

THERESA A. LOAR

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[Note: This interview was not edited by Ms. Loar.]

Q: Today is 8 August 2001. This is an interview with Theresa A. Loar. Do you pronounce it "Lore?"

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And that's T-H-E-R-E-S-A, and then A, and then L-O-A-R. This is being done by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. And you go by Theresa, don't you?

Q: Theresa, let's start at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

LOAR: I was born in New Jersey on March 23, 1954. I was born into a wonderful, large, Irish Catholic family.

Q: What was your family name?

LOAR: Loar - Loar is my maiden name.

Q: Loar?maiden name, yes.

LOAR: Yes, and there are seven children. I am number five of five girls and two boys.

Q: Yes, [sigh]?the poor kids, boys, I mean. [Laughter]

LOAR: Oh, they're great guys! They're at opposite ends of the family, and they're just wonderful guys. I grew up in New Jersey and attended Catholic schools all the way through high school.

Q: Well, let's talk first about your father. What was your father doing and his family background?

LOAR: My dad's family had come from Ireland at some point in the past and settled in Columbus, Ohio. During the Depression, he and his 10 or 11 brothers and sisters all moved east and started from scratch. My father worked in the post office for many years. He actually worked in the post office at Newark Airport, so he had a hazardous drive from our house to Newark Airport [laughter] every night.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: He worked the night shift. He also did second jobs in lumber shops and other places. With a family of seven, you can imagine that was necessary to do!

Q: Oh my! Yes, yes!

LOAR: But my dad had a very keen interest in world affairs. He dropped out of school in probably about eighth grade, and was very opinionated, with a very strong point of view about politics. Obviously, we were Catholics first, Irish second, and Democrats third. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And I always felt very fortunate to have those sensibilities, and being exposed to those sensibilities. My dad read two or three newspapers a day. He'd go to libraries since he was too frugal to actually purchase a lot of newspapers. But he was very interested in what was going on in the world.

Q: How about on your mother's side?

LOAR: My mom came from a wonderful family - McCabes. Her parents came from Ireland. They grew up in New York and were a fabulous close family. We're still very close to the surviving four siblings. Their parents died quite young. So, the oldest brother, my Uncle Jimmy, James J. McCabe, my mother's oldest brother, dropped out of school in mid high school to take care of the family and really was a great example for the family because he really took care of the family and made sure all the kids got educated.

Q: Yes. What was he doing?

LOAR: I don't know how he did this to help support the family; but, he did make sure that my mother finished high school and that some of the others actually went to college, which was very nice. And then my uncle, who is my Uncle Jim went to college and law school at night, and ended up joining USAID (United States Agency for International Development) in the Foreign Service, and served overseas in Japan after the war to help rebuild Japan. And I think that's what gave me the idea this would be an interesting thing to do. It kind of stayed in my mind. But there was a very strong sense in that family that you took care of each other. He was always very interested in our family, as my mother's other brothers and sister were. This was a very strong type feeling that we were part of a larger family that cared a lot about us and expected us to do good things and help people.

Q: Was your mother as interested as your father in international, and national affairs?

LOAR: No, my mom was, you know, really devoted to ...

Q: Was having kids! [Laughter]

LOAR: ?having kids [laughter]. She didn't drive, and was in this little town.

Q: What little town was this?

LOAR: Iselin, New Jersey.

Q: I-S -

LOAR: I-S-E-L-I-N

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ?which was a little, tiny town that, when the metro station, Metropark/Amtrak station moved in, grew into the town.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But, she was really focused on the kids, and we, I think, kept giving her a run for her money that way. She had a great sense of humor and still keeps in touch every day. If I want to know what's going on with one of my sisters or brothers, my mother will know - at 84 years old!
[Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: We're very lucky to have her!

Q: You went to what - Catholic school?

LOAR: Catholic grammar school nearby. I had to take a public service bus 45 minutes away to go to the Catholic high school.

Q: In the grammar school, was it run by nuns at that time?

LOAR: Yes, it most certainly was! Saint Cecilia's Grammar School

Q: Tell me?tell me about the nuns.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: You know, I mean one hears stories that -

LOAR: [Laughter] Here's a real one.

Q: Go on!

LOAR: Well, as you can imagine, I mean my family, we really did have a very strong Catholic upbringing, especially at the social justice part of it, and that did come from my parents. It came from my mother's extended family who had this philosophy that you're really here to help people, and do what you're supposed to do to help people.

It was a big, big school, very strict. I feel lucky that I learned good manners and right from wrong. We had Dominican nuns, and the nuns were really interesting, and [sigh] at some point I sort of started rebelling against the nuns, and finding them to be a little too oppressive. But we did have a lot of fun! When you have authorities who are so strict and so clear cut [laughter], you find a lot of ways to be devious, and get around, and do the things you're going to do.

Q: Oh, absolutely!

LOAR: Which is helpful later on in life.

Q: [Laughter] Yes.

LOAR: When there's more than one direct way to get past authority!

Q: Absolutely! I mean this is how one learns to -

LOAR: Right.

Q: Survive in the government!

LOAR: Right. You learn, and

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I run into a lot of Irish Catholics who had the Catholic school experience who learned how to get around authority without being directly rebellious, because you couldn't. You couldn't challenge the nuns directly.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: But you'd have to find a way to sort of prevail. I actually have two close friends from grammar school I still am very close to, and we see each other all the time. Our lives have gone many different directions, but we realize just what bonds were forged under the thumb of the nuns. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I also had other teachers. I had a lay teacher in fifth grade who took a great interest in me and who would take me out to restaurants and teach me manners, and then moved to the seventh grade to have me and my other friends as students again. She was a great, great person for me to become confident.

Q: What was her name?

LOAR: Geri Tozer, T-O-Z-E-R, Geraldine Tozer. She moved out to California when I was in college. But she had a great interest in teaching us polish and poise -

Q: Huh.

LOAR: And how to present yourself. She just valued us so much, and gave us so much confidence, my friends and me.

Q: I always try in these histories, if someone talks about a teacher, to get their name in. If nothing else, a little immortality for? I think it's only fair!

LOAR: Oh yes, write it down because I should catch up with her. She was just terrific! She really taught us all what was going on out there.

Q: Did you find that because of Pope John XXIII coming and things were changing, the Catholic Church, particularly the Irish Catholic Church in the United States, was several steps behind almost all the other churches? I mean it was very doctrinaire and all that. Did you notice this?

LOAR: Well, not in grammar school.

Q: Of course not, yes.

LOAR: I just didn't like the authority.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: The oppressive authority. In high school, I went to Saint Mary's High School in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. It was actually in a converted cigar factory. It has shut down since then because it was in kind of a tough neighborhood. They opened up other Catholic schools in more suburban neighborhoods so that kids could go to them. That was a school where I really think I got a great education. I learned Latin. I had some really terrific English teachers, and that became my interest - literature. We had an incredibly fun social life. Ah, [laughter] we just had a great time. It was about 70 percent girls and only about 30 percent boys because there was a really good boy's school not far away. The real good boy athletes would go there, so a lot of us girls were in student government. It was a different kind of environment. But yes, then we polished and refined our ways to get what we wanted to get done [laughter].

Q: What about things like movies and reading and things like that? I mean were they telling you, "Don't see this."

LOAR: Oh, of course. My parents followed the Catholic newspaper. It had a rating on all the movies, and we couldn't go to a movie that the Catholic newspaper thought would be objectionable, and we'd follow that.

Q: You really did?

LOAR: Yes, we did [laughter]

Q: [Laughter] Yes.

LOAR: ... probably until I was in my junior or senior year of high school, when I started dating guys and had broader horizons. But we were extremely sheltered in a lot of ways. With my own kids now, I wish they could be sheltered a bit more than they are.

Q: Oh well, things are so different now too.

LOAR: Yes. Authority was annoying and obviously difficult; but there was also a sense that it did prepare you, I think, down the road for big government, because there was the confines of what to do, and then ways to survive in that, and to excel in it, and to make it work for you. But, the whole thing was, 'You do good' - and that's not a bad message - 'and that you were here to serve, and you're here for others, and you don't put yourself first.'

I remember the assistant principal of the school in eighth grade. I was leading some third grade project, and I came in. I told her what I did. I said, "Me and my friend Mira Mitchell, we just finished up the training for the holy communion kids, for second grade." And she looked at me and said, "What!" And I said, "Well, me and Mira Mitchell - " She said, "You NEVER, EVER put yourself first!" And it was like, I'm remembering eighth grade because I put myself first, and you never, ever do that. Now, that can be a handicap when you get out in life, but it is something that's part of the training.

Q: Yes. Well, that's right. But in grammar school and in high school were there any courses that you particularly cottoned on to?

LOAR: Literature. I loved literature.

Q: Literature.

LOAR: In grammar school I just hated math.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I'm very bad at math.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But I loved literature, and I loved arts. I had a hard time with math. I fooled around in the language classes in high school, so I did nothing [laughter]. But in Latin I learned a lot because I had a very wonderful Sister Myriad. What a terrific teacher. We had quizzes every day, and I loved that! And religion was ridiculous because they didn't present it very well; but I do know every saint in the system.

Q: Isn't this about the time when they were wiping the saints out, too?

LOAR: Well, I was named Saint Theresa. A lot of the nuns liked us named after Saint Theresa of Lisieux, the little flower. So nuns would give me gifts on my feast day.

Q: Oh, I see.

LOAR: I was quite lucky. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I actually had to get little statues and holy cards, and it was very nice. I felt very lucky. I was actually born on my older brother Daniel's birthday so he got to select my name. He picked my name from a statue in some room, Saint Theresa. It could have been worse!

Q: Oh, yes!

LOAR: So I felt very lucky to have that name.

Q: Well, like people named Philomena, I believe -

LOAR: [Laughter]

Q: And that she was wiped out, I think, during the Reform.

LOAR: Wiped off the counter. Yes, but we knew our saints and our saint days and we knew the stories of the saints, which you know, as you get older, you read a little differently. But there are some wonderful role models -

Q: Oh, sure, sure!

LOAR: People who'd used their lives for ...

Q: I'm not a Catholic, although my name is Kennedy.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: But I always think of Saint Barbara somehow as the Saint of Artillery.

LOAR: Yes, that's right.

Q: I'm not quite sure why [laughter].

LOAR: I think she was a doctor of the church as well. I think she was a scholar.

Q: Are there any books that stick out in your mind in high school?

LOAR: Well, I loved reading all the Nancy Drew Mysteries. I thought they were very exciting; I would read the Hardy Boys because I thought they had bigger vocabularies. So my sister and I would be reading Hardy Boys, and one of us would use a big word. We would say, [nasal tone of voice] "You're reading the Hardy Boys. That's where you got that word!" [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: But I loved reading about Amelia Earhart and Nellie Bly...

Q: Oh yes.

LOAR: ?and people I thought were great heroes for doing courageous things like that.

Q: Well, were you finding yourself identifying with female role models at the time, or not?

LOAR: You know, I guess I haven't thought about that very much, but I did think it would be exciting to travel around the world and do exciting, independent things. The name of the book was Nellie Bly, Girl Reporter.

Q: Yes, and I -

LOAR: I remember reading that and thinking, that it was that great I loved to read.

Q: Sure.

LOAR: I didn't know that reading and being a journalist were not the same thing. But I thought I would be a writer or something.

Q: She went around the world or something, didn't she?

LOAR: She did. The picture was her in an airplane, so she must have done quite a bit of international journalism.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But I liked Amelia Earhart; I thought that was an incredible story, just breaking new ground and trying exciting, new things.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And I also liked Joan of Arc.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And I haven't thought about that before, but I loved reading about Joan of Arc and what she did. Actually, we saw an old movie about Joan of Arc about three or four years ago. My son saw it with us and he was about 10 at the time. He said, "She was a real go-getter, wasn't she!" [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I loved to read literature and I just loved having a lot of fun in high school. We had a very, very active, fun, social life. [Laughter]

Q: Yes. I'm always trying to pick up various threads -

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And I was wondering. This is not an interview concentrated on the sort of feminism or lib -

LOAR: Lib.

Q: But did you have the feeling from the church and the teaching that your place was in the home, or was it all expansive?

LOAR: Nah, I didn't listen to that. It never occurred to me.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And I don't think my mother ever expected that either.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: My mother didn't get to go to college. Her sister, who was an "Auntie Mame" type character who traveled around the world all the time, did. She was a schoolteacher in New York, and she traveled every summer. So we always knew about her travels.

Q: Oh yes.

LOAR: So we knew there was a big world out there. Because my mother's brothers were educated - both of them had gone to college and to law school - I think she thought that was good to do. And, I think she sort of expected that whoever of us could, would do that. I don't think the idea that her place was in the home - applied to me. I always thought I'd have a wonderful family, which I'm lucky I do. But I thought I'd go out, and do exciting things, and travel, and see the world, and help people.

Q: Well, by the time you were moving up, you were moving into the late '60s. Did the Vietnam protests and all that, or Vietnam itself intrude at all?

LOAR: Well, it really affected my older siblings more than me. They sort of set the tone. We listened to Jimi Hendrix (James Marshall Hendrix), and I knew all about the best music at a very young age because I had these older siblings. I think it did open up a lot of things, and I think it obviously opened up a lot of the ways our society looked at things and looked at government and looked at our place in the world.

But it didn't affect my life per se. My sister went to Woodstock, and that was a great problem in our family because she stayed away for a couple days. My parents were up late and I remember being on the phone trying to find out where she was. I remember noticing there was a lot of tension between my older siblings and my parents. But my mother just trusted us. She didn't have the point of view that you have to do this or you have to do that. You have to be a good Catholic, and you have to be a good person. That was the big guidance.

Q: Well then, in high school, were you involved in extracurricular activities?

LOAR: Yes, I was in student government. I was junior class vice president and senior class president. It was a lot of fun. We had a good group, and we did activities. Geraldo Rivera did a big exposé^{1/2}. He was a really good journalist when he started out - at least I thought so as a teenager.

Q: Yes. He later became sort of a sensationalist -

LOAR: Yes? a bit flaky.

Q: A bit flaky, yes.

LOAR: He's come back. He did a good thing on human trafficking recently.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So, I actually think he's coming back to his roots. But he did an exposé^{1/2} of a school in a home for retarded people called Willowbrook, [State School] in Staten Island, New Jersey [New York], on the news, and everybody was shocked by it. So we did a clothing drive for the students at Willowbrook, and I remember giving a public address announcement to the school to encourage people to bring in clothing and to do things.

We also baked cookies for the inmates at Rahway State Prison, and, shortly afterwards, there was a riot [laughter]! To this day I get teased that their chant was "no more cookies from Saint Mary's or from Theresa."

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: But you know, we did a lot of social good stuff in the community.

Q: Yes, that's great. What about the troubles in Northern Ireland? Coming from an Irish family, did that -

LOAR: It didn't. I do think I was very fortunate growing up. My father, since he worked in the post office, worked with people of all different faiths and races. And my father really made a point of teaching us that while we didn't go to school with black people everyone was equal. We lived in a neighborhood that was Irish, a little Italian, a lot of Polish, and that was my universe. Even in high school there were few people of color, but not many - some Puerto Rican and Hispanic kids from near my high school. I really didn't have any exposure to black people, so I felt very fortunate that my father had a very strong point of view, and that no one could ever make any remarks. As far as religions, we had neighbors who were Jewish, and my father would have ecumenical services with them. That was very fortunate. However, there was one group that we thought were the lowest in God's creation, and that's the English.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: So I grew up with a very odd bias against the English.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And that came from my mother's real sensibility from her parents of what they had suffered.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So we just knew that, and I didn't really know the specifics of it until later in my professional career when I became very involved. I'm still very close to what's going on in Northern Ireland, and have very close contacts there. One of the most wonderful things I got to do in my career was to be involved in Northern Ireland right after the Good Friday Peace Agreement and to be able to build some programs there that helped the women find their voice in the political process.

But it wasn't part of my growing up. It's just that we knew all the Irish songs. I had an Uncle Jimmy Payton who taught us all the lyrics to "Danny Boy" - the first and the second lyrics. My father had a beautiful singing voice.

Q: Was it Captain Johnson's Motor Car [Johnson's Motor Car] or something like that?

LOAR: [Laughter] It probably was, you know, "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen."

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: And all the protest songs.

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: And that was a part of the sensibility. But those I've learned are really Irish immigrant songs. The sensibility and the feelings of the Irish immigrant, the children, and grandchildren of the Irish immigrants is what forms those songs - what that experience was like, and the longing to go back, and the feelings against the British - which are really very out of date to what's actually going on now in Northern Ireland.

Q: Yes. While you were in high school, did the outside world or the UN (United Nations) intrude in teaching international relations or anything of that nature?

LOAR: No, I wasn't really aware of the UN. I didn't know anybody who did anything related to that. We would have drills and hide under our desks against the Russians. My mother would store food in the basement, and I was sure that was because the Russians were going to come, and all nine of us would have to live in the cellar.

Q: Cellar, yes.

LOAR: But [laughter] there wasn't a sense of the U.S. and the rest of the world. I remember when John Kennedy was shot. And I was, I guess, in fourth or fifth grade and the whole school was crying.

Q: You would have been about nine years old then.

LOAR: So about fourth or fifth grade, yes. And we were all crying, and we all got on our knees to say the rosary.

Q: At the election of Kennedy, was there sort of the feeling that nothing is precluded from being a Catholic, because up to that point -

LOAR: I didn't feel that there was any Catholic prejudice because I lived in a Catholic world. My father would say, "Newspapers aren't reporting correctly on things." He would have this feeling that there was anti-Catholic prejudice sometimes; but I never experienced it, I have to say.

Q: Oh.

LOAR: And my world was Catholic, you know!

Q: When you dated, could you date outside the religion?

LOAR: Well, I did. I was a candy striper in high school and met a boy who wasn't Catholic. And that was a hard thing for my mother. [Laughter] Of course he had a Corvette, and that was doubly hard -

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And he was rich! [Laughter]Error! Bookmark not defined. So there were several grounds for suspicion. I guess he was a year older or so. He was a doctor's son. That didn't last long. He was kind of a jerk, so it was my choice.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: My mother just sort of questioned, "So what's the deal here?"

Q: Yes, yes. I'm of an older generation. I was born in '28, and I belonged to a Protestant thing. So, well, Catholic girls were nice, but if you married them, the children will have to be brought up in the Catholic religion. I'm not quite sure why this is so terrible, but it was something that hung out there.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: These prejudices today are so kind of beyond. My son is married to a young - well, not so young - lady named Theresa, and they've got two kids; and we wish them well in whatever religion they're brought up in.

LOAR: Yes. We had good feelings towards other religions. You know, it was a sin to walk into a church that wasn't a Catholic church, and it was almost as bad a sin not to pay a visit when you walked past a church. So you'd have to run and say hello, then you'd kneel down, cross yourself [laughter]

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Which is not bad, you know! It's not bad.

Q: No, no.

LOAR: But yes, I did meet some other guys; but it was high school.

Q: Yes, yes. Well then, you graduated from high school when?

LOAR: Seventy-two.

Q: Whither? You say your family had prepared you to go on; the idea was you would go on.

LOAR: Well, it wasn't that you had to, but it was certainly possible. And, it was self-financed if you could pull it together, and I always thought I could. There were four older siblings. My oldest sister went to art school; she was, in fact is, a very talented artist. My brother, the one who named me, graduated from Rutgers College in New Jersey on a scholarship; I'm very proud of him; he got his master's. Then, my other sister went to nursing school. And my other sister, who's an artist and singer-songwriter and very talented, went to many different colleges and bounced around in music and theater programs. You found where you wanted to go to school; it was the guidance counselors who gave you ideas.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: And the guidance counselors only knew of Catholic schools.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: [Laughter] The rest of them were sort of like pagan schools.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: But I looked at different colleges. My sister was going to the University of Dayton, which was a Catholic school. I don't know what order it's affiliated with. I went to visit her with another friend. We went down to the University of Louisville in Kentucky. I thought that sounded cool and I went in and talked with them. I applied; and they said yes. When I applied I had no idea where I was applying. I didn't know anything about schools; but Louisville came back and said they'd give me money, and that sounded good. At this time, I had met somebody whom I was madly in love with and he was going to go to law school at the time. So far, it's turned out pretty well. He's been my husband for 25 years, so!

Q: Oh, yes, yes!

LOAR: I met him in my senior year of high school, which is an unusual time to meet your mate for life, but I feel lucky in that, too. So he decided to go to law school in Louisville, and I went to undergraduate school. I worked in the summer. We all worked as soon as we'd get our working papers, because that meant you had spending money. But girls were able to do babysitting. My mother would sometimes answer the phone, "Loar's Babysitting Services" because we were five girls and we all babysat and that was really great! We would iron shirts and work in a supermarket. That was allowed. That was another great high school experience [laughter] - working in the supermarket! And that was a broader social set too, because I met the boys from the Catholic high school! That's broad, you know! [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: Another high school! [Laughter]

Q: There's another high school!

LOAR: And actually some kids from the public schools; they were a little wilder. The summer before college, I made a lot of money. My then-boyfriend/current-husband and I painted house numbers on curbs. We charged a dollar a house and made \$1,000. I paid my tuition. It was really great. We just bought black and white spray paint, stencils, and went around knocking door-to-door. I was too shy to do that, so he did more of the selling: "It's only a dollar, blah, blah, blah," and I would smile nicely [laughter], and we would just spray the curbs. We'd just go around from one neighborhood to another. [We] made a lot of money doing this. We would swim during the days finding places where we could use the pool and make that money. So I ran off with that money in my pocket and some offers of financial aid.

Q: So to get a complete picture, could you tell me a bit about the background of your boyfriend/husband?

LOAR: Husband? It's Richard. Let's give him a name! [Laughter]

Q: Okay, let's give him a name. Why not!

LOAR: His name is Richard Bonsignore, B as in boy-O-N-S-I-G-N-O-R-E, like monsignore, only Bonsignore. He comes from a wonderful, Italian American Sicilian family. As my father-in-law used to say, there's two kinds of Italians - Sicilians and those who wish they were. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I met his family when I was 17 years old and came into his family, a wonderful, loving family - mother, father, brother, and sister. He was the only one of his family who had a chance to go to college. His father had done a lot of different things; but, at the time my husband was in college, his father had a trucking business. So his father paid for his college and gave him a convertible.

Q: Oh, boy!

LOAR: He really lived the high life. [Laughter] He was thinking about going to law school, so we decided to go to law school and college together. That was a little bit of a concern to my mother, as you might imagine, because I was, 18 at that time. She did want me to go to college because she thought I should as I had done well in school and liked school. She was concerned that I wouldn't if I ran off with this guy. But she liked him and my family liked him. They thought he was a little old because he was six years older, which is old when you look at that.

Q: Oh yes!

LOAR: It doesn't make any difference later on in life, but it mattered then. He was the same age as my older brother.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So that was a concern. But he hung around and hung around, and we got to know his family, and his family got to know my family. One day my Uncle John McCabe, who was my mother's younger brother and who didn't have the full responsibility of taking care of the family when his parents died (he was sort of the younger fella who got a chance to live life and had a lot of fun, and he's a very fun-loving guy still) was visiting, and Richard was over, and this issue of my going to college in Kentucky and Richard going to law school there came up.

My mother's position was: "I don't know if that's such a good idea, you're going off with this guy. You shouldn't, you know." It wasn't going to be a confrontation, but there was some concern. But I had good financial aid, and I had the cash, and I was madly in love, and the school had an English department and that's what I was interested in.

My uncle pulled my mother aside and said, "You should be thinking differently. You should be thinking like a Jewish mother. You want your daughter to marry this guy. He's going to law school. You want her to go off with him and then get a life together." And he talked to my mother and calmed her down about it a little bit. But we gave him a lot of credit for imagining us being able to get married ultimately.

So we went off to school together. He was in law school, and a very serious law student. I was undergraduate and a very serious undergraduate. I had a little different undergraduate experience than some people in that I hung around with law students and all they did was study. So I really hit the books hard and it was fabulous. While I had a lot of fun in high school with emphasis on my social life, in college I really got into the academics and loved it, just absolutely loved it.

Q: Let's talk a bit about Louisville, the college.

LOAR: No, the University of Louisville, Kentucky.

Q: University of Louisville in Kentucky. It was Catholic, I assume.

LOAR: Not at all, actually! Not at all, and that was, you know, probably another little concern for my mother - that it was a public school.

Q: Public school, huh.

LOAR: It's a school that draws a lot from Louisville and a lot from Kentucky, and I really have no idea how I ended up there.

Q: Well, they're always looking for somebody from outside to give it a broader -

LOAR: Yes, it was a big culture shock. It was like going to another country, in that everybody spoke with an accent that wasn't a New Jersey or New York accent.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There were people from rural Kentucky who kept firearms in their rooms; and there were people from coal mining families. It was a very different environment. But really, it was hard to understand people, and they thought I talked too fast. But I just loved the academics on the campus, and I loved Louisville. It was so pretty. They had old Victorian houses, and it was along the river. I just felt like I could do really well. I just remember loving, loving my English literature courses, and music history, and art history, and French - though I'm not very good at languages, to put it mildly. I studied French and French literature a lot, and did very well. I was on the dean's lists and loved it. I read a lot and enjoyed being in class with people who loved the same things.

Q: Well, Kentucky doesn't sound like the heartland of intellectual endeavor or something like that. But please correct me, how did you find that all?

LOAR: Well, you know, I didn't have that sensibility. I had a lot of excellent professors! I had one English professor who would always encourage me when I wrote poetry, and when I would take these honors classes. I took one with her on, I think, Virginia Woolf and that got me very interested in a lot of writers and women writers.

This one professor, Sena Jeter Naslund, was a writer at the same time. She has since become a very famous writer. I actually was listening to NPR (National Public Radio) about five or six months ago, and I heard her voice on the radio. She's not from Kentucky; I don't know where she's from. She wrote a book called *Ahab's Wife*, which is an incredible book! And I heard her speaking, and I thought, "I wonder if that - it must be - is that Professor Naslund?" Since then, I've read her book. I still need to get in touch with her and to contact her, because she was a great professor. She really encouraged me; she inspired me. She was brilliant; and she just had such insights into literature, and writing, and the human experience.

I had a great music history professor who helped me understand all the great composers and what they were trying to do with music.

In French art history, I had Professor Fink, who taught me all about the cathedrals. So I knew every cathedral in France, and how to read the doors and the carvings. I was really, really into French history and architecture.

You know, I had no idea about schools, and reputations, and what they did, or anything else. I just knew that I was really learning lots and lots of things. I also had three jobs. I was a resident assistant in a dormitory, which was a great cultural experience, because I would have students who would think it was a good idea to listen to their stereos in the middle of the night. They would turn their stereos on in their room, and then walk down the hall to take showers. They would turn the stereo on so they could hear the stereo while they were in the shower.

Q: Oh, good [Laughter]!

LOAR: And of course, they weren't really taking classes. They were just kind of hanging out in the dorm. So that became a little challenging.

I worked as a waitress in a restaurant called the Finish Line, so I got a great Kentucky pie recipe from there.

Q: A nice little benefit.

LOAR: ?Lifelong [laughter]?which meant a great value to me. I worked in the art library and music library, but loved it! I mean I just loved -

Q: Were you beginning to feel the cultural change in running a dorm where guys and girls were mixing up? Was this happening at that point, or not?

LOAR: Yes, but my social group was only some of the people from my dorm but a lot of my boyfriend/husband's fellow law students. I hung out with an older group - the law students; and I loved it! I really enjoyed that. But it was an incredible cultural experience to become very close friends with people who grew up in Appalachia, who had a really rural experience. They thought New Jersey looked like the middle of the city.

Q: Yes, right.

LOAR: And it was a really rich and interesting time. Because I guess I was decent in French, or maybe even good in French, in college, the school had a program in my junior year summer where you could go overseas; it was a work-exchange program. The cities of Louisville, Kentucky and Montpellier in southern France were sister cities.

I wanted to go to France because I knew every cathedral and was dying to see them. So I applied for it and went over in the summer of my junior year to Montpellier. I had a host family. But, by some fluke, I had three or four host families. I was staying in the dormitory at the university and working. I was supposed to work in the library, but they kind of said, "Oh, it's the summertime, and you're a young person. You don't want to work." So I didn't have to work. They would take me sailing and to their country homes. My other friends had to work in the emergency room in a hospital. [Laughter] They had really demanding jobs, and I was always sightseeing and hanging out with everybody's family; and it was an incredible experience. But meanwhile that paid. They gave me a stipend, and they paid for my housing right there. So all I had to come up with was the airfare. That was an incredible experience! My boyfriend/husband came over to meet me. He had just taken the bar exam, and we met in Paris and traveled around together. It was my first international trip, and it was just totally fabulous!

Q: You were getting, obviously, this French and the cathedrals, but how about international relations?

LOAR: I had no interest in that in college. None. I wasn't interested in political science. I wasn't interested in history because I thought history was boring. I loved history for the literature. I loved learning about a period - you know, French Revolution, or American Civil War - through literature. That's how I wanted to learn history. I avoided economics. I took survey courses if I had to. But I was really interested in international stuff, primarily because I wanted to see the art, and experience the culture, and speak the language. That was my interest in being overseas at that point. It was very much on the artistic and cultural side of it.

Q: What about in literature? Did the literature of the, I suppose it was the Beat Generation, did that strike a responsive chord? Or were you aiming at things that were not particularly generationally involved?

LOAR: I didn't find that particularly compelling. I loved the romantic poets, Charles Dickens, Emily Dickinson, and Mark Twain. I loved the American writers. I really didn't plug into the current stuff; it didn't really speak to me.

Q: It hasn't had very long legs. At least that's my impression.

LOAR: Yes. I did love writers like Virginia Woolf, who had a focus, an experience, and a life, and a writing that focused to some degree on a woman's experience and I really was drawn to that, and loved that, and read everything I could. I did enjoy reading a lot of the women writers, but I wouldn't say that I focused on that.

Q: Well, while you were at university, what were you pointed towards, other than going out. I assume that by this time, you and Richard were enough of a thing, so that when he had his bar exam and you graduated, you were planning to get married.

LOAR: I guess so. I have to say I never thought, "Oh, I'm definitely marrying this guy." I just knew that this was somebody I really loved and loved being with. I didn't know where I would head. I just didn't have that. I just loved really doing well. Every time I got on the dean's list, I'd go into the financial aid office and they'd give me more grants and fewer loans. And that was great, because I was very worried about having loans when I graduated.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: When I graduated, I had \$3,000 in loans. I was in a panic because I thought, "I have to pay this up." Actually, I didn't want to get married until I paid them off because I didn't want to go into the relationship with debts! But, I thought I would be an English professor or I'd work in publishing, or I really didn't know what I would do. But I loved the studying of it, and the experience of it, and all that.

Q: Well, 1976 was coming along, and what were you thinking about? At a certain point you had to kind of think ahead [laughter], or did you?

LOAR: Well, in my junior year summer (since I had gone to France and I sort of used my money to pay for that air travel), when Richard from graduated law school and passed the bar exam, we decided we had to make a choice: to stay in Louisville for another year or to transfer to New Jersey. And you know, we had a chance to build a little law firm with someone from his hometown.

Q: He was from New Jersey then?

LOAR: He was from New Jersey, too. He was from a town about 40 minutes away from me called Raritan, New Jersey. A very Italian American community [laughter].

He had a chance, when he graduated, to go into a small law partnership with someone from the town of Somerville, New Jersey. So I had to decide whether I wanted to stay in Louisville and he would stay and work there, or whether I wanted to transfer to someplace in New Jersey. I loved the school, but it wasn't like I was itchy, and I didn't feel like, "Oh, I have to finish up here." And, I had had this chance to go to France, and I knew if I spent my money paying for the airfare, I wouldn't be able to afford another year at Louisville.

So I applied to Rutgers College in New Brunswick, which was about a half hour away from my parent's house, and I got accepted. They took all my credits, and they gave me a \$500 state scholarship, and so at that point, it cost me nothing to go to school. But my father at this point was in a position to contribute and he offered. It was very sweet and kind of him to offer it, and to have me keep the \$500. That was very nice. So I had a chance to go to school for free and live at home, which was an interesting experience after you've been out. My husband had passed the bar and was starting to set up his practice. I went through Rutgers in one year, and that was a different kind of impersonal experience, because I was sort of in and out of classes.

Q: That's sort of a big - living at home and -

LOAR: It's a big school. I liked Rutgers. I think the academics and the quality of the classes was great, but I didn't really connect very much. I had a great professor for Shakespeare and all that, but I sort of just went in and out. I was vaguely aware that there was Douglass College, a women's college. I kind of knew they had these sort of marches for Take Back the Night and feminists' issues, but it didn't really appeal to me particularly.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Actually there's an interesting story, considering whom I'm talking to here.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was a Foreign Service recruiter who came to Rutgers. Now, I don't think Louisville would have attracted a Foreign Service career recruiter, but Rutgers did; and there was actually, I think, a female officer. The recruiter was on campus. I thought, "Well, you know, Uncle Jimmy was in the Foreign Service. Maybe this is what I want to do, and Richard's up for anything." So I went over to where the person was, and kind of walked by the room, and looked at the person, and kind of walked out. In my mind I said, "No, I don't think I'd ever be qualified." [Laughter] "I don't think I'd even be suitable to talk to the person!" So I chickened out, and walked away, and didn't talk to the recruiter; but in my mind I guess I'd been thinking ...

Q: I think your reaction is one that many of us who ended up in the Foreign Service had. I know when I came in, I'd had a good education and all, but I felt this isn't for the likes of me: I don't have family, money. These were pretty fancy people and all that. It's probably lost good candidates just because of this attitude; not because it doesn't pay much money or something. But this is almost in one way or another, either intellectually or financially, too fancy.

LOAR: Well, I thought I wouldn't know anything. I'm an English major. I liked the idea of international travel mainly because I wanted to see those cathedrals! [Laughter]

So I went through my senior year. My husband now was setting up his law practice and doing well. He and his partner bought a building, and it was great. We talked about getting married then, I guess, and we did. We got married at Kirkpatrick Chapel at Rutgers. It was a wonderful, fabulous wedding. It was great.

Q: This was before you graduated?

LOAR: No, right after I graduated. I graduated, I guess, in May or June, and we got married in June. You know, we had a wonderful time in college. We would drive out together in 12 hours to Kentucky from New Jersey. Richard's father would make homemade Sicilian pizzas for us to have in the car to carry out with us.

Q: Was it calzone, or whatever it is?

LOAR: No, it was actually pizzas.

Q: Real pizza.

LOAR: It's really, really good! Both of his parents are the best cooks that I have ever met - really, really terrific. He and his brother and sister are also good cooks.

So we got married there, and then we went for a honeymoon. And so I was like totally panicked because I had this \$3,000 debt.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Right after I graduated I didn't really know anybody who was working in New York; but, I thought I would want to work in New York, because that's what you did if you wanted to have an exciting career. When I was little, I used to read the Apartment 3-G comic strips. Reminds me of another thing about the career girls.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And I thought I'd be one of those career girls from Apartment 3-G.

Q: 3-G, yes.

LOAR: And then I was even working in a big city. Actually my friends and I in grammar school would go into New York City. I'm sure my mother did not know this, because I would not let a grammar school girl do this! We would take the public bus into New York City. We would get shopping bags and pretend they were briefcases. We would walk around, and walk into buildings with our shopping bags, and make people think we had briefcases, and that we worked there [laughter]. So I guess I had on my mind I was going to be a career girl and do something in the big city. And, that's what I ended up doing. As soon as I graduated, I actually went into New York. I thought I wanted to work in public relations or magazines or publishing.

Q: Well, this is sort of the traditional for young women of literary majors. You just named the whole spectrum of where one looked for this, and it's been a very successful thing for many people.

LOAR: Right, right.

Q: So how did this work out?

LOAR: I went into New York, and I thought, "Okay. Who would like me?" So I looked up the magazines I thought I wanted to work at, and there was a magazine, Cue, C-U-E, which at that time was like an entertainment thing. I went to all the different magazines. I would walk in, and they would say, "Well, can you type? What are your skills? Blah, Blah, Blah, and you know." I then went, and looked at the PR (Public Relations) firms, and picked out the ones with Irish names because I thought, "They're going to look at me. They're going to see I'm one of them. They're going to like me." I never got to the publishing houses.

I went into one PR firm called Moynihan. Who knows what I was thinking! I went in with my (you know, literally) little resume [laughter] in my hand and my Rutgers College degree - a graduate in English literature. I was hoping to meet Mr. Moynihan, who ran the company. I had no idea what PR firms were or anything else. While I was waiting and talking to the lady, she said, "Well, just have a seat here." And then some mailman came in and was really hassling me. I guess you would consider it pretty serious hassling. He was really gross and coming on to me, and the receptionist was really offended by that, and she said, "Go sit in Mr. Moynihan's office. You shouldn't have to put up with this."

Mr. Moynihan came back, and I'm sitting in his office, and he said, "So, why do you think you should work here?" And I said, "Well, I'm an English major. I can write, and you're Irish, and I'm Irish!" He said, "Well, do you have some typing skills?" And I said, "Well, yes," totally untrue. I had never learned how to type because I wasn't going to need it.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And my husband was a hunt-and-peck typist. He used to type all my papers for me on his little typewriter, so I never learned how to type. I don't know why I thought people cared what I was going to do. But he said, "Well, you seem presentable," and he was a very kind, very nice, very gentlemanly older man. And he said, "Well, I have a friend who's opening up an office for Phillips Andover Academy." And I thought, "That's interesting; what the heck is that?" And he said, "They're doing a fund raising campaign." I said, "No concept for that." And I guess he said, "Would you like to work there?" "Yes, I would!" [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: So he sent me over to meet his friend Jack Kates, John Kates, IV, who was an Andover grad and a Yale grad and real blue blood, New York -

Q: Real establishment type.

LOAR: In the social register, and everything else. This fellow asked me about my typing skills and would I take a typing test. I said, "Gee, I'd rather not!" But he insisted, and I had 29 words a minute [laughter]! He said, "Well, you know, I like your manners. I like your Catholic school manners, and we're going to open up an office here for Phillips Andover Academy. They're doing a Bicentennial Capital Fundraising Campaign to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the school. You can come in and be the secretary." I was like, no? I really don't want to be a secretary. Hey, I'm a college graduate! He said, "Well, you could be the secretary." So that sounded okay because it sounded like an educational thing, it sounded interesting, and he was going to pay me. So he said, "But you'd have to start in two weeks." I said, "Well, I'm getting married." He said, "Well, I'm not going to hold it open for you!" And he said, "Well, do you have to do a honeymoon?" This isn't this guy, and he was a very nice guy, but he clearly was having some pressure.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I really, really was pressured with this \$3,000 debt, but I did really want to go on my honeymoon. So I kind of took that risk and said, "I'll call you when I get back," and we went up to New England and then Canada for our honeymoon. On the way back, I stopped at Andover and at the school, Phillips Andover Academy, and went around and met people. I guess that was a good move. I tried to find some presentable clothes to put on. When I came back into New York, Jack Kates hired me, and I started my first job.

I earned \$6,500 a year to be a secretary for this fundraising campaign. It was an incredibly lucky experience because I got exposed to all the board of trustees at Andover. They included George Bush [George Herbert Walker Bush], the father, at the time, and a wonderful man named Tim Ireland, who was a partner in Brown Brothers Banking [Brown Brothers Harriman and Company]. It was all the establishment people who ran publishing firms, and people who ran banks, and who ran the investment banking firms; it was a wonderful experience.

Q: How did the campus of Andover hit you?

LOAR: Well, it was like a college. It was beautiful, absolutely beautiful! I thought, yes, this is presentable. I could make a contribution to this organization.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And it was actually very, very good because it widened my horizons a great deal. The whole experience of working for an organization like that and an institution like that widened my horizons. I looked at the standards of this place, and at the people who graduate, where they come from and where they go, and at the work that I did with the graduates, some of them my own age. That actually gave me a lot of confidence, because I realized, that while I didn't have some of those benefits of family, education, background and all, I felt I had drive and I had an interest in doing things in life. It was a wonderful, wonderful experience. I did have to take a typing course at night, and it was one of the low points because I had to stay in New York at night to take this typing course.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Well, I thought, "It's ridiculous that I have to learn all that typing!" [Laughter] But I did it and I would call Richard's law office. His partner's wife was the secretary there; and I'd ask her, "When you do a letter, where do you put the salutation and the date?" I was really bad! I didn't know anything, but I learned what to do.

Q: Yes. Well, how long did you do this?

LOAR: I did this for four years.

Q: This would be really '76 to '80, yes.

LOAR: Seventy-six to eighty. And we were located in the S&H Green Stamp building because the Beinecke family, who were a very prominent family at Andover and Yale - there's a Beinecke Rare Book [and Manuscript] Library now - donated the space to us.

After about six months in that office, we hired someone who actually did have secretarial skills and I became staff assistant, which meant that somebody who knew how to do things of a secretarial nature was able to do that. I would do things like research what the Major Gifts Committee should do, and I focused a lot on the development of the major gifts - gifts of [\$] 100,000 and over. We would put together research files on how to go after a particular family who had donated this, and profiled one they might be interested in.

Q: You were being paid to find out what made the Eastern establishment tick, weren't you?

LOAR: I know [laughter]. It was fascinating to see the hereditary genes in the families, and it was just such an eye-opener to me that people lived this way in great polish. I would actually go to these meetings at the Major Gifts Committee, they would be at the University Club in New York, a beautiful Stanford White building.

When I got married I kept my maiden name. So I did have this sense that I'm an independent woman. I didn't want to take - I loved the name Bonsignore, but you know, I'm not an Italian girl. I can't cook, you know! [Laughter]

Q: Yes, I hear you. [Laughter]

LOAR: I shouldn't be called that. I should be Loar because that's an independent thing. My parents never cared. Actually, Richard's family did not care at all. My mother was concerned that people would think we were living in sin and that I wasn't really married.

Q: By the way, what does "Loar" mean?

LOAR: It's a name that goes back. It's some derivation of an Irish name because my mother's mother is from Ireland of Irish ancestry; and we're not sure if it's German or Irish or Welsh, or something. We're still trying to figure it out. There aren't that many Loars in the United States.

Q: There really aren't. I know "Kennedy" is sort of Scotch Irish. It means ugly head if you go right back in history [laughter] as the early Kennedys were not the most beautiful people in the world.

LOAR: [Laughter] That's funny. I don't know what the word "Loar" means, but it does have some Irish Welsh background to it probably.

Q: Well, you went to these meetings, and all this. What was your impression?

LOAR: Well, it was all guys, and it was all very distinguished, highly successful, usually very wealthy men, a lot older than me; so they were probably 50s to 60s.

Q: Oh, my God!

LOAR: And I was 22. I remember once walking into the University Club and walking to the elevator, and a nice man in a little uniform came up to me and said, "Who's escorting you?" I said, "Well, I'm going to the Andover meeting on the third floor." He said, "Well, you cannot walk alone in the University Club." And I said, "Well, I'm not breaking anything. What's the deal?" He said, "Women do not walk unaccompanied at the University Club." And I thought it was appalling, and I was so offended [laughter]! I also was embarrassed because I'd felt like what a black person must have felt...

Q: Yes, oh, yes. Sure, sure.

LOAR: ?walking onto certain golf courses and into certain restaurants. And I really was offended and hurt, and felt bad in embarrassing somebody else. But, I learned to make sure I had somebody escort me.

So I would go to these meetings, and they would all have salmon. I never had salmon before and they'd hand me this. It was just so fabulous! It was such an eye opener for me! There was the guy who was head of Scientific American, and others - all of these, interesting, fascinating people, and my job was to assist them. There was a senior person with me, obviously, in the office, who had that responsibility. I had to make sure they had their files, and they went after the person they had to go after, and that they had the information they needed. I kept track of when was the last time we asked them, and how much they gave, and blah, blah, blah. It was just like a finishing, polishing thing.

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: These people were so kind and courteous to me, and treated me with so much respect, as if I wasn't 22 years old and didn't know anything. It was just a wonderful, door opening experience!

I was commuting in from New Jersey. It took me an hour and a half every day to commute and to walk across 42nd Street, because I was making nothing. My husband was doing fine in his law firm, and I needed career clothes, and I, of course, didn't have any money for career clothes because I wasn't making anything, but my husband was doing fine, so I was able to get some clothes.

Q: How did you do on your \$3,000?

LOAR: I knocked it off as soon as I could. It just worried me, you know.

Q: You were brought up in that school of thought: you don't have debt hanging over you.

LOAR: Yes, and I also was so afraid of going into a marriage and not being able to support myself.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I didn't want to be dependent, relying on my husband. I wanted to make sure I could stand on my own two feet and have financial independence. That was extremely important to me: to be able to take care of myself financially.

Q: Did the international world intrude at all at this time?

LOAR: Only in that my husband and I did some more overseas trips. [Laughter] I had to see more cathedrals and visit more chateaux. During this time they had cheap airfares to London, so we took a trip over to London, and we studied everything, and knew all the little towns and the history of everything. We went to Italy and traveled internationally for the sole purpose of really soaking up the culture and experiencing what the culture was like and the history.

Q: Did your husband have the same interests that you did on this?

LOAR: No! He loved the international stuff and he was interested in the culture as well. But he always was interested in politics; he was a political science major in college. He was interested in politics, international affairs to some degree, but really in political science.

Q: What was his law business?

LOAR: It was a general practice in town. They did extremely well. The partner was older and had been more established in the town. They bought a building, set up their practice, and did very well. It was nice because we didn't worry about money.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And that was a nice experience [laughter].

Q: Well then, doing this Andover thing for -

LOAR: Four years.

Q: Did you get up to Andover much?

LOAR: A lot, yes. I felt like a big career girl because a career woman now is independently flying, and they were paying for me to fly up to Andover.

Q: Did you stay at the Andover Inn?

LOAR: Yes, I don't remember where I would stay. I think I stayed in staff people's houses, you know.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But Andover's a lovely town, isn't it?

Q: This takes me back - I went to a prep school called Kent in Connecticut.

LOAR: Yes, right.

Q: I went to Andover as a summer school in the summer of '45 to take physics. I did that because physics would help me graduate so I could enlist before they drafted me. They dropped the atomic bomb just -

LOAR: Oh, wow! Yes.

Q: ?while I was there, and that sort of took care of that [laughter].

LOAR: Wow!

Q: But no, I really was terribly impressed by that campus and all that sort of stuff.

LOAR: Yes. No, it's beautiful. Ted Sizer [Dr. Theodore R. Sizer] was the headmaster, a great person, lovely, a real innovator in education. He had moved to make this school coed when he came on board. He's a great person. And it was the quality people I worked with, and that was really fabulous. And I did have a sense of what was going on - not that I wanted to work in this area. But I remember [Alexander] Solzhenitsyn. Was Gerald Ford the president? I think Gerald Ford was president.

Q: Gerald Ford would have been the president and then Carter came in.

LOAR: Okay. Well, I remember being embarrassed and thinking that Ford wouldn't meet with Solzhenitsyn and I was embarrassed because Solzhenitsyn was such a great man.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And I would remember when I walked past the UN, that in college I had hoped to work at the UN because I thought I was good in languages. Because I got good grades as I was studying so hard, I thought I was good in languages. I wasn't! [Laughter] I was just getting good grades! So I thought when I was in college that I would be a translator or interpreter at the UN. That was one of the things I had hoped to be.

Q: Right.

LOAR: And I would walk past the UN and think I'm going to get in there and be an interpreter one of these days because I'm so darn good! I have good grades! [Laughter]

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I walked past the UN. There were these protests about what was going on in Northern Ireland. I actually remember watching that and actually marched in a protest once, and I was like, "Do I know what I'm doing?" But I do know I care about this!

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And so I think that was my little bit -

Q: This is Bloody Sunday [April 19, 1972], or whatever it was around that time, or something?

LOAR: Yes, yes. I remember that there was just an ongoing street presence in New York. People concerned about what was going on in Northern Ireland. My husband and I, now at this point, had moved into New York. We moved into the city. He left his practice and took a job with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company as a lawyer. We got a really great deal on a fabulous apartment. He became very active in that he started his work and career which he does now, in real estate and property law.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: We moved into the city because we really wanted to live in the city where the action was and to live a very simple, urban, city life. We became a host family for UN people.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was a family from Sri Lanka, Fauna Rahjah Singum. He worked at the UN, and his family was moving to New York. We volunteered to be their host family. This was a way of getting to know people from other countries.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Actually when I think back, I'm going to back up a little bit to when I was at Rutgers. When Richard and I became friends with some of the foreign students there. We became very interested in what was going on in their lives. There was a guy from Lebanon who had incredible stories to tell on what was going on in Lebanon.

Q: Oh, yes, because the civil war at that time was going on.

LOAR: Right! So I was, I guess, paying attention to more than just the culture of other countries.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I guess I was interested in knowing what people's lives were like, and what they were doing, and had some interest in what our government was doing.

I remember when we were in Louisville, and my husband was in law school, and I was in undergraduate school. It was all during the Watergate time, and that was the main thing that we talked about all the time. That was the overwhelming issue of discussion.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Because, I mean, I'm hanging around law students.

Q: Oh yes! Oh God, yes!

LOAR: Our very close friend, a great guy named Bob Jase, was a die-hard Republican. He was from Massachusetts. He's since passed away. Bob Jase was a die-hard Republican, and Richard and I were big Democrats, and we'd have a lot of discussions about Watergate. So that was a big topic of discussion.

Q: Because we are talking about this period when you were there, how did you all feel about the Carter administration?

LOAR: Well, I liked Jimmy Carter.

Q: Human rights came onto the field.

LOAR: I liked Jimmy Carter. I don't remember thinking that much about the human rights issue. I didn't know it was new. I was interested in it, but I don't remember thinking that it was a unique thing or something different that he was doing. I know my dad liked Jimmy Carter a lot, thought he was honest and a good man. I thought that was good, and you know voted Democrat the first time I could vote. I remember in general just thinking Jimmy Carter was a smart guy and a principled person.

Q: You tapped into sort of Ms. Gloria Steinem and that sort of thing. Was this at all a theme that you were looking at, or was it?

LOAR: Yes. No, I considered myself to be very sort of feminist, in that I wanted to keep my own name when I got married. I wanted to be financially independent; and wanted to make sure that I worked, and had a career, and was able to support myself; and to be my own person, have my own identity, and those kinds of things. But there were parts of it I found less attractive and less interesting.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I would go to these seminars. I remember there was a seminar when I first started working for Andover in '76 or something like '77, about the career of women; some brand new idea. There were all these panels about how to move ahead, how to get a mentor to help you, how to balance work and family. I was very interested in that because I knew I wanted children; but I wanted to make sure I could work, and support myself, and have a career. I went to that one, and there were only three people! Nobody else seemed to care about that! [Laughter]

At the time I was working for Andover, I was still looking at the publishing houses and thinking that's really what I want to do when this is over. So I would really pay attention to prominent women in publishing. There was a woman named Somebody Evans, Joanie Evans [Joan Evans], who I would follow by reading the newspapers you see what she was doing, and trying to see if there were any women doing well there, who, if I went and talked to them, would want to give me a job [laughter]. So I was really kind of still looking at publishing and seeing if there were women who had succeeded there and if there was something I could do.

Q: Yes. Well, what about children? I mean a good, Catholic family, and there you are, you're working, and what -

LOAR: Yes, I wanted to make sure I could support myself, and my family, and my children before - I mean that sounds pretty extreme! But, I came from a wonderful, large family, but there would be no financial support for me from my own family if something happened to my marriage and I had kids. So I wanted to make sure if I had kids that I could actually support them myself.

I have a great relationship with my husband. I had no doubts about that, but I was afraid. I saw some of my friends from high school who got married and had kids really early and it didn't work out, and they were living with their parents in Iselin, New Jersey. They couldn't support themselves and had no way to, as they didn't have their own income or their own ability to work and have a career. So I really wanted to wait until I was successful enough in my career that I could support myself, support my children, and be able to come back to it, and continue to work, and to be able to keep moving ahead in my life, and achieving things, and having titles and things that would indicate that I was successful! That was very important at that time, you know.

But we loved living in the city, and we were very close to our families. We saw our families very frequently, going out to New Jersey and back to visit everybody. I'm very close to some of my siblings, and my husband helped my brother get a job at his company. We felt very close to our family.

Q: Well, I think this probably a good place to stop. I put at the end where we are so we can pick it up.

Q: Today is 20 August 2001. Theresa, 1980 after Andover, whither?

LOAR: The Andover campaign was a four-year campaign with a set goal, and once we reached that goal on the Major Gifts Committee - we passed it - then the team sort of broke up, and everybody scattered.

I had the opportunity, having worked with all these wonderful Andover trustees and folks who were involved in fundraising for major gifts, to meet a lot of wonderful, supportive, older men who were interested in seeing what kind of jobs I might be interested in. One in particular, a man named Tim Ireland, from a long distinguished Andover family, R.L. Ireland III was his name, was just so kind. He brought me down to Wall Street to meet with people at Brown Brothers Harriman [and Company], a private banking firm where he was a partner. He had me meet with Morgan Stanley investment bankers, and with people at publishing firms, and magazines.

And then I met with people in an advertising agency, Dancer Fitzgerald Sample;. I clicked there, loved those folks, and thought I would love working there. He said, "Okay. I'm going to help you get this job!" He was great friends with the Fitzgerald of Dancer Fitzgerald Sample, though I think Fitzgerald was long retired. He just kind of stayed after the personnel director to hire me. Of course the advertising agency didn't want to hire me because I didn't have an MBA (Master of Business Administration). I had nothing to recommend myself to them, other than this friend of one of the founders who was saying that they should hire me.

Q: Well, you had expertise. I mean learning in the field, hadn't you?

LOAR: Well, not in advertising or marketing.

Q: No.

LOAR: I was an English major, and I had just finished a capital fund raising campaign. So I was competing with the MBAs who came out with their advertising/marketing backgrounds.

Q: Well, before we get to this, I'd like to ask two questions. I think you've answered one, more or less, but I'd just like to sum it up. Here you came out of a strong Irish background and up against the people who've essentially been the enemies of the Irish -

LOAR: [Laughter]Error! Bookmark not defined.

Q: Or WASPs (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants), of the New England establishment.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: You know, the old "No Irish Need Apply," and all that.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of the WASP establishment? You were in the heart of it for a while, and I'm asking what sort of impression did you have of it?

LOAR: I don't think I saw it so much as the WASP establishment. The thing that struck me was the advantages and the different paths that are open to people who have family means for education. And that was sort of an eye-opener to me: that someone had sort of a world at their feet and could go to any school and could have it financed by their folks. That was interesting to me.

It may be intimidating at some point, but I wasn't really down with my own peers for most of my four years there. I was dealing with people who were 20 or 30 years older than I was. These were terrific guys, and I was working really hard, and I think doing a really good job. I always felt like they were supportive and encouraging. This fellow Tim Ireland had no reason to take an interest and to try to do this kind thing to help me get a job. I didn't even work with him that directly. I just thought I was very lucky to have someone take an interest and to help me get started.

Q: Well, something I think that has been a phenomena of the period when women were somewhat discriminated against, or at least they had a problem, was the mentor thing. Nobody said, "You mentor," or something like this.

LOAR: Right.

Q: But I think often you'd find older men for really altruistic purposes would say, "Here is somebody. I'm going to make sure she gets ahead," and doing this much more so for a woman than for a man, because a man, a young squirt, was kind of on his own.

LOAR: Yes. Well, it was just so kind! I remember going to Brown Brothers Harriman, and I interviewed with people who were a few years older than me, and I remember thinking, "This is not a planet I belong on." First of all banking would not be something I could be very good at. But they just seemed so staid and formal. They were all Ivy League graduates - everybody - from their undergraduate degrees to their graduate degrees, which I wasn't anywhere near and I just didn't connect at all.

But he would sort of kick off the meeting and say, "And Theresa, you know, financed her own education?" I'm thinking, yea, you know. And that was a remarkable thing to this group, that I financed my own education. But, you find out that a lot of people did that. And took a typing course at night to qualify for her first job. And all these things that I thought were, no, duh?this is what you do. But it was just that he really gave me a lot of confidence and made me feel like I was on the right track. I always believed I would go, and do, and get ahead, and do well in business, or do well in some field; and I didn't know what it was. It made me very nervous that I didn't know what it was.

But I did think once I clicked into advertising, this firm was also a sort of Connecticut firm - a lot of "white-shoe" Greenwich kids - and at that point I felt I could compete and excel, and I had a different set of skills. Perhaps I didn't have the confidence or assurance of having grown up with knowing that there's this available to you, but I did have some drive, I think, that compensated for the rest of those things. [Laughter]

Q: As a parenthetical note, you use the term "white-shoe," which I understand perfectly-

LOAR: Right.

Q: ?because I grew up in that. "White-shoe"?people used to wear dirty white buck shoes [a light tan color suede buckskin shoe], and this was sort of the mark of a prep school/New England college type kid.

LOAR: Right, establishment.

Q: With chino pants, or khaki pants, and a button-down shirt, with or without a tie, maybe a blazer. But the white shoes looked pretty sad! [Laughter]

LOAR: Right. I do remember once, in this work with Andover, meeting someone who was working with us in New York. She was a spouse who had gone to the Abbott Academy, the women's academy. She was involved in some fund raising thing. She came to the office once and was describing a Catholic wedding she went to. And she said, "This girl was Catholic, but she was really terrific."

I'm thinking, "What do you mean Catholic?"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And then she just said, "And the good thing was, they gave us a piece of paper to describe when you're supposed to kneel and when you do this." And I'm thinking it was just she did not mean to be insulting, but she was describing this separate tribe, this strange ...

Q: Oh, yes, sure.

LOAR: She had gone to a wedding of a descendant of the Roosevelt family a couple of weekends before, and she described that, and she said, "And can you imagine a Catholic wedding coming close to this!" You know, [laughter] and now it clicked. This is what my dad was referring to, back when he would read the newspapers and say the Catholic weddings were at the back and the Irish were barely hidden there in the announcements, and things like that.

But I never felt it was a hostile environment. I thought Andover was a fascinating place, and a place of excellence, and a mission I identified with. And, it was older people who really did it to be good and kind, and to help you get a foot in the door. And then I also felt, when I got a foot in the door, I really wanted to excel, to show this person that their confidence in me and their belief that I could do well were justified. And that was also another thing that sort of pushed me to want to do it.

Q: Well then, in 1980 you went where? What was the name of it?

LOAR: Dancer Fitzgerald Sample. It was one of the big advertising agencies, which, right when I left in '86, merged into Saatchi & Saatchi, which is now one of the big ones. So Dancer Fitzgerald Sample was a big, major, cool advertising agency in the Chrysler Building, which was also a great place to go work.

But I also was sort of hedging my bets. (I'm just remembering now, in talking to you.) One of the men I worked with directly in the office was a man named Dick Lombard [Richard Lombard], who was a graduate of Andover; and he was the chair of the Major Gifts Committee. He had gone to Andover and Dartmouth, and had married into one of the General Motors' families - I'm trying to remember? Sloan maybe? Kettering [Jane Olive Kettering], Kettering, the Kettering family. He was another guy who was just terrific, and somewhat closer to my age. He was older, but when you're 23, everybody's older [laughter]. But he was also another terrific guy, and he really wanted me to go to business school. I was like, "You don't know how bad I am at math when you're saying this [laughter]," but I was, of course, too embarrassed to say that.

So I was still actually thinking about going to business school, and I actually applied. I took the horrible GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) course, which was just dreadful. I got accepted. He helped me write a great recommendation to NYU Business School [New York University Leonard N. Stern School of Business], and I started going at night. And I just hated it! Well, I must have taken the worst possible course first, and it was all engineering students, and that was like people from another planet. It meant, also, I was getting home very late at night to New Jersey because I was still commuting. I thought I needed an advanced degree. I still to this day wish I had an advanced degree. If I had life to do over again, I would have gutted through that MBA course and just done it.

That was the other course then. Actually, he was encouraging me to go up to Amos Tuck School [of Business Administration at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire], "take some time off, you don't have kids yet, your husband will understand, go do this, and get," he was really pushing me to try to get out and get my business degree, which was excellent advice. I probably should have listened to it; but I took a couple classes, and I just hated it. I guess I took statistics. I scored very, very low on the English and the language stuff, and very poorly on the math, and partly because I think one of my sisters and brothers went ahead of me in the math class. We were all well behaved and the nuns probably figured, "What the heck! Let's give her an A!" So it's not like I ever did poorly grade wise in high school. I just never learned it, and it never caught up with me, not even on the College Board exam.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So I did do that. When I first started working in advertising, I was also going to business school at night, because I really felt I was competing with all those MBAs. I had to know what they knew. But I just couldn't stand it.

I should mention this. When I first graduated from Rutgers, I also started my masters in English literature at Rutgers because I thought I loved doing that. Well, I didn't particularly like that either. I think I didn't even finish one class. It was not practical working in New York; and it's different at the graduate level; and I was now into the workplace, and I was less interested in some of that.

Q: Yes, less of the artsy, fartsy stuff.

LOAR: Yes! I was more into doing the job, and learning new skills.

Q: Yes, what do you do in this job -

LOAR: ... and how to dress for success - all those cliché½s that were the beginning of all those women coming into the workforce.

Q: All very important at the beginning. Well, tell me. You were '80 to '86 with this advertising firm. What did you do?

LOAR: Well, I started at the lowest possible place you could come in at. First of all, I remember the director of personnel - like real annoyed that they had to hire me because this guy was just pushing, pushing. So they did bring me in and they paid me an MBA rate, which I think was something really high, like \$17,000 or \$20,000; and I was so like, wow! I can't tell my family. This is so much money I'm embarrassed by this! But it was pretty cool, you know.

I started at the lowest possible account. It was for a bug spray. It was for a pesticide made in North Carolina. The client was from North Carolina, which was like another culture. I thought, "I'm open to Kentucky. I know outside of New York." What was it? It was a bug killer, Spectracide; and that was really considered a low account. But without an MBA, they weren't going to risk me on any highly sophisticated clients. And I did that, and had a really jerk for a boss.

Q: What do you do?

LOAR: Within an advertising agency there's account management, there's the creative team, and there's the media team. Account management is the middle hub. You are the direct contact with the client. But you also work within the advertising agency to work with the creative, media, and research teams, so you know where to place the ads and how the ads from the creative team should be developed. But a good account manager sort of develops relationships within the agency and with your client. Your client has to have total confidence; and the people inside the agency have to feel like you are really representing their interests and respecting what they do; especially the creative people, because at the end of the day, if the creative people are not comfortable with you, you're not going to get great advertising for your client, and your client is not going to be happy with your work.

So you know, I had a good ol' boy client, who I'd go out to dinner with and it was horrible! I was assistant account executive. I don't even know if he had an account executive because it was such a crummy account. And then there was this account manager, who said I could meet with him from six to eight in the evening because he wasn't available until six. And I remember sitting in the office. He would be cursing, and abusive, and say these foul things about women, and just gross things that just totally turned me off - but yes, I did my work.

I don't remember how long I was on that account. We were not even in the main part of the agency, we were so low. So I spent a lot of my time walking through the other sections with people who were working for Proctor and Gamble, and other accounts. Only in the cafeteria would all the assistant account executives get together because we all came in as a training class. I wanted to stay and get a decent account.

Then fairly quickly - and I don't remember how long this was - there was an opening on Wendy's fast food. That was another account that was kind of sneered at because it wasn't really sophisticated marketers, and it was fast food, and it wasn't P&G (Proctor & Gamble) or General Mills. You know, MBAs went on the client's accounts. But I kind of just - I don't know how I learned about this opening - got moved over there as an assistant account executive, and that was a blast. I just had a fabulous time working on Wendy's, and that was really, really fun!

Q: Can you explain what Wendy's is?

LOAR: Wendy's Fast Food Restaurant is a national chain of fast food restaurants, and when I came onto the account, they were in the burger wars with Burger King and McDonald's, and they were really pushing to get ahead. So I was brought on as the junior account executive. It was a fairly large account, and we had I don't know how many millions of dollars of billing. But the big thing was they did heavy national advertising. That was a desirable thing, because what we want is to work on campaigns that get on national TV (television) across the country.

But it was also that Wendy's is unusual, in that you have a client based in Ohio, so you have a marketing department in Ohio (Columbus, Ohio, which was my dad's hometown. So that was cool, and I was going to be able to see what the heck my father's hometown was like) and you also had these franchisees, who were individual people who owned series of Wendy's franchises across the country. So you had guys from the rural South who were very successful businessmen and knew what they wanted in their advertising, and you had these people who did it from a corporate angle in another part of the country. So that was one client.

The other client was the marketing department. So you had to have good relationships with both. I had above me an account executive, who was an interesting, highly aggressive guy, who I learned a lot from. I learned what not to do. I had an account supervisor above him, who was an interesting guy, who did magic tricks and fell asleep at client meetings. Then a management supervisor above him, one based in New York and went back and forth, into/out of Columbus. His name was Charlie Rath [Charles W. Rath]. He became a very good, long-term friend and mentor in many ways, including family life and everything - a great guy. Then, above him was a management supervisor, a guy named Joe Mack [Joseph P. Mack], who I became very close to. He became president of the agency at one point. He just became a great supporter and I learned a lot from this a tremendously effective, decent person.

What you do as an assistant account executive is competitive spending analyses, and I'd have to take these home because I could not figure out percentages. I could do the basics, but you'd have to figure out what Burger King was spending in each market compared to what we were spending. Why was it my job to do this? I look back at it; the media people should have been doing this. But we had to look at it, and then we had to compare their advertising. So you wanted to see how your client fit in. This is really a low, little job. But I had a lot of trouble making sure my numbers were right. So I'd take it home, and Richard would help me at night. God bless him. He'd sit there, and he could do it in his head because he's really good at it, and figure it out for me, so I didn't embarrass myself by figuring my percentages wrong! And then you had to present it to the client. So you would learn presentation skills. And I always say that the stuff I learned in advertising on presentation, packaging, and ideas were very valuable for the Foreign Service. You had to learn how to present to a client.

Q: How did you find the difference between the suits up in the main office and the guys who were out there running these very small operations, which are really incredible when you think about the -

LOAR: Right. The profitability

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Well, the fascinating thing is - I'll never forget this - first, we had an incredibly fabulous creative team assigned to Wendy's, which is why Wendy's was a stellar account for the agency for a long time. We had the best advertising and that team was led by Cliff Freeman, who's still a good friend, and has done some work for us now on our new nonprofit venture with Vital Voices. I remember Cliff presenting a whole slew of commercials to a group of franchisees [laughter], and one guy jumps out of his seat and says, "That dog will hunt! That dog will hunt!" And I'm like, "okay; I guess that means it's good!" [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: But you have that, and then you have the guys in Columbus, Ohio, who are these corporate heads.

Q: The suits.

LOAR: But the funny thing is, the head guy, the guy who was a liaison between our agency and the client, the really strongest link - a man, Charlie Rath - was really a clever guy. He worked very well with the franchisees (you know, that dog will hunt) and the suits. And Wendy's, they taught us just to lay hands on, and probably still is, apparently from the advertising.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It was just such an unusual account, an unusual experience. I had a chance to learn how to present. We did another horrible, long project. I thought I would never get through these projects. I also had to do a project, an advertising planner, for the franchisees; this was another low job because it was black and white print advertising. Who cares? But that is really low! So I was really the lowest level in the creative team, but I took it so seriously. I just made it like the premier. I kept a copy of (I have it in my attic) the advertising planner for Wendy's that the franchisees could use. They were crazy about it, because they had print ads for each of their products, and they had banners. It was everything they could possibly want.

Q: Sure.

LOAR: Luckily the franchisees needed it. This was a crummy job nobody wanted to do, and it was done. And there's another thing I learned - you do the crummiest little job extremely well, and suddenly it's not a crummy job anymore. You've transformed it, and that is a good lesson.

Q: Well, I'm just thinking from the point of view of the executive. They give it to a young, relatively unskilled person to work on. But what you do is you get both enthusiasm and really some very hard work. But, in a way, what is considered a crummy job by the upper echelon -

LOAR: Right.

Q: I mean if you're selling hamburgers, you want to make sure you get good advertisements in the local papers.

LOAR: Right. For the franchisees these local advertisements were important.

Q: It's really the guts of the business.

LOAR: Right. But it was very good experience, and presenting that to the client gave me a lot of polish, and I learned how to do all these things.

Meanwhile, I kept working my way up. I got promoted to account executive, and then the account manager fell asleep at one too many meetings [laughter], and then I had no account manager. So it was me in New York in the Chrysler Building, with my friend, Charlie Rath, based in Columbus, working for my agency, but very close to the client; and Joe Mack at the very senior level; and that's who I dealt with in the mornings. So I'd come in at a quarter to seven, or seven o'clock when he did, and he was always there at seven o'clock; and I really worked with this guy who was several ranks up from me. I learned so much, which was very, very important. I think a lot of my fast promotions and accelerated progress was because I had the chance to work with this very senior guy who was demanding as heck. You do not make mistakes. I loved a boss like that because I didn't want to make mistakes.

Q: No.

LOAR: I wanted to learn a lot from very good people. I had a great relationship with the creative team. It was a very interesting time in the advertising world. There was a lot of cocaine; there was a lot of wild stuff going on. And, here I was and I didn't even know it! Somebody was drooling in my meeting once, some producer and someone said, "Oh, she's a little cokehead." I'm like, "Oh, is that what a cokehead looks like?"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And how fascinating! They're working on our account, and I'm relying on her to develop a production estimate!

But there were a lot of interesting things: I had my eyes opened to a whole other world of fast-paced creative content and learned how to have a good respect for the relationship with the creative team; and that was good.

I remember one other thing when I first started on that bug spray. That was such a crummy little account. It didn't even have big enough billings to qualify for a whole assistant junior account executive. So I also was put on this thing for Thomas's pita bread. They were going to launch this, and I had to do store checks. Now this is the other thing that's at the very lowest that you can do in an advertising agency. You have to go around to stores in your area, and see how many stores actually carry the product and how many spaces on the shelf. It was a marketing thing -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And boring as hell. But I rented a car, and I did 77 stores in two days! [Laughter] I came back and I reported on 77 stores, and they said, "Usually you do 10 to 15!" [Laughter] I was like, "I'm going to cover all of Queens, all the Bronx, all of this county," and I had it all written up, and I turned it in, and they were like, "You know?you really did a lot of stores." [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I thought I should cover all those. I think they should know that, and they shouldn't just know what the Hispanic neighborhood was doing, but they needed to know every neighborhood. And I just remember the guy who was a real, real WASPy Connecticut guy saying, "You know, you're going to go far, because you don't see any limitations on a project. You define it, and the 77 is - you're really - you usually do about 10 to 12!" [Laughter] But there again, I just knew that I had pride, and that is really important.

And then I had this great chance to work with this senior fellow, Joe Mack, here in New York, and then Charlie Rath, who was just a great human being! And these guys, they were just?you know, I worked my tush off.

I was totally honest; that was the other thing. Another thing of my old Catholic background - Catholic school training helped - the client trusted me. I didn't lie. I didn't BS (bullshit). I didn't spin. I said, "This is what things cost. Here's where we are on the product. Here's where we are on this, and here's where we are on that." And they believed me and trusted me, and that was important.

Q: How did Wendy's do in the war while you were there?

LOAR: Oh, it was great! It was so much fun! We used to have my old boss's cartoons that were in the newspaper at the time, the political cartoons. One of the political cartoons had the United Nations; and it had, you know, Wendy's, Burger King, McDonald's, (you know, the burger wars) and what was going on there. I was actually deposed by Burger King's advertising because they wanted to know whether we were misleading when we were developing our stuff, and of course we weren't! We had all gone through Wendy's hamburger training school, which I thought was a blast. We all had to learn how to serve the food and work in the various parts of it. We all had to try the product, which became a lifelong obsession with my family for Wendy's, because my husband loves Wendy's. We eat Wendy's chicken sandwiches twice a week to this day! Many years later, now, we have to go out of our way to find a Wendy's!

But Wendy's did really well, and their sales went up, and our advertising was fabulous. We did some white bread stuff, and then we did really fabulous creative stuff. When Cliff Freeman and his team really could come to the front, we did the whole incredibly funny series with -

Q: You know, I mean I'm indulging, but I think it's a fair -

LOAR: Okay. I'm happy to do it, but I don't want to be a bore.

Q: This is tape 2, side 1, with Theresa Loar.

LOAR: We would go out to California for two or three weeks at a time to shoot commercials, and stay in fabulous hotels, and Aerosmith, the rock band, would be at the same hotel, and it was really a blast. This was just really, really fun, and great relationship with the client. The franchisees seemed to like the work, but I didn't have as much contact with them as we got more into the national campaign.

Q: Was Burger King or your outfit, your advertising group, at all pointed towards international affairs?

LOAR: No. It was American consumers we were looking at.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I'm trying to get my chronology here, how I went from that to that.

Q: You're '80 to '86 was the advertising firm.

LOAR: Right. We did this whole very funny series of like a Russian - the idea being that at Wendy's you have a choice to make your sandwich any way you like. It's not, "Give me a hamburger," "Here it is." And that was the big thing then. So it was this very funny series of commercials featuring a Russian fashion show. [Laughter]

Q: Oh! I remember that! Yes, that was wonderful.

LOAR: Where the Russian ladies are walking down the runway

Q: Looks like Nina Khrushchev, yes.

LOAR: Yes, and it's beachwear, and they have one outfit on; and then evening wear, and they have the same outfit only with the flashlight, just very funny, over the top - you know, very clear manifestations that at Wendy's you get a choice.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And then we did, of course, the biggest one of all time, which was "Where's the Beef?"

Q: Which even moved into the political campaign.

LOAR: That's right, and I can't tell you how many people I've met who took credit for moving it into the political campaign, including a senator, a speechwriter, and a political operative, who all said they were responsible for taking that and putting it into the debates with the candidate, whose name I'm forgetting.

Q: Walter Mondale.

LOAR: Walter Mondale.

Q: This is '84.

LOAR: Right.

Q: This is Ronald Reagan.

LOAR: Right, and they said, "We are the ones who?" Each one of them said, "I personally am?" [Laughter], which I thought was very interesting. One time, I was at a State Department offsite with members of Tim Wirth's set of senior staff and the people in the building he felt were really supporting his agenda when he was the Undersecretary for Global Affairs. And there was a guy there who, as we all went around, introduced ourselves, and talked about our background, said, "I'm very proud of the fact that I took the "Where's the beef?" which was an advertising term, and put it into Walter Mondale's speeches, and used that for the debate." And then it came around to me, and he said, "Well, delighted to know that!" because I was actually at the advertising agency when we created that and wrote that. So glad we could use it for a good, strong, democratic candidate, which was a pretty interesting thing.

But going back, that was really, really fun; and I really felt like I would do very well in advertising. I loved it, and I excelled at it, and I was making money, and getting bonuses, and feeling very confident. I was feeling like maybe I could even have a child now, because I know I can earn a living. Richard was agreeable to that, and we started to think about starting a family.

Q: When did you have your child, or children?

LOAR: Our first son was in '83. When I had my first son Michael, who's leaving for college in a few days, I was at Dancer Fitzgerald Sample. I came back to work, and was one of the first women on a professional staff to come back to work after having a child; and I was very nervous about that because I didn't know how that would affect both of my roles; but I was very careful. Joe Mack - I had worked for under his supervision for a period of time - who was running our major accounts in New York, said, "Well, why don't you come back and work on Nabisco/RJR Reynolds, because they're based in New Jersey, and most of the clients are women who have young children at home or starting to have their families," which was a great management decision.

Q: Sure, sure.

LOAR: I didn't want to go out to California for three weeks at a time, but I didn't want to acknowledge that I was different now that I had a child, because you couldn't. It was not common!

There was only one other woman who had ever come back, and she came back part-time, and she never got promoted again. So I was really trying to figure out if there was a way I could continue my movement up the chain and still have a family life. It wasn't at all clear you could do that.

And I probably overcompensated. I didn't want to show pictures of home. You know, "Look! That's over there, and this is over here." But then I had wonderful clients and a much easier lifestyle, and was not away at shoots for a long period of time, and that was very important, and very good.

And then somewhere along the line there I got promoted to account supervisor, which was the next step up the chain - from account executive to account supervisor - and that was terrific. I remember being on maternity leave during part of the evaluations, and I got my full-year's bonus. This is their kind of management team, a very smart management team, because they could have said, "Well, since you're on maternity leave out of the office for, I think? I don't know what it was? ten weeks or twelve weeks, that you're not going to get your bonus." But they didn't - full bonus, highly valued to come back, put you on a great account make it work with your lifestyle, very smart, very productive work environment. It was something that I thought - since I was trying to figure this out, and I didn't know exactly what the work environment would be like - was very good. So it allowed me to continue to do that and feel like I could balance all this, and getting the sequence of what accounts win. We also started thinking, "Wow, you know, this is great! Let's have another child!" This is where the Foreign Service came into it. I don't remember the thinking exactly, except that I do know that my husband at that time was doing very well as a real estate lawyer in Manhattan. He was at a big firm, making big money, and was being recruited. Donald Trump asked him to come work for him, who was, you know, a big-time developer (and not with the best reputation).

Q: Yes. My son-in-law has done architectural work for Donald Trump, and he makes a point of always getting paid first [laughter] before he does his work.

LOAR: Yes, well, this is the time when he was talking about tearing down landmark buildings. Interesting, interesting job opportunities; my husband was picked up by a limo and escorted to a meeting with Trump. But it was just not his cup of tea [laughter]; he didn't feel at all comfortable with that!

But he was doing very well in the firm, and I was doing very well in advertising -not at his rate of compensation, as real estate lawyers in Manhattan in the '80s were doing very, very well. And I loved this work, and I felt like, okay, I can do this with my son, and [when I] look back on it, I probably was not focused enough on the fact that I was a new mother. I was still just trying to figure out how I could do both things and maintain a financial independence, because I felt I had this responsibility now to take care of this child.

But also, right at this time of our first son, there was another thing that happened. I was on maternity leave. We had a weekend house in Flemington, New Jersey. I started thinking about starting a small business, and now on that maternity leave we did. And that's a whole other thing. We started a cookie store, and I got my friends from advertising, a wonderful guy named John Licata, fabulous art director, to design a logo for the cookie store. I developed the recipes, and my brother helped a lot with buying equipment. Richard and I did this together. Richard found the location. And now I guess it was around '83, so I guess I missed that. But that was a fabulous experience of starting something from scratch and running a successful business.

And then when I went back to work after having my first son Michael. It became harder to run that business from New York City, where I was during the week. I was no longer out at this weekend house, and it was hard because I had some pretty wacky staff who would call me and ask, you know, "Am I supposed to clean utensils before I clock out or after?" [Laughter] So it became harder to keep doing that business while working in advertising. It was really a weekend business. We had heavy foot traffic on the weekends. It was the time of Mrs. Fields and cookies, and people indulging in expensive cookies while they were shopping was very common. And, we were right in the middle of the heavy foot traffic area in this town that had a lot of little outlets. It was really fun to start something, to see it be successful, to make money, to have total control over what you were doing. We got a lot of help from the family, which was nice. My brother was our beverage manager, which Rich and I got a kick out of. It was fun for Richard and me to do this!

We were running the store; we had this weekend house; we had this apartment in New York; and we really wanted to have a second child. Then we started thinking, "Well, we have to do something worthwhile with our lives. You know, all this money and income and success. The money's unbelievable!" Yes, but quite seriously, we really did think, you know, we always were very idealistic about what we should do with our lives, and you know, real estate law and advertising weren't fulfilling that for us; and I think, because it had been a very rapid march up the ladder for both of us, we felt confident that we could do this wherever we were.

One afternoon, we were sitting on the porch of our old Victorian house in Flemington, New Jersey (this is where we went on the weekends so I could sort of, you know, keep an eye on the cookie store). It was a quiet, nice place out of the city, out of New York City, where we were living. There was an article in the New York Times Magazine about the Foreign Service. It said, "If you can pass this quiz, you could be a good Foreign Service officer, or you could take a test." I tell you, I've never seen anything in the newspaper since then, and I would really recommend they think about that for recruitment. So, we were just fooling around taking it, and thought, "This is cool! Why don't we take that Foreign Service exam?" We'd thought about the Peace Corps; but frankly, I didn't want to be a teacher and I thought the roles for women in the Peace Corps, if you didn't know how to teach, was pretty limited.

I don't know if that was accurate, but I just didn't want to be a teacher. I didn't think I would be a wonderful teacher. And so then he said, "Well, Foreign Service. This is something cool," sort of like what my Uncle Jimmy, Jim McCabe, had done, and why not? So we didn't tell anybody and just took the Foreign Service exam, and Richard passed the first time, and I didn't. I was under by a few points. But we were still going to move ahead because now we had this idea. This was good, and noble, and a good thing to do, and we would love it, and it'd be fun, and why not? What do we have to lose? These incomes, we can get these anytime.

We really wanted to have another child before we did this, and we were very lucky. On the weekend we found out I was pregnant with my second child, I got a promotion at my advertising agency, my cookie store had reached some level of sales and success, and?what was the other thing?and something related to the Foreign Service. I don't know if it was then that I found out that I had passed the second time I took it. The second time I took it I had pink eye, so my eye just sort of shut down. I had one eye open, and I was like, "I am not taking this ***** exam." I loved taking exams. I don't let them bother me in the least. So we made it through, and I just squeaked over the line. Because I was pregnant with my second son, the Foreign Service held up Richard. So in the recruiting process, it wasn't as painful as it could be for a lot of people coming in together, tandem couples, because my pregnancy status sort of slowed Richard down. So, we had to wait for this child to be born and to pass a health clearance.

Richard came down for his oral exam, and I think he did it, or did he do it in New York, and he just ripped right through it, and we felt great about it. I came down to New York for my exam, my oral exam, and I remember feeling it was like a lark. I felt no stress. I remember taking the exam, the oral exam; and this was, I guess, '85 or so (let's see?Patrick wasn't born yet, so it was '85), and you know, coming into a room with all the people grilling you on all these questions. I loved that! I felt like this is like advertising. It's competitive, it's tough, you have to get in there, you have to BS them if you don't know the answer, you know.

Q: Right, yes.

LOAR: And I remember the questions I didn't know.

But in the meantime, when I had failed it the first year and had to wait for the next year (I know this is going in a lot of different directions), but I read a lot of the New York Times, even the things I found boring and not at all interesting; and this is the advice I'd give to anybody who wants to take the Foreign Service exam, is to read the New York Times, especially the things you're not interested in.

You can forget the sports section, but that's about it. Everything else, especially economies in other countries - what's going on in the business development in the world economy, you have to read all that. I got a series of books from the Council on Foreign Relations in New York; and I'd read their little brochures; and I would read their pamphlets about what's going on in South Africa, what's going on in Latin America, and stuff I'd never studied in college. I would read it; and I would, with my son Michael, you know, being a little baby, or a one-year-old or two-year-old at this point, I just read and read, and studied, and studied; and I found it really interesting, something which I didn't have any interest in it in college. But I really found it interesting, and would go to lectures that the Council on Foreign Relations would have - anything I could do to learn about foreign affairs. When I took the test again, I, did pass it, and then came down for the oral; and I found the oral to be invigorating!

Q: Do you recall any of the questions that were asked?

LOAR: Yes. I remember, "Would you compare the tax reform plans of?" I don't know if it was Bill Bradley and Jack Kemp? This is what I'm vaguely remembering, and I was like, "No, I'd prefer not to." [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: That was the one I didn't know anything about. But let me tell you about something else. Let's do that, and I knew part of it was not that you knew everything but that you could handle yourself. Like no, I don't really know a lot about that, but you know, yes, we need reform in our tax code. Let's move on!

Q: Yes.

LOAR: That was a terrible one. They asked me about unions and trade labor movements. I knew that, you know, from my background. But also, I'd been reading everything. I'd been reading, really studying, and it made me have a broader set of interests in that year that I was reading, and studying like crazy, and really focusing on trying to understand all of this.

I remember getting a cultural question, which my husband still teases me about, and it was a funny cultural question, because I thought culture, okay, you're talking to the woman who knows. I can handle this! I was trying to talk about some woman who was a conductor, and I used the name of an actress, a common actress, instead; and so the guy said, "Do you really mean that?" And I was like "Yea," like I'm thinking, "This guy doesn't know who this conductor is? He doesn't know this woman conductor!" and I can't remember this woman's name. She was one of the first women conductors in the United States.

Q: I know who you mean, and I can't remember either [laughter]!

LOAR: And I was so impressed with her. I was always looking for women of achievement and learning about them, and wanting to know about them. How'd they do that? How did they become a woman conductor when all the others were men? How'd you get the guts to do that? I always wanted to talk about that.

I was using the name of an actress, and it was very embarrassing. But then they also asked about different magazines and different things like this, and I could go on and on, and you know, I felt very confident. I felt very comfortable. I did feel that the people who were asking me the questions were just like people to talk to. I didn't find it challenging. Some people find it grueling. I'm thinking, "You want to talk? Let's talk. I'm ready."

Q: Sure.

LOAR: "I know the world! But if I don't, it doesn't throw me." It was very comfortable, and I didn't feel stress. I liked it. I liked the competition of it.

And then we had to do this whole thing of negotiations they did, and this was part of the exam. And I remember one guy at the table. I'm thinking, "He's really sharp. I'm not going to square him into this, because he'll end up hurting me. So I have got to be careful with him because he's very sharp!" And he actually came into the Foreign Service, and I would see him in the State Department hallways. He did very well - I think his name is John Fini - and I always noticed his career because I remember thinking, even in the oral exam I was noticing, this guy is really sharp and on the ball. There was somebody who was so dreadful I thought she was put in as a ringer, and I thought, "You can't be serious. This person can't be contemplating being a diplomat!" But I figured they put in this device of tough person to throw us off to see how we could handle an unwelcome person who was hostile and difficult, and it was. We had this budget to do to do a certain number of things and how are we going to split it up? So I kind of waited and said, "Well, I'll just take this little percentage here." I don't know what percentage it was, and it was lower than an equal amount, and I figured, "I'll just take a little lower and see how that goes." And then they came in and said, "You have ten minutes left," and they observed you, of course. Ten minutes left. The budget's been cut in half. What are you going to do? And I don't remember how my negotiating went, but I loved that session!

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I thought that was really fun.

Then we had the "in basket," this thing where you're the person, and I had some. "In basket" was like work. Here's your stack of work. You have to get it done, and blah, blah. I scored a 99 on that one. I loved that kind of thing.

Then you had to write, and you could choose a topic to write on; and they picked equal pay for comparable work, and I was like, that's an issue I cared about - like women getting paid, whether the secretaries in universities should be paid the same as janitors, or how does that go? It was equal pay for comparable work. There were some cases I had been following because I was very interested to know how women were going to be paid in their workplace. I was able to write a really (I thought) good, persuasive essay on it and on why it was important to both sides, and blah, blah, blah.

And I think that was it. I don't think there were other elements of it. But I left there thinking, "You know, I gave it a great shot." Actually I did well on it, so that was a nice thing.

And then our second son was born, which was wonderful; and we decided to make the move; and it was really like jumping off a cliff. We had no idea what we were doing.

Q: I was going to ask. I mean moving from where you were, sort of from really on the upward scale or something, would you say -was there a sense of idealism that came in doing something? Was it for fun, or really we ought to do something for the world?

LOAR: Well, I think because we were so confident after having done well, both of us - and that came easy to us - to do well in our respective fields - and thus, we did have a sense that we should serve, serve our country, do something that we'd be proud of. Especially when you have your first child, you think, "What do you want to show this child? What values do you want to pass along?" I always called it "the postpartum ambition." I mean I really wanted to start a cookie store, I wanted to do something in the world; but I was more driven to do good, important things with my life than ever before.

And, if you can see, "Okay, that's a way to get money," and I thought that would be such a cool thing because I didn't have that; and that was something I didn't even know how to do; and I learned, well, that's what you do to get money - you do this in the business - and I don't mean to demean that, and that was wonderful. But it wasn't like the deeply satisfying thing I thought it would be - to make money.

Q: Well, I've often felt for example, I've been doing these oral histories now for about 16 years, off and on, that to interview successful the-equivalent-of account executives or real estate lawyers, you know?I couldn't be doing it for that long.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: I mean it just isn't?it's great to make, and I don't demean it. But at the same time, there's nothing that you particularly want to pass on to the next generation like you do with the people who've been involved with American foreign affairs. I mean this is just me, but I think it's true in the greater scheme of things.

LOAR: Yes. There is something. I mean the State Department itself does have a culture of people who really want to get out there and really do good things. It's an interesting culture! There's a mix and hierarchy is a difficult thing. But I really felt, and then partly because my uncle had done this, and he was such a hero to the family, so important in my family.

Q: Yes, he was in AID (United States Agency for International Development), wasn't he, doing -

LOAR: He was AID in Japan after the war. But he was such a wonderful person to me, and what he did for the family, and his ideals, and plans, and what he thought you do with your life. At his home he has a perpetual flame to FDR (Franklin D. Roosevelt) and JFK (John F. Kennedy). He's passed on now, maybe four or five years ago. My understanding is that that perpetual flame is still there. FDR saved the country, you know.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Just going back too, I know this was in my thinking, that you do good things, but also that it could be glamorous and - not glamorous because glamorous is one thing - it could be fulfilling and important, not just something for the good. There's not much social working in an inner city, but it's something that could be fulfilling at the same time.

Q: Well, I think, too, that there is something that often is discounted by people who are in the Foreign Service because it sounds almost a little too?

LOAR: Pollyannaish.

Q: Pollyannaish or something. But as a practical fact, the United States is preeminent in the world during this period, and God knows how long it will last. But at the same time, if you're working for the United States, you do feel you have a mission bringing peace to people, and all this. No other country really picks that up.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: I mean it's kind of: if you're not going to do it, nobody else is going to do it.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: This can't help but transmit itself into a certain amount of sometimes missionary, a little too good, they sure made a lot of mistakes, and all that -

LOAR: Right. Too much judgmental thinking sometimes, yes.

Q: But at the same time, it's there. Am I correct in saying that this is somewhat of the feeling you??

LOAR: Service, and also like seeing other parts of the world, experiencing things, rolling up our sleeves, trying ourselves in another area. Richard had a great interest in this and was really fluent in it; and still, he's just really terrific at understanding all the complex political situations about a country and being able to articulate it. He's fabulous at that. He really is.

There was this sense of, like my Uncle James McCabe. My son had to do a project - interview someone of his grandparent's generation; and my mom was up in New Jersey, so that was hard; so we interviewed his great uncle. In interviewing my Uncle Jimmy I heard things I never heard before. It was his thinking, and it just made me realize this was built in. He said that the day that Hitler marched into Poland, he marched onto a train and came down to Washington, to FDR, to help FDR stand up against tyrants around the world.

And I think when I was working in advertising and making a lot of money - when I worked in Andover, my parents did not have any comprehension of that particularly. They kind of had this vague idea of how many Catholics are involved in that school? [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: But they were just proud of me for going out, and earning a living and never judgmental, just always encouraging. When I worked in advertising, they were sort of like, "You're a huckster!" You know, it's like, "Yea, it's good you're making money; and yea, it's good you're taking care of your child; but why you're using your maiden name is beyond me!" [Laughter] "And why you're not spending more time, why you're not at home with your child is, you know," but it was never like pushing it too much. When I ran my cookie store, my father learned I made a profit on the tins. He said, "Why do you make a profit? Why don't you sell them just for what they are?" "Because then I won't make a profit, Dad!" [Laughter]

So the idea of making money, there's some distrust there. And advertising was like, well, you're putting these things on TV and you're trying to get people to buy things, right? There was nothing, "But what is that?" And that?and it wasn't any heavy-handed thing, but it was, "Well, that's good honey."

There was some fun and vigor just because you're making so much money, and I'm how do you do that if you're doing it in an honest way [laughter]. You know, there are other branches of Irish families where health, wealth, and success is highly valued.

Q: Yes, sure.

LOAR: It wasn't particularly valued.

But the funny thing is, once I passed the Foreign Service exam (just jump ahead), when I came down to training, my parents came down to visit us once when we were in training. My dad and mom walked from where we were staying over to Georgetown, and they came back, and my father said, "You know, I've talked to some people on campus, and I told them, 'My daughter is a Foreign Service officer now, just starting.'" I think then he really understood what a Foreign Service officer was, and he said, "You know, we're very proud of you, and we're very proud of Richard." And it was funny because I think that is sort of what we were raised to do. I just felt very lucky to have a chance to do it.

Q: Yes, okay. Well then, you entered the Foreign Service when, in 1986?

LOAR: Yes.

Q: You both came in at the same time.

LOAR: Right.

Q: Had you designated what cone you wanted to be?

LOAR: Well, Richard knew he wanted a political, and he had scored well enough to do political. My score gave me two options - admin (administration) or consular - and I thought consular was managing people and resources, and I could do that; and I didn't talk to a soul, mind you, about what consular work was.

Q: You didn't?

LOAR: And we had no clue that at that time the political officers were the princes of the embassy -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And the consular were like, we're so lucky, you know, so happy we can give you some employment [laughter], the lower rung -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: The lesser folks in the kingdom. But we just jumped in, and really we had talked to one couple who are a tandem couple, called the Grahams. A guy I worked with in advertising, in the office next to mine, his cousins were in the Foreign Service. We talked to them - Russell Graham was the husband - talked to them once or twice on the phone. They gave us some advice, which meant nothing to us because we had no clue what that meant in managing your career. We had talked to somebody at AFSA (American Foreign Service Association), who gave us some vague advice. I was really trying to figure out this cone thing. Was I going to be disadvantaged? I don't want to be coming in at some disadvantage. Of course, you do as the consular officer. In the old days in their hierarchy, you were a second-class citizen.

Q: Well, I remember, I was in the consular cone the whole time. Can we talk about the Foreign Service, the basic officer course?

LOAR: Right.

Q: I mean here's the first chance to look at the beast, about the new people who are coming in.

LOAR: Well, it was so much fun for us. This was an exhilarating time, and we look at that as one of the great, fun times of our lives, because we had just had our second son, and I was ready to come in, like four weeks after he was born. I'm like totally clueless what it was like to have a second child. And there was a young woman named Lisa Parisik, who said, "Well, I really think it'd be great if you and Richard came in together," because they were offering us different times of classes, and she said, "Let's get you on the same track." In that part she made our life so much easier.

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: A great individual - she was working for Patrick Kennedy at one point, which made great sense, because Patrick is a great manager and a great promoter of Foreign Service personnel, and always looking out for the Foreign Service - and Lisa just did what no one else was really paying attention to and doing, and which we didn't know quite how to, and didn't feel we had any say in. She put us on the same track, so we started our classes together, because we weren't originally on the same track. Someone else had offered me a class at one time and Richard another, and she said, "No. We're going to put you together in the same class."

So then I had, I think, six months of maternity leave, which was glorious with this second child. So it means leaving our apartment in New York, leaving our 110-year old Victorian home, selling our cookie store in Flemington, New Jersey (we couldn't keep that up anymore), and basically saying good bye to the family that we were so, so, so close to, and moving down to Washington for this great adventure.

We came into the A-100 class together; found a wonderful nanny who was great, young college girl, a Mormon who lived with us (another wonderful experience learning about the Mormon religion, having this girl live with us); and we had double per diem, double training thing. One of the few benefits tandems get, is when you're in training, you get double stuff. So we got into the cool little townhouse in Georgetown. So we could walk over to FSI (Foreign Service Institute), walk our little son to Holy Trinity Nursery School right near Georgetown University, and we had plenty of spending cash. Our salaries went from very significant salaries to two of us together making less really than I made in advertising, and our quality of life wasn't affected. We had live-in help with the kids. We could walk to what we needed to do. We still saw our family a lot, both Richard's family and mine, because they came down to Washington, and it was just very cool.

We started in A-100 class, and it was really a fun class, and we're still close, as they say you will be, to a lot of the people we started in that class with. I remember thinking, you know, "What the heck. I don't have an advanced degree in foreign affairs, I'm not a lawyer, I'm one of the few in the class who doesn't have an advanced degree, and I was a real oddball." You know, everybody stands up and says, "I've just finished my masters at SAIS (School of Advanced International Studies), and I've lived overseas and worked in the major banking firm, and I've done this, and I was a lawyer, blah, blah, blah." Out of 41, we had like 9 lawyers, we had a lot of Peace Corps folks, and you could always sort of find your Peace Corps. You have to identify them. And then I stood up and said, "I used to work in advertising when "Where's the Beef?" was Wendy's campaign." [Laughter] I thought, "Ah, what the heck! I'm me, and it's a strange fit, but here I am." But I was so excited about living overseas, and joining the Foreign Service, and State Department. The A-100 class, it was a very wonderful lifestyle for us, because you go to class. You don't go out there and fight to earn a living.

It was just wonderful, and we had a lot of time with the two little guys, our two sons; and they were just cute as can be. It was a wonderful, sweet time for us. We were meeting these great people in our class, wonderful talented people, many of whom have stayed and had fabulous careers - our closest friends (you know, three or four or five of them). Dan Pacuda has had a great career, and last time I talked to him he was in administrative S/S-EX (Office of the Executive Secretary, Executive Office), working in the transition between Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell, and just a fabulously talented guy. Cindy Wood, who had a long Foreign Service career, and who joined her husband who was in the Foreign Service, and she just finished up in Greece. And Pattie, who had worked in New Jersey like we did, and we went to our first couple of tours and stayed very close, and I'm just blanking on her?Pattie [Patricia] Hanigan Scroggs, who got married, very terrific career, very talented person. Mary Kurtin, who we're very close to. These are people who, you know, just meeting them, we had a lot in common with them. They were all different ages. Dan was a lawyer. Mary was, you know, an American history and political science masters, and she and Richard really loved all that. Patricia and I, we had grown up near each other in New Jersey, and we ended up doing our two overseas assignments together. It was really interesting. We grew up in New Jersey; we came into training together, then went to Mexico together, and then Korea together, and then back to Washington.

But it was the training itself I thought was interesting, and like varied, and just fun; and we had a lot of social stuff. We played touch football games and had potluck dinners, and we socialized a lot. It was fun!

Q: Yes. Well then, in the first place, because we've talked about this before, did you feel oddballish within the Foreign Service?

LOAR: At being a woman?

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I didn't. But I had just come from a highly competitive business environment where all of my bosses, except for one, over seven years -was it seven years?six years I was in advertising - were men; all my clients, except for a couple, were men; towards the end there I had a few women clients. So I was used to dealing with guys.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And competing with guys.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And having guys as bosses who were responsible for my salaries, and promotions, and everything else. So this didn't particularly bother me. I didn't feel any - it was not an issue for me. I mean I did have some feeling that for a lot of the Foreign Service guys who were coming in, their wives were going overseas, and they don't have work, and they have to figure out work, and I'm thinking, "What a bad deal that's going to be, and how hard that's going to be."

Q: Yes.

LOAR: On the other hand, I was thinking, "And yet we have these two young kids, and we have to figure this out ourselves." So there's no at-home person to help with the transition, and the institution at that time really did not take that into account.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: You want to be a tandem, great; but we're not going to do anything to make your family's transition to post any easier. You have your kids, great! It's structured to have an at-home spouse take care of the family's lives. It's not structured to have two officers hit the ground, and it's just not conducive to family life. So I hope that something?you know, I'm out of touch. I haven't been overseas in a number of years on an assignment. But I felt that was a hard thing. But I didn't think it was a woman's thing. I thought it was a family thing. I thought that was hard.

But soon we were so enthusiastic. We had our swearing in on the Seventh Floor. It was just a very exciting, wonderful time for us. Our one son was in our arms, and our other son was a little baby. Patrick was less than a year old, and Michael was then three. I felt we were doing a great adventure, something good and purposeful, and felt very positive about it. I felt we were going to do really well. We were sure we were going to excel. We were going to do great! It was going to be a great career, and we were going to do it forever, you know.

Q: Did you have any particular goal in mind, where you wanted to go, what area, or something like that?

LOAR: No. We just wanted to be someplace together with decent jobs, and that's great because that's what the Foreign Service likes, you know. No particular language that we had, so we were pretty flexible. And of course they needed people out there to work in the visa mills, when they first come in the door.

Q: So where'd you go?

LOAR: To Mexico City. We were delighted with that. You know, Spanish is a learnable language. At that time I thought, "Yea, I can learn a language, you know." [Laughter] I didn't realize what a struggle it was. Mexico City was great. We just had no real?we would have gone anywhere. We would have gone to Africa; we would have gone to Asia; it didn't matter.

Q: I'd just like to get the beginning of an assignment. You went to Mexico City from '86 to, or was it '87?

LOAR: Yes?I'm trying to think when we left to go there. We started in September of '86 -

Q: Probably '87 then.

LOAR: It's when we started FSI. So nine months, is it? I think it's a pretty?is it nine months in those days they did?

Q: It's three or four months, I thought. But maybe - I don't know. But then language too.

LOAR: Yes, language too.

Q: So probably around?so you were probably mid to late -

LOAR: Eighty-seven.

Q: Eighty-seven to when? When did you leave Mexico?

LOAR: It was a year and a half, just a short tour, ridiculously short tours, stayed a year and a half.

Q: Yes. Okay. Well then, probably '89ish.

LOAR: Yes, right.

Q: All right. Well, let's?what was your job?

LOAR: Non-immigrant Visa officer. Richard, the real estate lawyer, [laughter] was doing immigrant visa interviews, and we were in two separate sections, but it was a blast. We just loved it, you know! We just, you know, it was fun! It reminded me of my first high school job, working as a checkout girl in a supermarket, because it was fast, and they didn't care what you did as long you did it fast.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Everyday the line supervisor would list how many decisions were made - visas issued, visas refused. They actually compared officers on the line. It reminded me of my summer job in the paint factory, too (it was get 'em in there; the machine will break down if you do not put these things into the machine holes at the right time). And it was so much fun. There was such a great esprit de corps among the officers.

Q: Well, how did you find the decision-making, because for some people this turns out to be -

LOAR: Ridiculous. It was atrocious.

Q: ?a very difficult thing just to make -

LOAR: I did not think I was doing work of value. I didn't think it was serious work. It could have been, but it wasn't when you were being asked to make these decisions in?under 60 seconds, I'm sure. We would go out to the barn in Mexico City. If you've done consular work, you know what that's like; and it was the waiting area that they built like a giant Quonset hut to shield people from the sun. This one fellow officer, Michael Scown, who was a big lawyer, really fun guy from San Francisco, [and I] would go out to the barn because we were the fastest; and we would go up and down the aisles and make ridiculous decisions based on whether somebody looked clean or not; and we would just like pluck out the ones we knew were never coming back to Mexico, were clearly going for work or whatever in the United States.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But I also felt very torn because I started thinking, "Well, wait a minute! My grandparents were immigrants. I have to treat these people fairly." But my job was to carry out the immigration law, which was riddled with inconsistencies. We'd get these ridiculous CODELS (Congressional Delegations) all the time asking us to ignore the immigration law. So I didn't feel it was particularly valuable and important work, and I didn't think anybody cared how it was done as long as it was done fast.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But it wasn't like eating me up. I wasn't struggling with it. We had such a fabulous, fun group of officers, who had come from all different parts, all different backgrounds, all different ages. We had like 20 JOs (Junior Officers), that it was really great fun to work. Richard had more serious work. In the Immigrant Visa case, you get to interview the person, and he would be done with his work at 11:30 in the morning, and then he was like, "Okay, now what?" We were done when there were no more people standing; and there were always people standing, always. I would joke that I really got into Mexican Coca-Cola in the green bottles because I needed to go, go, go, go, go, go, go, and I didn't drink coffee, and I would just chug those cokes back. But we would go through the lines and just pick out, okay, who's has nits, bugs in their hair, who has dirty feet? Send them outside. The others you go in for an interview. You just do the triage out in the barn of cutting out who was not going to ever - and sometimes it got to the point where, don't even send them in. Make the decision out there! So it really became ten seconds, fifteen seconds. You're just sizing somebody up!

Q: Well did you find that visa brokers were hiring suits and getting haircuts?

LOAR: Oh, yes. On the Immigrant Visa side Richard had some serious cases. He had to do a thoughtful, deliberative case, case-by-case things. Immigrant visas are a lot different than the 90 percent of the people who apply in Mexico City who are going to Disneyland or to visit a distant cousin, because those are the two destinations in the U.S.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: If we only had a nickel for every visa we issued for people going to Disneyland. But there wasn't that thoughtful process at all. It was much more of a quickie, quickie deciding, using your language, which I know my language on the visa line was terrible.

But we had wonderful housing because at that time they had an interesting housing policy in Mexico City, none that I could figure out. We had two kids, and I didn't want it with a lot of stairs because I didn't want my little guy falling down stairs. They found us one place that had quarters for two separate sets of household help, and I thought, "That sounds cool." And we had an American, this Mormon, young woman down with us, who was the transitional nanny, you know, at costs we found were so much because she had to live with us, you know, in Washington during the training and then come on down to Mexico with us, great person who was willing to help us get settled. We needed an apartment for her. So the landlord took this servant's quarter and turned it into a really nice apartment; and then, of course, when that American nanny left and the Mexican nanny moved in, the landlord was furious. "We would never have fixed that up for a Mexican nanny, and you tricked us!" I said, "No, I didn't." But the house was really an incredible house, and I couldn't tell how we qualified for this house, but I didn't care! It was fabulous, very close in and great life style, and my son was very close to the little Montessori school.

But the work was not wearing you out mentally. But it didn't matter, because we were all like, "Well, let's get this done," and nobody put themselves higher than anybody else. One woman there had seven languages, Daria Fane; another, Bryan Dalton, had seven languages. They were incredible linguists.

Q: Well, did you find one of the complaints sometimes is that, here I am so terribly qualified, and what they made me do? They made me go to Mexico City. We had, you know, letters to the editor and things like I'm -

LOAR: Of course, and they make it a big deal in Mexico City when people resigned. Yes.

Q: How did you feel about that? Did you feel your skills were always being misused?

LOAR: Oh, it was ridiculous! The thing was we all were in the same boat; and they were highly qualified people, all of us in the same boat, all of us, you know, in our mid-30s because that was the average age (when I came in, I was 32), mid to late 30s; and we were all having fun, having parties, and doing great things.

We were all looking for the serious work, and Richard had a chance to do some really good serious work. Roger Gamble was our DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission); and he was terrific, a former marine. I was very lucky. We were very lucky to have Roger as our first boss. Roger really, really managed the junior officers, really reached out to us, really spent time talking with us; because, here we were in the bowels of the embassy with the visa line chief focusing on getting the most out of us that they could.. Roger was just great.

He pulled Richard up to do some study of how you can predict who a Mexican future political elite is going to be. So Richard did this interesting study looking at people who were identified by the international business program. It was really a great thought piece, you know. But because he was in the Immigrant Visa line and done at 11:30, of course his line chief deeply resented that -

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: ?did not let him forget that that was inappropriate that he was working outside the section. You're supposed to read catalogs and magazines the rest of the afternoon, the way that she did. [Laughter]

Q: Yes. Well, I was just going to say, you came up against sort of the second level of the consular establishment, which is usually a problem.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: I mean in that these are people who probably aren't going to go too far, and have learned their technical skills, and sort of resent the young people, or not young, but I mean the bright people coming through and on their way somewhere else; and sometimes that resentment -

LOAR: Well, the immediate line supervisor was Gail, I forget her last name, but she was bright, and her job was to get those visas done.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And then the one above her had some real problems. I didn't have a problem with him, but some other people did. And then we had the consul general, and this is good for another session, okay.

Q: Who was the consul general?

LOAR: Charlie Brown.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: He was the supervisor and consul general for all of Mexico and the consulates, and Richard Peterson was the consul general just for Mexico City. If we could stop, I'd sort of like to pick that up, because that's another interesting discussion for next time.

Q: All right. Well then, we'll stop at this point, and we'll pick it up next time. We've got you in Mexico City. We've talked about your job per se, and your housing, and all. But we'll, now, next time, pick it up talking about your impression of the consular establishment there.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: Great.

Q: Today is 7 November 2001, Theresa, again, you were in Mexico City from when to when?

LOAR: I think from '87 to '88, for a year and a half, or '89, something like that.

Q: All right. Well, that puts us pretty close. Well, we were just beginning to talk about the consular establishment and your impressions, because I think this is important. For one thing, it's very important for an awful lot of people who are coming up to get visas or get protection from Americans to understand what makes it, and what harms, and what helps, you know, in this. We were talking about some of the people who came in sort of mid-career. But could you talk a bit now about the supervision that you had, and as you saw how it operated?

LOAR: Well, it was a great challenge, I think, to the consular supervisory team because you had so many people every day who were applying for visas; and you had to train these officers, most of whom were on their first tour in the Foreign Service and many of whom had done significant jobs with responsibility in other fields, but who had come all eager and excited to start their work in the Foreign Service.

You're supposed to implement the immigration law, and you usually had about 30 seconds to adjudicate a case, which is a very highfalutin word for looking at somebody and seeing whether they look like they're going to return to their home country or not. Well, I think that the supervisory consular team had a lot of challenges - which is, getting people to work fast and hard, keeping the refusal number high enough that Washington would think we weren't giving away the visas; and trying to keep the process honest, which was challenging when you had so many pressures from neighbors, and friends, and people who might know you, to help them with the visa. There were also a lot of security concerns at that time in Mexico: there was a lot of activity from former Soviet Union Bulgarian diplomats passing through; and from Russians, Cubans, and people of all sorts and stripes looking to come into the United States - so I think it was challenging work.

I think we had 20 junior officers in Mexico City. Everybody had to rotate through two things. the first of these was the line, the NIV (Non-immigrant Visa) line, which reminded me of my first job working as a cashier in a supermarket which was a lot of fun. There was no heavy lifting, a lot of fun, an emphasis on "do it good, do it fast" with a lot of camaraderie in the group you're working with. We had terrific camaraderie among the officers, who were just a very mixed bag of people: some were out of graduate school, some were experienced linguists, some with a lot of experience within the UN, three or four were lawyers, and my husband Richard and I. It was just a great group to work together with. But I think people uniformly felt their work was not difficult; you were making quick decisions, but you weren't making good decisions a lot of the time. It wasn't really your job to think it through. You'd just look at somebody, size them up as to whether they were coming back, or not.

Q: Well, did it bother you? Something that later actually came into a court case, I think, was that with this quick look, it's the whole non-immigrant visa process is discriminatory as all hell, because if you're a rich person, you've got something to come back to, and if you're a poor person, you don't have something to come back to. So ipso facto, you're looking at somebody and saying, "Is this person rich? Are you all satisfied? Good."

LOAR: The immigration law, though, is based on proving, or getting in this 30-second interview - maybe 30 seconds - the information and making the impression that you're going to return to your home country. Are you an intending immigrant or not? As we're finding after the tragic events of September 11th, there are other things that need to be considered. But right now, the consular system isn't equipped to do that if the intelligence is not in the system. And I fully support Mary Ryan's testimony before Congress. I follow this closely, especially when there is criticism. How did these people get visas? Well, if you don't know anything derogatory about this person, and you do your computer checks, and it doesn't come up with a hit, there's no reason not to give all those people from Egypt and Saudi Arabia who were involved in the terrorist activities here in the United States a visa. There was nothing in the system to indicate they were bad guys. You see, the whole system is based on, "Are you going to return to your home country?"

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And these people were people of means. So the intelligence information needs to be fed to the consular people, and there needs to be a lot more intelligence information, so that the consular officers have the information that they need to do their job. I really do feel strongly about that. You cannot blame the United States consular people for letting these people in when there's nothing to indicate they should not be let in. The law is not based on whether you think they might be bad guys or not. If you have no information, and there's no clue, there's nothing to go on. You have to go ahead and give them the visa.

Q: Yes. We're trying. But there have been proposals, supposedly from the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) not to give any Middle Eastern male between the ages of 18 and 45 a visa, or something like that.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: I mean highly discriminatory!

LOAR: Yes. We had so many visa applicants and so many people waiting in line that two of us would be outside to do what I would call the triage - Michael Scown, who was a lawyer out of San Francisco and me. Neither one of us had fabulous language skills, I will say right up front; but we were able to make decisions quickly. So, they put us out in the barn, which was a big room, very hot, with benches where people would filter in. The mariachi bands would be playing right outside; the taco stands were all around it, and we would just walk up and down the rows, and [laughter] I'm reluctant to say this, if somebody's feet were really, really dirty, or if there were bugs clearly on their person, in their hair, or if they just looked like they'd literally just walked out from the fields, we would save them the trouble of going inside. We weeded out an awful lot of people who were encouraged or who had paid somebody money to come stand in line to see if they could get a visa. It was a ridiculous process, utterly ridiculous process.

Then, after weeding those out, the pressure was, "Well, we don't want that many people coming in for interviews." So we would do our 15-second interviews out in the barn, and we would stand there and say, "Yes," "No," I mean just look at somebody, and [sigh] you know, you'd look at their papers, all the papers, and 90 percent of the papers were prepared by the visa handlers outside. They paid money to 'em. I'm glad to hear the United States is finally charging now for visas in some countries, since everyone was making money on the process except the poor U.S. government -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ?which was giving them the right and the privilege to come into the United States. But the papers meant almost nothing, because, unless you could really figure out which were the fake papers and which were the real ones, it was impossible to tell. But it was a very haphazard process, and I don't think it's changed particularly.

Q: How do you feel you were sort of supported, encouraged by the supervisory consular people. I would think this would be quite a job: to have people like yourself coming in, and a new crew coming in every few months almost, and doing things that we were trained you shouldn't do. You shouldn't make snap judgments.

LOAR: Well, I think we all saw it as the job you do to get through the gate. I was a consular officer, and I took consular work seriously; but I don't think anyone thought this was developing some skill. You did learn how to move people quickly through lines, how to set up secure entry systems; and I think it'd be hard for anyone to say this was something that was skill building, or a training thing that built you for the future of the Foreign Service. It was a need, and they threw bodies at the need, and we were one of the bodies.

Q: Did you find any of your colleagues were in a way unable to meet this particular test?

LOAR: Oh, I think some people found it annoying, but we were all ranges of abilities and all kinds of backgrounds, and it was a great leveler. It was what I imagine when you join the military. It's a great leveler no matter where you're from, the old military.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: When it wasn't so class divided.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So there was somebody next to you in the line who spoke seven languages and was really, really good; and here I was - I could barely handle Spanish.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And then the person next to me had a different set of experiences, had her master's in international relations, and was really dying to get out there and work in the Soviet Union; and here I come out of advertising. But it didn't matter. I mean we all sort of worked together, and we did different projects and went off and did our prison visits, which was a real fun project. Going off and doing prison visits, you got out into the countryside, and you got to visit American drug dealers in jail for the most part.

Q: Well, let's move away from the Visa Section. How'd you find the prison visits?

LOAR: Oh, it was a very interesting experience. It was scary, because you had to walk into these prisons alone. My husband, Richard, had worked in the Immigrant Visa Section. He had a very different work experience, in that it wasn't a sweatshop sort of quick, quick, quick, quick, quick! It was more: "Here's your cases for the day. Look at them, blah, blah, blah." Those were the scheduled appointments; and he had people like the Shah of Iran's brother, who wanted to set up a pistachio business, which is a little different from the clientele I was seeing. [Laughter]

Q: Yes. [Laughter]

LOAR: But when he was done, then he had freetime to do other projects. So he went off and did well. He was recruited by the DCM, Roger Gamble, who was terrific. Roger Gamble was a great DCM; a former marine who loved the Foreign Service and really ran the embassy. Of course, our ambassador at the time, Pilliod [Charles J. Pilliod, Jr.] only kind of lived in Mexico - he didn't quite live there and wasn't really connected to the team at the embassy.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But Roger really ran it, and he was just terrific. He and his wife were lovely. They would invite junior officers out to their place and you'd get to know them. He would invite the junior officers to receptions. He really treated all the junior officer team as serious officers, not as the people in the lower echelons of the embassy working [laughter] to decide who was in or who has fewer bugs in their hair than the other one.

So Richard would be recruited by Roger to do some different projects and reports. I felt that was interesting and glad he had a chance to do it, but I remember thinking, "Gee, that would be fun."

But as consular officers, we were called upon to go out and do these prison visits. You couldn't do it when you were on visa line duty, because you [laughter] literally couldn't leave your work area. That was really different from the supermarket, in that at the supermarket I had a union, and at 16 years of age I had more flexibility. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And I had an older sibling working at the supermarket with me.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But everybody was good-natured about it. We really did have all kinds of personalities.

But the prison visits were an interesting thing, and I do think Americans who are arrested overseas do need to be visited in prison. I think the program in Mexico was particularly stringent, and the U.S. Congress was very concerned about the prisons. I remember visiting a young woman who was probably in her early or late 20s, or so, who was a mule, and just carried some drugs for her boyfriend, and who was in this one prison for a very long time. She was getting out soon. She was obviously extremely concerned about what it would be like to be out of prison. But walking into the prison alone was not part of my life experience.

I remember one time I went someplace in the middle of a coffee plantation just south of Mexico - I think this was it. An embassy driver was with me, a wonderful guy; and he said, "Would you like me to walk in with you?" and I said, "Yes, I would very, very much like that! Thank you for asking me that question!"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And it really did make me feel a lot more comfortable that he would do that and wait at a particular place; and they knew he was waiting. I don't know what I expected.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: You know, I don't have a lot of experience with that.

Q: Well, how did you find the prison authorities?

LOAR: Well, there are two prison visits that come to mind. One was visiting this one guy who was a former Assembly of God missionary, and who grew up as a missionary in a big family of missionaries. Then somewhere along the line he had crossed to the other side of the street and had become a major drug dealer, and had used his intimate knowledge of the transportation systems, and distribution routes, and where to find the product to become a big-time drug dealer. He was arrested, and he was now living in this prison in a very remote area. He seemed to be pretty much running the prison. There were drugs everywhere. So that made me even more nervous, because you didn't know who the authorities were [laughter].

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Part of our services to him was to make sure he got his Social Security check delivered, so that his Mexican wife - who was living, I don't think in the prison, but in the prison town - could get the full benefits, which was another eye-opener to me [laughter]. I didn't know you could be convicted, and, while serving time in a Mexican jail, get your Social Security check, and be able to support your new family. But he was one of the more colorful people. I did say I was scared as hell when I was in there. But what he pretty much said was that he apparently had some ongoing relationship with people who sold drugs, so he had a lot of power in the prison. You would think he was a missionary with his long beard. He talked about how the heavy drug use calmed everybody down and kept them sedated, and how the men were able to bring women in - their girlfriends, or wives at the moment, or whatever we would like to call those who provided those services - and so there was not a great deal of sexual tension or sexual violence that there is in American prisons; that was very interesting. So, drugs and conjugal visits were kind of an accepted norm.

And my interest was really: is this American getting the full range of services he's supposed to get as an American overseas prisoner; is he being treated okay? He clearly was the dominant personality in the prison. And, yes, he seemed to be doing just fine [laughter].

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And when his social security check was delivered, he would request specific chocolates from a particular city - I think See's Chocolates from San Francisco, California - and we would do what we could to help him. That was an interesting experience. I remember the hotel I was staying in had little geckos all over the walls.

Q: Little.

LOAR: Little -

Q: Well, they -

LOAR: Ugly things.

Q: They eat the other insects that are around.

LOAR: Yes, I am glad to see them there.

Q: Yes [laughter]!

LOAR: Because there weren't other ones! And, I can't remember what city it was in the South. It was just unbelievable.

And then this other prison visit I remember. It must have been outside of Mexico City, which is why the driver was with me; and that was scary. It was just so sad to hear this story of this young woman from the Bronx who carried drugs for her boyfriend, and ended up paying such a heavy, heavy price.

Q: This, of course, is one of the great tragedies, because there are people, and elderly people also, who were used as mules.

LOAR: Right.

Q: Was her boyfriend still around?

LOAR: No. I don't think he ever even got caught.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I do remember Colin Cleary, who was a really terrific Foreign Service officer, and his wife, now Susan Cleary. They're both in the Foreign Service together, and they both have red hair. They have three redheaded kids. They look like a GAP ad.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: They're just a great couple and wonderful talented people. Well, Colin did a report. We were all looking for substance, something we could get our teeth into, because we were doing these 30-second visa interviews - cheerfully [laughter] -

Q: Yes. [Laughter]

LOAR: ?seeing who had the most numbers, and socializing a lot, and enjoying each other's company, but looking for substance.

He wrote a very long, detailed report about a Mexican drug lord who was in prison. It was about where he was in prison in Mexico City, and what his arrangements were. Colin would ask questions, and they would tell him. "Well, how does this guy get food? Well, how does he run his operation? How does he get visits from women? How does this all happen?" I do not remember the name of the Mexican drug lord, but it was let's say, '8'89. He was the preeminent Mexican drug lord, and he was in a prison in Mexico City and living the good life. Colin wrote this really long cable detailing it. But, it was not cleared to leave the embassy, because that would be bad information for Congress to know that Mexican drug lords were living the good life and running their operations out of a Mexican prison. I'm not sure who made that decision, but I remember Colin being very frustrated, because it was well researched.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It was like a reporter had written it, backed up by more than one source; it was very clear information. But it was deemed by someone in the embassy as bad information to come out of Mexico because then Congress would beat up on Mexico, and we didn't want that to happen, and "That stuff happens overseas sometimes."

Q: I know. Well, of course, there is this problem (I run across this in a lot of other of these interviews, and I know I've experienced it myself), that it's great to report on corruption, but when the corruption gets filtered out to Congress, it ends up in absolutely negative reactions when there are other things going on; and so do you report as a reporter does, and then can walk away from the repercussions of this? Or, you get your jollies, and you report it, and then, what does it mean?

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And unfortunately, we're seeing this now with our relations with our Islamic allies.

Well, where else did you serve in Mexico? What else did you do?

LOAR: Well, after my time on the NIV line, there was a position as an aide to the supervisory consul general. I was selected for that, which was a lot of fun because I got to work up in the office with the consul general, [Richard] Dick Peterson and Charlie Brown, who was the supervisory consul general. I don't remember all the things I did. I do remember that I set up a rotation schedule for junior officers when they came in so that they had some idea of what to expect from their tour. They didn't know if they were going to work on the visa line until they dropped, or if they were ever going to get a chance to do prison visits, or if they would ever get a chance to do citizen services, which was a cushy job and interesting. It gave you some chance to do things.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But we also were thinking (and I don't remember how this started) of rotating junior officers from the different consulates, because the supervisory consul general was also in charge of the final rating officer and reviewing officer for all the junior officers at all the posts all over Mexico. So I got to know all those officers, and that was really a lot of fun because there was so much talent out there! Patricia Hanigan, who's now Patricia Hanigan Scroggs, was a star. She was a fabulous junior officer out in a place whose name I forget [Mazatlán, Mexico].

So we set up a rotation of junior officers. I don't remember if this started with me, or if this had gone on before. It was a wonderful program of rotating junior officers in from the consulates into Mexico City, and then sending out the junior officers from Mexico City out to the consulates for two weeks at a time. I know the junior officers in Mexico City; thought it was great because you got to get off of the visa line to see what it was like in a consulate, which was completely different. And the JOs, who were in the middle of a consulate and bored to death because they had maybe 20 visa applicants a day, rather than 20 applicants in 15 minutes, were thrilled to come to a big city and to see what it was like inside of an embassy. So, it was a very good program. I'm sure it had gone on before. I enjoyed organizing that and getting that going and getting people to come in and out. I also enjoyed meeting all the officers from the other posts.

The other thing has to do with junior officers' EERs (Employee Evaluation Reports) - the personnel reports from the junior officers at post. Charlie Brown, as the supervisory consul general, had to write the reviewing statement. We had to look over those. That was something we took pretty seriously, because in some posts there were less than fabulous supervisors who were less than fair to some of the junior officers, and it's so important that your first reports were done right.

Q: Yes. Oh, absolutely!

LOAR: So I played a little bit of an advocates role in looking out to make sure people's reports were fairly done. I got involved in that part of it: I think Charlie wanted to be fair as well. He knew who the problem people out in the field were and who the problem supervisors were. We would go back with drafts that were more appropriate, given what people had done, and what they had contributed.

Q: Well, one of the things I was wondering was whether you were able to take a look at the Foreign Service, or consular work particularly. It's not everybody's cup of tea, and some people really can't rise to the occasion, as the fit isn't right. There's nothing wrong with them, they may be brilliant, but they were like a fish out of water. Did you run across that when you were looking at this rather large mass of junior officers? Were you, yourself, seeing, just as a reviewer, problems like that? I mean people who were a little out of place?

LOAR: There were some who were out of place. But one thing I learned in the time in the Foreign Service - and I learned this from one of my favorite bosses, Kathy Cahir, who was a consular officer, and had risen very high, and was one of the best managers I've ever come across - is that there's a whole different set of skills that are needed. You have people who can write cables well, people who can argue a point well, people who can figure out an economic table and read that well, and people who can represent U.S. interests. There's such a broad range. There were a couple of people who were odd fits. Some felt they were above it; and frankly, that was annoying to me because this is what you do. You come in, you do this job, and you move on to something else and you build relationships that help you in your future job, and you make your contribution, and you pay your dues. There were a number of people who had really significant high-level skills and had done very important highly compensated jobs, and they were not really the problem.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It was the people who had the perception that they were in that category. The perception and the reality didn't always match.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was such camaraderie among us, even though we were such a disparate group, an odd group. You would never put these people together and say, "Well, here's a group that can form together as a team and support each other," but it really was the case. I'm trying to think if there were people who stood out because they didn't work as a team and didn't support each other, because these were not good jobs, you know. [Laughter]

Q: No. No.

LOAR: They weren't good jobs! I'm trying to think if there were some who really stood out. There was someone who did have some mental health issues, and suffered a breakdown, and left post. Everybody saw that coming and felt bad about it.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I'm trying to remember if there were others who weren't quite up to the job of doing things quickly, and for whom that was a challenge.

Q: In a way, as you mentioned before, it's like the military basic training.

LOAR: Yes. They just strip down to: "Can you talk to people quickly?" This was the NIV Section. The Immigrant Visa Section was different; they had very different challenges. They had supervisory challenges there that were on a whole other level.

We had, I think, a good supervisory team on the NIV side and people who, for the most part, wanted to get the job done; and I wouldn't have done it exactly the same way; perhaps somebody else would do it differently. But we socialized with the boss team [laughter]. One of the things I think about it is those are friendships you built there. Richard and I are so close to the people we served with in the Consular Section in Mexico City because we were all in the same boat.

Q: Yes. Well then, did you both leave Mexico at the same time?

LOAR: We did, yes; which reminds me of one interesting experience.

Q: Sure.

LOAR: One time I was on duty in the NIV Section because in our lowly status you didn't have lunch free five days a week. You had to rotate lunch duty. One person had to cover the phones and be there in case something happened during those 35 minutes that you were allowed, or 40 minutes, to consume your lunch [laughter].

And I just must say something about the taquito stand behind the embassy. I still think those were the best fresh taquitos I've ever had. I'm still looking to replace those in my journeys around the world.

One day, on lunch duty, I got a call from a man who identified himself as a Nicaraguan diplomat and said he wanted to defect to the United States. Now, my immediate reaction was somebody who wanted to jump the line. You know, "I can understand that pal. I would want to jump the line too!"

Q: Yes, me too.

LOAR: "What baloney!"

He said, "Oh, no, no, no!"

I said, "Well, come to the front door." I mean, you know, it was lunch duty. It's what I was supposed to be doing.

Q: It occurred about the time when the Sandinistas were -

LOAR: Right. Right. Did I mention this in this history before?

Q: No, no, no, no.

LOAR: Okay.

Q: I'm just putting it in context.

LOAR: No, no. That's it exactly. So he said, "I won't come to the front gate because I know there's cameras there."

I thought, "Okay. This is somebody who's on the ball. This is a clever line jumper." I said, "Okay, I'll come to the side gate." So I had a Foreign Service National come with me, because I didn't want to go to the side door and let somebody in without some other person there with me.

This person comes in, is shaking like a leaf, has a military uniform on, has an official passport, has who appears to be his wife with him; and they're both shaking like crazy. I realized that this was probably something serious and talked to them a little bit. I felt bad for them because they were so nervous and so anxious. I said to them, "You wanted to talk about defecting." Then I said, "Tell me what your thoughts are."

He said, "Well, I've been trying to approach the embassy for days, and days, and days, and days; and I've not been able to get in; and this is what I want. I'm only here for a few days. If I don't have these conversations with the right people soon, my opportunity will be lost. I am the top aide to Humberto Ortega at the defense ministry in Nicaragua, and I don't like what they're doing, and I know where their secret bank accounts are, and I know how they betrayed the revolution and the people."

And I said, "Well, what are you doing here in Mexico City to start with?" I was trying to figure out who sent him, and how he was set up and what this whole thing was.

And he said, "Well, I'm here for medical treatment, and I always come to Mexico City for medical treatment. It's a wound from before my Sandinista days, in another revolutionary battle." And you know, he seemed very sincere.

So I took the passport and called members of the Embassy staff, and they came down and interviewed him behind closed doors. I kept calling back upstairs, and they were very excited because this was a real live person who had real live information, and it was a sincere defection.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I should just back up a little bit to say that as part of our training on the NIV line and the Immigrant Visa line, we all got to know people upstairs who were working for the station; and part of it was to look for people from Bulgaria who were going to the United States and were going to be stopping at the border and how we could coordinate with different intelligence communities so the intelligence community knew what these "not friends of the U.S." were doing as they were coming in and out of the United States. So we knew whom to call. We knew the station chief, who was very sociable and invited people up and really got to know the consular officers, so that they could be assets and helpful in intelligence gathering, which I thought was consistent with our job because we're supposed to represent U.S. interests. I think most people felt that way. It was more interesting than some of the other things we were doing.

So, when this fellow presented the passport, it took awhile to get somebody to come down because they were all on lunch. But I knew this guy was really shaking. I was really afraid he was going to leave so I had an FSN (Foreign Service National) keep me company/guard him and not let him leave. But it was right next to the door. He was so shaky! I was just so afraid he was going to leave after I started to think, "Maybe he really is legitimate." It took a while just calling up anybody I knew up there. They came down and determined that he was legitimate and bona fide, and decided then to continue their conversations with him. I felt good, and thought, "Go ahead and do that. This is my job, that's yours! [Laughter] You go and do that."

It turned out that they did bring him to the United States. At that time the Mexican government was quite friendly with the Sandinistas. We did not want the Mexican government to know that this guy had defected to us, and we had him in Mexico. So they got him out and got him to the United States.

I was told that this is highly classified, and we weren't going to talk to anybody about it. My father was a staunch anti-communist and really didn't like the Sandinistas, and I was dying to tell my father [laughter]! It was so difficult not to call my dad and tell him, "Dad, you're not going to believe what I did! You're not going to believe what happened! This guy came in, blah, blah, blah."

We knew that he got out of the country. A couple weeks later - maybe a month later - Judge Webster [William H. Webster], who directed the CIA came to town. We didn't even know that this is happening. I was invited to come up and talk to the station chief again. I thought, "Well, you know, maybe there's some other thing related to this." But Judge Webster was there, and he presented me with an award for my work in bringing in this defector, and it was a great.

Q: That was really wonderful!

LOAR: It was really a neat, neat moment. He talked about how they got the Walkers - the father and son who had spied against the United States. They were Navy people. How that came about was ... I think Walker's disgruntled ex-wife called drunk one night, trying to get the FBI to pay attention, and after several attempts somebody did. That's how they were able to do it. He compared it to that; it was just a really wonderful thing.

My view was: what a great opportunity to be able to help someone who has information that could be helpful to U.S. interests. Now, I wasn't the biggest fan of what the U.S. was doing with relation to the Sandinistas and with relation to our covert activities. But I was never a big fan of the Sandinistas either. So I thought it was important that we'd be able to bring some new information to light.

The fellow who defected was Roger Miranda, and he stayed undercover for a long time. Then, they pulled him out and made him public when there was some key vote in Congress on whether to continue to provide funding against the Sandinistas to undermine their government. He was a key witness and gave key testimony; he was listed in an article in Newsweek; I think he got the largest resettlement package of any defector. It was very interesting to have experienced this overall.

But I always told that story to other junior officers to say, "The lowest, lowest job has its rewards if you do it right."

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And if I hadn't listened to this guy, hadn't been polite enough, frankly, to listen to him, and let him in, and make him feel comfortable, he would not have come in to the embassy then. He may never have, or he may have come in at some other time - maybe or maybe not. But the lowest, lowest job, if you do it right, has value and importance. I do believe that.

Q: Well now, this is very important. I've seen this. I've served in a number of countries where defection is something, and one of the things I find is that this is one reason why it is very handy to have well-educated vice consuls, even if you only use him/her for a while for their brains. It takes things out of the routine, every now and then. I think some people tend to dismiss the obvious signs. This is true with a lot of intelligence activities, because, as you know, it's always the problem of getting past the clerk on the phone, or the doorman; if you have somebody who's intelligent there, they can do something about it.

LOAR: Yes. Well, it was just an interesting experience; and, after it was in the newspaper and in the public, I could tell my dad! [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: Which he got a kick out of.

Q: Well then, in '89 did you and your husband take off somewhere?

LOAR: Yes. I'm just thinking if there are any other highlights of Mexico?we left Mexico?

Q: If you remember anything else, we can talk about it.

LOAR: Yes, actually my rotation as a junior officer to one of the consulates was to Mérida in the Yucatan, and that was a really fabulous experience -

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: I learned a lot about life in a small post and realized that anybody would talk to me. I was interviewing all these political candidates, including some women who were running for office, and I thought: "Wow! You mean you're going to talk to me, little lowly vice consul, who in the embassy can, you know, barely make it up to the floor where the ambassador sits?" It was such a great program, and I hope they continued it. It was a little disruptive to supervisors, but great for the junior officers. The smart people who ran those consulates recognized this was a chance to build friends in the embassy, and to find out who the talent is for future assignments, and all of that.

It was a very interesting time, and the consul general there was Bryant Salter, who was a former Redskins football player. I don't remember the position [defensive back], maybe is there a cornerback??

Q: I'm not sure.

LOAR: No? If that's a position, then I think that's what he did.

I was reporting. I had never written political reports before, and these weren't classified or anything, but I was interviewing people, getting their views, so I was very nervous about doing it. I was told by Roger Gamble, our DCM, that "I want a steady stream of political reporting," and I thought: "Well then, you probably have the wrong person, because don't know how to do that!" [Laughter]

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But he pulled me in by saying something like: "I want to see a steady stream of political reporting now, and I want you to do it, and I expect that to happen correctly!" [Laughter] Well, I need say this just for some background. I was very, very nervous about it. I did some writing, and I would review it with Richard over the phone, because Richard had done this in a post; I didn't know what I was doing and he would help me with this. And that kind of gave me the confidence to think, "Well, you know, of course he was helping me, but I've actually had reports coming in, my own cables, out of this post.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And I wouldn't have been able to do it, I think. I didn't know how to even start the cable. We had no experience on writing a cable, other than advisories back to Washington on a bad visa guy. It was so, so valuable, and of course, I had someone helping me, Richard, write the cables, which was very kind.

But it was fascinating what was going on in Michoacán. There was so much. Their political activity was so different; there were Cuban posts there, and there was heavy drug activity. I was able to do a series of cables, and get them to Washington, and get them to posts. They were concerned because they were not getting a lot of information out of posts at the time. They were concerned about that. So it was a really wonderful opportunity.

Q: In the short time you were there, did you see a different part of Mexico? Was there a different feeling, or much more of a local ambiance, or local political ...

LOAR: Well, it was Mayan. I think it was the PAN political party (National Action Party), so it was not the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). It was a different group to start with and very disconnected. This is where the Zapatistas - is that what they are? They are the ones who are armed, and masked, and fighting the government, and representing indigenous groups. But at that time, they were not active in the region.

It is an area that was so close to Cuba; and not far from Guatemala. These are Mayans; and they're a very different ethnic group; not the indigenous group in Mexico City. It was a completely different experience and very different politically.

It was a small town, but also great intrigue, you know. What is the U.S. doing? Who are they talking to? Who are they paying attention to? And I did have a chance to interview some high-level women politicians. It was fascinating to me that these women were, first of all, willing to talk to me, a lowly consul, but also that they saw themselves as capable of being out there in the game and running in the political life of Mexico.

Q: Well, in view of your later career, including where you are today, did you find yourself looking at women as a political means?

LOAR: It wasn't me that was doing this. She had put herself out there, and we were just reporting it; and I think if someone else were there, they probably would have interviewed her as well. But I felt comfortable doing it because I thought she'd be more likely to say yes to talking to me than maybe the male candidate. Then, after I made some progress with her, I talked to the male candidate as well. It was just an interesting eye-opener for me, in that Embassy Mexico and the State Department in Washington didn't really know much about these people, and didn't know much about her. I don't remember her name or where she went in the future. It was just an eye-opener that someone with whatever her background was could run for political office, and could get in there, and roll up her sleeves, and compete with the big boys. For the rest of my time there I followed her to see what happened with her; it was very interesting to stay in touch.

The other project we had out of Mexico City was the special agricultural work project, which was something, in my view, written into the immigration law to help the American growers have a steady supply of people who could work in the agricultural area; it was largely bogus. We did not have people who could handle the workloads. We had to get a lot of help from Washington. So that's why I made some friends in the Consular Affairs Office in Washington. Suddenly this law was passed, and we had representatives of the growers in the embassy ready to interview people and to decide who should get the visas. They stayed on as consultants.

And how do you know if someone worked? The program required that people had to prove that they had worked in a particular agricultural area before, and to be allowed to come to the United States possibly for longer-term immigration benefits (I don't remember that part of it). But we had to find out who had worked in mushrooms. So what do you do if you work in mushrooms? We had to get in basic checklists. If you had picked strawberries, what were the likely series of questions you would ask somebody who had worked picking strawberries? And the ones who helped us design these questionnaires were the growers' representatives. So it was a very, very interesting process.

But they also at that time got to work with the church groups, the Catholic Church social justice groups. I think it was Caritas (Catholic Relief Services) whom I've stayed in touch with over the years. They were very interested in making sure these workers weren't getting screwed, and the ones who were qualified would get their benefits. So, then, the church social justice groups and the growers both wanted these workers up in the United States. So there was a lot of pushing and coaching: "Okay. You look like you could pick strawberries because you have the cuts on your hands to show it. It was really a strange program. There was tremendous pressure from Washington, from the California growers, and from the church groups to get these people credentialed up and get them up there. And I know we need agricultural workers in the United States. There is discussion about how to do that now.

One of my duties was to help manage that and get the help we needed for the program. That's because I was up in the consul general's office as an aide and one of the responsibilities I had was to make sure we had the administrative support to ensure the program was successful. It wasn't the usual Foreign Service officers who did it, because they still had full-time responsibilities. It was a special program and we hired spouses, some of who were excellent, and terrific, and could really break through and figure things out. But, sitting right next to them was a representative of the growers. Then the Catholic groups would come in and try to get my ear. I was very sympathetic and wanted to know what Caritas was, what they were doing and how they were representing the interests of these workers? I was also interested in what the lives for these people when they were up there but not in the fields were like? It was a very interesting, eye-opening experience for me.

Q: Great! Well then, in '89, where? Whither?

LOAR: We left to go to Korea. Richard by then was ready to bear a political position because he had paid his consular dues. We were looking for two assignments in a big embassy, and we did not want to be studying language.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It was easier for me to get a consular assignment almost anywhere since I was consular cone. We needed a slot that sort of worked for Richard, and the two of us could work together. So he got this job as political military affairs officer in Seoul, and I got another consular position. We left there and showed up in Seoul a few months later.

Q: And you were in Seoul from when to when?

LOAR: Eighty-nine to ninety-one.

Q: This strikes a chord with me because I was consul general in Korea from about -

LOAR: Oh, that's right!

Q: Seventy-six to seventy-nine.

LOAR: Yes, now an interesting place, isn't it?

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: North Korean and South Korean.

Q: So, we'll stick to you, because I hope to get your husband at a later date.

LOAR: Yes. He had a real interesting tour.

Q: Were you prepared before you went to Korea? Were you getting any, either through the grapevine or through the official things, of what to expect in Korea and all?

LOAR: Well, you know, we got some area studies, which was really interesting. Living in Asia we thought would be a great experience, a great opportunity.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I came in and I knew that I'd come and do another job now, blah, blah, blah. But I had a really interesting first tour. First of all, I did the NIV work. But then I worked as the supervisory consul general's aide, which was very different, and gave me a lot of chances to do a lot of different things; and it was, frankly, a very good deal.

So I went to Korea. It was, okay, you're going to go into this section, and there was no program to rotate the junior officers, no schedule. So I went into the consul general and said, "Why don't I do a schedule that will allow officers to come in and know what they can expect?" "Great!" And then, of course, I had done my time in NIV, so I did not schedule myself for the NIV Section [laughter], because I thought: "If I'm going to be trained in how to do full consular work, it'd be good to work in Immigrant Visas for a while, and I'd like to work in American Citizen Services."

I just don't remember the reaction to that, but they didn't have any kind of clear way for people to rotate and get a variety of experiences; and a second tour officer was treated exactly like a first tour officer; and that bothered me, because here was Richard and my good friend Patricia Hanigan from Mexico City. So there were three of us who were on the same track, had started in the same class, had gone to our first posts in the same country together, over here now. Here is Patricia Hanigan, really brilliant, wonderful officer in the Econ (Economic) Section, with an office and a secretary; and here is Richard in the Political Section with an office; and here I am, just starting at the very bottom again, with no sense of what my tour was going to be like and what my responsibilities would be! So I decided to help shape that. Sometimes that was well received, and sometimes it wasn't. But I had nothing to lose because this is my job and this is what I'm going to spend my time doing.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Ultimately, I would just say it was one of the lightest. I worked in the Immigrant Visa Section with Kathy Cahir, who, as I said before, was one of the best managers I've come across in any of my work experiences, but also a great human being. Kathy Cahir brings out the best in everybody. She values what people bring to the job.

Q: Her position was what?

LOAR: She was the head of the Immigrant Visa Section. Now in Seoul, you know, that's a huge job, and it was a lot of work with the military and their spouses, and "their spouses they wanted to bring over to the United States." [Laughter] Some of "those spouses" were older than their mother.

Q: Yes, I know it.

LOAR: See! That was a hard thing too, because you knew this was not legit (legitimate). You knew it carrying out these things. But it was not encouraged that you explore that deeply. If this guy says he wants to bring in this woman who's older than his mother, and that she's going to be his wife, this is what we do. If he says it, this is it. And that was a little discouraging.

The other thing was that I had a nephew who was adopted from Korea. So I asked to work on the immigrant visas for all the Korean adoptions, and I spent a lot of time getting to know that system and getting to ultimately respect how they did it; and there was some reporting to Washington on it.

Q: Yes. Well, let's talk a bit about the line. First of all, talk about the line immigrant thing. When I was there I was concerned that there might be fraud.

LOAR: Just perhaps.

Q: There had never been a real fraud investigation. So I went to Barbara Watson at a conference, and I said, "Barbara, I think we may have a problem. There's a lot of smoke, and I'd like somebody to come out because our security officer wasn't very interested in this." So she yanked out the old security officer, transferred him, and brought in a new hot shot, who was very good, Ed Lee, who came in and uncovered a big fraud; and most of the section got fired. Well, while we were doing this, I didn't know that a whole new fraud system was starting in fake petitions. It started just about the time we got rid of the old one. [Laughter] This is ten years before.

What documentation and problems with regular line visa cases did you find?

LOAR: I loved the cases where they'd bring siblings over, because you know, sometimes the wait was 15 to 20 years. So their siblings had gone over and petitioned for them because the line, the numbers, were so slow that it took a good 15 or 20 years to be able to go over there.

So you could really look back, and you would see pictures of the Koreans who were in Japanese military dress, and who had their names changed from Korean names to Japanese names. You really got a sense of what life was like for the Koreans living under the domination of the Japanese. There were really interesting, heartfelt stories. You'd ask, "Why did you get married so young?", particularly of the girls.

The Foreign Service National team at the embassy in Korea, as you know, is very highly educated -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ?very motivated. The Immigrant Visa team were almost all women. There were a few men. They have individual teams. It was extremely hierarchical, usually headed by an older woman who was past 50. The others were more recent graduates of Ewha University or the other prestigious universities.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: They had excellent English, were very well mannered, very polite, very well dressed. Some of them took better vacations than I was taking. Very motivated, very professional, always on time. One of the things that I valued was that they would give me background information. I would say, "Why did this girl get married so young? In Korea you don't, you didn't get married that young." And they said, "Well, as soon as the girl reached puberty or any part of her sexuality was developing, or she was going through puberty, they married her off to someone in the village immediately, so that when the Japanese came, it was less likely that they would take that girl away and put her into sexual slavery for the purpose of the Japanese camp.

Q: Called the "comfort women," yes.

LOAR: Right, which is ultimately what they called that. And that was just shocking to me, what that meant for these girls, who were barely teenagers, because it wasn't a part of the natural culture to be married that young. And then to have the older woman who would say, "There's feelings about the Japanese." I guess it was a woman in her late 50s, and they were talking about what it was like living under the Japanese, and how in their vocabulary they had several names for Japanese men, and they were all insulting. So you would tie your shoe like a Japanese man, you would go to the bathroom like a Japanese man, you would make love like a Japanese man, you would eat like a Japanese man, and every one of those was an insult!

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And we can laugh about it, but their feelings were so, so deep.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But it all helped in doing the job, you know, and understanding why somebody would be posing in the picture with a Japanese military uniform.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Why their name was changed? Would you be suspicious of them? Why I went from a Korean name to a Japanese name to a Korean name again? And there was, I'm sure, a lot of fraudulence. But I think in our section there was such a high standard of pride in the work, especially among the Foreign Service Nationals. They wanted the officers to understand when these people came in and presented themselves.

I think there was a lot of fraud among the young military enlisted men bringing over wives - tremendous fraud.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Utterly frustrating to me to have to ignore the fraud, but it was not something that I was allowed to look into. I remember once talking about it, and how I was going to do "this," and that was highly, highly discouraged. If an American decides he wants to bring this person over, whatever arrangement he has made, financial or otherwise, that's what he's going to do; and that's it, and we just move on.

Q: You'd better explain for the record why there would be this fraud. What was in it for everybody. I mean this marrying your grandmother or the equivalent? [Laughter]

LOAR: Well, Korea was just going through an opening. It wasn't a thoroughly flourishing democracy as it's on its way to being now, and there were so many restrictions on the Koreans. There was a big, big opening either right before we got there, which was when the Olympics, the Korean Olympics were. The Seoul Olympics, when were you there?

Q: No.

LOAR: After that there was a gigantic opening to the outside world -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ?where Korea then had visitors from all over the world come and look at Korea, and to understand what was going on there. For the first time, people of my age, and younger and their parents who never had this opportunity, had permission from the government to have passports to travel overseas. So there was a gigantic explosion of people wanting to and being able to travel outside their country. But there was still, you know, economic hardship for many, many people in Korea -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ?and for a lot of women who attached themselves to the military bases and made their living in prostitution. At some point, if someone became too old to make their living in prostitution, then they became somebody who was a madam or managed the prostitution services. And then when they were too old for that, they would then marry an American soldier and come to the United States.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And that part of it just got pretty tiresome, and you realize what you're doing was not always in the best interest of the United States. But there was a strong relationship with the U.S. military there, whose feelings they made very clear to the embassy consular people at the highest levels, that if an American officer wants to do this, we're not going to be investigating these fraudulent claims, and we're not going to be looking at how much money this guy got, or what the deal was. But I do remember being astounded at this one guy bringing over somebody whose wife was older than his mother, and they clearly knew nothing about each other. And I remember when I was pushing it, I was kind of being told, "But this is not our wish, and we're not going to do this."

Q: When I was there, we had been interviewing American civilians, usually military who are out of the military, who would come back.

LOAR: Yes, but there's a lot of that too. Yes.

Q: And arranged for a marriage.

LOAR: Right.

Q: And we used to actually refuse marriages. We had this joint interview. We'd ask them each how much they knew each other, and find out there was no real connection. After I left I think the question was put to Washington. They said, "Don't do it!"

LOAR: Yes.

Q: The one thing I found - I don't know whether you have had this feeling - but I used to talk to the younger officers who were doing this. Sometimes I'd get very frustrated at them, and say, "Look. You do your best on this, but at least you're dealing with a country whose people when they hit the United States are as little tigers, and they're not going to end up on welfare.

LOAR: Most of them don't.

Q: They're going to do well, and they'll be an asset, no matter how they got in. Do your best, but don't worry because actually we're dealing with a high grade of ore here -

LOAR: Yes.

Q: "as far as future American citizens." I mean this is -

LOAR: Yes, right. So, you know, because you were really looking for substance, after doing these, you know, this was sometimes frustrating.

And on the adoption side I got to meet the adoption agencies, find out how they met with people in the United States. It was very interesting, because the Koreans had gotten a lot of criticism during the Olympics, and then the foreign journalists came in, and there were headlines, and there were stories about Korea's number two export, behind cars, being babies and children for adoption. Part of it was that it was very well run, and if someone for one reason or another could not keep their child, you know, they were in service, they would give it up. Some of the agencies were tied to churches and Christian organizations. I think we got to know it pretty thoroughly, and that it wasn't a fraudulently run operation, and that they did have the interests of the children at heart.

I didn't know (it was very interesting) that when Korean couples adopted, it was extremely secret. They would hide it from the mother-in-law because it would be a great shame if the woman couldn't conceive herself. You'd be in the agencies, and they'd show you files. Then, there would be these locked files behind these locked doors, and that was where the Korean domestic adoptions were done. I thought it was very interesting.

But, after the stories in the press, they pretty much said they were going to shut down the adoptions, except for the handicapped. They would let those go, and they were very straight-faced about saying it, "Well, of course, we wouldn't keep the handicapped! We'll take care of our?" The story was, "We will take care of our own children. You know, if there are problems, and a family needs to give a child up, or a grown woman needs to give a child up, we Koreans, we can take care of this ourselves."

So, while I was there, there was a lot of concern in the United States that this meant they were shutting down the adoptions. The U.S. had meetings with Korean government officials, which is not something I had a lot of experience with. But I found an issue which got me out of the Visa Section, and that was very interesting. We found out that there was a public way of doing things and reality. As long as there were Americans looking to take care of these children, and these adoption agencies still had kids who needed to be adopted, if they couldn't be placed domestically, the agencies were still going to send them out internationally. I think there were 7,500 children a year adopted out of Korea to the United States.

Q: The majority of them were girls, weren't they, or not?

LOAR: I don't know. My nephew is a boy. But he was older when he was adopted; he was four years old. I don't know if it was a majority of girls or not. To tell you the truth, I didn't notice. I don't remember focusing on that.

But I do know that it was so surprising to American sensibilities that they would say, "If a child has a harelip or a heart defect, of course we're going to let somebody else take him, because we're not going to keep him here. And the truth is that Americans would adopt children with physical impairments, and spend the money to help them and heal whatever their difficulty or their problem was, and take them into their homes. It was a very interesting process, and I got to know a lot about Korean sensibilities from the way that they handled that.

Q: Well, when I was there, ten or more years before you were there, we had the same thing. The Koreans kept saying they were going to shut this down.

LOAR: Right.

Q: But the truth of the matter was that, if Koreans adopted a child overtly, that child would end up as a slave to the family.

LOAR: Right, because they were second-class, yes.

Q: And most of the adoptions usually were picking up somebody from a third cousin or something, and getting them -

LOAR: In the bloodline.

Q: ?yes, on the bloodline, and getting them put onto - I mean they would cook the birth records and all this.

LOAR: Right. Yes.

Q: So that was how adoptions really were handled.

LOAR: Yes. It was very interesting.

Q: It was a very successful program.

LOAR: It was, and I must say, I know a lot of American families. I have a good friend, Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, who is a member of Congress from Philadelphia. She adopted a little girl from Korea and was well known for it. I think she was the first single woman to adopt from overseas. She wrote a book about it. She was an advocate for it. She and her husband took many children from Korea, and did place them, and gave them medical care, and all that kind of stuff. They were sincere in what they were doing, and I thought that was interesting.

Q: Yes. When I was there, we had one woman that came to my attention. I said, "Oh, we're sending a child to Mia Farrow and André½ Previn."

LOAR: Oh, gosh! Soon-Yi!

Q: Who later became quite famous in sort of a scandal with marrying Woody Allen. [Laughter]

LOAR: Yes. That's right. Oh, isn't that interesting. That's right. She did come from Korea.

Q: Yes, yes. Oh, yes!

LOAR: Why was it that I missed the nice part of the job. That was the fun part of the job.

Q: Yes. Well, what was your impression of Korea at the time you were there?

LOAR: You know we'd been in Mexico. We got there in warm weather, and we had the language. We got nice housing in a really beautiful Mexican neighborhood, and my son could walk down the street to the Montessori school. When we got to Korea, we were on an Army base. Now, I had never been on a military base before. The diplomatic compound was on the military base, Yongsan, so you're completely cut off from Korean society. Plus, we didn't have the language. The only ones who really had the language right were the Peace Corps volunteers or those who were really, really good and spent two years studying (which I didn't think was in my temperament to do). And, surrounding this military base, you have to go through checkpoints. You know what it's like.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: You have to go through checkpoints with giant American men with assault guns, through various checkpoints until you get to your little housing compound; and the little housing compound also was a tad worrisome because every house was the same!

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And we used to call it Levittown on the River Han.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: You know, the Han River in Korea. The house we had was less attractive than the rest because you had to go down the steps. We were told, "Oh, that gets flooded an awful lot." Gee, I looked forward to that! They were white cinderblock houses. You went in, and the furniture was all this sort of standard issue, and I remember thinking, "Well, I just won't entertain. Just let it be known - I'm not entertaining! No one's setting foot in this house!"

And then, over time, like anything else, you get used to everything, and you value the checkpoints, because your kids can walk around and play day and night on the compound. It did take awhile though. There were soldiers who had guns, and I had no experience with walking around with people who had arms. And I had no idea what they - I mean I wasn't doing anything bad, but how did I know that they had that a positive view towards me or my sons?

Q: Yes.

LOAR: You were in this strange little military base in the middle of Korea, where they had movies for 50 cents, Baskin Robbins, Burger King, and the largest commissary in the world, where they had more brands of Oreos and more variations on Oreos than in any supermarket I had ever seen. And it was just the strangest cultural thing. Korea was one cultural experience. But it was being on this military base, and I said, "We're not going to unpack, you know. They paid for us to get here, but we're not staying!" And I really did not expect to stay. I thought we'd go back, or I thought, "I just don't want to move, but that would mean I'd have to spend the rest of my life here," which was not attractive.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: But it was a very hard adjustment, and that was sort of a signal that, "Gee, maybe we're not cut out for this moving from post to post thing. Maybe we just started this too late in life, or maybe it's just not a good mix for us.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Both Richard and I were working, so we both had to report to work right away, because you're a tandem couple. "Well, that's great, but we don't give a rat's ass! Come in to work!"

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And that wasn't the case, though, when I actually got into the job. Kathy Cahir said, "Get yourself set, and when you have your kids set in school, and you have your house all set, then you report to work. I don't want to see you till you're set."

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ?which was a very smart management decision

Q: Oh, yes!

LOAR: ?because I wasn't distracted. And, of course, I didn't believe that she meant that, because I thought, "Huh! You can't mean this, so I'll keep coming in!" She goes, "Did you get your shipment?" "No." "Well then, what are you doing here? You get that taken care of! Any kids that registered in school? No? Then stop." That was just so smart, because she knew that I wasn't going to be focused right now.

Richard didn't have [laughter], anybody telling him that, and I knew I was going to take care of it. So he did walk into the Political Section and start work.

But we had to take our childcare with us, because we were so concerned. It's not something they [the Foreign Service] have in their sensibility.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: If you had a tandem couple and there's some children involved in the mix, that somewhere along the line someone's going to have to be responsible for that. But we did have our interim childcare we took from Mexico. She was actually a European graduate student. She came back to the United States. Of course, we paid for her fare back to the United States. When we were in consultation, we paid for her hotel room in Washington. All of this was out of pocket, you know.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: We stopped in Hawaii on the way. She had her separate airfare, her separate everything, so that we could have some continuity. She was with us for a month, which was really, really great for the kids. That really helped us.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: This was our childcare person wasn't a stranger. It didn't seem at the time that I was in the Foreign Service that they had any particular concerns about tandem couples having particularly different challenges. You get two housing costs for one and all that. They did have challenges with regards to how you got assignments; and, then, if there were children, how you began work and your official responsibilities. But partly that wasn't the norm. I don't know what percentage of the Foreign Service were tandems. They said we were one of the few to come in together. We had met each other before we came in and came in as a couple.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: We were one of the very few they knew who had done that. Some tandem couples had met when they were in, or some had one spouse who came in and then later the other spouse came in. But it wasn't like anyone had given any thought to tandem couples' particular challenges, or needs, or opportunities in the Foreign Service. So that was a bit of a challenge.

But you know, you get used to life on the military base and then you take your little shuttle bus to work; and that was also very interesting, riding on this military bus [laughter]. But then we became very good friends with our neighbors. We were on the north side of the big street on the compound, so they called us the North Koreans. We had great pride in being that; and we became very close to the people on our north side of the compound. We are still very close to some of those folks including a great officer, Al O'Neal (who would be a great person for you to talk to), who had a Korean-born wife, Jen O'Neal, whom he actually met in the United States when she was teaching language. She taught us a lot about Korea, and it was a really enriching and wonderful experience, so that over time this isolated base and this isolated side of the compound really became very much home to us. We got to like it a great deal. It was a challenge and a great discovery for us. The people said it was just like Hawaii. It's a great vacation spot!

We were very spoiled in Mexico. We went to every beach resort; we just headed out of town for three-day weekends. We had great diplomatic discounts, took the kids everywhere, took our nannies with us on these vacations, and just hit all the beaches; and it was so much fun. We had the language, we knew which hotels?

In Korea they're a hard-working people, to whom the idea of vacation is not something that is usual.

Q: I think it's something like a 54-hour week.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: I think is the norm -

LOAR: Right.

Q: Or at least it was, yes.

LOAR: And so we figured, "Okay. Well, we need a little break. Let's go to Cheju-do, which is the island in the south that's supposed to be like Hawaii," and the geography is like Hawaii. However, the amenities are not [laughter]!

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: The beaches are not! So it was a very interesting experience! But we did relax by climbing mountains, because that's what you do when you're a hard-working industrious Korean.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: And it was a great experience for us. Coming back on the plane ... I'll never forget this. We were in the back of the plane, and everyone was in front of us, and everyone had straight black hair, and I realized this was really a homogeneous society.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And there's one race, and conformity is so important, and men dyed their hair if it went gray. It was just an eye-opener; I really was dying for variety.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Then I remember one of our trips home, just looking around the United States. I'm like, "Oh!" landing in LA (Los Angeles, California) and seeing blacks, and Hispanics, and redheads, and blondes, and short people. I'm just thinking I love this diversity, and I love this about the United States. I love the range and the mix of who we are.

So, that was hard to get used to. You were always the foreigner. I'd go out with this wonderful team of Foreign Service Nationals, who were so lovely, so polite, so nice, so kind, also very interested in my family and in how my husband married me when my Chinese Zodiac sign was a horse, and a white horse at that, which was very troublesome for women because it meant you had a fiery temperament, and "Did he know that?" I learned so much.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: They were so open about themselves. I'd go out to eat with them and I'd try to use my chopsticks as best I could, and I was always stared at. I was always the odd person in a restaurant, the odd person on the street.

Even though there were 40,000 American troops there, you were still odd looking, and I just never felt that I blended in. I thought, "Well, if I wear my glasses, and I wear a hat, and they can't see that my hair's this color, can they still tell that I don't blend in?"

It was such an interesting experience, and now I know how people feel when they come to the United States, and they just don't feel like they're in the right place. We would go hiking with the kids on the Korean national holidays, and we'd do all the Korean things of hiking mountains. The Korean ladies and the Korean grandmothers would come up to my sons and grab them by the cheeks and touch their skin. My son was, what was he? Second grade? I guess that was first or second grade, and he did not like strange, older women coming up and granny hugging him, so we gave him a walking stick and taught him the word for "please don't touch me," and then he would sort of like push off with the "please don't touch me!" [Laughter]

Q: Yes. [Laughter]

LOAR: But it's just that it was very enriching and fabulous. We wrote a lot of letters home, and letters to my uncle who had served overseas for USAID (United States Agency for International Development), and to the extended family. We were writing a lot about our experiences and reporting back to them what was happening.

Q: Yes. Well, the Far East is entrancing no matter how you look at this.

LOAR: Oh, yes! Utterly interesting! Just fascinating, and a great chance to see things, and learn about the food, and that Koreans are so private until you break through, and then they are so warm.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point. And the next time when we pick this up, we've talked about the work in the Non [NIV].

LOAR: Yes.

Q: Were you doing other work than?

LOAR: Yes, I did American Citizen Services, which is another enriching phenomenon!

Q: Well, we'll talk about American [Citizen] Services. We've already talked about the visa side of things, we've talked about living on the compound, and next time we'll be talking about 1) your impression of the government, and the Korean's society as such, using your Foreign Service eye on this; and also [2] about American Services, and the expat community.

Q: Okay. Today is 23 May 2002. Theresa, we're in South Korea. You were there from when to when?

LOAR: Let's see? I left there in '91, so maybe '89 to '91 I'd say.

Q: Eighty-nine, okay, to ninety-one. Well, let's talk about a couple of things. You said you were doing American Services for a while.

LOAR: Yes, I did consular work over there.

Q: Yes. What did this sort of consist of? Can you tell any stories or tell us of anything-

LOAR: Well, this was Korea right after the '88 Olympics, when there was a big opening for Korea, when they changed a lot of the public signs on the roads, and not just have it in Hangeul (modern name for Korean alphabet), but in English as well to make Korea more open to outsiders. It was a big point of pride for them as a country. They felt they had reached a level of sophistication and an opening up as a country, which was very important to them. So we went to Korea, my husband and I, after that. We lived on the base, and I just don't remember what I told you so far about this.

Q: Well, we talked about living on Compound One or Two, I guess.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And we've talked about the time on the Immigrant Visa line.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: But then you were moved from Visas to American Services.

LOAR: Citizen Services.

Q: Citizen Services.

LOAR: Right.

Q: And what were those?

LOAR: That were a large number of American citizens who were posted to the military base, and an extremely high number of young single women who'd come in to register their babies, which was shocking to me! I'm like, "You got it together. You're in the military. Did you choose to have these? Do you have some..."

Q: Yes, having unwed mothers in the military doesn't seem to work at all.

LOAR: Well, I think it probably may have come from the communities they came from, Where unwed pregnancies were pretty common. And that was shocking to me, and I was always really dying to ask them questions, which, of course, we couldn't do.

Q: But you can't, right.

LOAR: And there were lots of Americans who came over to teach English, and got themselves in weird situations.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was an interesting case of a couple of American women - one American woman murdering another one; and that was a fascinating thing, because then we had a U.S. attorney come over to investigate.

Q: What had sparked that?

LOAR: That was before my time.

Q: Oh.

LOAR: The investigation was when I was there, and I was less interested, frankly, in delving into why! [Laughter] But we wanted to provide cooperation to them, because they were really trying to get at what happened there. And it was a relationship deal. It always is, isn't it?

And we also had a lot of Korean citizens who had left Korea during the dark years and the tough times, when the government was very oppressive. They had immigrated to the United States, and had gotten an education (like a lot of Korean immigrants do here), and had made something of themselves. They were coming back to Korea and hoping to do something to contribute to their society; to be able to profit economically and to play a role. So there was a lot of giving up their American citizenship and getting back their Korean citizenship. I don't remember the details. I did know it extremely well then. I remember thinking, "We certainly want these people to come back and to contribute to what's going on in Korea, but why do they have to give up their American citizenship? Why wouldn't they be able to just make that contribution?"

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was a lot of that, and it was an interesting phenomenon to see more and more Koreans coming back, and feeling like they had a chance to do something here, or profit from the economic openings that were happening in Korea. That was sort of the rest of the work. We had young Americans who would die and leave their estates, and one very interesting man who was retired military (because a lot of retired military stayed on in Korea, especially if they had Korean spouses). This guy had a huge ivory collection. Our job was to inventory it, and you had to be very careful how you sent ivory into the U.S.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And I remember that as an interesting project - looking at these beautiful, gorgeous pieces of carved ivory and inventorying that to go back.

The head of ACS (American Citizen Services) when I came in was Vince Principe [Vincent Principe], a wonderful Foreign Service officer. Lovely man, who would bake cakes for the marines and for the section. He was just a generous, kind person, who had a deep belief in protecting Americans and providing services. He would go out and give speeches (I remember this) to American business groups about the dangers of Americans driving in Korea, because, of course, the great danger was that if you drove and you got into an accident, you would be blamed for whatever happened to that person, and their family, and anything else, Bad Karma, that might happen to this family.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was a lot of outreach. We had a number of interesting cases with mentally ill Americans who needed to go back to the United States. The challenge was how we were going to get them back, and getting cooperation with the airlines that are not American airlines. So there were a lot of economic issues with American companies, and with trying to get their cooperation and help in getting Americans back to the United States whom they didn't want in Korea, and whom we didn't particularly want in America. But what the heck! They were Americans, and they were going to go there.

But I remember coming into this section, I was the second American officer in ACS. We had Vince who was head of the section, and they'd never had a second officer before. I was offered a desk that I shared with one of the Korean FSNs, and a phone line I shared with them. I thought, "Gee, hmm, I'm a second tour Foreign Service officer. Perhaps I could have my own phone line, and perhaps even I could have an office to sit in." At this time, my husband was up in the Political Section and, of course, had a very nice office; and my other good friend, whom we started with in the Foreign Service, was in the Econ Section, and had a nice office, and a desk, and a secretary. I thought, "Gee, shouldn't this happen to the American officer in this section?" I suggested that to the consul general, who said, "Yea?mmm?sure?that's a good idea." But not much happened.

And then there was this wonderful guy - I wish I could remember his name - who was up in the Admin (Administrative) Section. I said, "Don't you think American officers should have their own offices?" He was a really nice guy in the Admin Section (he might have been the deputy head of Admin in Seoul at the time) and came down, and of course the Foreign Service Nationals thought it would be appropriate, "Why doesn't Mrs. Loar have an office?"

Q: Sure, oh, yes! I mean, why not?

LOAR: They thought it was inappropriate that I didn't have one. "Mrs. Loar, you need an office." They were just so great, so earnest, and educated, and dedicated. And so we cooked it up with this admin guy, and he built this office in his section. [Laughter] Then the consul general who was downstairs said, "Really nice idea, very good, ah huh!"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: "So glad you thought of it sir!" And then the Foreign Service Nationals took it upon themselves to get the furniture, because the embassy put old crappy furniture in the office, and it was "Oh! No, no, no. Mrs. Loar, you need good furniture!" And I had the best couch and chairs in this office. It was nice. Now the second officer had a permanent office in there. That was actually a fun little project to do. But it was a little bit of consular officers being sort of these second-class citizens.

Q: Did you run into the phenomenon of GIs marrying Korean women, and in many cases it was very suspicious. In other words, that this was a put up deal, that they would get them into the United States, and then they would go separate ways.

LOAR: Well, that was over in the IV (Immigrant Visa) Section. That was in my rotation in the IV Section. I don't know if I talked about that with Kathy Cahir being the head of that section. She was wonderful.

Q: Yes, I was just wondering because when I was there, I'm thinking not so much a GI, an American would come to Korea and often meet an older woman, sometimes of dubious reputation, at the airport, fall immediately in love -

LOAR: Yes, yes! Lifelong commitment.

Q: And want to get married the next day, you know.

LOAR: Well, there's a lot of that. Actually I remember having a soldier sit before me who was about 19, and the woman that he was bringing over to be his wife was older than his mother! "And did you tell your mom about this? Does Mom know that your bride to be?" [Laughter], and the bottom line was, there was no interest in looking into that. If an American soldier said, "I'm telling you that I'm going to marry this person," than that's what was going to happen.

Q: We stopped it! Anyway?

LOAR: There wasn't much interest in that, and we could be as sarcastic and have as much fun as we wanted, but at the end of the day, that was going to go forward. It was discouraging to me that we weren't more serious about some of the fraud issues, but I guess you do your best.

Q: What about American business people? The Koreans can be pretty rough in business deals.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: The mid-career type people in a shoe factory or something, will be told, "You go out and collect that money from that man, or get this deal, and don't come back without it signed, or something."

LOAR: There were a number of similar disputes where Americans or Korean Americans would get arrested; and who would say they did something wrong or immoral, and these were really commercial disputes. They would just put the Americans in jail because they didn't get from them something they thought the Americans should have paid, whether it was compensation for something, or just that they didn't pay their bill or a bill that they thought they should pay. There were a number of those kinds of interesting, odd cases that took a lot of negotiation, where the Econ Section would get involved, and the trade ministry, and they would decide whether this American who committed this terrible violation of not paying the bribe or kickback could get out of jail.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There was a case where an American was involved in an automobile accident, and was sent away. The company spirited the person out of the country right away, because they were going to go after all the assets of the company to pay for the damage done to the Korean who was hit in the accident, and the Korean wasn't killed. It was this idea that if a person is hurt, breaks a leg, or something, then your company has to compensate for all of that.

I actually didn't spend that much time in ACS. I spent a lot of time on the Immigrant Visa line. The ACS time was the interesting time, because it was a chance to broadly see what the needs of Americans were. But the military took care of itself very well most of the time. So it wasn't like in Mexico City, where people would come down and find themselves in jail for drug use, and all that kind of stuff. It was a much calmer pace and a calmer time.

Q: What was your view of the Korean government. Your dealing with aspects of it, and Korean rule per se.

LOAR: Well, I had a chance to work with the government on the issue of adoptions. I don't remember if we talked about this before, or not.

Q: Well, talk about it again even if you talked about it before.

LOAR: After the Olympics, the Koreans were embarrassed by the international press that had headlines like, "Korean Number One Export is Cars, Number Two Export is Orphans," because at that time there were 6,000 or 7,000 Korean children adopted a year overseas. So, while they sort of shut it down, it was still going on. I had this time on my hands, and bored to death with my job, and was looking for some more oomph and some more opportunities for substance. I talked to people in the different ministries, and they pretty much would say, flat out, "Look, if a baby is damaged and there's something wrong with him, sure we'll let Americans take him. Otherwise we are able to take care of our own." They would say that, but then the numbers would keep increasing. So I thought it was an interesting thing: they had to act like they were saving face and not really saving face.

The adoption agencies were very well run, and extremely organized, and seemed to be very concerned about the welfare of the children and about doing things right. I think they had an interest in working well with the embassy to get the adoptions done and the visas done, so the babies could go overseas. We had an interest in having things go pretty smoothly. There were three or four different agencies.

Q: What about Korean society? Were you picking up things from the local employees, and from observations, and all that?

LOAR: Well, the thing that struck me was how there was such an interest in self-improvement. Well, for instance, my name was Theresa. There were three or four different Koreans on the staff who were converting to Catholicism. Now, you know, being Catholic my whole life, I'm like, "Gee, do you really know what the deal is?" [Laughter] Perhaps I'm being sarcastic, but a lot of them took the name Theresa. It was a self-improvement thing to convert, to study, and to come into the faith - just like studying English. There were a large number of Presbyterians and a fervor, a real strong desire, to improve yourself through religion, through learning English, through all of these things.

It really struck me how focused they were on getting the outside indicators of what success would be, and getting those in line, and very concerned that their children go to good schools, of course, and very concerned that people knew that their children would go to good schools. It was almost like they didn't value themselves as highly as they should have, considering where they had come from after the Korean War. It really struck me that they undervalued themselves and depended so much on outside validation for who they were and what they'd accomplished.

But there were all the student protests when we were there - regular springtime events. My take on that was that they worked really, really hard in high school, and their mothers prayed really, really hard and long at the temples, the Buddhist temples, to get them in to college, and when they got there, they just kind of blew off a lot of steam and relaxed.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And then had time for these protests. Our older son Michael, at that time, was at the Seoul Foreign School, which was right near Yonsei University. The tear gas would come into his classroom, and he'd come home and then say, [whispers] "Oh, yea! We had a protest today! It was great! Exciting!" And then one time, one of the students climbed the wall to Seoul Foreign School - as if they could care less about these little kids.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But it was great excitement.

The ambassador's residence was broken into when we were there. Don [Donald] Gregg and his wife, who were just lovely people, were really admired by the Koreans. Don Gregg, who had been CIA station chief many years ago, really cared a lot about Korea. He and his wife, Meg, who were just very graceful, very nice people liked by the embassy and admired by the Koreans, really knew their way around. Their residence was broken into in the course of one of these student protests. Supposedly, the students were protesting over U.S. trade. It was [laughter] because the U.S. was forcing them to take in oranges and bananas, and we weren't letting in their fruit. Yes, I mean that's a really cutting-edge issue for students on campuses across Korea. So it was an orchestrated thing. But it was a scary thing because the protesters jumped over the wall and got into the residence. The Greggs were okay, but it did make everybody feel uneasy, and it was uncomfortable.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And then, a couple of weeks after that, we had a break-in in our home within the military compound. Of course, everybody thought the worst. It was the middle of the night, and there's a pounding on the back door. We got the kids, and ran across the street to another house. It turned out it was some drunken guy who had tried all the other doors on this street, and they were open. Ours was locked in the back, so he was really mad, and he was kicking it. [Laughter] And, of course, he circled the guard posts, who were all asleep. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter] Okay!

LOAR: So he made his way down our street, on the North Korean side of the compound. He got mad because our door was locked! [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: It was terrifying, though, it was!

Q: Oh, sure.

LOAR: Because it was not very long after the break-in, we were sure that "Oh, my gosh! Now they're coming into houses!" We had the typical cinder block Levittown on the Han house, which was utterly charmless and looked like everything else.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But it just turned out that's what it was.

There was a sense that it was inconvenient, because you had to alter your route home, but there were these regular spring protests. They still go on, I think.

Q: Yes, well, they were during my time. What about the role of Korean women? What were you seeing then, from your vantage point?

LOAR: Well, for one thing, I joined a group, that was just getting started, of Korean women, and some American and foreign diplomats, and some journalists, who had lived overseas and who had had international experience or who had worked for or were working for, foreign companies in Korea. We would meet at this one club somewhere downtown. My friend Caroline Wagner, who was an econ officer, and I would go to these meetings together. It was fascinating, because these were Korean women who had lived outside or worked within foreign national companies so that they didn't have to play by the rules of what Korean society expected of them. It was fascinating to me, because they were extremely well educated and very articulate. The ones who lived overseas and came back to Korea were as frustrated as heck as they were expected to live by a different standard, which was not full participation. They were not getting access to the jobs that they were prepared to do, educated to do, and capable of doing. At the beginning, it was primarily foreigners in that group; but, and towards the end, it became primarily Korean women, which I thought was really interesting.

That's when I learned that the Korean government actually had a maternity policy for working women, which our government didn't have at the time. [Laughter] So we ran right back to get the State Department to jump on that one, but never got anywhere with that.

But it was interesting how they did certain things they valued and understood. They wouldn't necessarily give women access to the highest jobs that were available and were capable of doing, but they did want them in the work force; and the fact they had a decent maternity policy would indicate that they wanted them in the work force, which I thought was interesting.

They also gave women a day off every month because you need that day off every month.

Q: Oh!

LOAR: And I always thought that was kind of an odd and interesting thing, "that us skwemen 'ave (women have) our day off, you know."

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I said, "Okay." It's like I'd be embarrassed to ask for a day off every month! But it was sort of a standard thing, and it was just, "You know why. It's just we need to have it."

Q: Well, was there any talk about women were now, by this time, generally a graduate of Ewha Women's University, a top rate recruit, that women were beginning to penetrate up or not?

LOAR: Well, there was a professor - I forget which university, it may have been Ewha - Park, Yong-Ock, who was focused on women's leadership in politics. I got to know her through Richard. We got to hear some of the things she was trying to do (and she's visited me here a number of times since then, and I'd really like to catch up with her, as a matter of fact). She was looking for openings for women in the political parties, and hearing about how women in other countries did it, and how women were ready to take that place, and were ready to get in there - not just in companies and private companies, but in the government, as well. But, no, I didn't see many women moving into high positions. Richard knew a lot of the people in the foreign ministry, but you didn't really see women diplomats.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And later, and when I was back at the State Department more recently, I had some women come on a delegation that was sent by their government to look at the model that we had at the State Department on this Interagency Council on Women. They included some women from ministries in that, but not all. There were men who were sent to take a look at this model, which I thought was very interesting.

Q: Well, it probably makes sense, otherwise it would be a -

LOAR: It'd be machoist.

Q: Well, it would be a sealed off thing.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And it wouldn't go anywhere.

LOAR: Right. But it was an interesting opportunity.

A lot of the Foreign Service Nationals who worked at the embassy were very well educated, capable women. They had great pressure, of course, to produce sons; it was thought to be lucky to have two sons, which I have. I remember one who had one child, a girl, and she was going to have another baby pretty soon, and everyone prayed it'd be a boy. When it wasn't a boy it was a tragedy. Because she had two children, which was just kind of a standard number, and no boys, her mother-in-law was really going to give her a hard time. I thought that was kind of sad because a healthy successful pregnancy is a reason for joy. So that was the undervaluing of girls, in looking at that experience.

There was an officer at the time named Richard Pittard, who did a reporting cable on prenatal sex selection. Because of sonar scans and sonograms, couples were able to look at the fetus to see if it was a boy or a girl. They were selecting not to continue the pregnancies of girls; they would only really focus on continuing the pregnancies of the male fetuses. He was blocked from sending that back to Washington because there was concern that if enemies of Korea on the Hill, like perhaps Senator [Jesse] Helms and others, got that cable, they would really come after Korea hard and try to come down on them. The people in the embassy didn't want that to happen. But interestingly enough, prenatal sex selection is a phenomenon throughout Asia. Now looking back at that Richard Pittard had something there. It's a problem in China and it's a problem in many other places where there's a shortage of girls. And there's going to be a shortage of brides.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Right.

Q: To carry, you know -

LOAR: Gotta procreate guys!

Q: And it takes two to tango! You know, I mean really!

LOAR: Yes, that's right. But it was an indication of the undervaluing of girls and of women.

Q: Yes. Well then, you left there in what, '91?

LOAR: Ninety-one, yes.

Q: Whither?

LOAR: We came back to Washington. I had been a consular officer, but wanted to go work on a desk. As a consular officer, the desk offices had no interest at all in having USIA apply, so I thought, "Oh, yea. That job looks like a good job." I'd try to find out what the good jobs were. I wanted to be on a desk. Richard wanted to be on a desk. Richard, who had done politico-military affairs, had people begging him to -

Q: Yes, sure, sure.

LOAR: ?bid on this and bid on that [laughter], and I got was: "Well, you could try." I got the Costa Rica desk. I thought, "Fine. I'll take it, just so I know the new job is set." All the more senior people at the State Department, in the embassy there in Seoul, said, "You know, a desk job is a great place to go," and we had a wonderful country team, people who had been in the Foreign Service for a long time. We really had a good country team and a good sort of esprit de corps. We had Ray Burkhart as our DCM. It was good after we got used to the fact that you were always an outsider in Korea, and even with just a little tiny bit of language you're not ever going to blend in.

For our family, it was an interesting time, because we really did a lot of different things culturally, and traveled throughout Asia, and all of that. But you always stand out; you're always the foreigner, and you're never going to blend in.

Q: Did you get any feel while you were there of the threat from the north?

LOAR: Well, we had a lot of CODELs that came through. And, of course they didn't have consular officers handling CODELs. But my husband - the kind, supportive husband that he is - would try to throw some my way. So I got Pat Schroeder. I had a chance to show her around. I admired her as a congresswoman, and was really glad to do it.

Q: She really was very helpful in getting pension rights and things like this. Oh, boy!

LOAR: Yes. And she, you know, was on

Q: Congresswoman from Colorado.

LOAR: Colorado, Pat Schroeder from Colorado, and she was on the Armed Services [House Armed Services Committee], I think.

Q: Yes, she was.

LOAR: It was actually during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait that she came, just after that, and I think I was her control officer then. I'm just trying to remember that. The goal was to try and get the Koreans to kick in their fair share, which they had absolutely no intention of doing [laughter], and they were pretty clear about that. But Pat Schroeder and a congressman from Upstate New York were going around making the rounds.

Actually Pat Schroeder came around Valentine's Day. She brought Valentine's Day candy and cards for all the Foreign Service Nationals and the American officers. She was so thoughtful and wonderful.

She was someone I really admired, because she was a woman elected in her own right and not on her husband's or her father's coattails.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: She made it a point to take issues that were affecting women's lives and to put them on the legislative agenda for the United States. Years later, there was a great cover story in the New York Times Magazine about her and how her stuff has come to the mainstream now. But, she really had done tremendous work. I remember her talking about Social Security issues. She really looked at the basic needs that American women had and found witty, sometimes sarcastic, sometimes very dramatic ways of talking about it. And she really did it on her own right.

So I was thrilled to have a chance to escort her up to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) and to do the ritual of visiting to see what the troops are like and what the issues are. But I would never as a consular officer have been asked to do that. They did not ask consular officers to do that. They give them all to political-econ officers, and it was only because my husband interceded that I got this opportunity.

I had another chance. I had Geri [Geraldine] Ferraro, whom I also admire greatly on a visit. She and her husband had come to Korea. She was terrific. And I actually got to know her very well later on, when we did the Beijing Women's Conference. She was on our delegation. She's one of those people that the more you know her, the more you like her. She also was a great person who had just broken through on her own, and was active and making her mark in politics. Those were fun isolated incidents.

We always went up to the north; I even got a helicopter ride once [laughter]. My husband also arranged that.

Q: But the DMZ was very quiet -

LOAR: The sense of the danger from the north was palpable, but it wasn't exploding. They blasted that music, and did this and they did that.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: But there was no ? you know, that I was aware of, a real sense that it was going to ... there was reason for cause or alarm. Not that that wasn't reflecting on people in the ERs (emergency rooms), which I found so amusing!

Q: Oh, yes.

LOAR: That "in this time of tension, living here on this border, blah, blah, blah." For onward assignments, people would always say, "_____ is more less relaxing, yet less stressful, more relaxing." But here is the biggest commissary in the world with more configurations of Oreo cookies than I had seen in U.S. markets because these are American soldiers, and they need every brand of Oreo cookie.

Q: Yes, oh sure, sure.

LOAR: So anyways, I thought it somewhat an exaggerated claim.

Q: Oh yes. Well, everyone always does this, you know. I was in Personnel when they were trying to cut down on people abroad, and every place said "because of the time of crisis in _____," and you could fill in whatever country it was. It was always a time of crisis.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: ?and some places were noncritical. [Laughter

LOAR: [Laughter] That's right. Crisis looming! We can predict it.

Q: Well then, you came back, and you went on the Costa Rica desk.

LOAR: That's right, yes.

Q: And you were there from when to when. I like having this in here.

LOAR: Ah, '91 we came back to the U.S., and so I did that for about a year, and then moved on to the Nicaragua desk for a couple of years, I guess, '92 to '93.

Q: So it'd be Costa Rica and then, say, about '91 to '93ish, more or less, about?

LOAR: Yes.

Q: What was the situation in Costa Rica in '91?

LOAR: What the heck is ?[Laughter] What's new in Costa Rica? Of course they probably figured since I was so determined to get a desk, and Ray Burkhart, who was the DCM, said, "Just get a desk, any desk, it doesn't matter." And then when I told him I had Costa Rica, he said, "But not Costa Rica! That's junk!" [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: "There's nothing going on there. There are no issues." And I said, "Yes, but nobody else wanted me. I was a consular officer, you know."

Q: Okay! Well, I interviewed a man now back in the?Curtin Winsor, who'd been ambassador, political appointee, to Costa Rica in the '70s; and I asked if he had any delegations visit him while he was there; and he said yes, he had one, the lieutenant-governor of Mississippi.

LOAR: Well, yes.

Q: That was it.

LOAR: So we came back. The move back to Washington, of course, was very hard, and that's when we decided, "Okay. That's it. We're not moving around anymore."

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I really do think that was the time we decided that while we really loved the work overseas, we weren't going to continue to move. My husband Richard was in EUR/RPM (Bureau of European Affairs/Office of Regional Security and Political Affairs) and had a very active, go-get-'em job, you know. It was really important, and it was NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) issues with more on the military side. And I had Costa Rica.

The president of Costa Rica was coming just about a week or two after I got there, and I was thinking, "Oh, sure. Presidential visit, what's the big deal?" And it was actually fun because right away I was brought into getting everything ready for the visit. Rafael Ángel Calderón Fournier was a nice guy; we liked him, like we do most of the Costa Rican presidents.

And I remember going to the Protocol Office. The head of Protocol for the State Department at the time was Jennifer, I want to say Fitzgerald or something like that, a very stylish lady. I remember being in the meeting to plan for the visit and she said, "So they'll land on the mall," and I'm thinking, "What mall? because, I have to know where I have to be. She said, "The Washington Mall," and I go, "Yes, okay." [Laughter] "And you'll be there among the greeters." We got to go through Blair House and to see where they'd be staying, which was fun. We got to check all that stuff out.

What were the key issues? Bananas became the key issue. It was a nice friendly relationship, but nothing that was particularly compelling. I actually had a colleague on the Honduras desk, who had many more interesting things to do than I did. At first I was so intimidated by being on a desk, because I felt that as a consular officer, what could I know, and do, blah, blah, blah.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Then, after a few months, I was bored stiff because everybody else had more interesting work. Dave Schuler on Honduras said, "Bananas - I have one word for you - bananas. Look at the banana trade affecting Central America, and at American companies, especially Chiquita Brands, who have most of the banana plantations in Central America, and are really fighting tooth and nail - a really tough, tough fight - with the Europeans who had their banana plantations elsewhere, like Ecuador and the Caribbean. Just look at that issue, because it's really going to affect the economies of Central America if they cannot export their bananas to Europe."

So not knowing anything about anything, I sort of jumped into that issue, and actually had a lot of fun with it, and became known as the "Banana Queen," and got to know Bob [Robert] Gelbard, who was the principal desk in the Latin America Bureau at that time. He had a strong economic background, and saw that there were issues related to trade, but also issues related to the economic well-being of Central American companies involved in this.

USTR (Office of the United States Trade Representative), of course, was saying, "Back away! Back away!" and the Economic Bureau at that time was absolutely hostile to the idea that any desk officer would get involved in something related to trade. Bob Gelbard loved a good fight though, so it was a perfect issue for him. He was able to really stick up for the Central Americans. It was very interesting because Larry Eagleburger was very concerned about the economy of some of the Caribbean states who were affected by this, and it was very interesting. I actually worked with some guy who became a member of Congress, Robert Jones Portman, and with Joseph Hagin who now is Deputy Chief of Staff in the Bush White House. I remember that they all worked for Chiquita Brands, and they were pushing for free trade, which is an often-used and often-misrepresented word.

Q: Well, that's it..

LOAR: But our interests, from the State Department's side, was that the economies of these Central American companies' countries don't get really disadvantaged by the Euro banana traders, and that American companies, of course, get their fair treatment as well, whatever that might be.

Q: While you were there, was there any progress made on this?

LOAR: No, there was not. I think I was out of government when some progress was made, so that would mean that it was in the last year or so, that there was actually some progress. They said this one person sent me a note: "Do you believe it! They finally achieved some resolution."

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But it took a long time, and then so much money was involved and such huge numbers of jobs that would be created or lost, and huge trading routes. Actually, it was interesting. I hadn't worked on trade before. I found it very interesting to see the role that USTR would play, or not play. At that time I thought the Economic Bureau wasn't being particularly aggressive in the way it worked with USTR. It was more like, "Okay, you tell us what to do, and we'll be your service agency." Perhaps it was unfair, but Bob Gelbard liked it because it was a fight, with economic issues. He knew trade, and he knew that these Central American countries were really going to get screwed if they did not get their shot at those trading routes.

The other issues were repatriation of?no, that was the Nicaragua desk. I think that was pretty much it.

Luis Guinot, Jr. - now this was under President Bush I, the first President Bush [George H. Bush]. He had sent the political appointee ambassador, Louise Guinot, who was a Hispanic man from the Washington area. He was a very nice guy, and it just didn't seem like we had a lot of difficulties, because the banana stuff became fun.

Q: Yes, well, the banana thing, of course, is part of this war that would go on and on particularly on agricultural products, between the United States and the European Union.

LOAR: Right, right.

Q: And when you start messing with those, you're talking about messing with each other's jugular vein.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: I mean these were not taken lightly.

LOAR: Yes. I actually think Chiquita Brands may have gone bankrupt since then. It's the Lindner family. They're huge contributors to both political parties. I remember watching them, because batting so up close, I was the only one who cared about their little banana issue, you know. So, Rob Portman, who is a Republican member of Congress now from Ohio and Joseph Hagin, who's now one of the Deputy Chiefs of Staff at the White House, were both working for Chiquita at the time, and they were terrific guys to work with. I, of course, was somebody paying attention to something they cared about, and they were grateful, I think, to have some energy and interest in the issue and all.

Q: Well then, when you moved over to the Nicaragua desk - Nicaragua has always been a more touchy place.

LOAR: Yes. Well, the big issue there was the expropriation of property by the Sandinistas from the people. Senator Helms was intensely interested in Nicaragua at the time (Violeta Chamorro was the president at the time, I believe) and intensely interested in making sure that the Sandinistas were punished for anything they did; and in seeing that anybody who had their property taken away got it back.

The Bush administration at that time was continuing the aid to Nicaragua, but Senator Helms was dead against it, and did not want any money going there; but couldn't stop it, couldn't block the aid altogether, so did everything he could to harass the State Department. Alec [Alexander] Watson, a very nice guy who had been a career ambassador and was really well respected was going up to be Assistant Secretary; and Senator Helms wouldn't give him a hearing unless the State Department did the following: turn over every document that State Department had generated on Nicaragua during a certain period of time, so that they could find out whether AID (Agency for International Development) was misusing the money or being too easy on the Nicaraguans. I'm sure they had many reasons for wanting what they were looking for. But, at the end of the day, it was a great hardship on our post, and on our ambassador, I don't remember who our ambassador was to Nicaragua at that time, just a good guy though, but I can't remember who it was.

Q: We can fill this in later.

LOAR: Ron [Ronald] Godard was the DCM; he was a very nice guy, and had a really good team. Chris Ervs, who is brilliant - he was in our A-100 class - was the econ officer down there, which was great, because I really did not have a heavy grounding in economics. Chris helped me an awful lot with so many economic issues on the desk.

But what really dismayed me concerning the papers Senator Helms wanted on Nicaragua was that there was nobody looking out for the Foreign Service officers in the field over any frank comment the Foreign Service officer might have made in any memo or emails directly to the DCM, or to the ambassador, or to anyone back here in the States. We asked the L (Office of the Legal Advisor) people for guidelines. "Okay, what are the materials we're supposed to turn over to Senator Helms?" And there were no guidelines. The guidelines were on an unsigned piece of paper and were kind of vague. So, in other words, how are we supposed to know what's a draft or what's internal discussion, and what's appropriate for Senator Helms? And I made that decision a number of times on my own. And, I remember thinking, "Who in this room was looking out for the Foreign Service officer" who gives his boss a frank assessment of what's going on?"

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And it was all about satisfying Senator Helms's desire for every piece of paper and every bit of information, and in getting that up to him so Alec Watson could get his hearings, which he deserved to have. It was ridiculous that we had to hold these things up. But I also learned at that time to have a great deal of paranoia, which served me well later on while I worked on international women's issues in the UN conferences. People would say, "Gosh, why are you so paranoid?" "Because there's a good reason to be paranoid. Because you can write a funny little email back about something, and that can go to a senator on the Hill, who will block you in the future, and will use it as evidence of your being prejudiced or biased against somebody. There were memos, internal discussions, where the ambassador said, "Well, what do you think about this? You know, before we release this next cable, how do you think the Central Bank is doing on its reform things?" And it really troubled me that there was nobody looking out for the Foreign Service officers in the field, who had good careers ahead of them. I realized you had to watch out for yourself.

Q: Yes. By the time you got to the Nicaragua desk, the Sandinistas had lost the elections?

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And how was Mrs. Chamorro doing?

LOAR: Well, one of her son-in-laws was a very powerful figure - forgive me for not remembering the name [Antonio Lacayo Oyanguren]. She wasn't a particularly powerful figure. We would have liked her to be, and I certainly wanted to see a woman president be a strong figure. But she wasn't particularly strong, and it didn't seem to make much progress.

I think it was a very sad situation, going down to Nicaragua to see the damage. There was damage done to the main cathedral during one of the earthquakes, and a lot of money came pouring in to fix it, and it was never fixed. When I was there, Tom Monaghan, who founded Domino's Pizza, had given lots of money to build a new cathedral, which was a ridiculous, ugly looking structure; and I love cathedrals, and this one looked like somebody was in a really bad mood when they designed it, but?[laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: The cathedral was going up. I guess that's a helpful thing - to have a new cathedral in the city. But there seemed to be no progress. While El Salvador was moving along, and seemed to be making progress, Nicaragua seemed not to make progress. It seemed like the country just changed hands from one part of the four or five families who ran things to another! They were all related, and all their businesses were pretty much co-owned.

I do remember one thing going back to the Costa Rica desk for a minute - coffee is a big export. I remember the minister for trade owned the largest coffee plantation. I remember thinking, "Is that possible that you guys can do that? Can you regulate yourselves?" That seemed to be the issue. That government service was a way to make sure your financial interests were enhanced and protected, which was sad and depressing.

But we had good leadership in the Latin American Bureau. Joe [Joseph] Sullivan was the DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs) at the time. He was one of the smartest people that I've ever worked with. He's ambassador now to Zimbabwe. Joe was up to be an ambassador to be sent out. With both Senator Helms's and Senator [Christopher] Dodd's staffs, there was someone from each side in an unlikely, unholy alliance; they were convinced that Joe had played some role that they thought was inappropriate in the past related to Central American policy. They were going to block him. It was such a demoralizing thing for all of us, who thought he was so smart, and wonderful, and liked him so much, and wanted to see him succeed. But it also made you realize that people could be blocked very easily for no particular reason from moving ahead in their career.

I did the Nicaragua desk for a while, and then moved from there. I could probably even have more interesting things to say about what the relationship was, but, I moved from there to be work on the Chile desk for a few months, and then moved up to be special assistant to Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs, Tim Wirth.

Q: Well, with Nicaragua, did you have the feeling that this was a focal point of our foreign policy at one point and that after it was done everybody washed their hands of it and moved on?

LOAR: Well, I do think AID had a good strong mission there and a good strong mission director. There was real interest in rebuilding the economy, establishing rule of law, helping to build a court system, and investing in civil society. But, there was constant pressure from the Hill, constant pressure from Senator Helm's staff not to release that money. So it was a tremendous battle. They had a huge AID mission led by Janet Ballantyne, who was terrific and now is number two over at AID, I think [Counselor to the Administrator of USAID].

But it was a long road, and it wasn't helped by the government of Nicaragua, itself. They didn't seem to be committed to reform, and still had incredibly high poverty rates, and a fair amount of arms. One of the issues was on civilian military affairs on trying to disarm the former combatants, and that seemed to be a very, very slow thing.

We also had ICITAP training (Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program). One of these was in rule of law, and others were in judicial training, and in law enforcement training. That was all going ahead at a very, very slow pace, and I thought it was kind of depressing. At the El Salvador desk, where I had a friend, they were making progress, and they are still making progress now. It had to do with the government itself.

Q: Was there any word of wisdom, or something about why was Helms was so down on Nicaragua?

LOAR: The word was that Helms actually had Foreign Service Nationals in our embassy in Managua faxing anything that they thought he should know about up to his staff, which I thought was stunning. But of course, that was just a rumor. No one knew that for sure.

The feeling was that Helms felt about Nicaragua just like he felt towards Cuba: the Communists had taken away things that these people owned, and they should be giving those back to them. It was not Helms thought that the U.S. didn't believe in that; our embassy team was heavily engaged in trying to return the expropriated properties; but the return of the expropriated property to both Nicaraguans and U.S. citizens became the reason for everything and the overwhelming issue. And nothing anyone could do was ever energetic enough. It was the same feeling I think that the Cuban Americans feel who've had their properties taken away. These are legitimate concerns. You know, people had sugar plantations confiscated.

It was interesting because in Mexico, I had the aide to Humberto Ortega defect to me, so I had no great respect for the Ortega brothers myself. So I knew some of the stories about Humberto Ortega. His aide had laid out the corruption and the money that was going off to other bank accounts. So it wasn't that I had any great respect for the Sandinistas or the Ortega brothers. It's just that there were other issues in their relationship, and that Senator Helms really refused to move forward on any of the reconstruction pieces and the rebuilding of the civil society until and unless these issues were covered first. I think that was his standard. and he's never backed off of that, and really wanted to withhold the aid. I think it was a very hard thing because the Bush administration really wanted to move it.

Q: Well then, you moved and then there was the election. Did that change things? Wirth came in with the Clinton administration.

LOAR: Right, Tim Wirth. They set up a new undersecretary position, Undersecretary for Global Affairs. Tim Wirth had been a congressman, and then a liberal Democrat, senator from Colorado, known for his work on the environment. He set up this new (G) Global Affairs.

I think they were in operation for a whole year before I came up there, and I came up sometime in '93-'94, I think. Rose Likins had been up there as the top person, the executive assistant, and then Andy [Andrew] Sens. Andy Sens had known me from the Latin American Bureau, and I was totally surprised that I'd been considered as a candidate for those jobs, because I didn't think that was a good fit, but I was very, very flattered and ended up liking working for Tim Wirth, who I admire a great deal.

Q: You were working for him for how long?

LOAR: Until I left to set up this office to prepare for the Beijing Women's Conference, which was in June of '94, I worked about a year. Rose Likins had left, which was a shame because Rose was wonderful. Andy Sens was the executive assistant; there were three or four of us up there. My portfolio was counternarcotics, refugees, and counterterrorism, because (G) included this mishmash of bureaus. I always said that was great training for handling women's issues later on [laughter].

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: Bob Gelbard was the Assistant Secretary for INL (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs), "Drugs and Thugs." Phyllis Oakley came in as head of the Population, Refugee, and Migration bureau. They had just added Population to that, which was a difficult thing. Not everybody was so keen on that. But that was a strong point of interest for Tim Wirth. What else was under that? Counterterrorism - Barbara Bodine was head of counterterrorism. And it was an interesting mix of things.

Tim Wirth came in with the idea of really trying to build constituencies for foreign policy, bringing NGOs (non-governmental organizations) into the process of government. He had strong interests in population issues and the environment. Those were his issues, he was really clear about that. He had these tremendous political skills, which didn't fit altogether that well with the culture of the State Department.

Q: No.

LOAR: But I have to say that he laid the groundwork for a lot of work that was done later, and it was hard for him to do - breaking open the doors of the State Department and letting NGOs in when the State Department doesn't see that it's something that's particularly of value. And also, these issues on the environment and population were not easy; there was strong opposition on the reproductive health and the population issues. Concerning the environment: there was a heavy backlash and confrontations with Congress on some of the environmental things. Then Tim came in with a lot of energy and political skills, and really tried to move things ahead.

Q: Well, you mentioned you had counterterrorism, which has now become sort of the almost principal focus of the government. Where did it stand at this time?

LOAR: Well, it was a little office with a lot of military folks, a lot of civil servants, not many Foreign Service officers rotated in and out of there. I think Phil [Philip] Wilcox was head at one point and then Barbara Bodine. But I do remember, in the time that we were up there, that that office had no particular interest in sharing any information with Tim Wirth or the staff. So they were going to go off and do their thing. They resented like heck that they had to be involved with us.

Q: It was sort of added on kind of to -

LOAR: They were an office downstairs who really thought they should just be reporting to the Secretary, and they probably were for all we knew; but this structure they were under - this, under (G) - was an interesting mix.

I do remember there was some huge capture during the time that we were there, and that was considered a great victory. It might have been the fellow who bombed the CIA headquarters here and who was picked up in Pakistan.

Q: Yes. We got him out of Pakistan, yes.

LOAR: Right. And that was the year we

Q: Well, he didn't bomb, but he attacked people in front of, and coming in -

LOAR: Yes, he came into the CIA, right.

Q: With a machine gun pistol.

LOAR: That's right! It wasn't a bombing. It was a gun.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And they were very secretive, and I mean really had no interest in sharing, "Look, you guys. You don't know. You don't need to know. You're out of the loop."

Q: So how did you deal with this?

LOAR: Well, you pulled out whatever information you could to make sure that the Undersecretary had the information he needed; and you tried to build relationships, good as old relationships. If they thought that you were trustworthy, they might tell you something; and if they thought you had a need to know they might. But there was an awful lot of military folks who were on detail from outside the State Department, and really just considered themselves stand alone operatives that really had no particular need to fill in, blend themselves in, or to be part of a team.

There were two or three things where Tim was supposed to be on alert to know something, but that wasn't really what Tim Wirth's interests were. There were good Foreign Service officers who went into there, a number of whom had Near East Asia backgrounds. So the people sort of rotated sometimes into that bureau, who had spent some time in NEA (Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs), because they knew a lot of the terrorist groups and kind of knew the situation and the background.

And for Population, Refugee, and Migration, it was a time to get ready for this big UN conference. That was not the one on women, but the one prior to that, the Cairo Population Conference, which would probably be a good place to start next time and to start with how that whole thing happened.

Q: All right. Okay. Well, the next time we'll pick this up, we'll move around '94 or so.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And we'll be talking about getting ready for the Population Conference in Cairo.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And then we'll move to the women's thing.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: Good. Great.

Q: Okay. Today is 13 September, Friday the 13th, 2002. Theresa, we're ready to go to the Cairo - I mean talk about the Cairo Conference in when, 199__?

LOAR: Ninety-four, September 1994.

Q: What was this conference about and then can you talk about what our stance and our issues were, what our concerns were?

LOAR: I got involved in this conference in the last few months of it, starting in June of 1994. And this conference was one of a series of UN conferences that focused on a range of social issues. This one was an international conference on population and development, and it had generated a lot of controversy because it focused on hot button issues, particularly reproductive rights and abortion. And it really brought out the groups, both sides of the issue with countries on both sides of the issue. It was really quite a huge controversial event, and promised to be a real controversial event, because all the buildup to it was, "the way the UN Conference is going is that there's a great deal of preparation, preparatory meetings in different regions of the world, and a lot of negotiating, even in New York prior to wherever the conference is held." And my involvement in coming into it in June was to look at some of the issues on organizing how the U.S. participates in these conferences as preparation for my work later on in the Women's Conference, which was to be a year later in Beijing, China, which was, you know, not on this issue, but on a broader range of issues.

It was a terrific experience to see how these UN conferences were run: what happens during them; who stages what protests to get themselves arrested to make the U.S. embassy have to dish them out of jail; what alliances different countries were forming; how the U.S. incorporated the non-governmental organizations' representatives onto U.S. delegations, how you managed this disparate group of delegates who are from inside the government - experts on a whole range of issues, including education and health care, and then people from outside of the government who were experts as well, but not necessarily within the government context. So it was a very interesting group to work with.

Q: Did this go smoothly or was it awkward?

LOAR: Well, I think that a big part of U.S. participation, when Tim Wirth was the Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs, was leading the efforts for the U.S. involvement in this conference. He had a real interest in bringing NGOs into the process; and I think it was a lasting contribution that he made to the U.S. government. It spilled into the State Department, because he really opened up the doors in the State Department to NGOs. The State Department didn't like it one little bit.

Q: Oh.

LOAR: They didn't like the idea the NGOs were coming in for large meetings. They didn't like it that NGOs were serving on delegations. It was particularly complicated as this was such a hot button issue, and it was an issue that people, you know good people, can come to their own decisions about and can disagree on. So it was a very challenging set of issues.

And the Clinton administration's point of view was supporting free access for women all over the world to family planning, and to be able to determine the number, the timing, and the spacing of their children. That was something that was a clear policy, and shaped a lot of the U.S. government's participation in the conference. Of course, that got misinterpreted by many who said that it was promoting abortion or some who saw it as not going far enough. They were a huge domestic issue - abortion and reproductive rights, and you put it in the UN context, and it's a really potent mix. But it drew members of Congress who were very concerned about the issue.

There were others who were very concerned about just placing women at the center of development. That was another U.S. goal: looking at empowering women and strengthening women's roles within the families; and then that became another issue - what a family is. And we had some very strong involvement by the Vatican in this, and the Vatican working with and reaching out to all kinds of Islamic countries, who you wouldn't think would be on the same side as the Vatican on any issue, which was surprising to me!

It was a real brew of domestic politics brought onto the UN stage. I thought my participation was helpful, because it helped me to see and to manage this set of issues. While we had much broader issues coming up in the Beijing Conference, it was helpful to see some of the very successful and smart things that were done, and to look at some of the things that pose particular challenges that would need to be addressed the next time around.

Q: Did you have any particular piece of this, or were you bouncing all over the place?

LOAR: Well, I was coordinating our participation (kind of broadly defined). It was just at the very beginning and I was not looking at what our policies and positions were, but at how the delegation came and stayed together. There was a terrific Foreign Service officer, Warren E. Littrel, a great guy, who was the Admin counselor in Cairo, who did a tremendous job of providing a terrific place for the U.S. delegation, and who set up a wonderful system for the U.S. delegation to operate with there. I was on the sidelines and wasn't involved in the policy.

But there was another thing. We were really determined to provide public NGO briefings every day of the U.S. delegation, because we were trying to set up a model of transparency and openness, so that NGOs who were not on the delegation and who wanted to know what the U.S. was doing could hear very directly from the delegates who were in the rooms. This was also hard as the UN didn't have a practice of doing this, and frowned on it, frankly.

Q: Yes, well, you sort of messed up the system.

LOAR: Yes. They weren't keen on openness. So that was another thing the U.S. pushed hard on, and I think it's also a lasting - nothing's lasting. But an important contribution I think the U.S. made in its participation in these conferences was in valuing NGOs, and bringing them in, and then also briefing them.

Q: Well, was there any way of defining what's an NGO? I've heard somebody who served in Kosovo say, to him an NGO was one person with a suitcase full of pamphlets.

LOAR: Yes, well, that could be. I never found that to be a particular issue - whether they were valid NGOs or not. See, on these issues of family planning, population, and family there were very well established, well funded groups on both sides who would stop at nothing to make their points.

Our ambassador to Cairo was Ned [Edward S.] Walker, who was very good, very shrewd, and very smart. There was a demonstration that was held outside of the gates with the purpose of getting the Egyptian government to arrest them, so that they could then say they were being mistreated by the Egyptian government, and force our embassy and our ambassador to have to go to work to get them out of their situation, and members of Congress were encouraging that. It was just a fascinating mix.

I do remember Bella Abzug, who was on the U.S. delegation, and who did not want to hold back on her point of view, particularly regarding the Vatican. I remember there was a memorable public statement that she made in the UN meeting rooms about the Vatican's views towards women. [Laughter]

Q: Did what?

LOAR: Memorable, on the Vatican's views towards women. I laugh - But they're words I can't even repeat, some of them.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: She wasn't in sync with them. They weren't on the same wavelength. [Laughter]

Q: How -

LOAR: And I had known - everybody grew up knowing Bella Abzug. I actually ended up sitting with her on a plane. She was really a very warm person too; that wasn't really her public persona. But she was very warm, very dedicated to standing up for women. Even if you didn't agree with her particular point of view or with the way she expressed it, you couldn't help but be won over by her real driving drive to help women be heard and break through channels, and to really make sure that women's needs were on the agenda. No one has come along who was like that within the UN system in the U.S. NGO community who has really had an effect like that. She was really unique in that way, and it was interesting having her on our delegation because she wasn't someone you managed.

Q: Yes. Did you find your Catholicism causing any problems for you?

LOAR: Well, I have my own views on the issues that were formed before this conference. I was dismayed at some of the Vatican's actions. I thought they were irresponsible to be working with really outlaw Islamic countries, even if it wasn't something they thought was deeply important. There were some members of the Vatican delegation who were just not in a diplomatic mode, shall we put it. Then there was this stellar member of the Vatican delegation, who's now an archbishop, Diarmuid Martin, who is from Ireland, who is brilliant and charming, and really focused on the social justice issues. Actually, he was a key negotiator for Beijing as well. When Mrs. [Lindy] Boggs was our ambassador to the Vatican more recently during the Clinton administration, I had an opportunity to do some work with him on trafficking. He is really an interesting person. One Foreign Service officer described him as the smartest diplomat he'd ever met. He's just really stunning.

On the other hand, the Vatican had some people who would scream and wave their fingers at you from across the room, and would huddle with Sudan, Iraq, and Syria, and tell them that the U.S. was trying to destroy families. That was troubling to me. It was troubling to see some of those individuals, who were actually American citizens working for the Vatican, do that. I thought that was really bad form.

It was also very interesting that the top people got involved. Phyllis Oakley, who was newly appointed (no, actually not new, I don't think she was newly appointed) as Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugee, and Migration, played a huge role in this. Phyllis is this really capable, talented person, who is well regarded at the State Department. So it was a great asset from Tim Wirth's point of view to have Phyllis Oakley involved because she really brought a lot of oomph to the issue, as well as institutional support. And I remember her saying more than once publicly that she became a feminist in the course of this conference when she saw the way some of these issues were being treated. Now people can disagree on this issue, and either you can respectfully disagree or you can disrespectfully disagree, but there are different sides of that issue. But it was more than just the family planning and the abortion things. That these two were pushed together, was also interesting to see.

It was a fascinating way to get into the whole UN conference thing. It made me realize we were going to have a problem with the Islamic countries if we didn't have someone on our delegation who was a Muslim, as well as a woman, who could meet with the other delegations. We knew that at the time.

And we also knew that we needed someone who would be seen as a real, active Catholic - someone who wouldn't be messed with by those who wanted to misrepresent our views. Well, this is looking ahead to Beijing, because Beijing had reproductive rights as only one of ten issues, and there were some who were looking for the chance to start that whole battle again. Al Gore came to the conference, and he came in in the middle of these issues as well, and that was very interesting. I haven't looked at my notes.

I haven't looked at anything from that for such a long time. But I do remember everyone got sick because it was Cairo, and it was heavily polluted. They were also working late into the night, and the air conditioning was overwhelming. We had these countdown meetings every day with the delegation. The delegates were just a fascinating brew of the ones I said - people like Bella Abzug on the one hand, and these really staunch, pro-choice health groups in our U.S. delegation. Then you also had people from the government, who are used to working on health policy or to working on issues related to equal pay, or something like that, because lots of different parts of the docket were science issues. [laughter] They were altogether in this delegation. It was a fascinating mix. Brian Atwood, the head of AID was there as well, and I remember it was helpful to have him involved. This was an interesting introduction to all of this for me.

Q: How did it come out, as far as you were concerned?

LOAR: Well, I think there were steps forward on putting women at the center of development, and it laid the groundwork for a lot that was going to be done. It was a very strong document that came out of Cairo. It's been misrepresented a number of times, but I think the tremendous value of it was that it really did look at some of the needs of women as individuals, within the family, within the community, and at what countries should be doing, and at what governments should be doing. While it did focus a great deal on women's health needs, it also looked at issues of violence, and female genital mutilation, and issues like that, which weren't being talked about in any significant way. So much of it was pushed over to the side because of the controversy about family planning. The same with family planning, which I thought was stunning because I think a majority of Americans supported the idea of family planning here in the United States. Yet by lumping it with abortion, they were taking that away from women in other parts of the world, and I didn't think most Americans would support the idea that women in developing countries shouldn't have access to family planning. But this debate goes on, as we can see. There are family planning funds being withheld from poor women all around the world now because of the misrepresentation that it's used to promote abortion.

Q: Did you find, however, that with the focus on family planning, and with the real controversy having moved over there, that you were able to get through other things on the agenda?

LOAR: Ah?that was the overwhelming issue. I'd have to look to see what else was being looked at in some of the other issues: there were inheritance rights being discussed and there was real controversy with some of the Muslim countries on that issue; some of the work on violence against women wasn't really controversial, but it wasn't really front and center either; educational needs of girls, and then, of course, you got into parental rights, which is another fun area to look at too - what rights do children have, what rights do girls have - access to health education, or access to information about what they might need for their bodies. Parents was another area - what is a family?, what are parents? All sides were very eager to replay these in Beijing, and were just warming up to let that happen.

Q: Yes. Did gay rights move into the thing at all?

LOAR: Well, I think there might have been a little bit of language on that, "related to sexual rights" was that code phrase. The U.S. position there was tolerance, and nondiscrimination, which was also, I think, a fairly mainstream American value, and it's even more so now, I think. Our country's made some progress in that area, but this is 1994, and it wasn't some moronic or bizarre idea. I don't remember this issue in Cairo, to tell you the truth, because my memories of Cairo are a lot less clear than my memory of what happened in Beijing. I remember in Beijing having the positions extremely distorted as to what the U.S. was trying to do.

Q: Well Theresa, the Beijing Conference on what, Women?

LOAR: Yes, the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women; it was the fourth in a series of conferences on women that had gone back 10-15 years before then.

Q: Well, what was the impetus for this?

LOAR: Well, in the '90s, there was this series of conferences looking at a range of global or social issues for the United Nations; they were all set in motion and scheduled at the same time. It started with Rio [Rio de Janeiro] . I should back up, because that's when Al Gore and Tim Wirth formed this interest and commitment to these UN conferences as a way to effect broad change and to really bring governments together. I think those conferences served a very valuable purpose. We had that Cairo Conference, and then in between we had the Conference on Social Development. That was in Copenhagen, and that was an in-between conference; and not to denigrate it or anything, but it was a little bit mushy. Then you had the Women's Conference in Beijing, which was in September 1995; and there was a lot of building up to that; and it was clear we were going to draw a huge number of people. The fact that it was China who was having it, made it another interesting element.

Q: What prompted the Chinese to get into this conference?

LOAR: Well, these UN conferences move around from region to region. For example, it was Latin America's time to have a conference, so the Brazilian government bid on it, and Rio became the place; and then when China stepped in and said they wanted to do the UN Conference on Women, all the other countries in Asia sort of backed off because you don't take on China. I truly think, and we know this from very concrete information we received later on, the Chinese were looking at this as an opportunity to show the world they could handle the Olympics. They were moving blithely along to set up the NGO Forum in the downtown of Beijing, and the UN conference right nearby.

And then Li Peng went to Copenhagen, and saw at the Social Summit what NGOs were and what they did, including one who threw some blood on him - I don't know how they got that close to him, but this was the story - it could be one of these stories. [laughter] But, he saw them - very active, vibrant NGOs that weren't controlled by any of their governments; and he said, "Whose idea was this to hold this UN conference in China. It's outrageous. We're going to have all these wacko protesters, NGOs coming to our country. I want to know whose idea this was." And of course, it was duly reported to him that it was his idea. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: So, the Chinese government made a decision to move the NGO part of the conference from downtown, the NGO Forum, and put it out in the countryside, in an open field with no facilities - just away from the conference, so that the wild and crazy NGOs would be out in the countryside, down a road in Huairou that was quite a bit away from Beijing, with no facilities, and just flat land and dust - not a welcoming place to discourage the outsiders to come to. But you do your UN piece in a very strong and effective way.

My role was, really to look at all parts of it: what are the issues we were going to look at, how do we reach out to Americans, how do we bring them in, who should be representing us on the delegation, and how do we work with other governments. It was really the whole piece of it. I had the opportunity to work with the Chinese government on some of these issues of how our delegates would be treated. I wanted the whole range of things.

Of course we worked with Mary Ryan, Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, on Services for Americans. My good Foreign Service friend Dan Pacuda was in China at the time, and he set up a site in Huairou, at the NGO Conference, for American citizens who might need services; and he made of point of showing every member of Congress who came by that he had done this, [laughter] because we were sure that somebody was going to get in trouble with the Chinese government, and we wanted to be very visible about being out there, and we wanted the Chinese government to know too. And Dan was really smart in the way he handled this, "Let the Chinese go; let our government know." We had somebody on site ready to step up to the plate for Americans.

But pulling this all together, we had a number of negotiations with the Chinese. I remember this very smart and savvy guy in the Chinese government, who was my interlocutor on this, and who told me with a very straight face the reason they had to move the non-governmental part from downtown Beijing to the countryside was because the facilities in the soccer stadium where they were going to hold the NGO Forum weren't suitable for women.

So I said, "What do you mean? They don't have bathrooms?" I mean I can say that word. "Do they have bathrooms? They don't have bathrooms!"

"Well, they're just not suitable."

I said, "Wasn't this going to be one of the places you hold your Olympics?"

"Well, they're just not suitable!" [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: So it was, I guess, women's bathroom needs that really kind of threw the whole thing off. [Laughter]

Q: Yes. [Laughter]

LOAR: I do remember when it was announced that they were moving it, they were just complete clods about it. They were artless in the way they announced it. They were taking this NGO conference and moving it from downtown and throwing it out in the countryside. They announced it in the middle of a UN meeting that was one of the preparatory meetings for the conference. So all of the activists from all over the world were in New York for this meeting, and all these delegates, and they announced it then! You know, they could have done it like a week later, when nobody would be united as a group. So, of course, we made a very strong statement about it. I put something together from our delegation to this UN meeting [that] said, "This is an attempt to separate NGOs, and to deny them access to the government, and to undervalue their role in building democracies," and all this stuff.

This Chinese guy?and then I had to see him at a lunch later on, and I thought, "Well, of course they would expect us to react to this ridiculous thing they're doing! Their timing is atrocious!" And I have never had a conversation with anyone in the diplomatic field like I had with this Chinese guy. He was just - if he'd punched me in the nose, he would have - he was just sitting at this restaurant and just eating! I mean his anger was just flowing across the table, "How dare you do such a?"

And I was just stunned. "Well, what did you expect us to say and to do? Your timing, and your decision's a bad one. Your timing's atrocious. We're going to react, and people are looking to us to react! 'What is the U.S. going to say about this?'"

So it was just a sidebar, an interesting element. And then later on, a couple years later, I was in a meeting with Harold Koh, who was then Assistant Secretary for Human Rights [Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor], and I was asked to come meet with the Chinese delegation that was here on human rights issues, and I was to talk about some of the women's human rights issues, and this guy was across the table from me! But we were so happy to see each other, because even though we did disagree and had a great deal of confrontation, we knew each other [laughter], and we just had to remember those many occasions we had to express our points of view about what our government expected from their government.

Q: What was our delegation like?

LOAR: Oh, it was a fabulous delegation! And I have to go down the hall and get you a picture. Then I'll remember who all...

Q: I'm being shown a picture, which is full of smiling faces, mostly female for obvious reasons, and very colorful;, and you want to talk about it?

LOAR: This is the U.S. delegation in Beijing, and this was taken at the ambassador's residence - I guess after the first few days of the conference. We put together the delegation to really reflect the level of interest that Americans had in the conference. This is the largest number of Americans who ever traveled to any conference, any international meeting outside the U.S. A big part of our efforts were to make sure that Americans had access to the conference, and that their NGOs could get in; and we also wanted to include in our delegations representatives of groups who had shown a lot of interest in this work and in the issues.

We had an incredibly interesting group: a number of people who were running for office, ran for office later on, had run for office. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, a former member of Congress from Pennsylvania, had a big role at the conference; [pointing at delegates in the photo] here's Geri Ferraro, who was a member of Congress and ran for the Senate later on; this is Julia Taft, who became Assistant Secretary of Population, Refugees, and Migration in the second half of the Clinton administration; and obviously, Hillary Clinton, who had an incredibly large role to play, and who really put the conference on the map; Madeleine Albright, who was our Ambassador to the UN at the time and then went on to become Secretary of State; Bonnie Campbell, who went to head up the Violence Against Women's Office at the Justice Department, which was a new breakthrough; Madeleine Kunin, who was a former governor of Vermont and then became an ambassador later on; Dottie Lamm, who ran for the Senate in Colorado later on; Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly, who was a nun, who was the head of the College of New Rochelle, and now a trustee of Georgetown [University], but she was like a leader in women's education, especially low income women, I'm just looking across the picture - there's a whole mix of people.

Q: Were you able to get a woman or women who represented Islam?

LOAR: Yes; right here is Laila Al Marayati, a woman from California who was a Muslim woman, and who Kathy Hendricks (who worked with us and was an important part of our planning, and also worked in the government with us) had recommended. Laila and her husband, Salam Al Marayati, were very active in California in interreligious issues. So she was well respected by her own community, but also knew how to work with and was very good at representing Islam and Muslim issues to other people of other faiths. She was also involved in a number of issues related to the rape of women in Bosnia. She was a Muslim woman in Bosnia; she was involved in that. So she was terrific, just a lovely person, she educated a lot of us on the delegation about Islam, but also was really terrific in meeting with the other delegates. She was a mother of two, a doctor, and had a very busy life; but she devoted a lot of attention and time to this. She was tremendously effective, because she'd come back to say, "You're not going to believe," and I have to say, "This is what the Vatican delegation is telling the Islamic delegates about the U.S.! They're saying that you're encouraging teenage girls to run off and marry and be with older men, and encouraging girls to leave their families, and encouraging them to be lesbians and not be with their families," and all these things that nobody in their right mind would believe. But yet one particular Vatican delegate who was an American, was then put up for a position in this administration [sigh] - it didn't go forward though. When this person was representing these views to the Islamic delegations, especially to those in the Arab countries, what Laila was able to do was to speak frankly, to say, "Look! I'm a Muslim woman," and because she was very well regarded in her own community, she was able to set the record straight. She was just a really good diplomat for representing the U.S. views, which is what every delegate's supposed to be.

And then of course having Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly, a Catholic nun, on the delegation, who was a leader in education, was helpful.

We had Tom [Thomas] Kean, who was a former Republican governor of New Jersey, who was terrific. He had said a very memorable thing when he was on CNN (Cable News Network) one day. He said, "Well (Well), it just seems to me that..." (he was the governor of New Jersey, but he had a New England accent [laughter], the guy is still extremely well regarded in New Jersey, my home state.) "what we're talking about here is giving women the same rights that men have always enjoyed, and I don't see anything radical about that." And he was just really terrific, and steadfast, and a great support on trying to calm things down and to bring focus to the central issues, which was valuing women and girls, and trying to bring these issues onto the agendas of government.

Q: Did Hillary Clinton's participation come early or late in the thing?

LOAR: Well, from the very beginning her office was being contacted by people who wanted her to play a role and to make sure that the U.S. was well represented and doing what they should do in bringing important, serious issues to the conference. There were school teachers, accountants, and all these women's associations - not those necessarily on issues of women, but women accountants, teachers, school principals - all contacting her office, and pushing to say, "This is a big conference, and we're sending someone. We're organizing to send someone from our eastern district, and we want to make sure?" So there was a lot of pressure on her office, because she was the place in the U.S. government, there on the political scene, where there was interest. She had expressed some interest in issues for women.

Q: Would you say that the thrust of this was to, essentially - and this sounds condescending; I don't mean it to - but to bring parts of the other world and America up to at least where we are as far as treating women; or was it to really meant to do things within America, using this to?

LOAR: Well, it was being part of this conference that brought together women from all parts of the world who shared similar issues and similar concerns. In our country we had just gotten the Violence Against Women Act passed, a breakthrough piece of legislation that was fairly unique in the world. That was passed in '94 - '95 [1994], somewhere along there. So now we were setting up an office in the Justice Department -the first country in the world to have something within the justice ministry for violence against women. So that was really a breakthrough. So there was much to be shared with other countries on that.

But there were other countries that had really done a much better job of helping and supporting families throughout their lifespan, and there was much we could learn on that end. So it was really to engage (and I know this sounds like UNspeak) but just to engage in partnership with these other countries.

We spent a lot of time and a lot of effort on how we projected ourselves - how we presented ourselves, not just in the speeches that Hillary made, and not just in the public statements the delegates made, but in how we represented ourselves and how we engaged in the preparatory meetings prior to these conferences and in the public meetings that we had across the United States to prepare for this conference. It really brought people into the process.

There was just a tremendous, unprecedented interest in Americans in this conference, and there was no real mechanism for how to respond to this. That's why this conference secretariat was set up. The Department of Labor was doing some of these regional meetings across the country and people wanted to go. They were really interested in going to China, you know.

I have an assistant down the hall, a young woman who worked with me a couple years later. I never met this person at the conference. I heard about her later on. She was a college student, and she got the money together, and against her dad's best wishes, went to China for this conference. She didn't have the right kind of visa.

Q: I guess, in a way, this is part of the unintended consequences for the Chinese. Because the conference was being held in China, it helped attract a lot of people.

LOAR: Right, an interesting place!

Q: Yes, but once they were there they got engaged.

LOAR: Right. So to respond to the interest of American women, we wanted to really show we were taking this seriously. But, we were also really ginned up by this.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I would go to my son's soccer game, and there would be women on the sidelines, and I'd say, "What're you working on?" They'd say, "Our temple is sponsoring two people to go." And everybody had somebody, I know I was living in that world that seemed like that, but it was just really like all over the place that people were really drawn to this and interested.

And then the international community. Because of the Cairo buildup, there was this, "What is the U.S. going to do at this conference?" We were working very hard to take the gains that were made in Cairo and some of the very good things that had come out of that and to use that as a base for some of the other things that needed to be addressed. Violence against women was the huge overwhelming issue that people were pushing for discussion of, talk about. Whether it was in the UN meetings or in the NGO Forum out in Huairou, there was this real interest in coming together and in how we were addressing this, and in how we were doing this. Bonnie Campbell, who I mentioned, who was the former attorney general of the state of Iowa, and was the first person appointed as director of the Violence Against Women Office at Justice Department, was like a rock star at this conference, because there was no one like her in the world who had a position in the federal government, in charge of implementing a law, which didn't really exist elsewhere.

Q: Could you explain for the people who are going to be reading this, how would you define, as we saw it at this time, violence against women?

LOAR: The whole range of issues, whether it's domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, or stalking, it's all in the law. It's the law that Senator [Joseph] Biden [Democrat from Delaware] had a huge role in getting passed, and more recently, that Connie [Constance] Morella, my congresswoman from Maryland, had a huge role in getting reauthorized. It also put a big chunk of money on the table for states and local governments to work with the police, prosecutors, and judges, and to implement the law. So it was a lot of work, and a lot of resources, and a huge commitment - a major step forward on this issue.

Q: Were we using our law and sort of passing out copies of it to??

LOAR: Not necessarily. I don't think we expected to, when we got to this conference. We were not working internationally as a government, broadly connecting with other governments, on women's issues at this time.

So in preparing for the conference, we were exchanging ideas. We heard what Australia was doing, or Chile, and others; it was all very interesting. But really, the focus was on language and doctrine. It wasn't like we have a law, and you have a law. No one went to this conference thinking, "Okay, they're going to be looking for this." No one quite knew the mindset of the global community on these issues, and it was something you learned when you got there.

The interesting thing was that there were some who chose to present this conference as "the Western feminists forcing their ideas onto women from other countries." I actually sat in Cardinal O'Connor's residence with some senior members of our delegation, and I believe Madeleine Albright was there, and I don't remember who else. There was a cardinal there and a few bishops, including a bishop from New Jersey, who was on the Vatican's delegation, and who was a particularly closed-minded individual. He said, "Look! These New York feminists can't tell women in the other parts of the world what to do." And I just remember thinking, "How could you walk around that conference and think that New York feminists are going to tell those other women from other countries what to do? Have you sat down to negotiate with them?"

And I was particularly thinking about the women from the African delegations, who at the very last preparatory meeting before the conference blew the document wide open saying, "Yes, there's something we forgot to mention," or "There's something we've been trying to get in here for a long time, and you're not listening to us, and let me tell you we're not going anywhere without it." All the African delegations came together and said, "You have to add something on girls." So it was called "girlchild" in typical UN language. So the needs of the girlchild became an added element, which sounds like nothing. But it just blew it wide open, and it was because the African delegates said, "If you do not start at that age, then if they don't have access to health, and education, and everything else at that age, and if they're not free from violence, they won't make it to be women. The patterns are set then. They won't ever be able to make their contributions and to have that kind of life."

So it was a fascinating thing; and I remember thinking, "How? Are we walking around in the same meeting room at the UN?" But it was this condescending attitude that, if only Bella Abzug and the New York feminists would go away, all these demands for living free from violence, and having access to family planning, and being able to have access to vaccinations and education, all these annoying things would go away; if only the New York feminists weren't requiring it. Now it was a stunning point of view, but I was glad to see that, because it drove a lot of the public statements ever made from those who opposed the very idea of the conference.

Q: Well, it reflected itself quite recently in the sex scandals of the Catholic clergy messing around with altar boys and all this, which had been buried for probably centuries; and all of a sudden it had blown up. Again, the bishops didn't really understand. They didn't get it!

LOAR: Yes. Well, it was just a stunning closed-mindedness, and "we know better than they do," and "who are they to tell us," without really opening and listening to what these women from other countries were saying they needed and understanding who they were representing. This was the very kind of people that Christ stood up for and the kind of people the Catholic church and the Pope would speak about.

There was an interesting thing that the Pope did before this conference. He sent a letter to the women of the world, which was a beautiful document. He actually mentioned violence against women, because there were some issues with some in the church, none on the Vatican delegation necessarily, but in other parts of the world that if you really tackled this issue, when you get at it, you're talking about domestic violence, and if you're talking about domestic violence, at some point there may be a need for people to leave the family for safety reasons. So there were some on the Latin American delegations that said that you were really breaking up families when you were addressing this issue of domestic violence. But the Pope in his letter to the women of the world, it was really, actually, a beautiful statement about the value, and he actually got at violence against women, but didn't say domestic violence. So that was an interesting thing that he was really doing. And, ahead of this conference, he was recognizing this was an important meeting going on. I always say it must have been this Irish diplomat Archbishop Martin who was responsible for that because it was a very forward-looking statement. [Laughter] Of course the delegation wasn't necessarily guided by those lofty ideals all the time.

Just going back to what our delegation was trying to do: we spent a lot of time talking about the range of issues affecting women's lives, and what the goals of this conference were, why we were going, and why Hillary Clinton was expressing an interest in going. Of course she didn't really announce it right at the beginning there because there was such a flashpoint; but it was to represent America's interests and to have the U.S. engaging internationally on a whole range of these issues. It was important that we be part of these discussions, because it was China, and because there were these complicated issues related to reproductive health, which were still on the table. There had been no change from the Cairo conference, and those who lost there wanted to win, and those who felt they didn't win enough, wanted to win more. Then there was another whole set of other issues that came up. There were just real red herrings.

Q: This conference took place I've got from the 4th to the 15th of September 1995.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: How did this work once you got on the ground? I mean the NGOs were off to one side, out in the field -

LOAR: Yes, and there were some NGOs who were credentialed to be around the conference as well. But a lot of NGOs didn't care about the conference. They wanted to get together with women from other parts of the world and to work. I mean there were like 600 nuns who gathered. You know, I love telling that story. [Laughter] And I think I saw every one of them. The largest number of people did come from the U.S. because we have more means than most countries. The second largest number of NGOs who came, came from Japan. Large numbers of them were from all over Asia.

The NGOs represented a whole range of activities. So there was the disabilities tent; that actually became a point of real solidarity, because there was no means for disabled people to get around the conference because it was really muddy fields, and of course it rained the entire time, and so the people in wheelchairs had a very difficult time getting around. So it became an issue of how to get people access, and that became, I think, an issue that came to the fore, when it hadn't been fully addressed before.

An interesting thing happened when Madeleine Albright went out to the NGO Forum in Huairou: she was asked to speak to the Americans. So there was a North America tent, and everyone assumed she would go there. But she had heard about the difficulties that the women in wheelchairs were having, and she said, "Let me go to the disabled tent, and everyone can meet me there, because I don't want to have those women in wheelchairs not be able to hear and I want to have a chance to talk with them."

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It was a beautiful statement, and it was a great moment because it, I think, put everybody of the mind that, "Gee, you know, this is what she's doing. Let's all sort of take a look at that."

But when we got there, it was huge issues related to the UN, who was running at the UN conference, and who was providing protection around the parameters and the outside of the conference. The UN is supposed to be responsible for security of the site, but they were ceding the ground to the Chinese who were blocking journalists and NGOs from going into certain rooms. So that fell to the U.S., who played a huge role in standing up to the UN on that. And those were some interesting conversations, but we did prevail. Boutros Boutros-Ghali did not come to the conference, which was a stunning blow.

Q: Do you think that was? I mean -

LOAR: Stunning, because it was the largest UN conference ever, and he fell ill.

Q: Yes, he had to be impressed with so many, I guess.

LOAR: Well, if he had been there, he would have had to be responsible for standing up to the Chinese, and that wasn't in his interests since he was going to be seeking his second term.

Q: Ah!!

LOAR: But the timing of this conference too, and this is kind of all over the place. But we had this office at the State Department, and there was a real interest in NGOs knowing what was happening. So we held monthly public briefings in one of the public buildings here [in DC]. You didn't even need security clearance to get in; you were just able to go in - I think it was at OPM (Office of Personnel Management); at that time anybody could walk in and come into the big conference room there, the big theater. We held public briefings every month because we wanted to be open. This was a carry over from Tim Wirth's concept of how to bring NGOs in and be open with them, and this is a very interesting idea. Of course the State Department didn't want the briefings in that building; how would we ever get over there. But that was okay for us, because it was an open, easy place for people to get to.

So we would do these meetings every month, and every month you'd have another issue on the table where it'd be annoying things like, "Well, how do I know what clothes I should bring?" I was like, "We are not your travel agents." There was also, "I can't get the forms filled out," and "I want to be credentialed." So we would actually assign people. You know, Senator Helms had a whole set of groups who shared his views about these UN conferences, which was not on the supportive side, that were having the same difficulty getting their forms filled out to get credentials. We had a terrific staff member, Jeff Meer, who would sit down with Senator Helms's staff and these groups to help them fill out their forms, so they could come and beat us up at the conference. "But that is the way we're doing this." It's like, "You're an American. You should be part of this conference, too."

So we really made a point of doing this. We held these open meetings where we'd brief them, and I had people come up to me and say, "Why are you so anti-family" and I'd say, "You know, that's kind of a broad question, but in fact, I'm not. Why don't you come in and talk with me later on," and they'd come in, and I'd show them pictures of my sons in their soccer uniforms, and my brothers and sisters and say, "Actually, I'm not anti-family. And the U.S. delegation is not anti-family." And then the next time, at the next briefing, they'd stand up and say, "Now that I know you're not anti-family?" But my idea was to bring them in, and just talk with them, and perhaps give them less of a chance to misrepresent what you're doing and why you're doing it.

But there was just a whole range of groups. There were youth who wanted more youth issues involved, and there were people who hated China, "Why are we going to China." Actually in the course of this, Harry Wu went into China and got arrested a month before we were supposed to leave for China. Therefore, it meant all the leadership of the House, plus those who had the strongest views about U.S. family planning and abortion policies, wrote to the president to say, "I'm sure Mrs. Clinton, your wife, is not going to be going to this conference now that Harry Wu has been arrested and is being detained by the Chinese, because you would just be playing right into their hands." This is at the same time the U.S. had just renewed the most Favored Nation status for China. So it was okay to trade with them; it was just a problem to send women there to talk about democracy and all those ideas. It was a really interesting political stew.

There were hundreds of summer interns in Washington at the time. Our office was just getting so many requests for people to fill in the interns in Washington, and tell them that this really cool thing was happening. So we went to the State Department, and Ashley Maddox, a young person who saw no bounds, set up a briefing for all the interns in Washington to come hear Hillary Clinton talk about what the U.S. goals were at this conference. So, we held it, working closely with Hillary's office. Melanne Vermeer, who's in the picture here, who was Hillary's deputy chief of staff, and I worked very closely then. The idea was to have Mrs. Clinton come over, and just talk about the conference, why it was important, and what we were doing. And of course it was Hillary Clinton. It was all the Dean Acheson Auditorium and all of Loy Henderson Auditorium flow over. So there were, I don't know, hundreds, maybe 500. Having gotten the White House all on board, they were really rocking and rolling. Then we got a call from Maura Harty in the Secretary's office, who I knew well and just had a great relationship with, "Theresa, I hear Secretary [Warren] Christopher got wind of the fact that Hillary Clinton's coming over to the State Department." I said, "Yea, yea! She's going to do a briefing for interns!" She goes, "Well, would you want to have run that by us up here in the Secretary's office? That would have been good for us to know." [Laughter] Of course we worked it all out and everything else.

Then Harry Wu went into China and got arrested just days before the briefing was supposed to happen, and we had hundreds of interns ready to come into the building! So we ended up not making it a briefing on the Beijing Conference and what Hillary was going to do at the conference. Instead, it was a report on her trip to South Asia. But the level of interest in what was going on was just overwhelming. It was just not something the State Department is really structured to respond to.

And then there were all the international issues and the intelligence issues, and the Chinese were denying Americans visas. They would not give Americans visas, and we knew later that it was a real concerted effort; and the UN organizers at the conference were part of this effort: not giving forms out to Americans that they would need to go out to Chinese consulates; Chinese consulates were refusing Americans visas right and left, so Americans would go - this is how motivated people were - they'd go from city to city to find a Chinese consulate who'd give them a visa. I mean it was just a huge, huge effort. So we had all kinds of things that we had to deal with: Americans' interest, how to work with other governments, who were our allies, and what were the key things that we were going to focus on.

Q: Well, were you able to go to the Chinese? I mean the people you were talking to said, "You're really screwing things up!"

LOAR: Yes, yes. Many levels. We had Win [Winston] Lord, the Assistant Secretary of East Asia/Pacific there. Actually, was he there, or was he over at the NSC (National Security Council)? I forget where he was, but he was engaged in this. But I have to say, frankly, there was very little enthusiasm from anyone in our government, other than our little office and Mrs. Clinton's office, for the U.S. participation in this conference.

Q: Why?

LOAR: The NSC found it to be rather distasteful and annoying. EAP (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs), thought it wasn't in their interest and, "Gee, what was the point of this because we had a relationship with China. Why are we doing this? Why do this?"

But the reality is we didn't choose this conference, and we didn't choose China as our site, and this was the moment in time when Americans are very interested in these issues. They wanted us to engage; they were going to this conference, and we had an opportunity to really work with other people in other parts of the world, and build some consensus around these issues. It would have been a stepping back from the leadership responsibility if we hadn't gone; I think, we had to do it. But we weren't really popular. Many people just thought we were this place over there, and nobody wanted to share any intelligence with us or tell us anything.

Q: Did they ever use the term "pushy women?"

LOAR: Well, I was a Foreign Service officer; I was one of their people in the building; I wasn't some outsider. It wasn't really "pushy women." It was this inept - it was much more looking down on, "you really don't know what you're talking about; you don't really know your way around the UN." Well, we really did by then, because you go to several preparation meetings, and you know all the delegates, and you know that the same delegates will go from meeting to meeting, and you know who's going to be doing what.

The relationship with China was, you know, there were a lot of different things going on. But we didn't ask Harry Wu to walk into China and get arrested, and that was a very carefully timed thing, and meanwhile this train was moving down the track. Was the U.S. going to stay home? There were a number of women's organizations who thought that, and then supporters of Hillary said she shouldn't go, because it's not going to turn out well, and she shouldn't expose herself to this kind of possible condemnation or failure. So with no real institutional support in the U.S. government, and yet a lot of interest from NGOs and a lot of interest internationally in the U.S. engaging, she did make a decision to go, and it was a huge, powerful thing.

Her speech in Beijing was a beautifully written speech. Patrick Tyler of the New York Times said it was the strongest statement by any high-ranking or high-level VIP (Very Important Person) American on human rights issues in China. She delivered a stronger, more direct message to the Chinese on human rights than anyone had ever done before. At the same time, she really gave voice to a whole range of women's human rights issues that now everyone understands and knows, but had never been described as human rights issues.

The human rights community, even human rights organizations in the U.S., dismissed these ideas of dowry burning, female genital mutilation, and violence against women. Those were not human rights issues; those were about something else. I got a lot of discussion with the human rights folks over at the NSC on "how Mrs. Clinton really didn't understand human rights, and this was really going to be a problem for us." It was just a huge breakthrough.

Standing in the balcony and watching her deliver her speech was a very moving and unforgettable scene, because looking around the room you had delegates from India, from Thailand and Africa and men and women - primarily womedelegates, all packed in this hall. When she talked about dowry burnings in India, the Indian delegations would jump to their feet; and then she'd talk about something, a practice that was common in Africa, and the African delegates, with their beautiful outfits and head ribbons, would stand up and speak; and when she talked about human rights abuses in China, including those that took away the rights of the individual and their family to decide the number and spacing of children, including forced family planning, Chris [Christopher] Smith, a congressman who I grew up with, and who was really opposed to U.S. participation in the conference, jumped up and applauded her. So Clinton's speech was a real strong statement that "women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights." This had been a concept moving around in the NGO community and the women's rights community, but she really brought the attention of the world to this conference and to these issues. It was very, very powerful, and moving, and exhausting; but, it was a great moment.

Q: Did you feel in the aftermath that the agenda had changed in a way?

LOAR: I think it had a profound effect. I know it has had a profound effect.

Q: Violence against women and other things like that are not part of the agenda.

LOAR: I think the Beijing Conference had a huge effect in policy development. I think it was a watershed event that led to a number of things. A year later I was in a senior position at the State Department focusing on women's human rights and foreign policy. So I was in a position to see what was happening in other parts of the world as follow-ups to this conference and to stay in touch with a number of the delegates and ministers for women, and ministers in other areas that I had worked with. And, our embassies were starting to do some reporting; and also all the ministers for women of other countries and delegates I had worked with would come in to see me. So I would regularly hear from people what they were doing after this conference.

At first, we had four interns in our office at this office at State, and they were tracking the changes, and pulling down cables, and I found they were kept fairly busy. Then, months went by, and you just couldn't keep track of all the cables from the field, and you couldn't keep track of all the changes that had been made since the conference. We stopped monitoring this because, for example, in Latin America the women legislators formed a group, and they just would work together across, all over, from one country to another in Latin America, to strengthen the laws of violence against women, to criminalize rape, to criminalize domestic violence, to set up new government policies on the issue of violence against women. It was just if you track the legislation in Latin America and how those countries deal with these issues, you can see right after the Beijing conference from Panama to Chile, to Columbia, to Ecuador, what they did, and how they used each other's legislative tools, and how they set up police units in Brazil; and it was just a stunning, stunning series of issues.

And what it was was that if you had an interest in these issues as a legislator, or a woman in government, or as an NGO, you had a consensus document from the United Nations that was agreed to by 189 countries - a consensus document. Now you may have pages of reservations from certain delegations, but it was basically that violence against women is an impediment to development, violence against women is human rights abuse, women should have access to a full range of health care across their life span, and educating girls is a value to the country, not just to the family.

Q: Many of those things you might have reservations against, but it's pretty hard to have reservations against violence against anybody.

LOAR: Yes, well, if it breaks up families though, you have to look at the greater good. But, now I wouldn't share that view -

Q: Yes, but there were -

LOAR: But there were some other countries who expressed that view. But in other areas, I definitely think that the fact that there had been this huge conferencing in Beijing, and this global discussion about empowering women, and strengthening woman values, and the importance of families and communities in growth of nations, for women and girls to be treated fairly and with some justice. I think that dialogue, all of that, was still around a year later in October of 1996 when the Taliban moved into the capital of Afghanistan, and said that girls can't be educated, and women can't walk outside the home without being accompanied by a male.

I think, I know I wouldn't have been able to play the role I played, and I don't think our government would have responded the way we did if we had not had this conference ahead of time. It laid the groundwork, and that was happening in capitals all over the world. It happened in Japan, and it happened in Australia, and it happened in other countries where they were not going to recognize the Taliban, because there were these new sets of issues now a year old on the table.

It was October '96, when the Taliban came in. The conference had been a year before. It really laid the groundwork for countries saying, "Well, you know, you really can't treat half of your population this way because they're basic human rights. Girls should be educated. The world agrees to that. We all came together and talked about the value of educating girls a year ago." So it really laid the groundwork for the U.S. and many other countries denying the Taliban a seat at the UN and - just because they had control of the majority of their territory at some point, had more guns than anybody else - not recognizing them as a government. I know there were other issues, but it was one of the issues on the table. So it had a really profound effect.

Q: Oh, yes, this did. Oh, yes, this one, I think, caught the attention more than anything else.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: More people against the Taliban. Well, what did you do after the conference and all?

LOAR: Well, right before the conference it was Women's Equality Day, the day that women had gained their right to vote, August 26th. And we were thinking about what happens when you get back from the conference. How do you carry this all forward, because there was such a push, and such a drive now. Right after the Africans sort of opened up the document to include a whole series of issues around girls and girlchild, the Australians said, "And by the way, shouldn't all countries come up with a series of commitments, what they're going to do afterwards? Because now we know how these UN conferences work. You need commitments." So the U.S., and I were like "Thanks Australia! Another thing we have to do to get ready for this conference."

So then we had to have an interagency government working group for that. "Okay. Labor, what do you have? And Justice? Okay. You need your Violence Against Women Office. Okay. Labor, what do you have? HHS (Health and Human Services)? So we tried to get a series of commitments, which we had to know were going to be carried out. So we had to quickly put together, "What does the U.S. government think it can do, knows it can do because we can't make these commitments; so get all these things put on the front burner, pushed up to the line."

And one of the things we said we would do was to set up an interagency working group to follow up on all the recommendations that came out of the conference, and that's what we did. It was the President's Interagency Council on Women, and it was announced by President Clinton a few weeks before we left for the conference. And then we came back and that was the first thing to come up. We set it up in the White House, and Hillary's office was very involved and very interested. HHS was sort of funding our office. I was the director of the council, and it was on that back picture over there. But that's for the next time.

But this was a really fabulous idea, and I guess it was; you come back from a conference; you said you were going to do all these things. How do you set up a mechanism to continue to work together as a government, bringing together government agencies; and how do you set up something that allows you to work with other countries and to respond to the NGOs in your own country. So it was a combination of all those things together that kind of led to the Interagency Council on Women.

Q: Okay. So we'll pick this up for next time at about?'96 or so.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: Where we'll be talking about the time after the Beijing Conference, and dealing with interagencies to put together a coherent package to deal with the issue.

LOAR: Yes, right. Okay.

Q: Fascinating!

LOAR: Great!

Q: When you left there, the women's meeting in Beijing, you went to the what, Interagency Council? What happened?

LOAR: Well, a few months before we left for the Beijing Conference (the conference was September 1995), the Australian government put this new idea into the mix, and that is, that every country would have to come with a series of commitments on what they would do to follow up. You know, we all thought it was a great idea; but it was a big pain in the neck to us who were actually organizing, because we then had to have a series of government commitments to announce, and we wanted to announce things that we knew we could get done, and we were trying to do it on an interagency basis.

One of the things we wanted to do when we returned from this conference was to have some follow-up mechanism, a coordinating body that would take the ideas from the conference and build them into the way our government does work. So President Clinton announced on Women's Equality Day on August 26, 1995, which was the 75th anniversary of the women's right to vote, that on returning home from Beijing, we would set up an interagency council. It would be called the President's Interagency Council on Women. It would be a government task force of high-level representatives of the federal branch, and they would carry on the good ideas that came out of this conference. That was just a couple of weeks before we left for the conference.

We wanted to do that because there were NGOs who were pushing to set up a government NGO body. There were some who wanted to set up an NGO body endorsed by the government. I think our thinking in trying to set up a government task force was government had responsibility for these issues. We wanted to make government have responsibility for these issues. We knew we had strong leadership with Hillary Clinton, who was willing to get behind it. We had Donna Shalala, who was the cabinet secretary at HHS, who was going to be coming to the conference and was very supportive. So we knew we had some of the wherewithal and oomph within government to do it; and we didn't want to expose ourselves to NGOs calling for an NGO commission; apparently there had been something along those lines under President Carter. But we thought we didn't want to leave it to NGOs to do the work or NGOs to advocate for what government should do because we were really leading this, and we kind of knew what needed to be done. So we wanted to see what we could put together. So the government task force was announced, and it was set up, and we came back from the conference.

I talked about the conference in the past - the largest gathering, the largest UN conference ever, and the largest number of Americans who ever traveled to go to a conference outside the U.S. or any international meeting.

So we came back and there were great expectations.

At the conference, Hillary Clinton delivered this extremely strong speech about women's rights and human rights; it was very well received by the international community, and by the Americans who attended. Madeleine Albright, who was our U.S. Ambassador to the UN (and this was a UN conference), announced the commitments, including this commitment that we'd set up this organizing body within the government.

So we came back, and we had to think about where this would be. Melanne Verveer, who was Mrs. Clinton's deputy chief of staff at the time, knew there was a real interest in really carrying this forward. She was very instrumental in helping us set this interagency task force up over at the White House, and that would mean that one agency had to sponsor it. HHS agreed to sponsor it, one way or other. Donna Shalala became the chair of this task force, with Hillary Clinton as the honorary chair. We had office space in the New Executive Office Building. Some of the team who had been with me in preparing for the conference, like Jeff Meer, who's a Foreign Service officer and who was a terrific human rights negotiator and all around very capable Foreign Service officer, came over with us; and Kathy [Kathleen] Hendrix, who had been appointed and had been key in the office in preparing for Beijing. Kathy Hendrix had been an appointee to the Clinton administration; she started as a speechwriter for Cliff [Clifton] Wharton, who was the Deputy Secretary for a period of time; and then when we were getting ready for Beijing and setting up this Beijing office to get ready for the conference (the conference secretariat), she came on board; and Kathy had been a reporter for the LA Times for 20 years; she had attended a previous women's conference as she was a terrific writer and conceptual, able to think in broad ways about women's rights and building this into what governments could be doing; she came over. Lycia Sibilla, who's a Foreign Service spouse, and came into the office before the Beijing Conference, and did terrific work with us at the conference, she was also over with us.

So we had the same crew who was getting ready for the conference then detailed over to set up this post-conference interagency task force.

Q: Well, you had other issues too. I mean-

LOAR: Right. So there were ten concrete issues that were the basis of the Beijing Conference: violence, workplace issues, labor issues, health issues, education for girls - the whole life span approach to needs that needed to be addressed, with the whole idea that women's rights are human rights and putting women at the center of development is sort of key for the progress of nations. That was 1995 and not a universally accepted idea by any means, but there was more direct language in how to speak about it and how to tie it to the future of countries and to country's development.

And so this team, which helped put this together, came over; we opened up this office at the White House, which was a lot of fun. In designing a logo, Lycia Sibilla decided we should use the White House logo [laughter], which I loved, so we had stationary cards, and everything else. We had to find furniture; we had to build it, just like we had done before the Beijing Conference, like this was our [laughter] destiny - to be entrepreneurs and set up offices, to set things going, and to get people moving.

And it was actually great fun because we were in the New Executive Office Building. We had a trace of space in the Old Executive Office Building, which, unless we did what Ollie North did - which was to build a second level of offices within the office, which was not anything we were going to consider doing - was extremely crowded and tight; and we would only have room for one or two people. But we wanted this crew who we had been working with and who were very committed to moving us forward. We knew we would want volunteers to come in and help. We thought people from other agencies might want to come in, because we were really trying to focus on what other government agencies could be doing and to be working as a joint body to take some of these ideas and suggestions for government action out of this conference. So it was a lot of fun.

We started by looking at the Beijing Platform for Action, which was a call to action that was a consensus document (we were saying how hard it is to get consensus, but that's the way the UN works), and had key strategies in the ten important areas, calling for action in the basic guidelines. What the Beijing Platform for Action was, was a roadmap for what governments could be doing, and what the international community could do to improve the status of women, to make women full partners in society and to give them full access to health, and to bring them into the political mechanisms. It opened up the doors to taking action against violence against women and really looked at the whole set of needs for women and girls. As I said before, the African delegations really insisted on an emphasis on girls, and they were very, very successful in doing that.

So we looked at this, and at the current government. We realized that there were a number of high-level women appointees throughout the federal government under President Clinton. What we really wanted was a decision maker, and this was Kathy Hendrix.

I was thinking about what this interagency council, this body, this taskforce could be. Melanne Verveer, who was in the First Lady's office, was also key in these discussions and looking at: what the taskforce was, and who we wanted from an agency. We wanted someone who could deliver that agency; we want somebody who cared about this issue and doesn't see this as a meeting to sit down with Donna Shalala or Hillary Clinton, but was really a go-getter and really committed to wanting to do this. And there was a series of sort of talking with who would be the best representative. In some cases it was the Deputy Secretary, like at Education: Madeleine Kunin was the Deputy Secretary of Education. She had been at the conference; she had been at previous UN conferences and really obviously had an ability.

Q: She had also been governor of -

LOAR: Of Vermont.

Q: Vermont.

LOAR: After leaving Education, she went out to be our ambassador to Switzerland.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But she also could deliver the agency. So, they were representatives, but they had to bring with them people who could carry out things. It wasn't our job to say, "Okay Education, here's the ten things you have to do." Our job, what Kathy Hendrix and I did, was to make house calls to the different representatives and these agencies, and explain, "This is what came out of this Beijing Conference." Some were intimately involved, because they had been involved from the beginning in planning for the conference. But, some agencies didn't have representation at the conference and weren't part of the planning process. Therefore, in some cases, it was explaining anew what we were trying to focus on, like at Agriculture.

Q: I was wondering, could you talk about some of the agencies and how they felt about this, starting with the State Department. Were you still a State Department representative or what?

LOAR: Well, I was actually. That was actually my title, State Department Representative, though the other title was Director, because somebody had to be in charge of this task force. You had your Chair, which was Donna Shalala, who had come to the conference, and been very active in the preplanning, and very committed to these issues throughout her career, but especially as Secretary of Health and Human Services. Someone had to be the organizer and pull it together. Kathy Hendrix was the associate director.

We represented our agencies. However, as the State Department people had been the organizers and had planned the conference before it took place, we had a broader role afterwards; that is, since our government has made these commitments at an international conference, we at State then had the responsibility for carrying out those commitments.

Q: Did you find this a handy tool to use to beat people over the head by saying, "Well, I'm sorry, but the government has committed to it, so?"

LOAR: Well, being a diplomat, of course, one doesn't [laughter] hit anyone over the head. What we did actually, we didn't make any? we wanted some maverick group working outside of channels. I was a Foreign Service officer, and had the additional advantage or burden (however you look at it) of 12 years of Catholic schooling.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So I was very conscious of hierarchy, and consensus, and bringing people on board. Before we went to the conference, getting those commitments was a little bit of a tough process. It was tough getting people to think big, broad and bold.

But there were people in these agencies who really wanted to do things. An example was the Department of Justice. There was a new law, the "Violence Against Women Act" that Joe Biden [Joseph R. Biden, Jr.] had been key in getting passed. This new law, the Violence Against Women Act, was really landmark legislation worldwide for looking at issues of violence against women. This was the first time there was a federal government response to these issues, and as far as I know, was the first anywhere in the world, to mandate that a new office, the Violence Against Women's Office, be opened at the Department of Justice and to build this into the criminal justice system and to get a criminal justice system response. This is a very specific commitment. But we wouldn't have announced this if there wasn't a law, and an office that was opening up, and someone very dynamic and strong who was running that office who was appointed by President Clinton - Bonnie Campbell, who used to be the attorney general in the state of Iowa, and who worked closely with Senator Biden in writing the law.

So it wasn't hitting people on the head. For a lot of people who cared about these issues, it was finding a way for them to push some of the things they were working on from the back burner to the front burner, and to think broadly. "Okay Department of Education, is there anything in the education area the U.S. government could be announcing: education for girls, issues related to equity, or other key issues in education. We're not the education experts, you are. Okay. So what is it you would want to announce; but, don't give us anything to announce that you can't follow through on."

So there are issues of microcredit, for example, at the Treasury Department. There was an office focus on microcredit and microlending.

Q: Could you explain what microcredit and microlending are?

LOAR: It's small loans, making small loans to people so that, and -

Q: Essentially for business.

LOAR: It's for businesses and for income generating.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And it's one of the great tools of development that was pioneered by Mohammed Yunus in Bangladesh.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And is now a very universally recognized way to lift people up.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It has a disproportionate benefit for women, because as the microlending projects would start, women would pay back at a higher rate and would take the money they would get from their investments and invest it in their families. So those in development started looking at this as a great way to help people generally, but specifically something that was particularly helpful to women, as women would use it as a tool to move their families forward, to educate their children, to feed their families, to get better access for health care.

But within our Treasury Department, to have an office that's a community development fund, I believe, and an office that was focused on microfinance and microlending in the United States, was very important, because this was an idea that was being used in and had gained a lot of interest in the international development community. Actually, Hillary Clinton, when she was the First Lady of Arkansas, had been very interested in taking some of these ideas and bringing those to Arkansas. So I think there was strong support from the First Lady at that time to have something within Treasury look at this and at how microcredit and microfinance could be available and helpful to people in the United States through the Treasury Department, which is a very interesting idea. So that office made a commitment to announcing awards once a year for the best microcredit projects in the United States. They were going to really encourage the capital banks here in the United States to look at how to invest more in these types of loans and to make more of these kinds of funds available to people. So that was another very practical thing.

And at the Labor Department? I'm trying to think of the best ones.

At HHS, Health and Human Services, of course there were a lot of things on women's health. One of them was looking at women and HIV/AIDS [human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome], which in 1995 people were looking at. It wasn't as prominent an issue as it is now, nor as prevalent. Unfortunately, it is much more prevalent now. The incidence of HIV/AIDS in women now is just about equal to that of men in new cases. So, there were some very serious commitments from there.

But it was the process, as I was saying beforehand, of getting people and agencies to commit. It's diplomacy, but it was also that there was always someone in some agency who really wanted to get things done.

Q: You weren't having, in a way, to sell the product.

LOAR: We were trying to elevate the product.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Okay. So if somebody said, "Well, I could do?" "Yeah, it's really interesting, but don't you have a bigger, higher, or more fabulous thing that you would want the United States to be identified with - something really important?" In some cases it was a cabinet secretary who grabbed for the biggest thing. In some cases it came from mid-level.

It came together though, and they were all doable, concrete things that the U.S. government could announce. So the immediate job or task of this interagency task force was to carry those out, and that would mean me, and I would go to Education and say, "Okay, Education, you said you were going to do this. Let's make sure it gets done." But this wasn't like hitting people over the head. They really wanted to do this.

Q: Oh yes.

LOAR: But some of the agencies, like, for example, the Department of Agriculture (Ag), hadn't been part of the planning. This was a great exercise and a fun thing for me because I got to find out what every federal agency does. Even though I grew up in New Jersey, the farm state, I didn't have much experience in the agricultural area! [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And so to find out what Ag does was a great revelation to me. They had huge programs for welfare and feeding children in families. They had tremendous numbers of loan programs. The representative who came on board from the Department of Agriculture was Jill Long Thompson, who'd been a member of Congress from Indiana. She was from a farm state, and she recently ran again. I don't know if she won her election or not. I have to look to see. But she was very dynamic and a statistician.

So after Beijing, we went over to Ag and Kathy and I introduced ourselves and sat down with Jill who had some of her team and her staff there and said "We're going to do great things."

And I thought, "Ag didn't make a commitment at the time of the conference, but let us look at and talk through some of the things that you think we could be looking at, or let me tell you some of the things we're thinking about, and we can think them through." So we thought through these ideas with them. Kathy Hendrix, in particular, had a great mind for thinking for what we call gender mainstreaming now, which is looking at, how you bring women into the process of developing policy, or how you look at policy and see how it affects women, so that women get a fair share.

Jill Long Thompson at that time was right in the middle of doing a major survey to determine how the Department of Agricultural loan programs were working and who they were serving. So they looked at who you have to talk to, and then at what information we find out from this survey which told us that people said they needed from the Department of Agricultural loan programs; and after talking to us, she said, "Well, maybe I'll put a separate little line here that will ask the person to identify their gender - male and female - and then also identify whether they call themselves a farmer or not." And she came back to us later on to say, "We found we had certain assumptions about who the farmer was in the family; and there may be a farming family, but often, in many cases, it was the mother and the woman who was the farmer. Because the husband, because farming wasn't as lucrative as it had been ...

Q: Yes, he was at the factory.

LOAR: ?he was off getting employment outside the family. So we found by doing this survey that we were really talking to female farmers, and then what their particular needs or interests were as far as not just loans, but also other services that the Ag Department provides to people: distance learning, and access to social services. So it was a fascinating example to us, and particularly to me, where I didn't know agriculture from a hole in the wall. However, here was this leader, one of the under secretaries at the Agriculture Department, who took some of the ideas and concepts that came from this big UN conference and decided to look at it in her own work. That was just the first of many things that she would do.

She was just such a go-getter. The council was filled with senior appointees like this, most of whom were women. We had a couple guys from the NSC; we also had someone from the State Department in addition to us. But we had these women who had high-level appointments, who took some of these ideas and concepts, and now had a mandate.

See this is the fascinating thing! The interagency council, as we wrote the announcement for the president to announce, was going to be a task force designed to carry out the good ideas from this conference. Okay? So it was a mandate from the President of the United States for people to take the ideas from this conference and integrate them into their work. What does that mean? Well, we sit down with people and we talk through these ideas of the conference; we have a mandate which is important to have, and we convene. So you need, you could call it pep rallies, which are also a way to bring people together to say, "Look what's here, look what this person's doing!" This is important because people get ginned up by each other if you have people working at a similar level in government with a common task coming together for meetings. So we had a meeting. We had a couple of meetings. It wasn't huge, and everybody wouldn't get together every month because these people had high-level positions and a lot going on. They didn't need a lot of these meetings; but we did a couple at the White House, and then later on, when we moved to State, we did it there. But Donna Shalala and Hillary Clinton would come, and of course that would be very invigorating and exciting -

Q: Oh yes.

LOAR: ?especially Hillary Clinton, the First Lady, for these women appointees from different parts of the government. We had people report on what they did: "Jill, could you talk a little about your project at Agriculture and what you're planning to do?"

And another really, truly dynamic and fascinating person was Sally Shelton-Colby, who was one of the top administrators at USAID. Sally was one of the proponents of putting women at the center of development, and so was a leader in the U.S. government's efforts to do that since the beginning of the Clinton administration. And, she'd been to the Beijing Conference with us, and had played a really significant role there, and was very, very engaged. So Sally was a great model for others and she'd say: "As I look at development and at what AID is trying to do - alleviating poverty and raising the standard of living for people around the world - by investing in women, we find this to be an important thing."

But more than just those words, she had actually done a very comprehensive review of how AID was conducting its programs: very concrete and businesslike, and intended to get people thinking about, whether concerns of women were being addressed. For example: in this water project, were women designing where the wells should be in that village, since they're the ones who are actually going to go out and get the water. So, really concrete things were being addressed as the programs were being structured so that women were not just the beneficiaries at the end, but also the designers of the programs and of the product of the program. So Sally would come, and she'd be a great model for others, because she had been doing this for a while, and she had the language of it, and she was very elegant.

She is still a very elegant woman, and very articulate, and had a lot of pizzazz, and had been an ambassador during the Carter administration, had a lot of authority and was very comfortable using it. The interesting thing from this meeting is that she would then listen to Bonnie Campbell, who was the head of this brand new Violence Against Women's Office at the Justice Department, talk about the 1.6 billion dollars that was authorized through the Violence Against Women Act. What Bonnie was doing was working with the criminal justice system in the United States to get those grants out to the police level, to the prosecutors, and hopefully some day to the judges, so they might even look at this issue, and to community groups. Basically, it was getting the criminal justice system to respond to this issue as mandated by the law. Sally heard that and said, "Well, internationally, in the work I'm doing on development, I'd like to have some more information to see how we can make use of some of these ideas on a law, and its uses, and the legal structures. That would be helpful in some of these countries to address the issue of violence against women." So we had this natural discussion.

When you had highly motivated people coming together under the leadership of Hillary Clinton, everybody got excited about coming together and being in the room, and the agenda was planned to some degree, because we'd have Bonnie talk about what she was doing, and Sally talk about the law. But then there were these things that you couldn't predict, where Sally would say, "Well, I'd like to think about what I could be doing with that violence," or "Bonnie, would you come and give me some advice," and, "Could you help brief some of the people in my area who are working in the issues of development and democracy building;" and there were just many others.

There was a great person over at the Department of Transportation, and I remember Kathy Hendrix and I would be, "Oh, my God! What the heck is the Department of Transportation? What is this?" And you know, true State Department snobs that we were [laughter] -

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And I remember we went over to the woman who was the chief of staff to Secretary Pena, Ann Bormolini, she was from Denver. She was the chief of staff, and she was just terrific. There was another woman there whose name I forget. But when we walked away from there, we said, "We didn't realize that transportation was a feminist issue, did we?"

Q: You didn't know, huh!

LOAR: Who would think? They said, "Okay, these are some of the things we've been thinking about, but we're going to move them to the front burner." And it wasn't as though we were hitting people over the head; it was really broadening their thinking and giving them a context and a framework to work on some of these issues, so that it wasn't like, "all I'm organized to do. What next?" One of their key issues was, that if you look at who's using public transportation, low-income women and older women, women that are kind of at the margins of society use it disproportionately to men. Like, oh really! That's interesting! So you have to look at how you're making public transportation available to them. And it was just fascinating to dig at the things that they were going to be doing. hey wanted to fill us in on that, and it was great.

And then we would act as some sort of link. For example, someone would say, "And what about helping women who are visiting prisoners and family members who are in prison?" And I'd think, "Oh, I know there's someone at the Justice Department working on that too." So we were like this switching gear and a link for people so they could come together.

Now the NGO community assumed, "Oh, doesn't the government work that way?" "HELLO! No!"

Q: No! [Laughter]

LOAR: "It doesn't work that way. We would certainly like government to work that way, but it doesn't." It wasn't that we came up with every idea of what people needed to do, but this task force gave them a way to coordinate; and yes, we were cheerleaders, and pushing them up higher, and using whatever it would take to get people active in getting it done. But people wanted to do this too! They were excited about having something that many of them thought was important validated as an important and significant government action.

Q: Well, in a way, you were pushing or doing this at the right time. I think we've gone through sort of the revolutionary aspect which was kind of resented by a lot of guys because women were pushing too hard and all. That was over.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: Correct me if I'm wrong, but this was the time when we began to ask, "What are we going to do about it?"

LOAR: Yes. And it's also that we were all very conscious, having been through this UN conference and all the difficulties [laughter] that we encountered there, how you talk about these issues, and how you frame the issues. So it wasn't something that's counter to or taking away from something else, but became fully integrated into everything else you were doing. It wasn't like the chief of staff at the Department of Transportation was going to stop something else that she was doing; but it was sort of building this into it so it's enhanced.

We also looked at this as not something that benefited women, but women and their families. We used that language a lot, and it wasn't for manipulative purposes; it was true. Okay, if you know an elderly woman has better access to public transportation, well, that's great for her whole family then, isn't it? And if a woman in the Justice Department who has been subjected to violence, now has access to some services and is able to get the legal remedy she needs, isn't that better for her family? Of course it is!

So it was fun though. We were building and creating as we went, and doing this we were sort of the "true believers" here in our little office at the White House. There was so much energy and so much interest.

One example is one representative from each agency would convene meetings. Bonnie Campbell at Justice pulled together the Criminal Justice people, for the victims - now there's a whole office on victims' services. In the Criminal Justice Office there was a person who was doing a study and said, "We're looking at why there are higher rates of female juvenile delinquency, why there's more juvenile crime among females than there was in the past." And then one of the mid-level people from HHS was looking at this and saying, "Yes, and we're really worried about the high teenage pregnancy rate." And the Education Department person said, "Yes, I'm more worried about the dropout rate." So the three of them started working together. You would think that this would already be happening, but it wasn't.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Now was this revolutionary? No, it was fabulous! It was good government policy. Well, how do we keep girls in school? Okay, that's Education's. How do we keep them from getting involved in criminal activity? That was Justice's concern. And then HHS, how do we keep them from getting pregnant and making those unwise choices? So it was good common sense and great government policy. And like I was a true leader in government before? But this whole exercise made me just thrilled about what the possibilities were of what government could be doing. And, I thought back to my Uncle Jim McCabe, who inspired me to think about working for the Foreign Service in the first place and his perpetual flame to FDR, and I thought that was how my uncle looked at government. That was how my parents looked at government. It's something that really rescued people, could save them, could lift them up, could help them achieve their American dreams. And I was thinking this while looking at this work and the people who were working all over the government. It became very interesting and very fun for us to be able to think about how to elevate this issue to get more people focused on it and to get them working together to develop new policies that really made a difference.

Q: How did you find Donna Shalala operated? I mean she was a Washington or an American phenomenon. She was a short little woman with just this tremendous drive, who, I think, even attacked a thief one time.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: How did you find working with her?

LOAR: Donna Shalala is a phenomenally gifted and talented person, who I think we were very lucky to have as our Secretary of HHS for the two terms of the Clinton administration, which was a giant, tough job. She's just charming, and feisty, and smart, and was fabulous! She has terrific leadership, and she was so much fun at the Beijing Conference.

I don't remember if I told this story on tape. At the Beijing Conference, one of the episodes happened when we went out to the NGO (Non-governmental Organization) Forum, which the Chinese had moved outside of Beijing into this open, rural area called Huairou, where there were no facilities. It was literally just this flat open land. They figured out that NGOs were perhaps not there for a craft fair, but to really promote democracy [laughter] and things like that. They were a little bit troubled by that, so they moved them away from where they thought the press would be, and where they might infect other people; so they put them out in the countryside.

So we had this terrible place to go to. Everyone traveled out to it as we were determined to do as a U.S. delegation. It was one of the things I felt was extremely important: that the U.S. delegation be out and about at this NGO Forum. It was a pain in the neck, because it was probably an hour outside of Beijing, and it was through these difficult roads.

Of course Donna Shalala, being just the grassroots organizer she was, who came from nowhere and was a completely self-made person by the dint of her talent and her determination, was determined to go out to this NGO Forum. The First Lady, Hillary Clinton, was going to give a big speech at the NGO Forum, which was another big point of contention, because people said, "Oh, you shouldn't! It's too wild and crazy out there!" It was like, "HELLO! That's where the democracy advocates and the NGO organizers are going to be. Some of them are going to be in the UN meeting in town, but the real movers and shakers, those whom we want to influence, and to know that America supports what they are doing, because we are also for freedom and democracy, and all this, were going to be there."

So we had a caravan of members of Congress, including Connie Morella from Maryland, who's just the most wonderful person. We had Jane Harman from California, and Carolyn McCarthy, a congresswoman from New York; and we had members of the press; Andrea Mitchell was on one of these vans. and I'm trying to think who else was in the group going out to the NGO forum. Clare Shipman was there, as well as a few other really prominent people who are now even more prominent; and we had cabinet members. We [laughter] were working our way through the roads, and of course, the caravan got split up. There were great stories of how people broke through, and got to the forum.

The meeting room where Hillary Clinton was going to give this big speech to the NGOs, which was going to be a real highlight for those who didn't have access to the UN meetings, and who were traipsing around in the mud because it had rained for days out there. But what the Chinese did was to decide that they were going to fill the room with their own people, meaning the Chinese male guards who were out to protect people from democracy I guess. So, they had the whole room filled, and they would just empty the room out row by row letting in people who they determined were okay. But there was actually pushing and shoving at one point; and Donna Shalala and Governor Tom [Thomas] Kean, former Republican governor of my home state, New Jersey (who was a great human being, who speaks with a New England accent, by the way [laughter]), he and Donna - now he's quite a tall man and Donna is a?is not a tall person - and the two of them I remember [laughter]. I'll never forget this picture! We also had Win [Winston] Lord who was the Assistant Secretary for Asia, who was very game, and had come on the plane with the First Lady. I remember them sort of being pushed around by the guards (and literally, you could see that the guards liked the pictures, because the press was fascinated by this - see the guards sort of pushing them), and you could see these tough guys with crew cuts and slippers. I remember Donna saying, "You know, those of us who've been through the women's movement have seen tougher times than this!"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And I think they got into the meeting room to hear Hillary Clinton's speech. I don't know. But the Chinese were just so heavy-handed, and so ridiculous. Donna was terrific at sound bites and communicating clearly, in addition to just being someone who was just determined it was all going to get done.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I remember at one of these interagency council meetings, we had one time over at HHS in one of her fancy, schmancy board rooms, or we may have had it at the White House. I can't remember the location. But Donna said, "You know, you're all from these other agencies, and all those other cabinet members are my friends. So if there are things that you'd like me to pass a word along to them on, they'd be happy to hear from me." [Laughter] I'm sure they wouldn't. But suddenly these agencies thought, "Oh, yeah! Donna will help us out. She'll drop a word there for us." And, of course, people would deeply resent Donna Shalala telling them what to do with their agency [laughter]. But her idea was, "If we can do it in my agency, they can do it in other places, too."

And she just empowered people with her sense of optimism, determination, and bold thinking. "We are here in government to do good for the American people, and this is one of the things we're going to do, and we're going to do it right, and we're going to make it effective, and by gosh we're all going to do it!" She was very good. There were a number of things like that, where she would speak very plainly, very directly, and very clearly. She knew how to take ideas, and to boil them down to two or three points whose meaning people could understand. She was very energetic.

Q: Coming from this from the foreign relations viewpoint, were you in contact with other countries? Or were they saying, "What are you doing?" and you'd say, "We're doing this," and you would keep them informed; and then did you see any results of this?

LOAR: Well, this first year, being outside of the State Department and being detailed over to the White House, was actually a time I had less international contact than I had in previous times in the State Department. But the word started spreading.

Anytime there was a minister for women or anyone who had served on the Beijing delegation who came through Washington, they usually found their way over to our office. It was sort of like a high-five. "Yes, wasn't that great!" Other countries were very interested to know and would ask, "What is the U.S. doing? So you set up a government task force, and you mean you have your central White House supporting this? And you have a cabinet member of some means and significance as your chair? And you have your First Lady as your honorary chair? And you have a budget too?"

And our budget was really just to sort of?we didn't need much. We weren't doing much, other than writing reports on what people were doing. We'd been asked to conduct speaking tours around the country, and we could only respond to a portion of those, but we did try to get everybody out talking about what they were doing. So it was really just a matter of organizing and moving people together.

But I remember the Japanese government decided they were going to do a follow-up. They sent in these fellows who were with a private foundation in Japan - I guess they were like a think tank - to interview us at length. And I thought, "Isn't this cool. They're interested in what we're doing." We were interested, and asked them what they intended to do, and they said, "We haven't decided yet what we're going to do. So we wanted to hear what works, and what are good mechanisms, and things like that."

And we would regularly meet with some of the women's ministers and delegates from other countries, and hear what they were doing.

At this time we weren't doing much on email, unfortunately. We didn't have much means to communicate internationally. But we did see the cables that came in regularly from our embassies in other countries. But for that first six month to a year period, it was much more focused on pulling our government agencies together.

Q: This is what, '96 to??

LOAR: September of 1995 [Beijing Conference]. So October of 1995 we opened the doors of the President's Interagency Council on Women.

The other component of that was there was a consensus among the UN people on something. Everyone agreed on what they would do. After about a year after the conference, all countries would report to their citizens on what they had done to follow through on the commitments they had made at the conference. (And I do think, again, this is the Australians putting this on the table, which was wonderful.) They also had to hear from citizens about what they thought their government should do. Can you imagine this getting into a UN document? It really was democracy gone wild! [Laughter]

Q: Yes, yes. [Laughter]

LOAR: But bringing NGOs into the process of government. We took that very seriously, of course, as we said we were going to do this. So what were we going to do? And a couple people said, "Well, we'll have a little conference here in Washington, and blah, blah, blah, and people can come in." Then all the sharks started coming in with their proposals: "My firm will do this for this amount of money, yah, blah, blah, blah."

Then we had a wonderful person, Joan Winship, who was from Iowa, and who was with the Stanley Foundation. The Stanley Foundation is a private foundation whose goal is to support and encourage Americans to be involved in international issues. She had been very involved in one of the NGOs we had worked closely with in preparing for Beijing. And Joan said, "When we do conferences across the country, we would never do it in one city. Certainly you don't want to do it in Washington! That's like not the center of the United States! Why don't you do it on broadcast via satellite, and you can downlink it to community colleges all across the country?" And we said, "Well, how do we do that?" She said, "Well, here's the organization, community colleges, and they love doing these kinds of things, and just take it from there." So the idea that Joan Winship presented to Kathy Hendrix and me - was a way to report back to the American people in an open way which allowed people to really think about and to hear what you're doing, and to understand what you're doing, and also to have some input. We actually made that one of the key projects we wanted to do: to find a way to do this end-of-year summary, in addition to the reports we were getting out.

But even before the Beijing Conference, we had started doing public briefings because people were intensely interested in all kinds of issues. We did these open public briefings at the Office of Personnel Management, which you could get in without being precleared. (I guess you just showed an ID, maybe a driver's license. Can you imagine getting into a government office?) We were trying to set up this principle that we were open and we were government. At that time, we were getting ready for the Beijing Conference at the State Department conference secretariat. I was really determined that we should be open to people whether they were coming in to criticize us, or to tell us what should be done as we were supposed to be representing Americans at this conference. We didn't really have the Internet or a web site at that time, so these open public briefings were the best we could do; and we did those every month.

I wanted to set out the principle that Tim Wirth pioneered when he was Undersecretary. This was that you wanted to build constituencies with the work that you were doing, and you also want people to understand what you're doing so your work was transparent. If they have some input, they can criticize or they can tell you you're right or wrong. But, you've done it in a transparent way so people know where you're going. And so we held these briefings every month and when we came back from Beijing, we continued holding those; so it was this very open way of continuing to talk to this whole NGO community.

There were some highly critical people who thought that we were destroying American families because of our policies on family planning, and others who thought that we were not doing enough on that same issue. There were other people who thought that we needed to do more pushing on some of the legal remedies for women. But we were always open, and we would feature different speakers, "Okay, here's somebody from HHS who is going to talk about what they're doing; here's someone from the Treasury Department; here's?;" we would just feature different speakers, but keep it as an open process.

When we got close to a year after this conference, we began to think: "How do we do this reporting back to Americans?" We decided to use Joan Winship's broadcast idea. The Department of Agriculture offered us their studio, and we had the leaders of the delegation to Beijing - Hillary Clinton, Madeleine Albright, and Donna Shalala, as well as some of the NGOs - speak from Washington. We had a bunch of organizers and volunteers who had been working to keep people engaged at the state level. We ended up having 800 downlink sites, with something like 60,000 or 80,000 people gathered. A number of people put together whole-day events around this downlink broadcast.

We had reports in from different people. We had someone from the bayou region of Louisiana, who had been a nun. A community of nuns had come back from Beijing and were looking at how to develop more low-income housing for the disadvantaged; and I thought that was a great step, not that nuns need inspiration to do this kind of social justice work, but linking it to this UN conference and feeling that they were part of that was. We had a college girl from Iowa who had developed new safety programs for girls on her campus; she did a video for us and reported that in. We had some people call in. We had Mia Hamm and Julie Foudy, two of the big soccer stars, talk about the kind of things they were doing for women's sports; it was very cool.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And we had Judy Woodruff, the CNN reporter and anchor, agree to moderate this thing. It became a really significant program, and it was a great way to report out to people and to have people report in to us. It was all staged, but it was very representative.

Q: Well, did you find that you were able to reach across the aisle to get a significant Republican commitment to this? How did you find Republicans views on this?

LOAR: Well, some Republican members of Congress came with us to the Beijing Conference, Connie Morella, for example. Others who didn't support the reproductive, health, and family planning policies came and let us know they didn't support that. This wasn't really a partisan agenda. Reproductive health is always going to have strong views on both sides, but there was nothing else on the agenda that we were working on that was partisan, or would be Democratic, or Republican. So I wouldn't say that we were talking to Democrats or working with Democrats. We were working with people who cared about these issues and wanted them to move forward.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: At that time, we didn't come in for much criticism. We were under the radar. We didn't have any of the extremists on the Hill coming after us, because what we were really doing was developing well coordinated government policy with a greater focus on women, and girls, and their families. We didn't really come under attack, which was a great victory to be able to get a lot done and not have anybody slug you down while you were doing it.

Q: Yes, it is. No, this is the whole thing, you know, particularly since so many things have turned into the-right-versus-the-left on the abortion issue.

LOAR: Yes. Well, that is a central issue that divides people. It was behind a lot of the concerns about what the U.S. was going to do at the Beijing Conference. For most of the people in the world who were coming to that conference, that was only one issue; there were many, many other things they wanted. The central issue that came out, which was the result of the greater emphasis on looking at this issue in ways that had never been done before, was the issue of violence against women and a greater recognition that governments had a role to play in passing laws to make this illegal, and in creating an environment where this was not considered to be a cultural thing, or an okay thing. So the issue of violence against women became sort of the issue that came out of the conference.

Q: And this isn't partisan.

LOAR: Well, I think it'd be hard for any American politician to stand up and say, "I'm for that."

Q: Yes. [Laughter]

LOAR: There were some who were more supportive than others in implementing the Violence Against Women Act. There actually are some groups who say that that law turns women into victims, and that the statistics on violence are exaggerated and weaken women; but they're really truly on the fringe, and if they haven't figured that out yet, let me be the first to tell them! They really are truly on the fringe, because if you look at the issue of violence against women, it took 20 years for it to get from the grassroots level, where people started coming together and saying, "We need to do something about this," to our government passing a law that became the law of the land and empowered an office at the Justice Department to bring it into the federal government level with money, which is a great accomplishment. There are lots of laws that have no money for implementation - but with money, which means grants could be given at the police level, on the community level, this could begin to be addressed; and that is, I think, tremendous progress that's been made there.

And as my friend Bonnie Campbell, who is really the pioneer and the expert on these issues, said when she was running for attorney general in the state of Iowa, she learned a lot about this issue by going door-to-door and finding out that this was something that people felt was not being addressed but was something that was destroying families. It wasn't some personal, private little thing; it was in the way of people living their lives. What she said was that at the police level they made tremendous progress, and at the prosecutor's level they're making progress, but, at the judge's level it was harder to break through. But there wasn't a disagreement that this was an important issue that needed to be addressed. It was getting people to talk about it and to figure out what they could do to make a difference that I think was very important.

It's also how we framed this conference that we did one year after the Beijing Conference. This was in September of 1996. We had materials, our logos, which is the American flag with the profile of mother and daughter against the flag, and Americas' commitment. People were thrilled to be linked to us at the White House on a report back and on a discussion about what more we could be doing in our community.

Kansas City had its own action plan, and they reported back on what they had done a year later. They had set up new mentoring systems for at-risk girls to keep them in schools. They had set up new ways for successful businesswomen to mentor women moving into business, particularly those at risk. This was great community action, and it was a way of encouraging that and linking that to a larger national purpose; people were very energized by this. This was never criticized when people met in church basements, or in VA [Veterans' Administration] hospitals, or in schools. It wasn't like some radical feminist gathering. If you looked at it, it'd be the people we would run into at community group meetings all across the United States.

Q: Well, I'm thinking of another trend, which I really haven't monitored very much, but I've just read about. It came out of the male black rap culture in which an awful lot of violence against women was glorified in much of the popular songs that came out in the 90s. This must have been very disturbing.

LOAR: The rap stuff?

Q: Yes.

LOAR: As a mother of teenagers, it's really disturbing! Yes, there are groups who have focused on that. There are others who are very clear in speaking out against it, including leaders in the black community. And apparently one of the, I can't remember his name, I wish I did, first pioneers of rap, first people in the music industry to really develop rap and to use it as a means of expression, and who was just recently killed, was clear that violence against women, the street thugs, and the gangster stuff wasn't part of rap music originally. It was sort of introduced into that, and sort of brought it down. But yes, that's [sigh] very disturbing; and there are many who've spoken out about that, including some of the performers who tried to offer alternatives to that. But, it always bothers me when my teenagers would listen only to just what's on the radio; and it bothers me to see this as being glorified; and it's extremely prevalent right now.

Q: Speaking of violence against women, what parts of the community in the U.S. were being addressed in this focus on violence against women?

LOAR: Well, I think the Violence Against Women Act was really set up to address this within all communities. I know there was an advisory committee, who worked with Bonnie Campbell; and they represented immigrant communities, all income brackets, people, and businessmen who were concerned about the issue because they thought it affected whether or not people could come to work and carry out their jobs. It was a business collage in community groups.

As I said, it was something that the Justice Department was really taking the lead in. There was intense interest in the mechanism and in how this could be done in different communities. Other countries and their governments then became very interested. Sometimes it was the government; sometimes it was the female legislators; sometimes it was First Ladies of other countries, who were very interested in, "What is your government doing on violence, and what is this law? How is that being carried out? How do you work within the communities?"

Sometimes First Ladies from other countries would come in and meet with Hillary Clinton, and she would ask them to go over to see Bonnie Campbell. They would say, "I really want to know what you're doing on violence against women." And she'd say, "Well, we have an appointee here at the Justice Department who's leading the work on this, and we have a law, and she implements that law." So Bonnie Campbell would meet with First Ladies from other countries at the request of Hillary Clinton, because they were interested in knowing what could be done. And it was interesting that Bonnie was asked. We encouraged them to talk to Bonnie, and then Bonnie was asked to go out and speak in other countries; and of course, her responsibility was really domestic, but occasionally, if she had the opportunity, she would go and do some work internationally. She did some work in Russia, for example. But more than anything, it was when people were coming to Washington that she would give them some guidance and ideas on what was working here in the United States, or what was in process, and what the obstacles were. But it was this truly significant breakthrough.

During the conference, Bonnie would walk around the NGO Forum in Huairou, and walk around in the UN meeting rooms; she was really like a rock star, because no other country had a high level appointee who was a former attorney general of a state (a very significant position), whose job it was to run this Violence Against Women Office and to implement this law. So there was just intense interest in that, and that has never gone away.

Jumping ahead a little bit, when I did move back to the State Department, one of the things we would do is sort of track progress since the Beijing Conference, and encourage the embassies to report this to us. But what I would find when international visitors would come in to see me, especially woman legislators from Latin America; was that they were working together as a group and they were just borrowing laws from each other and looking at other good modelthe United States and otherand passing laws in country after country to criminalize rape, to criminalize violence against women; and to set up police units. Brazil had great models, and Ecuador had perfect models; they were being very practical about putting laws on the books. So that was one of the very concrete things that came out of that conference, within like a year of the conference; you could just kind of look down the hemisphere and see what a difference that conference had made.

Q: Well then, this council lasted for about a year or so?

LOAR: Actually it ended. The Interagency Council on Women continued as a government mechanism till the end of the Clinton administration.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It became an interagency task force.

Q: What happened when the Bush II administration came in?

LOAR: Well, there were two things: there was the interagency council, which was this government task force; and then there was, within the State Department, the senior coordinator for international women's issues, which is this SES position under the Undersecretary for Global Affairs, that really looks at women's human rights within foreign policy.

And the interagency council, you know, the big strength there, just jumping ahead, was being able to have access to these people all over government, not just for what they were doing in our own agency, but also how they could be working on some of the international issues we were looking at. And some of the concrete things that came out of that were the work we did on trafficking, and getting a law passed on it, and getting the really broad interagency cooperation as we were working on that.

Q: We're talking about what used to be called white slavery, aren't we?

LOAR: Right, selling human beings into conditions of slavery.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Human trafficking, and trafficking women and girls, but really broadly trafficking, and the other issue that we worked on was the democracy building promotional program called Vital Voices.

But with the new law on trafficking, and the Violence Against Women Act [of 2000], and the protection for trafficking victims act [Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000], which we got passed in the end of 2000, what we wanted was a permanent structure to duplicate the interagency structure we had, and we wrote that that would be at the State Department into the law. It was mandated that the State Department would house an office on trafficking, but that that would be interagency with interagency responsibility.

In just looking at whether the interagency council would continue, I would say that there were some who thought it was a good idea, and some who thought it wasn't a good idea. I thought it had served its purpose because we had terrific opportunities, terrific leadership - people committed to the Beijing Conference and the Beijing agenda. I wasn't sure we would have that same level of commitment and interest from the new administration coming in; and I think it's just fine that that council doesn't exist now. [Laughter]

Q: Well, did you find yourself caught up in some sort of foreign policy issues? For example, everything you're talking about would run counter to trying to be nice to Saudi Arabia. Now, at last, people are beginning to focus on Saudi Arabia, and on what they're doing.

LOAR: Well, getting back to the foreign policy piece of it, a year after we did this "year-after conference" as our wrap up, a position at the State Department, called the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, opened up. Dorothy Thomas, who was one of the women in the human rights community, who as a founder and director of the Women's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch had pioneered the idea and issue of women's human rights and of identifying violence against women as a human rights violation, had gotten it written into the State Department authorization bill - maybe it was another bill, I'm not sure I have the right name [Foreign Relations Authorization Act Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995?] - that a position should be created within the Office of the Undersecretary for Global Affairs to focus on the human rights of women as a way of integrating that into foreign policy; and that position had been open for a few months when the administrations changed.

So, after this one-year-after teleconference that we did, I looked at that position. I was asked to consider taking that as a way to carry on the foreign policy work; and I was ready to do that. I loved the State Department. It was fun being at the White House, but I also really loved foreign policy work, and I missed my daily dose of cables from all over the world. I was very eager to take the issues that we had been working on before the conference and at the conference related to women's advancement and to look at really integrating these into foreign policy.

So I resigned from the Foreign Service and took this on as a presidential appointment. It was a Senior Executive Service position. It was a great, wonderful leap. I went back to State and took this on. Maybe we can sort of end there for now. That's a whole other focus of how we did this with the foreign policy.

Q: So we'll pick this up in 1997?

LOAR: Six [1996].

Q: Six.

LOAR: It was October of 1996 I came over, literally moving back into the State Department a couple of days after the Taliban had moved into Kabul in Afghanistan.

Q: Okay. Great. Well, we'll pick it up then.

LOAR: Okay.

Q: Just as an addendum, would you mention the publication that came as a -

LOAR: Yes. Oh, as a wrap up at the end of the Clinton administration, we did a report that Lidia Soto-Harmon honchoed. She was one of the deputies on the interagency council. It was called, America's Commitment: Women 2000, and it was a five-year review of all the federal programs that we had put in place to benefit women and their families and of the many initiatives that came out of the Beijing Conference. This is actually over 300 pages [378 pages]. It was a huge compilation, and is something that I wish I had hundreds of, because people are still coming to visit me from other countries and are still looking for ideas on how their federal governments could be doing things to benefit women. This report is a very good model for that.

Q: Good. Okay. Well, we'll pick this up the next time when you went back to the State Department in '96.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: All right. Today is 27 February 2003. Theresa, October of '96, what was the job? You left the Foreign Service and went into what political??

LOAR: Okay. The position was Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, and it was a position created by Congress in one of the State Department appropriation bills, I believe. The position was created in 1995. It was the handiwork of a very clever women's human rights leader named Dorothy Thomas, who went to Senator [Patrick] Leahy's office, and?

Q: Senator Leahy of Vermont.

LOAR: Senator Leahy of Vermont, and Senator [Olympia] Snowe, who was a Republican senator from Maine, who I think actually sponsored or put it into its final language. But anyway, Senator Leahy, a great human rights person, and Tim Rieser on his staff were really pushing for a senior position to be created at the State Department to focus on women's human rights. This position was housed in (G), the Undersecretary for Global Affairs. Apparently, at the time that it was being created, there was a move to put it in the Human Rights Bureau. But Tim Wirth, who was the Undersecretary at that time, wanted it at a higher level, and he had visions for what this position could be. He was able to get this Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues housed in (G). The first person to hold that position was a woman named Gracia Hillman, who came from the League of Women Voters. She held that position as we were preparing for Beijing. She left the administration and left that position in April of 1996.

At that point, we were back from the Beijing Conference. We had created the Interagency Council on Women, this government task force to follow up on Beijing. I was on detail from State over to the White House, sitting in the New Executive Office Building, and having a lot of fun, sort of taking this fabulous Beijing document, the Platform for Action, and working with all the different federal agencies and their representatives who were assigned to this task force, the President's Interagency Council on Women, to look at how that - the principles, and the ideas, and the strategies that came out of that terrific UN Conference on Women - could be integrated into the work they were doing.

So we had done an awful lot towards getting that integration done. We had a strong, vibrant interagency council going with Hillary Clinton as the honorary chair, and that made all the difference in the world, because it showed there was high-level political support for this work. Donna Shalala, our Secretary of Health and Human Services, was the chair, and she was, as you know, known for her very open, direct, and energetic support for women's programs in HHS. So, to have her as chair of this government-wide task force made all the sense in the world. A year after the Beijing Conference we did a satellite conference, reporting back to Americans, and having Americans from all around the States report in to us what they had done, and that was really great fun and a great success.

And then this position was open at State. And of course, my heart was with the State Department and foreign policy. Seeing what difference it made when we had an understanding of these issues and how they could affect the lives of women, and going to this big international conference and seeing the need for these issues to be put on governments' agendas, and moving them out of the NGOs or other elements of society, and onto the government agenda, was very interesting to me. Something I thought could make a real difference was to try and build this, and to deepen this, and to put this into foreign policy.

I was selected for this, and it was a wonderful, great leap. I moved back to State, as I mentioned, in October 1996. I moved into an office where there was no secretarial support, and no staff because Gracia Hillman's very nice secretary, who had been on detail, went back to her previous assignment. So I walked into my home building, the State Department, ready to go, and ready to get everybody on board with these important issues affecting women's rights progress around the world, and I didn't have a fax machine! I did have a chair and a desk! I think it's the story of my life - I never could walk into an office with an existing couch and matching chairs; I always had to scrounge. But I did have three or four interns from the White House who had a White House Security clearance, and State allowed me to bring them over with me, so they became my instant staff. They were really sharp, bright, energetic young women.

Q: Could you talk a little about what an intern was at that particular time?

LOAR: Yes. When we were over at the White House and I was Director of the President's Interagency Council on Women, we had interns that would come in and just take on all kinds of projects. I was able to bring, as I mentioned, some of them over with us.

One of the interns was Alyse Nelson, who had just graduated from Emerson College, and who is now working with me as a professional staff member here at Vital Voices and manages our global network around the world. And we had a really terrifically smart, young woman, who looked like Daryl Hannah. It was always great to send her down to [laughter] talk to the guys in different offices around the State Department about these issues - and I'm just blanking on her name, I'll remember her name.

Q: Okay, we can fill it in later.

LOAR: She had done some human rights work as an intern. She had just graduated from one of the universities here in town. Her job was to monitor the cables that came into the State Department on follow-up to the Beijing Conference, because one of the first things I thought I needed to do was to show that the Beijing Conference, this UN Conference on Women in 1995, had made a difference, and that it wasn't just the U.S. actively pushing this agenda forward, but that other people in other parts of the world were doing that too. I was hoping that this was the case.

So this intern's job was to monitor the cables and to give me a short briefing of cables that came in from our overseas posts, and there were about four or five a day. I was delirious with joy that there were four or five. But this young woman thought that this was ridiculous because they're such central issues, why weren't there more cables coming in?

So, what she started was a monthly newsletter where we would track progress made around the world since Beijing. When we got a cable in from some great Foreign Service officer for example reporting from Brazil on the things I mentioned before or from Colombia that they had made penalties stiffer for domestic violence, this great intern would put it in the newsletter. It was particularly noteworthy that we got lots of these cables from Latin America where we saw women legislators working together to strengthen their laws, to criminalize rape, to criminalize domestic violence, and to set up a criminal justice systems to respond to violence against women.

So our intern started doing this and every month we would have this thing that we would issue to NGOs. This position was indirectly created by NGOs, and I wanted to be sure that those in the human rights community knew how activist we were being. They became our great friends and allies as we were doing this work, because the truth is that the idea of women's human rights was a concept that was only a few years old. There were two people who really made the difference in developing the language for this work. One was Dorothy Thomas, who I mentioned, was the creator of the Women's Human Rights Project at Human Rights Watch, which is one of the great, very well respected human rights organizations, and the other is a woman named Charlotte Bunch at Rutgers' Douglass College, who was Executive Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership. I still work with Charlotte very closely.

We had a constituency. We wanted people from outside the State Department. In my preparations for Beijing and my working at the Beijing conference I also knew how important it was to bring all NGOs from all sides of the political spectrum into the process of developing these policies. So we had open doors; we had open public briefings; and we continued those processes because I did believe that that was very important. So we started doing this newsletter. Then, after a period of time, we just looked at how further to engage the Assistant Secretaries and others in the State Department on this fabulous agenda that we were all sure they were going to agree with us on. And, literally within days of coming into the building, the Taliban moved into Kabul. There was a -

Q: You might explain who the Taliban were.

LOAR: The Taliban were a ragtag, uneducated, highly armed group, many of whom had grown up in refugee camps in Pakistan, and were very poorly educated in the Islamic tradition. I know this from many of my Muslim friends here in the United States who said that it was really not a sophisticated education of Islam that they received because they had such strange non-Koranic-based versions of what Islam was. But they had come into Afghanistan.

There was tremendous struggle in Afghanistan for who was in control. There were all kinds of warlords, including the Massoud who were struggling for control of Afghanistan at the time. The Taliban moved in from the refugee camps in Pakistan, with tremendous financial support (we found it was backing from Pakistan), to the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul, and declared that they were in charge of the country.

There was an initial statement made by a deputy spokesman for Secretary of State Warren Christopher. I don't know the exact wording of it, but it gave the impression, informally I was told, that: "Well, at least we'll have some stability now." And of course, the reaction of many people who knew what the Taliban were and what they were trying to do was: "Well, it's going to be a stable reign of terror," because the first thing that they did was to issue decrees saying that women could not work outside the home, that girls could no longer be in school, and that women could no longer move outside of the home, not even to work to support their families. This was an issue as millions of Afghan women were widows as a result of the Afghan-Russian war, and were the sole support of their families. So it wasn't like they were reacting to women in high heels, you know, in the corner office building their careers. These were widows working in basic food-production jobs, many of which were created by the United Nations: baking breads in the most primitive ovens possible, and being part of the food distribution channel. So the Taliban came in and right in front of CNN and in front of the whole world issued these decrees saying, "We're here, we're an Islamic movement." As I said, many Muslim groups in the United States had terrible personal reactions to (I don't know how public they were about it) the Taliban taking control of the country, and to their considering themselves in charge.

So I moved in to State, and the Deputy spokesman issued this statement that was just, not like, "Whoa, hold the phone here! Look what you're doing when you come into their country. The United States is very concerned about this!" but it wasn't warm and fuzzy towards them; it was sort of neutral.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And that, of course, came from the South Asia Bureau, and from a fellow who was in charge of Afghan issues. So when I came in, right away I knew we needed to respond to this in a very strong and direct way.

We had just come back a year before from this terrific UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Hillary Clinton had made this extraordinary speech that "women's rights are human rights." There was a real big push and interest on the part of the women's human rights community, because the human rights community itself was still not embracing it.

The mainstream human rights groups were still not embracing the idea of violence against women and other violations against women as real true human rights issues. They were skeptical about that and not sure that they would consider rape, and female genital mutilation, and other issues such as dowry burning, as human rights issues. They weren't quite on board with that yet.

But, there were women within the human rights community who were working to push these women's issues. And then there were all these other groups who got really energized by this Beijing Conference: teachers' associations, women accountants, religious groups, the religious order of nuns, and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. I had been working with them, you know, and it brought me back to my Catholic high school days. Only, these nuns weren't in habits, and I was agreeing with them [laughter]! We were all pushing for the same social justice issues.

It was such a shocking thing when the Taliban came in; and for those of us who were living in this world, just having come back from the Beijing Conference the year before, it was a particularly shocking thing! So I thought that we needed to get statements out immediately from Secretary Christopher, and from his spokesman, who at that time was Nick [Nicholas] Burns - and is now currently our ambassador to NATO, and has done extremely well, and is a very good guy. I knew we needed to get strong statements out from his office. Well, I had no experience working with the press office at the Secretariat, but I went to see him to say, you know, "Nick, I'm really concerned about this. There's this kind of statement of, 'Let's just act like it didn't happen.' It wasn't you. It was the deputy. But now you're back in the office today, and I'd really like to say that these violations of women's human rights are appalling to the United States. It's against what we stand for as a country; excluding girls from school and women from the ability to earn money to support their families."

Q: I think women were even excluded from hospitals, weren't they?

LOAR: Right. Well, the catch 22 there was, if you couldn't have women as doctors and women couldn't be treated by male doctors, women were basically denied health care for the entire reign of the Taliban.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: It's not like they had tremendous health care before, but they had basic health care needs met, especially in the cities.

So Nick Burns said, "Well, just give me your guidance, and I'll work with you on it." So you know, me, a former Foreign Service officer, I said, "Well, I know I'm supposed to clear it through the bureau and want to be able to work for the bureau." He said, "Well, you're not going to get this cleared through the bureau!" And what he was referring to was this Foreign Service officer Lee Coldren, who had very strong views. He was a fellow who had spent a lot of time in the field, and had real strong views about Afghanistan, and considered this annoying focus on women to be distracting. This is something I heard repeatedly, "But like flavor of the month, we're going to worry about women now? Come on! These Taliban have guns, they have this, they have this that. They're in there, and they're going to stop some of the bad things going on!" And it's not that he was pro-Taliban, but it was like, "Why are we worrying about women?" And it wasn't that I didn't appreciate the point of view or understand the point of view. I did! I was a Foreign Service officer, and I understood you look at a country in totality. But I also knew that this was just unprecedented!

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: It's not that there weren't other countries where women's human rights were being violated; there were many other countries. But nobody was stupid enough, as the Taliban were, to go in front of CNN and saying, "Girls can't go to school, women cannot work outside the home and there'll be no movement of women on the streets unless accompanied by a male relative." Well that means that if your husband's dead, and you don't have any brothers, and you don't have any sons, you're basically housebound. And, that means if women can't work, they can't be doctors to provide health care. So they were stupid enough to do this right in front of the world, and we as a government had to respond.

Nick Burns said, "I think what you did in Beijing was just terrific," and I was like, "Wow! You know what we did? You mean someone in this building paid attention to this?" And he was just, "Look, I served in Muslim countries, and I have three daughters, and I'm going to support you on this!" It was just terrific.

And that's the great thing about the State Department. Here is the structure, the fellow in charge of Afghanistan and of the South Asia Bureau - a relatively new bureau, the South Asia Bureau - who was dead against any of this focus on women and anyone talking about our concern about women. He said, "But it's just not that significant, and we shouldn't do it." And I would not have been able to break through if Nick Burns hadn't said, "Just give me your guidance, and I'll use your guidance." And not only did he use my guidance that I gave him every day, which was, "This is of great concern to the United States. These egregious human rights violations cannot be tolerated. This is not going to move the country forward when half of its people are left behind," just very strong language. I would give him guidance whenever I thought it was appropriate.

Even when I didn't give him guidance, he would bring it up in the press briefings. If somebody asked something about another country in the region, he'd say, "And let me go back to Afghanistan, and why I'm so, we are all, or Secretary Christopher's so concerned about the treatment of women in Afghanistan." He was just terrific [laughter], and I needed exactly that counterweight to the very aggressive, hostile, you know, bordering-on-bullying tactics coming from the South Asia Bureau.

Q: What was your contact with the South Asia Bureau?

LOAR: Well, I went down, as the good, you know, organization person that I am, or a good company woman, to the bureau to say, "Nick's asked me for guidance," because it's true, he did ask me for it once [laughter] -

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: We talked it over, "and I just wanted to show you what I'm going to give him, and I know you might not agree with the emphasis on women, but I think it's important you understand the view in talking about it."

And there was yelling, and there was slamming of doors, and there were disparaging remarks such as: "Who the heck are you?" "Have you ever been in the country? Have you ever been in the Marines? And what are you talking about?"

And it was just like, "No, I don't; but I do know what I've been appointed to do, and I'm going to use my diplomatic background, and I'm getting my Foreign Service colleagues, and I am going to send this to Nick," and I was sure this guy is going to come around.

Well, he didn't. The time that we were speaking very publicly about this, I wanted everybody to know too, because I don't think the press conferences prepared, on C-Span at that time, this Secretary of State's press person. So nobody really knew Nick was saying this. I knew it, and it felt good. But I needed to let the NGO community and all those people outside of Capital Hill, who were totally freaking out, knowing that the Taliban was making these statements, that we were responding correctly. Because, already people were ginning up, "Wow! They say one thing, and they do another." No, we actually had very strong statements, and were saying them right off the bat.

So we would compile - and I still have a list of these, and they were just gems - the statements made by the Secretary of State's spokesperson, Nick Burns, day after day in the public briefings about our concern for this. And we just kept issuing those and getting them passed out.

Now we didn't have email then, and we didn't have web sites. We had the handy, you-sit-down-and-you-type it, and you fax it around, and you hand it to people, and bring people in for briefings. So I did bring in different groups who would call me. A lot of the domestic groups had no idea where Afghanistan was, they didn't know what Taliban meant, they had no idea. But, they knew that girls couldn't go to school, and that women couldn't leave their homes, or couldn't work outside their homes. So there were just basic knee-jerk reactions to this. Some of these groups came in to see me, and I would get a conference room and sit down and talk with them about what I was doing. I said, "Maybe it's good for you to meet the regional people too," because I was thinking [laughter], "It's important. I am not the expert in Afghanistan just yet." I can tell you that right now, I sure am! But I wasn't just then, three days back into the State Department; and the Bureau people had been working on it for a long time.

So I invited Lee in the open, transparent way we do business in the State Department, to come meet these groups. I'd say, "Lee, they're here to express their concerns. You're the policy guy on this. Please come and talk to them, and while you may not agree with them, these are NGOs. This is the way we do business, blah, blah, blah."

Well, it was a complete and utter disaster. Which NGO person did I have in there? I had Marjorie Lightman, who is an acid tongue (and I'd say this right to her face), sharp-witted, very opinionated NGO activist on human rights, who had recently been working on women's human rights. She was with the International League for Human Rights, I think, or the Lawyer's League for Human Rights, out of New York. And we had?(I'm just trying to go around the table, and I remember the faces) a wonderful man from Amnesty International named [T.] Kumar, who himself was a victim of torture and was a very well respected human rights activist here in Washington; and Suzanne Kindervatter from Interaction, who had a lot of development experience; and these were pretty savvy people on foreign policy.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: These were the groups that really knew foreign policy, and knew human rights, women's rights, and foreign policy. They were becoming a very knowledgeable group. So we probably had five or six people. And Lee Coldren comes into the conference room, and you know, I grew up in the middle of a large family, so I'm used to sort of like, "Oh, you're fighting, and you're fighting, and you're not getting?okay, we all agree, right?" [Laughter] and I kind of knew that was going to happen.

But I was unprepared for the level of vitriol and disrespect. At one point Kumar - and I knew it was really directed at me, but they couldn't come after me because I was a State Department official - but Kumar, this wonderful NGO fellow, says, "You know, why aren't we just doing blank, blank, blank?" and it wasn't a stupid question. It was just a very direct thing. And this guy gets up across the table and points a finger in this guy's face; I mean jumping across the table. He would have hit him, but I knew it was really directed at me. He said, "That's a stupid question! That's a really stupid question! And I'm not going to answer stupid questions!" And I'm looking at him like, and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, please don't hit him, please don't!" [Laughter] I'm laughing, but it was really not fun at the time -

Q: No.

LOAR: ?because it was so deadly serious and so important that we opened up a dialogue, and that the people who knew what was going on with the Taliban and knew what had been going on in Afghanistan before hear from people who had every legitimate right to be in this building expressing their views to policymakers. So that was a complete disaster of a meeting, and he stormed off and said, "That's it! I'm not talking to any more groups." And I'm like, "Don't worry pal. I won't be asking you! You should be helping me out explaining policy!"

Q: Well, was there anybody below him?

LOAR: Well, there was above him, I want to say, Assistant Secretary Robin Raphel, who wasn't particularly engaged on this issue. And then, there were a couple of people on the desk, or who were moving on to the desk, and that's where the break came.

But what happened with the NGOs was like, "Now we know what you're up against!" And I said, "Well, that's one part of it. The other part of it, though, is the Secretary of State's spokesman. Okay, he's not shaping policy, but he is certainly putting out there what the Secretary's point of view is, and Nick was not on his own."

Q: No.

LOAR: You know, Warren Christopher obviously supported this, and wanted us to respond in a direct way, and Nick would keep referring back to the Beijing Conference on Women. We had just said, as a country, this is what we thought, and this is what we did, and we wanted to follow through on that. And if you can't respond this way, it wasn't like something that was nuanced, or you had to think through carefully. You may look at women's human rights, and have different views on it - I can't imagine how anybody could - but how could anybody say that this is not a basic violation, and a violation of the UN charter

So it was quite challenging in letting the NGOs know that and trying to get some support from the outside, and that actually ended up being helpful to me as I continued to work past this. The breaks came. A wonderful guy named Donald Cam-

Q: Excuse me, but what was the role of Tim Wirth, your

LOAR: Well, this was of concern to Tim, but Tim's primary focus was on reproductive health and reproductive rights, and on population issues, and on the environment. And I think this was of concern to him, but I don't think it was a primary concern.

His focus was really trying to integrate the population issues, and he did a job on that by taking the Refugee Migration Office [Bureau of Refugee Programs] and turning it into a bureau that included population, and that was a great struggle to be able to do that and to really energize the Bureau of OES (Oceans, Environment, and Science [Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs]).

But this wasn't really a central issue. I was something he was concerned with, but it was "something I was going to do, but?"

Q: But did he give you sort of free ...

LOAR: Free reign? Yes.

Q: ?we're talking about a bureaucracy, and he's your boss, and going over to Nick was -

LOAR: Yes, I should probably look at my notes. Yes, well?it is a bureaucracy except?did I have free reign? Certainly Tim supported my efforts. Tim never blocked anything that I was trying to do here.

Q: Free reign!! [Laughter]

LOAR: Yes.

Actually there were meetings in Tim's office. Tim would have the Assistant Secretaries in who were under (G), so it would be Drugs and Thugs, INL (Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs), PRM (Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration), OES (Assistant Secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), and maybe sometimes IO (Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs). I would join those meetings, and we would hear what was going on. Actually, you're reminding me of something wonderful.

Meg Donovan, who is now deceased, but who worked within H (Bureau of Legislative Affairs), as one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and was an appointee from the Hill, and has been a Democrat who had worked many years in Congress and was a very energetic and outspoken person, called me after one of the meetings in Tim's office and said, "So what are you going to do about the Taliban?" And this was literally the second or first day I was back from the White House. I said, "Well, I'm going to call over to the NSC, because I know who I can get working on the NSC." And she said, "Well, screw that!" sort of. She said, "Screw that! You're in the State Department. You have to change this building. This is your building. Forget the White House. This [knocking noise] is where you have to work. You can't go over to?forget them?blah, blah. You have to do it here." And I was, "Yeah, I guess you're right." And she said, "And, just talk to them down in South Asia. I'm sure they're going to agree with you?you're going to be fine. Just do it!" And that really did focus me that. I couldn't count on the NSC to take care of this issue and I was supposed to be here at State. That oriented me. So yes, I did certainly have support from staff, from Tim. We raised what we were doing in the weekly meetings with the Assistant Secretaries; and I would keep Tim up to date and fill him in on what we were doing. He was always supportive of and liked my energetic approach, because he was such an activist himself and had worked so hard to get the population and the environment issues onto the front of the agenda.

But we moved along. We got the good statements out there. We would deal with everything we could because the Population, Refugees, and Migration Bureau, were my other allies, particularly a fellow named Allen Jury, who had spent a great deal of time on refugee issues related to Afghanistan. He was the fellow who was going to the donor meetings on how all the donor countries who supported the refugees who came out of Afghanistan and in the neighboring countries would coordinate what they were going to do. The donor countries were going to these meetings, (and I have to go back and check my notes as to when). But he was such a great guy, because he was such a straight shooter and had such a wonderful way of being able to develop a message and carry it into these donor meetings - it made such a difference for us. What Allen said was, "We have to look at?"

I was very concerned. Are we going into these donor meetings and acting like it's business as usual. "Well, we hope it all works out, but here is, you know, the assistance we always gave you." There had to be some difference. If you were excluding girls and women from the distribution channel for food, and from education, and from basic needs, are we, as a country, and all the other donor countries going to ignore that and go on as though it was business as usual. And Alan had the opinion that we shouldn't, and he didn't. It wasn't across the board that everybody in his bureau agreed with him. But he was a very intelligent Foreign Service officer, so he knew how to write the guidance cable. And I asked to be on clearance for guidance cable, and it was like, "Well, no, we don't clear outside?" But I was like, "Oh well, I'm in charge now of this particular agenda." It was just with the Taliban it became a much more heightened position, because it was just focusing on this, and they had handed me this issue. The Taliban was no nuanced situation. I remember working with Allen and working very hard to make sure I was on every clearance, clearing all the cables when the U.S. was sitting down at donor meetings.

The other thing was, since Allen was really supportive of this and really wanted to go to the donor meetings, saying that, "It's not business as usual. The United States is going to have to look at how we distribute aid and what kind of assistance we give, because we're not going to turn over the same kind of stuff to the Taliban, and we're going to have to figure out how we can maneuver this to make sure that women and girls get a fair shake and maybe develop some new things because now they're being excluded from the basic services they had before."

I invited that same group who had been in that terrible meeting with Lee Coldren earlier to come in and have a conversation with Allen Jury from PRM. They came in, and it was just wonderful. It was also terrific, because then they saw that these kinds of meetings took place. Also, I thought it would be good for Allen to get some support from outside, because Allen was used to working with refugee groups and used to dealing with a lot of outside groups. But this was different; this was the human rights community.

So Allen Jury had this discussion with the NGOs, and it was very helpful because he was used to dealing with outside groups, having worked a lot with refugees. This is a different community - the human rights community and the women's human rights community; but it really helped sort of lock in that we were going to look at how, as a country, we provide assistance; and we were going to work and try to influence other donor countries to kind of take our point of view - that it's not business as usual and that we have to really take a look at what kind of assistance - and that was huge and had far reaching effects!

But then again, it was the ally in PRM who helped do this; but he needed support as well. So me being a clearance on the cables, we could do bad cop/good cop, but I couldn't accept any mealy-mouth language, "Well, we'll take a look and see what Japan said, and we'll see what the Brits say, and see what Canada says." You know, it had to be clear. "This is the U.S. point of view." Now, the South Asia Bureau [laughter] wasn't particularly keen on that, but they didn't pay much attention to the humanitarian assistance side. They were interested more in the political and military things.

So, we were able to get this going. When Allen wasn't around, or if there was someone meeting at the UN, it required monitoring of all the different mechanisms, all the different ways that policies develop that were affecting this country. It was a tremendous challenge, and ultimately we moved in the right direction.

What happened was that a very talented Foreign Service Officer, Don Camp, who had a lot of experience in the region moved in. He had gone over to the NSC at some point, and then had come back as one of the deputies. Lee Coldren, the dinosaur, as we would call him because we had to have some humor in dealing with this, because it was difficult, retired. It was hostile; I mean yelling! And I don't like being yelled at, especially when I know I'm right [laughter]!

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So when Lee retired, others came in. I don't know if Don took his place or if he was a deputy. But Don came in, and he was really open to this and was going to work on this and take on this issue. Then, after a few months passed by, Warren Christopher moved out as our Secretary of State and Madeleine Albright moved in as our Secretary of State. Rick Inderfurth [Karl Frederick Inderfurth] became the Assistant Secretary for South Asia, and on one of the first few days in the building he came to see me and said, "Let's talk about Afghan women, about which I'm extremely concerned! I think it's very important that we highlight that, and that the U.S. supports it and does everything we can." It was really good. And that made a big, big difference.

Q: I've had a good, solid oral history with Rick Inderfurth, yes.

LOAR: Yes, he was true-blue, terrific. At the same time, on the Afghan desk, two fabulous Foreign Service officers came in, who became and still are good friends of ours. Sheldon Rappoport, who was the senior fellow, who is now consul general in Lahore, Pakistan and an extremely talented, stellar Foreign Service officer, Tom Hushek, who I have great respect for. Tom later went out to be a Refugee officer in Pakistan, going in and out of Afghanistan.

Sheldon was really sophisticated and had a lot of experience with Rick, doing a million things, and I knew we had his support, so it wasn't going to be difficult. Don Camp was very experienced; Sheldon was a very clever diplomat; and Tom Hushek - it was, you know, we had allies there.

While we had allies; we still had to be the activists. We had to watch PRM; we had to watch IO for anything going on in the United Nations; we had to watch the group of countries surrounding Afghanistan, the "Stans", and Russia and all the surrounding countries who had a point of view about what's going on there. So we had to watch what the U.S. was saying there. We also had to watch the cable traffic from the field.

But we had allies. Allies who were helped by our constantly watching, monitoring, pushing for attention on the women's human rights issue in Afghanistan, bringing in groups to meet them, and by our asking them to talk to people, because there were so many elements of play. And, as things moved along more and more on the Afghan and Taliban issues, I then wondered how they were going to react to the drug trafficking issue, and later on to some of the terrorism issues, trying all the time to keep women on the agenda. From my view, right there on the top of the agenda, it was great to have that active, supportive team there; but it was still our job to make sure that these things were treated fairly.

I'd like to stop there if I could.

Q: All right then. When we pick this up the next time, I'd like to start with several questions. What could you do when you were dealing with a group like the Taliban? And, did you have media people that you could deal with, in other words, get your issues on the front page of the Washington Post and the New York Times.

LOAR: Right. And I'll mention the meeting I had with the Taliban as well.

Q: Today is 27 May 2003. Let's talk about the Taliban.

LOAR: Well, one of the key goals of the Taliban was to get U.S. government recognition for their government when they came into power in October of 1996. When they came into Kabul, they pretty much thought that they would be recognized by the international community as the government of Afghanistan.

One of my key purposes in life was to make sure the U.S. did not recognize them [laughter]!

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I think I talked a little bit about some of the efforts we made to make sure that the statements that came out of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's office expressed appropriate concern about the treatment of women and the Taliban's edicts. But I think the effort of keeping this women's human rights on the agenda, and in a prominent way on the agenda, really did help to marshal the support of the international community not to recognize the Taliban.

I think we had the support of the other donor communities. We had very high-level women at the UN (and I think I spoke about this), who had significant positions of leadership - Cathy Bertini, who was head of the [UN] World Food Program, and Carol Bellamy who was head of UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, its former name; now called United Nations Children's Fund) at the time. They were determined not to continue their programs as if it was business as usual. That made a very big difference to many of us working in governments around the world, to know that there was senior leadership at the UN who were going to make the point that when women and girls are excluded from all the normal streams of society in life, that a country can't go forward, and the international community can't just turn its head and say, "Well, that's cultural," because it's not cultural. It wasn't cultural before these guys came in with guns; and people with guns shouldn't determine the culture of the country. Of course, that's what the Afghan women said and continue to say.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: One of the memorable things was when the Taliban came through seeking recognition. I think this was just after Madeleine Albright became Secretary of State. Rick Inderfurth was the Assistant Secretary for South Asia; we had a very good collaborative working relationship. Rick was very smart, very savvy, and very strong on this issue.

I asked for a meeting with the Taliban, so I could express my views and be able to share with them the concerns of some of the groups we were working with here in the United States, and of the Afghan women in exile that I had had so many extensive, long meetings with. I also spoke to Muslim friends whom I had worked with and known getting ready for the Beijing Women's Conference: to ask them how I should appropriately address the Taliban; how to, you know, what they would like to have expressed, because it wasn't appropriate for me to be referencing the Koran or anything else. Of course the big message of the groups I had spoken with was, "Your message is not based on Islam. You, Taliban, are wrong, and we don't support what you're saying about girls' education and women's ability to earn their own income, and the women's relationship to the family."

It was a fascinating meeting because there were five or six men. One was pretty savvy; you could say he was the PR (public relations) wing. I would say he was probably not based in Afghanistan; he probably came from outside of Afghanistan, because whatever question I asked, he would sort of come back with a snappy response, which I thought was interesting.

But one of the points I made was that I explained my position: what position I had within the making of foreign policy, which was to promote and protect women's human rights; what the Secretary of State had said about the U.S. concern about this; but also to reference the United Nations and UN charters. I could have been talking about nuclear physics as there seemed to be no comprehension of any UN standard norms for human rights or anything else. But then I asked very specifically, "You've closed down the schools and have excluded girls from any schools, and yet you're talking about and moving ahead to continue educating your sons. Don't you want your daughters to be educated too?"

And they said, "Well," it was this PR guy who made this really big point, "the main reason is that the Russians left behind these terrible books full of propaganda, and girls are very weak and susceptible to that propaganda; so we can't have the girls go to school. If UNICEF would just give us the appropriate books," and then they started ranting and raving about UNICEF and Carol Bellamy, which I thought was fascinating. [Laughter] "If?if they would do that, then we might find a place for the girls in school again." And there were some other basic things like that. But that was the memorable point.

They were clearly angry at these UN officials who were getting in their way. I know that Cathy Bertini particularly incurred the wrath of one of the senior Taliban officials, because she was so direct and clear and was not going to go ahead with the food distribution in Afghanistan if women weren't part of the distribution chain, because they just weren't going to get the food. But this guy did go on a rant about UNICEF and Carol Bellamy, which I thought was interesting. In the course of it, the meeting took place around noontime, individual Taliban members would get up and go into the corner and do their prayers. It was a very interesting experience.

I'm sure they didn't quite comprehend what my job was, but it really hit me then, that they were so unpolished and ignorant, and I had met with a lot of people all over the world. They were just, even with the PR guy, not in the realm of understanding the world they were trying to influence and persuade. And that's what a lot of my well-educated Muslim friends have said, that they were uneducated Muslims.

Q: Yes, well, this is what came across so much. I mean in doing things, there was nobody looking and saying, "Well, this might not be a good idea," or something like that -

LOAR: Yes.

Q: ?blowing up monuments -

LOAR: Right.

Q: ?you know, things that didn't have to be done!

LOAR: Right. Well, some of the practices of the Taliban were no worse than the practices of some of the other warlords - Abdul Rashid Dostum and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and others. But then the Taliban were stupid enough to go in front of CNN and make these ridiculous pronouncements.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: This became their dominant driving force, and it would wax and wane according to who was in control. And, they just never delivered anything to their people either. When they took over government ministries, it wasn't to improve the lives of their people.

Q: No.

LOAR: It was for control. But they had nothing to offer other than control.

Q: Yes. I think when we finally went in there we found that there was nothing really new. The Taliban had collected things from other people and were essentially living off the property of a conquered people.

LOAR: Right, and the drug trade -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ?and al Qaeda. It turned out that al Qaeda were the power, and the Taliban allowed al Qaeda to come in, and then al Qaeda was sponsoring them. The Taliban were the sponsored conquerors.

Q: Al Qaeda gave them money.

LOAR: Right, and that's what kept them going for a long time, because they even had the drug trade cleaned up; they did some good work on that front. Al Qaeda had unlimited resources.

Q: They really didn't seem to understand the depth of our hatred of al Qaeda and what we were about to do to it.

LOAR: Right.

Q: There were several opportunities when the Taliban might have made some sort of deal, which in a way would have been awful; but we were after al Qaeda, not the Taliban.

LOAR: But for what difference it made, I think the U.S. in not recognizing the Taliban as the government sort of set a standard. But if the Taliban had turned over al Qaeda and cooperated on terrorism, there might have been a different outcome. I can't predict that. But it did set a particular standard - it did hold back recognition of the government.

But there were also a lot of programs that were developed through the Refugee programs. Julia Taft was head of Population, Refugees, and Migration [Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration] at the time, and she had a tremendously effective team there. Allen Jury is one of the people who developed a lot of the sustainability programs for women who were in Afghanistan and who were not able to get out, just to provide them with basic health services to ensure their survival because they had such limited access to health care. The Afghan women received training through some of the U.S. government funded programs, through CARE and others, on how to keep their children alive or avoid diarrhea in their children. So in the most extreme circumstances, I think the U.S. assistance programs and the Refugee assistance programs did their very best to be responsive and to empower the women without being shut down by the Taliban; and I think that a lot of effort went into that.

But I also think that if we hadn't as a country and as a government and as an administration lived and gone through this big United Nations Conference on Women in 1995, the year before, I don't think there would have been this sharpened focus, and I think it would have been much tougher to hold back the forces who wanted to recognize the Taliban and see them as a stabilizing force.

Q: We may have touched on this before, but did you run across any people in the Near Eastern Bureau, or later the South Asian Bureau, who were looking and saying, "Well, yes, we've got problems here, but we really should recognize the Taliban?"

LOAR: Well, I don't know that there was anybody who was politically tone deaf enough to say we should recognize them, but there was a prevalent attitude among some that, "That's fine, but this is all going to get sorted out later on. This is the way women are always treated in these countries, and we're not going to tell these countries how to treat women," and, "What is this, the flavor of the month? What are we going to worry about next time?" This was the thing I heard again and again.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And it wasn't just related to the Taliban; we had it related to a lot of other things.

There were some who knew the country well, had served there, and had lived there for many years, who said, "These guys are no worse than anybody else." I had recognized that. But the Taliban did lay down this line and were carrying out these edicts. The U.S., as a government which had just gone to this United Nations Conference and put out this important message that, "women's rights are human rights" couldn't ignore that; this was a black and white case! This wasn't whether or not women should get promoted at a certain rate, or whether women should get the corner office. This was the basic human rights that are in the UN charter. Our country was based on this. It was just basic participation and access to food and health. So it was pretty clear and pretty black and white.

There was interest on the Hill, but it was mixed and sometimes pretty ill informed. But our job, too, was to try to get information out to people about what was happening and to really try to keep the focus on the degradation of the lives of the women in Afghanistan.

There was a very good group called Physicians for Human Rights that did a whole report. It was Holly Burkhalter and an Afghan-American woman, who did this report on the health conditions of Afghan women under the Taliban. That was fabulous because it showed the complete, total degradation and suffering the Afghan women were experiencing. That was a human rights issue. This report showed what was happening to women because they couldn't get to their doctors, and because the Afghans wouldn't let women doctors be women doctors, and wouldn't let women go to any doctors. And that was such a good case, for it's not cultural; this is not, "Let that country decide what they're going to do with their own people."

This was a basic, human concern. It was also a very good advocacy tool, I thought, as we did a lot to highlight those findings as often as we could in Hillary Clinton's speeches. She was always eager to talk about the conditions of Afghan women. We held a human rights event at the White House in, I think, 1997, that focused on Afghan women. Belquis Ahmadi, who is a very strong, talented, young Afghan woman who's now living here in the United States and completing law school and who I think will someday be running her country, came and spoke at the White House. President Clinton, Madeleine Albright, and Hillary Clinton were there.

We tried to draw attention to this as often as we could. We also tried to send a signal to the community outside the government that we understood the situation, and that we were not going to recognize this government. However, I don't know if those words were ever spoken publicly by any official, "that we would not recognize the Taliban." But at the end of the day, we didn't.

Q: Well, one of the things about the people who were saying that, "Well, this is just a cultural thing," and all that, my impression is that whatever the system was prior to the Taliban taking control, a lot of talented Afghan women were doctors. There seemed to be a rather substantial reservoir for that backward nation up in the middle of the mountains.

LOAR: The Afghan women got the right to vote about the same time as American women. In the '70s there was a cadre of professional women, a professional class of women, in Kabul. In the countryside, there's no question that there's an extremely high rate of illiteracy, that many women were covered with the "burqa," (the full-body veil created to hide women completely from the gaze of men), and that women had a very inferior status to men in society. But in the capital city of Kabul, women ran universities, and were lawyers and judges. So it wasn't a valid claim to say it was cultural.

Plus, the Taliban were not native. Many of them came from Pakistan and grew up in these very isolated "madrassas" (religious schools), where they had very little access to sisters, mothers, aunts, and all the memorable things that help civilize and help a person develop and understand their role in the world. They had very limited female interaction, and were taught by people who were not Muslim scholars. As my Muslim friends would say, it would be impossible to have read the Koran and to have really been trained by a Koranic scholar and to draw the conclusions the Taliban did.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So there was, you know, a lot working against accepting that idea, that it was cultural, but it was still not always an easy thing to keep our views on top of the agenda.

Q: Another issue that you would see arise from the papers - I don't think we've covered this, and this was particularly going towards Africa - female genital mutilation and people claiming refugee status. Did you get involved with this?

LOAR: Well, a year after the Beijing Conference, when I left the White House, and came back to the State Department to take on the position of Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, one of the first issues I was hit with, in addition to the Taliban, was female genital mutilation.

The reason I was hit with this sort of very quickly early on was that members of our Congress, at the time, including Pat Schroeder, had passed either a law, or it was in a regulation, that the U.S. government had to withhold loans at the World Bank and international financial institutions, to withhold any kind of financial loans or aid programs (I think that was what it was), to any country where this was practiced and where there were no educational programs in place to address it. Pat Schroeder, who was always a strong advocate for women, put this into place, as we understood, at the urging of American human rights groups.

But the American women and human rights community were severely criticized by the African women who said, "This is not helpful to us, that our country's going to get less aid and fewer loans because this practice takes place in our country. Our government will be angry at us, and our people will suffer, and that's not helpful that you did that!"

So in my extreme naivety, my idea that I could bring people together and get people to agree to something, I called a meeting. There happened to be three or four African women, who were leaders in the field of female genital mutilation, in the United States at the time. One was a woman named Nahid Toubia, who was a Sudanese surgeon. Another was a fabulous, beautiful woman from Somalia in her late 50s, who was the first one to ever talk about it publicly and who did a Ph.D. (doctor of philosophy) thesis in Somalia on it; she was a great hero to other African women. There were some others. We invited them to an open meeting in a beautiful conference room; it was Patrick Kennedy's, (A) conference room (the best conference room, of course, is always in (A), Administration), with a nice round table. We had the African women, and I invited the women from the human rights community in the United States who were active in getting Pat Schroeder and others to pass this law or regulation to come in and have an open discussion about it.

I did a little work ahead of time, and found out that the big concerns the African women had were that, putting this issue on the human rights agenda was not so good; it should be on the health agenda. Also, they didn't want American women telling them what to do and not recognizing their efforts. So I sort of worked out a policy statement ahead of time with the African women, and got the American human rights groups to agree to that; it was a difficult, heated discussion.

One of the African women said, "I would never in a million years think I'd be sitting at the U.S. Department of State on a policy discussion of this, and I want to thank you, the U.S. government, for getting us space to talk about it." So that was positive in that way. I think the women in the human rights community came to understand the concerns; it was actually a very positive thing. We came up with a policy statement, which is that - I remember it still, this was 1996, because it was difficult! - the U.S. government would work in partnership with those governments, communities, and organizations on the ground where this female genital mutilation is practiced to help eradicate this harmful health practice. The outcome of that is a greater integration of awareness and education against FGM (female genital mutilation) in our health programs through AID and our commitment to talk about it as a harmful health practice. There was also even controversy calling it female genital mutilation - whether it should be cutting or mutilation. I did a program once with an African -

Q: Yes, mutilation, I guess, is a loaded word.

LOAR: Right?an African woman who said to me, "American women get these breast implants. You mutilate your breasts deliberately and on purpose, and I don't see or hear anybody saying that. We call it cutting." So even the language of it was something where we needed to listen to what the African women were saying.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There are some who called it circumcision, which sounded very harmless, because circumcision for males is harmless. It doesn't affect your reproductive system and your ability to have children, or whether or not you can have a -

Q: Isn't there a term clitorrectomy, or something?

LOAR: Yes, that's another horrible thing.

We did have an expert in the State Department, Lois Gochnauer, who was an expert in that she would write the country profiles where this was practiced; and that was helpful to the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) and for those people who were seeking asylum, based on whether it was practiced in their country; and Lois was the expert on country to country and on where this was practiced.

And I'll say something just completely off the record here [laughter], I had a friend who was very witty and clever, and she said, "If you look at the basic fear of women's sexuality and fear of women being able to enjoy their sexuality - because that's what this practice does, is to remove any enjoyment of sexuality with a lot of other damaging effects - it was amazing it didn't catch on with some of the other faiths, because the whole idea of so many other faiths is to control women's sexuality." [Laughter]

Q: Yes.

LOAR: "And it's amazing it didn't catch on in some of the other faiths." But it wasn't really faith based, because it wasn't in Islam, and it wasn't exclusively in the Islamic countries.

Q: No, no.

LOAR: In Senegal, for example, there's a tremendous model for ending the practice, and it came from the village. And there are some other countries, like Egypt, where they imposed a law and tried to do it from the top down, which is less successful. But in Senegal, it was like village elders, including male village elders, convinced that this was a harmful health practice, that was not going to improve their country, or be good for their village. So that was one of the tougher things.

So, in the fall of '96, I walked into tough issues, but it really was what the position was all about. That's why the women and human rights community created that position - have someone focused full time on promoting and protecting women's human rights within foreign policy.

Q: It's very important! I have just sort of a historical aside. Here I am talking to you about this, I'm 75 years old, and brought up, I guess, in a fairly traditional mode. I just ran into this problem in talking to a missionary doctor in what was then the Trucial States, now the United Arab Emirates; she was talking about how she had to deal with this problem there back in the '50s. I was horrified. I had never heard of this before, and it has always stuck in my mind how horrible this thing was.

LOAR: Yes. One of the good things about what Pat Schroeder did in the law was to make it illegal in the United States, which was important, because it wasn't illegal. Now, HHS had the responsibility to reach out to the immigrant communities and to educate the medical community with an immigrant community in mind. That was fascinating, working with HHS and encouraging HHS to do that, because they really had to train doctors - this is what it is. So, some of these women from Africa who were experts in it would be part of these outreach efforts to the immigrant communities, and I actually got a call in my office, and then another call came into the Op Center after-hours from doctors who were asked to perform this practice in the United States and wanted to know what to do. And of course, I wasn't the health expert. I had to tell them it was illegal, but that we had an emergency number at HHS they could talk to, which could reach out to them, which was really interesting. It's not that it doesn't happen; I'm sure it's still practiced in some communities. But, I thought that educating the health community in the United States, especially those people that served the refugee and immigrant communities, was a very valuable way to get going.

Q: Well, even circumcision, which was standard practice in my time, is now much more debatable, but might still cause all sorts of uproar in the Jewish community.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: But anyway, were there any other issues that you got involved with?

LOAR: Well, one of the issues that arose was the issue of human trafficking. We started off with trafficking women and girls, and then understood that it included boys as well. So we'd say trafficking in persons.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It was brought to me through a variety of ways. One way that it hit me in the face was at the first conference that we did for Vital Voices, the Vital Voices Democracy Initiative, and the idea that vital voices, women's voices, are essential to the development of any democracy. That was in July 1997. The first conference was organized and sponsored by Swanee Hunt, who was our ambassador to Vienna at the time. The idea was to bring together emerging women leaders, and delegations of women, from all the countries in the former Soviet Union for a meeting in Vienna, which sounded like a very straight forward thing to do. I'll talk about Vital Voices in a little bit.

One of the issues that arose from that meeting was this horror of women and children being sold into modern-day slavery. It's very hard for people to comprehend that that was happening; very hard for them to comprehend that it was happening here in the United States. We now know there are some 50,000 people a year who are sold and end up in slavery-like conditions in the United States, and that's on farms, in factories, in private homes, in brothels and in the sex industry. They come from all over the world, and it's based on economic hardship. Women are lured from their home countries and children are pushed out by their families because of the extreme economic conditions that they face.

This journalist, Victoria Pope from U.S. News & World Report, took me to lunch when she returned from Russia. She was an investigative reporter for U.S. News & World Report at the time. This was sometime in the beginning of 1997. She told me, "I just came from Russia, and you should know that there's a whole industry of selling Russian women into the United States, and they end up in places, for example, like New Brunswick, New Jersey." Now I had gone to Rutgers College, graduated from Rutgers College in New Jersey, and I was envisioning New Jersey and Rutgers, and I couldn't believe that there were Russian women who the police would pick up and say, "Oh, they're prostitutes," and deport them; and then the criminals, the traffickers who would trade them, would pick them up on the other end and sell them into another country. This was just shocking and very difficult to comprehend! It really became a major focus of our work on the interagency side because we had this government task force on women, the President's Interagency Council on Women, which included government representatives from every federal agency.

So while I was focusing on women's human rights in foreign policy as the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, I also had this responsibility, as Director of this President's Interagency Council on Women, to coordinate government-wide activities for women. So when this issue of trafficking came up, and we saw Ukrainian women talking about this in this conference in Vienna and Russian government officials putting their hands up to say, "It's overwhelming; we can't even address it," it was clear that we needed to develop a government response to this. It was very helpful to have this government-wide responsibility and mechanism to be able to address it because it's such an overwhelming issue: it's a human rights issue, it's an issue of organized crime; it's an issue of migration to the United States, and it's a health concern. That involved a number of cross-agency responsibilities.

We had a very strong team that came together to address this; it sort of evolved. We were able to recruit a very talented lawyer named Steve [Stephen] Warnath, who had been at the White House Office on Crime, and before that at the Justice Department, and who not only had experience in White House policy, but also in crime, and who knew people at Justice Department very well. Anita Botti, who is still at the State Department and was one of the top people in Population, Refugees, and Migration Bureau, and who had a lot of experience with refugees and migration, came over. We really developed this concept. We began by asking: "Okay, what are the issues that we need to face?" We invited people in from the human rights community; we held a lot of public briefings about this; we really wanted to look at this issue, and to learn what we could, and to see what would be an effective government response.

So we would hear from the human rights community that you have to balance your team with Martina Vandenberg, for example, at Human Rights Watch (they wrote terrific reports about this to help define the issue), and that you couldn't just look at protecting the victims, without also looking at prosecuting the criminals.

Q: Oh, yes!

LOAR: Or one or the other, and then the other is prevention, so warning people off.

So we developed this prevention, protection, and prosecution, and that became sort of the base for the policies and programs that we developed and ultimately of the law that was passed in the year 2000, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000.

This was an all-involving issue in that the more people learned about it, the more action that was required for people to take. It was very, very valuable to have the State Department base, but also the interagency mechanism; and Anita and Steve did tremendous work in pulling together people in the other government agencies.

At the Justice Department, for example, there are victims in the United States who needed protection, but traffickers who needed to be prosecuted, and a whole range of other issues. HHS had health concerns, and also refugee responsibility with resettling refugees. Ultimately, we needed to help define the issue. We were able to get a report out. We had Amy O'Neill Richard, who was an analyst in INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research), and was a candidate for a special CIA program called the Exceptional Analyst Award. We all worked hard to get Amy that Exceptional Analyst Award so that she could sit in our office as her home base and study trafficking for years. She issued the definitive report. It was the first report done by the U.S. government in 1999. There hasn't been an update since, but it's the one that came up with the estimates of numbers from around the world and the 50,000 here in the United States.

But we also had a lot of cooperation from a number of different parts of the CIA in looking at the traffickers. In looking at human traffickers, we had a lot of the CIA focused on drug trafficking - who were the traffickers, what were their roots, how were they able to accomplish this. There was a lot of cooperation there.

There were a lot of challenges. There were many challenges and different points of view within the Justice Department, because there are a lot of competing agendas. That was an interesting and complicated mix of very talented people working in our Justice Department.

We had a lot of interest and support from Hillary Clinton's office. Melanne Verveer, who was Mrs. Clinton's chief of staff, was very interested and supportive of this effort.

We also had a lot of outreach too in connection with the faith community because they would come in to tell us that there were women who were seeking asylum and seeking help from the faith community, and they don't know where to turn because there's no law.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: As we were going to be leaving government at the end of 2000, and were unsure of what would happen next, we wanted to be sure we left a permanent policy approach, which was prevention, protection, and prosecution, and also a government structure that would respond to it.

Q: Well, there's also a problem. I don't know how you dealt with it, and I'm speaking on outmoded knowledge. But being a prostitute made you ineligible for a visa, and I can see where a woman who got caught up in this thing would find herself in a catch-22. If she testified, or something like this, she was declaring herself ineligible. I mean this must have been a very difficult nut to crack.

LOAR: Yes. Well, it is difficult. But, no one would consciously put themselves in these circumstances. No one would willingly come in to the United States and be subjected to slavery.

Q: No, no, no.

LOAR: So regardless of what somebody's hope was, or how they hoped to earn their income, at the end of the day, no one would deliberately put themselves in these circumstances. So it was a great challenge.

We had some interest from Capitol Hill. Congressman Chris Smith [Christopher H. Smith] from New Jersey was a tremendous advocate on behalf of trafficked women. He was very active on the Helsinki Commission [U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe], and he actually introduced the first piece of legislation to put this into law. We had Sam Brownback [Samuel Dale Brownback], a Republican from Kansas, on the Senate side; and the late Paul Wellstone was a Democratic leader in the Senate; and there was another member of Congress, [Samuel Gejdenson], who was on the Democratic side in the House, who was not reelected, who was the Democratic sponsor (I wish I could remember his name, that would be helpful).

We worked closely with them to get this idea of prevention, protection, and prosecution out and to be sure that it wasn't just sex trafficking which was addressed because the traffickers, these criminal networks, did not select only people to work in brothels. They would go into a village in India, for example, and they would assure the parents that their young adult children from 10 to 16 would be well taken care of. Then they would whisk them out of the country and beat them and subject them to horrific human rights violations. They would split them up. Some would work in rug factories, some would work on farms, and some would work in brothels. So to limit it just to sex trafficking was too limiting and Congressman Smith was open to that and did expand that. That was very important because otherwise you skew the focus and you don't really get at the issue.

Hillary Clinton was a tremendous advocate for this in that she would, on her overseas trips, try to call attention to the issue. I remember the first time she talked about this in a very open way and actually visited some of the locations where this was. One of those countries that was being affected was Thailand in 1997; she went to Chiang Mai in the north and met with families where the girls had come back, girls who had been lured into trafficking. Of course it's a horrible issue in Thailand. And, there's so many young women, girls and children, actually from Burma, who were sold into slavery.

That was a very dramatic trip and time because what we were trying to do was call attention to some of those programs that would reintegrate the girls, some of whom had now become HIV positive. We were also trying to show models of these reintegration programs that worked, where the girls had a little further education beyond the compulsory age of education. If the families could see that investing in the girls and the girls' ability to get further education was better for the family, they would be able to return more to the family and they became more valuable to the family. That was sort of a positive approach. It was also in a series of UN meetings that we called to deal with this issue.

Now on a policy front, Madeleine Albright would raise this, and I always knew when she did because I'd hear from the DAS [laughter], the Deputy Assistant Secretary, who covered that country, and pretty quickly. For example, when she met with the prime minister of Italy on the margins of the G8, in 1998 I think, she raised it and said, we need to be working more cooperatively. The Italians, actually, had a lot to teach us. We had a very strong relationship with the Italians. They led the world in protection.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: They were terrific in offering protective services to Nigerians and Albanians who found themselves traded in open slave markets in Italy. Then I'd hear pretty quickly from the Italian embassy and the DAS for the European Bureau who covered Italy, that, "Oh, we have got to be working with you. Well, let's do things!"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: Our role was really to be advisors and consultants to the regional bureaus because dealing with trafficking shouldn't be housed in one place. Our thought was that it was important that there be a place to coordinate the policy but that the regional bureaus should develop policy as they work with the embassies, and those partnerships were really strong and effective. So it was very helpful when Madeleine would raise this, and it would filter down.

Q: Well, it puts it on the agenda -

LOAR: Right.

Q: ?and once it's on the agenda -

LOAR: And the governments know it's of concern, because, when Madeleine Albright raised this, it's of concern.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: She raised it as well in Israel, and that was a little bit harder for that bureau to take that on board as something that they wanted her to raise, first of all -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ?which she was going to do! They wouldn't clear on the papers. I got a call from Madeleine Albright's plane.

Q: What was the problem in Israel?

LOAR: Distracting. You know that's a distracting issue. It'd be like this was not only a flavor of the month, but a distraction from the main agenda, which was the other refrain I heard frequently ...

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: ?which I could understand. I didn't accept it, but I could understand where it came from because this has nothing to do with the U.S.-Israeli relationship; why are you messing it up with this?

But there was a front-page article in the New York Times, which was based on a report that Martina Vandenberg from Human Rights Watch had done, about Russian and Ukrainian women being trafficked into Israel. Madeleine Albright or her team read that on one of her flights to Israel to meet with Binyamin Netanyahu, and called our office from the plane. It was dark, so it must have been late. I don't remember the exact time, but it was not in the morning that we got this call that she wanted to raise this. So like let's give her the briefing papers, talking points, and everything she needed. That call came from the Op Center to our office.

However, the bureau, and I guess it was NEA, didn't quite agree with Madeleine Albright's desire to do this, which I thought was stunning! The last time I checked, she was the boss! We had to find out right away. It was very difficult because there was an extraordinarily ineffective, over-financed program to try to figure out where trafficking was illegal and all this stuff; and I was trying to get information from that, and couldn't quite get it. That was funded by one of the other bureaus at the State Department, so it was difficult. We tried to figure out several things: what the actual status was; was there a law against it; how prevalent it was; and finally, while we have this human rights report, does our own government have anything? And it was very hard to get any of that information. But we were able to cobble something together.

They wouldn't clear, and the NEA Bureau wouldn't clear it because they just didn't think it was appropriate for her to raise this. [Laughter] But she did raise it, and the follow-up was difficult because they thought, "Well, you may have done that, but no one's going to actually go forward with it." There wasn't a strong interest from the Israeli government on trying to address that; and it was very complicated because it was the Russian immigrants who are involved in this and that was a whole political issue for them.

And then Madeleine Albright raised it with the Ukrainian government as well, which was important because they did want to be very open about it and they wanted a partnership with the U.S. We ended up doing some very effective programs with the Ukrainian government. The State Department and the White House got involved, as well, in training prosecutors and the enforcement community. Actually, it's a model that has been duplicated in other places.

We raised this issue publicly, and offered some approaches to it, because the idea of slavery and its profitability is so overwhelming. We tried to develop a policy framework of prevention, protection, and prosecution, and then tried to constantly define it that way and then to try to build the capacity of our government to respond.

In pushing towards the law, a lot of other elements were drawn in. There were people who were involved in (the whole story needs to be told at some point) how the trafficking law was developed: there were a great number of people in the religious and faith communities who were involved in the religious freedom bill, who also wanted to develop a similar punitive law on sex trafficking. Since we were interested in making permanent these approaches on trafficking, and having an organized, functioning, coordinating government mechanism, we wanted to have a common agenda within our government. But, there was some point there where it didn't go forward as a common agenda, and became difficult. We also had negotiations going underway with the United Nations on a new protocol on organized crime. And, we developed one on trafficking as well that became a flash point: people from the far Right and the far Left tried to distort that to say that it wasn't addressing prostitution, therefore we must be promoting prostitution. It became a flashpoint and got in the way of a lot of good work that could have been done. To this day that nonsense carries on.

Q: Well, what was the problem? Was it that prostitution wasn't mentioned, or was it?

LOAR: Well, this is an issue that's been going on for more than 20 years in the feminist community. In the context of trafficking and the effort to end the trafficking of persons, which puts people into modern-day slavery, we were trying to use every mechanism we could to build an international consensus around the issue; so we went into the UN. There was a protocol being developed under the organized crime and drug control part of the United Nations. It was a convention on organized criminal activity and there was one part having to do with a protocol on trafficking that the U.S. proposed. So this protocol just on human trafficking would be part of a larger convention. This was in 1999, I think, that this was being negotiated. Our position as a government was to try to get other countries on board with the prevention, protection, and prosecution agenda.

It was interesting that a number of countries (China for one, and Russia) who don't particularly care about fighting organized crime and don't really care too much about human rights were very concerned about trafficking because their own citizens, especially the younger generation, were very affected by this. They felt that they had to respond in some way. So we were able to draw those countries in.

It was a very effective way of going at the issue. And, while it was organized crime, we had to work very hard. There was tremendous work because if you get into any UN setting, you're always going to have a lot of sides pulling and pushing at an issue; but it was very important that we made sure that victims' protection was well written into that.

In the middle of all this, there was some alliance that developed between the extreme Right in the United States and the extreme Left, who decided to come together to make this instrument an instrument against prostitution and to end prostitution in all forms. As I said, there was this ongoing debate within the feminist community for 20 years, which I have to say I never particularly tuned into, but was drawn into. On the one hand, some believed that prostitution was inherently exploitative and harmful to women and should be outlawed (and that's my point of view). It is illegal here in the United States. So as a government, of course, that was our point of view.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: There were others that thought that prostitutes are in that situation for whatever reason, and that they're workers, and their rights should be protected, and they should have workers' rights and health benefits available.

Q: There have been things in San Francisco and other places -

LOAR: Yes, right.

Q: ?you know, saying, I mean, "We're workers."

LOAR: So there's that point of view, and if we look within the UN context, there are countries around the world where prostitution is not illegal. For example, it's not illegal in Israel, in France, and in Holland, I think, and several other countries.

So there are some who would say "that's an interesting issue, but we're really looking at selling human beings into slavery, and the sex trafficking is one piece of it; so let's focus on what we're trying to do," and that was our point of view as a government, and that is what we were trying to do.

However, there were some who thought this would be a really great time to make the point that prostitution was bad, and that we should end prostitution. They distorted, and do to this day distort, the position of what the U.S. was trying to do in that UN meeting. And there were groups who decided to come together and said very openly and directly that the administration's point of view at this meeting is that if you're not going to end prostitution, you're really promoting it, and you're supporting it. And that bizarre, ridiculous, outlandish statement just kept bouncing, and bouncing, and bouncing, because, of course, it became a political attack against Hillary Clinton. Because groups like Equality Now from the Left decided to hold the point of view that if you're not ending prostitution, you're really promoting it. And groups like? I can't even remember the names of the groups - it was more the individuals on the Right deciding to come together. This was interesting to the press, and the New York Post, which is not known for its unbiased point of view, did a headline called Hillary's Hooker Panel. This referred to the [President's] Interagency Council on Women, and listed Anita Botti, Steve Warnath and me as those on Hillary's hooker panel, who were promoting prostitution. I thank God my mother doesn't read the New York Post.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: But my friend Anita Botti's father said, "Well honey, at least the prostitutes will like you!"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: ?which was not our goal. But it became a very damaging and destructive distraction from the important work of getting countries together. It was ill-informed and ignorant and politically motivated. It was a distraction, and still is a distraction (and that's another long story, as to how this issue's being addressed now in the United States under the law that's being passed, and not being implemented as it should be). The U.S. made very firm statements, that we do not support prostitution, that it is illegal in the United States, and that we think it's exploitative of women. Those are on the State Department's web site. I've had to remind people of those on a regular basis, but facts don't get in the way of someone who has a political agenda.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Some of these groups said, "We don't care about resources for these women. We don't care about taking care of these boys who are sold into these sweatshops. We want to make the point that prostitution is bad." Well, it's hard to find people, anyone on earth, who thinks prostitution is good.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But beyond that, it was a fairly ineffective, damaging, and destructive distraction to this overall issue.

But I'll go back to the main issue and talk about how this got caught up into the law and everything else, but at the end of the day, Congressman Chris Smith, Brownback and Wellstone prevailed. The point of view we shared with them was that this is an inherent evil. Trafficking people into slavery denies them of their basic human rights, and we, as a country, have to stand up against it and treat people who were trafficked in the United States as victims and provide them with refugee services and help them. We have to aid in the prosecution of their traffickers. The United States has a responsibility to help countries around the world address this issue, to help them with prevention, protection, and prosecution. That's what the law says.

The other part of the law is there because there was a faction who wanted some punitive tool within this law to damage and punish countries that didn't address this issue. A compromise was that there would be a Trafficking in Persons Report issued once a year, and that this would be an important way of ranking countries according to how they addressed this issue - the old standard ranking way we do on some other things. I've never thought that was particularly effective, but it was a compromise. The sad thing is that because of this ranking and the reporting, this has become like the drug trafficking report; people spend all their time trying to get up the list rather than trying to do things. I have heard from some people that the list is helpful; it calls the attention of governments. I think what's less helpful is that when they issue the report every year, we don't also say (and it's been issued twice, it'll be issued again in July 2003, a few months from now), while these are the countries we had the greatest concerns about, we are working with citizens in that country, some faction of government, to help empower them to stand up to this human rights violation and this organized criminal activity. I think that we're abdicating our responsibility as a government when we don't do that.

But at any rate, the law got passed. It was a great moment. I remember the trip to Thailand that I took with President and Mrs. Clinton in 1997. Bill Itoh [William H. Itoh] was our ambassador at the time. When we came down from Chiang Mai with Mrs. Clinton and joined the president's party in Bangkok, the big event and the whole focus of the president's trip, was for President Clinton to sign a repatriation treaty, which was for the repatriation of profits from American companies so that there was a better tax arrangement between the governments of Thailand and of the United States. And I thought, "well, that's like really not that exciting. I can't believe this is the focus of the whole trip! I'd like to see the president sign something that really affects the lives of women all around the world some day." However, as I stood in the Oval Office in October of the year 2000 while the president signed the trafficking law into act, I recognized that it was possible to take these issues and it was possible to get the highest level of attention; and that with good, strong legislative support, to actually put something permanent in place that would address the issues that affected so many women and children around the world.

Q: Well then, I take it you left when Clinton??

LOAR: At the end of the Clinton administration, yes.

Q: Did you feel that you had institutionalized some dealings with women that hadn't been there before?

LOAR: There are actually two things that I'd like to talk about next time as far as institutionalizing, because as a former Foreign Service officer, that was my heart's desire, and I saw that as a mandate. It's a lot harder to do than to be able to get the support of the Secretary of State, just because she was so on board with this agenda; the First Lady was also such a leader. One thing is to make the speeches, and that was very powerful, very important, because that set the tone. But in institutionalizing, you have to get people to internalize it.

Why they value it and why it's important to give awards to people was the other part of it. I felt that was my responsibility to make sure that that happened, and I think we were successful at that in several ways. Secretary Powell has decided to continue the position of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues. It was an action memo that went up to the Secretary from the Undersecretary for Global Affairs (Paula Dobriansky in this current administration). They had polled a number of the regional and functional bureaus, including the Economic Bureau, asking what they thought, and there was an affirmative response that this position was helpful to the work that they were trying to do. So I took that as a sign of success, that we had made some progress in trying to institutionalize it.

But I can talk next time about trafficking and the response of our embassies, and how they viewed that.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And then the Vital Voices conferences and how we started Democracy Network.

Q: I know it's beyond your State Department career, but let's talk about Vital Voices too.

LOAR: Okay. The third thing I want to talk about, and this is really a State Department function, and it had a huge impact, was the role that Craig Johnstone and his office [Office of Resources, Plans & Policy] played. It was the idea of putting our resources and our policies together in a "foreign affairs account." Craig Johnstone took our office as a model of an emerging issue, and of how you get appropriately resourced in the mission program plan design; that second thing had had a huge effect on how we were able to move ahead with these issues, as the regional bureaus couldn't get their plans approved if they didn't put trafficking and democracy building in their plans. That was one of the most significant things we could have done for institutionalizing it. So I'd like to talk about that - which will be of interest for State Department people [laughter]!

Q: Sure.

LOAR: People outside may not find it that particularly exciting, but it is!

Q: No, it's very important. I think back to Patt Derian [Patricia M. Derian, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, 1977 - 1981] and putting human rights on everybody's agenda, which hadn't been included before. This included an awful lot of inter-bureau fighting and a lot of tooth gnashing.

LOAR: Right. And the other thing was the language: what worked, and what didn't. It was using the language of "women's rights" that can mean many different things. People see that as sort of aggressive and a throwback to the '70s. And, "women's human rights," well, nobody really knew what that meant. However, using the word "democracy" helped us an awful lot. Packaging in the idea of the full empowerment of women, and women as active participants in society, and calling it "democracy," I think, was helpful. And so I'd like to talk about that the next time we get together.

Q: Okay. Well, we'll do that.

Q: Today is 25 June 2003, only six months to go to Christmas. So I guess you've sent your cards out already!

LOAR: [Laughter]

Q: Well anyway -

LOAR: Getting all set.

Q: Let's talk about the embassies and their response to trafficking and that.

LOAR: On the issue of trafficking, I think in Washington we probably talked about a government-wide response and recognizing we needed numbers to quantify the problem. So we needed the CIA's help and engagement, and we needed Justice for their ability to look at prosecuting cases and the protection of the victims. There were some prosecutors already very active in this at Justice, who were using a variety of criminal statutes, under Al Moskowitz [Albert Moskowitz] and Louis deBaca, who is a terrific prosecutor to this day. We also needed HHS to try to find ways that the victims who are brought here could have available to them some of the services that refugees have available to them. And, of course, we needed the Labor Department, because this is slavery and forced labor here in the United States. We knew that we needed to build a government structure, so we started? I just don't remember if we went and talked about the event at the White House where we issued an executive memorandum from the president.

Q: I think you did.

LOAR: We did? Okay. This was really a very good thing because it gave us the authority and empowered us, as the President's Interagency Council on Women, to be able to build this government structure. It also helped us because in putting together the executive memorandum, we were able to bring together the agencies to see: can you do this; is this something that's in your capacity; even if you're not able to do it now, do you see there's value in this. So it wasn't that we were hitting people over the head; we were bringing people together on a common task.

Q: Did the Central Intelligence Agency come into this? They've been brought into the drug trafficking business, and I was wondering whether they got into this at all?

LOAR: Well, it was actually very helpful to us because the President's Interagency Council on Women included high-level representatives from every federal agency. We had good contacts over at the CIA, and that was very helpful in the development of two things: one, trafficking was the most important one. Anita Botti had come over from PRM (Population, Refugees, and Migration) to help us put together a strategy on how to deal with trafficking. She and Steve Warnath, who had come over from the White House with a background on fighting criminal activity and on developing policy on crime, were both very helpful. I don't remember the sequence of it, but we knew we needed to quantify the criminal activity in trafficking and also know who these traffickers were, because people didn't really know who made up these criminal networks. That was something we thought the CIA could help with. INR at the State Department was less than enthusiastic about helping on that, which surprised me because I thought that would be an emerging issue they would want to jump on.

Q: Yes, it'd be kind of fun, getting -

LOAR: It was not considered a priority, which is unfortunate. Amy O'Neill, who was one of the analysts at INR was always very interested in our issues, had heard about this program called Exceptional Analysts Program that the CIA had. You could devote a year of your time. You could apply for the Exceptional Analyst Program; I think one was chosen a year. You would be funded, have a travel budget, and you would devote a year to a particular issue. You had products and reports. We, through our friends there, heavily supported Amy's candidacy for this particular program, and she was chosen as the exceptional analyst. She came and sat in our office and worked closely with Anita Botti. That was what they called the CIA Report on Trafficking. That came out, I think, in 1999, though, of course, it was written by a State Department person on the program.

So that report that came out that quantified the trafficking was one big breakthrough that helped us a lot. I remember this team of people from the CIA (and I don't remember the section, I just remember their faces) coming in and meeting a lot with Anita, and Steve, and myself to look at trafficking routes, and at whether the people involved in trafficking were involved in other illegal activity, who they were; could we start developing some intelligence on who these people were. They were very enthusiastic about it. They did an awful lot of work although I don't think we got regular briefings. I do know that there were briefings up the line at the CIA and up the line at State. That was very helpful to us because people started understanding that this is not like some mom-and-pop operation, and that there were very high-end criminal networks involved, in addition to the mom-and-pop, opportunistic traffickers who pop up here and there. So that was really helpful to get the CIA engaged and fun to work with these guys over at the CIA who saw this as a new chance to start putting this into the system. There were all these procedures for starting to collect intelligence: find out who the people were, develop or get information on trafficking routes, and all that.

Q: Were you seeing, at that time, any conjunction with drug smuggling?

LOAR: Well, in some cases, the people involved in smuggling humans were the same people involved in smuggling drugs and weapons. We certainly saw that there were a lot of parallels in the issue, but there were some major distinctions as well. When you traffic drugs, you are trafficking a substance or a plant, which is consumed, and that's the end of it. When you smuggle and traffic human beings, it's a human being who's still alive after being put into slavery at the end of this, and then is transferred again to somewhere else and in another terrible condition of slavery.

So there were differences. It was actually always a challenge to help people see and remember those differences. These were some of the discussions we had with our friends in the Drugs and Thugs Bureau, who were really geared up to fight drug trafficking. We tried to instill the sensibility that it is a human being involved and therefore protection of the victim has to be part of our approach to this; that was a challenge sometimes, and I think it became an ongoing challenge.

Even as we looked into, at the end of the Clinton administration and at the beginning of the Bush administration, when Secretary Powell came in, there was some interest by the outgoing Undersecretary for Global Affairs under Madeleine Albright in moving trafficking into the Drugs and Thugs Bureau, into INL (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement). I thought that would be a terrible move because I thought that we would lose all the focus and attention on the prevention and the protection of victims components. I thought it would become purely looked at, or predominantly looked at, from the issue of organized crime, and that became ? [laughter] you had another issue to advocate on and to do some work on, and I think we did prevail in the end. I remember talking to Richard (Dick) Armitage. When the new team came in, I was asked to come in and sort of share with him my views on how this should be handled. I was appreciative that they had asked me after I had left government to come in and share with them some thoughts about that. It turned out that they did keep this trafficking under the Undersecretary for Global Affairs; they didn't move it into Drugs and Thugs.

The new law, of course, required an office to be set up. I think it is important that, as an office, it's separate, and that it's treated differently than drug trafficking, because it is! It involves a human being. You have to look at that human being from the very beginning: why is this person being lured into trafficking, what are the economic or societal conditions that makes this human being - a boy, a girl, or a woman - vulnerable to being lured into trafficking, or sold into trafficking, or forced into these conditions of slavery. I think that's a very big distinction.

Q: Well, one of the big factors was the Soviet Union had broken up, and living was very hard in the former Soviet Union, and certain criminal elements had taken over all sorts of sectors of that economy.

LOAR: I think you're right. There's the combination of the rapid increase in criminal activity, the open borders, the economic vulnerability and breakdown of economic opportunities for a lot of people across the former Soviet Union, and Ukraine, and Russia, and other countries as well, that all played together to make people vulnerable to the traffickers who were and still are offering them jobs out of the country.

I mean, we had a group in here at Vital Voices (a group of advocates, NGO activists, journalists, government officials) working together on trafficking, and from the far east of Russia to St. Petersburg they all pretty much said the same thing - that the traffickers prey on people's economic weaknesses. You know, a young woman who's just finished college and should have the world opened to her doesn't have a lot of economic opportunity, a lot of great jobs. So she's willing to go and look at what's being offered in Turkey, or a promise for some job in the United States, or some place in Western Europe. The big challenge, for these groups, is to make people aware of the risks that they're taking and to set up some kind of safe travel network, so that people don't go off on their own.

Q: Were we setting up, I won't call them safe houses, but almost transition houses - places where, particularly women (there were young men involved too), where they could come to put them through a process. Once they had the stigma on them and all, it's a little hard to get back into regular society. I mean reintegration is being kicked back to the country they went to?

LOAR: Well, reintegration is a very big challenge, and I think it's an area that needs a great deal of work and thought. One of the women we work with in Ukraine, Oksana Horbunova, has been doing very good work on trafficking for a very long time. We met her first while we were working in the State Department and met her again at one of the Vital Voices conferences we put together to encourage this cadre of women's leadership, but wasn't focused on trafficking in particular. Oksana has been focusing a lot on working cooperatively with her government in Ukraine, which I think is very important. She deserves a lot of credit for doing that. She's also been looking at when victims return: how can they come back into society when they've been through some pretty horrible situations, sexual slavery in many cases; how can you come back in without the traffickers knowing where you're living; how can you protect your family; and those are big, big challenges. I know there are a lot of different programs being tried and developed, but I don't know if they have found the solution to that. In some cases people return with real serious health consequences and terrible health conditions. So that's also very difficult.

Q: What about the reaction, while you were still in government, of our embassies? You mentioned the Ukraine, where there's stories of how many Ukrainian young women were flooding Western Europe and are caught up in this prostitution, but I mean there are other places too. Did our embassies see this as an issue?

LOAR: I think the endresponse of our embassies was very encouraging and says a lot about the Foreign Service. It is that people go out as I did, (you go out to the field, you're whatever level you're going out with, even if it's your second or third or fourth tour), and when there's an issue that allows you to do something that hasn't been done before and allows you to engage the governments or the NGO sector you do it. Some people really love working with the NGO sectors; and some officers look at it and say, "Well, that's not what I joined for;" and then you have the public diplomacy people who were always very close to what's going on in the media and what's going on in the culture and the press.

The response we got from our embassies on this issue was terrific, and I think there's so much more potential for the U.S. being a partner in these efforts to combat human trafficking through our embassies. It's great to have the Secretary of State say important things here, and it's good to have things going on here in Washington, but I think our embassies in the field have a great ability, to partner with people on the ground, either governments, somebody in the government. In most any country you will find someone - whether parliamentarians, men or women, or somebody in the Labor Department (and I can think of this from country to country), or somebody in the social welfare area, or those who fight the organized criminal network - there's always a partner you can find in almost any government in the world. Then there's somebody on the ground who's looking at it from the point of view of the victims, and trying to warn people off from going into these risky behaviors, or convincing the families that their children shouldn't be sent. And then there are those who tried to look for the alternatives, to try to provide economic alternatives and looked at it from the human rights issue. But our embassies - I can just think of the very creative things that officers did in trying to get this on the government agenda.

We had a very good team on the Italy desk here in Washington, and they activated some of the folks in our embassy in Italy. We ended up with a very strong relationship with the Italian government, including the head of the anti-Mafia commission who came here. It wasn't like it came out of our office, and we said, "We need the anti-Mafia commission."

Our office was really trying to help advise the regional bureaus on how to handle this issue. That was really fun to do because you got the officers in the field very engaged, and the desk officers interested in another issue, and even if you looked at us and said, "Oh, that's women's rights. I'm not interested," or you had looked at it and said, "Well, you know, I don't really deal with criminal issues. That's not my?" But, there were consular issues and there was a big role for consular officers.

Q: Oh really?

LOAR: Mary Ryan, the former Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, whom I have great admiration for, made a point every time I would run into her at a meeting on the Seventh Floor and in the cafeteria, of saying, "Are we doing enough on trafficking?" In fact, Consular Affairs set up the whole fraud profile of traffickers because consular officers had a huge role to play in issuing visas. In how those visas were issued, they can detect (and they did very often) trafficking rings, and people who just didn't sound very logical or accurate about what they were going to the United States to do. Also, Consular Affairs officers could provide information to those who received the visas (now it doesn't work as the traffickers, in fact, were buying the visas wholesale or working through some travel agencies) on what to expect when you come to the United States. There's a lot of that that can be done. I thought that was a terrific role for consular officers to play.

Another role the consular officers played was in working with other embassies. I'm trying to remember which countries our embassies did this in. The Ukrainian ambassador, for example, had met me at a reception in the State Department, came up, which I thought was extraordinary, and said, "You know, we'd really like some help on this issue of trafficking," which was very unusual - that a country would admit they'd have a problem and that the ambassador would openly talk about this was extraordinary - and he said, "When I was ambassador from Ukraine to Israel I would see so many Ukrainian women there, and I wouldn't know what to do, or how we should approach it, and," he said, "this is really a concern for us, and we want to work on it," which opened up a lot of things: Madeleine Albright's discussion with Kuchma, to a model program in Ukraine, to cooperation on the law enforcement side; which was just very, very good.

But one of the things our embassies did, based on that conversation and based on concerns that we had heard from a number of other governments, was some of the former Soviet Union countries and other countries didn't really have a system for protecting their citizens when they were in other countries. They had these embassies, but the embassies were set up to deal with government to government issues, and not to look after their own citizens. The Philippine government is extraordinarily concerned about the welfare of their citizens in other countries, and they actually have a government agency that deals with this because so many Filipinos go overseas to work.

But most other governments did not have that. So one of the things some of our consular officers did was to work within the Consular Corps to sort of share information on how you protect your citizens when they're overseas, and if they find themselves in this situation and they come in and ask for your help, how you can repatriate them safely. I thought that was just a terrific response. It wasn't a huge resource issue. It was sharing expertise and ideas on how we do this, and there were some very good models that came out of that. I know that there were Foreign Service officers nominated for awards for their work on trafficking in the field, and I thought that was just terrific because I thought it wasn't, you know, somebody who called following a mandate, but were really using their skills and talents and contacts to make a difference on this emerging issue.

Q: Well, in a very short time you were there and responding to something, and the State Department normally takes a long, long time to take a look at the environment, or this sort of thing. But of course, this thing almost exploded with the demise of the Soviet Union.

LOAR: Right.

Q: It had been going on, but not in the numbers.

LOAR: Right. And I think too, the fact that there was such human suffering involved, that it really drove people to want to see what could be done. People were probably also encouraged by something else we did. I knew how the State Department worked. So, when we got a cable in from the field which reported on any activity done or some new idea, we would send a kudos cable back. We did this an awful lot. We would write cables back to say, Washington greatly appreciates that reporting. We did this because I knew that that language was used in someone's EER (Employee Evaluation Report), their personnel evaluation, and that motivates people to want to do more. They also learnt that there are NGOs in Washington.

Q: Well, it also alerts the ambassador or the consul general to their embassy personnel's being appreciated in Washington.

LOAR: For that insightful thing about the opposition party [laughter], and those cables are their standard reporting, and you wanted to encourage that kind of reporting when that came in and the truth is that we were getting such incredible information from the field. It was very, very helpful to us, and we were able to leverage it with local embassies here, through our contacts in the UN, and through a whole range of things.

Q: How about your connection to the news media? Did you have contacts at the New York Times or the Washington Post, or the AP (Associated Press)?

LOAR: Well, I don't know if I had mentioned it earlier, but one of the ways this issue really came to my attention was through a reporter named Victoria Pope, who was with U.S. News & World Report, and who had just come back from Russia, and was doing an investigative piece on something she had seen there and seen here in the United States, on Russian women being brought into the United States and end up in trafficking. That really woke me up to the issue, particularly when she mentioned that the women were being trafficked into New Jersey. I had graduated from Rutgers in New Brunswick. That was my hometown area, and I was very concerned about that. She said what would happen is that once these women and girls were picked up by the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service), the traffickers would know when they were being deported and would pick them up on the other end and send them somewhere else. That was very distressing, but very helpful to have the press put their attention on.

I do remember that there was attention and interest from Times and Post reporters in the field on this issue. There was interest on trafficking from the press based in Washington when there was talk about putting a law together, because it had such broad bipartisan support from both Republicans and Democrats, from religious groups, from feminist groups, and from people working across all sectors.

Q: Well, were you able to pinpoint any countries, particularly the Middle East or somewhere else, where there was a blind eye turned, if you get some European women into the brothels?

LOAR: Yes.

Q: This has been a story that's been around for hundreds of years. But I was wondering what -

LOAR: Yes, I think there were a number of governments that were making quite a bit of money off of the whole operation and were not eager to take action and didn't like any particular attention put on the issue. I think that it wasn't isolated to one part of the world. It wasn't just women, as we're finding out more and more now. It's boys being put on coffee plantations; they were just kidnaped in the way that people have experienced and known slavery and slaves were brought to the United States. These young children are being sold to work on farms and sweat shops. So it's pretty broad and pretty much across the board.

You know, if we can point to a model country that puts a law on the books and implements it, it really does something to work with the members of civil society who are trying to fight it, and that's a big step forward. But I really can't point to a model country. I don't think we're a model country. I think we still have a lot to do to really come to terms with people who end up in those conditions here in the United States.

Just the other day I had a meeting with one of the service providers, who is just utterly, completely frustrated because the trafficked victims who come to them primarily are those who are sold into domestic servitude. So they're in homes as virtual prisoners, but somehow they are able to connect with other people in their own ethnic community and to find help, and this is in Los Angeles. If 90 percent of their cases are on domestic servitude, well, all the stories we're hearing in the press, and all the things that we hear about are the sexual slavery and brothels, where are they? And it's of great concern because it's so underground, so hidden, and so invisible.

Q: You left the State Department when?

LOAR: At the end of the Clinton administration.

Q: Well then, you moved. What did you do? We want to talk about Vital Voices and all that.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: What is Vital Voices, and how did you get involved?

LOAR: Yes. I don't remember if I talked about how we started Vital Voices Democracy Initiative in the government. I guess I didn't because I mentioned that at the end of our last session. One of the things we were trying to look at was trying to identify how to support women's role in public life. One of the things I kept hearing in my meetings with women, with women's human rights groups here in the United States, and from women whom I met with on my travels internationally through UN meetings, was how difficult it was for them to have a role in the public life in their country, and how difficult it was to be at the seat of power and to influence what their governments were doing, or if they were in government, to have any access to real decision makers or to make change.

Swanee Hunt, who was our ambassador to Vienna, had spent a good deal of time traveling around Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and had met with a lot of different women's groups. She was also very engaged in peace building efforts. She decided to hold a conference, and she called it "Vital Voices: Women in Democracy," in July of '97, just before she left post, to pull together some of the women she had worked with in her tenure as U.S. ambassador to Austria. She did a very exciting, energetic job of pulling people together and putting on this big-time conference of these 300 people in Vienna, Austria. She was putting together a steering committee, and she asked me, as the Senior Coordinator of International Women's Issues, and in the foreign policy part of my job, to serve on this steering committee and to engage the State Department. She also contacted the First Lady's office and asked Mrs. Clinton to come to this and speak. So the NSC got involved, because if Mrs. Clinton was going to speak at a conference on democracy, it was important that the foreign policy elements be right in line. That was actually a very important first step. I give Swanee a lot of credit for taking the initiative, and pulling this together with the idea of getting women together from all the different sectors of society, who could work with each other to strengthen each other's capacity, and to link them to some American women who might be able to work with them on an ongoing basis.

It was a struggle to get the State Department to see this conference as something more than a gathering to support women. It was a big deal to get a cable out to say that promoting women's roles and building democracy is one of the elements of U.S. foreign policy. I remember it was Jim O'Brien [James O'Brien] in Secretary Albright's office who was my ally and allowed me to get clearance to get the cable out, because it wasn't enthusiastically received. It was seen as an ambassador, and a political appointee ambassador to boot, who was leaving post and wanted to pull some women together for a conference. It wasn't well received despite all of Swanee's good efforts. And, Swanee's a very colorful, lively person, so it wasn't like she was particularly concerned about how they saw it. When Swanee had asked me to become involved, I wanted to have the foreign policy components to it; so that was a big effort to do that.

Swanee had had some groups she had worked with, but we asked our embassies to identify the women candidates who could be invited to this conference, and let the ambassadors themselves do the inviting. So it was a really sort of trying to route it into the embassies then. There were some posts that didn't think there were particularly any emerging women leaders who could benefit from coming to a conference then [laughter], and our response would be, "Well, that would be extraordinary that there would be no emerging women leaders in your one country when there are in the rest of the world." But, that was an initial reluctance. Some of the embassies sent officers, actually, to the conference to accompany the group that they had identified. That was the best model. The women met with the ambassadors before they went and then met with the ambassadors when they came home. So, then the embassy had a whole other set of contacts, with women, who felt terrific about the United States, and felt that the U.S. cared about the things they were working on, which was Rule of Law and human rights issues and clean government, and that the U.S. recognized that as women they had a particular path to travel on this, and that they would be brought into the way the embassies worked - so that was the model. Swanee left government shortly after that. We recognized that model as a very good way to try to build regional capacity, and to help our embassies expand their contacts with women, and to find a way to look at promoting women's role in building democracies. We also recognized that the U.S. could use these conferences as a way to accelerate U.S. government interaction with emerging women leaders and to help them find resources for follow-up.

You know, after the Vienna conference, the U.S. gave a lot of money to the former Soviet Union, so we had a huge AID budget. Richard Morningstar was the coordinator for all U.S. assistance to the former Soviet Union; he was a great ally and he was very interested in working with us. He pulled together all the different partners in the U.S. government who funded programs in the former Soviet Union and agreed to take a look at how their programs were benefiting women, at whether we were giving women a fair share of the assistance money in any program such as those for democracy or those supporting entrepreneurship, and at whether we were including them enough in the design of the programs. That was a huge, huge undertaking; and it was really a direct look after we came out of this wonderful first conference, and the many strategies and ideas that needed to be developed, at where do you go from here? Resources are a big part of it, and the U.S. encouraging it through a lot of different ways is another thing. But since we're throwing so much money into the former Soviet Union, why couldn't some of this money be directed towards some of these strategies, which these women were very clear on how to move forward; these were also things that we as a government said were important to us. So Richard Morningstar, Dick Morningstar, was very helpful in pulling that process together. For me it was fun because it was not just a conference and all the great feelings you have at a conference, but doing the follow-through afterwards and being able to deliver something on a more permanent basis.

The next Vital Voices conference that we held, Swanee had -

Q: Had there been a Vital Voices organization before? Or, this created Vital Voices?

LOAR: The first was a conference that Swanee conceived of, organized, and called the "Vital Voices: Women in Democracy" conference. We started calling it "Initiative" when we decided, "Okay, well, we're going to?"

Swanee left government; she went up to Harvard to set up a wonderful program that focuses on women in armed conflict and women in peace building. "Women Waging Peace." We had a very strong collaboration with her because this is all on a continuum: we focused on women's political, economic, and human rights issues, and what Swanee focuses on at Women Waging Peace is women in peace building and then ending armed conflicts.

So when Swanee left government, we wanted to continue this model of bringing emerging women leaders and engaging our embassies, around the overlay of women in democracy, because I thought that was a very important way of presenting these issues to the State Department, to the general public and to other governments. Nobody could say they were really against democracy. So as I was saying, it was packaging the idea of women's human rights under the democracy umbrella, which is a very legitimate thing to do because democracy should be a delivery system for human rights and for women's human rights. It allowed us to move forward and engage broad sectors in this conference. It went from conference to initiative.

The second conference we did wasn't planned that this was the way we were going to do it, but the opportunity came up. It was after the Good Friday Peace Agreements in Northern Ireland in 1998 a process we were part of. They had worked for a long time. Some of these women were trade union leaders, like Inez McCormack; and others, like Avila Kilmurray, were community leaders; and they were part of the process of the Good Friday Peace Accords. Some of them were in the meeting rooms and part of the long, long, long negotiations.

But they were very concerned that after the Good Friday Peace Accords were agreed on, they would be pushed aside, and would not have a role in being able to build the new assembly or build the new economic structures across the community and across the border structures that would come out of that. So they had a series of meetings. Some of the women, Monica McWilliams, Pearl Sagar, and others, were here in meetings at the White House for St. Patrick's Day. President Clinton always brought a large group of people from Northern Ireland to the White House for St. Patrick's Day. They were very big and very fun receptions, with tents - big, bigger every year but always very encouraging for people in Northern Ireland who were working on these issues, because they felt they had great partners who wanted to really move them towards a sustainable peace. Then these women came, and had a series of conversations with President and with Mrs. Clinton.

When the women from Northern Ireland came to one of the St. Patrick's Day receptions at the White House, right after the Good Friday Peace agreements in 1998, they said they were very concerned that when the new government structures and new economic structures were to be developed, that they would be pushed aside, and they needed some help in finding their voice and in articulating their message. The word "voices" kept coming up, and out of that came, through the mysteries of how our country works [laughter]?an agreement, and when President Clinton announced our U.S. commitments to the peace accords, there was a line that said, "and the U.S. government has agreed to host a Vital Voices conference in Northern Ireland to help women integrate themselves into the new structures;" and hence, we were going to hold a Vital Voices conference. And I'm not sure all the players involved in that from the NSC side quite understood how that happened, how this little Vital Voices piece got in there [laughter], but it happened, and it was all for good!

Q: Well, this was one of the big things in Washington: the scramble to get a line in a presidential address, or presidential decree, or something like that.

LOAR: Yes. Well, it was good to have the First Lady's team who were very adept and very committed there, and to have the First Lady, Hillary Clinton, willing to help out in any way and willing to respond to our needs.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But Vital Voices in Northern Ireland was a tremendous challenge because it was tied to the travel of Hillary Clinton and President Clinton. That was a very complicated time, when there were all kinds of scandals going on, and lots of questions about who was traveling when, and what people were going to do, and whether they were going to come to Northern Ireland. But there was not real interest on the part of a number of people in our government in having a conference focused on women, and in having Hillary Clinton be the main feature of the conference at the same time, and to have it timed with the President's trip. The exact words were, "that this will get in the way of President Clinton's trip, therefore this will not happen." This was people out of our embassy in London, people in the European Bureau, people in the National Security Council.

I kept referring to the fact that this was a commitment that was made by a president of the United States. We had great interest on the part of the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam [Marjorie Mowlam], who was a fantastically interesting person, a leader in the peace negotiations, and a tremendously important and fun person, because she never took herself too seriously. In the history of Northern Ireland and the peace accords, she emerged, and will continue to emerge, as a very important player. She thought it was important to encourage the women in Northern Ireland to play a role. She thought that a visit from Hillary Clinton and a conference that engaged different players in the American public from the business side and from those engaged in organizing, advocacy, public speaking, and business development was extremely important for women in Northern Ireland at this time. She thought that the new leaders of the government, Seamus Mallon and David Trimble, could be brought around to see this as something that would be helpful to what they were trying to do with the new Northern Ireland government. So from the Northern Ireland side, we had the government enthusiastic.

The obstacles were some of the fellows on our side, who would not give any country clearance to go to Northern Ireland to visit, and it was just extraordinarily ridiculous and difficult, and to this day we'll not understand whom they thought they were working for. But this resistance fell apart at some point, and the way was cleared.

There was a memorable meeting in the White House when Mo Mowlam came to visit once. She had some very good meetings with Secretary Albright, and with the President and his people. She had a conversation with Hillary Clinton as well, and said, "I thought you guys were going to come over and do this meeting to help energize our women in Northern Ireland." There was a fellow there from the National Security Council who had been less than enthusiastic about this whole process, and he relayed to Mo Mowlam that, "Oh, no, we can't do that, because there's no hotel rooms available because it's around the time of the President's visit, and we might be able to use Queen's University, which is fine, but it's not like the premier spot for a conference." There was a brand new, fabulous conference facility called the Waterfront; Bono from U2 had just done a huge concert there, and it was a fabulous place, and that's what we had our eye on. We were also told it was not available because it would only be available for the President. And Mowlam said, "Well, I don't think so. No, I think it's available!" in other words, "This is my place, Northern Ireland; I think I can make that available." And he said, "Well, I don't know if there's any hotels either." And she said, "Oh, no! There are! There are hotels!"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: And that kind of resistance all fell away. The overt, open opposition fell away, and I was in this meeting, and Mo said, "Well, Theresa, you're coming over, right? You're going to come over. Well, can you come over next week? And can we just start planning this, because I'll pull the women leaders from Northern Ireland together if I know you're going to come over. Don't let me down now!" So I had my marching orders and was on the flight over, and then they had to give me a country clearance to be able to come into Northern Ireland. Our DCM in London, you know, I trying? I'm blanking on his name, because you blank out all the names [Robert Bradtke]! You only remember the people who helped you!

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And we had a great consul general in Northern Ireland at that time. It was Kathy Stephens [Kathleen Stephens]; she was leaving post. So if she had stayed, that would have been a lot easier to try to get this all done.

But at any rate, it was a tremendous, tremendous success in that we did a tremendous amount of work. Dave Pozorski, who's a great Foreign Service officer, and who was part of George Mitchell's negotiating team, knew everybody in Northern Ireland, of course. I was not an expert in Northern Ireland. We didn't have the cooperation of the European Bureau, the embassy in London, Bob Bradtke, I guess, the DCM, was just not on board with the program, and we had no consul general in Belfast. So it was very important that we be able to engage people and present ourselves as part of the U.S. government in appropriate ways. So Dave Pozorski was terrific because he came back to help out and sort of introduced us to all the key players. By having him introduce us, because he was part of Senator Mitchell's negotiating team, it was like having the mayor everywhere we went. Literally, you could not walk down the street in Belfast without somebody knowing Dave. So we just spent a lot of time ahead of time to get this right, because in Northern Ireland it's like the Middle East, if you invite one person and not the other, you invite this political party and not the other; a person who spells her name Moira this name and Mora that name, indicates which community you're from, or which religious tradition it was very important to get it right. So it was very, very important that we get the mix of individuals and political parties and economic entities right. So we spent a lot of time sort of traveling around Northern Ireland engaging people from all the different counties, which was a beautiful thing to do. The roads were horrible, but the scenery was beautiful. It was a fun, terrific experience. As someone with an Irish heritage, I just loved it. But it was exhausting because there were so many different communities, and sectors, and individuals, and political parties who really needed to be consulted and brought into this; and we worked very, very hard to do that, all with the blessing of Mo Mowlam.

As she had requested, I did go over there to visit her the following week. Her office was in Hillsborough, which is this absolutely beautiful castle where the Queen of England comes to stay when she visits Northern Ireland. Mo invited us to come there for a chat, and I thought, "Here I am, [laughter], Theresa Loar, in Hillsborough Castle in Northern Ireland planning a women's conference with this fantastic woman, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam. How did this happen? This is quite a moment!" It was just terrific. But, of course, there was no time to think about that because we walked in the door, and Mo said, "Okay, I got the groups here; I have the political leaders here; we're going to start work," and we did.

The embassy in London did send someone to help out, AKA (also known as) keep their eye on, also - not AKA, but also keep their eye on us, and of course, I warmly welcomed their participation and their help because I believed in doing things by the book in the State Department, and they just had to recognize the book was changing [laughter], and they thought I had to kind of get with the program. But it was a very, very good way to get started once we broke through. You know, if it wasn't for Mo Mowlam's engagement -

Q: When you talk about Northern Ireland, the Catholicism, and all that, abortion is such a divisive issue within the United States. I can see where that, well, could not help but be a problem.

LOAR: Well, Northern Ireland has a majority Protestant community with a minority Catholic population. I think in Ireland it's a very different situation, where the Catholic Church is very influential on the issue of reproductive health and abortion. But we actually looked at the issues of women's reproductive health and abortion, and I did not take on those issues as part of the mandate of my job, as I was able to determine that there was already a way, a structure in our government, to look at issues of reproductive health and abortion rights and maternal health and all those issues.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And I did not put those under the mandate or the agenda of what I was going to work on, because I thought it would be completely divisive, we'd never get it done, and it would not be a thing that would motivate me to get up and to try to develop into foreign policy. I thought that promoting women's roles in building democracy, giving women access to their government to be able to be part of shaping the government, I wasn't controversial; I think we could get more people on board with that. So we never, never in these conferences took on that issue, and I was criticized severely by both sides for not doing that.

Q: It seems you did the right thing, yes.

LOAR: I mean I think strategically it was the right thing to do; and I think we would not have made any of the progress on bringing people along on this agenda if we had included that as well. First of all, there wasn't a strong structure in our government, in many different places in our government, for dealing with that and for working on that issue. I was trying to look at the underdeveloped issues: violence against women; trafficking; women playing a role in moving towards democracy, and getting women to be part of that; and the women who really wanted U.S. partnership and wanted the U.S. to help them find their voice in their own country.

Q: Well, the conference took place when?

LOAR: In 1998, in the beginning of September 1998. This is when we called it an ongoing Global Initiative, even though it was our second conference [laughter]. We already were getting some work in Latin America: they wanted to have some regional convening for women, and we had heard from others elsewhere who wanted to do the same kind of thing. But we also knew that, unlike the former Soviet Union, we didn't have a lot of resources and follow-up money to work with to implement some of the ideas and strategies. So we started thinking about bringing in private sector Americans who would come to this conference with ideas for implementation and follow-through, as well as resources, whether it was offered in internships or political skills training that they could provide.

It was actually Alyse Nelson, who was working with me at the State Department, who kind of came up with this idea to say when Americans come to this conference, it would be a very hot ticket. Americans would want to come over to Northern Ireland; there was a very active and engaged Irish-American community. The fact that Hillary Clinton was going to be there, people now saw as something very interesting and important. And, too, if Americans wanted to engage because of Alyse Nelson's idea, which was wonderful, they would bring a commitment for follow-through. That really did set up this beginning of the idea that there were outside partners out of government who could help be part of this initiative. It wasn't that we were soliciting because we weren't able to do that, of course.

But if someone wanted to send a representative - for example, the Marriott was very interested in setting up a series of hotels in Northern Ireland once the violence stopped, but there weren't a lot of people who were trained to be able to work in the hospitality industry - they made a commitment to train a certain number of women to work in the field as managers; so that was wonderful. Another group - this was Shrum, Devine and Donilon, through one of the wives of one of the partners there, Marylouise Oates - committed to doing a political advocacy and communications training for a group of women community leaders and those in the political life in Northern Ireland, a really top-notch training. There was a whole series of commitments like that, and we realized there was real interest then in not just having people in government follow through. As more representatives from different private sectors committed themselves - Discovery Communications sent some of their executives, and said that they would want to do some good work and follow-through - that became the beginning of the idea of how to engage this on a longer term basis and invade the private sector.

So we started thinking ahead about how to engage people so that it doesn't just become just the government engaging as follow-up partners. I'll sort of end for today, but kind of go on to how we continued it in government until the end of the administration, and then how the nonprofit got started.

Q: All right. So we'll pick this up really towards the end of how the commitment to Vital Voices worked when you left at the end of the Clinton administration, and then what you've done since then.

LOAR: Yes. Okay.

Q: Great.

Q: Today is the 5 August 2003. Theresa, you want to pick up where we're starting on this. You came to Vital Voices after you left the Clinton administration.

LOAR: Well, we had been looking at how to respond to the needs of this network of women all over the world who we had been working with; some going back to before the Beijing Conference, and some through the beginning of the first Vital Voices Conference in 1997. Here it was the end of 2000; and these women were people we had worked very closely with, who had done great work in Russia on violence against women and trafficking, in Northern Ireland on women's political leadership, and in Latin America on trafficking and fighting corruption. We recognized that these women continued to want to work together and to work with us. As we started looking at setting up this nonprofit, we really wanted to look at what was most needed.

So we had a global advisory council meeting. We picked 10 to 15 of the women we had worked with over the years who were the most dynamic and had the most impact on what was going on in their country. We invited them to Washington for an off-site retreat where the Stanley Foundation (Joan Winship was the officer there) hosted us at Airlie House. It is always nice to get out of town a little bit. It was a moderated retreat with a series of discussions entitled: "Where do we go from here?" and "What is most needed?" What these women said in one conversation after another was that, "We need training. We need more women like us in our country."

The woman from Russia, Marina Pisklakova-Parker now, said, "If there were 10 of me in my country, wouldn't it be great? "We'd have someone who knew how to talk to the press, and we'd have the kinds of trainings and experience that I got through my relationship with Vital Voices, and through working with people at the State Department, as they have been developing this since 1997." I remember the first meeting with Marina; she was terrific. But, she's so much more effective now! And she said, "Imagine if there were 10 more like me, who knew how to talk to the press and build coalitions and make their case, and who developed the confidence and skills to really unleash their potential and to have great impact." We heard that from her; and we heard that from women in Vietnam who were really trying to make their way in this country where the old general still thought, "Isn't it great we won the war," and where these women just want the government to get out of the way so they can build a really ... Their focus was on the economic structures and on trying to move ahead, because, as you may know, the Vietnamese are incredibly natural entrepreneurs. How communism ever took hold of that country, I will never know! [Laughter]

Q: Yes, well, I served in Vietnam.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: And there one had the impression that behind every successful Vietnamese merchant was the real power, which was his wife or mother. I mean the women often were the economic spark plugs.

LOAR: Yes, yes. They were focused, and they were driven. We kept hearing this from these women. What came out of that offsite retreat was to try to figure out a way to have this new organization, Vital Voices, become a place where women could receive leadership and skills training. That was just a very clear message.

After several discussions, we built a relationship with Georgetown University with the idea of putting together a global women's leadership institute. Our board chairman, Melanne Verweir, who was Hillary Clinton's, first deputy chief of staff, and then, chief of staff, is a graduate of Georgetown and had a long relationship with Georgetown. It was her relationships that really helped us forge this alliance for Vital Voices. The Global Leadership Institute is housed in the school public policy [Georgetown Public Policy Institute] at Georgetown, which is wonderful. Judy Feder's [Judith Feder] the dean there. This institute includes the School of Foreign Service, the law school, and the business school. It allows us to draw from the richness of what Georgetown has to offer: great professors, and a vibrant student body. We hold some of our sessions on campus; we have public events on the campus. It's a way to bring these emerging young leaders to the campus so that the students can have access to them, and a way for the women to be able to have a public forum, and a way for us to be able to draw from the richness of the Georgetown faculty.

So this Global Leadership Institute was an idea. It didn't spark like this, but we kept hearing about something like it. After discussions with Georgetown, we started looking at: well, what does that mean: do you bring people to Washington, or do you do trainings in the field? We started by setting up series of trainings in Washington. Of course, the big challenge was how to fund that. Then we started looking at whom we had worked with over the last several years. It was our embassies in the field. We then started talking to our embassies to say we have this relationship with Georgetown for this leadership institute for women. It's been a terrific relationship with the embassies.

It's one of the things I miss from the State Department - being in touch with our embassies in the field and hearing a lot of stuff. But, of course, now we have the Internet, and I have to say probably I hear from somebody in the field every couple of days because we send out e-newsletters on issues of trafficking as a part of global updates. It is wonderful to hear from the people in the field.

At the beginning I was certainly going through withdrawal of not having the same ability to work with our colleagues in the field and to hear what's most needed from them. Through this Global Leadership Institute, we had a concrete way to provide much-needed skills training to women who are identified by their embassies, and by our other partners as well, who are our NGO partners as women who really are poised to make a big difference in their country, who have broken through, and who have demonstrated some leadership.

And so the first few trainings we did were with Vietnamese and Chinese women on entrepreneurship, because in both of those countries the embassies asked us to work with women there. If you looked at the range of the curriculum, leadership was the overall area that we were going to focus on. The other areas were areas that we had been consistently working on: violence against women and human trafficking, was the most urgent call from many women in the field. The second was entrepreneurship and women's economic leadership; and then the third was political leadership in civil society. So in China and Vietnam we weren't going to get anywhere with political participation. The embassies didn't feel that there was enough of it for them to go up there to work on, so we worked on entrepreneurship; so these were our first trainings at the Georgetown Leadership Institute. It was just fabulous because from there we went to one country after another. We've done these pretty regularly now, just about one every month or every other month since we've opened the doors.

Q: Now do you bring them here?

LOAR: Yes, that's one part of the program - to bring them here to Georgetown. We actually do some trainings right here in this building on Connecticut and L Street. We have a training room as part of our office facilities here, which is wonderful, because the women can go down to the stores right in this building. [laughter]

Q: Yes [laughter].

LOAR: They all want to go to Victoria's Secret and to Filene's Basement, and often a session is getting ready to start, and the women aren't at the table. Then someone will say, "She's at the basement." [laughter]Q: [Laughter] Yes.

LOAR: So we try to be disciplined, but a lot of the women who come here are dying to get out and see the street life in Washington such as it is. I mean it's not New York City.

Q: It's not New York City, no.

LOAR: And then, of course, they wanted to see what Washingtonians are like.

Q: Yes, yes.

LOAR: Last summer, just to give you an idea, we had a group of women legislators and human rights leaders and journalists from all over Latin America come for training. This training was a real cost sharing opportunity. [laughter] We don't do anything easy, like, here's a grant and everything's covered, because we're still starting up, and we're still demonstrating what we're able to offer, and what the value is to the women around the world. This was the Liz Claiborne Foundation, which funded women from four countries where they have operations in the field, because they're very interested in a nice stable country; and they're very forward-looking. Liz Claiborne is very -

Q: Liz Claiborne does what?

LOAR: Women's clothing.

Q: Women's clothing.

LOAR: But they're a huge, very progressive company. They were known for their good labor practices as well in the Clinton administration. We have the Arca Foundation, which is associated with Elizabeth Bagley, who's on our board of directors; they care a lot about Latin America. Three or four embassies have funded women to attend as well. So, we have had a whole smorgasbord of funders.

What came out of that was that these women came in for a very intensive training that was going to be focused on political leadership. However, corruption and anti-corruption kept emerging as an issue. We had Virginia Canter, who's an ethics lawyer at the Treasury Department come and have a very informal chat over lunch about ethical procedures, and how American government officials, if they're going to take a high-level position, have to fill out different kinds of forms. And it was like we lit a match, because they were extraordinarily interested in that. These women could not believe that if you're going to go into government, you have to actually say what's in your bank accounts and what companies your family owns, and that there would be a possibility that you couldn't regulate the company your family owns. So it was a very interesting thing, and we thought we would not look at corruption as a women's issue; however, that emerged as a very big issue there.

In all the sessions, we also had a discussion about human trafficking, and how it affects what goes on in the country. All of that was under this whole overall discussion about political leadership and women's leadership.

In this training we had a woman from the Dominican Republic, Minou Tavaréz, whose mother, Minerva Mirabal, is known throughout the hemisphere as one of the people who stood up against a military dictatorship. In *The Time of the Butterflies* (Julia Alvarez's great book) is written about her mother and her sisters. These were really dynamic women from Peru, Guatemala, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic. That was a year ago.

Since then, we've done follow-ups in two of those countries. We start by bringing people here to Washington, because in addition to the trainings and the sessions with us, there are the really top people they're able to interact with, and whom we put them in front of. One of the things they say again and again, is "Communications is very important, and if I can't break through in the press, or through how I speak publicly on the floor of the Congress, or in how I lobby and make my case then I won't make any progress." So we have a heavy focus on communications; we have a very good program for that.

Q: When you say communications, could you explain what you mean?

LOAR: Right. So part of the program is, for example, Eileen O'Connor, who used to be CNN Bureau Chief and is a terrifically committed and talented person, will come in and work with them and say, "Okay. What are the three key points you want to make in the issues that you're working on?" And they'll go on like most people, and they'll talk for five minutes. She goes, "No, no. That's 20 points. Three points, and then how do you want to say those three points?" And then Eileen will coach them on how to respond to the press. Let's say you were trying to get the local people to write an article on something you think is important, okay? How do you manage that interview? And here is a former CNN reporter, a very senior, talented person coaching them on how to talk to the press, and how to get the press, not to manipulate and use you, into a position where you'd be able to use them as a vehicle for what you wanted to say. It's fascinating, and it's just very, very good.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: These women recognize this is a CNN person who is very well known and has a very good career; so they know they're really working with top women.

Then the next phase of the communications training is putting women in front of cameras. We split the group of women, into two. We have two public relations firms who have donated their time. They do this at least once a month for us, which is just amazing to me. One is The Kamber Group [TKG]; Jill Schuker is an executive there who donates her services to work with a group of women. The other half go to Susan Davis International [SDI]. Susan is on our board of directors, and Judy Whittlesey is the executive there who puts them in front of a camera and says, "Okay, let's practice those three points you're going to make." So we usually have six in each group. One, by the way, is known as the Republican PR Program and one's known as the Democratic PR Program [laughter], because this is Washington!

Q: Yes, sure.

LOAR: They split up. They stand in front of their colleagues and the other women in this training who they've gotten to know. We don't do this in the beginning; we do this after they know each other a little bit.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Then they practice in front of a camera. They bring a camera crew in, and they film them, and then they roll it back and critique it. And they get the tape of what they looked like in front of the camera and the tape of the comments. One person said, "I was going to buy this, but I wouldn't know where to buy it in my country. No one does this kind of thing. It's so important for me to focus and direct what I'm doing." The women mentioned again and again, as one of the most important things, that it gives them confidence seeing themselves on television as the one to stand up and to make that speech in either a corporate or public setting.

So that's the value of a Washington-based training. You do very high-end, really high-end things. Almost every group meets with our two honorary co-chairs, Hillary Clinton from New York and Kay Bailey Hutchison from Texas. These aren't long extended meetings, but they have an opportunity to say hello to these women who are very big deals in our political structure and to get a photo with them. It means a lot to these women from other countries. What's wonderful is both of the senators are always very engaged, and the women will ask them questions even though you're right in the middle of a picture. The women want to know!

I remember one of them asking Kay Bailey Hutchison, "How did you decide to run for senator? There's only what, 11 of you, or now maybe 13? How did you decide?" And Kay Bailey was just?she was just lovely. She said, "I am like you. I worked at local government like you do." These were women from all over Russia who were here, "I realized this was something that I could do and make a difference, and I would be good at. I just kept working my way up, and kept thinking maybe I could be doing more." She just related to them instantly. Those political skills just translated across, and these women really took that to heart. It was just the most lovely discussion.

These groups get to meet Hillary Clinton. Many of these women know of her because she visited their countries when she was First Lady, that she stood up for women around the world, and that she had a real emphasis on women's rights. Of course, they want to ask her, "How do you like being senator?" They want to ask her all these questions right off the bat. This is something that's particular and special to the Washington experience.

And then we also usually have, a press opportunity, like Nora Boustany from the Washington Post. Diplomatic Dispatches is always looking for great stories of women overseas, and she's done two or three profiles of the women who have come in. She did a whole piece on the Russian women, and she called it, "Up From the Underground, Russia's Feminists Reach Out." She gets these women to talk about things that we don't hear about and we were with them for two weeks. Nora will ask them these pointed questions which get right at it and the women tell about all this other stuff going on in their countries.

Sometimes they're on NPR (National Public Radio). Part of this is to help them find their voice, and then to learn the skills and use them to affect policy makers. And of course, we go over to Mother State. We bring every group that comes over to the State Department. We do this for a couple of reasons. One is we do want policymakers to hear these women directly. It doesn't mean that they're not listening to them but it's a big deal. These women think the State Department is some big deal. We'll work with several people, one of whom is Tony Wayne [Earl Anthony Wayne], the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, he is always available. Sometimes he hosts the lunch if they're businesswomen. We had a delegation from Africa recently - this was unbelievable - and these were businesswomen who were just the top-notch businesswomen of the continent; really tremendously effective women. They had had a series of meetings, with different people and then when they met with Tony, who hosted them for lunch in the diplomatic rooms, which is quite a big deal -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: He started off his speech, by saying a couple things about Vital Voices because he was one of the greatest supporters of Vital Voices. He had a tremendous effect on what we were able to do with it as a government program when he was in the European Bureau, before he moved to EB (Bureau of Economics and Business Affairs). He started off with mentioning a little bit about Vital Voices, but then went into this whole speech about Africa and the U.S. government's economic interests in Africa. The women responded to that by asking him questions on the business track: what's going on with the oil industry; and with mining and the extraction industry. It was this fabulous, high-level discussion between business people and an economic policy person at the State Department. They didn't respond to other people that way because he talked to them like they were economic business leaders, and policy people, and businesswomen making a difference. But they responded that way, and it was very interesting. He's got a real vision. It was terrific!

Another one of the things that could happen, is that they get a chance to interact, and policymakers get to hear. I mean he just said, "I'm really particularly interested in the oil business." And one of the women from Cameroon was involved in the pipeline from someplace to someplace else (I forget, you know)?from Chad, maybe through Cameroon. So he sat down with her at length and said, "You know, this is information we don't necessarily hear in cables."

Q: No.

LOAR: This is very direct information, and people would say things very directly. They wouldn't tell an officer in the embassy, and the officer wouldn't be able to put it in the cable anyway. So I think it's also of value to the policymakers. To be able to hear from these women directly -

Q: Oh, yes!

LOAR: ? and in the field we're making a difference. So that's all part of the program that we do in Washington.

But increasingly, we've been asked to do follow-up in the field, and we've started doing that. And, of course, it costs money to bring people to Washington. But, it's very high-level, and they get a very high-level of interactions. But in the field, you're able to reach a lot more people. So for example, we were asked to go down to Guatemala. Our ambassador, John Hamilton, and his wife, Donna Hamilton, are two great Foreign Service people.

Q: Oh yes.

LOAR: And, Donna has recently retired, and they have a fantastic home in Guatemala and they're there at such an important time. John was involved in the peace negotiations for years. They'd be a great couple to talk to.

Q: Yes, I know Donna.

LOAR: Yes, it was lovely to see them again. John was my boss when I was in ARA/CEN (Bureau of Inter-American Affairs/Office of Central American Affairs) on the Costa Rica and Nicaragua desks. He was a tough boss, and very, very demanding. Because he was smart and hard working, he wanted everybody else to be that way, and that was fine with me [laughter]. I think she liked working for people like that.

And so, of course, when we visited him in Guatemala as part of this training, he said, "We're going to have a reception for you and for the Vital Voices delegation that's here to conduct this training." It was very nice that they did that. And he said, "So I'll make a speech, and you can make a speech too. You'll do it in Spanish, right?" I'm like, "Aughh! I guess I have to!" My Spanish language skills were never good to start with, but I felt that I needed to, and so I practiced really, really hard. My son Patrick, who's 17, came with me on this trip to Guatemala. The translators who were working on our training session helped me translate the speech. I practiced it in my room, and Patrick said to me, "Right, Ma, I think you're going to have to stand in front of that mirror and practice it four times!" And I said, "Well, I think I know what I'm doing." And he said, "No, you're stumbling, and you're stopping, and you're saying words that don't sound like Spanish!" So actually I did what he suggested, and it turned out quite well; and, while I was giving this speech, I looked at Patrick, and he gave me the appropriate nod.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: So it's wonderful to have a son who can give you good advice like that.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But, just to go back to that training in Guatemala. The Guatemalan women who had come up here had asked us to go there and do some training for a larger group. It was actually 40 women in Guatemala, including eight or ten indigenous Mayan women who were in full dress and focusing a lot on Mayan political issues and indigenous people's political issues.

We started the training four months before the upcoming election. While we were there we had the usual discussions on corruption, which were very powerful, because these women were extremely frustrated with the government and decided that they needed to be more proactive in how they talked about it. It was also clear that the former president, Rı̇½20s Montt was, at that time, trying to get himself into the running for the presidency again. I guess he was prohibited by the constitution from doing that. But during the last few days before the training he got his pal from the supreme court [Constitutional Court] to overrule whatever the constitutional prohibitions were. So he was going to run. So it was a very tense time, and these women were very focused on the upcoming elections.

So the trainings in the field were terrific as well. The women, themselves, sort of identify what is needed, and what trainers they wanted. Because they had been to our training institute, they knew our trainers. So they asked us to bring down Anita Perez Ferguson, who is a terrific American woman who was head of the National Women's Political Caucus here. Recently, she ran for Congress, and is based in California now. She's written books on women's leadership and has a terrific ability to work with women at the grassroots and at the high ends and to bring the two groups together. So she did an awful lot, not just on leadership, but also on women working together to try to achieve their common goals. She would kind of drop out, and the women would say, "Well, what's our next steps?" And she would say, "What do you think your next steps should be?" getting them to pull it out of themselves.

What this group in Guatemala decided to do, which was very powerful, was to hold a series of public forums building up to the elections and then after the elections. They were going to do it across political parties. There were two daughters of former presidents at our training, who were not from the same party (and they didn't sit next to each other). There were also all these other Mayan women from other indigenous groups who had a different agenda. We also had women in government. They all decided to be a cohesive group to try to move forward and even went around to start collecting dues while we were there, and so the last half-day we sat in the back and gave them the space to do this.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And that's what the framing is. It is just being a catalyst in helping to sort of release potential for this kind, and in the strengthening of their skills. So that's a big part of what Vital Voices does. It tries to empower individuals through these series of trainings in the field and here in Washington.

And we do, as well, a lot of work on human trafficking. We do an e-newsletter that goes to 7,000 people around the world, which is, as I said, one of the ways we stay in touch with our embassies.

Q: Theresa, we're at August 5, 2003. Could you take a little tour around the horizon? I'm using the diplomatic term and all. Where do you see real signs of movement regarding bringing women into the political and power process?

LOAR: Around the world?

Q: Yes, and where are there real black holes?

LOAR: Well, I think September 11th ... The Taliban were the enemy of the United States because they first welcomed in al Qaeda, and then let al Qaeda take over and then allowed al Qaeda to sponsored them.

Because the Taliban played a role in the terrorist attacks as they were sheltering al Qaeda, and because they were the enemy of women as they treated them so badly, the Bush administration wanted to really make the point, that these Taliban were the bad guys, and that if we got them out, we were the good guys. That was an important point to make. Mrs. Bush gave a very beautiful, substantive radio address about support for Afghan women; she also gave a UN speech. They were both beautifully done. (I understand that Karen Hughes was very involved in them; she told me she was.) It was very important to have the commitment from the Bush administration that women's human rights were going to be important and that they were important in Afghanistan. It was important to have that highlighted, but then they went further and said, "And they're important in other places of the world too. It's not just there." On some TV interview the President said, "It's not just Afghanistan. It's everywhere around the world;" I noted every one of these things. I was probably one of the few people watching any of these shows, who was writings these kinds of things down.

I thought that as cruel and horrible and backwards as the Taliban were, they did manage to focus people's attention on this issue, and the situation allowed this administration to fully embrace women's human rights, because the abuse was so stark, so black and white: keeping women out of the workplace so they couldn't support their families, and not letting them distribute food; keeping girls out of school. These actions were just egregious; they helped the majority of Americans understand that women had a bad deal in other parts of the world, and that what happens to women in other parts of the world affects us here in the United States.

Maybe not every American was making that intellectual leap to say that a country that denies women their basic rights and cuts them out of the political process and does not include them as full citizens, allowing them to live up to their God-given potential and make a contribution to their society and help shape the destiny of their country - the most extreme case is Afghanistan, where they were so extraordinarily silent and repressed and cut out - and look what that told us, what was going on in that country at the time! It was an open, fertile ground for terrorists to take hold; there was complete lawlessness and a disconnect from the rest of the outside world.

And I think there was recognition that it was not just social justice, and that it would be nice if women had a better chance to get fed at the same time as men, or get access to health care and not die in childbirth, and also be able to actually vote and maybe run for office. It was about future security issues for all countries. That changed the dynamics quite a bit, and changed the way people in the world look at these issues certainly for a lot of everyday Americans.

One of the projects we're going to hear about is support for Afghan women. It was one of the key issues I've worked with at State; I knew these groups extremely well. I became very involved right after the fall, after September 11th, when Secretary Powell and Kofi Annan announced that they were going to be involved in helping to shape a new government. We actually worked with Mrs. Bush on this. We brought a group of Afghan women in exile to Washington. That was actually, I think, our second training. These were Afghan women who were in exile, and who wanted to be able to speak to policymakers, but had had no experience in doing that. They were in exile and they were shunned. Some of them were recent refugees; we recognized that they didn't have the ability to speak for themselves.

I was asked to come up to UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women). Ruchira Gupta, my friend at UNIFEM, had asked me to come up and said, "You guys need to come up and do something right away at the UN," (this was right after September 11th; it was October or November), "and bring Afghan women so that they are able to start speaking very publicly." We held a forum there. We invited two or three of the women we were very close to and had worked with - some recently and some for years. We coached these women on the train ride up to New York. We said, "Okay. This is going to be a public forum at the United Nations. Why don't you talk a little bit about what your aspirations were when you were growing up, and how you continued to have those aspirations, and want to have a hand in shaping your country."

One of the really terrific women, Belquis Ahmadi, said, "Well, while I was growing up I wanted to be the governor of the province where my parents grew up and where my parents were from. That was always my aspiration, and I was planning to go to law school. I was on track to do that when the Soviets came in and then the Taliban. I plan to be able to do that again." And I said, "That's terrific!" I said, "People would never think! They look at Afghanistan as a country of women in burqas. They would have no understanding that a young woman who's 30 years old would ever have grown up with that kind of aspiration. You need to say that." And she said, "Well, I can't do that. People will think either that I'm grabbing power, or that's not appropriate. I can't say that." And I said, "Well, I'm going to ask you that question, so please get ready to say it!"

And then another woman who was with us, Farida Azizi, who's actually now on our staff, and who is a more recent refugee, talked about fleeing and her flight out of Afghanistan, and how she was sure that everything was going to work out, and that women would be able to go back to Afghanistan, and shape what the government does. She was okay speaking with me. But she was not so comfortable speaking at a forum. Understandable, but we thought it was critical that you don't have American Western feminists being the only ones speaking for them. For so many years we had to be their voice, but now they could be their own voice.

So this was one of the first trainings we did. We had top-notch communications people like Ann Lewis, who used to be Director of Communications in the Clinton White House, come in and work with these women. We worked in the room right down the hall. We had at least 12 women sitting around the table. We arranged it so that the ones who were the most recently in exile and had the least outside experience went first. Ann is an incredibly polished and talented professional; she would say, "If you could sit down now with the leaders of the UN and the U.S. government, what would you tell them is needed for Afghanistan women?" And of course, they would just go and talk about everything: what it was like to flee the Taliban, how their husbands were this or that, and what was going on with their sons. It was critically important. Ann was so patient and so wonderful with them. So the first three had got through, and had their two or three points down.

As soon as these women had arrived, which was right after Mrs. Bush had given her radio address, we had called Mrs. Bush's office to say, "There's a group of Afghan women in town, and they wanted to thank you for your radio address. Can they come and visit you at the White House?" We got a call while we were in the middle of this communications training. When Ann had finished working with three of these women. We told the three, "The White House called, and Mrs. Bush would like to meet with you." So we got up from where we were here, on Connecticut and L, and literally walked down the street to the White House, a few blocks away, and stood in line. The women got cleared in, and then within a half hour to an hour they were sitting in a room with Laura Bush making their three key points. [Laughter]

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: I found a picture when I was clearing all my things out. I found a very touching picture of this group of Afghan women the other day. Of those women, three of them were in the Loya Jirga, (traditional Afghan Grand Council) the grand assembly. One of them was on MacNeil/Lehrer [NewsHour] last night [Sara Amiryar], and I congratulated her.

Q: Yes, yes, I saw her. Yes.

LOAR: That's my Sara! And I said, "Sara!" I said, "I'm so proud of you! You were so fabulous!" She said, "It's the training and confidence you gave me." Now that woman had skills and talent galore!

Q: Oh, yes, I think -

LOAR: But she kept saying again and again, "It's confidence," and that's what a lot of it is. It's the confidence to be able to be the one speaking up; it's not that you're listening to someone else, somebody from the United States or a guy. It's you who has something worthwhile to say, and it's that you have the ability to do something that's really important for your country.

You know, I'll just go back to this. When we started Vital Voices, Afghanistan wasn't on the horizon as a key issue we were going to work on, and so Afghan women weren't on the horizon either. We were responding to what happened there. At the same time, we had no funding. My young colleague, Alyse Nelson, and I put the airfare for these women on our personal credit cards, which our husbands found out later, but not immediately! And then the way we finally funded this training was fabulous. Women who had worked at AOL (America Online, Inc.) or who were still working there, like Kathy Ryan, Kathy Bushkin, Jan Bryant, and Colette Rhoney, just wrote us checks. These were executives and former executives at AOL who wrote us checks to pay for these Afghan women to come to Washington, DC. This is what we had in mind with this global partnership. Vital Voices Global Partnership is working together with the world community to support women's advancement; this was so critical. We could never get a grant from any foundation in time -

Q: No.

LOAR: ?or gosh forbid, the U.S. government or AID [laughter].

Q: It comes in three or four years.

LOAR: These women at AOL, some we knew but some were new to us. They had the cash; they worked together and called up their friends, and helped us put this together. I really do think it was extremely important and critical and had a huge effect, because to a person, these women have gone on to have a big role in what goes on in their country. One of them, Belquis Ahmadi, went back and finished law school and is doing a lot of work in Afghanistan on women's legal rights. I believe she will be governor of her province. She's a terrific, terrific, talented young woman.

Sara Amiryar, who is associated with Georgetown, was on the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, the big PBS [Public Broadcasting Station] show last night. She was part of the Loya Jirga, and has incredible stories about when women were getting ready to speak at the grand assembly of the Loya Jirga, and about how - that's a whole other story - the men would turn off the microphones when the women would have their scheduled slots to speak. It was like dirty U.S. politics.

Q: Yes, it sounds like Mayor Daily running the convention [laughter].

LOAR: Right, right. And of course when we hear these reports, we just keep updating it. This is the role we play: to get the stories of what's going on with these women out. So it's not just leadership training, it's being able to help them raise their voices. We continue to do this. Right after this leadership training, Farida Azizi appeared with Hillary Clinton on Katie Couric and the Today show. Another woman from training was on Greta Van Susteren's legal show on CNN, The Point. It is very powerful for these were women who are literally, refugees, and are living in exile to be able to speak to the U.S. press about what's happening in Afghanistan. And that's the whole idea of Vital Voices: to raise their voices.

So you asked about what the horizon looks like. I would say on Afghanistan, in particular, it's very, very dismal. There's actually a six-hour planning meeting today, that I'm going to join in the afternoon, of a number of groups here in Washington who are trying to think about how to work together to keep a focus on support for Afghan women. I think the Taliban were just another set of warlords. They were just the warlords who were stupid enough to go in front of the cameras and say, "No girls in school, no women outside the home." But the other warlords have similar points of view and are as brutal and better armed, and I think it's very dismal and very difficult.

I think it's extremely important that we keep the focus on Afghanistan and women's human rights. Personally, myself, and as an organization, we're going to keep focusing on the women in Afghanistan, because it was part of the one country where there was just a general consensus that these women should not be treated this way.

Q: No.

LOAR: And if we don't get it right there, first of all as a security issue, it's going to affect Central Asia, and it's going to affect everything else that happens, and U.S. interests will be tremendously disadvantaged. I also think we have an administration that has invested a lot in this, and they're going to keep investing, so we have an opening politically. We have an opening to keep the focus on and support for these women, so we shouldn't turn our attention somewhere else, like Iraq, or North Korea, or wherever else our Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz [Paul Wolfowitz] thinks we should be going after next. I mean these were commitments that were made in a very big, public way.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So I think it's very dismal.

I'm encouraged by the fact that there's a recent announcement that the Bush administration's going to put a lot more money into Afghanistan. I think Paula Dobriansky, who's the Undersecretary of the State Department for Global Affairs, is very committed to this. She has been a good partner on all the work that we've tried to do on Afghanistan. I think she has been a good advocate within the administration to keep the focus on women for a lot of important work. I know it's not easy. If you do not have a constant advocate, the focus doesn't stay there, and to have an Undersecretary as an advocate is very good.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: It's very good, and Paula is a good person.

Q: Where else? I mean how about Africa? What do you?

LOAR: Well, I mean the group of women we had in recently from Africa were the businesswomen that Tony Wayne had hosted over at the State Department.

But of course, it wasn't on their agenda. They hadn't necessarily said they wanted to talk about it; but one morning we added something to the schedule. We said, "Would you businesswomen like to have a discussion about HIV/AIDS in Africa?" And they said, "Yes." So I said, "Well, we have to do it at 7:30 in the morning." We had Sandy Thurman, who was the AIDS czar in the Clinton White House, a terrific woman who's now head of the International AIDS Trust. She came over, and at 7:30 in the morning every one of those African women were down in the hotel lobby ready for that discussion, because it is a huge fact of life for all of them whether their families are affected.

One of the women from Kenya said she was not going to get married, but is going to stay celibate. As a matter of fact, she does not want to contract HIV/AIDS, because she's one of the few people in her family who's healthy, and she has so many children - her father's second family, her sister's children, her brother's children - that she's responsible for, and some adult has to be healthy and care for them. And she's a lawyer and a businesswoman and quite successful. It's just heartbreaking to hear!

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I think that is the overwhelming thing affecting life for women in Africa.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I'm encouraged by these public statements that have been made about the Bush administration's interest and support for fighting HIV/AIDS in Africa, but the money hasn't gotten there yet. It's been a lot of rhetoric. So I think that's a great concern.

But I do think women's economic issues, you know, women playing the role as economic leaders, is just going to continue more and more now. We just had a woman in here the other day from Côte d'Ivoire who works for their embassy who asked us to do some work in Côte d'Ivoire with women leaders there.

I think there is a huge challenge in Africa.

I think in the Muslim world, we're at a real crossroads now. I look at Iraq, and I'm very concerned about what's happening in Iraq concerning the status of women. Because it was so closed for so long, there were not links to Iraqi women who actually lived in Iraq to outside groups. Even our friends in Kuwait that we had worked with said the women in Kuwait, like Lubna Al-Kazi and Rola Dashti, are women who have been working for women's suffrage and are really smart strategists (not being highly successful at the moment because the Kuwaiti parliament just voted in more fundamentalists who would be against women's suffrage), but they've been trying very hard to work with women in Iraq and reach out to them, and they said every group is highly politicized and polarized.

So we're starting in Iraq from scratch. We've been approached by a number of different groups of exiles and asked to come and work with them on women's issues in Iraq and to help support women. But they don't have contacts, and they don't have women to work with. So it's a very big concern, it's just starting now. But there are some groups starting out.

Q: Well, is there anyone, say in Iraq, in the field with our military, or their embassy, or their administration, who is doing something?

LOAR: Well, actually, this is a conversation I had with Liz Cheney [Elizabeth Cheney] at the State Department, who is Deputy Assistant Secretary in the NEA Bureau. She has been very public, open and focused on civil society in the Middle East, and I asked her about this, particularly in Iraq. There is an officer who is part of Bremer's [Paul Bremer's (Civil Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq)] team who's focused on women and democracy in governance. But I tell you, it's a huge challenge, because who is organized now in the post-Saddam era? It's the clerics who are organized, and the clerics have not shown themselves to be friends of women and women's participation. We hear stories - they're in the paper, and I'm hearing them from different networks of women because now women's groups are starting to go in. I even hear it from some of the American government people who come back on trips: in order for women to receive food, women have to be veiled and have to be seen as appropriate, and following appropriate Muslim laws because the food distribution is being done through mosques. Now they never had to do that before to get food, and we shouldn't be allowing that to happen, because we're just allowing, a new standard to come in. As horrible as Saddam Hussein was, it wasn't a requirement that women had to go to a mosque and be judged by a cleric as to whether or not they're appropriately Islamic or good Muslims before they could get food. The other issue is schoolteachers who have to be veiled and demonstrate other signs of their piety before they can get their salaries.

These are major steps backward, and the thing that concerns me (and I'm saying this on August 5, 2003), is that if the clerics stay organized and nobody else is a counterweight to them, this will become the norm.. If after all the horrors and the sexual violence and everything else that they suffered under Saddam Hussein, these new norms being determined by clerics of how women are able to conduct themselves, and of how their family relations must develop, and of what role they should play in society, become institutionalized then Iraqi women will have this enormous new problem. These clerics have failed and they're wrong. This Iraqi population is not welcoming the clerics there; they do not want them there.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So it's a great concern. I think Liz Cheney and Paula Dobriansky, both in the State Department, are now both concerned about this. I'm not particularly optimistic; I'm very concerned. I just got another email from another group asking me to come over for a debrief with them; they had just come back. So we're going to work quite a bit on this. I think it has a large element of political will, and if it's true that women in Afghanistan had to be part of the building of their country, it has to be true in Iraq as well. I know it's very complicated. I read a news report where the American officials had put an entirely qualified woman judge in place, and they got tremendous protests and flak from the local population saying that this woman judge shouldn't be put in place. So I know there are a lot of challenges there.

But I also know that we have to stand for something, and if it's true in Afghanistan, and if Laura Bush and President Bush said that and meant that, and I believe they did then, it has to be true in Iraq! You know, we have to be smart about this, and we have to see it as in our interest and not sort of allow that to go under the radar or let it go. This way this could become the new standard.

So I'm concerned about that; but, I do think that there are some players in the State Department who are committed to not letting things go backwards.

Q: How about in the Pentagon? Do you have contacts in the Pentagon, because this is where a lot of the administration is coming from?

LOAR: Um?no.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I would say when we had the President's Interagency Council on Women during the Clinton administration, we had representatives in the Pentagon. We had a lot of work we were doing with women in the military. I don't have those contacts now and I don't know who is in a position to do those kinds of things now. You know, a lot of the work we do and the contacts we have are with the State Department. After reading in the newspaper yesterday that Secretary Powell and Richard Armitage might be stepping down at the end of this term, there are a lot of broken hearts, I think, at the State Department.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: But I think we don't really have a relationship with the Pentagon, the military - and I'm open to this. I'd like to influence who's ever working and can have an impact on women's lives, but that opportunity hasn't presented itself.

Q: How about with Russia? I mean how are things going there?

LOAR: Well, we just had a group in. You know, one of the three areas we work on is trafficking.

Q: And including the Ukraine in this.

LOAR: Right. Well, this is an area we've done a lot of work on and we have long ties to various Russians that we have worked with. Actually, the Library of Congress has a terrific program called the Open World Program, and they bring about 900 emerging Russian leaders, men and women, to the United States every year. Gerry Otremba [Geraldine Otremba], who's the head of that program, and whom we've worked with now for about a year and a half, has asked us. We've worked with her to do trainings here in the United States. We did three trainings last year. We just completed one last week with emerging women leaders on a whole range of issues: women's political leadership across the country; women's entrepreneurship and economic development; and trafficking. Human trafficking is one of the areas that we've been asked to do some more work on. This training we did last year of Russian women from all across the country included journalists, service providers and advocates, and some government officials from the Ministry of Interior in Russia. We always try to bring in government officials into our trainings because whatever the ills or social problems are, or other issues affecting women, government has to be part of the solution. Sometimes people are reluctant to have government in our trainings. But I'm from the government, I know government can make a change, and we know that every country, any country, has progressive people who are trying to do good things for women.

So what came out of this was there were tremendous tensions between the women in the Ministry of Interior (you know, the tough guy ministry) who a year ago, in October, set up a task force on trafficking and some of these NGO service providers who saw no response from the government and had no faith in the government. But, over the course of the ten days with us, the two groups devolved a new collaboration. They were going to actually set up some of the models and some of the things that we had done here, which are holding public briefings and inviting NGOs for consultations, and things, which when we did them, the State Department was horrified about, but now have become standard. The Russians looked at some of these, and were encouraged to do them. After this training, we received a letter from the Ministry of Interior asking us to do a training for this Ministry of Interior task force, which was very encouraging. It included ten men and two women. We just completed that, and this was a big breakthrough.

It was very interesting to hear these men, some of whom are law enforcement experts in organized crime, and others work closely with their counterterrorism, work against organized crime, talk in these heartfelt ways about the suffering of Russian women who've been trafficked into France, and about how they worked with France to get these women back and about how they have worked to lock up the traffickers without a law. The overwhelming message that we were encouraging them to deliver around town is that they have a lot of capacity, but they need a law. They're close to getting a law in Russia, but they're not there yet.

The issue we worked most closely with Russia on is this issue of human trafficking: the corruption it is connected with, the tremendous effect it has primarily on the women from Russia, and of course, the degradation of their lives. But also Russia is a destination point; and to hear these law enforcement guys who are trying to work on legislation, shattered every stereotype you would have of tough guys in the Ministry of Interior. They were just appalled to see people from Chechnya brought in, and sold as slaves, and people from other parts of the former Soviet Union, from Central Asia, being used on construction sites and not being paid. It was basically slave labor. This issue includes men of course.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So it was really an eye-opener for us. We, of course had meetings at the State Department. This group of Russians were very blunt with the State Department, saying, "You issue your reports on trafficking, and you are way off!"

So what we did was to act as a way for the government officials in Russia working on trafficking to interface with government officials of the United States and the State Department and the Justice Department. That was a great role to play, I have to say! It's important, and it needs to happen, because Russia's close to getting a law. The U.S. could be helpful in that in being a partner by pushing this law and in encouraging that to happen. I think a law will have a good effect in Russia, when that does happen. They'll be able to prosecute the cases, because some of the prosecutors who came in, those who have the responsibility for that, were very frustrated, because they can prosecute people on kidnapping or bringing people across lines for illegal activity, but they can't prosecute them for the act of trafficking. Of course, that's one of the things we are able to do here in the United States because of the new anti-trafficking law. And, we know how hard it is to get a law passed.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: So I have great sympathy for them. And I think in Russia, though, we are seeing more women in the Duma and women playing leadership roles in the Duma. One of the ideas that came out recently was to have us work with some of the women judges, so that they could be more effective in the work they're trying to do. They're in these positions of responsibilities; and they have asked for some help and work on how they can affect the judicial system. There are women in the Duma and deputy ministers who are really determined to stand up for women; and it's not just to stand up for women, but to be able to play a role in what goes on in that country. They have great pride in Russia, and they have great pride in their heritage, and they see that if they're not there and publicly fighting alongside their male colleagues, that they're not going to have a voice; they're not going to have a say. So there's a lot of challenges ahead.

Q: How about the Ukraine, because this is a big country which is often overlooked?

LOAR: Right. Well, Ukraine, we've been asked. The Library of Congress Open World Program has added Ukraine. They're, I think, in the process now of getting final congressional approval for a program that comes through really working with women leaders from the Ukraine, and that's very exciting.

We have a partner from Ukraine we've worked with for several years, Oksana Horbunova, who is a leader there, and is a very charming, ladylike woman, who wears lavender suits and speaks in a very high pitched voice. She talks about how she goes up to the criminals; she gets a rage in her voice when she talks about what they do to destroy women and their families through trafficking. And she is unbelievable! She had worked in the Ministry of Interior in Ukraine (there's something to be said for government service), and she understood how they looked at this issue. I mean she went out and worked used to with an NGO on this, and now works with the government. So in a very unique way, was able to get her own government to look at this. That is a big challenge!

It used to be that she had a hot line. Congressman Chris Smith was actually involved in one of the hot line cases, which is not a big surprise because he's so involved in trafficking. There were some girls from Ukraine who were trafficked into Montenegro, and through the hot line Oksana recognized that. I guess their mothers called, and they knew where they were; Congressman Chris Smith was able to do something with the authorities in Montenegro, and the girls were able to return home. What Oksana used to do was go to the airport to meet the girls and to bring them to safety. But the traffickers knew when the girls were coming back, and they would be at the airport too. So she was really putting herself in a very dangerous position going to the airport. Through her incredible smarts and charm and the way she's persistent, she was able to get her government to join her when these girls came back; now she goes to the airport with government officials. So the traffickers know that she has some officials in her government and some government backing for the work she's trying to do, and I think that's extremely impressive.

We got to know Oksana back in 1997 at the first Vital Voices Conference in Vienna, and she's been part of our global retreats and our trainings. Now she comes and conducts the trainings for Russian women, and she'll be part our Ukraine training, whether it's on trafficking or something else, because she is someone who is really having an effect on what goes on in her country. There's tremendous challenges there, there's huge corruption, and there's huge political violence; but I think when one woman breaks through, that helps other women to break through.

Q: What about the Internet? Is this making a difference? I mean it allows anyone to do anything. I was wondering whether it gives women more of a feeling of being part of a movement and all that?

LOAR: Well, we have a fabulous web site here at Vital Voices. It was funded by AOL Time Warner Foundation, which is just fabulous; and our web communications director here, Diana Pineda, is very creative in keeping that up, and it is a fabulous tool. It is a way for people to learn about what's going on with women around the world, and for women around the world to be able to connect with each other. Actually, just this morning, I was talking to my colleague down the hall to say the women in Guatemala really wanted to go forward to the next step; they wanted to be able to touch base with us sort of a month after the training to tell us where they were and strategize a little bit. So we said, "Well, let's do an online chat or do an Internet chat - some way to bring these women together." Now, we're not fluent Spanish speakers, as I had mentioned before, but we have the capacity to bring somebody in to help us do this. So we think we'll be able to do this. So it's not like you have to travel back and forth to be able to bring people together to say, "Okay, where are we since our last sessions or trainings together? How do we go forward?" We've also done that with a group that we did our training with in Vietnam. It was slow and tedious, but we were able to talk to each other for about an hour and a half on a chat and sort of strategize for our next step.

It's as an information tool that the Internet is unbelievable! We've heard this with this trafficking newsletter that we do, that reaches people all over the world, that we put on our web site. So, in addition to the internet being used to send out e-mails, through the resource of this newsletter on the internet, people hear about others working in their own countries they didn't know about who are working on the same issues. We get e-mails all the time from people saying, "Thank you for putting us in touch with this other group in Nepal; we're going to be meeting with them."

We get groups from New Jersey, my hometown in New Jersey where I grew up. When I grew up there, as you know from the beginning of this conversation, the population in my area was primarily Irish, Polish, Italian, and Jewish families. After all seven of us kids moved out, and after my parents retired, and my dad passed away, more and more Asian Indian immigrants moved in. So, now the population of the town is about 80 to 90 percent Indian.

Q: Hmm.

LOAR: It's also been a destination point for women trafficked from India. It just breaks my heart, that Iselin, New Jersey (where, by the way, Chris Smith, the congressman, is also from) is a destination point for trafficked women. It was a group working in New Jersey that went onto our web site and said, "We'd like to take your materials and translate them into Hindi to use in New Jersey." And I thought, "Of course! But it can't be Iselin, my hometown, where people are brought into and then sent out to?" Apparently, the destination points are factories, domestic servitude and brothels. And Iselin was one of the three target points in New Jersey for the work that this group was trying to do. This group in New Jersey, that's trying to really get the word out and work with the immigrant communities from India, was going to translate all our materials and all our fax sheets about what trafficking is, what hot lines to call, what your rights in the United States are, into Hindi. So the website a tremendous tool. You put it up there, you put the information out there, and it is just terrific for people to be able to get information.

Because we have such a strong relationship with the Library of Congress, and the Open World Forum, which has been such a strong successful program, we've translated a lot of their materials for their Russian trainings into Russian. We make that available to everybody who comes to our trainings. This way, they can get the latest materials and see things on our web site. We're striving to get more and more foreign language content, because you don't want to exclude to those who just know "ingliḡ¹/₂s" (English).

Q: All right. Well, one of the things that I've noticed that's now very popular, which was certainly not even a thought when I went to school back in the '40s, is gender studies. I have a feeling that an awful lot of it is American-focused. I was wondering whether you have been able to make contact with the people who do gender studies, and push the trafficking thing on a world-wide basis. It's a good place to catch very committed, young women (some young men, but mostly young women) and to make them aware of the problem and say, "You can do something about this." This way you'll send out some good anti-trafficking zealots.

LOAR: Yes. Well, I am very practical and very focused on projects and action. We've done some good work with gender studies here in the United States, but a lot of it is just theory.

The real practical work of standing up for women's rights and supporting women and encouraging women, for me comes more from international studies. Often; when I speak on college campuses, it's not at the invitation of gender studies. I prefer to speak to those focused on the international front, because I think that is where the action is. It is there that people ask questions like: how do we get the kind of future we want, what are the effects of globalization, and how do we work towards a more secure America, women's participation and fighting corruption. Going up against trafficking is all part of that important subject. That is, I think, a very practical approach to it.

When I was in college, as you know, I studied literature and music, but I was always concerned about issues affecting women around the world. When I came into the Foreign Service, and at my posts in Mexico and in Korea, I had two things I was always interested in: religion and church (and especially the Catholic Church), and the status of women. I had no idea that it would lead me to working full-time from 1994 till now, 2003, on women's progress around the world. So I don't think gender studies is necessary for you to be able to work full-time on women's human rights and trafficking. However, I'm not really familiar totally with the course work, to tell you the truth.

But I do think that it is important to continue trying to get women's human rights and trafficking integrated into foreign policy, and into the academic, international curriculum. I do work with professors, and with people who are doing studies on how women's issues and foreign policy relate, on what the differences are, and on how to build these issues into the curriculum. I think that's important and interesting.

But I think part of it is that I think there's a recognition like there's never been before, that we can't build the kind of future we want without women's participation. Now, maybe I'm saying that because that's my life, but I've been thinking about that.

Q: Well, no, but -

LOAR: I really do think we've reached a turning point. When we held a benefit to raise money for our work, there was an award ceremony at the Kennedy Center, my younger brother, Vincent Loar, is an over-the-road truck driver. wrote me a check for \$250. He also asked, "Who needs it most in the world?" I said, "Well, right now the women in Haiti are in really bad shape, and they're facing a lot of political violence." He said, "Okay, I'm going to go talk to the other truck drivers about women in Haiti," so he is going and trying to get other support for us.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I think there's just an understanding that what goes on with women in other parts of the world affects us in the United States. So I'm just hoping that that concern continues to be matched at that level. I think we're making a lot of progress in building the private sector into this with corporate support. We work a lot with corporations. I mentioned Liz Claiborne, who's a good corporate partner for us; but there are others as well.

Q: Well, one of our great concerns today, and certainly a concern of the administration, is terrorism and how to combat it.

LOAR: Yes.

Q: Do you see a tie between the plight of women and terrorism?

LOAR: Well, the most extreme case was in Afghanistan where al Qaeda took root. They took root because it was lawless. The Taliban had no agenda or ability to govern other than to suppress and control. And, of course, the first group they went after was women, and that's a sign. The threatening of not just women's rights, but also of their ability to earn a livelihood and to live their lives as productive members of the family and community should be a sign to policymakers, and to those who are concerned about human security. That was an extreme case there in Afghanistan.

But if we look at it, the exclusion of people from the mainstream of their country was fertile ground for terrorism, because you just don't have an open, public society, democratic or otherwise, that allows a variety of players to affect what goes on in that country.

As you know, the real causes of terrorism are complex; people have spoken quite a bit about what they are. I do think that if you have an open society where all citizens are valued and human rights are respected, it's a hard place for terrorism to take hold, because the "values" of terrorism would not be consistent with values that respect the individual and value people's participation in building their country.

Q: Well, as one looks at this, right now at least, most of the terrorism is coming right out of the Islamic world, and it's coming out of the extreme right wing of the Wahhabi, or whatever you want to call it, branch of Islam, which denigrates women.

LOAR: Right, and excludes women.

Q: Excludes them.

LOAR: Yes, it denigrates and excludes them; a lot of Muslim women have been very frustrated by that for a long time. Women in Central Asia are very concerned about mosques going up that are funded by these groups. Their time, the time of Wahhabism, I think, has to be over, as we see it. Look where the 9-11 terrorists came from. Look where the people who damaged the United States came from?

Q: They came from out of Saudi Arabia.

LOAR: Right. These are not places that are friendly to women -

Q: Yes.

LOAR: ?and parts of Yemen. There are people in the Yemeni government, and the Yemeni ambassador here, who are terrific and really want to have women in the mainstream. But, there has to be a more aggressive effort.

It's interesting to see that the governments of Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait have talked to us about working with them on training programs for women. This did not happen before September 11th, and they're not doing it for the PR value. They actually want some good work being done; that's encouraging. But I think we have a long way to go.

Q: Any connection to Saudi Arabia yet?

LOAR: Well, not in ways I'll talk about here.

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: But there's a little glimmer of hope there.

Q: Yes. Well, Theresa, I think maybe we've come to the end of this.

LOAR: Yes. There's just one thing I wanted to highlight, and it doesn't go chronologically, but I don't think I talked about this time when I was leaving the Clinton administration and the Powell team was coming in. Did we talk about that?

Q: I'm not sure.

LOAR: It was a very interesting thing and says a lot about Colin Powell, I think. I started this as a Foreign Service officer. I spent fourteen years at the State Department: ten as a Foreign Service officer; and four as a political appointee in the Senior Executive Service as the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues. As I was leaving, there was an opportunity to do a briefing for Secretary Powell, a Global Affairs briefing.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: Everybody was very excited about Colin Powell coming in. He has great charisma and great stature. People were very enthusiastic about coming in to brief the new incoming Secretary. There was this round table conference room (I think it was a lovely conference room at State; we always knew the best ones because we tried to use them [laughter] for our meetings with women), and I was sitting at the table, and Colin Powell comes in. He's two seats away from me and went around and asked us all to introduce ourselves. He didn't walk in with any staff; he walked in with this small little notepad, and there weren't any thugs to push people around and tell them where to sit or what to do; he just came in for the briefing.

We went around the table, and a number of people spoke. Then he came back to me, and he just asked me to introduce myself. I didn't do a really full briefing. He came back to me after listening to everyone and said, "Now I've heard from other people about this thing on women, and what went on. Tell me a little bit about this President's Interagency Council on Women, because I haven't heard anybody brief on that." I had been specifically told that I wasn't supposed to talk about that because that was outside the State Department. There were other reasons at play as well, but I said, "Oh, well, thank you sir," and I explained what it was. He then asked what the focus was. I said, "Well, there's actually been a great deal of work done in trafficking, sir."

And you know, that's when the eyebrows across the table began to stare daggers at me, as there was this big debate when I was leaving the administration as to how we were to implement the trafficking law. Do we take trafficking and keep it at a high level with the Under Secretary, which is where we had it; and all these government task forces; or do we move them into the office called Drugs and Thugs, INL (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs)? And I thought it would be a big step down to put it into Drugs and Thugs, even though I loved the guy who was the Assistant Secretary at the time, Rand Beers, who's just recently resigned over the Iraqi intelligence policy, by the way.

Q: Rand Beers?

LOAR: Rand Beers.

Q: I'm interviewing him. I interviewed him yesterday.

LOAR: He is a very talented, bureaucratic, intellectual, smart guy. It was nothing personal, and I knew he didn't think it was. I simply didn't think trafficking and the government task forces belonged in Drugs and Thugs; I didn't think that was broad enough. There was an ambassador, Wendy Chamberlin, who was determined to move it there; I didn't think she had a very good understanding of what was needed to address the issue at all.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: I thought she was playing dirty pool in the way she was addressing it. But I thought Rand, this was, okay, fine! You feel that way; I feel this way! The Undersecretary at the time, Frank Loy, had a strong feeling it should go to Rand. So I wasn't supposed to talk about it.

But Secretary Powell asked me something about the Interagency Council, so I thought, "Well, sir, one of the key issues was trafficking. That allowed us to work across the government, with the CIA, with the Justice Department, and with HHS on developing a comprehensive policy for trafficking. We were able to put that into law. Now there's a new law. There's going to be a government task force. But one of the things you're going to be asked, sir, is how the State Department handles this." And I didn't say it was my point of view, but that, "there was some concern that this would be turned into just a criminal issue and moved to INL. So you're going to get that question sir, when you go up for your hearings."

And, he asked me something else, and he said, "Tell me about Vital Voices," because someone had raised that. I explained what we were doing, and that I was leaving the administration, leaving the government to do that, and hoped to work with his State Department. He said, "Well, it sounds to me like Vital Voices is taking the frontal ground of democracy and planting seedlings, and we will work very nicely together." And then someone else said, "Oh Sir, let me tell you something else we did on women," it was the Africa Bureau, and then AID, and then the Human Rights Bureau, and than almost everyone. There was actually a very good discussion.

Afterwards, my friend Tony Wayne, the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, who was at the briefing, asked me, "What's going on in trafficking?" And I said, "Well, there's this big battle." He said, "Oh, well, why don't you write a note to the Secretary?" I said, "Well, it has to go through channels." He said, "Oh, really?" Like here I am following the rules for 14 years, okay [laughter], and I'm realizing, "What do you mean?" and he just said, "Oh, really?" Okay.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: And he said, "Why don't you just give me a memo. Just express your point of view on what should be done and why you think that." So I wrote this careful memo.

You know, it was really emotional leaving the State Department after 14 years. My husband and I had had a great time there; our kids had great experiences overseas, and I had loved the work I had done on international women's issues. It was tough to leave.

But, wrapping up on leaving, I had a call from Grant Green, who was the chief of transition, and who's now the Undersecretary of Management for Secretary Powell. He said, "Oh, why don't you come in and talk to us about this?" That became a week and a half of long discussions with Grant Green and Paula Dobriansky, who was to become the Undersecretary for Global Affairs. We discussed how you would address trafficking and how you would work just on international women's issues themselves. It was the most unbelievably intellectually rigorous, respectful conversation.

At one point, Grant Green asked me to come in and talk to Dick [Richard] Armitage and express to him why I thought trafficking should be housed in Global Affairs. I asked people about him, and they said, "Well, Armitage is a tough cookie. You know, he bench presses 440. If you're going to go in and talk with him, you'd better know what you're doing!" My response was, "Great! I'm ready to do that!"

I went in and talked with Dick Armitage. He was the most gentlemanly guy going, but he pounded me with questions. "Why, if this is so important, didn't you guys knock it out?" I answered him, "Did you knock out drug trafficking when you were in government before?" Then we talked about comparisons between human and drug trafficking. His response was, "Why don't we just move all our forces behind it?" This was the same ridiculous idea that Wendy Chamberlain had, that if you use the military and you do all this stuff on human trafficking, you'll knock it out. And I said, "There's a difference here. This is not a plant that's being shipped across borders. These are human beings, so you can't treat them like a plant! It's not like drugs are consumed, and that's the end of it. This is a human being. So you have to have human rights components with it every step of the way, and repatriation, and ways to warn people off, and special ways you treat them when they're rescued or when they're returned home."

I was so impressed with Armitage. He was so charming, intelligent, and tough, and I thought it must be a great time to be in the State Department. To have that high level of interest and interaction on trafficking was just stunning. I had great conversations with both Paula and Grant. And Grant is a colonel in the military, so he asked me for org charts (organizational charts), and I could only respond: "Well, sir, I don't do those!"

Q: [Laughter]

LOAR: But it was very emotionally difficult, because here I was trying to pull myself out of my job and the State Department, and yet here I was being asked about everything I was doing. It was so fabulous to be able to have a voice in how they were going to address these issues. I had a conversation with Paula Dobriansky about a month ago on something else in her office. It was also a little bit difficult, because it was on something related to trafficking. But, on the way out I said, "I always appreciated those conversations we had at the transition." And she said, "I really appreciated, right from the very beginning, when you came in to give us advice, some of which we followed." It was just so gratifying. I give them a lot of credit because they wanted to look at what could be done to keep this work going.

The Interagency Council on Women did disband, which I thought it should, because, while I thought it had played an important role after Beijing, I didn't know where it would go after 2000. Also, the new law required interagency work, though they're not doing that yet. I'm hoping they get to it soon, now that we're moving into three years after the laws passed.

Regarding the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, G (Bureau of Global Affairs) waited six months and then Paula Dobriansky sent an action memo to Secretary Powell saying, "This is to discuss the issue of whether the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues position should be continued." That was in July of 2001. The memo says they surveyed in the State Department and what role it played there, and they determined that it was a very helpful role, and that people in the State Department wanted it to continue. Paula recommended to Secretary Powell that the position be continued; and there was a check off where he said he agreed and concurred. I thought that was a clever thing to do, because if they had done this right at the beginning, the right wing would have come in and put in somebody who would just try to unravel and undo everything.

Q: Yes.

LOAR: G really wanted to see what role was necessary and what role it could play. I thought it was terrific. I'm gratified that that continues. I really do think Paula Dobriansky, the Undersecretary, really carries the agenda, which is very important.

I wanted to talk a little bit about that transition, because it was respectful, intellectually rigorous and very encouraging. I've been grateful that Colin Powell, Dick Armitage and Paula Dobriansky were there, because I now think that it wasn't rhetoric, and it wasn't for political purposes, they do think this is important. It will be sad when they are not there anymore.

Q: Great. Well, I want to thank you very much.

LOAR: Okay. It was great.

End of interview