




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
International Trade Administration

Washington, D.C. 20230

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE U.S. AND
FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE

DATE: December 4, 1996

FROM: Lauri Fitz-Pegado 
Assistant Secretary and Director General

TO: Elizabeth W. Stroud
Director for Human Resources
Management

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Collective Bargaining Agreement
for Agency Head Review

The Collective Bargaining Agreement between the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service (US&FCS) and the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) was approved and signed on the afternoon of December 3, 1996, by F. Allen Harris, President of AFSA and me. We were supported by our respective negotiating teams and had a photographer to recording the official signing.

The Agreement is hereby forwarded to your office for agency head review. If you have any technical questions on the agreement please refer them to my senior advisor (Scott Bozek) on 482-2393.

cc: Scott Bozek, Senior Advisor DG/HRD
Kathleen Taylor, OGC
Deanna Shepherd, PTO



**GROUND RULES AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION
AND THE U.S. & FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE**

This agreement is entered into by and between the U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service, Department of Commerce (US & FCS) and the American Foreign Service Association bargaining unit within US & FCS (AFSA). The purpose of the agreement is to establish basic ground rules for negotiations between US & FCS and AFSA (the parties) regarding: re-negotiation of the collective bargaining agreement, proposed changes to conditions of employment, procedures which management will observe in exercising their authority, appropriate arrangements for employees adversely affected by management's actions, and mid-term bargaining.

Section 1: Preamble

In the interest of sound labor-management relations, the parties agree to conduct negotiations as expeditiously as *practicable* and to bargain in good faith to reach agreement.

Section 2: Negotiating Teams

A. The negotiation team for each of the parties shall consist of up to 6 individuals, including non-employees of US & FCS who may be present at any negotiating session. The parties, at their discretion, may change the individuals present during the negotiation of any group of articles.

B. Technical experts may, at the mutual consent of the parties, be present at negotiations to provide briefings to the parties on issues related to the specific topic being negotiated. Such experts will not be counted as members of either party's bargaining team.

C. Each party will provide the other with a list of its negotiating team not later than ten work days prior to the date negotiations are to start.

D.. US&FCS recognizes that effective and efficient negotiations may require a substantial commitment of time on the part of both parties. US&FCS will adjust the workload of employees serving on the parties negotiating teams while the parties are actively engaged in the negotiation process. Such adjustments will be made proportional to the amount of time spent in negotiations and to the amount of official time spent in preparation for negotiations, unless doing so will significantly interfere with the completion of US&FCS's critical day-to-day operations or the performance of its overall mission.

Section 5: Negotiations

A. Negotiations shall begin within 15 work days after the exchange of counter-proposals unless the parties agree otherwise.

B. Negotiations normally shall be conducted at least two days a week, every week until negotiations are concluded. The parties will meet each day of scheduled negotiations from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM unless the parties mutually agree to extend or shorten the period of negotiations. The parties may mutually agree to cancel negotiations on a specific day.

C. During negotiations, either bargaining team may call caucuses. Caucuses will be limited to 30 minutes unless a longer period is mutually agreed upon by both parties.

D. When the parties reach a preliminary agreement on an article or a mutually agreed upon group of articles, section(s) thereof, that issue, article, group, or section shall be initialed by the chief negotiators. Nothing in this sub-section shall preclude the reopening of any article or section when the negotiation of a subsequent article or section would create a conflict within the collective bargaining agreement or upon mutual consent of the parties.

E. Each team may take its own notes. No transcribing or recording of the proceedings will occur.

Section 6: Negotiations Facilities

A. Negotiations will be held in space provided by US&FCS at the Department of Commerce or any other mutually agreed upon location. Caucus space will be provided for each party at the same location.

B. Reasonable use of US&FCS facilities to complete tasks related to the negotiations while on official time may be made by the AFSA negotiation team members at their work site.

