL: No, absolutely not. I was kind of miffed that he gave them anything personally.

*Q: Wait, they would have killed you but for a couple of packs of cigarettes.*

HULL: Well we were the Americans and if they had thought of it they would have been in bog trouble. But at the time the day was moving and the sun was settling down. That was problematic. So much so, I thought nothing of it. My friend reported it to the Ambassador or the DCM or something. After that they decided that people would not be allowed to travel outside of Kinshasa without notifying their RSO or their section head as to where they were.

*Q: so you were the cause of...*

HULL: So that was my first weekend overseas in the foreign service. Enroute to post I stopped in Sierra Leone to work on my doctoral dissertation research because I hadn't given up at that point. I had a good time with Ambassador Michael Samuels who I still keep a little bit in touch with. He was oddly a political appointee of the, which administration, it must have been the Ford or the Nixon. In '76 that would have been Ford. Ford was until '77 so he was still in office. I don't think Carter was in office. Anyway, Michael Samuels then left because he was a political appointee, and went to work for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce running international programs I believe it was. But anyway, two other highlights of my time in Kinshasa which was only one year. Because I was a public affairs trainee and I was supposed to become BPAO in Kisangani. The consulate up in Kisangani had actually been closed a couple of years before. But we kept the USIS branch post going. We also had a branch post in Lubumbashi where there was this terrible BPAO by the name of Neil Walsh who tried to right things.

*Q: I think there is a note of irony here. Neil is a good friend and very much active.*

HULL: But Neil and I looked a bit alike in those days. I had my hair and we were both about the same age. Whenever he would come to Kinshasa, the Economic Counselor would say to me, "Hello Neil." "No I am not Neil; I am Tom." So I guess we looked somewhat similar back then. But I was sent up to Kisangani to close the post. They decided who is the most appropriate person to go up there and face the wrath of the FSNs and fire them all, and I think they decided it was the public affairs trainee. We had an

executive officer at post who could have done it, but in point of fact they sent me up, and Jill and I lived in Kisangani for a month because it took that long to destroy everything that should be destroyed, give away the books to the university there, sell the new furniture for the library and the office (which were purchased, I believe, by a local casino), and to fire the employees, So it wasn't a happy experience, but it was an interesting experience. We would go down to a local bar because there weren't a lot of places to go. There were places run by Greek Cypriots in town, mainly casino bars. And we would hear from old Belgians at the bar about what it was like in the 1960's when the American consul had to eat the American flag in town square or else be at risk of losing his life. They would show me where the priests and nuns had been shot. Across the river there had been the massacre of the Belgian priests and nuns, the rape of the nuns. So, about the only touristic highlight was to go over and see the bloody wall where everybody had been lined up and shot. It was a pretty depressing place to be. There was a very active program of the Rockefeller Foundation at the university there, so there were a number of Americans still in Kisangani. We would hear about all the former BPAO's and I must say one who they spoke very highly of always was John Archibald whom we saw yesterday. I could tell from the records at the post that John had been a very active and excellent Branch Public Affairs Officer. Of course, Kisangani was old Stanleyville which is why they had all those massacres. If you were to teach a course in African literature I always felt you could do a course called the Novels of Kisangani with Heart of Darkness, A Bend in the River, and other novels that have been written about this exotic place. So I was glad to have a month there, but I think that a month was enough. There were always overtones of tension, and I think I told you I had to tell the regional governor that I was closing the post. That meant no more official American presence in Kisangani.

*Q: No fun.*

HULL: So I had to do that, and went over to tell him, but not being entirely confident in my French I took my French and English dictionary with me in case I had to pull it out. I also took my supply of presentation books and such materials from USIS to sweeten the message. But it turned out Mobutu's wife had died the night before, so actually I sat cooling my heels for a few hours while they dealt with that emergency because of the real fear the country would dissolve. Because she was always seen as the brains behind the throne in Zaire, Mama Mobutu, as she was known, was the cleverer of the two. I did see him. I gave him the unfortunate news, but the Government was preoccupied with the death of Mama Mobutu. It was written up and I probably have some newspaper articles from the papers at that time about how Monsieur Jill had come and announced that the office was being closed. That was because it was my wife's French English dictionary, and it said Jill Hull on the cover where she had written her name lest she lose her dictionary. In Zaire your first name is always your family name, so they assumed that must be true for Americans as well. So I became Monsieur Jill. I felt this is great. I am anonymous. I have given this horrible message and if anybody resents it they will be looking for Monsieur Jill.

*Q: Something you might have done on purpose.*

HULL: Right. So having achieved this unfortunate task, we went back to Kinshasa. I was hoping to take the boat down the river, but I ended up on Air Zaire which was also known as air scare. And it was fascinating. I remember the pilots coming on and saying, "Monsieurs et Madames Nous avons un problem." We wondered what kind of problem there was, but we were half hour out. They said, "We are going to have to circle back. We don't know what the problem is." So we circled back for about 15 minutes, and then they came back on. It was in French. "We think we solved the problem, so they turned around again and went to Kinshasa." We thought, we sure hope so. Travel by air in Zaire at that time was fascinating. Parker Borg was the consul general in Lubumbashi. He later became an ambassador. He wrote a famous report. In those days we did what we called airgrams as well as telegrams that were sent back to Washington. He sent an airgram on fear of flying as he called it about traveling in Zaire where you had to go through an internal passport process, where you have technically left the country and could not come back in until your flight was finished. People would check in, and they always overbooked flights. So there was always a mad dash for the airplane and if you got a seat, you got a seat, and if you didn't you went back to the waiting room and waited until the next day for another flight for Lubumbashi. So you would always bring a blanket and pillow with you and food. There was no place to eat if they had to stay overnight. Then they would try again the next day. Then there was always the danger when you got to Lubumbashi that nobody would be in the control tower. This was quite common. Either they were asleep or absent. Usually the pilots would just land until one day a plane ran off the runway. Nobody was killed, but it was a serious enough incident that the pilots refused to land unless there was somebody in the tower. They would fly in and buzz the control tower to try to wake up whoever was there. If nobody was there, then they would turn around and fly back to Kinshasa which was a considerable distance because it was a huge country, and they would land and everybody would get off and they would wait until the next day in the waiting room until they could get on the plane again. Those were the hazards of flying. I remember when we would send grantees to the United States, we always had to explain to them you don't have to take your own food with you on a flight, because they were accustomed to going to the airport and having to have their own food in case they were stuck there overnight. They didn't know how they were going to eat on the airplane on this long trip.

So the last highlight I will mention from that tour of duty was I was sent to Brazzaville. We had not had diplomatic relations with Brazzaville for about 14 years. They were re-established. It was known as a communist government which was one reason why we did not have those diplomatic relations. They sent a chargé d'affaires there, and they sent him about four people, somebody who was basically an administrative officer who came with his wife who worked as the secretary. And then I guess somebody else who worked as an all purpose political officer, and six U.S. marines. So the marines actually outnumbered the embassy. They had this magnificent old embassy building that we had there before. When they opened the old building they wanted to make sure it was not bugged so they sent in the Seabees who jack hammered around the outside of the building to make sure there were no wires. It looked like a perforated building that should say tear here so you could tear it off. But somebody had come through from Washington, Chuck Bell the desk officer, and promised them a public affairs officer and some programs. Well, lo and

behold, the program materialized before the PAO did. So they needed to send somebody over to Brazzaville to be the PAO. The fellow who was the chargé whose name is slipping me at the moment but will come back to me later, and my Public affairs officer, Robert Dumas, hated each other's guts. They had been together in Rwanda or Burundi at some time and for unknown reasons they just disdained each other horribly. So, Washington told the PAO he had to send somebody over to Brazzaville because they were getting a rock and roll duo led by Mickey Baker, who was at one time famous as part of the Mickey and Sylvia duo and had a hit song called "Hey Mickey, Hey Sylvia" or something. I think it was called Love is Strange. It was a top of the charts hit in the late 50's. He had emigrated to Paris where he actually wrote some very famous guitar books. Everybody who studied guitar in that time wanted to read Mickey Baker's books. So they were sending Mickey Baker there, and needed somebody to program Mickey Baker and his sidekick Alec Sanders, who was originally from the Caribbean, to do a concert. So we figured it was a concert in Brazzaville and my PAO very begrudgingly, because he hated this chargé, said, "You go over there, you set up this concert. You come back and when Mickey Baker arrives, you go do the concert. So having just been back from Kisangani I said to Jill, "Well Sayonara. I am headed off to Brazzaville." Which I was looking forward to, and as it turned out it was a wonderful place to go. The communists were very efficient. The people were very positive and very wonderful, and a total contrast to Zaire where everyone was very glum living under the Mobutu regime. I got over there. The Chargé said, "I am so glad to see you, Pat" I said, "I am not Pat; I am Tom. Why do you think I am Pat?" He said, "Well all the cables say you are Pat." I said, "No, that is public affairs trainee." He said, "I am so glad you are here because we are going to do these concerts that are really dynamic, and we are going to do them here in Brazzaville and Pointe Noir, and a little town called Ouesso, which is a regional capital up on the Cameroon-Brazzaville border. I said, "Well that is not exactly what my PAO said. My PAO said I should come over here and spend a couple of days setting up a concert in Brazzaville, and then go back, and then he will send my back again." The Chargé said, "No, you belong to me now." You are here TDY. You are here in my country, and I am keeping you." I had to communicate this back to my PAO and the only communication we had was by Walkie-Talkie across the river to the embassy. And everybody could hear what was going on in the Walkie-Talkie traffic because everybody kept their Walkie-Talkies on in the embassy for security reasons. So I simply told him the Chargé says I am his and I am staying. The PAO said, "No, you are mine and you are coming back." I said, "Let me put the Chargé on the radio." So they had this screaming match back and forth across the river with everybody just listening in. It was terribly embarrassing. So finally the chargé sent a cable back to Washington and asked, "Is he mine or is he not?" The State Department came back and said when an officer is TDY in another country he belongs to that country and is under the instructions of that person. So that meant I had to stay.

*Q: Did Dumas hate you for this?*

HULL: No, but it really didn't matter as we will get to because I was sent. He understood that it was Washington's decision. Dumas was a nice guy in a lot of ways. He had some interesting ideas, one of which he required everybody on his staff who did not know how

to play bridge to come to his house and have bridge lessons. So that is how Jill and I learned how to play bridge. We still love to play bridge.

So I had to fly to Pointe Noir. I thought this is really exciting, I am going to be the first American to go to Ouessou and establish anything in 14 years. Not to Ouessou, to Pointe Noire on the ocean. I fly to Pointe Noir, walk into my hotel and lo and behold there are all these screaming Americans and Brits and their bratty children because they were oil workers from Cabinda and this was their R&R point to come up to Pointe Noire. So even though we had not had relations, we had Americans go up there for years. So all right, but then I got on a slow aircraft to Ouessou on Air Linga which was the airline in Brazzaville, and we landed on a dirt airstrip in Ouessou. I was taken to the regional governor. They were delighted to see me and everything as this was the first American to be in Ouessou in all these years. They were delighted to have me and delighted to have the concert. They had one generator that worked up there so there was the possibility of the electric guitars actually working. I flew back and everything was set up, and we set up the concert in Brazzaville. The most famous female singer in the country was going to join the concert. It was just going to be a wonderful thing inviting the elite. Because I needed my visa extended the communist government or the socialist government was happy to extend it. By the way they were delighted to have the Americans. The only difficulty was there were so few hotels and the country was opening up so that almost every night I had to move from place to place to stay. But anyway it was all set up.

*Q: Dumas was in Kinshasa at this time.*

HULL: Right. And one of the problems was with Washington. I kept saying no you have really done nothing to set up your USIS post here except to send a camera which I am happy to use if you will send the film. But you have not given me a budget. So I was there in Brazzaville and the chargé said go to Ouessou, go to Point Noire. I said I have no money. So they had their acting PAO but nothing else. So they sent the program, and then they sent the PAO, and eventually they sent money. I went back and things started working out. Of course being a public affairs trainee the first months I knew absolutely nothing of what I was doing. I went back and eventually came across the river. We had a good concert in Brazzaville and a so-so concert in Pointe Noire. In Ouessou it was the most memorable programming of my career. These guys just rocked out, and there actually were people who had played rock and roll in Ouessou, and they joined in and the whole town joined in. It was just the most wonderful experience. I did have one problem when I was setting it up on my first trip. I was having lunch with the regional governor and we sat and had lunch with all the leaders in town, and sat and had lunch and the sun is beginning to go down. It is just a dirt airstrip with no lights. Well where is the airplane? I do have to go back. Oh, it is going to come. So eventually the plane lands and nobody is on board. I got on the plane and we take off, and then we made another stop and somebody came on with their chickens or whatever. We made it back to Brazzaville. Actually waiting in the airport in Brazzaville was one of the highlights of my foreign service career. I was talking to this Frenchman for about half an hour. They turned around and said, "Are you French?" I said My French is 3-3. But we got off the plane after that first trip up to Ouessou and I walked back to the embassy, because when I

worked in the embassy we all ate communally, six marines who lived on the top floor of the embassy and the rest of us in the embassy all ate together because the marines would cook and that was how we lived. So I got back to the embassy and the marine guard looked at me and said, "What are you doing here Mr. Hull?" I said, "well I went to Ouessou and took the plane back and here I am." He said, "Oh no. You didn't know that they cancelled all flights and discontinued service to Ouessou after your flight that you took there." It turned out that the chargé had to go to the head of the airline to get them to continue flying for a couple of more weeks. They had to send the plane up just for me, and then they had to continue the service so we could have the concerts up there. After the concerts ended, that was the end of air service to Ouessou. But fortunately the chargé d'affaires made wonderful contacts including with the head of the airline and was able to get me back.

*Q: Now a moment ago you said PAO. You were a TDY.*

HULL: A TDY-PAO basically.

*Q: So you were the PAO.*

HULL: Because there was nobody else there. I was the boss. But to make me feel good they called me TDY-PAO. But while I was there as I mentioned the opinion of Robert Dumas really didn't matter. That was because while I was there...

*Q: You belonged to the Chargé.*

HULL: No, while I was there I was given the assignment of being the first assistant cultural affairs officer in Pretoria because they had cut my assignment in Kisangani and needed to figure out what to do with me, and they created this new position in Pretoria. So very soon after I did the TDY in Brazzaville for basically a month, I then had to pack up and go to Pretoria.

*Q: So, you were a month in Kisangani, given the bad news, a month in Brazzaville, and then back to Kinshasa to pack.*

HULL: Right. The other ten months at post were spent rotating. I worked a little in the political section, the admin section, over at USAID, so actually I did get around a bit. I didn't work at the CIA, but they were very active there at the time. So I did rotate, I did work in various sections. The executive section; the information section, the program section of USIS, so I did get some good exposure.

*Q: Between Kinshasa and Pretoria you went back to Washington at that point, or did you go straight direct transfer.*

HULL: In fact I think I was a direct transfer. I will have to give some thought before we start up again. But I think I was a direct transfer.

*Q: So parting glimpse of Kinshasa.*

HULL: Well I like Kinshasa very much. It was a beautiful city at the time with lots of flowers. I met some interesting people like Frere Cornais who was a Belgian priest who was expert in African art and maintained Mobutu's private collection. One time the CAO and I got to go up to Mobutu's grounds and go into this warehouse that was just full of art, because quality traditional art was disappearing from Zaire. The Belgians had taken a lot to Europe and so forth. We went into this place, a huge warehouse of nothing but Zairian art belonging to Mobutu. So there were some interesting experiences and interesting times going to Kisangani and Brazzaville. But it was a very difficult place to work, and it never met nor have I ever met since people who were so somber as the people in Zaire. Not that they didn't have a lively art scene. Certainly they had lively night life. But day to day life was such a burden. You had no real prospects.

The other fascinating part that should be perhaps part of the record was the first information officer that Rosemary Crockett worked for, a guy by the name of Vince Hovanec. And his paramour who was sent out to help us run the exhibit for the Feecan Fair which Nick Bartsky who just died last year was running the exhibit section for USIA. There was a big international fair there every couple of years. We always sent a huge exhibit. So that was fascinating having some exposure, and it was on American agriculture. It was an interesting exhibit. They sent out this young woman who later became Susan Hovanec, who had a very interesting lusty affair supporting this thing with Vince Hovanec, the information officer who was given this responsibility. Vince became a prominent PAO, but that is another story that I won't go into. They eventually married. But it was disruptive. It created enormous tension at post because Jim Connolly the PAO was a very strict Roman Catholic, thought very highly of Vince Hovanec who had been a PAO at Bomako. Vince's wife had been following him around Africa for a number of years finally said to him, "Vince if you want to go to Kinshasa, you go to Kinshasa. I am going back to the Untied States, and I will see you when your tour is up." But instead of that happening Susan came along, and she was blamed by the PAO for her relationship with Vince having destroyed Vince's marriage. Meanwhile Jim and Vince who played tennis every day religiously suddenly were no longer playing tennis because Vince was betraying his estranged wife. It became a Peyton Place sort of thing. The nature of the foreign service is that at small posts personal relationships play very much into professional relationships.

*Q: And you were sot of the observer of all.*

HULL: But this is part of being a public affairs trainee. You suddenly discover there is this added dimension to the foreign service career life.

*Q: Yeah, tremendous intrigues.*

HULL: I also learned through this and other things not to be concerned about people's personal lives in the foreign service. People's lives are their lives except when they impinge on their professional performance as in the case of Lagos where I had a person

working for me who turned out to be a pedophile. That became a problem for the embassy.

*Q: Embassies seem to be divided into two types of people. People who are fascinated with other people's personal lives and do get about and others who take the attitude you have just described. That would be a minority actually.*

HULL: Well certainly at that state I was just fascinated by what is going on here, because we all discovered this very belatedly. But through time and experience you learn that every person's life is different. Vince Hovanec was replaced by another officer and his wife who really wanted to show off their water bed to anybody who wanted to have a threesome or a foursome. So I mean you sort of learn through these sorts of things at work. As long as it doesn't reflect on the United States of America and they keep it private, let's let them keep it private.

*Q: Oh my gosh. That is a good principle to go by and maybe a good point for a break. We are what year here, '78?*

HULL: We are 1978. I left early 1978 to go to Pretoria, probably in February.

*Q: Let's take a break at this point on a very high note. This watery experience. Okay, we are in our second session, I think this is the fourth segment of the tape and we are interviewing Ambassador Tom Hull in New Hampshire today on 8 January 2010. Just one postscript. On your brief TDY in Brazzaville we just wanted to add the name of the Chargé.*

HULL: Right, Jay Katzen.

*Q: And the importance of Jay Katzen I guess was that he was opening a post that had been shut down for 14 years.*

HULL: Right, and very much doing it on his own, and doing an impressive job.

*Q: Though he never became ambassador there, but he had the honor of opening a post that had been long shuttered.*

HULL: Then he spent many years in the Virginia State Legislature where he was notable for looking after foreign service interests for people who were Virginia residents. I think he, for example, made it possible for them to have some better flexibility in voting absentee and that sort of thing.

*Q: OK, so his departure from the foreign service was not entirely happy but no hard feelings I guess because he as a legislator did good things that made life a little bit easier for foreign service officers.*

HULL: I can presume so, and he also eventually ended up being chief of staff in the Peace Corps headquarters. Around the year 2006 or so, 2007.

*Q: Well that is another parting glance but your next phase then took you to Pretoria as assistant cultural affairs officer. That is a newly created post.*

HULL: Right and specifically for exchanges. It was a newly created position because after the Soweto riots there was a recognition that we wanted to give more attention to South Africa.

*Q: Again we are in 1978.*

HULL: Right.

*Q: The Soweto incident was in '76.*

HULL: I believe it was '76 and when Hector, I forget his last name, was killed and they had the Soweto riots.

*Q: Well tell me actually before we get the politics of the creation of this job, the U.S. government was having a new look I think at what it was doing in South Africa.*

HULL: Well there are two things that are happening. First of all the Soweto riots showed that South Africa and its government were not as stable as perhaps, for example, the Nixon administration thought. Obviously there was a bit of a divide between the Democrats and the Republicans in how involved to get with the whole apartheid issue. You may remember that Bobby Kennedy went to South Africa and gave his famous winds of change speech. So the Democrats were very interested in seeing change. Richard Nixon sent out an ambassador whose name I don't remember who was known as a great white hunter and spent a lot of his time in that type of activity. So when I went...

*Q: The Republican Party...*

HULL: Was more tolerant of apartheid at that point, not wanting to interfere in the internal affairs of South Africa and that sort of thing. But there were many reasons to give attention to South Africa which we will get to. But when I was in Brazzaville and they said, "We would really like to send you to South Africa, I had some pause because I had I was an Africanist. I had done a lot of academic study in African affairs. I was aware of what apartheid was of course. Certainly all of my friends back at Columbia University were in favor of boycotting South Africa and what have you. So it gave me pause to actually go and represent the U.S. government in South Africa. Would I be seen or would I see myself as colluding with the apartheid regime? As I mulled this over in my mind I ultimately decided that if I did not go, somebody else would go who knew nothing about apartheid or who might have good feelings about apartheid. Far better to have somebody be there who was fundamentally opposed to apartheid.

*Q: Had you ever been in South Africa before?*

HULL: No, never had. That led to some interesting aspects, because in some ways it was a more subtle type of oppression. Certainly there was a separation like segregation in the United States where people had to live in townships and so forth, but you did not see the people rounding up blacks very often or beating them up or doing that sort of thing. That was done outside of everyone's sight, not done publicly. So like good Germans in the Second World War, the Afrikaners and other whites can say we don't see this going on; it can't be as bad as people say. Even the South Africans themselves were lulled by the regime into looking sometimes at apartheid as something that is culturally benign as separation of the races.

*Q: This was partly because the regime's extreme skill in making it invisible.*

HULL: Oh absolutely. It was a very vicious type of policy but it was very sophisticated in its implementation in general. Now the Afrikaners are not necessarily known for their sophistication so I don't want to overstate that, but at the same time it was more subtle. Certainly for example you would see Black South Africans all over the streets or everybody had black South Africans or their families working for them who they seemed to treat reasonably well if kind of patronizingly. But they were very happy to have black South Africans in their shops as customers spending what little money they had. So certainly shopping was fully integrated even if commercial aspects were. They were happy to take the Black South African's money.

*Q: I understand, however, that black South Africans who were seen in Pretoria after dusk were committing a crime by even being there.*

HULL: I don't know if that was so much the case. I think they could go around, but certainly they were looked upon with suspicion. Certainly after the Soweto riots, that is when people started to put up fences or walls around their homes. Before then there were no fences or walls. If there were, they were very low walls. Everybody suddenly had a big dog. And so forth. Of course they did before. It suddenly became electrified fences and walls and that sort of thing. It became fortress Afrikanerdom whereas before I first arrived there were very few walls. But their confidence was shattered by the Soweto riots. It was a big psychological blow to them that there really was the possibility that black South Africa would rise up against Apartheid.

*Q: OK, you implied I think that the Afrikaner culture was not particularly sophisticated, and yet the system was. Is that a discrepancy?*

HULL: No, because as individuals the Boers might be bores but on the other hand they knew how to run a police state. They knew how to run intelligence services. They knew when to be heavy handed and where to be heavy handed and where not to be. Perhaps they learned this through trial and error from the Sharpeville massacre in the late 50's, or the early 60's. I forget the exact date.

*Q: The 60's.*

HULL: And then through the Soweto riots they learned.

*Q: Do you have any historic or personal knowledge of Afrikaner versus Anglo. There had been a war fifty years earlier or 60 years earlier. The Afrikaner system, we talk about Afrikaner affirmative action, where did the Anglos fit in here or was Pretoria basically an Afrikaner bastion?*

HULL: Pretoria was basically an Afrikaner bastion. You had some Anglos, but most of the Anglos tended to live in Durban or Cape Town, Johannesburg. But Pretoria was seen as the capital of the Boer Republic so it was seen very much as Afrikanerdom. Of course the Afrikaners always resented the British, their treatment during the Boer war including the first concentration camps and so forth. They retained that memory and bitterness from that and of course during the second World War the Afrikaners were seen as being aligned with the Fascists, not with the British. Even the symbol of the Afrikaners party kind of resembled a swastika. One thing I used to say after I lived there for awhile is one thing you have to understand about Afrikaners is they didn't just dislike the blacks, they disliked everybody. They really looked down on them. If you were not an Afrikaner, if there had not been black Africans, it would have been somebody else if they had been coexisting in the country. In fact at the time I was there, there were the wars first in Mozambique and then in Angola, and there were large numbers of Portuguese fleeing from Angola and Mozambique to South Africa, people who were not highly educated, mainly craftsmen and tradesmen, carpenters and electricians, plumbers and the like. The Afrikaners on the one hand were very grateful to have more whites emigrating into their country, but they were very concerned because they came up to 25% or so of the white population and they didn't speak English or Afrikaans. But on the other hand they were often more conservative than the Afrikaners, and having lost much of their property to Africans were very much accepting of apartheid policy. So on the one hand they embraced them. But on the other hand if they didn't need them, they probably would have hated them too.

*Q: Now this is a pretty severe indictment of Afrikaners. We are talking general obviously.*

HULL: Sure we are stereotyping. But somehow we think of apartheid as just pure racism, but I think it is more than just racism white and black. I really think the Afrikaners were xenophobic.

*Q: This is a feeling you got you were there '78 for two years. As we talk in the next few minutes if things come to mind, anecdotes that you can remember that substantiate that, it would be interesting. I don't want, this isn't ambush journalism, but if something ticks a memory let's try to go in that direction.*

HULL: Sure.

*Q: So you arrive in '78. You familiarize yourself with the recent history, the Soweto uprising.*

HULL: Well even before we go into that part of it, maybe we should go into the organizational part of it because USIA had created this new position that the post needed. Our exchanges are growing because the embassy and the U.S. government recognized they needed more programs for black South Africans so black South Africans would have a better understanding of the United States. So probably 90% of the people whom I sent to the United States or close to it were black South Africans.

When I got there it was something of a rude awakening for me because the post and the PAO did not realize they were going to send me so fast. So not only did they not have a house for me, they didn't have an office for me. I arrived and said here I am, and they said, "Well what are you doing here?" I said, "Well they sent me." So initially they had me share an office with the educational advisor and we were squeezed in together. But they had already been planning to move USIS from a floor integrated with the embassy in this office building downtown Pretoria and put us on a separate floor of the embassy. So that happened in fairly short order, however, as it happened my office was no bigger than a closet. They had to scrounge around to find a desk to squeeze in there. I am not sure how they did it. But it was a little office with room for me and maybe a chair and then a chair behind the desk. It had two doorways, because the only way to get into the cultural affairs office was to pass through my office. So consequently and if I had anybody in my office meeting with me, I had foot traffic going through. First a person would have to go into the secretary's office and then from the secretary to my office and then into the CAO. The first CAO was a fine fellow by the name of Merrill Miller who was close to retirement and had lost much of his energy but at the same time had gained a lot of flatulence, so it wasn't very easy sharing this space with him next door. Then he was replaced by an African-American officer who was a bit of tokenism, and who actually identified more with Afrikaners in the way he treated his household help. A black diplomat was considered an honorary white. So I think he somehow relished this, I am not sure. He basically did two things during his tour of duty, and that was every day he did the crossword puzzle from the International Herald Tribune. And the rest of his day was copying recipes because he liked to cook.

*Q: So you did all the work.*

HULL: So, I did all the work. Well, the division of labor was I would handle all the exchange programs with both of these people. So our basic program was the International Visitor Program which grew in size as the country gained importance. The Operation Crossroads Africa Program which was an opportunity to send professional Black South Africans to the United States along with a few white South Africans to get some exposure to America. There was considerable exposure both ways. I remember just anecdotally one South African OCA grantee we sent to the United States. He came back and we were debriefing him on his impressions. He said, "Well what really left a lasting impression was I went to a black American church, Baptist Church. The people there were so excited

to see me and to meet a black South African, a brother from South Africa. One gentleman shook my hand and dropped dead in front of me.”

*Q: From shock.*

HULL: From delight. Literally dropped dead. That certainly made a lasting impression. But more importantly this gave people exposure to American society that they did not have except superficially. So Crossroads Africa was an extremely important program.

*Q: You said division of labor. The exchange program, was the other half of that speakers and*

HULL: I will get to that. We had IVs; we had Crossroads Africa. We had the Cleveland International Program which was a program for South African social workers, which was about the only profession open to black South Africans. So we saw those people as future leaders of South Africa. And if we found some progressive whites in social work which is where you might very well find progressive white South African they were also eligible. Then we had Fulbright graduate study in the U.S. program. But the CAO basically took on speakers and programs. What happened was fairly early on because of the nature of speakers we were bringing to try to open the doors of racial dialogue and reform in South Africa, early on our speakers were denied visas. So we had no speakers nor programs, so the CAO had nothing to do, and so I ended up doing it all together with Gill Jacot-Guillarmod, our FSN.

*Q: Which is a very important topic. Just one detail. There was a cultural boycott at that time. Were there intellectuals declining to go to South Africa in sync with the cultural boycott?*

HULL: I don't recall. I don't know because I wasn't at the recruiting end of getting speakers. Basically we would get people, mainly American academics we wanted to bring out. They simply were not given South African visas because it was felt they would stir up some trouble.

*Q: As we get into Gill and you work with her you said we decided and we found it was a mutual; there was a re-orientation to the practice.*

HULL: Well this was an important period because suddenly we had a change in regimes in Washington. We had Jimmy Carter as president when I went to South Africa. Jimmy Carter was the first president to really emphasize human rights.

*Q: So this was from the very top of the hierarchy all the way down. Did you feel this was consistent? This changed things when you said we. Was it local? Was it local with consultation with Washington?*

HULL: Well, the policy from Washington was to try to peacefully transform South Africa so it would not dissolve into civil war over apartheid. There was a strong feeling.

Remember Jimmy Carter was a strong proponent of civil rights and human rights. So from the very top there was a feeling that we had to have another orientation. This had stated actually before I arrived. The first ambassador I had there was Bill Bowdler who then became Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American affairs. Ambassador Bowdler certainly was a person who advocated racial integration and transformation. He was replaced by Ambassador William Edmondson. Now I did not really work with Bowdler because of the bifurcated nature of government in South Africa. When I arrived at post, he was in Cape Town where he spent six months of the year. The only time I met him was when he came up to Pretoria for his departure party. So I was there a fairly short period with him. He was replaced by Ambassador Edmondson. I was absolutely delighted to work with Ambassador Edmondson because he had been Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs. He had a strong interest in the International Visitor Program and the other exchange programs because he had worked with those in Washington. So it was very fortuitous to be a fairly junior officer as an assistant cultural affairs officer but with an ambassador who had a very strong personal interest and was very supportive of what I was doing. For example, when it came time to select International Visitor grantees, and Gill and I would elicit the nominations and then we would make sure the nominations were complete, and then she and I would work very long hours because we would get large numbers of nominations and arrange 100 or so. We would print up these nominations. Then we would work late at night collating them because this was before collating machines. Getting everything ready for these committee meetings at which the embassy committee would select the international visitor grantees. Well, there are so many nominations that these meetings would go on for three or four or five hours, but Ambassador Edmondson would come and be there for the whole meeting because he had a personal interest. Everybody in the embassy knew there was a commitment to educational exchange.

*Q: Well your profile in the embassy was rather high because the Ambassador had a personal interest in what you did.*

HULL: Well, it was also an extremely small embassy at that time. We forget that when we think of how big the embassy became in South Africa. But at the time there was the ambassador, the DCM. There was one consular officer. There was a very small CIA station there, two or three people probably, and there was I think a two or three person political section, one or two person economic section, a consul, a regional budget and fiscal officer and his deputy, an admin officer, a GSO and an AGSO.

*Q: So that was like 20 or 25, something like that.*

HULL: Yeah, 25 or so Americans at most. 25-30 maybe because you add in the communicators and then throw in the marine detachment. But we were downtown occupying a building that we shared with the South African police.

*Q: Sharing a wall in fact.*

HULL: Sharing a courtyard. So we would be in our offices, and at lunchtime, because we did not have central air conditioning, we would open our windows. There wasn't that sense of security where you thought you had to have your windows blacked out or anything. We would have our windows open and be listening to the South African police choir practicing their songs in Afrikaans at lunchtime. Because we shared a courtyard everybody was getting the singing coming up through. About once a week they would practice.

*Q: Did they sing "Die Stem", their national anthem or was that just for solemn occasions?*

HULL: I don't recall what they sang, but that is how close they were. I am sure they were listening through the walls and everything. The police there were very efficient. Of course I was one of the people there who would be interested in following around. Because even at that time in South Africa the American embassy made an effort to engage the black community. So we were the only whites virtually who went out to townships, black townships. Other embassies did not do that. White South Africans with rare exceptions did not do that. It was very significant that we as American diplomats made it a point to go out and participate if we were invited to township events and what have you.

*Q: Now in doing this you were pushing to the limits what you, the South Africans thought were the rules and regulations.*

HULL: Oh absolutely.

*Q: So again this came presumably from somebody in Washington who said go ahead and do this, but the main thing is the ambassador encouraged it.*

HULL: Oh absolutely. Both ambassadors. Ambassador Bowdler. I can't speak before Ambassador Bowdler, but certainly Ambassador Bowdler and Ambassador Edmonson and every ambassador thereafter encouraged this. I suspect there was much more of this after the Soweto riots than before. A very key person in our embassy at that time was Steve Mc Donald. Steve was a political officer. He was not head of the Political Section but he was extremely competent, extremely committed, and he would go everywhere. He knew Steve Biko. He knew all the black leadership. When there was a death in the black leadership, he would be the white face at the funeral. Steve knew everybody and did a tremendous job for us. Steve's wife was a native American. That was interesting because whenever we talked to white South Africans and denounced the apartheid system of homelands, they would turn to us and say with a very straight face, "Well you Americans shouldn't complain. You created Indian reservations. What we have here are no different than Indian reservations so people can retain their native cultures and what have you." They would go on in front of Steve and say we treat our blacks better than you treated your Indians. Then Steve would say, "This is my wife. She is an American Indian." Unfortunately Steve left the foreign service after South Africa, but he remained very

engaged. Even today he is at the Woodrow Wilson Center. He might be someone you want to talk to.

*Q: Love to.*

HULL: He is very open and accessible. He works with our Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. They have worked together for many years. Former Congressman, head of African Affairs. The name is slipping.

*Q: I know exactly who you mean.*

HULL: Anyway they have worked together for a long time promoting democracy and elections throughout Africa, but Steve McDonald is somebody who knew everybody and was at the forefront of everything that was going on on the American side.

*Q: He sounds like somebody going forward very boldly in this. Was it your feeling that the entire American staff was in the feel of this?*

HULL: Most of it. Certainly my CAO, Merrill Miller was. Again we didn't have a lot of Africanists. Merrill hadn't spent any time in Africa. He came from India to South Africa. Our PAO, Harry Hughes was not a strong personality and spent most of his time in his office. Harry was certainly well meaning. I think he was sympathetic with the policy, but I think he was not an extrovert. So he spent much of his time in his office because he had a very intimidating secretary, Dana Steadley who is well known to everybody because Dana had been the secretary for many years in the Foreign Service lounge in USIA before going out to South Africa. She very much was a person who liked the South African system. She wasn't racist necessarily, but she was just comfortable with it and didn't necessarily see it as our position to be meddling in their affairs too much. But she got along pretty well with the staff. It is important to remember we did not have an information officer in country. The branch political officer in Johannesburg served as information officer and that was Jake Jacobsen when I was first there. His deputy was Nyoka Han, who became Nyoka Han White. So they were a very good duo because she had worked at the Voice of America. They were very good at handling the media. Jake was replaced by Jody Lewinson in Johannesburg and Nyoka was eventually replaced by a lawyer turned foreign service officer named John Mizroch.

*Q: Wait, Jake was a political officer in Johannesburg?*

HULL: No, he was branch public affairs. Then Jody replaced him. There were two of them while I was there. After I departed post, and my second CAO John Hicks departed post, Jody was brought over to Pretoria. I think initially, I can't remember if she was brought over as CAO and then became country PAO. Harry Hughes was replaced by someone else who had never served in Africa by the name of Bernie Lavin. Wonderful man, very nice person to work with, but Bernie was a typical American. He wanted to give everybody the benefit of the doubt. He thought that was very important. So in other words every Afrikaner should be assumed to be reformable. Bernie came from South

Korea where he was a PAO, which was a very big job. They basically thought that after Harry Hughes they needed to strengthen the post with a stronger public diplomacy officer, so they brought in Bernie. Before Bernie came to post he had little exposure to South Africa. He was very excited when he was preparing for the post because he met one of our International Visitors in Washington, a back bencher in parliament who he felt had tremendous potential. He was Adriaan Vlok and he later became the minister of prisons and police in the Apartheid regime and a major oppressor who showed that people are not necessarily reformable. Adriaan Vlok was a very notorious person. He was interested in prisons even as a back bencher junior member of parliament. So we sent him to America to see American prisons, but I think he was inspired on how to make his prisons better than rather to see what he could do to reform the system.

*Q: He is famous I think.*

HULL: Yes, in fact there were some questions as to whether or not he should be brought to trial still for what he did later on as a minister. So that was the type of person where the rest of us would say to Bernie, "No, you have to know the Afrikaner mentality. Most are unreformable, but some are. We can identify those people who are reformable."

*Q: I don't want to cut off your train of thinking but how did you feel you acquired that sense. It is not easy to pick up in an alien culture who are the people you can work with and who you can't.*

HULL: Oh of course, and you always have to have some suspicion as to who is sincere in their beliefs. I think you would look to people in the media who are willing to come out and speak or to go in a direction which would give black South Africans opportunities. For example people working with the school of business leadership at UNISA, the University of South Africa who were willing to work with black South African entrepreneurs for example. Now the fundamental failing of apartheid aside from the unsustainability of keeping a society divided was they never prepared for the future beyond apartheid. It was very evident in my first tour under apartheid their biggest mistake was failing to build a black middle class. There was this total polarization. Not only was it black and white, it was rich and poor. So they never created a body. Very few people were actually black entrepreneurs. People like Willie Hoods or Stan Kweyama, people we knew who made it to the middle class. But they were the real exception.

By the way if I can digress with an anecdote, a personal one. It gives a good example of how apartheid worked and the mentality. We had these good friends who were friends of many American diplomats out in Atteridgeville in the black townships, Stan and Maude Kweyama. Stan and Maude had a Siamese cat. The reason why they had a Siamese cat, a rarity in a black impoverished township, was one of my predecessors or a former officer there, Mr. Spector, had a Siamese cat. He had to leave the country and he didn't know what to do with it, so he gave it to Stan and Maude as a present. Well this cat went into heat wanting to have a few sexual escapades and was howling up a storm. So finally they said our cat will have to have kittens. So they put an ad in the English language newspaper in Pretoria, the Pretoria News, Siamese cat in heat need partner to breed or

something to that effect and gave a phone number. Of course the white population mainly read the Pretoria News and they were the people who owned Siamese cats. So they would ring the number and as soon as it became apparent that the owners of this Siamese cat that was in heat was a black family they immediately hung up the phone because they certainly did not want their “white” Siamese cat getting together with a “black” Siamese cat and having some sort of miscegenation. Finally the Kweyamas gave up and opened the door and let their cat go find whatever alley cat she could find, whereupon she got impregnated. At a party out in Atteridgeville, one of the kittens kept rubbing on my wife’s legs and finally we asked the Kweyamas, “Could we have this cat?” and they said, “Certainly.” When a Siamese cat breeds with a cat of another breed, not a Siamese, one of the cats in the litter is always pure black and the one that we got was pure black. So we’d always remember Pretoria because we named the cat Pretoria and called it Tory. That cat lived to be 18 years old. We left South Africa in 1980; we came back after 17 years. So the cat died just before we went back to Pretoria. We were so delighted that in 1997 when we went back to find Stan and Maude Kweyama. Oh your cat just died otherwise we could have brought it back. And they said, “Oh our Siamese just died a year or two ago, the mother of the cat. It goes to show that although it was a long time between our tours it was within a cat’s life span.

*Q: OK, we are just on another segment, but in the same...*

HULL: Well let me just conclude that by saying the reason I was telling you that little story about the cat is because it is a commentary about how apartheid worked, the logic of apartheid, and the racial views of the time. One of the functions that we had as American diplomats of that period was to bring blacks and whites together because they would never talk to each other, and they would have strong stereotypes about each other. The only context in which they talked was in terms of a black customer purchasing something, household help for white South Africans, or a boss and master kind of relationship. There was not any real communication between the races. So we needed to bring the races together and white South Africans, were saying to us, “Oh we didn’t realize there were educated blacks.” White people were oppressed by their own system because they used it as a crutch to support their predilection and preconceptions that blacks were uneducable, and that blacks did not have the same kinds of concerns and interests that they had.

*Q: This is remarkable. Describe some of the venues. Did this happen at your house?*

HULL: Largely in our house, but we could take people to restaurants. We always had to phone ahead and let it be known that we were going to have black South Africans with us that we were taking out to lunch, so there would not be an incident at the restaurant. They would know. But for example, a good example, we used to show films at home. There were things that were banned in South Africa if they were purported to show good relations between the races or anything they would undermine the philosophy of apartheid was banned in the country. So books were banned, films were banned, even games were banned. They had this game called The War for South Africa. It was a board game for southern Africa. No matter how you played the game white South Africans

always lost because that was the reality of the demographics and everything else. So that game was banned in South Africa. I went out of my way to track it down and bring it in through the diplomatic pouch so I could get some people together to show them the hopelessness of apartheid. One of my most memorable evenings was the night I showed "In the Heat of the Night." At my house which was my banned film at the time. Of course "Call Me Mr. Tibbs" was a tale of racial attitudes in the United States and certainly demonstrated how irrational they were. This was definitely something they did not want seen. So we would have a group of South Africans, black, white and the in-between race they called colored, to our house to see a film like that. That would spark a lot of discussion because we would get someone like Adriaan Vlok to come see a black American policeman showing up a white Southern policeman.

*Q: Now if this happened in your home there were not vast numbers of people. How did you identify the people you wanted to have in your home?*

HULL: They were all often people with whom we made contact with for one reason or another as grantees or we had heard about them or met them. But I was going to say a lot of people, people who were important to us, sometimes we discovered on our own. But also our FSNs, foreign service nationals, were very important. We had very few of those in Pretoria. Of course there was Gill Jacot-Guillarmod who over the course of the decades was our cultural assistant par excellence, was always on the lookout to help us identify both whites and blacks. Because she was active in Black Sash, she knew. We also knew if we were talking to white South Africans of British extraction they might be very nice people but essentially powerless in the equation unless they were journalists. So we would try to bring together people, the people of influence if we could. For example, I think Fleur de Villiers, who was a prominent journalist, was one of those people.

*Q: So better an influential Afrikaner than an enlightened Anglo who might not have had a key role in the infrastructure.*

HULL: Yes, but we would still bring them. But like there was Marinus Wiechers at the UNISA School of Law who was an Afrikaner. People who might be able to influence.

*Q: He became the head of UNISA.*

HULL: Yes and like Fleur de Villiers, who was the political correspondent for the Sunday Times for George Marais. They also had something interesting which was their equivalent of our International Visitor Program run by an organization known as USSALEP, the United States South Africa Leadership Exchange Program. There was an Afrikaner, Willem Grobler who ran that. He was one of those we would look for. People like that. Although we knew that as progressive as some of these people might sound, we also knew they were not necessarily people we could count on. We would also interact at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or with people like Dan Neiser. You know Dan?

*Q: I don't; I have heard the name. Who was he?*

HULL: He was a lawyer and defended a lot of blacks who were arrested, but he was also an Afrikaner and good friend of Gilian Jacot which is one reason why I mentioned him. But anyway, we would go to the political section people like Steve McDonald who would know who is up and coming in the black community because he took his job very seriously. He would put us on to people who might be good exchange grantees. We also met a lot of people as we did interviews. I traveled all over the country interviewing candidates for Operation Crossroads Africa. You met some very impressive black South Africans, not all of whom could go on the program. Some of them became contacts as well. That was always an interesting experience. For Operation Crossroads Africa we went out with Director Jerry Vogel and his deputy Bart Rousseve to interview people. It was fascinating because it was very difficult for South Africans to do those interviews because they were predominately black South Africans. Even though we were Americans, we were white. They really could not trust us. Who are these people we are talking to? What might their connection be to the regime and so forth?

*Q: Was likewise Bart Rousseve an African American?*

HULL: Yes, but also not quite knowing who he really was. Who is this person? And so you know ...

*Q: The trust did not come immediately.*

HULL: No, absolutely not, but we made some useful contacts and friends through that. We always had receptions for the Crossroads Africa people. When you did Crossroads Africa you could find the Rand Daily Mail was hiring some young black journalists, And there were some, so you could find some black professionals even if they were kind of at junior levels for Operation Crossroads Africa. The CIP (Cleveland International Program) in the social work profession was the one area where there were lots of black South Africans, but at the same time it was very hard to judge how influential they were going to be in the larger scheme of things. The other thing I did quite a bit was visit the black universities that were part of the apartheid system, looking particularly for Fulbright candidates. You know we were highly distrusted. After the Soweto riots if you went around a university to these, they were almost like fortresses. The University of the North particularly stands out because it was something of a moonscape. It was an institution that rose up in the middle of nowhere surrounded by a high fence and barbed wire much like a prison to keep the students in and isolated even though there was no place for them to go basically. It was run by white administrators. The black professors, some of whom were former Fulbrighters, would help us identify other potential Fulbright scholars.

*Q: Did you have any trouble getting in to any of these places; did people confront you ever?*

HULL: We would get permission ahead of time. They would know we were coming, the administration would set up our program. We would tell them who we wanted to meet with because this was a Fulbright alumnus or what have you. There was some resistance

but they knew they essentially had to give us access. We would bring along our educational advisor and myself. Quite often an FSN such as Gill would go to the University of the North with Deva from Durban would go with us out to one of the Indian universities there. We would go to Fort Hare. Our biggest problem was because of the emergence of the independent homelands, which was just beginning which made it more difficult. But at that time there was only the Transkei and I think the Bophu was becoming independent. It became more difficult later with more independent homelands.

*Q: We didn't recognize them. Did that mean we were not dealing with them.*

HULL: We did not deal with the independent homelands at all. We could not travel in them because they would want to stamp our passports if we went into the homelands, which might imply their recognition as countries.

*Q: So people living in those places did not benefit from the exchanges.*

HULL: No, that is not the case. What would happen if somebody from a homeland was selected for a program and was denied a South African passport, we did not take that to prevent their travel. Basically we did not recognize their passports, but I think what we did was put their visa on a separate piece of paper or something and the educational exchange visas always had separate pieces of paper anyway. I believe the position the U.S. government took was we issued a travel paper and a visa saying we do not recognize this passport, but we do not prevent this person from traveling.

*Q: Remarkable.*

HULL: If the person was a representative of the government in one of those homelands, they would not be going.

*Q: Hard to imagine nowadays with the border security letting someone in with a passport that we do not recognize.*

HULL: Well South Africans of course considered these people if not terrorists close to being terrorists, potential terrorists, so that was a problem. But it was quite an experience. We were followed around by people. It was quite remarkable people. One of my prizes for coming up with a person was a guy by the name of Michael Sinclair in terms of exchange grantees. The only white South African we were sending on a Fulbright grant. He ended up going on an IV grant because he took a scholarship to England in the end. Here was a person with an Anglophone name, Michael Sinclair, but lo and behold he was elected president of the student body at the University of Pretoria, an Afrikaans speaking university. He also was very progressive. We thought he might have a real role to play. We were disappointed when he didn't go on the Fulbright, went on the IV, but he became vice president of one of the big health organizations here in the United States.

*Q: He emigrated?*

HULL: Yes, he ended up emigrating to the United States. That was always the risk you had with people. One of the biggest challenge of our programs was brain drain; not only of whites but also of black South Africans. It was unfortunate too that our black South African nominees were always looked upon with some sort of suspicion or disdain by other Africans in programs like Operation Crossroads Africa because the question always was how did you get a South African passport if you are a black South African? You must be colluding with the regime. That was usually not the case, but you know...

*Q: I was there at the other end of these tumultuous meetings at OCA, very confrontational when the African grantees would subject the South African black grantees to terrible excruciating scrutiny starting with enormous distrust. Very emotional. These meeting s would go long into the evening at the end of which usually the black South Africans were able to convince the others that they were legitimate.*

HULL: We would have pre departure meetings where we would try to explain they were very likely to encounter this problem in the United States. That was true of our other grantees as well, but the OCA was particularly a multi-national group for Africa. So that was a serious concern. But there was this skepticism. What are you doing here? Fox Black South Africans, who were oppressed at home and fundamentally opposed the regime, to go to the United States only to be confronted by Africans who saw them as fellow travelers with the Apartheid regime because they were on a U.S. government program with a South African passport was a major shock for them and gave them a whole new perspective on their status and that of the rest of Africa.

Also one of the Afrikaner justifications for apartheid which was fundamentally unsound which I will say in a minute, but they always referred to, "Our blacks." It was always how we treated our blacks versus how you Americans treated your blacks, as if somehow we owned people with black skin. But they would always say, "Our blacks are much better educated than blacks in the rest of Africa. They have more hospital beds, more access to doctors, nurses and so forth and so on." We would tell them, "This is very specious thinking, very fallacious because what you say may be true, but black South Africans do not look at themselves in comparison with the rest of Africa. They look at their condition compared with what is possible in South Africa and with what you have. So you can make that argument all day long, but it doesn't strengthen your position within your own country." And it was true. The black South Africans generally were, based on my comparisons, generally better than other Africans even though they may have gone to Makerere University [Uganda] or other distinguished African universities. Our grantees from Black South African universities were by and large better educated, more articulate and so forth. So they would go on these programs and I think quite often they would stand out as participants, as exceptional individuals. So they were exceptional, and yet they were looked down upon by other Africans. That really irritated them. I think it was a shock for them to see that their educations were better. That was not the fundamental issue. The fundamental issue was equality, access to justice, access to employment and what have you . Freedom was the issue fundamentally.

*Q: You said something earlier that drew my thinking. You said that when you went to places like you visited the north, the administrators understood that they had to receive you and to set up your interviews. If they felt defiant against that, what was it that made them feel that they had to go along with your program? Let's say they were apartheid supporters. What was it they felt obligated to be doing for you?*

HULL: I am sorry, they being?

*Q: White administrators of black universities like the University of the North.*

HULL: Well, because they did not want to unnecessarily irritate the relationship with the United States. The government of South Africa had larger fundamental issues, and they were not looking to create incidents that would inflame the relationship. There were already enough strains to the relationship. When the Carter administration decided to address apartheid, there were two things that I think in the way they approached it. First of all they were going to work to try and create dialog between the races in South Africa because there was a potential for mutual understanding if only people would talk to each other and ultimately negotiate an end to apartheid. There was a belief, there was a hope that would happen. I was not truly confident that would happen. That was more of the approach. We do not accept apartheid. It is a violation of human rights. You people need to get your act together and become a more open society, but obviously we Americans cannot force that upon you.

One area where we felt we could weaken apartheid and the apartheid regime was over the issue of South West Africa, which eventually became Namibia. Because the International Court of Justice had ruled in the early 70's against the South African occupation and administration of South West Africa, there was a legal basis on which the United States could say we support the ICJ decision and you South Africans have to make a withdrawal from that area. It took a long time. It didn't happen until around 1988 or '89 and the UN came in and did a terrific job with last year's Nobel Prize winner Norwegian Mathieu Athari leading the way.

In any case at that point we felt we could make real advancement on the independence of South West Africa, particularly as South Africa had really tried to make a major effort despite all the attacks by SWAPO, the South West Africa People's Organization, through Angola. If you recall the South African military decided it would just simply go wipe out the government in Angola. They headed up that way and the United States got them to put on the brakes and come back when they were within a day or so of arriving in Luanda. Seeing that the United States was not going to tolerate this and was in fact going to stand with the Soviet Union on this issue, they realized there were limits as to what they could do in South West Africa and it might be unsustainable. Nevertheless they were determined to hang on to South West Africa, but the United States felt that here is an area in which we could make progress and we would have an international justification for our intervention with South Africa on this issue because the ICJ had ruled that South Africa had sort of inherited this through the League of Nations mandate that South West Africa had been a German colony. It was then administered by the British along with South

Africa and then after the Second World War South Africa laid claim to the British mandate for South West Africa and the United Nations always said, “No you don’t.”

Finally in the early 70’s with the ICJ decision there was room for intervention. So we did have visits to the country by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and by Andrew Young who was ambassador to the United Nations at the time to come and try to negotiate that issue with the South Africans. I remember Cyrus Vance being a wonderfully pleasant man. I remember him in the swimming pool at DCM residence in Pretoria sitting on the steps in the water in his bathing suit trying to read his briefing book. At the same time there are all these kids in the pool splashing him. But he was very grandfatherly and was nice about it all. He wasn’t quite as nice on the tennis court. My wife and I played tennis against Cyrus Vance and his wife. We weren’t nearly as good tennis players. At least I wasn’t. I did have one fortuitous or unfortuitous tennis shot. At short range I hit a very fast tennis ball to Mrs. Vance’s ear, at which point we curtailed the match. The Vances sort of let us know that they were more accustomed to playing with people like the McNamaras and Richardsons, former cabinet members, than with lowly foreign service officers who would hit the ball viciously. Cyrus Vance I believe was accompanied by Hodding Carter, who was his press spokesman. Hodding was married to our assistant secretary of state for human rights, Patt Derian. They were newly married as I recall. So he decided to buy her a present while he was there with Cyrus Vance. It is memorable because it created one of those dilemmas that you run into. Being a political appointee, Hodding did not know all the rules. But in South Africa he saw a couple of wonderful probably about three or four feet high concrete lions he thought he might put along his driveway in the states.

*Q: Not easily transported.*

HULL: He wanted us to pouch them back in the diplomatic pouch. In the end we sent him a bill that was far higher than what those concrete lions cost. That was memorable as we had the dilemma of what do we do with Hodding Carter’s lions, because he was close to Jimmy Carter and Cyrus Vance and all of that, part of the inner circle.

*Q: I have heard similar stories in Europe but I think it is a universal foreign service problem, what do you do?*

HULL: So we didn’t make a lot of progress on that point of Southwest Africa, but that was one of the approaches.

*Q: You said interestingly earlier about ten years later when the Cold War came to an end it became possible. What was the relationship? Things were happening in Eastern Europe. Weren’t they analogous to the things that were happening in the opening and the social change and the political change in South Africa. It couldn’t be a coincidence that this was happening at the same time.*

HULL: In many parts of the world it was. We will get to the collapse of Communism later on because I was a part of that in Prague. But a lot of things opened up as the Cold

War was ending and therefore the United States was less compelled to be perhaps as quietly supportive of countries in different parts of the world or different areas of Africa which is why you saw so many civil wars, imploding states and so forth shortly after the fall of communism. But let's hold that until we get to the fall of communism.

I want to add one other important element of the time I was in South Africa, which was the fact that we came to recognize that South Africa was also a nuclear power. That always influences, I think, how we deal with countries. It was very memorable to me because I have a friend who was the duty officer when a nuclear explosion was detected out over the Atlantic Ocean. Presumably a South African nuclear device was set off as a test. It was memorable because Ambassador Edmondson was an incredibly dedicated ambassador who never took a day of leave, worked seven days a week, what have you. Finally his daughter was coming to visit him, so he decided to take a few days off and travel to one of the private game reserves on the fringe of Kruger National Park, out of telephone contact, but he did leave a telephone number of a farmer who lived something like 40 kilometers away from this game park. I believe it was Jim Carragher, a political officer who became a DCM in western countries, who got the call and was told you have to notify the Ambassador of course, so he can deliver a demarche to government and let them know that we know and we are not pleased and what have you. I remember that the duty officer got the telephone number and called this Afrikaner farmer and managed to explain to him that he needed to talk to the American Ambassador who was off at this game preserve and would the farmer go fetch him. So the farmer dutifully did this for us, and the Ambassador came to the phone some hours later and all the duty officer could tell him was Mr. Ambassador, I know you are having this rare vacation with your daughter and your wife, but you have to come back to Pretoria.

*Q: Not a secure line. He couldn't tell him what it was about.*

HULL: He couldn't tell him what it was about whatsoever. The Ambassador said, "Well this had better be good." All the duty officer could say was, "Mr. Ambassador you have to come back." Of course he did come back, and this was a highly confidential point of dispute.

*Q: You were very glad not to be the duty officer that day.*

HULL: So, that was my tour of duty. I guess I should say a few words about our FSNs that we had. We had an interesting group of foreign service nationals in Pretoria. I mentioned Gill Jacot-Guillarmod a number of times. She was a key central figure for foreign service officers working in Pretoria for decades, their entrée to South Africa black and white, a person who had the institutional memory of the operation and could help keep us from going astray if we had the wrong inclinations. So she was very important. We had an FSN, black South African secretary in the cultural section. She only lasted a few years, three or four years and then left. I think she particularly had a little difficulty with our cultural affairs officer Mr. Hicks who could only speak in clichés. Gill to this day can reiterate them to you. They said that he always would come into the office and say to the secretary, "May I beg, borrow, or steal a cup of coffee?" which was the signal

she had to go get coffee. Once she had made the coffee he would say, "You are indeed a jewel." This sort of thing. Everything was superficial clichés. They did not like working with him although I think they liked working with me. One of the ironic things that happened was that in my last month or so of being in Pretoria the South African government relented and started giving visas to our speakers and specialists. So in my last two months at post there was this flood of people coming in.

*Q: That would be '79-'80?*

HULL: Early '80 and late '79 I think the CAO took home leave, so I ended up being the person programming the speakers and doing everything in the end. But that dam did break. I don't know if it broke forever, if it was re-imposed at some point, but for a while they relented and started letting our people in. This was a big issue between our countries. Again those were they type of issues South Africans decided was too expensive. These people in their judgment would probably have impact, but it was too costly to our bilateral relationship because they couldn't afford to lose what they saw as American support.

*Q: So the types of exchanges you were doing were the things the apartheid regime was willing to sacrifice so to speak for what they thought were larger policy goals.*

HULL: Yes, on their part I think. I can't explain it otherwise, but also they had their own USSALEP program (United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program) so they were bringing Americans of influence from the United States, Congressmen and business leaders and so forth. It worked two ways. So if they wanted to bring Americans to South Africa they had to reciprocate on exchange programs fundamentally. Because they had the USSALEP program and we could have done something about USSALEP in retaliation.

*Q: Well as mean or whatever negative you could say about them they were always very conscious of legal niceties I think. Even some of the bad things they did they always had a legal citation.*

HULL: And the programming I think was interesting and valuable. The fact that we were willing to go out and interact with black South African communities throughout the country was important. To go back to FSNs, Gill was important. Some of these are just interesting tales. We had a couple of nice drivers such as Obed and a nice cleaner, but we had an interesting fellow by the name of Cliff Andrews. We had a regional management officer, Joanne Clifton who later rose to higher heights to USIA. She traveled a lot and did not supervise this black South African, really colored South African in their categorization, who was our administrative assistant. Cliff was a bit of a slippery fellow, and all the FSNs knew it, but none of the Americans would kind of believe it except for me. I had a close relationship with the FSNs. So they would come to me and tell me what Cliff had done that was intolerable. I would go to my boss the CAO, and tell him what was intolerable. I was constantly complaining about Cliff to the CAO and the PAO, Bernie Lavin. But Bernie had a problem. His wife was from Yugoslavia originally. She

was depressive and was on medication, but she often didn't take her drugs so they would have crises and Bernie would end up working from home. That meant that he was sort of in and out of the office, but it was understandable. Cliff Andrews also had a wife who I guess was an alcoholic or had serious problems. So he had a lot of empathy for Cliff Andrews. So it was made clear in no uncertain terms that I should stop complaining about Cliff Andrews. The sort of thing Cliff would do, he would leave his coat on the back of his chair on Thursdays and take the afternoon off to go to the horse races and gamble. I would point out to Americans that Cliff's coat was there but he was not. But they just say, "Oh he is some other place in the embassy" or something else. So nobody would buy it. So after I was told this, the FSNs would still come to me and finally showed a little store room where we had some abstracta which was this metal system that we would assemble to do photo shows and exhibits and so forth. One day the FSN's came to me, Gill and one or two others and said to me, "Tom, you have to see what Cliff has done now." Cliff's wife had just given birth or was about to give birth. They took me to the store room. There out of abstracta was a baby's crib that had been created with a foam mattress that had been created with some of our foam. It was very clever use of the abstracta, mounting it and using those silver chrome bars all the way around for the baby. So I said, "well I cannot deny to you that this does indeed appear to be a baby's crib." Now my credibility with the FSN's demanded that I report this, but I had been told in no uncertain terms not to complain about Cliff. I decided to go through the chain of command. I went to my boss, John Hicks and I said, "John, I think what we have here is a baby's crib, come see this." He said, "Well you may be right. We have been told not to complain, the PAO doesn't want to hear this from me, why don't you go tell him." So I was sent off to the PAO, walked into his office and said, "Bernie, I know I have been told not to complain about Cliff and make accusations, and I may be totally off base here, but would you please come to the store room with me so I can show you something." So I took him to the store room and said, "Bernie, you might think this is an abstracta exhibit but it looks a bit like a baby's crib, and I have been told Cliff created this crib for his baby." So it was undeniable. Even Bernie could not say well this must be something else. But the only punishment was Cliff was told to disassemble this thing and so on. But not long thereafter other irregularities emerged. About the time I departed post Cliff was terminated. Some years later, I forget where I was PAO, I received an e-mail from another PAO by the name of Robert Gosende who said, "I need to hire a new administrative assistant, and I found this fellow Cliff Andrews who used to work for USIS. I think I am going to hire him. What do you think?" So I E-mailed him, "Never! Never ever hire Cliff Andrews." Against my advice Bob Gosende hired him again, and Bob Gosende shortly thereafter found that he had to fire him. So he worked for USIS again.

*Q: You could say why did he ask for your opinion.*

HULL: Right. I always bear this in mind. I should remind Bob of this the next time he calls insisting on some of his ideas. You are the man who re-hired Cliff Andrews. And then the other important FSN we had was Joyce Ngele. Now when I came on board, and they hired me as a new position and there were too many people in the office. They moved our part of the embassy to another wing of the embassy on another floor that was

disconnected. So we had to have our own security. So what they did, they had an electronic bullet proof door that visitors could enter and then shut behind them. Then in between there was a Plexiglas bullet proof booth that was staffed by an FSN receptionist, and that was Joyce Ngele. Then on the other side of this reception area was another bullet proof glass door. So poor Joyce Ngele spent years sitting in this little booth just talking to people day after day through Plexiglas voice things deciding whether or not they should be admitted to USIS and should she press the control button. We learned later on that she was active in the ANC. She knew who was coming in and who was going out to see us and what kind of connections we had with people, which may have given us some credibility perhaps because we dealt with everybody.

There was one memorable occasion late at night one night when one of the U.S. Marines came around to check our offices, entered the security bubble, if you will, between two Plexiglas doors, and after the door closed behind him realized suddenly that he had forgotten his key to get through the second door, but he couldn't get back out the first door. He was stuck in the middle. Of course this would cause all sorts of problems for him because it meant the rest of the embassy was unguarded all night. So he then tried to break through the door because they carried these Billy clubs and he battered the thing, but all he succeeded in doing was shattering it. He ended up spending the night in there until the next Marine came on duty and saw in the internal TV that this guy was stuck in this particular area. But Joyce at that time did not strike us as anything but a particularly nice person who happened to allow people to come in. I think she moved up into the position that Cliff Andrews once had in the executive officer office.

*Q: A secretary or administrative office management specialist or something where she was actually assisting in the public affairs section.*

HULL: Well she was actually in the section but she kind of reported to Dana Steadley, the secretary who was comfortable with the local situation. But Joyce was always a very nice person, but never somebody who we saw as political. We had nice relations. She would be happy to point out that Cliff Andrews was building a crib for example. That was about it.

*Q: Little did we know.*

HULL: Well later, I think Bob Gosende's time perhaps, she was promoted to a higher level job. Of course she was arrested for ANC connections. Bob put a lot of pressure on the ambassador to obtain her release. I forget his last name, but Bob always called him Herman the German because he had a Germanic surname. Bob got Washington involved to put a lot of pressure on South Africa to get her released and back to work, for which he deserves much credit.

*Q: Mention what happened to her in 1995.*

HULL: Well she became the first black mayor of Pretoria, which was very exceptional.

*Q: Astonishing.*

HULL: It was a lot of fun to come back as PAO and find my former receptionist as mayor.

*Q: The cliché having a friend in city hall this is an enormous example of that.*

HULL: Right. We didn't call or impose on her too much, but she was always open and available to us if we had a visitor that we really needed to bring in for something. She always would make the time for us. Of course having worked with her I perhaps had more credibility than somebody new who did not know her personally. Of course she did know the FSNs.

*Q: Oh I think they talked all the time. I think you are right because of her political connections to the ANC and seeing what you really were doing, it must have given credibility to you and the mission in the ANC.*

HULL: Yeah, less so me, but the mission as a whole and USIS in particular. One thing I might mention unless you had some more specific questions is that when I left, even though I was assistant cultural affairs officer, I was friends with the journalists in Pretoria. In fact one of them, an assistant editor of the Pretoria news actually house sat for me when we went on home leave, which was very interesting because I had to go out and rent my home. They told me I got a rental allowance based on my grade. I was promoted, but they didn't recognize the fact that I was promoted. In the end they did. There were a lot of administrative problems with my new position. Being naïve I wrote to the area director about how the PAO had failed to order appliances or furniture or anything else.

*Q: But then you came a little bit earlier than they expected.*

HULL: Right, so the admin people told me to go out and get three bids on furniture. My poor wife went around to furniture stores and got three bids, appliance stores and got three bids what have you. We sent all those bids back to Washington saying these are the ones we recommend you accept. Washington cabled back and said, "What are you idiots doing. We have stuff in the warehouse in New York for this new position. We will put them on a ship and send them to you." Meanwhile we had been living in a hotel for a month or two. We were going crazy in the hotel. Eventually it all came, but also in terms of renting a house we had to do it on our own which you might do in other countries. So we found this house, a nice little place in Pienaar Street. It turned out the landlady was having trouble paying her mortgage or whatever because she was running a marriage counseling and dating type of service out of her house. So you went into the living room and there were all these chaise lounges where these newly met people were supposed to cuddle together or couples who were having problems.

*Q: This was the building you were renting?*

HULL: Yeah, the house we were renting. That was very interesting. And then as it happened we went on home leave, and this very nice guy who had just become the deputy editor of the Pretoria News, we met him, he didn't have a house, so we said, "Why don't you house sit for us while we are on home leave for six or eight weeks?" The embassy said OK, so they kind of moved into the house. They had a boat on a trailer and stuff from wherever it was he lived before. The people became fast friends of ours. We linked up with them again when we came back years later. He had left journalism and was running a fish farm and annual cultural concert series called Splashy Fen with a lot of people smoking dope and wandering around listening to rock and folk bands and what have you in a multi-racial setting in Natal Province below the Drakensberg Mountains.

While we were gone the landlady had severe financial problems. So the creditors called upon the sheriff to seize the property and all the property within the house. So this guy is there with his boat, his car, and the sheriff comes and seizes his belongings as well as laying a lien against all the embassy's possessions. So he finally went down to the embassy and said we have this little problem at the house because they were about to evict him. Maybe they arrested his wife or something in a case of mistaken identity. She was the daughter of a British aristocrat or something. This got sorted out. Because it was a diplomatic residence they couldn't evict us from the residence, but they could put the house up for auction. My poor pregnant wife was negotiating with the sheriff for there could be one day where people could walk through the house and see it in case they wanted to place a bid on the house.

*Q: The landlady wasn't around I guess.*

HULL: Well the landlady was out of the picture at this point because it was being auctioned off. By this time she was doing a séance somewhere and reading tarot cards. So my poor wife, nine months pregnant, had all these people marching through the house to see it, and then they put it up for auction. When the auction began they announced this house was under lease to the American Embassy and the lease could not be broken so if you bought the house you had to take it with the lease until the lease expired which was a few years. There was like another year or two left on the lease. So some poor lady came into the auction after this announcement was made and made the high bid. She was told to pay up. She was also told sorry you can't occupy it. She fainted on the spot. Anyway, we were able to stay there through the remainder of our tour of duty.

*Q: Did the journalist get his belongings back?*

HULL: Oh yeah, he did, but it was a major problem. Somehow the person who succeeded me who is a well known USIS officer whose name is slipping me, Maggie Westmoreland or somebody. Anyway whoever it was was laying in bed with her husband under a beautiful tin ceiling. Pretoria being on an old lake bed the land kind of settled and the walls kind of cracked. They were there one night and the roof leaked and they were listening to the raindrops come through and hitting on the tin ceiling. Lo and behold there was finally enough water that the ceiling came down on them in bed. But this really evolved into a major scandal in the embassy at that time. John Graham was GSO there.

John Graham had served previously in Pretoria and it was recommended in his file that he never serve there again. But of course personnel never read the file and sent him back. He was highly suspicious because nobody could ever get things from him like appliances or draperies. If they wanted draperies for their house they had to go to a specific vendor. The vendor was always changing and so forth. To make a long story short because it was kind of discovered by people who were working at the warehouse and stuff. Freezers would come in but nobody would ever see them. What he was doing was as he ordered large quantities of appliances for the embassy, he then sold them to an appliance store, Saseens, in Pretoria. So he had this kickback scheme where he was selling furniture and appliances he was ordering for the embassy free to local Afrikaner businessmen. The same thing on draperies. He had drapery contracts where he had kickbacks. He would get a better kickback from somebody else. We had a political officer replace Steven McDonald, I think Simeon Moats who later worked for Exxon Mobil for a number of years representing them for Africa. But he came in, he was there and he was very frustrated because he could never get draperies for his house. He thought something was amiss. I guess the rest of us thought something must be amiss but we didn't know that something criminal was amiss. At the time we were beginning to open our embassy in Zimbabwe and set it up. So they sent out an admin officer to set up Zimbabwe who was a friend of Simeon Moats. Now this admin officer, Harry Geisel, today is acting inspector general of the foreign service.

*Q: Don't know him, but I have read his inflammatory stuff.*

HULL: Well he came out as an admin officer charged with sort of setting up an embassy for Zimbabwe but he would stop in Pretoria because Pretoria became his support base. Anyway Simeon Moats told him about this and it smelled suspicious. So the admin guy went into the embassy on the weekend, got the file cabinets open and found enough stuff in the files that was incriminating that he went back to the IG and said, "Hey something is wrong in Pretoria." It was unfortunate because Ambassador Edmondson and his DCM both of whom were very good, had let John Graham extend a year. It turned out that John Graham had two sets of embassy furniture in his house. He had bought a house in South Africa. His housing allowance was paying off this place which had riding stables and other things, what have you. So shortly after I left the embassy for another assignment a team arrived from the inspector general's office, threw everybody out of the admin and budget and fiscal sections, closed the whole thing down and went through it. They found an FSN who was intermediary for John Graham in selling all this stuff. John Graham and the budget and fiscal officer were both called back to Washington to explain all this and what have you for disciplinary procedures.

*Q: But this is a criminal matter is it not?*

HULL: Well yes, and they were going to be indicted and tried, but when they returned to Washington and they saw why they were being called back, what the handwriting was because there clearly were going to be criminal indictments, the State Department had not seized their passports. So John Graham simply went and got on an airplane, flew back and effectively got political asylum there in South Africa. In fact he may have been doing

intelligence work for the South African government and that lead was compromised. But meanwhile, Norm Barth who had been the admin counselor at the time but who was a political cone officer and knew absolutely nothing about admin work so the GSO could do whatever he wanted. But his career was basically finished. The budget and fiscal officer, they got him only on the fact that he had claimed an extra day of per diem on a travel voucher of his own. He was not complicit probably with John Graham. He was just signing the paper work and paying the bills, not asking the questions. So he was negligent but probably nothing more than that. But his career was finished. Then there was a junior budget and fiscal officer who they wanted to terminate because she was non tenured, but finally was shown that she was just following her boss' order in signing this travel voucher. So they gave her a reprimand. She went to work for USIA for many years rather than the State Department. The FSN was fired. But John Graham to this day lives in South Africa very comfortably. I don't know if we tried to get him extradited or not after the fall of apartheid because they did indict him They never got him. The other person who got caught up in this was an assistant first tour GSO junior officer working for John Graham who didn't know what he was doing, but when he departed post for Moscow, John Graham said, "Oh you will never get car parts in Moscow. We don't have car tools in Moscow Why don't you just pack up some of the car maintenance tools and auto parts in your HHE which he did. And of course it coincided with the investigation so when he got to Moscow and they opened his HHE and found all this stuff. So he was the only one who was sent to jail in all of this, for like a year and a half.

*Q: Oh no, the least culpable.*

HULL: And he had just married a CIA officer, so that sort of finished her career as a CIA officer. He was probably the least culpable guy. He was not very bright and was told why don't you take some of this stuff because you can use it in Moscow.

*Q: So that is 25 years or more of an American getting political asylum in South Africa because of having committed crimes against the U.S. government. That is quite amazing.*

HULL: Yeah, and I am not sure that he was formally given political asylum but he was allowed to stay. Never extradited.

*Q: Now you asked if I have questions. I do have one. We are getting to the end I guess of the tales of your first South African deployment. You are very selfless in telling about the changes, the social changes, the mission as given by the Carter administration to create dialog among the races. You give credit to the FSN's for helping. You can see what I am about to ask which is about you. You went all over the country. You went to universities designated for black South Africans. You visited townships. You were helped and assisted by local employees. You were out there quite a bit. Could you be modest for a moment and tell us what you were able to do.*

HULL: Well maybe I should tell what I wasn't able to do. I am citing a newspaper article that was written as I was leaving the country because I gave an interview. The journalist decided to title it, "Goodbye to Frustration." So that probably reflects much of my

thinking at the time which after some decades was probably more accurate than what I might recall. He writes in here I was moving on to Upper Volta to Ouagadougou to be public affairs officer there from South Africa. He writes “though South Africa may be a more comfortable place in which to live, it has proven difficult for an American representing a government greatly concerned with human rights issues, to get any feeling of achievement.” Then it goes on about the differences I anticipate finding in Upper Volta and South Africa. Then he quotes me as having said, “Having served in Zaire and South Africa for the last few years, it is refreshing in a sense to be going to Ouagadougou in Upper Volta” where there was a genuinely democratic government at the time. He says, this is me being quoted, “In Zaire and South Africa it was frustrating dealing with human rights issues because the governments with which we tried to express these concerns have been resentful of our having raised them in the first place.” Then he talks about my work in South Africa and talks about how my responsibility has been mainly in administering the educational cultural exchange program through which South Africans visit the United States under U.S. government sponsorship. About 85% of South African recipients are blacks sent to America for additional professional training. The heavy emphasis on blacks in this program, “Mr. Hull says,” is to give substance to American rhetoric about concerns for the situations of black South Africans and the American belief that if peaceful change is to take place in South Africa it will probably begin in the economic sector. Mr. Hull says some South Africans consider America’s interfering in South Africa’s affairs, but he claimed America is contributing to an atmosphere conducive to social change. Commenting on what he found in South Africa, Mr. Hull said he had expected a pervasive police presence. Virtually all whites would be in favor of government policies. Although he had been surprised not to see police presence everywhere, he had learned that the police presence was pervasive. He had also been struck by the differences between South Africans of all races and politics. Then he quotes me as saying, “to me as an educator the greatest tragedy is South Africa’s great waste of human resources because people are generally unable to achieve their full potential as a result of insufficient educational opportunities and as a result of job reservation.” Then he goes on to say politically the position between black and white had already become polarized before Mr. Hull came in 1978. Then he quotes me in conclusion as saying, “I am by nature an optimist. I would like to believe peaceful social change is still possible in South Africa. Yet the degree of alienation that I find in the black community and the lack of appreciation of this frustration in the white community lead me to believe that peaceful change would be very difficult if not impossible to achieve.” So I did leave rather pessimistic. The Pretoria News, in a column written by John Patten, their diplomatic editor, and the date on there is April 15, 1980.

*Q: We are on I don’t know which session here but it is the evening of the eighth of January. Ambassador Hull before we allow you to leave South Africa there were a couple of significant family events, one very happy and one very sad.*

HULL: Actually just one very happy one in South Africa at that time, and that of course is my daughter’s birth in South Africa, which may not be terribly significant for this purpose but indicative of the kind of foreign service national that Gill Jacot-Guillarmod was. When my wife was there in the hospital with her new born baby and had no other

family around her except me, and was perhaps feeling a little lonely, the nurses announced that her sister had arrived to see the baby. That of course was our FSN Gill Jacot-Guillarmod who ever since has been known as Auntie Gill to my daughter.

*Q: Fantastic. There was a hospital rule that only direct family members, so Gill bluffed her way in. So Gill and her sister, Jill.*

HULL: Right. One with a G and one with a J.

*Q: Exactly. Sometimes it takes me a second or two to remember. Now because of the folder you are holding in your hand, I would like to ask you about a more sad event which was the loss of your parents.*

HULL: That happened in 1997 when I was the area director for AF. Very interestingly my parents died on the day when I had gone back to my Peace Corps village in Sierra Leone. Then I came back to town and I was staying at the ambassador's residence with my good friend Ambassador Hirsch when the State Operations Center eventually tracked me down. They died in the UK so the consular section in London had to track somebody down, and lo and behold here this next of kin is in the Ambassador's residence in Sierra Leone, where I eventually lived as Ambassador. But there were a lot of outpourings of condolences but the most fascinating one had to do with the next post where we are going to discuss which was Ouagadougou where I served as PAO from early '80 to 1983. Fourteen years later, after my parents died within two weeks there were condolences in the newspaper, letters of condolence from the ministry of education and from the ministry of foreign affairs, which were very meaningful to be remembered after 14 years in the country.

*Q: Amazing. Well I screwed up the chronology here. We haven't yet...*

HULL: Well that is a good entrée to Burkina Faso. Of course it was known as Upper Volta back then, but Ouagadougou is still Ouagadougou the capital city. By odd coincidence I got my first PAO-ship very early in my career by happenstance because our branch public affairs officer in Durban, Ashley Wills, who later became ambassador to Sri Lanka as well as many senior positions such as PAO in Delhi, he was assigned to be PAO in Ouagadougou but because of a medical problem his son had at the time had to be curtailed. There was a very well known and demanding ambassador, Tom Boyatt in Ouagadougou who wanted a replacement as soon as possible, and since I had already had French qualifications they decided to send me there. It was one of those fascinating situations where the area personnel officer was calling me up saying, "We really want you to go to Ouagadougou if you can as soon as possible," and my career counselor was saying, "You are over reaching. Don't bid on it. You will never get the job." The same little office was giving me opposite advice. However and rather ironically I can recall sitting at a dinner in Durban with BPAO Ashley Wills and all of us making jokes at his having to go to Ouagadougou as PAO, not knowing that in point of fact it was actually going to be me.

There was a hilarious song that was done by a labor attaché who did lots of songs about the foreign service. He did a wonderful one about a junior officer being assigned to Ouagadougou and how he had been sent to study French at FSI thinking he was going to Paris where he would be seeing the Champs Elysees and so forth. Instead he ends up on Ouagadougou and he is saying ouaga where? In any case Ouagadougou turned out to be a wonderful place. The people of Upper Volta were terrific wonderful people, probably the least corrupt country in Africa, including South Africa, that I had served in at the time. While I was there, they had a couple of coup d'états. They had coup d'états before but they never had shed any blood. Then they had a coup d'état in which one or two people died. The whole country was horrified that anybody had died in a coup in their country. Subsequently there were more coups and executions and what have you.

*Q: Does this coincide with your, was this in 1980?*

HULL: This was in my tour of duty, 1980 to 1983.

*Q: During your tour.*

HULL: Right, I forget the exact date. There were actually a couple of coups there. The one that brought the famous Captain Sankara to the fore, Thomas Sankara who is revered in many parts of Africa as a great Pan-Africanist philosopher. I never saw him in that respect, but maybe we can get to that. In any case I went there as my first tour of duty as a PAO. I was there for a short period of time, two or three months and took a home leave during which I got very ill and actually had to be away from post for about four or five months. In that time Ambassador Boyatt left and we had a chargé d'affaires Larry Grahl and then we had a wonderful ambassador come, Julius Walker. Julius Walker had the appearance of Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame. A little goatee, a little white mustache that sort of extended out and a southern accent because he was from west Texas. He had grown up shooting squirrels for his grand daddy for dinner. But he was a wonderful, very professional ambassador who had previously served as chargé d'affaires in Liberia where he had to go out and watch Samuel Doe's people execute all the ministers of government on the beach in Monrovia where they tied them all to stakes. It was a very horrifying experience. But he had been around Africa, so he was a true Africanist and we were glad to have him.

We had a very large number of former Peace Corps volunteers in all parts of the embassy. We had people who had been Peace Corps Volunteers working in the admin section, the political section, AID and so forth. Just lots of people, so it had a real kind of Peace Corps spirit to it, plus we had a large Peace Corps program in the country at the time headed by John Hogan who was brother of Jim Hogan, a USIS officer. So it was a wonderful post. It was a lot of work but for a novice PAO it was a very well rounded program that we had. We had a very active library, a very active English teaching program, with lots of small scale exchanges, but we were successful in getting university linkage relationships. There was a very small independent media in the country at the time which we gave a lot of encouragement to, and a good staff of FSNs, who did quite well overall.

I had succeeded, although there was nearly a year gap, Jerry Huchel who had done a great job as PAO. I was replaced by Bill Weinhold who continued the tradition of strong PAOs in Ouagadougou. So it was a wonderful post, and on the whole very good FSNs. One or two exceptions. My right hand man it later turned out had been embezzling money that even our RPMAO (Regional Post Management and Administrative Officer) had not captured. He had to be terminated, Constant Kadiogo, which was a very sad and disillusioning. Then we had a cultural assistant named Robert Soe who was kind of useless but managed to have a 25 year career at the post. Then we had a press attaché who has just retired this past December, Isonore Ouedraogo, and I had a wonderful driver by the name of Bwensom there. On the whole we had a delightful program in a country where the size was very manageable for a one officer post, and a very excellent active program throughout.

Working with Ambassador Boyatt was a revelation. At that stage I had worked with a lot of very good ambassadors, Ambassador Bowdler, Ambassador Edmonson and Ambassador Cutler and so forth. So I moved on to Ambassador Boyatt. He was a real pistol. He loved to play softball. There was actually a satellite imaging station there that had been funded by USAID. The Ambassador felt there should be irrigation there so the grass could grow for the baseball field. Which I believe AID took care of. Every weekend there was a big softball game and the teams would be different every week, but Ambassador Boyatt would always be the captain of one team. What was fascinating about these games was you never knew when they were going to end because they would only end when Ambassador Boyatt's team was leading. Ambassador Boyatt's team never lost. Ambassador Boyatt was also famous for poker games that he loved to participate in every week. He would bring his briefcase and as he sat down at the poker table he would open his briefcase in which there was a revolver in case there was any doubt about who would win the poker for the evening. Sort of tongue in cheek, but he was sort of a cowboy. He got his just desserts because after a few months of my being assigned to post, his tour of duty was curtailed and he was sent to Bogotá, Colombia as ambassador, which was in a very difficult period of the drug cartels and what went on there.

*Q: Certainly as a reward, not a punishment.*

HULL: Right. He was replaced by a chargé for a few months and then by Ambassador Walker, a wonderful person. Ambassador Walker died about three or four years ago, but we are still very much in contact with his widow who lives in Washington. So just wonderful people. I was fortunate in terms of mentoring to have a lot of interesting ambassadors, professionally very competent but all having different styles, to work for which I think is part of the education process. There is not just one style that succeeds. When we get to Somalia I will speak of another one, Bob Oakley who was my ambassador there. But in Ouagadougou those were my ambassadors, a very satisfying tour of duty and very excellent for professional development. I always had very fond memories of that tour of duty.

One of the activities we did there, that was particularly memorable to me was the annual English teaching conference. They used to have a wonderful PAO residence that had the only pine trees in all of the country in my yard and green grass. So we used to do a lot of outdoor programming there because we didn't have a good programming facility at our cultural center. Our cultural center was a ramshackle building in the heart of town across from the Hotel Centrale. The Hotel Centrale was famous because it had a fascinating dish on its menu which was spaghetti flambé. It was wonderful. It was delicious. The waiters would come to your table and pour cognac over your spaghetti and light it. It was actually delicious. But this was the Hotel Centrale. Everybody went on TDY to Ouagadougou so they could go to the Hotel Centrale for a spaghetti flambé. We had odd sorts of offices above our ground floor cultural center. Some of them were NGO's such as OXFAM. But also we had others. We had Comfort and Joy, prostitutes who worked the street in front of our building. They worked out of some upstairs offices as well, but it was very funny having Comfort and Joy there. It was like a Christmas Carol year around.

But we did a lot of programming out of my house. We used to do the classic feature films out there at least once a month. Big audiences. People turned out for those. But every year we did an annual English teacher's conference and brought in specialists from USIA to conduct those for us. At the conclusions I would give a large closing reception in my yard outside. I didn't really appreciate the perils of that the first time I did it. Most of these people were from provincial areas. People in Ouagadougou did not drive cars. They drove Mobilettes, so there were a lot of these mini motor cycle bicycle sorts of things the people had. So a huge number of English teachers, probably about 150 arrived at my house for my reception on these Mobilettes, but I had forgotten they didn't have the same sophistication as the urban population. So when it came to my open bar they had no hesitation whatsoever mixing vodka and gin and scotch and beer whatsoever. The next thing I knew there was not only a large number of people in my yard but people who could not get on their Mobilettes without losing their balance to go home. So finally I went to bed and when I woke up the next morning my yard was littered with bodies of English teachers all over the place who had simply passed out on the grass and called it a night and Mobilettes everywhere.

*Q: The report to Washington said a good time was had by all.*

HULL: Very effective reception. English was rolling off their tongues.

*Q: Brand names at least.*

HULL: Anyway that was just an example of what that post was like.

*Q: You said you didn't understand the perils the first time. The second time you...*

HULL: Let me tell you about another peril. We had a wonderful cultural program that came by. Those turned out to be very labor intensive programs. I sometimes question the value of cultural programs given the labor and time and what you had to mess with and what you have to put into them. But they are high profile, and in Ouagadougou they very

much appreciated the arts. We always had to come up with American feature films for FESPACO, their film festival every two years. But we also had a blues singer Johnny Copeland who won a Grammy in the 80's, a couple of years later, who came with his blues band to perform for us both the capital city of Ouagadougou and in Bobo-Dioulasso. Well Bobo-Dioulasso was the first concert and we took them down there. They were very enthusiastic about doing their concert which was being done outdoors in a soccer stadium I believe during the month of November. It never rains in Bobo-Dioulasso in November at least according to what my FSN assured me unanimously. We went down there to examine the site. Everybody in town assured us it never rains in November in Bobo-Dioulasso. Well I said I will go with your advice and not build a cover over the stage. So we got all these people in to the soccer stadium for this event. There were clouds over the town and I am saying to people, "Is it going to rain?" "No, Mr. Hull, it never rains in Bobo-Dioulasso in November." Like you idiot, don't you get it? It doesn't rain here in November. So as we got closer to concert time and these clouds were very persistent and it was very humid, my trusty FSN came up to me and said, "Don't worry, Mr. Hull, not only does it never rain in November in Bobo-Dioulasso, but I just sacrificed a chicken to make sure it wouldn't happen." But sure enough they got about 40% of the way through their concert and the clouds opened and it rained in Bobo-Dioulasso in November, and it rained for about 10 minutes and it stopped. I told the musicians, "Don't worry, that is a freak thing that happened. I'm told it is not going to happen again and you can play again." They said, "No, we can get electrocuted up here with these electric guitars." I said, "Don't worry, you won't get electrocuted." So they started playing and they played for another ten or fifteen minutes when suddenly it rained again. They said, "You lied to us. Our lives were in danger. We refuse to play any more." But at least we got in half of the concert, so people went away fairly happy. The musicians were able to drink enough and then go back to their guest house and have their way with the owner's daughter, so felt they had a beneficial visit to Bobo-Dioulasso. So that was Johnny Copeland and his blues band in Bobo-Dioulasso. From Bobo-Dioulasso we went back to Ouagadougou to their large auditorium called the Maison de Peuple. These guys were rather enthused about what had happened to them in Bob-Dioulasso, probably not so much the concert but afterwards. However, they were very hung over on their trip back to Ouagadougou. By afternoon the following day they were still very hung over. So much so they decided to forego a sound check. So we were all set up in the Maison de Peuple. We had senior government officials and dignitaries and our target audience. We had the American ambassador and everybody else all set up. So Johnny Copeland and his crew sort of staggered on stage just about sunset when it gets a little cooler in Ouagadougou. And in November it is cooler than at other times. And they begin to play out of tune so that some of their guitars had very high pitches, so high that they attracted a very large flock of bats which came inside because the Maison de Peuple was not air conditioned and had an opening between the roof and the walls. And through the walls came these bats flying all over the concert. One guy's guitar had a particularly high frequency, and I knew he was stoned when a bat came and actually sat on his shoulder while he was playing the guitar and he looks over and just keeps playing. So it was a very memorable. We greatly enjoyed them. They were fantastic musicians, but it was just so memorable having Johnny Copeland and his blues band there. We not only did good work but we definitely had a lot of fun.

*Q: Did he change their name to Johnny Copeland and the Bats?*

HULL: So that is a memorable from the Ouagadougou days, and that is what makes the foreign service a lot of fun and public diplomacy in particular such fun.

*Q: Let's see, you mentioned another performing group?*

HULL: Probably not, but it is kind of funny because USIS was one of the few offices to have a four wheel drive vehicle. How that was significant because at one time Ambassador Walker and his wife had his 90 year old mother visit post. He decided to take her to a game park in the south not only to see the game but also the re-forestation projects that AID had going on. Unfortunately Ambassador Walker's vehicle got stuck in the soft dirt or the sand out there in the game park with the wild animals. He may have been driving himself in fact. They only had one vehicle. So having his wife and his mother with him, he really had no alternative but to go on foot and hope that one of the few lions in the country didn't gobble him up. He made it to the main road. There was a curfew because there had been a coup *état*. And so consequently he was able to thumb his way back and get the military or somebody to pass word there was an emergency and they had to come get him back before curfew. Because we had a U.S. Marine Corps detachment, the Marines were scrambled. They had to borrow my USIS vehicle because it had four wheel drive to go out and rescue the ambassador's mother and wife from the middle of a game preserve.

*Q: The U.S. ambassador thumbed a ride.*

HULL: Yes. But that does remind me that the last coup *état* brought to power a military junta. It was a fairly bloody event. They put into power a very benign person, a military pediatrician who oddly enough lived next door to one of our USIAD contractors who had a small child who was always talking over the wall and made good friends with his friend Dr. Ouédraogo next door. So they woke up one day only to find out this man was suddenly the president of the country because the military junta had staged a coup, but they couldn't agree on who should be president, so they figured this benign pediatrician was somebody who would cause them no trouble, whichever faction they were with. Over time, after I left post, the leader eventually became Captain Sankara, Thomas Sankara who had been a paratrooper. I don't know if they had any planes, but he had played a prominent role in their heroic war with Mali over phosphates, that probably nobody ever remembers. But Burkina Faso, as they were then, really did remember this and thought he was wonderful. He was a person given to making great political profundities, so much so that later after he was assassinated he sort of became a revered African philosopher, certainly in Francophone Africa but even in parts of Anglophone Africa. One of the things that used to drive me crazy, even in Freetown where I was ambassador many years later, many African papers always had a quote from Captain Sankara on the front page of the newspaper. The same thing also happened in Addis Ababa with one of the newspapers and somewhere else where I was. So he seemed







HULL: Well that was it, and it was not significant during my time there. As in all of Africa virtually, radio was the primary medium of communication and that is what you wanted to work with.

*Q: So that did not change significantly.*

HULL: No, that did not change our media work significantly. But it was a new dimension if you will, for the future.

*Q: So Ouagadougou was a very positive experience. Your first PAOship, pretty hilarious things. You weathered them all. Your next assignment was Mogadishu?*

HULL: My next assignment was Mogadishu. I wasn't sure where I was going in the end. It turned out that Mogadishu was available. I was always one for a challenge and I looked at the potential of Mogadishu as Ouagadougou by the sea, and having an added dimension, seafood, which we did not have in Ouagadougou. And it was a slightly larger post. We had an assistant public affairs officer in Mogadishu, and it was a critical, geo-strategically it was an important part of the world. We had to deal with a very unpleasant dictator there, Siad Barre. But by the same token I had survived Mobutu and Apartheid so I figured I could manage working with the Somalis. The Somalis as you recall, had been very pro-Soviet until the communist Derg came to power in Ethiopia and expelled the Americans. Since the sworn enemies of the Somalis are the Ethiopians, the Somalis then expelled the Soviets from Somalia in the Cold War period politics of that era, and then embraced the Americans. And we came in to provide assistance and foreign aid. And also some military assistance although it was generally of a non-lethal nature except for stinger missiles to be used in defense against Ethiopian tanks.

*Q: This is very interesting because those of us who only read about that part of the world remember wherever the Soviets were, we had to be in the other place. I remember reading how there needed to be an American initiative to switch sides. It was actually the Somalis.*

HULL: Well we were expelled from Ethiopia so I am not sure. We were certainly available to the Somalis. I am not sure who initiated the invitation but Said Barre definitely needed a patron to help defend him from the Russians and the Cubans and the Ethiopians.

*Q: Interesting, so probably the overture was made by him initially.*

HULL: Probably, but I can't swear to it. I really don't know the origins of that. I think that as I contemplated this assignment I was probably less concerned about the Somalis than I was about the Ambassador Robert Oakley who had a reputation for firing his country team members and embassy officers and staff on the spur of the moment and sending them packing. Fortunately for me he had been ambassador in Zaire before he went to Somalia and we had a PAO conference in Kinshasa that the director of our































show you how sensitive the regime was to USIS. USIS was not really allowed in those communist countries, so we were always known as the Press and Culture Section of the embassy. What happened on my very first day in the office, I was invited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I thought that was very nice. It would be a challenge for my newly learned Czech, but I was so delighted that they wanted to welcome me to my tour of duty in Prague, in Czechoslovakia. But what really happened is they wanted to protest the activities of Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America and the way in which they were trying to subvert the government of Czechoslovakia. So there is this article here about how they berated the new officer of the American Embassy Mr. Thomas N. Hull.

*Q: Undermined the subject.*

HULL: I was sort of insulted. I know they were trying to feel me out, and see who this new kid was and perhaps intimidate me. But we were at a point in history where it was evident that they, the communists, were very weakened. And so every time they tried to engage me on Radio Free Europe especially, but to a lesser extent the Voice of America, I would simply tell them that wasn't my responsibility, but how happy I was to be in Czechoslovakia. I am sure it was very frustrating for them. We were talking past each other. They were trying to deliver a demarche; I was trying to tell them how wonderful it was to be in their country. That was the way it started. Not long after I arrived we got a new American Ambassador. The previous American ambassador departed post not long before I arrived. I was pretty excited to find that my new ambassador was going to be Shirley Temple Black the former child star who was well known for films like, "Stand up and Cheer", "Little Miss Marker", and "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm", and who sang, "On the good Ship Lollypop." I announced this to my daughter that Shirley Temple was going to be our ambassador. I remember her response, "But Daddy, isn't she a little girl?" Because everybody was used to watching her films, children just didn't relate to the fact that this was ancient history from the early days of Hollywood. It was kind of funny. There were a few articles in the newspapers. Some of us were reminded that Ambassador Black had previously been Ambassador to Ghana under President Ford in the mid 1970's. Also during the 1980's she ran the Ambassadorial training course for FSI, so she was no stranger to the world of embassies. Some people looked upon her as a bit superficial because of her, "Good Ship Lollypop." In fact this article in front of me says, "Shirley Temple Black, the child movie star eternalized in American's memory on the Good Ship Lollypop shortly will be named ambassador to Czechoslovakia." So that was a cross she had to bear. Although she was very proud of her acting career, she was more irritated that everybody drank Shirley Temples for which she received no royalties. While I was in Czech language training she came to the State Department to get ready for her confirmation hearings and that is where I first met her. We hit it off pretty quickly, although I was a little taken aback by her very first question to me which was, "Tom, do you have a good joke book?" I said, "No, I don't." She said, "Well you better get one because I like to begin and end my speeches with jokes." I thought, "Oh dear, here we go." Plus my only experience with writing a speech was something of a fiasco with Iran-Contra business that we discussed before.

*Q: I don't think the speech was a fiasco.*

HULL: Anyway so she was nominated and she was confirmed. By and large we had a delightful three years together. I arrived in late August, and she arrived just a few weeks later in Prague. There was another interesting aspect of this. She had a brother who had cerebral palsy, so she spent much of his life looking after him. So that was a cause she strongly supported, finding a cure for cerebral palsy. So she happened to be in Prague in 1968 at a conference on the subject when the Soviets invaded. So she was actually there and had that connection which gave her some credibility to the Czechs. They learned that she was actually there. She was among the foreigners the American embassy had to evacuate from the country at that time.

*Q: So that is before being ambassador. She was there in August of '68.*

HULL: So this was a very long time before.

*Q: As a private citizen.*

HULL: As a private citizen. So that was a very long time, much earlier in her life. But she had that little connection to Prague, and she was the kind of a person who knew how to maximize that kind of incident and get some diplomatic value out of it. She was immediately thrust into her work as I was into mine. There were people who wanted to interview her. I made one mistake early in her tour, the first week, for which she took me to the woodshed. That was in an interview with the New York Times in which because she was new she had me there sitting with her in this lovely palace that was the ambassador's residence in Prague. She had me there as the New York Times correspondent was interviewing her. I would from time to time interject information to him amplifying what she was saying. Afterward she let me know that she never ever wanted to be interrupted during an interview because there was only one star on the stage. She very firmly told me this. I said, "Fine that is the way it is." We worked very well. That is not to say I didn't whisper in her ear from time to time. We would do lots of interviews. In fact we made a mistake one day when we did the very first live satellite interview from Prague to the United States for Good Morning America. Later in the day I believe it was for the CBS Evening News. In fact the anchor of the CBS Evening News whose name is slipping me, wrote about this interview in his memoirs, a book called, The Camera Never Blinks Twice. He was in Prague. He wanted a briefing. There was a description here of his visit to Prague. This was before Communism fell as I recollect. So it was within her first couple of months on post. Apparently there was a person who arranged interviews for this anchor person.

*He called him and he said, "There is good news and bad news. The good news is that the political officer will talk to you," (meaning he was a little confused). He meant the public affairs officer. "The good news is the political officer will talk to you; the bad news is there is a price. You have to interview the ambassador and put her on the air." "I muttered an expletive deleted," says this anchor. "The Ambassador was Shirley Temple Black. I loved her in Bright Eyes and Curly Top when I was in grade school, but was not enthralled by her diplomatic credentials despite her previous appointments to Ghana and*

*White House Chief of Protocol under Gerald Ford. I said if we do the interview it is a deal?" Her handler said, "It is a deal."*

*We drove to the embassy where we had our pictures taken with some very squared away Marine Guards. I was a little embarrassed when one of them said, "Mr. Rather, [Dan Rather]. You are a marine aren't you?" In truth my Marine Corps duty was cut short by a medical discharge, and I have too much respect for the corps to go around bragging about the service that didn't amount to much. Just to go on. We had our briefing with the Political officer, a very good State Department product who did his job. He did not tell us one damn thing.*

*Q: Is that you?*

HULL: Yes.

*Then we had our interview with the ambassador recently appointed to this extremely sensitive post in Prague. Shirley Temple Black could not have been nicer. She is a gracious woman, but I was impatient to get her interview out of the way. She settled herself on a grand antique chair from which her feet didn't touch the floor. She was looking for what correspondents call face time, and we all understood it. In answer to the first few questions Mrs. Black proceeded to tell me that it was all very interesting what was happening in Berlin, but in Prague everything was tranquil. I, myself, in recent hours talked to the archbishop and foreign minister and very important people in the party. They all assured me that nothing like that was happening in East Germany could occur here and so forth and so on.*

*Now inside the embassy I couldn't believe what I was hearing. In the back of the room the political officer wore the look of a man whose underwear was too tight. At one point Mrs. Black said there were only 5000 Soviet troops in the country. At one point while we were changing tapes the officer coughed and said, Mr. Rather, Madame Ambassador the number is actually 55000. We finished the interview in time for CBS This Morning. I received the message later that the ambassador was not pleased with the results. But even as we were speaking the communist government was collapsing within a number of days, and within a matter of days it had fallen.*

I mention that because I was in on all of her interviews, very close with her. We did dozens of interviews throughout her career as ambassador because as she pointed out correctly, she had been doing media interviews since she was about three years old. She was so adept. And when people would take her picture, whether it was a journalist or just a visitor, she would know if her eye blinked, and she would say, "I blinked," and she would have them take the photograph again. I mean she was that sensitive to how this worked. She was known because her films had been shown before the Second World War in Czechoslovakia, and her books were translated into Czech as well as other languages around the world. They did books basically summarizing her moves with pictures of her and so forth. There were Shirley Temple dolls and so forth, in the depression and early 40's. That wasn't true only in the United States but around the world. Remarkably she

was an international figure. She herself saved MGM from collapse through her popularity in the 1930's.

*Q: So ironically the ambassador said to CBS days before the fall of the government that she saw no signs of this happening.*

HULL: Well I don't think that was entirely true, but let me come back to that in a little while. Because the streets in front of the embassy, we could not drive to work in October of 1989. We had to walk through the crowds of East German refugees. Our embassy's property shared a wall with the West German embassy. All these East Germans had come after Hungary had opened its borders. Thousands and thousands of East Germans came to Prague. They abandoned their little cars, Trabants, all over the streets of Prague and left notes on them saying, "Take this car." They took their few possessions mainly blankets and clothes to keep them warm because there was a chill at night, and they all went to the West German embassy to seek asylum. With the help of the Red Cross and the large yard behind the West German embassy they set up soup kitchens and tents for all of these East Germans.

*Q: Now this is one month before the wall.*

HULL: Yes. The period this is before the wall fell. But it continued and continued. We had this cul-de-sac that the British embassies and the American embassies were on. The entire cul-de-sac was wall to wall people, men women and children. Even the Czechs who did not want this to be happening. The Czechs put in porta-potties and soup kitchens were set up because the West German embassy could not absorb all these people. The street was just full of people who had abandoned their lives and possessions and were just living in the street in front of our embassy.

*Q: Why did they leave East Germany at that particular time?*

HULL: Because they wanted to go to the west. They were looking for a way out.

*Q: They couldn't imagine the wall coming down.*

HULL: They were looking for asylum or something from the West Germans to get out. They really didn't imagine the Wall getting out, but they believed it was going to be possible to get out of East Europe because the Hungarians had let people out. What happened, this gets the whole dynamic of the collapse of communism. What happened was that people in the west expected that if communism were to collapse it would first collapse in Hungary. They thought it would collapse last in East Germany where Honecker had been an absolute communist dictator for a very long time. They thought he would never fall. Therefore the next country that was likely to have a collapse of communism was Czechoslovakia. So I think a lot of East Germans came there thinking that this was the next weak link in communism. In point of fact the Czechs, for all their good values, one of them is that they do not take great risks, and they accommodate themselves to situations, The Good Soldier Švejk by Jaroslav Hašek sort of captures this.

So they were living on streets. They had all the international news media there. There was scaffolding on these old buildings being repaired in Prague. There is a wonderful picture that a Time Magazine photographer took from the scaffolding. It was on the cover of Time. All these people, this mass of people living in the streets. It was a bit of a problem for us in the embassy because East Germans would try to get there any way they can, and quite often they came through a large park behind our embassy, behind the West German Embassy. They would scale the wall. Sometimes they would scale the wall and end up on or our property. You had U.S. Marines who did not appreciate not official Americans being on the property. So we had to make a policy that was very clear to the Marines that if East Germans came over our wall, we would not stop them. We would direct them to the West German Embassy wall. They could climb over our wall. We did not want to be in a position of taking these people who were fleeing to freedom and turning them over to the communists.

*Q: And how were the West Germans at dealing with them?*

HULL: Well as I said, they were coping. They had the Red Cross setting up tents and food kitchens.

*Q: In fact the welcomed these people.*

HULL: Well they didn't have much of a choice. It was a fait accompli. The Czechoslovak government didn't welcome them either, but it was a fait accompli. Finally the Czechoslovak government needed a safety valve or an outlet, so finally they pressured the East Germans to allow these people to go to West Germany. But the deal was they all had to go by train. The train had to pass through East Germany, and then into West Germany. So trainload after trainload went into East Germany. That was the crack that led to the fall of the wall and the collapse of communism in East Germany. The pressure on the system was simply too great. The collapse of Communism came in Prague a few days weeks later. We will get to that after commenting on the period leading up to that in Czechoslovakia. The Ambassador and I were new, but we were fortunate. We had an excellent staff. I had a newly created position of Cultural Affairs Officer. Mark Wentworth was the first officer to occupy that position. He was a very good conscientious officer, but I had an Information Officer who was absolutely superb. A first tour former lawyer by the name of Jim Crissinger, who had been there with Mary Gawronski for a year or more, and so he really knew everybody and was wonderful support for us. We had some terrific FSNs but it was a very small staff because there was a limit as to what you could do. The people who had contact with us in those dark communist days had to have a couple of screws loose, because nobody in their right mind would willingly go to the American library under a communist regime. This was inviting trouble. So we had a good staff but a small staff. But we were thoroughly trained before we went to Prague not to trust our staff.

As in Sough Africa in the late 70's under apartheid, when I was constantly followed by the secret police in South Africa, in Czechoslovakia they had the STB, which was the Statni Bezpecnost, which was state security. They were the people who played the role



my car. I drive back to the embassy and called my wife. She said, "Where are you?" I explained that I was locked out of the building. Would you please come down with the keys. She said, "No I am too sick. Wait a minute I will tell you what I will do. I will call up through the chandelier." So she said, "Please for you who are up there, would somebody please go down and open the front door." So I got in my car and came back to the building and the front door was open. So it could be helpful to have people around watching, but there was no privacy in your life. That is something you had to accept if you were going to a communist country in East Europe.

*Q: The scenes in the lives of others, is there any accuracy to that scene of the fellow in the attic just listening to....*

HULL: Oh yes absolutely. That is what they did, and that was their lives, and you had to wonder about your lives. But they were human too. Now when we got there, when the ambassador first came, it happened to be a season when we did wreath laying in Czechoslovakia. Wreath laying is a long tradition for ambassadors to go out and lay wreaths on the monuments and graves of American soldiers who had died fighting the Nazis in Czechoslovakia, mainly in the western part of Czechoslovakia near the border where Patton's army had come in. Large numbers of Americans were killed in the final days of the war fighting there. One of the historic controversial parts of the war for the United States, Patton was ordered to withdraw so the Russians could have the whole country. But for us this was extremely important to go out and remind people that we had helped to liberate the country in the Second World War. So every American ambassador for decades had gone out and traveled around to these various monuments and laid wreaths. It was not easy. In one place they built a gas station in front of the monuments so that nobody would see it. In another place they planted a circle of 30 foot trees so that nobody could see the monument because it was surrounded by trees. In other places they simply ripped down plaques. We thought maybe they had thrown them away but they had just shoved them into the basements of buildings. So it was something that they did not want to give much attention to. And wherever we went when we did those things in the early days, we would be followed. And in being followed the secret police would be photographing everybody who was crazy enough to want to come out to meet the American Ambassador.

There was one group that was interesting which was the Pony Express group. There was a fascination in Europe as you may know, with the Wild West of the United States. That applied to East Europe as well as Germany for example. So they had this club where they re-enacted the American West, they created a little town. Once a year they could come and dress up in cowboy gear and American West gear, and they would have a Pony Express ride from one end of Czechoslovakia to the other as if they were delivering the mail. That was just sort of it. So people like that would come out and see us. Otherwise when we would go to these things, they would come out and there would be a few loonies, very small numbers or people who would hang a flag out of a window or a group of five or ten people in the cemetery who would hold a flag. The defense attaché would go. But then you would have these security people who would be standing observing and reporting on what went on in these situations. This did not last long, but these were







speech at their venerable centuries old Charles University. Because Secretary Baker was tall, they decided to replace the venerable old podium and built a new one for him, which the university strenuously objected to but you know how heavy handed the Americans can be. So we ended up having to actually extend the podium of this old university. But they had a wonderful procession for this honorary degree and speech by the Secretary of State. That was quiet a challenge, but a very important visit. Of course we had all the important people for him like Vaclav Havel and Alexander Dubcek came out. I had gotten to know Dubcek, which for me was a thrill because I am a 1968 type of person. So this was very exciting to know him. These were the leaders of the Občanské Forum. Havel's brother was actually there with all these people.

Wreath laying went on. For context wherever we went, you can see the masses of people who come out to show their support for the United States. Every place we went they even had special things, people rappelling down towers for the Americans. Everywhere we went we had the ambassador. This photo is Jiri Dienstbier, the foreign minister. Czechs and Slovaks everywhere would show up for these things where in the past only a few people would. But it was a really amazing outpouring. One of the things that was really amazing was that Czechs had kept WWII vintage vehicles in their garages since the Second World War. Suddenly, when we went to these things, in Pilsen they had a million people turn out for the American ambassador and President Havel came with her that spring on the anniversary of the fall of Hitler's regime which I presume was in April or May of 1945. It was April or May, just six months after the fall of Communism. There was a huge parade of American jeeps, ambulances, troop carriers, all sorts of vehicles. There were museums set up in some towns, people had kept K-rations that the Americans had during the war. Radio equipment, uniforms, all sorts of things the Americans had left behind. It was kind of like the Pony Express organization, but now everybody was captivated by the role American had played during World War II.

I think this is an interesting little story. As I said I lived in a beautiful apartment across from a lovely park on the square, and I had this little dog, a West Highland terrier. I was told by my Czech teacher that Czechs hated dogs and that I shouldn't take my dog, nobody liked dogs. Nobody wants to see your dog pooping in the city and what have you. I get to Prague and everybody has dogs and they love dogs. The only person who ever didn't like dogs was my language teacher. So my very first week, I am out there walking my dog in the park. In the park there was this beautiful old church. Of course there were no longer services there because the communists would not allow religious services. But the steeple was very useful because it was the same level as my apartment. So it was always staffed with secret police watching my apartment through binoculars and watching me in the park. So when I would walk my dog in the park it was well known to people this was the new American and you really didn't want to talk to him lest you got into trouble. But one man approaches me with his dog and we got into this conversation. He gave me his card. It said, Cestmir Suchy, a business card, and underneath, window washer. We got talking. He said, "Actually I am a window washer because in 1968 I was a broadcaster for Czechoslovak radio. When the Soviets came in with their tanks, the last bastion of resistance was Czechoslovak radio which continued to broadcast about the Soviet invasion. So all of these people were penalized. He was made a window washer.

So for decades after '68 his job was to wash windows. He and I became friends because we were the only people that would talk to each other in the streets or in the park with my dog. Communism fell. The next thing I knew he was the Dean of Journalism at Charles University. He and I were good friends, and I would invite him to my receptions. He came to a reception that I had for Abe Rosenthal of the New York Times. He went back to the United States and wrote a column about this guy who gave out the window washer card even though he was now a Dean, and sort of the history and how this person symbolized the transformation in central Europe.

*Q: His name again?*

HULL: Cestmir Suchy. So Abe Rosenthal wrote this front page article about this guy. Abe Rosenthal was also a friend of President Bush, and within a few weeks the President gave a speech on East Europe in which he dedicated a whole paragraph to Cestmir Suchy and what had happened to him and picked up on the whole thing. So anyway that was the kind of thing that happened there. You just can't imagine. It is very phenomenal. A similar story was with Jiri Dienstbier, who was also a journalist in 1968 on Czechoslovak radio. He was turned into one of these guys whose main responsibility at an apartment building was to shovel coal into the furnace to keep it heated. So Jiri did that for years. But when communism fell Vaclav Havel made him the Foreign Minister. So what happened on the day Havel was sworn in and the cabinet was sworn in, Jiri Dienstbier went that morning, got the coal, shoveled it into the furnace, and then told his boss he was sorry he had to quit because he was becoming the foreign minister. His communist mentality boss told him he couldn't do that. He hadn't given enough notice. Therefore he was going to have to continue. That is what all of these people were doing, all these menial jobs that nobody ever wanted. Then they suddenly emerged and were doing all these prominent things. So there was this total transformation. We had certainly 75% of the U.S. Senate come to post while I was there, and probably half of the House of Representatives come. The poor Ambassador was giving receptions night after night for prominent Americans of one sort or another, where before the fall of communism there was very little to do except for some of our programming. I got classic feature films. There was one film that had Bette Davis and Lillian Hellman. It was about two women who lived on an island called Whales of Anguish. These two women, all they did was bicker, even though they were family, and contradict each other. I got that film and we showed it. There were two things related to that. About the same time the Ambassador had over the two grand daughters of Thomas Masaryk who was the first president of Czechoslovakia. They were rather elderly now, their father had committed suicide when he was Minister of Defense in the years immediately after The Second World War or something. The Communists defenestrated him but in the Czech tradition he went out the window. We maintained contact with his two elderly daughters. The luncheon was the Ambassador, her husband, myself and Masaryk's two grand daughters. All the grand daughters did was bicker about relatives and contradict each other, so the Ambassador decided this was very much like the movie we had just shown to the Czechs. But the Ambassador was generally dissatisfied with the quality of our classic feature films that USIS had to offer. She called this the Whales of August lunch, this Masaryk lunch. When we showed the Whales of August, we rented out a movie theater to an invited audience. It

was so incredibly dull to anybody except an American intellectual that the Ambassador decided that was it. So we went back to her office the next day and she called the head of the Motion Picture Association of America, this former advisor to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

*Q: A guy with an Italian name, Valenti.*

HULL: Yes, Jack Valenti. She picks up the phone as only my Ambassador could do and calls Jack Valenti, and says, "Jack, I need some good films out here, some current films, not *The Whales of August*." So at that time in the fall of 1989 one of the current films was one about the Soviet submarine that was being defecting to the United States, a John Clancy novel turned into film.

*Q: Yeah Red something. [Transcribers note: The Hunt for Red October.]*

HULL: So instead of showing the *Whales of August* with some elderly Americans bickering we now could rent a movie theater and invite an audience to show a Soviet submarine defecting to the United States. But that was the kind of programming we did. Suddenly that all changed with the fall of communism. We could now substantively get into programs that would help transform the universities. All of our programming exploded exponentially. We set up a Fulbright commission. That was an important initiative. We re-opened USIS Bratislava as a branch post. We reopened the consulate. The reopening of the branch post in Bratislava also has an important aspect to it.

While this was happening all sorts of people were emerging from the woodwork who might not have approached the American Ambassador. For example I mentioned the Shirley Temple films and the Shirley Temple dolls. What I wanted to append to that was one of the more moving stories that sometimes moves me to tears when I think about it because it was so moving. A woman came to me and she said she wanted to meet the Ambassador and she explained to me why. I went to the ambassador and said, "You must meet with this woman, because she really did not meet with many people. She did not send out autographs unless you sent her a stamped self addressed envelope. She wanted to always downplay her actress background, not because she was ashamed of it or anything, but it interfered with her image as the American Ambassador. But this lady came. I took her to see the Ambassador. She explained to the Ambassador that when she was a little girl, she had seen Shirley Temple films and she loved them. She loved the little Shirley Temple books about the films and her Shirley Temple doll. She and her entire family were rounded up because they were Jews and they were sent to concentration camps and separated. At the end of the war every other member of her family was gassed and dead. But this woman had one connection to her former life, her Shirley Temple books. Even today I find it just a very moving moment. But that was the sort of things we had.

*Q: So the Ambassador did receive her.*

HULL: Oh absolutely. I remember another man she received. I told her she should receive a very elderly man who was just a fanatic Shirley Temple fan and wanted to meet her. He was so happy having met her. He got on the train to go back to Germany and died on the train.

*Q: He completed his mission on earth.*

HULL: Yes. There were a lot of these very moving moments. To the depression generation of America and the world she was just a very important person, but to meet somebody whose only continuity in life was her Shirley Temple book was pretty amazing. So people would come out of the woodwork now and were able to interact with us who had not interacted before. There were all sorts of new activities, new opportunities. One of these was a guy who came to my office one day. Whenever somebody came to the embassy and they didn't know what to do with him, they sent him to me because I was the Public Affairs Officer. Lubomir Elgner comes to the office. He explained to me that he was unable to have contact with Americans for many years, but he was an FSN at our USIS operation in Bratislava until about 1952 when he was convicted of spying, when he was arrested and sent to work in uranium mines because he was alleged to be a spy for America. So he spent about 10 years working in the mines. Then he was released and he had been working in some sort of menial jobs. He had survived all this, but he wasn't able to have any contact with Americans. But he remembered very fondly his boss in Bratislava, a young foreign service officer named Claiborne Pell. So I then said, "We need to give you some justice." I began a long struggle to get him financial compensation because he had never been terminated from his employment from the U.S. government. He was simply picked up and sent to jail. In the end I did succeed in getting him his back pay for all the years he was in prison and in the mines. Then when we re-opened the consulate in Bratislava we brought over Claiborne Pell, and we put him together with this FSN. Again a very moving moment. There were often moments like that which made Prague an especially memorable and indeed very moving post. But otherwise we were also doing God's good work in restoring and building up exchanges. It was just phenomenal.

I was able to persuade Washington fairly easily to have a massive increase in the size of our USIS operation. Suddenly it was no longer just the American secretary, the PAO, the CAO the IO. We added an executive officer. We added a regional librarian. We added an AIO and an ACAO and became a very large operation. Even though the country was breaking apart we got the operation going in Bratislava again I hired about eleven or twelve new FSNs in addition to the ones I had. This was a very time consuming process. I also had to hire all the FSNs before a BPAO was even sent for Bratislava. So I had to interview, I had to weed through tons of applications. I then had to interview dozens of people. In an interesting way almost everybody except for a driver I hired was a woman. The way it turned out some of them I became quite good friends with. There was a secretary, Susanna Kucerova. Susanna's story was she had fled to the United States with her parents in 1968 as a girl. They left her grandparents behind. She went to high school in California, graduated from high school. Went to work at Loehmann's and other American department stores and was in her early 20's when her grandfather died and they

needed somebody to look after her grandmother. So she drew the short straw. The family sent her back to live in Prague and look after the grandmother. She married a Czech. Now she was damaged goods because she had lived in America. Nobody really wanted to marry her. So she married this ordinary workman and had a couple of kids. Then communism fell and she could appear on our door, and we needed a secretary. Here we had one who was educated in the United States, whose father is now an American citizen, and everything else, but she is an FSN. Then we had another one, Ellen Belovska who became our admin person in USIS. I interviewed many people for that job. I would have the heads of communist parastatals come and everything else. But what I found out from Czech men is they were damaged goods from communism, because they had gotten into a lifestyle where they did no work. They came home from work and they sat around drinking beer and then went back to work. Whereas the women had raised the children, stood in the food lines, fetched the beer for the husbands, done all the work in these highly efficient lives and they were the competent ones. But I was very reluctant to hire this woman even though she was very good because her husband had worked for a Czech trade agency in Zambia. It seemed to me that sounded like secret police or spying. As it turned out I interviewed her about three times, and finally she said, "I am divorcing my husband. I found out he worked for the secret police." I said, "You have got the job." She was a wonderful employee. But it was fascinating because you never knew who you could trust anywhere in that situation and people were desperate for work. I can remember taking a hotel room in Bratislava to interview people. There were these women, beautiful women one after another who would come in for these interviews saying, "I would do anything to work for you," sort of thing. Throwing themselves at me. It was getting embarrassing, but that was the way it was. We got superb employees.

The other initiative at the time was to open an American library. Ours was too small at the embassy for the need and for our growing staff. There was very limited space in the embassy, so we had to have an American cultural center. Consequently we needed to find a place where we could have an American cultural center. I spent an enormous amount of time searching building after building, being offered buildings to become the American Cultural Center. We were actually offered this beautiful Lenin museum, which was historically significant. Every communist country had a Lenin Museum. But this particular museum was the museum at which, I forget what they called the communist party in Russia in the early 1900s. Were they Social Democrats? In any case, what happened was they had their meeting in exile in Prague and this building. It was in this building that they decided to divide themselves. They broke apart into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks with Lenin himself present. So this had some real historic meaning for the Soviet communists. We had the chance to take it over because it belonged to the Social Democratic party in Czechoslovakia, which existed on paper as part of the façade that they were a multi party democracy when in fact they were a Soviet state. So these political parties technically existed. There was an American who had headed the party way back when, whether it was '68 or before. Anyway he came back to take over the party. He wanted to give us the building. Washington didn't think they could accept the building for nothing. So the legal people got into it. But then he got pressure from within his party. Then they wanted something token, maybe \$1000 a year. So Washington said, "Keep looking Tom to try to find other places." By the time they were through dithering

around it was \$100,000 a year. So it came down to two possible buildings. the former East German Cultural Center which was shutting down and which in the 1930s had been an automobile showroom, and this Lenin Museum which was a very old Baroque building in the heart of Prague. It was actually on a street that was founded by, called Hibernska which means Irish in Czech. Hibernska Ulitza, Irish Street, because Irish missionaries were the ones who came and Christianized Czechoslovakia because they were Celts as were the Czechs. It came down to this choice, so what happens but the Director of USIA decides to divert because the President of the United States is now coming to Prague and they need to decide on a building so the president can announce the building in a speech. It is on such mundane sorts of things that the world turns. So Vic Olson who was head of EU at the time and the director of USIA, a gentleman whose name is slipping me. Not Catto.

*Q: Not Catto, the guy after Catto.*

HULL: Or was he before Catto? I think he was before. I think Catto was Bush's second one. In any case the director [Bruce Gelb] of USIA diverts. He had already come to post during my first month in Prague. We had hit it off. He, his wife and myself. We had a lovely luncheon in the gardens of the embassy with all the FSN and American staff, but he really hit it off very well. So from the beginning of my tour of duty he took an interest in Prague because Prague is such a seductive, wonderful place. He and Vic Olson diverted from a trip to Moscow to come to Prague because the Director himself was going to decide which building was going to be my cultural center. First we went to the East German Cultural Center where they were packing up the goods to take them back to Germany and dispose of them. There was a hand carved symbol of the East German state. So he wanted to know if he could have it. They said, "Sure, this country doesn't exist anymore. We don't need it; take it." He was very excited, and this made him very excited about the building. Then we went over to the Lenin museum where they were also packing up. So there was this portrait of Lenin, and he wanted to know could he have that portrait of Lenin which we would then have to ship back to the States for the Director of USIA. They gave him the portrait of Lenin and that sealed the deal. The Social Democrats had no need for a Portrait of Lenin. But all this Lenin memorabilia was there, and he got this portrait of Lenin. Then they assigned to my post an agency architect, Ted Bork, who came and worked on my staff to transform this historic building which was really a group of Baroque buildings that were tied together into one. Actually they were older than Baroque but they tied them together in this baroque style. We had many challenges constructing it. The most memorable one was, under American law, we had to have handicapped access. Therefore we had to have an elevator for anybody in a wheel chair. But the historic commission quite rightly would not let us put an elevator in the building, so we got one of these platform elevators that can go up a stairway that you put down for somebody on a wheel chair. However this was an oval Baroque staircase. It wasn't a straight shot, nor was it a circle, and nobody made an oval one of these things, so it had to be custom made at enormous expense for the U.S. government to have this. Because the building was so huge and we couldn't touch the beautiful Czech ceilings, hand painted, stuff that the communists had not disturbed, neither could we. Fortunately Ted Bork was there to make sure that the designers back at USIA would respect the

integrity of the building which the historic commission expected us to do. But it was larger than our needs, so we actually co-located. The Department of Commerce wanted to open a trade office, so we had both a trade office and a USIS office. Unfortunately over time because the rent had gone up because Washington dithered, by the late 90's or early 2000's it was no longer affordable and we gave up the building after investing enormous amounts of money into it.

It was quite an experience having a high profile very active ambassador, a transforming country with huge numbers of Americans coming. I think I told you informally the story of how we had to do the speech of Secretary of State Baker, but the rest of the story was after the speech I had to rush back to the embassy to interview a Smithsonian tour group that included the sister of the President of the United States. Then I had to go on to give a briefing to Freedom Forum on no sleep. It was just a totally exhausting tour of duty, and it was a seven day a week job, late hours. My only regret of that particular tour of duty was everybody had to sacrifice so much family time. I think to this day my Cultural Affairs Officer Mark Wentworth's children remember me rather hostilely as the man that kept them from ever seeing their daddy, because we had to sacrifice so much family time although we had some great family moments.

One of the people we were good friends with was a musician who had a band. I have his CD here. I should take it out and get his name. but his father, he inherited the band from his father. His father wrote "The Beer Barrel Polka." It was a wonderful Czech brass group. Long before it was the Beer Barrel Polka to the American troops in WWII, it had another Czech name. Anyway it was fun to go to their concerts with them and those sorts of things. So there were delightful moments and gosh heaven knows all the great Americans we worked with, but it was four years. Ambassador Black left after three years. We got in a new ambassador, Adrian Basora. Adrian Basora was a very dour, very serious economic officer who I think benefited in his career because of his father-in-law, he had married the daughter of Ambassador Harry Barnes who was Director General of the Foreign Service. I think that helped Adrian's career quite a bit. Nice guy, but he was very dour, very serious, rarely cracked a smile, in contrast to his wife who was a graduate of Bennington College, a real live wire. She wrote children's books and finally got one published because she was the wife of the Ambassador. She was a lot of fun. So they were night and day when it came to their personalities. There was one exception that I recall. The Ambassador had a driver inherited from the communist era, who probably reported on Ambassadors to the secret police, what have you. Who was also serious, very proper in a very traditional protocol type of way. Knew how to do his job. One night my wife and I took the subway to hear a concert. I think one of the Prague Spring concerts in one of the many concert halls in the city. We ran into the Ambassador and his wife there and they had a friend who was visiting from the United States. Afterwards they said, "Let us give you a lift home." I said, "That is very nice Ambassador but there are three of you and the driver and there is just no room for us in the car." He said, "No, come with us. We will make room." So we go out to get in the car and the Ambassador's driver was there. His jaw did drop and I thought he was going to faint when the Ambassador insisted that his friend and Jill and I sit in the back seat of the car and the Ambassador got in the front seat and put his wife on his lap. Off we drove. This was just so out of character for

this guy. I actually encountered Adrian Basora in an odd way when I was in graduate school and beginning to despair if I would ever get into the Foreign Service. I cast around for work at a few businesses. My father had worked for General Electric, so I talked to them. They said, "You know we had a really great guy on loan here from the State Department working with General Electric, a guy by the name of Adrian Basora. You should call him up and find out some more about getting into the Foreign Service." So I gave Adrian Basora a ring and we chatted. It was just this phone call that probably he didn't remember, but I remembered. I didn't know anything else about him. But he was not a successful Ambassador really because he had few people skills.

*Q: And he had a tough act to follow.*

HULL: A tough act to follow and few people skills. I should mention too that one of the other things that we did was we had a wonderful cultural program there because suddenly everybody in the world wanted to perform in Prague, whether it was Yo Yo Ma or whoever. One of the problems in those early days after communism was there was no hard currency, and they needed hard currency often to subsidize these concerts for the hard currency aspects. I had a large enough budget that I could throw a couple of thousand dollars here or \$5000 there to help support concerts and performances. We had jazz musicians like the Brecker brothers. We had Paul Simon. I was on leave unfortunately so Mark Wentworth did that one. But we had very prominent type people. The most memorable one was the Bill T. Jones Dance Company. We partially paid for that one, and as a result we got the Ambassador and his wife a front row seat right up close to the stage and Jill and I and some of my other people sat behind. We were very excited about this modern dance company. Bill T. Jones, this was probably in the early 90's, 1993, '92-'93. Bill T. Jones had a partner in his dance company. It was the Bill T. Jones-Arnie Zane Dance Company. But Arnie Zane died of HIV/Aids. In any case a very avant garde American dance company. When they came on stage, they all came dancing out, dancers of all ages of all shapes and sizes, some very fat, some very thin, some very short, some very tall. Males, females and so forth. In the course of this dance they took off all their clothes and were totally naked dancing around the stage with all their appendages flapping in front of our very dour, serious ambassador. It probably fit in very good with his wife, the avant garde person from Bennington College. But then there is the Ambassador. As the dance progressed they put their clothes back on and danced off the stage. Then they did other very avant garde types of dances. So, I was sort of mortified that I had put the ambassador in this position.

*Q: And the audience?*

HULL: Oh they loved it. The Czechs just loved it. This is a very Bohemian sort of thing. They just absolutely loved it. At the end of the performance, because we were funding this thing we invited members of the audience to come down and talk to Bill T. Jones and the dance company. The ambassador was sort of trapped by all these people around asking questions. So the first question was like how do you keep from getting an erection during these totally naked performances? And the ambassador is sitting there. I am glad

my tour of duty is drawing to a close. We had another memorable performance which was the famous blind pianist.

*Q: African-American.*

HULL: African-American yeah.

*Q: I can't think of any names up here in New Hampshire, but we know who you are talking about. Ray Charles.*

HULL: Ray Charles. We partially funded Ray Charles. That was a nice one because Ambassador Black came with me and she brought along Vaclav Havel so Jill and I and President Vaclav Havel and Ambassador Black shared a box to see Ray Charles performing. I mean that was the kind of tour it was and it was terrific. I also should have mentioned that when we finished our American Cultural Center transformation, there is a photo downstairs, the ribbon was cut by Vaclav Havel to open it. I have a wonderful picture of the other key person, Vaclav Klaus who was then the Prime Minister, now the president of the Czech Republic. There is a wonderful picture, photograph of me speaking to introduce Vaclav Havel, Vaclav Klaus and my Ambassador. But Vaclav Klaus was one of those who was a particularly good friend, because before communism fell, I had to give, something PAOs did every year, give a reception for a program that we subsidized which was the Salzburg Seminar in Austria. Both Klaus and his wife were economists. So I invited them, he was working on a research institute, so I invited them as former grantees to a reception at my house for Salzburg Seminar alumni. One thing I did, and I didn't know if I did this because I was smart or because I was dumb, I sent separate invitations to Mr. Klaus and Pani Klausova. His wife came and there was this immediate bonding between her and Jill and me because we had recognized her in her own right as an individual. We were about the only people who had sent separate invitations to her and her husband. So we were always friends with Pani Klausova but also with Vaclav Klaus. We could get Vaclav Klaus to do things with us because we had the Salzburg Seminar connection. In fact the Salzburg Seminar, I presume you have been to Salzburg.

*Q: Not to the Schloss no.*

HULL: To the Schloss. The Schloss is where they filmed the Sound of Music. There is a little gazebo they built just for the movie for a gazebo theme. But the head of the Salzburg Seminar had been a DCM in Prague and he became a good friend. He is now deceased. One Christmas he invited us and my parents to spend Christmas at the Schloss because they had no students there. In fact he and his wife went off for Christmas, and Jill and I largely had the Schloss to ourselves and the staff in such a beautiful location with the lake by the Schloss, so my daughter could be out ice skating on the Schloss. This photo is the view from our room across the lake at the Alps. Then this is the gate which, if you watch the Sound of Music, you will see that gate down to the water. But that was one of those benefits.

Incidentally of course all these wreath layings resumed. This is a photograph at Pilsen. I have in fact two photographs side by side so we can capture the whole square. Huge numbers of people with orchestras, everything. There is Vaclav Klaus. We had a wonderful American woman married to a Czech who served there in the communist years who served as the Ambassador's translator. There is Vaclav Klaus with the Ambassador doing one of these things. By the time with the Ambassador, we had American veterans who would come out to these things. By the time we got to the end, the last year of the Ambassador's tour of duty as Ambassador, we actually got her to the point in Pilsen for this large crowd to sing "On the Good Ship Lollipop." She could finally let her hair down. Another thing we did, we still had a few political presence exhibits. This photo is one with the Ambassador walking in the crowd and myself and Alexander Dubcek next to me sort of coming along. He was a very nice man, but of course he died in an automobile accident unfortunately. Every visitor came and even Dan Quayle our vice president showed up and spoke at the residence and what have you.

The other thing that was terrific was that I was very close to the people in the president's office, especially the press people. Prague castle is just a marvelous place. I got to go to all the rooms that people never see. Then I was able to take my parents through them because I had these close relationships with Havel's people. One of the highlights was toward the end of my tour under Ambassador Basora one winter day. I can't think if it were December, or January or February. I get a phone call in my office. "Hello, my name is Mr. Pritzger, I am skiing here in Austria and it is kind of a foggy day and the skiing is lousy so I would like to come up and have lunch with you and the Ambassador today if I could." So I said, "Ok, well let me ask the Ambassador." Fortunately the phones did work from the new cultural center over to the embassy, so I called the Ambassador and said, "Here is this guy and he controls this huge hotel chain (Hyatt) in America. He wants us to go out to lunch today. Well what it turned out to be. He flew up and we went out to lunch, just hopped on his jet and came up. He was responsible for the Pritzger Prize in architecture, this big prize that is given annually to the best architect in the world. He decided he would like to have it in Prague. So I had to arrange for it to be in the Prague Castle. They had a room there much larger than a basketball court, it could even be a gymnasium basketball place. It is called the Spanish Hall. It is full of mirrors and Czech chandeliers. It is one of the most beautiful rooms in all of Europe. We ultimately set up this huge banquet there to give this prize. It was just a very memorable occasion.

*Q: Now Rupert Murdoch can \_\_\_\_\_*

HULL: I am sorry, there are so many of these events, I am sorry I didn't mention Rupert Murdoch and Katherine Graham. One day in late 1989 at the same time the whole world is collapsing around us and we are creating a new government. We have senators and we have congressmen and what have you, the Ambassador hears that Rupert Murdoch, the media magnate who controls so many publications around the world, was coming to Prague. The Ambassador who always had ideas said to me, "Tom, I think I would like to have him at a luncheon at my house. Please arrange it." I knew that Rupert Murdoch was based in London and I was able I think with the help of USIS London to track down the phone number of his office. And I phoned the office and said, "Hello, I work for the

American embassy in Prague. I hear Rupert Murdoch is coming to Prague, and my ambassador, Shirley Temple Black, would like to invite him to lunch." The secretary said, "Oh just a minute, let me give you Mr. Murdoch." So the next thing I know instead of talking to some aide I am talking to Rupert Murdoch himself and explained to Rupert Murdoch that we would very much like to have him to lunch, and he graciously accepts and says that he will bring along his wife and so forth. That was all well and good. But then the ambassador hears that Katherine Graham, the owner of the Washington Post and Newsweek is going to be in town coincidentally at the same time. She said, "You know we should include her in the lunch," I said, "Well Ambassador, how do we even know if they like each other. They may hate each other." She said, "Well, why don't you call up Rupert and ask him." So the next thing I know I am on the phone again to Rupert Murdoch, and I say to Rupert, would you mind if we invited Katherine Graham. "No, no," he says, "We are great pals. I would love to have Katherine Graham come." So my next task was to track down Katherine Graham whose office I phoned in Washington. Once again rather than having to deal with some aide, her office immediately puts me through to Mrs. Graham at her house. She picks it up and says, "Hi, I am Kate, who are you?" I said, "I am Tom." She says, "Well just call me Kate." I explained that the Ambassador heard she was coming to Prague and would really like to have her to lunch, particularly to a lunch she is having for Rupert Murdoch if that would be okay with her. She said, "That would be fine." Just like Rupert Murdoch she said, "We are great pals." I think that was something of a code word, because when Katherine Graham died and I was watching the news reports and they were interviewing people, they would say Katherine and myself we were great pals. But it turned out she had a little more of an entourage. She had to bring along Meg Greenfield a columnist for the Washington Post, and Jim Hoagland who was another columnist for the Washington Post, and Richard Smith who was Editor-in-Chief of Newsweek and so forth. We also had Michael Meyer of the Washington Post. So we had this large entourage on her side. Then we had the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice and the Health Minister and people from Civil Forum, this was a period in which the government was a blend of the Communists who were leaving and the open forum who were coming in, so it was very interesting. We also had Michael Zantovsky the president's press attaché who became Ambassador to the United States subsequently. We had a delightful meal talking about the new Czechoslovakia.

At the end of the meal I was handed a note. Katherine Graham's publications had been doing a deep investigation of the Mayor of Washington DC, Marion Barry, because of a lot of corruption issues, so there was a lot of investigation, investigative journalism going on, but he in a lot of ways was a Teflon mayor. These accusations would simply roll off him until he was caught in a police sting with a lot of cocaine. So I received a note at the end of this luncheon that Marion Barry had just been arrested in this police sting. I then pulled Mrs. Graham aside because it was after we had left the table. I scooped in and said, "Marion Barry has just been arrested." She immediately broke in this hearty laugh of hers and started squealing and was so excited as I recall it. I would not have been surprised if she had been doing back flips because she was so excited. Finally she was vindicated because she and her publications were being accused of a racial vendetta

against Marion Barry but now all of that was vindicated by this arrest. That was another very exciting event we had.

*Q: Well huge numbers of enormous historic events and events that you staged and created while you were in Prague, Ambassador Hull. Any parting glances at that assignment before we move on to the next?*

HULL: Sure, I think it was a very gratifying because quite often in our work we come and we work to try to transform countries, and here was a case where there were visible results from our public diplomacy work, from decades of public diplomacy work that preceded my coming to Prague and later the satisfaction of now looking back and seeing the success the Czech Republic has had. It has had a lot of its own problems as have so many of the Central European, and East European countries. But I think we can say that democracy has genuinely taken hold and the Czech Republic is a solidly transformed country.

We were less encouraged by Slovakia. Let me tell you a tale or two of Slovakia before we leave. When communism fell, immediately people started coming from Washington including a senior person from USIA whose name escapes me, but who was responsible for democratization. He said, well let's go down to Slovakia. Nobody from the embassy had had a chance to go to Slovakia because in that first week when communism was collapsing we were all glued to Prague and what was happening as the whole world watched what was happening in Prague. But Ed Kaska, a political officer, and myself and this guy went down to Bratislava. In Prague the revolutionary group was called Občanské Forum, the citizen's forum, which was working on the transformation from communism to something else. In Bratislava it was called VPN, Public Committee against Violence. So we decided the first place to go was to go visit these people who were just kind of in a formative state. They didn't know what they were doing. They were just kind of a group of dissidents getting together, and their lead dissident was a guy by the name of Ian Carnogursky who had spent a lot of time in prison, and to the best of our knowledge was still in prison. We didn't really have an appointment. We just sort of told them we were coming. We got there and they were glad to see people from the American government. They told us to sit on this bench here and we will get to you when we can. We were sitting on this bench chatting, and I turned to this guy who is sitting next to me waiting for his turn. We started chatting and I said, "Who are you?" He said, "I am Ian Carnogursky." So we were immediately in. He immediately became the leader; in due course he became the Prime Minister once they held elections. He became the Prime Minister of Slovakia.

*Q: OK, Ian Carnogursky the future president of Slovakia.*

HULL: Right. It was an interesting time. Everything was happening very quickly in the country, and there were a lot of strains and a lot of rumors that Czechoslovakia would break up into two countries. But initially there was this idea that the name of the country should simply be changed to the Czech and Slovak Republic because there were always historic strains. Woodrow Wilson had basically created Czechoslovakia. It was a country

that brought the Czechs and Slovaks together as part of, they had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But Slovaks were always part of the peasants of the empire, not terribly well educated. In the communist years they were the part of the country where the heavy industry particularly the manufacture of armaments was located. The Czech Republic always saw itself as the more intellectual part of the country. Even in the early days of Czechoslovakia the administrators of Slovakia, the teachers in Slovakia were all Czechs and not Slovaks. So the Slovaks had long resentment against the Czechs that was suppressed under the communism but came to the surface post communism. In those initial days where there were thoughts of having it be a Czech and Slovak republic, Slovakia was governed by a coalition. Really the country was as well because even though Havel was president the first prime minister was Prime Minister Calfa who was a progressive Communist from Slovakia, because basically the communists knew how the government functioned so you didn't have total anarchy. So you did have this transition period where you had a blend of progressive communists and dissidents running the country. This was also true to some extent in Slovakia. So after we had met Carnogursky and had gotten established with the revolutionary element in the country, the Ambassador decided to make a trip to Slovakia. I don't recall the exact date, but it was a few months after communism had collapsed and transitional arrangements were in place. We went down there and had lunch at the State house with three people who were basically running Slovakia at the time. They were Milan Cic, George Shuster and the 1968 Prague Spring prime minister, Alexander Dubcek. So the three of these people were basically running the government in Slovakia. We sat down and had lunch with them. The press came in and they took their photos and left. The political counselor, myself and the Ambassador got down to a working lunch with this leadership of Slovakia. I don't know if we made a mistake or not, but we asked them about this whole debate as to whether or not the country should remain as Czechoslovakia or become called the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. Suddenly all the suppressed emotion of this issue emerged, Dubcek, all of them, were adamant. So much so that I believe it was Cic who was Prime Minister of Slovakia at the time hopped up from the lunch table and ran out of the room. When he reappeared he had a framed document in his hand. He said, "This is the Pittsburgh Agreement. In Pittsburgh is where Czechoslovakia was created. There was a negotiation during the First World War on what this new Czechoslovakia would look like, and it was referred to as the federation of Czech and Slovak republics in this document." So their position was the name never was supposed to be Czechoslovakia. It was supposed to be the Federation of Czech and Slovak Republics so they were going to call it the Czech and Slovak Federated Republic. So this was clearly an emotional issue, but it was very memorable. The prime minister goes hopping up from his table and running out, and Alexander Dubcek the prime minister of the whole country from '68 being also of one mind because Schuster and Cic were former communists, of one mind on this important issue. So the country eventually split apart. I had a lot of good contacts in the country. They repeatedly told me, because I used to go down there quite a bit trying to get the branch post established and also getting the Fulbright Commission established, the country was indeed going to break a part and become two countries. I learned from a very big mistake I made at that time because the chief of station told me that definitely was not going to happen. His contacts in Slovakia assured him that it would remain one country. So I deferred to the chief of station assuming that someone in American intelligence had

more intelligence than I had. Of course in hindsight it taught me a lesson to trust my own contacts and sources more than the CIA's.

*Q: No comment. I would just refer the reader to Legacy of Ashes by Tim Weiner on that subject. I do want to ask a more general question comparing the two parts of the world but anything else?*

HULL: Just one other thing I would mention. I did mention that the heavy work load that all of us faced and Mark Wentworth's family not being very happy with the fact that we had to work so long. That was also true of my information officer, Jim Chrisinger, who as I said was a superb officer with some little children. But Jim, after he left Prague was assigned to be PAO at the Vatican assuming that would be a fairly non revolutionary country, non-controversial post. But he never got there. He was a lawyer and had also been a press secretary to Congressman Jim Leach. He decided to leave the Foreign Service and become a political consultant working for Governor Vilsack in Iowa, where he was from, for many years. He now works as a consultant in Minnesota. We were all pretty much burned out from that experience. By the end of it, as exciting and as emotionally attached as I was to the whole situation in Prague, I was grateful for an opportunity to move on.

I thought I was moving on to another democratic transformation because I was assigned as Public Affairs Officer to Nigeria where democratic elections were going to take place before I arrived. It would be the end of military rule in Nigeria and the start of a Democratic era there. Unfortunately it didn't happen quite that way. The election was annulled when it was clear that the winner was going to be somebody, Chief Abiola, who was not welcome by the military regime. My predecessor as PAO, Mike O'Brien, denounced the regime and declared that this decision was "unacceptable." In Nigerian English "unacceptable" is a very threatening type of word, so he was PNG'd from the country. I thought I was going from one country going from totalitarianism to democracy to another that I would help take from totalitarianism to democracy, but it didn't quite work out that way. But you referred to South Africa where I served later on, which was a country that did move from the totalitarian Apartheid to the democratic regime at about the same time that all of this was taking place in Czechoslovakia. There are indeed a lot of parallels. As PAO in both cases I was working in situations where clearly there was supposed to be a transition from wrong to right. So, it makes it much easier to function as a PAO where you have clearly delineated issues of right and wrong, good and bad, and so forth. So certainly communist East Europe was that type of situation, and South Africa was absolutely that type of situation.

*Q: Do you have any guess as to why this happened at the same time. Is it a coincidence?*

HULL: No, I think it is well documented that at the end of the Cold War, suddenly a lot of groups lost their patrons, and therefore with the collapse of the Soviet Union suddenly we went from a bipolar world, at least for a brief period, to a uni-polar world where the United States was perceived as the sole super power. American support was critical. The ANC certainly was no longer going to be having Soviet support, for example, but the

United States was no longer going to fall on its sword for the government of South Africa at any time, either. There were certainly the sanctions, the disinvestment and so forth. I have always felt that with respect to South Africa and other countries that economic sanctions are usually ineffective and counter-productive because they force countries, if they have a capacity, to become more self-reliant or they go out in to the black market and obtain weapons. In South Africa I was always in favor of sanctions, not because they could be effective, but because they were the morally right thing to do. But there was one aspect that I always felt would be effective in South Africa, and that was sports boycotts and sanctions on international participation in sports, because the South African Afrikaners and British alike were fanatics about sports. That was the one thing that would really affect the population negatively in terms of their support for the government and their support for apartheid. They really felt the burden of exclusion that came from a sports boycott, whereas they could maintain their lifestyles pretty much with other types of sanctions simply by adapting. There were also the pariahs of the world who interacted with each other, those who were largely excluded at that time in the world when I served my first time in South Africa. Argentina under the generals. You had Paraguay with its dictators. You had Iran with its revolution. You had the Israelis that most of the world didn't like, and you had the North Koreans. What was astounding to me at least when I served in South Africa, certainly by the time I had left was that although the Shah had been overthrown in Iran, the South Africans were still exporting chickens to Iran and the Iranians were exporting oil to South Africa. South Africa was buying, I think it was asphalt from North Korea, and they were shipping something else to North Korea. South Africa at that time was inundated with tourists from Paraguay and Argentina, but they were very disliked because wherever they stayed they stripped the hotel rooms bare by stealing the televisions and the sheets and the towels and anything that wasn't nailed down because they were so poor, so they were sort of kleptocrats. There was an intelligence relationship between Israel and South Africa and military relationship. So all these disparate strange bedfellows came together in South Africa through mutual self-interests as pariah states. So again another reason why I had no great confidence in economic sanctions working because the pariahs would always work things out among themselves. Despite apparent extreme differences. South Africa being ostensibly strongly anti-communist, North Korea being the extreme of communism, yet they were able to do deals because they were being excluded by other parts of the world.

*Q: I think you have said a lot for one session.*

HULL: Well we need a little break.

*Q: Ok, we are now in our 14<sup>th</sup> segment, Dan Whitman interviewing Ambassador Tom Hull. We have reached the year 1993 which is the year I believe you moved from Prague to Lagos.*

HULL: Yes, I was pleased to go back to Africa. Africa was my area of expertise. I felt very grateful and fortunate to be selected as Public Affairs Officer in Nigeria replacing Mike O'Brien, another great Public Affairs Officer. His predecessor was another great PAO was Bob LaGamma. Of course by that point I had been promoted into the Senior

Foreign Service as a Counselor. This was a minister counselor position, so it was a step up career-wise. It was a post that had three branch offices in Kaduna, Ibaden, and Abuja. So it was a very substantial USIS operation. I think we had about 15 officers in country. We had program development officer, executive officer, PAO, deputy PAO, secretary, three branch officers, ACAO, CAO, IO, and junior officers and so forth. So it was a very substantial operation with a large number of Nigerian employees. I went there with a great amount of excitement because I had just been through this remarkable transformation from authoritarian communist rule to the democratic civilian rule in Prague, and here I was going to Nigeria, where after a couple of decades at least, Nigeria at the promise of President Babangida was about to transform from authoritarian military rule to democratic civilian rule. I saw a certain parallel in the work I would be doing. USIA had amply funded a number of democratization programs that I would inherit in the country. So it was with some optimism and enthusiasm that I was going, and as I was preparing to go to post an election was held that was supposed to bring civilian government to Nigeria. But, when it was seen that a southern Yoruba by the name of Chief Abiola would be elected, and that even though he was a Muslim he was a southerner, this was unacceptable to the northern Muslims that were running the country. Consequently they annulled the election citing election irregularities, which is never difficult to do in Nigeria since every election is irregular. Nevertheless, we had gotten the promise of civilian rule. The election was annulled. Mike O'Brien, the PAO, went public and made a statement, a statement that Ambassador Swing didn't clear ahead of time. He simply said to make a statement, but the statement wasn't quite what he wanted. Mike O'Brien denounced the annulment of the election as unacceptable. Which was the credible thing to do, and made the Americans very popular in Nigeria, but it wasn't the politic thing to do. Therefore, Mike O'Brien in his last month at post was PNG'd. I emphasize his last month at post because that meant his wife had to stay at post and pack out while he got to go onto his next assignment.

*Q: London I think.*

HULL: Yes it was London. That sudden situation where my predecessor was PNG'd which meant that I was also sort of persona non grata. This delayed my arrival at post. We had to have a little bit of a cooling off period until the Nigerians would be willing to issue me a visa. So I went to post, and there was actually a civilian government because Babangida had promised to step down, and he did step down, and they had through some convoluted method appointed Ernest Shonekan to be an interim president, Shonekan had been the General Motors representative in Nigeria so he had an American connection and he was a civilian. That was seen as a bit of progress. When I arrived it was also a kind of a transition period. I thought I would be serving for Ambassador Bill Swing, a well-known ambassador with a lot of experience in Africa. But Washington decided because Haiti was in crisis, he should go to Haiti. So we met at the airport. He was leaving; I was arriving. We had a period of a chargé affaires under DCM Tibor Nagy. Eventually Ambassador Walter Carrington was appointed and he came to post, but that took several months to happen. In the meantime Chargé Nagy was in charge. Being a Senior Foreign Service officer, he and I worked very closely together, which is kind of a precursor because when he became ambassador to Ethiopia he wanted me as his DCM, which in

turn led to my becoming an ambassador. So it was an important personal and professional relationship with Tibor Nagy. An interesting name because he was a Hungarian refugee in 1956 from the Hungarian uprising. His father was a senior military officer in Hungary.

*Q: You went to Abuja for Carrington's presentation of credentials.*

HULL: That is correct. This was a period of transition because it was inevitable that the American embassy would have to move to Abuja as would other embassies because Abuja was the capital and all the government ministries and the head of state were in Abuja. So it was during this time that we opened a branch post in Abuja.

*Q: Was it Babangida or Abacha who decided to move everything up there?*

HULL: Oh it had been decided long before, because they had to build the whole city, so I think it was even before Babangida. It was quite some time before. We had another branch post close by that was easy to drive to from Abuja which was in Kaduna, but the consulate general had already been closed in Kaduna so we were really in a period in which that post was going to be closed. Another closure in time, after I departed was our branch post in Ibadan. In fact these were decisions that I ultimately had to make as the Area Director because of severe budget cuts that took place in the mid 1990's in USA.

But for the time being we did have those branch posts which were very useful. We didn't have any in the east of the country. It would have been very useful to have one in Port Harcourt or something more east, but nevertheless we did have good reach around the country although we had the failure to get civilian rule of the country, we nevertheless carried on active programming despite the difficulties posed by the Nigerian military government, and we worked very closely with civil society organizations and the very vibrant mass media in the south of Nigeria.

*Q: When you say vibrant, what was the degree of freedom of expression?*

HULL: Tremendous, although some journalists were arrested and put in jail when they exercised their freedom a little too extensively. Otherwise, some self censorship took place. Some people had to go into exile. The editor-in-chief of the Guardian was a good friend of mine, Olatunji Dare. We won for him the Nieman Prize at Harvard for journalistic courage one year, and then he ended up teaching at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, where he still is.

*Q: The Name of the paper was...*

HULL: The Guardian. So that was one person for example, but there were many journalists that we worked with closely. We worked very closely with Claude Ake who was in Port Harcourt, a brilliant political scientist who unfortunately was killed in a Nigerian Air Lines plane crash going from Port Harcourt to Lagos. There was always some suspicion as to whether or not that was an actual crash or a planned death. So I worked very closely with Mrs. Awolowo-Dosunmu, the daughter of Chief Obafemi

Awolowo who was one of the people who led Nigeria to independence and was a major leader. The stature of her family was such that she was somewhat immune to persecution. She undertook a lot of pro-democracy activities. We had a range of people. We had lawyers, jurists and so forth, business people whom we could work with and we also could work in the arts quite a bit. If you know anything about Nigerian culture, it is a very vibrant artistic society. So we worked with the theater in particular in getting rights for American plays to be performed, particularly Langston Hughes plays to be performed, such as *Fences*. So this certainly kept us very busy. Instead of transforming the country into and supporting democratic rule, at the time I was PAO our task was to keep hope alive which we did very actively. We had an active Fulbright program, worked closely with the Universities. We could do a lot but it wasn't what we had expected to do when I was first assigned there. We had a number of prominent visitors such as the Reverend Jesse Jackson coming to extol the need for transformation in Nigeria. We had Congressman Watt from Oklahoma, a prominent African American Republican for example. So we had some important people coming, but it was nothing like my tour in Czechoslovakia, thank goodness, where we were constantly being inundated by visits from Members of Congress and the United States Senate.

*Q: Now are we into the Abacha regime by now?*

HULL: Oh absolutely. I mean they were as I mentioned Shonekan lasted just a few months and then there was a coup d'état. Even under Abacha we were doing all this with the media and with culture and so forth. One of the terrible traditions of Nigeria are book launchings. When anybody writes a book they want to have a book launch. If you go to a book launch you are lucky if it starts within an hour or two of the scheduled time. These would go on for hours and they would have lively discussions. I do remember one in particular that was attended by the dissident from the Niger delta, Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was then executed by Abacha.

*Q: A terrible thing, international outcry against it. It took several weeks.*

HULL: It was actually a bit loony. Like in Czechoslovakia when we worked with the different dissidents, you sometimes had to have a screw loose to challenge authority. He was arrested and executed. That was certainly a complication at the time, and it showed the true colors of the regime.

*Q: Was (Nobel Literature Laureate) Wole Soyinka out of the country at that time?*

HULL: No, he was in the country, in fact he came to my house on a couple of occasions to representational events, but I wasn't the first PAO by any means. He was a strong critic of the United States feeling that we could do much more for transformation in Nigeria, but nevertheless he was a friend of America and certainly was a contact of CAOs and PAOs over a period of years. We had a Cultural Affairs Officer at the time, Margaret Westmoreland who was extremely active with the arts community, particularly artists, but also theater. So we had extensive outreach in the educational and cultural areas. We had extensive outreach with the media because we had Arlene Jacquette, a very good

information officer, for most of my tour. So we were well situated; we were active and we did a lot. We helped to keep hope alive for the mass media, the educational and cultural world, and the civil society. We would also take speakers to the military academy and tell them what we thought of military rule, which was pretty negative. So we were not shy about being critical in a diplomatic way of the regime. By being critical trying to show them that civilian rule was superior to military rule.

*Q: So the regime was pressing down very hard on Nigerians, but apparently did not limit what you were doing.*

HULL: Not really, There may have been one or two instances of Nigerians not being able to travel on grants because their passports didn't come through or something like that. It is hard for me to be specific because I don't recall what all of our programs were with various universities. Many of them were disrupted. The Americans had difficulty getting visas, coming to Nigeria. It was difficult to get the audiences we would have had if we had a civilian rule in the country.

*Q: If I remember correctly you had quite a bit of AID money that was available to you.*

HULL: Yes, a lot of this program was funded by USAID. That was all put in place before I got there because there were no initiatives after the annulment of the election. So what I was working with was what I inherited from my predecessors, Bob LaGamma and Mike O'Brien.

*Q: So, so many things to look into. First of all the move to Abuja. Tell us about that.*

HULL: Well the embassy did not move to Abuja while I was there but we did have a consulate general open up there. We opened up a branch USIS post. We got a small building there that we operated out of up there. So for some of the time we were co-located in the very little consulate, but we rented another villa next door that we were able to use as a USIS post, interestingly very closely located near the national security headquarters.

*Q: Just like South Africa.*

HULL: But that said, we did have an operation up there, so we were in place a few years later when we built a new embassy. One of the problems was that we could never get the Overseas Building Office in the State Department to approve a piece of land that we should have or a building that we should rent or buy. We actually had a piece of land assigned to us by the government, but we didn't feel it was appropriate, also a piece of land for an Ambassador's residence. The only government that had moved up there at the time the election was annulled was the British government. They were well positioned should the election be successful, but the election failed, so their equivalent of our inspector general tore apart the British ambassador and the British government for relocating to Abuja when everybody else stayed behind. So it was fortuitous that we did

stay behind. It was a symbolic message but we also had to prepare for our eventual move to Abuja which of course has now happened.

*Q: Now travel I take it was relatively difficult in Nigeria.*

HULL: Less difficult than dangerous. I mean the airlines were very unreliable, a number of private ones poorly maintained, airplane crashes. I remember sponsoring a country conference of all my officers in Abuja and our officer in Ibadan, who has been PAO in Dakar, whose uncle was Mayor of Detroit, Claude Young. Claude Young got on the plane and they are taxiing to take off and he finally has to yell to the stewardess that the door is open back here sort of thing. So they had to abort the take off and close the door. So, that sort of negligence you would find. Traveling on the roads was a grueling process. Once I got to Kaduna or Abuja, I would then travel by road up north in general, but the roads were in terrible condition and there was a lot of banditry, so you had to really be careful on where you traveled on the roads. One of my truly memorable experiences was meeting a very pleasant fellow when I flew to Jos I believe it was. A university was there and it was sort of a gateway to the far northeast of the country. I was delayed by fog and was sitting in the airport. I started talking to this fellow who turned out to be the manager of the airport. It turned out that he had actually studied air traffic control in Minnesota. So I asked him what his name was, and he said to me, "God knows." I said, "You don't know your own name?" He said, "No, that is my name." Godknows Obiozor. That was very typical of Nigeria; you would get all of these names that people would have.

*Q: Like the current vice president and acting president Goodwill Jonathan. A nice kind of Anglo Saxon fanciful.*

HULL: He is in line to replace the president should he die, President Yar'Adua. But this was also not an easy post family wise. My wife is a teacher at most posts. She taught in Prague. She taught at the school in Lagos. She kept busy, but the school only went up through the ninth grade, so rather than have our daughter do one year of school in Lagos, we sent her to boarding school in the United States. That was kind of sad that we didn't have our daughter with us at post. But otherwise the Nigerians were delightful. We had wonderful friends. We also had great cultural performances that came in. We had a wonderful group that was just drummers. They did a drumming workshop. Drummers came from all over They had done the theme music for an American TV series, the one that took place up in Alaska.

*Q: Northern Exposure?*

HULL: Yes. Anyway they did the music and it was all drumming. They came out and did a concert that was wonderful, it was all drumming and they did workshops. They wanted to cut it short because they weren't feeling well. I said, "No you can't cut this short. People have traveled from every corner of Nigeria to come drum with you. It is fantastic to hear these Nigerian drummers and traditional drummers. Another good friend was Fran Kuboya and her husband. She had a most fantastic voice. She was the sister of the famous musician, Fela, whose life has been featured in a Broadway musical. They were































































































language the closest word to compromise is a word that fundamentally means to lose. If you have compromised you are seen as having lost, and of course that would undercut your position politically if you were a Somali leader.

*Q: As the English word is, if you have your pants down you are compromised.*

HULL: You may recall that a few years ago there was a conference of Somalis, a peace conference of Somalis in Kenya that we supported, that was ostensibly under the aegis of IGAD, and it went on for months and months without any progress or agreement on creating a provisional national government. Apparently because they were having such a good time at the hotel they were staying at foreigners expense that they had no incentive to come to an agreement. Their national interest was not their primary interest. So that is indicative of the difficulties. It extends to the problems you saw between Meles and Isaias for example, Ethiopia and Eritrea negotiating and dealing with folks in the horn of Africa who do not truly see themselves as African but as something superior to African and more closely akin to the Middle East if anything is a major problem in that region.

*Q: Last question I promise. If God forbid if you were drafted to do Somalia policy, we do have a Somalia person in Nairobi. How do you suppose you would go about it in this day and age?*

HULL: I don't know because I haven't been close enough to the issues. I am sure that I would try to find common ground between these people, but recognizing that they might be in their own area of commonality. The United Nations, The African Union, and people are engaged there. Americans are involved and we are still working one way or another toward a solution there. But if and when that will take place, there is obviously concern about Al Qaeda, Islamic fundamentalism and so forth. I think I said in my remarks on my service in Somalia that I had not foreseen the enormous bloodshed that followed the fall of Siad Barre. We all knew that Said Barre had not really set things up for how the country would run after his demise. But given the fact that they were all Somalis, they were all fundamentally ethnically unified with a vision of a greater Somalia, I did not foresee that they would turn on themselves in such a vicious way.

*Q: In '92.*

HULL: Well even when I left it was 1986, and back then. But I think I mentioned in the interview earlier that one of my FSNs said to me, "Mr. Hull you are leaving at the right time because when Siad Barre goes, we will all start killing each other. We all have our AK47's." It just wasn't evident because it was such a peaceful place. There was less crime in Somalia than any other place we had served in Africa. It was an astounding. Then to have it go so totally 180 degrees in the other direction.

*Q: Chillingly prophetic.*

HULL: Which is why it is a good idea to listen to FSNs.

*Q: Yeah. Well your next assignment was the big one in a sense.*

HULL: Big but a much smaller embassy than the ones I had been serving in in recent years. My most recent embassies had been Nigeria, South Africa, and Ethiopia, three of our largest embassies in Africa.

*Q: However, you became Ambassador.*

HULL: I did become an Ambassador and that was partly because of strong support from Ambassador Nagy. I was never very much of a self promoter and being from USIA, it was always seen as being unseemly in USIA to go out begging for jobs the way our State Department colleagues had shamelessly done in our view. So it wasn't the sort of thing I would do. When I was the Director of Africa for USIA, if a USIA officer came to me to plead his case for a position in Africa the instinctive reaction in my mind would be what is wrong with this person that he cannot let the personnel process take its course and would emerge as the best candidate. But there were some USIA officers like that who I could name but won't name at the moment. But nevertheless in general in the State Department you were expected to be a self promoter. You were expected to go out and lobby on your own behalf for jobs, which was the death knell of getting an assignment USIA, but it was the path to take in the State Department.

So you know, I had been told that I had been strongly recommended to the Assistant Secretary of State at the time, Kansteiner, for an ambassadorship. I had been considered before on panels but I think mostly as a token candidate because AF had other candidates they wanted for jobs. But it was clear that my chances would be very good for an ambassadorship. Finally when it was getting close to decision time, I decided that I would bite the bullet, but rather than be so presumptuous as to call the Assistant Secretary of State, I just sent him an E-Mail saying that I hope I am not being too presumptuous, but I have all these qualifications and experience in Africa, and I would really like to be a chief of mission, and by the way I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone, and I thrive on tough assignments, so I would appreciate having the toughest assignment you can give me. The very next day he came back and said, "Well how would you like to be Ambassador to Sierra Leone?" which is what I was angling for anyway even though I could have had something else.

*Q: I see.*

HULL: I didn't specify but I said, it would be presumptuous of me to suggest a specific country, but I would welcome a tough assignment.

*Q: Ah very artful.*

HULL: I assumed that if he were going to give me something, he would give me Sierra Leone where I had made clear I had experience. Then shortly thereafter he came out to Ethiopia and Ambassador Nagy assigned me to escort Kansteiner around the country. We hit it off.

*Q: I am sorry you were still what at that time?*

HULL: DCM. Nagy was still there.

So before it had actually been paneled, but he had indicated informally that I would be his candidate for Sierra Leone. When I traveled with him, he saw the way I interacted with my staff. Rather than steal the thunder of, for example, the AID people, I rather stood in the background and let the other people do what they do and take credit for what they do. I think that sat very well with him and cemented his support. Then there was just the matter of going through the process, because it was not the sort of situation where somebody else might be trying to stab me in the back and maneuver in to get the Sierra Leone assignment.

*Q: Right. It wasn't France after all.*

HULL: Also Larry Andre who had been, I guess, regional environmental officer in Addis Ababa had become DCM in Freetown with my strong recommendation to Ambassador Chavez. So I had some communication. I couldn't, of course, say I am going to be the next Ambassador to Sierra Leone, but I was able to strike up some dialogue with the Embassy in Freetown and get a sense of what was going on there, which I appreciated. But of course until the White House actually announces that you are going to be the candidate, you have to pretend you know nothing.

*Q: Kansteiner, I think people remember him as a real gentleman, as a person who was not a screamer, and was sensitive to staff morale.*

HULL: I think he looks very good in comparison to some other Assistant Secretaries whom we have had. He was seen as a bit narrow. Of course he was appointed by a Republican administration. Not to say that made him narrow but that he had his well-defined priorities, private sector development, environmental protection.

*Q: He was a businessman.*

HULL: He was a businessman. He had four or five priorities, and that was where the focus was, probably less diffuse than it was under some other Assistant Secretaries of State. So you may or may not have agreed with his precise priorities, but remember this is also the era when the Millennium Challenge Corporation was being created, PEPFAR was being created. All these things were coming out of the administration. AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act), which had been created before the administration really, but was a priority adopted by the administration.

*Q: Was he a hard charger?*

HULL: Well, I did not work that closely with him. I believe he was. That was my impression, but I never worked directly with him sufficiently to really comment.

*Q: OK, so let's get to the fun part, your confirmation.*

HULL: My confirmation was interesting only in the sense that anybody who has been through this process knows that it can take a very long time for a nomination to rise to the level where it can be announced to the world by the White House. One of the most important parts of it is that it has to be signed off on by the President. In my case it had been quite awhile, and I had submitted all the paperwork and so forth, but there were a number of new Ambassadors who had not been signed off on by the President, I assume because the President had higher priorities. But then on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the flight at Kitty Hawk when America first flew, the event got rained out. So the President had some down time in North Carolina on that trip, so that is when he signed off on these ambassadorial nominations. It then had to further work itself through the White House personnel process, but it was eventually announced. But then there was always the question of when would the Senate be able to schedule confirmation hearings.

*Q: Where were you during all of this?*

HULL: I was in Addis. I was functioning as DCM, so this is all taking place at long distance. I assume that it is more automated nowadays, but then it meant filling out hard copies of all sorts of documents and then sending them back to Washington, and finding the time to do that. But then on top of that we just didn't know when the Senate was going to schedule hearings. We had an inspection going on in Addis. The Ambassador was counting on me a lot, I think, in the inspection because I was a point of continuity from the previous Ambassador and had been Chargé during the interregnum period. But in the middle of the inspection it was like can you be in Washington in four days for a hearing? So suddenly I had to get to Washington, have the remarks that I was going to make, that I wrote, prepared and cleared.

*Q: And be an expert on Sierra Leone.*

HULL: And be an expert on Sierra Leone. Fortunately I had followed the country over the years and everything else, and I was at a hearing with two other ambassadorial nominees going to Congo and Cote D'Ivoire. So the hearing was small, chaired by Senator Feingold with Senator Alexander from Tennessee, who was previously Secretary of Education. It was a very benign friendly hearing. So basically it was do that, go back to post. The inspection was finished by the time I got back, so I wasn't able to be there for the exit briefing. So my job was to pack out and leave. I think even before I left post I was confirmed as Ambassador to Sierra Leone, so I really had no further role there in Ethiopia.

*Q: So then voila, you were confirmed.*

HULL: Yes, I was confirmed as Ambassador. But then you have to be attested to by the President. The President, actually I should take it back a step. Let me just say that once you are confirmed by the United States Senate, you then have to be attested to by the

President, which is just a formality. He signs the papers saying he nominated you in the first place. But after the confirmation the President, just like he signs a bill into law he also has to sign off after the Senate confirmation. Then technically you are the Ambassador. You don't have to be sworn in. In fact you don't have to be sworn into any federal position. It is just a formality. As long as the Senate has confirmed, the President has attested, it is only a formality that you be sworn in.

*Q: Actually the Constitution says that people appointed by the President, it is in there some place.*

HULL: In any case I was told you don't have to be sworn in; you can go directly out to post if you want.

*Q: But you still need the agrément.*

HULL: No, the agrément came earlier. That is before, once the President has signed off to nominate you, you are then proposed to the host government. So before the White house can announce the nomination you have to have that agrément from the government you are being assigned to. Mine came very quickly. It came when Larry Andre who worked for me in Addis was actually chargé d'affaires. The request came into the embassy and Larry very efficiently took it over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Director General of Foreign Affairs. And you may recall in the Peace Corps I taught a little Roman Catholic school in a very small village. This was a school with four or five teachers and a couple of hundred students out in a very rural area, where the most prominent family was the family of the Minister of Education, Mr. Wurie. Many years later when it came time for Larry Andre to get agrément, and he went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the director general's name was Amaru Wurie. As it turned out he had actually gone to the little primary school where I taught in the Peace Corps and graduated from that primary school. So he was thrilled to have somebody who actually had lived in his little village where he grew up and taught at the very school, a Roman Catholic school, where he as a Muslim had been sent. This was a real thrill for him. This actually stood me in very good ground because the Wuries at the time had many positions. The Minister of Education was the son of the Minister of Education when I was a Peace Corps Volunteer. The head of the national airline which didn't fly but collected fees was a Wurie. The Wuries were strategically placed throughout the government including Ambassador Wurie who was the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So Agrément came just like that, very quickly. It had to be passed on by the cabinet interestingly enough, not just the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but Mr. Wurie made sure that it went very quickly. So we had the Agrément; we had the confirmation hearings; we had the confirmation by the senate; we had attestation by the President after which you can then schedule your swearing in. I was fortuitous in having Secretary of State Powell who took a personal interest that no matter how large or small an embassy was he wanted to do the swearing in.

*Q: I was present.*

HULL: So it was a terrific event. I really enjoyed it because there were so many people from my career and my life who were there, that it was a wonderful event. The Secretary of State was very gracious. I was very pleased that just by coincidence, my FSN Adamseged, who was my driver in Addis Ababa, had got to be there at that event. Later on the Secretary commented to an undersecretary or deputy secretary, somebody who got back to me, and told me the Secretary was deeply pleased because the only swearing in he had been at where there was an FSN who was present and acknowledged by the new ambassador and credit given to the FSN. So this is something that Secretary Powell particularly noted. So off I went almost immediately to Sierra Leone because Ambassador Chavez had left to take up the directorship of the African Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University.

*Q: I am sorry, what year are we here?*

HULL: We are in 2004. I was sworn in August, 2004 and almost immediately within days went out to post. Larry Andre who had been chargé d'affaires was in the process of transferring out also. We had like a 24-48 hour overlap over a weekend. The embassy is yours.

*Q: You went to Freetown?*

HULL: But a nice thing about this I had been back to Freetown periodically, not very often but once a decade or so after being a Peace Corps Volunteer. There were a couple of FSNs who had been there those many years. One in particular was the senior FSN for USIS, which had their employees throughout the civil war. Although the Americans evacuated the post, the FSNs came to the embassy every day and did their work, carried on the public diplomacy work. It is a very remarkable story. Periodically an American would come to the country and they would get paid, but it was a very inspiring story of commitment and courage on the part of our FSNs.

*Q: What work could they do?*

HULL: There was still reporting of what was going on in the media if it still functioned. I think there still might have been some exchanges taking place. I am not sure. It is amazing, but they carried on very loyally. James Taylor our librarian there. The lady who retired when I was ambassador whose name is escaping me, I think her name was Elizabeth. I am trying to remember. We had a number of people, Sierra Leonians who had the names of movie stars. I am trying to remember. There is James Taylor, the singer, who is also the FSN. I am trying to remember if she was Elizabeth Taylor. She was something that resonated. In any case I had known some of these FSNs a little bit when I was area director and visited the post, and previously when I had been in the country and passed by and introduced myself. So they remembered. So they knew a little bit of what they were getting. I got there, and it was timely for me to get there because everybody else was leaving. Everybody else was on vacation or in a period of transfer or what have you.

My tenure as ambassador was a period of flux for the embassy. We had been at the same location basically since the embassy had opened. Which was in the heart of Freetown under the historic cotton tree that had been there since the establishment of the colony by the liberated slaves. That is where they sort of did their equivalent of the Mayflower Compact. They did it there, so a very historic symbolic location of the embassy, but it was no longer a secure location. Therefore the decision was made, was accelerated to move the embassy. Ambassador Chavez and Larry Andre were able to persuade General Williams the head of the Overseas Buildings Office (OBO) in the State Department to move Sierra Leone Freetown higher on the list of new embassies because he saw the vulnerability of the embassy there. One of the interesting things about my predecessor, he visited all 12 districts of Sierra Leone and got all around the country quite a bit. So one of the challenges to me was to do the same thing. But he had an advantage. In that immediate post war period the State Department had a helicopter at the embassy. So he could very easily get into his helicopter and fly around the country for the period of a year or two that they had the helicopter; whereas, I had to drive over some very rough roads. One advantage was General Williams, the head of OBO was visiting in Conakry, and would say “I can’t get to Freetown. The Ambassador said, “I will send a helicopter for you.” So he was able to divert down to Freetown and see the need for a new embassy. So much of my time was working with OBO on construction of the \$65 million American Embassy complex, on a poorly selected location because it was on the ridge of a steep hill. It wasn’t the steepness that was the problem but the fact that there was no water there. Since there is no municipal water in Freetown, even the Ambassador’s residence was serviced while I was there with untreated water delivered by water trucks. This was a constant problem we had. We did a lot of drilling for water, but there was no water to be found. Ultimately there was a jury-rigged solution, but it has really not been a very satisfactory one.

*Q: The water has to be delivered.*

HULL: Oh yeah, by water truck. And the same thing, and of course this was supposed to be an embassy that had its own water treatment plant and everything else, all these fancy things, but they just couldn’t function in an environment like Sierra Leone. Also it was designed to be the embassy that was self reliant for electricity because there was absolutely no electricity in Freetown, a major capital, except for that produced by private generators. So our embassy had enough generator power that it could power a good percentage of Freetown as well as our embassy. But two of those generators are back-up generators. So the infrastructure in Freetown is very weak. The one thing that happened, as in most of Africa, was the cellular phone revolution that made so much more possible in the country, but the general infrastructure was just horrible. It is one of the situations that you often read about how African countries are worse off today in many cases than they were at the time of independence. That is certainly true of the infrastructure in Sierra Leone, in spite of the fact they had a major hydro-electric project going on since the early 80’s. It had never reached fruition, run by an Italian company, because of enormous corruption. Since then, in the last couple of years under the new president, it has started to come on line finally.

*Q: Cell phones. I guess the time you were there must have been the time of the very rapid rise in the use of them, '04, '05, '06.*

HULL: Sure, and that of course was, as in many African countries, because they took business away from the parastatal telephone company. Still, they got parliament to pass a bill saying that all international calls had to be through the state telephone company so that they could take their piece of the action, but in point of fact they did not have the capacity technologically to do this.

*Q: Were there several cell phone companies competing?*

HULL: Oh yes there were.

*Q: And each of them had their own repeater towers.*

HULL: Yes. Some were more developed than others. Celtel, Mo Ibrahim's company was the most advanced, but there were a number of these operations trying to tie together Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Manu River area offering different comparative advantage. But there were major issues. There was probably a fair amount of corruption in the ministry responsible for telephones, giving out more telephone contracts than they should have. Corruption was rife in the government as it had been for a number of years and they had a number of different types of corruption issues.

But just to go back to where we started, I guess my lasting legacy in Sierra Leone is the \$65 million embassy with my name on the plaque in the front of the building. We will see how long it lasts, but certainly it is so solidly constructed it will physically be there for a very long time.

*Q: It does seem odd. I have had people outside the State Department say \$65 million for a building in a country that has been at times unstable.*

HULL: Well not only that, well all the more reason to have a secure embassy. However, a \$65 million cost was far more than the aid we were giving the country over a period of years. But we have a responsibility to protect our employees. Certainly it was appreciated by the new government because the construction was in the post civil war period in Sierra Leone that ended officially in early 2002. That is when the post war period began. The government saw this as a vote of confidence in the future stability of Sierra Leone. So although it was \$65 million, it did generate employment of Sierra Leonians and it was seen as a positive gesture towards Sierra Leone.

*Q: Did the embassy take advantage of that perception and further it. Was that part of the presentation of the NEC?*

HULL: Well I am not sure, because I wasn't there at the time it was presented to the government. But I didn't have to sell it. The only complaints were you could have done something else with the money, but then again you wouldn't have had the money to do

something else with. They always hoped there would be more employment generated by it, but we did employ a few hundred Sierra Leonians in the project.

*Q: In other U.S. similar projects the Chinese model of bringing in labor from the outside is sometimes the case.*

HULL: It is certainly the case because it is contracted to an American company so they would bring in, first of all the American labor as supervisors, but they also brought in a construction company subcontracted from Turkey. There were sometimes problems with the relationships between the Turks and the Sierra Leonians, communication issues, treatment issues, and so forth. But I think there was begrudging recognition by the Sierra Leonians that they did not have the skills that the Turks brought to the job, so there was a skills transfer from the Turks to the Sierra Leonians as they learned the jobs, but there were difficult relationships between the Turkish subcontractors and the...

*Q: Likewise in Yaoundé exactly the same thing. So outside of the embassy what was Sierra Leone going through at that time?*

HULL: Well it was recovering from the war. The immediate post war period was another Ambassador, mainly Ambassador Chavez. He did an excellent job. He had been an Ambassador in Malawi. He had been a Peace Corps volunteer, so he knew his way around Africa dealing with Africa. But I think West Africa is often quite different for a variety of reasons than other parts of Africa. Each region of Africa has some distinctive characteristics. Certainly in Sierra Leone, he had seen corruption in Malawi, but he had never seen corruption on the scale that you had in Sierra Leone. In point of fact, the corruption in Sierra Leone was only limited by the fact that there were very few resources to be corrupt with. So they were not as extremely corrupt enriching themselves as other places, but corruption permeated society, the more as time progressed. Ambassador Chavez became more publicly outrageously offended by the corruption in the country and he was very outspoken on it, to the extent that it made him highly unpopular. It was the correct thing to do but it is not necessarily...

*Q: Did the majority of the population or was it members of government?*

HULL: Well members of government in particular, but since it pervaded society there were very mixed feelings. There were a lot of people who said bully for you, thank you for pointing it out, but also, I know it is hard to deal with specifics. Well show us the corruption. What corruption are you talking about? Of course everybody knew this. We were particularly outraged, we the U.S. Government, because we had given funds particularly to the Electoral Commission and to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, wanting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to publish their report and the Electoral Commission to reform themselves and prepare for elections. The money was misspent and couldn't be accounted for by the Electoral Commission. The money was withdrawn from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Although they did eventually publish the report in Ghana, there were all sorts of allegations that it was being tampered with in Ghana in terms of the final outcome, mainly because it pointed to

abuses by the Nigerians, and the Nigerians did not want those abuses to appear in print. Therefore, they were allegedly subverting publication. In point of fact criticisms remained in the report of the Nigerians, so I don't think it was actually tampered with, so I don't think it actually was, but that was the rumor. It did eventually get published, and it may have been just the simple inefficiencies of West Africa at work as well.

*Q: We have a time limit, but on the corruption issue, so you moved into your position. Your predecessor was very much in your face on this issue.*

HULL: They were all very relieved to see me because they assumed that because I had been a Peace Corps Volunteer there, that I understood the country better and therefore I might be more tolerant of corruption. I think it was more my approach was a bit different. I have numerous articles headlined about talks and speeches I gave on corruption and human rights critical to Sierra Leone. What they appreciated from the outset when I gave my first remarks and I gave my Letters of Credence were accepted by President Kabbah, on corruption for example. I said "Hey I understand why corruption occurs because civil servants are not paid a living wage, but that does not excuse you for being corrupt in Sierra Leone, and we expect Sierra Leone to perform to international standards of good governance." So they were much more tolerant of my criticism if I could show that I had some understanding of the situation, but nevertheless, there needed to be reform.

*Q: Do you feel that during your tour of duty there, that corruption changed in any way?*

HULL: Well yes. See, there was an anti-corruption commission in the country, and it is important to remember that the United States was not the major donor in the country, it was the United Nations and the British government. The British funded the Anti-Corruption Commission and they had a very stalwart Anti-Corruption Commissioner. But the system was flawed. Before there could be an indictment, the indictment had to be approved by the Attorney General who was also the Minister of Justice. So there was somebody in the Government that had to approve the indictment, and he presented roadblock after roadblock to the indictment. And also the Government was in an outrage and an uproar when the Anti-Corruption Commissioner sent his investigators, and there were British investigators there as well as Sierra Leonean investigators, with their own warrant to the home of the Minister of Fisheries, and discovered lots of television sets and furniture. Just things that did not meet the quantities of their homes. So that created such a brouhaha that the head of the Anti-Corruption Commission had to resign. A new Corruption Commissioner was appointed who had been a former brother-in-law of the President. Not very much happened in terms of the Anti-Corruption Commission as a consequence, although certainly I would complain to the President as did others, that the Anti-Corruption Commission had to be given teeth and the law should be changed so that the Attorney General would not be an obstacle to indictments. There would be special courts for corruption. There were some corruption cases and convictions but they were little fish. The people of Sierra Leone were expecting what they called the big fish to be caught by this ACC. The British threatened to withdraw their money, and we think they may even have suspended it. But to get to the end of my ambassadorship and beyond, ultimately with a change of government in Sierra Leone in 2007 the law was changed,

and now that obstacle has been removed, and the current Anti-Corruption Commissioner has real teeth, so there is progress being made. Part of it too, the new President of the country today is showing an intolerance for corruption.

One thing I learned in Africa over the years is corruption begins at the top. If the President of a country indicates that he is going to be very tolerant of corruption, as for example arap Moi was in Kenya, it will quickly pervade the whole government, and even in many countries there has been an expectation that you can pay a civil servant low wages because through extortion, embezzlement or whatever, they will be able to supplement their incomes. Sierra Leone is beginning to show less and less tolerance for that. But in my period it was very frustrating because in the first instance we had an excellent person in charge who was not going to accept obstacles to corruption, but was frustrated and eventually forced to resign. Then a token person was put in charge of that issue. So that was a significant problem.

*Q: We are running out of time but you talked about giving teeth to the anti-corruption effort, and your efforts to convince. Whom did you have to convince, the President?*

HULL: Well I would often go to the President because I knew that if the President put pressure on parliament, laws would get passed. I think one of my notable achievements was Anti-Trafficking in Persons legislation which was stalled in parliament. Parliament was going out of session before the elections of 2007. I said, “Look Mr. President, your international credibility depends upon these laws that have to be reformed. There are also laws pertaining to the status of women and the inheritance rights.” The president himself was sensitive to the fact that if he himself died before his wife did, instead of what actually happened, his wife would not have had inheritance rights. It would have gone to his family. Because President Kabbah had a career in the United Nations and the UNDP he was sensitive to many of these issues, but he was also more tolerant than he should have been. It would take pressure, and I would go to the president and I was able to pressure him. I was not the only one doing this. The British High Commissioner, the head of the United Nations were doing the same thing, putting pressure on the President to get laws through the parliament. Although the current constitution of Sierra Leone is a blend of American and British models of government, there is a separation of powers between the President and the legislature. There is no Prime Minister. That does exist but in point of fact the President has sufficient influence. Certainly in the case of President Kabbah, he had sufficient influence to get them to take a vote.

*Q: Is it usually the President of Sierra Leone that proposes legislation?*

HULL: Legislation has to be proposed through a ministry of government. One of the reforms we were trying to work with Members of Parliament to create was the ability of members to introduce their own bills for consideration in parliament. But if you wanted a bill to become a law it had to be approved first by a ministry. Sometimes legislation would be stuck in those ministries, and we would have to go to the President and say we have to unstick this.

*Q: And he had the capacity to do that.*

HULL: Well they were his ministers.

*Q: Right. Thanks Ambassador.*

HULL: So in Sierra Leone there were many appropriate initiatives being taken in the style of good governance, they types of things we would expect, but many of them were not implemented fully. So they gave the appearance of reform without actual reform, the Anti-Corruption Commission was one of those at the time. Another one we had to push along was the Human Rights Council. The country at our urging and of the urging of other governments created in principle a Human Rights Council, but that took a very long time to appoint people to the Human Rights Council. Then funding was always an issue. So I recall that members of the Human Rights Council never got paid for their services. It undercut the organization, so there were a lot of efforts at reform. A lot of them were pushed along by my predecessor in Freetown, by other Ambassadors, western Ambassadors in Freetown, and by the United Nations. I really cannot speak highly enough of the superb work done by the United Nations peace keeping organization UNAMSIL, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. It was succeeded; it was wrapped up and the peace keepers withdrawn.

*Q: Was the war...*

HULL: The war ended in 2002, but even before that the UN had moved in. UNMMSL had a very checkered history. There was a famous incident of some of these UN peace keepers, I think Bangladeshis and Indians maybe, simply surrendering themselves and their weapons to the rebels when asked to do so because they really did not have a clear mandate from the UN in New York as to how they should act in such a situation. That was part of what precipitated the eventual intervention of the British SAS troops who in a matter of days had the rebels fleeing for the hills and abandoning their weapons and the war was essentially over and the UN could be effective. Also they brought in a very good Pakistani general, General Akram, who was a no nonsense officer who did a superb job in shaping up the military operation in Sierra Leone and guaranteeing the peace.

*Q: The UN operation.*

HULL: The UN operation. And also a very good special representative of the Secretary General and SRSG in charge of the operation, Ambassador Mwakawago, who was a former Tanzanian government minister who was appointed as SRSG. The deputy SRSGs were superb. The one who left shortly before I came to Sierra Leone, Alan Doss, is now running the peace keeping operation in the Congo after having run the peace keeping operation in Liberia. His successor, Victor D'Angelo from Portugal was also superb and continued on after Mwakawago left as the Executive Representative of the Secretary General (ERSG) in charge of the peace building mission, UNIOSIL standing for the United Nations Office in Sierra Leone. This was a peace building mission which was something new that the UN had created. They had not done this before. There is also a

similar operation in Burundi, BINUB, but this is a new approach by the UN in recognition of the fact that too often they have declared victory and walked away without leaving very much sustainable behind nor a sustainable coordination effort.

The United Nations was critically important to the democratization, to the success of the elections in Sierra Leone. So I worked very closely with the UN. We met regularly, first the SRSG and later the ERSG with myself. We coordinated with the British, the French, the Germans, the Chinese, the Nigerians and so forth. So we had a very compatible group of Ambassadors who could sit around and find common direction even if we all couldn't contribute in the same way. For example, in most countries, when you have an election situation, an election basket is created into which countries can make donations but the United States can never do so, because of our own aid restrictions. Nevertheless we could coordinate by agreement with the others saying we are going to do this before the elections. For example, in Sierra Leone we were able to use USAID funds to support the training and implementation of indigenous election observers in the country, while another donor funded through the UN basket, international observers for the election. So we worked with the others to make sure that things functioned smoothly. But it took all of us together as a team to achieve success. I think each of us individually could take satisfaction from the success that was achieved in Sierra Leone in terms of very genuinely free and fair elections.

The critical moment came when the election commission was in limbo. Prior to the local elections in 2004, just before I arrived the election commissioners were fired; new ones were put into office, but they really lacked direction and they needed leadership. And they needed a Chairman of the National Elections Commission. I, and I am sure some of the other ambassadors under President Kabbah, I said to President Kabbah, "You need a person of integrity who is apolitical in this position or you will not have a credible election in this country, and by the way it would be best if you would appoint a woman, because women are not seen as a political threat to any of the male leaders of this country and therefore can be more acceptable to everyone." In point of fact very shortly thereafter, he did what I was hinting at, to appoint Christiana Thorpe as the National Electoral Commissioner. She was a former nun, a no-nonsense woman who had been very prominent in education in the country, had directed a civil society NGO for education that coordinated with teachers throughout the country. So again another good example of somebody from civil society coming in and making a contribution. She came in and she fired everybody in the electoral commission so that all that was left were the other four commissioners and herself. The other four commissioners, the men were pretty useless. But what she did was she started hiring people and going out and finding uncorrupted people to staff the National Electoral Commission to make it truly independent and largely proceeded to ignore her fellow commissioners except when they were exceeding the bounds of what their positions were politically.

*Q: But she is directly in charge of them.*

HULL: Oh well theoretically yes, but some of them had political connections and so forth, but they were marginalized. She hired some people away from the Embassy, some

of our good FSNs. But we could hardly object since we were supporting the Electoral Commission. I must say with support from the UN, from the British, from the Americans and others, support from NGOs like Search for Common Ground, they did a superb job of preparing this election. When Christiana Thorpe was in a position where it appeared the government would not support her or the government would drag its feet to delay the election or whatever, the rest of us would step in and wag our fingers at the powers that be and say no you can't do this if you are going to have credible elections. We are very fortunate that President Kabbah had a career in the UN development program, the UNDP, so he understood the international importance of respecting internationally accepted standards for elections. So as they went forward, when push came to shove, the President always came down on the side of what would be the acceptable international standard for an election. He might not have liked it, but he swallowed hard and did it. Sierra Leone's credibility was on the line, and when they ultimately did have the election it was very credible. They had to have a run-off election which took place after I had departed the country.

Another key element was the UN was doing police training following a period when the British had done it on their own. But it meant the UN was pretty much embedded with the police, and because the head of the UN police operation was a Deputy Police Chief from Austin, Texas, we were able to have direct influence on how that was executed even though he ostensibly worked for the UN with a Nigerian deputy. Whenever there was a threat that the police would somehow disrupt a demonstration or political rally, the international community was always there to give some backbone to, particularly, the deputy police commissioners. They called them Inspector Generals so it would have been Deputy Inspector Generals. These were actually fairly professional people. The head of the police who was actually a bit political, but he was somewhat neutralized by having this international involvement. And in the election you had this remarkable situations where the police would actually find people who were voting more than once or who had little signals to say I want to vote again for the Government and so forth. The police were actually arresting people supportive of the Government who were violating the election laws. So it was really truly an exceptional election that took place. Of course there must have been some irregularities. But any ballot box that was clearly stuffed was not counted. You couldn't have 100% control and one of the problems in Sierra Leone as in many places is that paramount chiefs, traditional leaders, would try to tell their people how to vote. One of the great challenges there was to say to people you don't have to vote the way the chief does. It is a secret ballot. But that was always a challenge. But there was sufficient support that overall we had a free and fair election, and consequently the opposition won the highest percentage of the vote. They did not have a majority. They did have a unique situation where the Government ruling party was split because of the manner in which their candidate was selected, which was the President railroading through, in an abruptly called convention, the nomination of his Vice President as the presidential candidate. The nephew of the first Prime Minister of the country was also a candidate and objected to that, and he had his own following. When it came time for the election, rather than endorse the candidate of his uncle's party, rather than endorse the party he had been loyal to his whole life, he aligned himself with the opposition party. So you did not have a strictly ethnic election because otherwise the parties tended to be

aligned along geographic and ethnic grounds. This made the opposition party a blend of people from around the country. So a combination of all these factors that came into play and led to a genuinely honest election. And it led to a run off.

There was of course a temptation. This came after I left, but my parting words to the President and to others were you must respect the process and accept the results. After I left it took continued international pressure to make sure it happened and it did. I think the United States could take some credit and satisfaction for the type of election that was held. I think we have had a number of other elections in Africa such as in Ghana where we can be satisfied that you are beginning to see some reform in elections. But whether or not it is sustainable or whether it was a unique circumstance in Sierra Leone remains to be seen in future elections because you will not have the same international attention, the same international assistance, the same National Electoral Commissioner probably, and you just won't have that focus. So who knows what happens the next time around, but if it is sustainable, it would be wonderful.

I would also point out something interesting. This applies to elections in Liberia and Sierra Leone which in Freetown we had funded by the Department of State, the military depot, a peace keeping depot where we kept vehicles and communications equipment and other such non-lethal materials which could be used to support peace keeping missions anywhere in Africa. But one of the ways we used this was to lend the vehicles to Electoral Commissions so they could get around the country and pick up ballot boxes and what have you. We did it in Liberia. The vehicles came back. Sometimes their engines had been traded out for crummy ones and their tires had been traded out for bald ones, but nevertheless we made the contribution to the election in Liberia. Then we in Sierra Leone likewise. It was the rainy season. Helicopters could not get around. The UN did not have the military helicopters; it was a peace building mission. Our vehicles were used around the country to deliver election materials and collect election materials. So even when we didn't have a lot of money to put into elections, we could contribute in a material way.

*Q: The tight coordinated teamwork among the various embassies in the UN, what was the mechanism? How did this work?*

HULL: Regular meetings and they would be called by mutual agreement by the head of the UN because all of our countries were members of the United Nations. So even if we might not want to go over to the Chinese Embassy, for example, we would all go to the UN and meet together. Usually we would do it at UN headquarters.

*Q: Was that the venue?*

HULL: That was always the venue. There was strong leadership on the part of Victor Angelo who is now the SRSG for the UN mission for Chad and the Central African Republic. He was a strong leader, and we all had a mutual respect for him, and we all had a mutual interest in having these elections work. Remarkably even the Chinese when push came to shove were willing to show their support for free and fair elections. I don't

know if that was the Chinese Ambassador acting individually, or if he was reflecting instructions from Beijing. But in a continent where China is known for non-interference in the internal affairs of African countries, they more often than not certainly would have interpreted showing support in an election as possible interference in the internal affairs of the country. But one thing they all made clear is that we were supporting a process rather than supporting candidates for parties. So I give the Chinese some credit. They weren't very vocal about it, but they were vocal enough so the incumbents in Sierra Leone saw that even the Chinese as a Security Council member were supporting the process of open democratic elections.

*Q: Also just anecdotally, when you did have your parting words with the President, was the press in the room at that time?*

HULL: Yes. This is unusual. I made my farewell courtesy call on the President, but it was more than a simple farewell with platitudes. I was using the occasion to impress on the President that the vital future of the country, the credibility of the country in the eyes of donors in the world, was to have credible, independent, transparent, open elections. To my surprise he had the press present, perhaps because he was thinking I would be speaking platitudes, but in point of fact it gave me a pulpit to make clear not only to the President but to the entire country that the position of the United States of America was that the process be respected regardless of the outcome.

*Q: How tough was this pill for the President to swallow?*

HULL: It wasn't so tough for the President. I think because of his UNDP background and the fact that he was also an African leader who was voluntarily stepping down from office after two terms and respecting his constitution. He was tired. He had been through a war. He had been in exile with his Government for a while. So he was pretty exhausted. He used to claim to me that he didn't have to be corrupt because he had a UNDP pension and also part of his late wife's UNDP pension. Therefore he was financially independent, although certainly there are all sorts of rumors about his having independent income.

*Q: It is amazing how important the coincidence of who happens to be there at an important time.*

HULL: Oh absolutely. Another one of the things I found interesting in West Africa and in that part of West Africa was you had a former UNDP person running Sierra Leone. You had a new president in Liberia who came from the UNDP. You had a prime minister who only lasted a year or so, in Guinea but he was from the UNDP. President Conteh grew tired of him and fired him shortly before he died, but nevertheless, the UNDP, the UN, was being an incubator for leadership in Africa, which I think is an interesting phenomenon that should be encouraged and watched, because it takes people out of the African political culture and puts them into an international political culture of sorts.

*Q: And in this case there was a President who had a personal connection with the UNDP.*

HULL: Right. He had worked with them for 20 years or whatever.

*Q: Maybe with the various variables the widest, I guess that may be one.*

HULL: And it was never certain that the ruling party would respect the outcome of the election if they lost. That is why there was always this pressure on, because there were rumors that there were elements of the party led by the Minister of Finance at the time that were going to maneuver to ensure that Vice President Berewa, the party's candidate, would win the election one way or another or that it be thrown into the courts and paralyzed. But that didn't happen. There were probably two key elements there, the police and the army, the security forces. Freetown itself was strongly for the opposition, and it was very clear that if the army intervened, attempted a coup, or tried to ensure that the ruling party stayed in power, that there would be a public uprising. It was not at all certain that the army would oppose that uprising. Of course, soldiers even though they might be soldiers, also have relatives. I am sure they had a lot of relatives who were supporting the opposition and the police as I said. And, the British had and still have an International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT) that is there for a period of about eight years or so, but they were there at the time of the election, 120 soldiers, 100 from the UK, 3 from the United States and the rest scattered among other British Commonwealth countries mainly. They were there to train the military, which meant they had insight into the mood of the military, and likewise there was always the fear the British might call for their over horizon SAS troops to come in if the military acted inappropriately. So there were various factors there, but what was clear was the security forces were not going to intervene to influence the outcome of the election. That meant that even those within the ruling party who wanted, if necessary, to use force to retain power would be unable to do so.

*Q: Some people say, and maybe it is a platitude that the Anglophone countries in West Africa seem to be more able to keep an electoral process, a free and fair election than the Francophone countries. We see what has happened in Guinea in the last year.*

HULL: Well Guinea is unusual though because Guinea President Conté saw himself as not only president for life, but he took on the attitude that he was immortal so he made no preparation for his succession, and when people tried to raise that issue he would be dismissive of them, so you did so at your own peril. While there was some discussion within the army, a lot of military leaders were discredited because President Conté by the time he died, was very unpopular. Even though he had a son who was a major in the military, it wasn't clear at all that the military would accept him to be his successor. In the end it ended up Captain Camara who has been a brutal leader and has been shot. I am not sure where that stands at the moment, but last I heard he was in Ouagadougou.

*Q: Ouagadougou, and his people claim that he is conscious and ready to come back. The medical reports say the injury is very grave.*

HULL: But Guinea is a tinder box, and that is worrisome to both Sierra Leone and Liberia, two countries that border on Guinea. But so far it doesn't have spill over. So far I am pretty confident that the Liberians and Sierra Leonians can resist that problem, but it would certainly help the region if you could get civilian government restored in Guinea.

*Q: Guinea, Togo, Cote D'Ivoire.*

HULL: Cote D'Ivoire is apparently getting a bit better.

*Q: Well in terms of transition.*

HULL: No, but you are quite right. I think maybe because of the Anglo Saxon tradition of rule of law and what have you, even where the niceties of elections and rule of law are not observed, people know and understand that these are not being observed. People know electoral fraud and corrupt elections when they see them, Nigeria being a clear example of that. But by the same token I think people often feel helpless in the face of electoral fraud by a ruling party given the history of Africa since independence. But in Sierra Leone in this circumstance it was a very different, very exciting, very encouraging, but also qualified with a certainty that it could ever happen again.

*Q: Wasn't Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's election at about the same time.*

HULL: It was a year later. No, she was already in office.

*Q: It is remarkable that these two basket cases, countries that seemed absolutely hopeless a short time before now stand as models.*

HULL: Yeah, I think Liberia's election was less clear as to how corruption free it actually was. But be that as it may, George Weah was convinced that he should withdraw, even though I think he truly believes that he won the election. He was a popular person. I think the international community made it clear to him that they were recognizing Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the winner. Now if you look at a better example, I think Ghana is where in successive elections they really proved they could hold a reasonably credible election. Certainly there is still corruption in Ghana. Nobody would pretend otherwise, but nevertheless they pulled it off very nicely.

*Q: Something like five times in a row.*

HULL: You can still find Anglophone exceptions like Gambia and also Nigeria.

*Q: Nigeria, yeah, which is the elephant in the room.*

HULL: Yeah it is a political basket case at the moment with the uncertainty over President Yar'Adua's health. But to go back to Sierra Leone, this was a point of great satisfaction in my ambassadorship that we could actually have successful elections. There was another highlight just to move on, the arrest of Charles Taylor, the former president

of Liberia who was considered by most people to be responsible for the atrocities in Sierra Leone by his fueling of the war by exchanging weapons for diamonds. It is an interesting history because the head of the rebel movement, RUF, Foday Sanko and Charles Taylor linked up when they were both in liberation training camps in Libya sponsored by Qadhafi. They also had connections to the government of Burkina Faso through which weapons were funneled from Libya.

Taylor is on trial now. I believe that he will be convicted. I am personal friends with one of the judges and I know the other two. There is some resistance to finding an African head of state guilty of war crimes. There is a lot of discomfort there. One of the three judges in the trial is a woman from Uganda, and I think she is probably under some direct if not direct pressure to vote for his innocence. The judge from Northern Ireland I suspect will most certainly vote him guilty. The other judge is from one of the islands in the South Pacific. I forget which one. I think in the end he will probably vote for a guilty verdict. So far all of the people on trial have been convicted. These are the judgments that remain to be made.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone, as it is known, is a very interesting institution, one in which I was very much involved, worked very closely with the prosecutors. We had a succession of prosecutors beginning with one David Crane who had been the acting Inspector General of our Department of Defense. He was replaced by Mr. DaSilva, a British attorney who had a long involvement in Sierra Leone, and then finally by an American prosecutor who was our federal attorney for Northern Iowa and is now our Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes the State Department. He was recently confirmed and sworn in. So the prosecutors spoke to me about the evidence and their strategies in prosecuting these war crimes. Of course they looked for whatever help we may be able to provide them in terms of finding evidence, if possible. But the critical point was that most of the funding for this court came from the United States, tens of millions of dollars. The reason for that is each war crimes tribunal in Africa so far has been different. Each one has been sort of an experiment and a work in progress. The next one learns from the previous ones what worked and what didn't work. What didn't work for Rwanda, for example, was too many people indicted with trials taking too long and people not having satisfaction with the outcome. So, they limited it to fewer than 20 people to be indicted in Sierra Leone and only those with the greatest responsibility for crimes against humanity. Consequently they only indicted, I think it was, 13 people. One of whom, Foday Sanko, died in custody. Another one, Hinga Norman, died on trial. Hinga Norman had great sympathy because he was actually fighting on the side of the government against the rebels. He was the Minister of Defense in Sierra Leone Also a couple of them had simply disappeared and were presumed executed by Charles Taylor. There was a lot of digging up of graves and DNA and what have you in Liberia to try and verify this. I don't know if they actually did it or not. Sam Bockarie was one and there was another one. In any case those that remained have been prosecuted as I said, and all but those currently on trial have been convicted.

The Court itself was seen as a joint undertaking of the government of Sierra Leone and of the United Nations. But through voluntary contributions, not assessed contributions. So

consequently one of the shortcomings of the Court was it was always trying to find financing, always having to come to Washington to plead for assistance from the State Department, and the State Department always saying can't you do these trials faster? The answer would be do you want credible justice or not? But it has been very expensive for the State Department to pay for this. It has been interesting watching the administrators and prosecutors of the court coming to Washington and lobbying on Capitol Hill for funding for the State Department to continue to support this war crimes trial, which is very important. One of the problems has been a certain percentage of the judges including Galaga King who is currently head of the court have been Sierra Leonean judges who have not been very interested in seeing a rapid outcome, a rapid conclusion to the tribunal. The United States has been pressuring for it to work itself out of business, but the Sierra Leonean judges have never had it so good, about \$250,000 a year, getting cars and drivers, so as far as they are concerned they want to prolong this tribunal as long as possible.

But in any case, the United States was under heavy criticism because Charles Taylor was given refuge in Nigeria. There was a feeling that if only the United States acted, the Nigerians would hand over Charles Taylor, which wasn't the case because there was a lot of concern among African leaders about the idea of convicting a fellow African head of state, and Charles Taylor claimed that he never stepped down from the presidency but that he was simply in exile. There was a lot of concern about the precedent that would be set by an African head of state being put on trial, because many African leaders were saying there but for the grace of God go I. So there was a lot of pressure on President Obasanjo not to send Taylor to the Court and there was a gentleman's agreement that if he went into exile in Nigeria, that he would not be extradited to Liberia and in return for which he would not interfere in the politics of Liberia. But, in point of fact, he was actively participating from Calabar, where he was in exile, with folks in Liberia. Ultimately, again to make a long story short, he was captured trying to flee with a lot of money in his car. He was probably urged to do so by the Nigerians because Obasanjo was going to Washington and needed to be rid of him. As you know there were late night meetings at the State Department where it was made clear to Obasanjo that he would not have his meeting the following morning with President Bush if Charles Taylor was not apprehended and extradited. There had been a lot of discussion over time as to how this would happen; what aircraft would be used, who would provide the aircraft. There was discussion with our Department of Justice over the aircraft. In the end he was put on a United Nations aircraft, but one of the preconditions of all of this was that he had to be arrested in Liberia. Whether or not he had to be arraigned there was unclear, but basically what they did was they flew the plane to Liberia. At that point the UN peace keepers had left Sierra Leone, so the question was how would you ensure his security? But the peace keeping force in Liberia, UNMIL, had a rapid deployment force so they had two or three helicopters. They flew him in, the people from the Special Court, the prosecutors what have you, met the plane officially accepted him from the Liberian government, effectively charged him on the tarmac, put him on the helicopters and the helicopters flew off to Sierra Leone. Then the question was what would happen when he landed, because there was a real fear that some of his people may have infiltrated into Sierra Leone. In Sierra Leone there was no fear that the Sierra Leonians would try to liberate him, but

there was fear that his own people might have infiltrated. But we got him to the Special Court. Another interesting aspect was who would guard the Special Court to protect the facility against people coming, infiltrators coming in from Liberia to attack the Special Court and liberate him. It was very interesting because we now had a peace building operation in Sierra Leone that had no military component. So what ended up happening was Nepalese Ghurkas guarded the prison and they, the Nepalese were funded by and reported to UNMIL in Liberia. But in any case he was very secure there, but eventually the decision was made to send him to the ICC in The Hague and for the Special Court to lease the facilities of the ICC to detain and try Charles Taylor.

*Q: Now the U.S. government, the United States is not a member of the ICC, so where does that put us?*

HULL: Well I was going to get to that because that was an interesting dynamic of this whole thing. Before we sent Charles Taylor to the ICC facilities, we had to get the concurrence of the Bush administration that the Special Court of Sierra Leone could use money contributed by the U.S. government to lease the ICC facilities to hold and try Charles Taylor, which the Bush administration to its credit decided to do. There are many other complications because the ICC sits in the Netherlands. The government of the Netherlands insisted that before Charles Taylor could be sent there for trial, there had to be a commitment from a country to incarcerate him if he was convicted because the government of the Netherlands did not want to be left in a situation where he was convicted in the Netherlands and therefore they would be responsible for him. Two countries had already agreed in principle that they would incarcerate people convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Those countries as I recall were Sweden and Austria. But when it came to the actual possibility of them having to take Charles Taylor if he was convicted, their parliaments objected and said wait a minute. Our prime ministers or whomever could not make that commitment without parliamentary approval, and we don't know if we want to be using our taxpayers money to support these people for the rest of their lives in our prisons. So there was an impasse that looked like it was going to disrupt this whole thing. So in the end the British said, they may have had a piece of legislation in Britain, but they said they would take him and hold him. In the meantime an interesting development, we established an FBI office in Sierra Leone. Congressman Wolfe put in some appropriation legislation that there had to be an FBI office open either in Liberia or Sierra Leone. Liberia at the time was in no condition to have an FBI office, so the FBI office was established in Sierra Leone largely out of concern that there might be a continuing problem of blood diamonds, as they were known, being used to fund conflict and atrocities in West Africa. But that office did become involved interestingly in the arrest of Charles Taylor's son, Chuckie Taylor, who was the first person put on trial under American legislation that allowed us to arrest and prosecute an American citizen involved in human rights violations overseas. Our FBI office did a tremendous job in finding the people who actually did torture with Chuckie Taylor being present and directing the torture. So it did pay off and Chuckie Taylor has been convicted and is in federal prison. So there is some progress and some satisfaction on that front.

*Q: Taylor has a very expensive lawyer.*

HULL: Being paid for by the United States Government because he has claimed to be indigent although we know he is hiding money somewhere. But consequently the Court has had to provide legal defense for him.

*Q: At least on the radio this lawyer sounds very skilled. What is your guess of the outcome?*

HULL: I don't know. I presume he will be found guilty, but you are right. He has a very skilled attorney. He went out and hired the best person he could find who is experienced in war crimes.

*Q: Great qualifications.*

HULL: But at any rate the person is being extremely well paid. And it is ironic that he is being paid by the American taxpayers to insure that Charles Taylor gets justice.

*Q: So many ambiguities here. We are supporting a court which by policy we have refused to join.*

HULL: Indirectly. The court itself has no jurisdiction in the matter. It is simply a matter of using their facilities. Nevertheless given our non-recognition of that court's authority it is ironic that we are doing that.

*Q: The same court that has indicted President Bashir for genocide, and we have supported that action, although we don't support the court.*

HULL: You know this whole business of war crimes is difficult because certainly we all feel that people should be indicted, leaders should be indicted, for crimes against humanity and war crimes, but it is often done with a political tin ear that can be counterproductive and result in many more people being killed. To me it is better to have sealed indictments and wait for the right time to release them. I think another good example is the Lord's Resistance Army and their leader, the so-called Reverend Kony, who was close to having a negotiated resolution of his conflict with the Government of Uganda. And then he was indicted by the ICC, so he said, "Why should I have a negotiated settlement." Far better to have a settlement followed by the indictment.

*Q: And he went back to war.*

HULL: He went back to war. And the same with al-Bashir. He has nothing to lose now that he has been indicted. Certainly there is a lot of satisfaction that comes from indicting him, kind of judicial masturbation, but it doesn't accomplish much. I think people generally support the concept that it is the right thing to indict al-Bashir, but it probably wasn't the right timing to announce the indictment.

*Q: How would a sealed indictment work actually?*

HULL: You seal the indictment and you release it when you chose to do so. There could always be the rumor out there that there might be an indictment.

*Q: So the accused can only guess whether there is an indictment.*

HULL: Right, but there is one and it is just can be at the discretion of the prosecutor when to open that indictment to make it public.

*Q: The other, I mean there are so many odd things about this. The President of the country where Taylor had taken refuge was pressured to get Taylor to the border where Nigeria would no longer...*

HULL: Well I don't know that we, I don't think that we pressured him. I think that they saw the handwriting on the wall, and they basically said to him you better move because we don't know how much longer we can protect you.

*Q: He was picked up by helicopter. This is kind of an extraordinary....*

HULL: I think one could postulate that this might have been a set up because of what happened at the border. He wasn't able to pay off the border guards. The money in his trunk apparently disappeared which was a substantial amount of money. They fairly quickly picked him up, whisked him away and got him fairly quickly back to Liberia. So it would suggest to me that something was coordinated or there was a contingency plan to do this, but it just worked so well in a part of the world where things don't work very well. It suggests to me there could have been some prior decision by the Nigerian leadership that they were going to do this. But I can't say that for certain because there were very tense, as I understand this, negotiations late into the night. One of the unfortunate things in all of this was very poor coordination by the leadership of the African Bureau in the State Department and their embassies overseas. Not only with myself, but with the American Embassy in Liberia, the American Embassy in Nigeria. All this effort to extradite Charles Taylor was a very close hold being discussed in Washington, and by Washington with its allies. So when the three American Ambassadors in the countries I just cited really learned about what was going on was when I started inquiring from Freetown because our Assistant Secretary of State for Africa was telling her counterpart in the Foreign Office in London about what was being planned, and the Foreign Office in London was telling the British High Commissioner, and then the British High Commissioner was discussing it with me. Of course, he said, you will know this because it is your government that is doing it. I was in the dark. I thought, well I am the only Ambassador in the dark, but by infoing other Ambassadors on my E-mails back to the Assistant Secretary of State, I quickly discovered that our Ambassadors in Nigeria and Liberia were equally in the dark as to what our Government was planning to do that affected the three countries that our Ambassadors were serving.

*Q: Not to indict an individual but what does this tell us about the way the Africa Bureau was run at that time?*

HULL: Well I think it maybe tells us something larger about how the State Department and the NSC and the White House were all operating in a world which they believed they controlled with out a need for coordination with overseas embassies.

*Q: So the authority that you had derived from the President.*

HULL: True, but so did theirs.

*Q: And they were in Washington and you weren't.*

HULL: And they were in Washington. So it was a very Washington centric operation. On a need to know basis, they felt that their ambassadors in the three countries involved did not have a need to know.

*Q: Incredible.*

HULL: It was very incredible. They were clearly very frustrated when I started asking questions based on what I had heard from the British High Commissioner, who had heard from the British Foreign Office who heard it from the State Department.

*Q: That speaks for itself.*

HULL: So that was certainly a frustration, but to perhaps move on to some of the other interesting things that went on.

There were a lot of less dramatic and less spectacular things than war crimes tribunals and elections that we did in the day to day operations of the embassy that I thought were useful contributions that we made. One of the things that we did because we established a new American Embassy building, we could restore consular services in Sierra Leone for the first time in a decade. Up until then Sierra Leoneans had to journey to Conakry, Guinea, where they were not very warmly welcomed by the people of Guinea to apply for visas at the American embassy where frankly there were sometimes poor judgments on visa decisions because they did not know the people they were interviewing or did not have the context for issuing visas. We even had a situation where Nancy Pelosi is calling me saying, "Why aren't visas being issued?" "Well it is not my Embassy. It is the Embassy in Conakry that makes the decision on the Sierra Leone Refugee All Star music group." So it was a major success for us to restore consular services and a lot of good will toward me and toward the Embassy for doing that.

*Q: Was it a coincidence that it was being set up at the same time?*

HULL: Well the fact was that the State Department was not going to resume visa issuances for security reasons until there was a new facility. So that facilitated this decision, but it was a major point of tension and unpopularity for the American Embassy. Playwrights wrote plays about people having to stand in the hot sun in lines for hours to

get visas for the United States, but at least they were able to get them in the past. But now they couldn't even get them. Or they would talk about schemes of people claiming to faint in line so they would be dragged inside the building and they could jump up and stand in the visa line. So this was something that was, when people talked about the American Government, their biggest complaint. "Why can't we get visas here in Sierra Leone?" So we were able to neutralize that problem by starting consular services. It was still for non-immigrant visas only, but it was a start toward broader visa services. People who won the visa lottery competition would have to go to Ghana for interviews. I mean the whole thing was crazy, but at least we started the resumption and largely neutralized that criticism.

One area of failure was my inability to get the Peace Corps back in the country, which had been another sign of confidence in Sierra Leone. We almost had them back. We had a Peace Corps re-entry team come after two prior assessment teams. We had a person designated to be the director, and then the money didn't materialize. But fortuitously this past year we have had the decision made, and the Peace Corps is returning in a few months in June to Sierra Leone. So even after I was Ambassador through my position on the Board of Directors of the Friends of Sierra Leone, I was able to continue to apply some pressure on this issue.

*Q: I know that is a very personal thing for you.*

HULL: Absolutely. And another thing. I have always been a fan of what were USIS libraries and are now American Libraries of one sort or another, information resource centers. One of the things I did because we were moving to a new building, I gave up the name that they had given it which was the Martin Luther King Library. Half of the old USIS libraries in Africa were probably called Martin Luther King library, and I thought there should be wider recognition of contributions of other African-Americans, so I renamed it the John Taylor Williams Library. John Taylor Williams in 1897 was the first African-American Consul General to Sierra Leone. So he was a person who actually had a direct African-American connection to the American Embassy in Sierra Leone. We recognized somebody who otherwise would not be recognized. That was a very interesting period. The McKinley-Roosevelt administration sent a number of African-Americans to be Consuls General in Africa. That ended sort of after Roosevelt was President. They sort of stopped doing that. But for that period that was being done, there were a dozen or fewer people who became Consul General.

*Q: Was this generally known in Sierra Leone?*

HULL: Well no. That is why we did it. We wanted to publicize the fact. One we had this diplomatic relationship, even though it wasn't an independent country, we had this diplomatic relationship going back some time, and we had even sent an African-American to Sierra Leone. So I felt it was worth some recognition for something that would otherwise be obscured in the history of our relationship.

*Q: Is the ISC now co-located.*

HULL: It is co-located so it is hard to access. Being the Ambassador with a public diplomacy background, I did as much as I possibly could to facilitate public access. Unfortunately the Embassy is in a remote location, but it is not too bad of a walk from the university, maybe 20-25 minute walk from the university, so certainly it could be used, but not like they used to be when they were parts of an independent American cultural center. I know it is an ongoing problem for American public diplomacy around the world. So that was another thing.

Another thing was always fighting for an aid program for Sierra Leone. The AID office there was not a full fledged AID mission, but a subsidiary, if you will, of the USAID mission in Conakry, Guinea. That meant we had a contract American running the office with a few Sierra Leonians. That did not keep us from having an active program, but it was always a struggle for resources. Our focus was in three areas: reform of the diamond sector, decentralization of government through support for local elected councils, and agricultural development. So we were very active in all three areas. The least successful was probably in diamond reform. I sat on a board that in a sense oversaw the diamond reform or the reform of the diamond sector along with four or five Sierra Leonean ministers, the police commissioner, and so forth on the Sierra Leonean side. That included the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Mineral Resources and so on. Then on the American side it included the British, ourselves, the United Nations, the World Bank and other representatives. So we were trying to keep them honest and have reforms that would reduce smuggling, but it was a constant struggle.

*Q: Who set those three priorities, was it AID?*

HULL: They were set before I got to post, but they were sensible ones for the country and realistic given the resources we had. So those had been set before I got there, and I continued those priorities. For awhile we did well in the diamond sector, but on the whole I think it simply was not adequately funded or adequately supported. There were some very weak contract personnel in the end doing it. But much more encouraging, we made real progress in agriculture. Some excellent work with local councils. Tremendously interesting work of people having to go out and explain to people in villages about paramount chiefs, "No, the paramount chief does not designate who is going to be your representative on the council. You actually have an election and you can choose, and the chief has nothing to do with it." It was very interesting because in Africa in general you have this situation where you have traditional forms of government, and you have modern forms of government and how you make them work together is one of the challenges. But at least there was this recognition that the Government accepted in principle decentralization, bringing government to the people so that things like education would not be funded centrally but funds would go out to support activities through local government closer to the people. Now the real problem there when push came to shove was getting Government ministries to actually release their money to local councils. This gave the local councils an opportunity to embezzle it instead of themselves. But that said, if we look at the principle rather than the practice, we were making progress. I am not sure since my departure how that has operated. We have had a change in personnel there

of USAID people and what have you, so it is hard to know what kind of continuity and sustainability we truly have.

*Q: Again it may be a generalization, but I think the Francophone countries tend to be more strictly centralized and that the Anglophone countries in general have regional authorities, I think.*

HULL: Yes, well in Sierra Leone in theory you had those regional authorities, but over time they have become centralized. So after the war they needed to be decentralized to bring government closer to the people. Another AID funded activity but wasn't one of our core ones, was the Ambassador Girl's Scholarship Fund. Very exciting, more limited than we would have liked, but we got more girls going to school. When I launched that project, I told the President that I was going to be doing this. I wasn't going to do it in Freetown. I was going to go up country to a provincial or district capital to do it. The President said, "I want to do it with you." So the President came, the Minister of Education, a whole entourage. Of course they wanted some political credit for it. I mean they had their own motives. Nevertheless the President was a supporter of girl's education. That was a priority for his late wife, so in her memory he wanted to do this. So the President joined the AID director and myself in going to interestingly the teacher training college where my wife was a Peace Corps Volunteer, and we all announced it there. So it was an exciting event, and I must say a very successful program. My only regret was we didn't have more money. I forget how many scholarships we gave. It may have been four or five hundred.

*Q: This was money enabling girls to pay the expenses.*

HULL: And the school uniforms and the school materials and textbooks and so forth. Another good program that was related to our PL-480 food assistance program in the country which was administered as I recall through CARE International, was a program whereby girls went to school, because families gave priority to their sons. And also their logic was we need the girls at home to help their mothers cook and to work on the farms. CARE instituted a program whereby if girls went to school they would be given an allotment of food at the end of the school day to take home so the families would have food to eat, and they would benefit directly from girls going to school. So interesting things I thought happened there.

Another important aspect of what we worked on in AID was debt forgiveness. As we were in so many African countries. I was very much involved in what was known as the HIPC process, the Highly Indebted Poor Country process. We had many meetings with all the concerned Government ministers and all the international donor community and international financial institutions, with NGOs as observers and so forth working with the Government developing a poverty reduction strategy paper that was required to reach the HIPC debt relief completion point. I participated in a donor's meeting in London where we really pushed this forward. While we were there, Sierra Leone was successful in meeting that completion point. Therefore we were able to forgive \$58 million in debt

from Sierra Leone, mainly having derived from PL-480 food in the past. So that was another important element.

Also, another very exciting thing I felt, in the Parliament of Sierra Leone we had a very good person who was Chairman of the Human Rights Committee. One of the things that happened in Sierra Leone as happens to most African countries, when the annual human rights report for the Department of State for the country was released, there would be all this hue and cry over who us? How can you criticize us? You have your own faults and so forth. But the head of the Human Rights Committee in Parliament took another approach in Sierra Leone. He said, "Let's take your human rights report and use it as the basis for an annual one day conference on human rights in Sierra Leone." So every year, this is something that started my first year as ambassador. I would go up to the Parliament and I would speak to the Members of the Parliamentary Committee and whatever other Members of Parliament were there, about the American human rights report and the situation with respect to human rights in Sierra Leone and why we came to the conclusions that we came to. We were not the only ones there. The media was invited, Government ministers, people from civil society, people from the police and everybody else who were concerned about human rights in the country. So this was actually a very exciting thing that went on. It got very controversial. I got to be outspoken in my criticism of traditional practices like female circumcision. A very interesting back and forth with men in particular supporting the traditional practice, the women being a little more mute, although in Sierra Leone a lot of the women did see it as a threat to their culture, as if there was a red badge of courage for having gone through this. But the fact that we would have this and it would be highly publicized in the media was something unique in Africa. I hadn't heard of any other country where the Parliament would take our human rights report as something positive and it led to a decision ultimately by my final year as Ambassador where the Parliament decided that it would require the Government of Sierra Leone to produce its own annual human rights report as well which they could compare with ours, because there were a lot of questions. I mean the President and other people would say this statistic doesn't look right or that doesn't look right. We would say that is fine, give us the correct information and we will incorporate that in the next report. So it is interesting. I think that it wasn't just a knee jerk reaction against the report. There was really thoughtful discussion of our annual human rights report.

*Q: It sounds as if that came from an inspired individual.*

HULL: Yes it did as these things often do. You had the right person in the right place. He has now stepped down from Parliament. I don't know if that is continuing or not. He was from a prominent political family. His wife's father had been a leader of the SLPP political party at the time that I was a Peace Corps volunteer. She had been the executive secretary or executive director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and so forth in Sierra Leone. They were British educated, sophisticated, and recognized the importance of human rights. So that was something else positive.

As I had mentioned earlier I worked on a number of laws that needed to be implemented to have reform in Sierra Leone or at least had to be passed in order to eventually be

implemented. I mentioned trafficking in persons. This was a sensitive area for the Government of Sierra Leone because Americans were accused of trafficking in orphans and children for adoptions. There were actually some investigations by prosecutors in the United States of some American adoption agencies and their practices. There was deceit where it was not clear that the parents in the country, illiterate parents, were giving up their children and would never see them again. It all came to light interestingly. Some of the adoptive parents in the United States when they heard from the children that they still had living parents, they said, "Well let's take you back home to visit your parents." Of course when they came back these people went on the radio thinking they had done this wonderful thing of connecting their family with the Sierra Leonean family. They suddenly found themselves arrested for being involved in child trafficking. Nevertheless, we did get a trafficking persons law.

I was very outspoken in defense of freedom of the press in terms of efforts in the country. The country had criminal libel laws which were used to persecute journalists who may have slandered or libeled politicians or what have you with some legitimacy, but at the same time we felt that those laws were unacceptable. So I was very outspoken publicly, garnered some headlines to the dismay of the President who disagreed with me, calling for repeal of the libel laws. It did make me popular with the journalists, with the NGOs and people who supported all that. Unfortunately I was led to believe by some American people in the press who are involved in such issues that we didn't have any such laws in the United States, but in point of fact a number of our states do have criminal libel laws that can be applied against the press. Be that as it may I took the high road and said no modern democracy has this and neither should you.

*Q: I think that some of the key cases were in New York State. The burden is on the prosecution to show that there is malice of intent. I think in most cases, it is true that it is determined by the states, but in most cases it is very hard to prosecute someone for libeling a public figure.*

HULL: In an African country like Sierra Leone it is kind of easy.

*Q: And in Europe and Canada.*

HULL: So I was pretty outspoken in that particular aspect and at least got serious consideration for the repeal. They were not repealed while I was there, but the mere fact that the American Ambassador was using his bully pulpit to address the issue meant that the Government was not getting a free ride on this activity.

I was also very much involved in the preservation of Bunce Island. Bunce Island is a place I went to as a Peace Corps volunteer, and it had a profound effect on me. Bunce Island was one of those slave trade factories, as they called them, along the west African coast. More than any other one in Africa it had a strong connection to the United States. Most of the others were sending slaves mostly to the Caribbean, and they were sending Sierra Leoneans and people from up and down the coast from Guinea down to Liberia out of Bunce Island to the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations. Because of the rice culture

in that part of Africa along what was known as the rice coast, large number of the slaves were sent to South Carolina and Georgia where they were instrumental in introducing modern rice technology that the Europeans did not have and made rice the first American export product. That was very important in the 1700's into the early 1800's. Before cotton, rice in the lowlands in the Carolinas and Georgia sustained slavery. What was significant about this particular island is that it is not only one end of a bridge which, through the horrible slave trade, people emigrated to the United States. Millions of people can trace their heritage to this. But it had a special role in American History. It was the only place where a battle of the American Revolution was fought in Africa because the French attacked Bunce Island, because they were our allies in the war, and it was a British fortress. The place has a very cultural history, but it has another connection. A slave trader, dealer in South Carolina was a gentleman by the name of Henry Laurens. He worked in collaboration with Richard Oswald, a British gentleman, who actually owned Bunce Island. So he was in effect Oswald's agent in South Carolina, Charleston, to sell the slaves. When the American Civil War broke out, guess who became President of our Continental Congress, Henry Laurens. Somewhere along the line in this history the Continental Congress decided to send Henry Laurens to the Netherlands as our Ambassador to try to get Dutch support for us in the Revolutionary War.

So Laurens was then head of our Continental Congress, a supporter of the slave trade through his connection to Bunce Island in Sierra Leone He then gets sent to be our Ambassador to the Netherlands, but enroute his ship is captured by the British and he is thrown into the Tower of London. As it happened this fellow with whom he worked, Richard Oswald, was also a financial advisor to King George III and told him how to make his investments. So he was pleading for a special parole for this guy in the Tower of London. When it became time to actually negotiate a peace, the Treaty of Paris, between the United States and the British in Paris, who should be the negotiator for the British but the owner of Bunce Island in Sierra Leone, Richard Oswald. We sent who was it, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and who was it, Jefferson to negotiate? I don't know, the three of them. But there was a fourth, and do you know who the fourth was? Henry Laurens, our slave trader from Charleston who was the business partner of the British owner of Bunce Island. So what their contribution was when Henry Laurens was released was to ensure that the slave trade was protected through Bunce Island. And this eventually had influence on the way the American Constitution was developed in terms of the slave trade. So unlike other places where slaves were traded in the United States, this little island, where there are just ruins now in Sierra Leone, had some significance for our country beyond human beings being exported to the United States. So I am working very much with a Professor from James Madison University on raising money. We have been working on making this a World Cultural Heritage site because it is a fascinating place. You go there and the ruins are there. It is only about four miles long by about a mile wide. But the cannons are still half buried in the ground. You feel the solemnity and the horror of this place. In fact there was an article about this in the State Magazine because using DNA, we actually found a woman through tracing the records. I think they are in the New York Historical Society, we used some of the slave manifests, we were actually able to find a person in South Carolina to trace her ancestry all the way back to a young girl by the name of Priscilla who was put on a slave ship to South Carolina. So

while I was there we had this big delegation including this descendant come back to Bunce Island. We had a major article in State Magazine about this visit. So that was another highlight of something that we had going on there as well.

We also resumed Fulbrighters teaching at the universities there, so there was a lot of work towards normalization. With respect to the university one of my priorities was the restoration of the John F. Kennedy Building at the Fourah Bay College, which was the first college in all of Africa to be established back I think it was 1827, by the London Missionary Society, a largely theological institution originally. But in the 1960's, as in many places in Africa, there was an edifice established by AID in honor of our assassinated President. You will find a John F. Kennedy Hospital in Liberia and a John F. Kennedy Library at the University of Addis Ababa. If I can digress that is a very interesting one because Bobby Kennedy, the President's brother, laid the cornerstone but was subsequently assassinated. So to finally cut the ribbon on the building was Rose Kennedy. His mother came to Addis Ababa to open the building, and in the process also planted a Sequoia Tree on the grounds of the library. So I think that is probably the only Sequoia Tree growing on the African continent. So it is an interesting footnote.

*Q: It is still a young one.*

HULL: Yeah, it is a small one. It is tall but it is not all that tall. But that is just a fascinating footnote. This John F. Kennedy Building was there in Freetown. It was in very bad state of disrepair. The clock had been shot out by rebel soldiers using it for target practice. It was just a disgrace and it was named after President Kennedy. It had a personal connection to me because it was the first place where I went for training when I arrived in country as a Peace Corps Volunteer. It was at Fourah Bay College that I met my wife. So this particular building had some personal significance to me as well as some significance I felt for how our country appeared to Sierra Leonians. As it happened the entire university had been given an exterior facelift by the Chinese government which painted all the buildings, repaired all the windows, the exterior and so forth except for the John F. Kennedy Building which was seen as the American Building. Of course our Agency for International Development is no longer into capital intensive construction projects. So I promised the President I would find a way to restore this building. We had some experts sneak in if you will because it is not the kind of thing we would normally sanction. There might be asbestos tiles here from the 1960's and all sorts of complications. In the end because we had a very creative USAID contractor, we could put things like the Center for Gender Studies and the Center for Conflict Resolution Studies and so forth in the building. We were able to find ways to creatively use funds from USAID too. As I was leaving the country the project was being implemented and was soon finished to at least repaint the building and provide new desks and everything else and at least make the John F. Kennedy building look respectable once again. It was the most visible building in Freetown because it was the tallest. It sat on the mountaintop over Freetown. So looming over Freetown is this building, the John F. Kennedy building, the symbol of the United States.

*Q: A greater result perhaps than the typical ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation which is of limited amount.*

HULL: We did use that fund in Sierra Leone as well. As I was leaving we were also using it to preserve documents. There is a very difficult climate in Sierra Leone in terms of humidity and so forth. There are actually a lot of records for slave ships being kept, historical records in Sierra Leone, just all sorts of important documents that were at the university decaying. So we were trying to find money to preserve that. But we also used the money on Bunce Island. We got a preservation grant, a cultural preservation grant to do a cultural preservation study which was done by a leading anthropologist, architectural anthropologist who has written some superb books on El Amina Castle, which is his specialty, in Ghana. He came with a team from Syracuse University and did a study and a plan for us on how to preserve Bunce Island. It wasn't the first time it had been done. The U.S. Park Service had done it before the civil war. There has been attention for a long time. But at least it gave us a fresh plan for moving forward.

Speaking of the Park Service, it reminds me of another interesting area we worked in was environmental protection particularly around Freetown where there had been so much deforestation. It meant that the watershed was disappearing for this growing city, and with all of the erosion that comes with deforestation, they simply weren't capturing water for the city. So we got the U.S. Forest Service to come out and start doing that, some planning with the Sierra Leonians on how to preserve the forest area which is ostensibly protected, but was being chopped down indiscriminately and used for charcoal.

Another good area was in our assistance for the military. I mentioned we had three military working on the British assistance team, but also we gave patrol boats to the navy, such as it was, of Sierra Leone so they could intercept pirates, smugglers, illegal fishing and conduct some rescue missions. We had both the U.S. Navy and the Coast Guard involved to create some capability. We gave small patrol boats like our Coast Guard uses. It was in stark contrast to a larger patrol vessel that the Chinese gave at the same time. What was interesting was ours used outboard motors which were fairly fuel efficient. The Sierra Leonians could not afford the fuel to run the Chinese patrol boat. In both cases we had to provide extra money so they could have fuel both for the American boats and the Chinese. But for the Chinese it was a much larger investment. They were very frustrated with that contribution.

One other important aspect of military assistance. Because Sierra Leone was not a focus country to receive assistance through our PEPFAR program to combat HIV Aids, we got our money through the Department of Defense. For the Sierra Leone military to create awareness within their own military of HIV aids. But to be effective it meant you had to educate not only the military but the public at large. We did some very creative things, such as we had a popular Sierra Leonean singer, a musician named Steady Bongo, who went around the country and gave about 15 concerts every year on songs and themes about HIV aids and protected sex and handing out condoms and what have you. These were just a huge success. Unfortunately at the conclusion of my tour of duty the money dried up as PEPFAR tried to recapture money from the Department of Defense. But



HULL: Yeah, and traumatized the Americans who were coming to visit the chimps. In any case Bruno the chimp is still on the loose after four years or so in Sierra Leone.

*Q: Is there a bounty for someone who brings in him alive.*

HULL: Maybe. I don't think they want him captured. He seems to have readapted to the wild and that was the purpose.

*Q: All kidding aside, he led an escape. I really seem to go back to what was the benefit of having them in, I won't say captivity, but in a controlled environment?*

HULL: Well, one of the things was to see if you could rehabilitate them to the point where they could be reintroduced into the wild. While Bruno was the oldest and closest friend of the fellow who started the reserve, nevertheless...

*Q: It was a temporary friendship.*

HULL: Well I think it still is a friendship. I think he has always felt good that Bruno has his freedom. He is back where he belongs out in the wild. But we have very few forest reserves, natural tropical forest, old tropical forest between Sierra Leone and Liberia. So part of the chimp preservation effort went far beyond that to try to give incentives to farmers not to destroy the habitat of the chimps which also had environmental importance for production of oxygen and all sorts of other good things that tropical rain forests do for us.

*Q: Part of the point were chimps being hunted and killed? Is that why?*

HULL: Oh, they were being hunted and killed or hunted and sold as pets. But chimps are part of the ecology of tropical areas.

*Q: Not to mention they are our closest cousins.*

HULL: Well all too close. If they could have had a baseball team, Bruno would have been great. Anyway that was one thing we always did, but it was always a lot of fun. It was kind of funny, my brother-in-law went back to Sierra Leone, not at my encouragement, but he went there with part of some sort of medical mission. He saw my name two places. One of course was on the plaque of the new American Embassy Building, but the other was on the wall of the chimpanzee preserve for my commitment to helping these people.

*Q: Can you say you were named after a chimp or a chimp was named after you?*

HULL: Well I think probably chimps would be more inspired to be named after me. But anyway there were various activities like that, and I just wanted to note them. And also I mentioned earlier my effort to get around to all of the districts of the country which I

thought was important to show that I was the Ambassador to every place in Sierra Leone. Particularly when I went back, it was several months before I returned to my Peace Corps village because there were some prominent politicians from my former village, and I did not want an identification that I was the Ambassador to that village or to that part of the country. So I very conscientiously went to other parts of the country first. There was good cause to go because we had a number of ambassadorial self-help projects throughout the country that were doing good work. One of the most interesting ones I thought was an effort we cooperated in to try to end the practice of female genital mutilation. One of the obstacles to ending that practice aside from the cultural issues were economic issues of the women who did the surgery in very unsanitary conditions, to circumcise women in the bush as part of secret society rituals, initiation to adulthood and initiation to the society. What we did as part of the self help project, was to provide tools to the women so they could farm with the equipment, so she would have a different source of income and would lay down their knives.

*Q: You mean the women whose sole income was they performed this thing.*

HULL: Yes. So there was a need. This was an economic incentive not to continue the practice. But if you could get a local chief to support the idea that this was a practice that should be ended, if you had that support, you could then do an intervention to help these women have an alternative form of income.

*Q: You mentioned yesterday that the reaction to the idea of ending this practice was mixed. So is this a personal crusade? Did you have allies in this?*

HULL: Well there were some. I mean this was one up-country area away from the capital city. I remember going to one meeting where hundreds of people came because the American Ambassador came to show his support for this effort. There were many women wedded to tradition who felt that an uncircumcised daughter would never be marriageable. If you were not marriageable how would you survive and so forth. So this was a practice that had a lot of support even though there would be many infections and deaths among young girls because of the conditions under which this took place, plus the potential for HIV/Aids transmission as well through the sharing of knives for multiple operations, very unsanitary. As I said earlier there were those who took the approach that if we can't defeat the practice, then at least we can make the conditions under which this takes place healthier.

*Q: So did the idea catch on?*

HULL: I think the jury is still out on that very much. I have seen this throughout Africa of course. Somalia was a place where they practiced extreme versions of female circumcision. It is a major issue in Africa and it is one of those aspects that reminds us that tradition still has a very strong hold on the continent. One of the things I think we were going to discuss was the role of chiefs and the local government.





HULL: No, not really. I am enthusiastic that they can do well but experience tells us when we deal with African countries, unfortunately all our optimism has to be qualified by a certain amount of caution.

*Q: Like the stock market at its most volatile behavior. Sometimes today's success becomes tomorrow's failure and vice versa.*

HULL: And sometimes the situations that look the most promising or most stable in point of fact have undercurrents of instability that we as westerners do not necessarily see.

*Q: Thinking back to your FSN's prophetic remark when you left Somalia might be an example of what you are saying.*

HULL: Absolutely.

*Q: I want to ask about two or three things just in general about the whole tableau. I will mention them now and take them one at a time and go in whatever direction you want. First of all you had a wonderful anecdote about a person of high rank who sought political asylum in the U.S. I mean logically they were asking for asylum against themselves. Secondly you made some comments yesterday off the mic on how the Ambassador divides authority and the activities in the embassy between the Ambassador doing certain things and the rest of the staff doing other things. How about the anecdote about political asylum because it is such a juicy one?*

HULL: I think let me talk first about the Ambassador and the role in the embassy. It is astounding to me that there are so many Ambassadors, and it is still a minority, but there is a significant number of people who are very poor managers, especially managers of people, which in a small organization, such as Embassies in Africa predominately are, even in the larger embassies, you get people who are remarkably inept at looking after and managing and inspiring their own employees. They want to micromanage or they show inappropriate behavior such as yelling and screaming and all sorts of things. It makes you wonder what kind of power has gone to people's heads in terms that their image of an Ambassador is one that sometimes seems like it is out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century instead of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One conclusion that I have come to is that public diplomacy officers who worked particularly for USIA before the merger with State Department are people who are well suited to be ambassadors because they had to manage, as Public Affairs Officers, many operations in which they got a lot of experience managing budgets. They weren't just doing their public diplomacy work. They were managing people, and they had a lot of experience. Very unlike reporting officers in the political and economic cones who would simply come up with a very, in many cases, a very narrow vision of their work and who were then suddenly asked to be managers of people and resources. Also the public diplomacy officer, Public Affairs Officer had to work with everybody in the embassy to take maximum advantage of them to get their input for cultural exchange nominations, to maximize publicity of their public activities, and what have you. So public diplomacy people I think, had a broader institutional experience and a broader managerial experience that may better qualify them. I think that it is

unfortunate in the days of USIA so few Public Affairs Officers, because we were an independent agency, so few became Ambassadors, because I think there were a number of people who would have made superb Ambassadors.

*Q: What principles should an ambassador go by in order to have a harmonious productive embassy?*

HULL: Well I think some of the practices, I mean I haven't sat down and given this deep thought, but certainly I always felt it was important to empower the people who work for you, allow them to make mistakes, provided they were not fatal mistakes, but allow them at least one or two mistakes. If they learned from those mistakes that was terrific. If they didn't, then of course you had to take more corrective action, but too many people, I think, tried to micromanage rather than to work with their staff with shared vision, shared goals, and to then empower the people to go out and do their jobs while supervising and monitoring what they do. I think it is very important for morale for people to feel a professional satisfaction from the independence they get from doing their jobs.

*Q: Why, just going on the bad ones for a minute, what motivates them? Is it fear, insecurity, lack of experience?*

HULL: I am sure it is individualized, but I think there is an ego issue where this authority, this image goes to one's head because you are the personal representative of the President of the United States of America, allegedly with all the authorities that go with that position, although in fact you are told what to do by Washington generally. I think one of the great things about working in Africa is that quite often you are in countries that are low priority for people in Washington, and therefore the Ambassador had considerable independence of action on how to implement and pursue American interests in a particular country. Obviously you have to be judicious about what you do, but also you are empowered as much as you want to empower your own employees to do what makes sense with the resources that you have. The other thing a good Ambassador has to be able to do is recognize the reality of resources and where your resources are. Increasingly in recent years they have been on the Department of Defense side, with the Defense Attachés side of the shop. But how do you use those so they support wider interests. I mentioned the patrol boats that we gave to the Sierra Leonean navy. At one level it was to strengthen their military capacity, but at another level it was to strengthen the rule of law capacity of the country in terms of being able to interdict illegal activities, or the HIV activities through the military because we had no other resources. But we ensured that the message as it went to the military was also going to a wider public. So you have to identify where your resources are and take advantage of them and try to maximize them.

*Q: In a situation of political strife or rivalry what is the proper role of an ambassador versus the role of subordinates?*

HULL: Political strife within an embassy?

*Q: No, in a country. You mentioned yesterday about dealing with chiefs rather than....*

HULL: Oh sure. I don't think it is just political strife. You are the Ambassador to the Government of the country, so whether you like that Government, whether you like that leader or not, you have no alternative but to deal with that leader. That does not prevent you from communicating dissatisfaction with the way a country is managed. But at the same time you have to be careful not to engage too deeply in the internal affairs of a country. Yes, you can support the principles of human rights and what have you, but once you start getting identified with one political party or another, whether it is the people in power or the people out of power, you undercut your neutrality. Therefore, I think it is important to engage with politicians throughout the political spectrum, but an Ambassador is a little bit more removed from what individuals can do. One thing I have always liked about the Foreign Service working in Africa is junior officers and mid-level officers in the Foreign Service in Africa interact with higher level personnel. Their jobs are broader, less narrow than in a larger embassy in a place like Rome for example. Your first tour officer might very well be out meeting with a Government Minister, and I always said, that as a public affairs, as a public diplomacy officer, my most interesting and exciting tours were at the beginning where I could be out at the grass roots, meeting the musicians and meeting the professors and so forth. Whereas when I was a PAO, I was more likely to be meeting with the editors rather than with the reporters, with the university presidents rather than with the professors. So the grass roots of our work in public diplomacy is always extremely interesting. I think you can take that a step further to say when you are a junior political officer in Africa you can go out and meet all sorts of interesting people to whom as an Ambassador it might be inappropriate for you to be getting that close.

*Q: Is this different from the model let's say of Eastern Europe 1980's dealing with dissidents which all embassies did. Are you saying this is just a different paradigm?*

HULL: Well I think in that situation, having lived through it, you wanted to have your Ambassador to have contact with the dissidents because that contact symbolized our opposition to totalitarianism. But at the same time you would have to interact with those governing, with the President of the country and everybody else on a Government to Government level. But you had to find a ways to signal your disapproval to the ways a country is being governed. I think one of the things we commonly do in Africa is show American Ambassador support for and involvement with civil society organizations as a neutral force, because political parties as an institution are generally corrupted; whether they are in power or out of power.

*Q: So Ambassadors should not censor or limit their contacts with people who are not obedient to the regime.*

HULL: Oh absolutely not, but I do think ambassadors have to be careful to understand whom they are dealing with so they don't suffer the pitfall of being exploited. I think you have to go in with open eyes, that just as you are trying to send a message by engaging with certain people, they are trying to use you as well. And maybe that is your objective to

give them the opportunity to use you to signal the Americans support for what they do. But if you extend, you can have your reporting officers engaging with all sorts of people. Sometimes governments will complain about that, and the job of the Ambassador is to defend our right to talk to anyone in the country, but at the same time the Ambassador has to be a bit removed from how much a person engages. I certainly, as Ambassador, engaged at the grass roots. Now I engaged with the people, for example, who were defending women's rights, the need for inheritance rights or who opposed female mutilations, so there was a signal there that was also a political signal. Those who were opposing female genital mutilation, FGM as it was known, they were taking personal risks in the society. By the American ambassador associating with that person you hoped that would reduce the risk to show there was world attention to what was going on. So there were those types of situations. The same with journalists; American ambassadors should defend freedom of the press, freedom of speech, what have you, which is always under pressure.

*Q: Did you find in Sierra Leone a healthy number of people taking personal risks for freedom of expression, greater inheritance rights.*

HULL: Oh yes.

*Q: This risks being socialization.*

HULL: Well, it is not just being isolated or ostracized. It is even at times a fear of people might get beaten up or what have you. In a society that can be very volatile, some people see the solution through physical action, attacks on people.

*Q: So your last tour, Sierra Leone, your tour as ambassador from 2004 to 2007, looking back. No first I insist on this lively anecdote you told off the mic about a person asking for political asylum against himself.*

HULL: Well there is always a certain problem that I think that people in Embassies have with political asylum in the United States. Obviously if people need political asylum, they should have political asylum. But in some cases people only need political asylum because they asked for political asylum. A good example was the head of Parliament in Ethiopia, who had gone to a conference in the Caribbean and was transiting an American airport on the way home when she decided she would ask for political asylum. One could logically ask how could the head of Parliament need political asylum since she was from the ruling party and had been in that position for a decade or so. Furthermore the country was about to replace the incumbent president of the country, a largely protocol titular type position with a new person, and the new person was likely to be she. It just seemed to be very illogical. Well there were personal reasons involved why she left her family behind. There were other reasons why she decided why she wanted to go and stay in the United States. Well this person ultimately sought and got political asylum, and was last seen being fired from her job working in the mini mart of a gas station in the Washington DC area after having been part of ruling elite. She was Oromo which was one of the minorities in Ethiopia, and when she sought asylum she said, "I support the Oromo

Liberation Front.” So by simply announcing her support for the Oromo Liberation Front she needed political asylum.

*Q: Well we are now on the home stretch unless you have something more to say about the MP who got fired from her gas station job.*

HULL: No, it is just interesting that the act of proclaiming political asylum itself was what prompted the need for political asylum in the country. Then that of course led to another anecdote which was the person who actually became the President of the country, a man. The president had to be somebody who was not a political threat to the Prime Minister of the country in an odd sort of way. They ultimately selected an elderly gentleman, a very nice man, who ran an environmental NGO and who had been a pilot in Haile Selassie’s air force and so on. A wonderful person, but at the time he was selected to be the President, he was awaiting a scheduled interview for a green card to live in the United States with his wife and his children who were already living in Alexandria, Virginia. So we had to consult with the INS or its successor ICE to get some assurance that this application could be suspended and re-activated once he finished his term of office as President, so he could go live in the United States.

*Q: In failed states or rickety unstable states, is there anyone in the elite who does not want to have a green card?*

HULL: This is how I know the brain drain is always such a loss for Africa. It is always such a dilemma when we, for example, send people on Fulbright grants with the purpose of having them study in the United States so they can come back and help their own countries, but in many cases they are helping our country by staying. So it is an investment for America, and then you say well shouldn’t the money be spent on Americans for scholarships. That is a whole other debate we shouldn’t get into, but I think the brain drain has been just devastating. I think it is understandable because of the environment people have to work in in Africa, the low salaries, the limited professional opportunities, and just management styles of institutions. People find just so much more intellectual freedom in the United States and professional freedom as well as a more secure environment.

*Q: Are we in fact hurting more than helping by providing alternatives to people to live and work here?*

HULL: It is hard to say because what is the absorptive capacity of countries for some of these people who study abroad. It certainly helps the diversity of our country to have these people here and we welcome them, but at times a certain frustration that people go and they don’t come back.

*Q: The original wording of the Fulbright text was mutual understanding. That is in the law and it doesn’t, the emphasis was not intended to be on enriching the U.S. but creating understanding. So have we gone astray from the original Fulbright concept?*

HULL: Well I think it is just reality, economic and political reality in the world. I always try and put myself in the other person's shoes. If I was an African going off to the United States often with every intention of coming back and helping my country but facing the reality of what can I do when I come back. And most people come back, at least those on official exchanges. I don't want to suggest that they don't. But there has been an enormous loss of talent from Africa to the United States and other countries that I think is very regrettable because I think Africa might be a better continent if they still had these very capable people.

*Q: OK, 2007, can you tell us just a little bit about what has been happening since that last day when you rushed back to Washington to try to get an FS-50 and did not succeed.*

HULL: Well it is fascinating to me that after you had a very long career of more than three decades in the Foreign Service, if you are an Ambassador, they give you five days to leave the Foreign Service, wrap up all your affairs even though you are retiring from overseas. You are given five days from the moment you depart post to retire.

*Q: That includes the time spent in traveling.*

HULL: Absolutely, so if you are spending a couple of days traveling you are given three days for your exit medical, and if you are coming from a post like Freetown where you cannot have a medical exam because of the limited facilities, and submitting all the other paper work which generally has been submitted but you have to do out briefs and just so much to do in a very short period of time, not to mention your retirement flag ceremony, which is done with the Director General of the Foreign Service. But nevertheless, in my case I had my future sort of set up. I had the good fortune to be selected the Warburg Professor of International Relations at Simmons College in Boston, a position that usually goes to a former practitioner of diplomacy. I replaced Ambassador Walter Carrington who had been my Ambassador in Nigeria. He had replaced Ambassador Charles Dunbar who had been head of the World Affairs Council in Cleveland for a long time. He now teaches at Boston University. Charlie Dunbar was Ambassador to Qatar and to Yemen, as well as having been chargé in Afghanistan at one time in his life and other interesting work.

*Q: He negotiated a position very successfully.*

HULL: Many other ambassadors have held the position including Harry Barnes who was Director General of the Foreign Service. In Boston I frequently see Tom Simons who was in the Cold War period a critically important person as he was in charge of Soviet affairs in the 1980's in the State Department and after the fall of the Soviet Union was responsible for coordinating aid to the newly independent states of the Soviet Union. He is now at Harvard but he had my chair at one time, as did Monteagle Stearns who I sometimes see was Ambassador to Greece. So it is a distinguished chair to have and there is a maximum three year limit in holding the chair so there can be some rotation and fresh blood in the position which I think is a good idea except for the fact that I am now in my last semester of my three years. So I am going on to a new phase which is unclear.

*Q: Would you consider taking the Foreign Service exam and going in as a junior consular officer?*

HULL: Wouldn't that be wonderful. At times I thought of joining the Peace Corps all over again. I am not sure that my wife's health would permit it, but I would do it individually.

*Q: It would be in Africa perhaps.*

HULL: Oh absolutely. It would be back at the grass roots. You know I would emphasize that we do have so many Foreign Service Officers who are former Peace Corps volunteers, and emphasize how critically important that is because of cross cultural experiences they have had, and their understanding of life at the grass roots in a country. It is very hard when you only deal with elites to understand those elites are only the surface of a much deeper society, and the true issues of countries are the issues of the grass roots.

*Q: A profound moment to wrap up the conversation.*

HULL: Well thank you very much.

*Q: Ambassador, it has been a wild ride. Thank you so much for sharing all this experience.*

HULL: I thank you very much, Dan. It has always been a pleasure to work with officers like yourself throughout my career. Much like societies, Ambassadors are only the surface, and what Ambassadors achieve depends on all the people throughout our diplomatic establishment who are invisible.

*Q: Well without wanting to be treachy, I would say that working with a person with your professionalism, your high standards, and your human touch, for the rest of us we have died and gone to heaven. There are so few of you.*

HULL: But it has been great those qualities masking my ineptitude.

*Q: On that note, we conclude.*

*End of interview*