

Contact

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(LinkedIn)

Top Skills

International Finance
International Financial Institutions
Development Financing

Languages

French

Publications

The Work Ahead: Machines, Skills,
and U.S. Global Leadership in the
Twenty-First Century

Laura Taylor-Kale, PhD

Global leader on Economic Policy | Technology & Innovation |
Industrial Policy | Future of Work
Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Summary

Laura is an experienced executive, policymaker, and thought leader working in foreign economic policy, International development finance and industrial policy. She currently serves as the first-ever Presidentially Appointed, Senate-Confirmed Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy. A former State Department Foreign Service Officer and appointee at the World Bank, the U.S. Development Finance Corporation and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Laura specializes in the intersection of business, policy and finance. Prior to her appointment, she was the fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations where she wrote and spoke on strategic innovation, industrial policy, and the future of work. In addition to a Princeton MPA and NYU MBA, she has a PhD in Management Science and Engineering at Stanford University's Center for Work, Technology and Organizations. She uses ethnographic and qualitative field work and network methods to understand how organizations navigate multi-stakeholder contexts and solve complex societal challenges through emergent work practices and strategic processes. Laura is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Experience

United States Department of Defense
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy
April 2023 - Present (5 months)
Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Served as first-ever Presidentially Appointed, Senate Confirmed (PAS) leader with oversight over the defense industrial base. Led multiple teams including small business programs, global investment and economic security, Defense Production Act and Industrial Base and Sustainment investments, international cooperation, planning and analytics, and industry engagement.

Council on Foreign Relations
Fellow for Innovation and Economic Competitiveness
October 2021 - April 2023 (1 year 7 months)
Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Council on Foreign Relations
International Affairs Fellow and Deputy Director of Task Force on the
Future of the U.S. Workforce
May 2017 - June 2018 (1 year 2 months)
Washington D.C. Metro Area

- Researching and writing on the impact of artificial intelligence and demographic changes on U.S. economic competitiveness, international trade and the future of production

- Deputy Director of independent task force on the future of the workforce

Princeton University
Visiting Lecturer
September 2017 - February 2018 (6 months)
Princeton, New Jersey

Teaching a Fall 2017 graduate policy workshop on U.S. government assistance in the energy sector in Senegal and the role of the private sector in development

U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing
April 2016 - January 2017 (10 months)
Washington D.C. Metro Area

Senior Executive Presidential Appointee in the International Trade Administration overseeing export promotion and U.S. competitiveness in health and IT; energy and environmental technologies; and transportation and machinery.

Overseas Private Investment Corporation
Senior Advisor for Policy and Operations
July 2014 - April 2016 (1 year 10 months)

Presidential Appointee at the U.S. government's development finance institution. OPIC provides finance, loans and guarantees to U.S. companies investing abroad.

As Senior Advisor for Policy and Operations, I delivered strategic oversight, investment strategy, policy coordination and guidance on \$6 Billion Africa and Asia portfolio. Reported to President and CEO of OPIC. I also served as the senior representative for OPIC in negotiations with White House on budget, policy and programs.

The World Bank

Special Assistant to the Vice President for the Sustainable Development Network

July 2012 - June 2014 (2 years)

Trusted Advisor on strategic and political matters pertaining to the Board and external stakeholders. VP's chief liaison with World Bank Chief of Staff and senior management.

U.S. Department of State

8 years 10 months

Financial Economist/Foreign Service Officer

March 2011 - June 2012 (1 year 4 months)

* Worked in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EEB) as the Asian Development Bank desk officer

* Led on all Asia development finance (East Asia Pacific and South Asia regions, World Bank, ADB and all multilateral development finance)

*Led on China-Africa economic development cooperation and Afghanistan and Pakistan development assistance

*Broadened State Department's influence and coordination with the Asian Development Bank, particularly on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Led review of Asian Development Bank and World Bank investments in Asia.

*Negotiated between State, Treasury and White House for interagency agreement on relaxing U.S. policy towards World Bank, Asian Development Bank and IMF re-engagement with Burma.

Foreign Service Officer/Diplomat

September 2003 - June 2012 (8 years 10 months)

Career Foreign Service Officer serving in South Asia and Africa and the World Bank

The World Bank

Advisor to the U.S. Executive Director to World Bank Group Board of Directors

March 2010 - February 2011 (1 year)

First State Department Officer seconded to the USED's office. Developed and led coordination of official U.S. positions on World Bank, MIGA and IFC loans, budgets and policies for Middle East, South Asia and Africa.

*Led U.S. reviews and negotiated positions on nearly a quarter of all Bank and IFC loans and policies. Renowned for effectively leveraging relationships to gather and analyze critical data and reach consensus with stakeholders.

*Reviewed Bank Group policies on Environment, Governance and Anticorruption, Health, Gender, and Institutional Diversity

U.S. Embassy Afghanistan
Economic Affairs Officer
August 2008 - July 2009 (1 year)

* Provided economic analysis, oral briefings, and bilateral diplomatic engagement to promote road transportation, civil aviation, telecommunications, labor, and environment sectors

* Wrote analytical reports on international community efforts to construct a road network in Afghanistan, the economics of road infrastructure development and the security constraints affecting the transportation sector

U.S. Embassy Cote d'Ivoire
Political Affairs Officer
October 2006 - June 2008 (1 year 9 months)
Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

* Drafted frequent reports on developments in the Ivoirian peace process, UN peacekeeping mission activities, and the run-up to Ivoirian elections

* Wrote congressionally-mandated reports and developed assistance programs on human rights and human trafficking

* Managed \$1.5 million in democracy promotion and human rights foreign assistance programs

U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, India
2 years

Special Assistant to the Ambassador
July 2005 - July 2006 (1 year 1 month)

* Coordinated and tracked assignments from the Ambassador to senior staff and coordinated and edited daily updates from embassy to Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs

- * Reviewed, edited, and prioritized briefing documents, official correspondence, speeches, and memoranda to and from the Ambassador
- * Managed Ambassador's participation in more than 40 high level visits to India from U.S. governments and Congress

Consular Officer

August 2004 - June 2005 (11 months)

- * Interviewed daily 100 Indian business, tourist, and skilled worker visa applicants in Hindi and English
- * Seconded to U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka after December 2004 Tsunami; Led Sri Lanka consular section efforts to account for over 950 American citizens reported lost in the aftermath of tsunami

International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics Summer Fellow/Researcher

May 2002 - August 2002 (4 months)

Niamey, Niger

- * Conducted cost-benefit analysis of traditional and new market gardening techniques
- * Wrote report outlining the problems associated with large-scale implementation of new market gardening techniques and irrigation in Niger
- * Conducted market survey of vegetable producers and sellers to determine prices of vegetable products throughout the year
- * Analyzed the socio-economic policy problems related to market gardening

U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassy Yaounde, Cameroon Summer Fellow/Intern

May 2001 - August 2001 (4 months)

- * Wrote report on the 2001-2002 budget for Cameroon to the State Department Bureau of African Affairs

Mathematica Policy Research

Research Assistant/Programmer

August 2000 - May 2001 (10 months)

- * Managed projects related to Medicare, welfare reform, and health insurance markets
- * Generated statistical data analysis for published report on welfare reform and food stamp programs

Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research Summer Fellow/Intern

May 2000 - August 2000 (4 months)

* Organized seminar on the economic, political and social environment in Togo and Benin for newly appointed U.S. ambassadors to those nations

* Wrote unclassified and classified reports on Laos, Sierra Leone, and the future of humanitarian intervention

Africare

Intern

January 1999 - May 1999 (5 months)

Dakar, Senegal

* Translated project reports and proposals from French to English

* Wrote reports, edited proposals, and created informational brochure about Africare/Senegal programs

Education

Stanford University

Doctor of Philosophy - PhD, Management Science and Engineering · (2018 - 2022)

New York University - Leonard N. Stern School of Business

Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.), Finance and Management · (2015 - 2017)

Princeton University

Master in Public Affairs, International Development , Economics, and Demography · (2001 - 2003)

Smith College

BA, Economics and Anthropology · (1996 - 2000)

United World College-USA

International Baccalaureate, Anthropology, History · (1994 - 1996)