

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

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JUNE 2014



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On the cover: At AFSA's May 2 Memorial Ceremony at the State Department another name was added to the plaques honoring members of the Foreign Service who lost their lives while on active duty. Antoinette "Toni" Beaumont Tomasek, a USAID FSO, died on June 26, 2013, in Haiti. Photo: Bob Burgess.

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# Telling Our Diplomacy Stories

BY ROBERT J. SILVERMAN

**A** FSA celebrates our annual award winners on June 18, in the State Department's ornate Benjamin Franklin Room. I hope you will come. For those who cannot attend, the September *Foreign Service Journal* will provide full coverage.

As usual there will be two broad categories recognized, outstanding performance and constructive dissent. I am always on the look-out for good Foreign Service stories, and this year's nominations yielded a bumper crop, so I decided to tell a couple of them in this column.

Office management specialists are often unsung heroes of the Foreign Service. They support others in the mission, so that their outstanding work underlies the achievements of others and often gets subsumed. AFSA is proud to offer the annual award for OMS achievement to Carol Backman of the Management Section in Embassy Ankara.

Reading her nomination, one thing jumps out—computer innovation. This year Mission Turkey handled nearly 100 applications for new positions, many of which involved Syrian transition issues, tours of differing durations, new locations in country and a variety of sponsoring federal agencies. The embassy needed a tracking device for the approval and assignment processes.

Ms. Backman developed a SharePoint site, and worked with the alphabet soup of agencies to ensure everyone used it. Then she cut the Gordian Knot of the contact manage-

ment database. I have been at many posts where the need for a missionwide contact database was frequently invoked, but no one had the time or expertise to take ownership of it. In Ankara, Ms. Backman did, and it is now being relied on for July Fourth invitations and other events.

We had other strong OMS nominations. Carol Johnson in Embassy Accra exemplifies the senior OMS in the front office who projects the professionalism and competence that sets the tone for the entire embassy. In Embassy Baghdad, Mariam Abdulle helped manage the termination of the police training program with great sensitivity and skill, enhanced by her knowledge of Arabic and understanding of the local culture. Her nomination highlights why AFSA advocates expanding language and areas studies training to include OMSs and other specialists.

There are many ways of recognizing outstanding performance, but the only celebration of dissent in the federal government is the AFSA awards. This year the Christian Herter Award for dissent by a member of the Senior Foreign Service goes to USAID's Ambassador Jonathan Addleton. As senior civilian representative in Kandahar, he argued for a "bolder, nimbler" approach to public diplomacy in a dissent cable in February 2013. Here is his case.

Following the terror attack on Malala of Swat, the young girl who championed female education in Pakistan, Addleton wrote an editorial drawing parallels

between her and Malala of Maiwand, a young Afghan heroine killed in battle in the 19th century. In fact, Malala of Swat's parents had named her after Malala of Maiwand, hoping she would be equally brave. Addleton believed the link to the famous figure would inspire courage and advance the cause of female education.

Addleton's op-ed was "spiked" in Washington, ostensibly out of concern that it could strengthen conspiracy theorists claiming that the U.S. government was behind the attack on Malala of Swat.

After Secretary Kerry addressed a town hall with Embassy Kabul via video, encouraging the audience to speak candidly and promote outreach, Addleton sent in his dissent message. Reflecting on the story of the two Malalas, he criticized our risk-averse public diplomacy policy: "A control-oriented approach not only makes it difficult to respond quickly when outreach opportunities arise; it also breeds a tendency for officers to avoid any media exposure."

Addleton followed up the dissent cable with advocacy in Washington that, in concert with ongoing AFSA efforts and with support from the Public Affairs Bureau, will result in new regulations liberalizing publication clearances in many cases. He continues to believe in outreach and joined dozens of trips "outside the wire" throughout southern Afghanistan.

Be well, stay safe and keep in touch,  
*Bob*

[Silverman@afsa.org](mailto:Silverman@afsa.org) ■



*Robert J. Silverman is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.*

# Diplomats of the World, Write!

BY SHAWN DORMAN

This month members of other countries' diplomatic corps offer an inside look at what it's like to be part of the Foreign Service of their countries. We hope to bring in more voices from other countries through occasional articles from foreign diplomats in the future.

To kick off this series, we bring you diplomats from four countries: Turkey, India, Romania and Finland. Three served as Transatlantic Diplomatic Exchange Fellows in a program that brings diplomats from NATO and European Union countries to work at the State Department for a year, and sends U.S. diplomats to those foreign ministries.

Turkish diplomat Ömer Murat tells about how the Turkish Foreign Ministry handled tensions between generalists and specialists that was leading to specialist resignations. In "The Indian Foreign Service: The Glass Gets Fuller," Ambassador Kishan Rana writes that the Indian Ministry of External Affairs is inviting younger officers to bring forward reform ideas, with the notion that the "youngsters" have the biggest stake in reform and the freshest thinking to offer.

In "Life and Work in the Romanian Foreign Service," Diana Tase explains how Romania chooses its diplomats. Finally, Aaretti Siitonen explains that most Finnish diplomats also do development work; the foreign aid agency was merged with the foreign ministry in the 1990s.

When diplomats write, they must consider carefully what they say, given clear-

ance requirements. As the *Journal* aims to be a welcoming place for members of the U.S. Foreign Service (and other countries' diplomatic corps) to share their experiences and perspectives, we are keenly aware of the barriers that a clearance process can create.

In an up-close look at Foreign Service writing, FSO Yaniv Barzilai tells of his adventures in publishing, and offers advice and encouragement for others considering going down this road, as well as suggestions for how to make the process work better. We hope it will inspire.

FS writing might just get easier soon, as AFSA has been negotiating with the State Department on updates to the regulations on the publication. Look for good news on that in the July-August issue.

Already inspiring others to write is former FSO and Army veteran Ron Capps, whose new book, *Seriously Not All Right: Five Wars in Ten Years*, is reviewed by FSO Douglas Koneff in this issue. Finding strength through writing, Capps now helps others do the same through the nonprofit Veterans Writing Project.

In AFSA News, you'll find the inspiring and tragic story of Antoinette "Toni" Tomasek, a USAID Foreign Service officer and beloved wife, mother, friend and colleague. "She was driven by the passionate belief that individuals can make a difference," said USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah. "Her inspiration will be felt for decades to come."

Toni's name is inscribed on the AFSA Memorial Plaque, unveiled during the AFSA Memorial Ceremony on May 2. ■



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

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## Identifying Talent

Sorry, Tyler Sparks, but I am not among the “practically everyone” you assert subscribes to your view of how the State Department should identify talent (“Bring Back the Powell Fellows Program,” *Speaking Out*, April).

In the diplomatic service of many countries, unless you attended the right elite school, you’re doomed to the slow track from the start. What’s great about the U.S. Foreign Service is that it provides opportunities for officers to demonstrate ability at all stages of their careers.

Trying to identify precocious talent based on academic provenance, personal connections and early assignments (particularly in Washington, where one can hitch one’s wagon to high flyers) would disadvantage those who, through no fault of their own, got a boring job, a weak boss or no support during an early tour.

America is the land of second chances, and multiple careers. Some of our best diplomats graduated from undistinguished universities or started in completely unrelated occupations, and not all were instant successes once they joined the Foreign Service. It takes seasoning to show true mettle.

When I read phrases like “the best of the best,” I am reminded of the “whiz kid” label given to Robert McNamara and other commercial geniuses in the Kennedy administration who were young and smart, and were identified as having high potential early in their careers. They also took us into, and failed to extract us from, Vietnam—and we all know how that turned out.

Does anyone who has been on an

awards committee, or seen how various accolades are handed out, and to whom, in the State Department, honestly believe there could be a fair way to decide which 12 or so mid-level officers out of thousands are the “star achievers,” deserving of special access to a patronage network and private perquisites that would favor them over their peers?



Mr. Sparks claims that the military identifies people “with the potential to rise through the ranks” early on. I would argue that grooming an (to some extent, self-identified) elite of neophytes is just as likely to give you General George McClellan—second in his class at West Point and plenty smart, but lacking the grit to engage General Robert E. Lee in the early stages of the Civil War—as Ullysses Grant, who labored long in obscurity after leaving West Point (nowhere near the top of his class) before proving that he had the right stuff to grind the South into surrender.

My point is, you never know what people can really do until they have been tried out, in various jobs, over time. That’s how real leaders should be identified, and that’s the right way to “pick winners.”

Having recently spent six weeks on a promotion panel, I found the process to be fair, balanced and largely effective, though I freely admit that it has flaws and (to paraphrase Winston Churchill’s comment about democracy) is the “worst system ... except all the others that have been tried.”

Before claiming that we have a “broken evaluation and promotion process,” critics should first come up with a better one.

S.R. Hankinson

FSO

Embassy Lome

## The Social Media Emperor

Hallelujah! Someone has finally had the good sense to point out that the emperor has no clothes. Bob Silverman’s critique in his March President’s Views column of the use of social media in diplomacy (“Are Social Media Over-rated?”) certainly struck a responsive chord with me.

It could well be argued that Twitter, Facebook, et al. are *virtual* communication platforms, insofar as largely vacuous information thrown to the electronic four winds is no more a genuine form of communication than fast food is real food.

But these so-called media do accomplish one thing: They are a way to conduct enough outreach to satisfy the bean counters in Congress and elsewhere, without spending the time and money necessary to do real, extensive evaluation of the impact of the full range of State Department communications.

Social media might yet prove to be a useful tool in efforts to reach foreign audiences. But the redirection of considerable resources to a largely unproven “tech-tool-of-the-day” seems shortsighted and overly optimistic, at best.

Until the time comes when evaluat-



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ing the impact of department outreach is as important to the powers that be as the volume of such outreach, the questions Mr. Silverman asks will continue to be relevant.

*William J. Millman*  
FSO, retired  
Kyiv, Ukraine

### An Unvarnished Look

It was great to see that *The Foreign Service Journal* will remain in good hands after the transition to a new editor.

The *Journal* is one of the few magazines that I read almost cover-to-cover, because I welcome its unvarnished look at developments and its willingness to examine received wisdom. For example, I appreciated Robert Silverman's President's Views column on social media in the March issue.

*Robert E. Patterson*  
Ambassador  
Embassy Ashgabat

### Telling Our Stories

Congratulations to the new *Journal* editor, Shawn Dorman, for the fascinating March issue, and to Managing Editor Susan Maitra for her masterful editing of the oral histories selected to represent six decades ("Telling Our Stories").

I was particularly gratified to see the excerpt from Constance Harvey, representing the 1940s. Selections from her oral history also appear in my book, *Her Excellency, An Oral History of Women Ambassadors* (Twayne, 1994).

Although Ms. Harvey was not an ambassador, she did achieve the rank of consul general. She and Frances Willis were the only two female FSOs throughout most of the 1930s, and Harvey provides a unique perspective on what the old Foreign Service was like. With about

800 officers, it was a small enough fraternity that everybody knew everybody, and officers in Europe would telephone each other to offer birthday greetings.

Ms. Harvey's entire oral history merits reading because, in addition to her "nefarious life," she recounts being interned at Vichy after the Nazis took over the unoccupied region of southern France. The remarkable ways the diplomats devised to occupy their time during the endless days of detention speak volumes to the mettle of these brave individuals.

Equally interesting were the many obstacles she encountered as a woman attempting to carve out a career in a man's world. She would be astounded, but I think gratified, that of the six oral history excerpts you selected, three are by women.

Years ago she generously set aside an entire weekend for me to record her memories and was enthusiastic, wry and witty, not afraid to tell it like it was. She even gave me a photograph of herself receiving the Medal of Freedom, now in my archive at the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

The archive includes taped oral histories of female ambassadors, their family members and friends, as well as reflections by those who either served with them or were their superiors. You can find them at [www.smith.edu/libraries/ssc](http://www.smith.edu/libraries/ssc) (the Ann Miller Morin Collection). The director is Sherrill Redmon.

*Ann Miller Morin*  
ADST Fellow (ret.)  
Women Ambassadors Project  
Charlotte, N.C.

### Inspired to Publish

I always love the *Journal's* annual edition that highlights and promotes books

by Foreign Service authors (“In Their Own Write”).

In reading the November 2013 edition, I noticed that several of the authors used a self-publishing service called CreateSpace.

I researched the option and then used it to publish my new book, *Accidental Patriot: A Diplomat’s Journey in Africa Rediscovering America*.

Although I had secured a literary agent (and also the required State Department clearances), I was unable to interest a publishing house in the project.

Thank you for leading me to CreateSpace so that I could realize my goal of becoming an author.

*Kirsten Bauman*

*FSO*

*Embassy Seoul*

## Millennial Spouses, Relax!

As a trailing spouse myself, I’d like to respond to the March article by Jessie Bryson (“A ‘Trailing’ Spouse?”). It seems to me that many Foreign Service spouses spend a lot of time trying to justify their existence. This is unfortunate, considering all the fascinating opportunities available to us.

First, we have the luxury of time to study the local language and to go out and practice it in our neighborhood. Not good at learning languages? Neither am I, but it’s still fun to try, and good exercise for the brain. Regardless of proficiency level, one will inevitably pick up cultural insights through language study.

Also, we have the opportunity to read up on the history of the city, country and region of the world in which we happen to be living at any given time, explore those places, and photograph and write



about them.

Rather than fret over what others think of our role as trailing spouse, we can instead thank our lucky stars for having landed in a unique and interesting position that provides us with endless opportunities to learn new languages and

explore many different places in the world.

*Qani Belul*

*Embassy Manila*

## Inherent Conflict

I congratulate AFSA on the March issue of the *Journal*. I spent a whole evening reading it, something I don’t recall ever doing before.

AFSA’s Governing Board and employees have attenuated as much as possible the inherent conflict between AFSA’s roles as both a labor union and a professional organization. My compliments on that.

I would like to see AFSA set up an online “Speaking Out” forum where members and guests can post and debate their views on foreign policy issues in real time. I don’t think the AFSA Facebook site fills that need.

*Carl Bastiani*

*FSO, retired*

*McCormick, S.C.* ■

**Share your thoughts about this month’s issue.**

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## A Tale of Two Strikes: “Warriors Abroad”

On April 2, Haaretz reported that the yearlong labor dispute by the Israeli Foreign Service was settled, after an unprecedented 10-day general strike closed the Foreign Ministry and all of Israel’s 103 embassies, consulates and missions abroad.

Though the 1,200-strong Foreign Service had waged an effective Facebook campaign, “Save Israel’s Foreign Service,” the turning point came in early March when a seven-month mediation process led by the former Chief Justice of the Labor Court collapsed in the face of the Ministry of Finance’s intransigence.

In early March the diplomats began implementing a series of measures that included such things as no longer engaging with foreign representatives, no longer taking care of official visits of and no longer issuing visas, all to “raise awareness, both domestically and internationally, of the dire situation of Israel’s hard-working diplomats,” as the Foreign Service Workers’ Association put it in a March 3 statement.

Representatives of the Histadrut (Israel’s organization of trade unions), the Foreign Ministry Workers’ Committee and the Finance Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding that is the basis of a collective labor agreement.

The pact gives the Israeli government “industrial peace” for several years, during which foreign ministry employees will be barred from going back on strike. The ministry will also be empowered to determine its emissaries’ second foreign postings according to its preferences, not just those of the emissaries.

In return, the pact creates financial incentives for service at hardship posts and, for the first time, ensures that diplomatic salaries will be set by a transpar-

ent process that takes into account the cost of living in foreign countries.

The agreement also compensates diplomats for being on call and reimburses them for their children’s educational expenses, and shortens the time junior diplomats must serve before promotion.

Finally, it upgrades the pensions of Israeli envoys and their partners, who will also receive job retraining and other compensation for damage to their careers caused by their relocation overseas.

The *Jerusalem Post* quotes Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, who has hailed the settlement for creating “a new work model that provides for the professional needs of the Foreign Ministry, and an economic model that provides for the needs of the workers at all pay grades in the ministry.”

For its part, the Foreign Ministry Workers’ Committee commented: “The uniqueness of the diplomats’ work is reflected in the [newly agreed] pay scales, which bring them a little closer to their colleagues in intelligence and the military, though a large gap remains that will have to be bridged in the future. We are pleased that the state of Israel understood the difficulties that its warriors abroad have to face, and we regret the unnecessary damage that has resulted. Tomorrow we will return to serving the country on the global front.”

—Steven Alan Honley,  
Contributing Editor

## Strike Two: The Canadian Foreign Service

A recent issue of *Bout de Papier* (Vol. 27, No. 4) features a fascinating interview with Tim Edwards, president

of the Canadian Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (AFSA’s equivalent).

Much of Mr. Edwards’ “Post-Mortem,” reflecting on last year’s strike by Canadian diplomats, which the *Journal* covered in its October edition, will resonate loudly for many AFSA members. Here are some excerpts:



**Bout:** *In essence, what was this strike about?*

**TE:** At its core, this strike was about equal pay for equal work. We wanted to eliminate salary gaps of \$3,000 to \$14,000 between diplomats and other federal professionals doing the same or

similar work in Ottawa, often in neighboring offices. The latter include economists, lawyers, policy analysts and commerce officers.

The gaps were most acute at the FS-2 level (the second step in our four-level ranking system), our largest cohort of members. They first appeared in 2005 and were exacerbated by the influx of hundreds of non-FS professionals into the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development over the last decade to compensate for chronic under-recruitment of Foreign Service officers.

**Bout:** *What was the point of no return in the negotiations that prompted the strike?*

**TE:** On Jan. 31, 2013, we conceded to the Treasury Board’s two key demands. We accepted annual increases of 1.5 percent per year—well beneath inflation and wage growth in the wider Canadian economy—and the elimination of severance pay for a one-time salary boost of 0.75 per-

**SITE OF THE MONTH: [www.thediplomat.com](http://www.thediplomat.com)**

As its subtitle “Read *The Diplomat*, Know the Asia-Pacific” suggests, *The Diplomat* specializes in coverage of developments and trends in the Asia and Pacific region. Based in Tokyo, the online magazine gives excellent insight on domestic and foreign policies of key regional players from an Asian perspective.

*The Diplomat* also hosts an active and lively Facebook page, “The Diplomat Magazine,” that shares non-mainstream coverage of the region and has some 256,000 likes. It also offers a weekly newsletter, “The Diplomatic Brief.”

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The publication has partnerships with a range of

public policy and media organizations, including the global news aggregator RealClearWorld, the Environmental News Network, the U.K.’s Foreign Policy Center, India’s Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, Danwei, China Hush, Australia’s Lowy Institute, the U.S. East-West Center in Hawaii and others.

The site is fantastically easy to navigate, with headline stories covering a slew of relevant topics across five major regions of Eastern Asia, as well as topical sections. To cover this fast-growing region, *The Diplomat* makes creative use of interviews, podcasts and videos.

—Susan B. Maitra, Managing Editor



cent. In exchange, we asked the employer to address our longstanding wage gaps, which we saw as unfair, demoralizing and a serious threat to retention.

We were told on the spot there was no reason to offer Foreign Service officers one cent more than what had been tabled the first day of negotiations 18 months earlier. At that point, it was clear to us

that only a strike mandate could give us the leverage we needed to have our grievances addressed.

**Bout:** *What prompted the call for binding arbitration in July 2013, a key turning point in the strike?*

**TE:** By mid-July, we had been conducting targeted withdrawals of service for about eight weeks, including at some

of Canada’s largest visa-processing centers abroad. Media reports were suggesting that the economic impact of these walkouts on the tourism and education sectors, as well as on industries which rely on temporary foreign workers, was significant and would grow in severity if the strike persisted.

To prevent further

damage to the economy, PAFSO formally proposed to Treasury Board President Tony Clement that we take our dispute to binding arbitration (which would allow us to immediately suspend strike measures). We stressed that if he was so confident his longstanding pay offer was “fair and reasonable,” he would not hesitate to submit it to third-party scrutiny.

**Bout:** *Can the damage to relations between the government and its diplomats soon be healed?*

**TE:** To the extent that salary is a barometer of the value and respect accorded a profession, this strike’s outcome—notably the elimination of wage gaps at the FS-2 and FS-4 levels—suggests that the government ultimately recognized (if grudgingly) the excellent return on investment it gets for every Foreign Service officer.

Now that we are back at work, members are doing everything in their power to ensure a swift recovery and minimize



Canadian FS members picket in front of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s office in Ottawa in 2013.

the strike's long-term impact on Canada's reputation as a destination for travel, study, employment and immigration. We also continue to enthusiastically supply the same loyal, fearless and expert advice on which successive governments have relied to achieve their international priorities.

But in a competitive global arena, a country with Canada's footprint, ambition and scope of interests demands a motivated and well-resourced Foreign Service. A productive relationship between government and its diplomats over the long run will require not just one favorable contract, but a reversal of the systematic nickel-and-diming of our conditions of service and the essential tools of our trade in recent years—including travel, hospitality, training and public diplomacy budgets.

**Bout:** *What more needs to be done to get the Canadian public to appreciate the value of the Foreign Service?*

**TE:** One of the collateral benefits of job action is that it gave us a podium to counter many of the negative myths associated with diplomatic work and the circumstances under which it is performed. We were able to tell our story and control our narrative, offering an accurate and up-to-date picture of the professional and environmental challenges we face. As the strike progressed, it seemed that more Canadians—though certainly not all!—thought that equal pay was not such an outlandish request by those tasked with defending and promoting Canada overseas.

Although it was never PAFSO's aim to carry the day in the court of public opinion (we simply wanted to be ready to rebut government messaging as needed), media coverage turned out to be broadly sympathetic. PAFSO intends to use this attention, momentum and our well-oiled advocacy machine to

continue building a community of interest and presenting a current image of life in the Foreign Service.

—*Steven Alan Honley,*  
*Contributing Editor*

## #AskIraq—But Don't Expect Many Answers

**O**n April 16, Iraq's ambassador to the United States, Lukman Faily, held his third Twitter Q&A, moderated by Josh Rogin of *The Daily Beast*. Using the

hashtag #AskIraq, hundreds of Twitter users sent in questions for the ambassador covering a wide range of topics, though most of the questions centered on declining security in Iraq.

Twitter users pestered Ambassador Faily throughout the session to comment specifically on the December 2013 attacks on Iranian dissidents living in Camp Liberty, which left multiple members of the Mujahideen-e-Khalq group wounded or killed. He responded: "We urgently

### 50 Years Ago

**A** colleague of mine, having spent many a winter Sunday watching professional football on television, recently mused: "There's nothing wrong with the country team concept, except that it's not up-to-date. Every embassy should have two country teams, one for offense and one for defense.

It has struck me that this idea could be played for more than a laugh, and I have found myself, furthermore, pondering other unexplored analogies. No producer in his right mind, for example, brings a straight play or a musical into New York City without at least one out-of-town tryout. Out-of-Washington tryouts for new policies would similarly make a lot of sense.

While it might, admittedly, be something of a shock at first, we should probably become accustomed to reading headlines like these: "New China Policy a Real Turkey, Closes in Philadelphia." "Alliance for Progress Shift Shows Promise in Chicago."

The possibilities inherent in a two-country team arrangement are limitless. ... The dilemma of the football coach faced with the decision as to whether to have his team try for that extra two yards or kick on fourth down would, of course, be as nothing compared to an assistant secretary's moment of truth when he would have to decide whether to leave the OCT in at the height of a crisis, or pull it out and send in the defense. Football fans and sportswriters could never begin to produce Monday morning quarterbacks in the same league with those to be found among political commentators, congressmen or Washington taxi drivers.

Morale and performance would certainly be improved when, say, American Embassy X could trade to Embassy Y an experienced but unneeded political officer and a green but promising cultural attaché for a shrewd economic counselor and a shifty public affairs officer, throwing in some cash (in counterpart funds, of course). And instead of the present haphazard method of assigning new FSO-8s, we could look forward to the more sensible—and vastly more exciting—prospect of assistant secretaries participating in an annual draft of these newcomers to the professional diplomatic game.

—*From "The Young, Intellectual, Overseas Chinese Trade Union Leader and His Piano-Playing Student Wife," by S.I. Nadler, FSJ, June 1964.*

## Contemporary Quote

“ This unconscionable act was committed by a terrorist group determined to keep these girls from getting an education—grown men attempting to snuff out the aspirations of young girls.

—First Lady Michelle Obama on the kidnapping of Nigerian girls, delivering the president’s weekly radio address on May 10.

seek relocation of MEK members to third countries. We are working closely w/U.N. and U.S. on this resolution.”

The discussion then turned to the recent arrests of prominent opposition figures by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, which Amb. Faily dismissed by asserting that the “judiciary in Iraq is independent of executive. We are still working to strengthen the professionalism of our judiciary.”

Asked whether Iraq believes that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad “must go,” the ambassador would only say: “We believe in a democratic resolution to conflict. A primary objective of Iraqi people is to stop bloodshed.” He added: “Serious dialogue must take place btwn Syrian stakeholders. Otherwise war of attrition btwn them will never lead to peace.”

To read the full conversation, follow @FailyLukman on Twitter, or search for the hashtag #AskIraq.

—Bret Matera, Editorial Intern

## Happy Birthday, Ben!

In the June 2013 edition of Talking Points (“Diplomacy Goes to the Dogs”), we spotlighted Australian artist Bennett Miller’s “Dachshund U.N.” show, which posed 36 adorable dachshunds as United Nations Human Rights Commission delegates.

Salon.com reviewer Allison Meier noted that the show had plenty of barking and biting, and sometimes the “delegates” even lunged at each other.

Here in Washington, Secretary of State John Kerry tried to keep barking from degenerating into biting by having a single pooch on stage: Ben, a yellow Labrador retriever. Sec. Kerry noted that State’s new top dog was named for Benjamin Franklin, America’s first diplomat, and is affectionately known as “Diplomutt.”

As Colby Itkowitz reports in the April 24 *Washington Post*, Kerry’s best friend celebrated his first birthday in style on April 22. Sec. Kerry set up a Twitter account for the pup (@DiploMutt), and promptly tweeted him a “happy birthday” message. No sooner had the tweet gone live than Ben had 615 followers; by May 15, he had 1,516.

Two days later, Ben’s dad brought him to a “Take Your Child to Work” event at the State Department. The pup behaved himself for most of Kerry’s brief remarks, though he did jump on the female sign language interpreter. (Bad dog!)

The official State Department transcript of the April 24 event includes the following ad-lib from the Secretary: “Whoops. Sit, sit, sit, sit. He’s learning. He’s 1 year old yesterday, two days ago. Whoops. (Laughter.) Sit. He’s learning, slowly. He’s getting there.”

Itkowitz concludes her report by asking, “Should Kerry consider trying some of those obedience techniques on [Russian President Vladimir] Putin?” ■

—Steven Alan Honley,  
Contributing Editor



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# Publishing in the Foreign Service

BY YANIV BARZILAI

It almost goes without saying that members of the Foreign Service have a lot to share.

Whether through incredible stories of adventures abroad, personal accounts of years spent in war zones, memoirs of a life in government service or poignant analyses of foreign policy and history, the men and women of the Foreign Service are in an extraordinary position to share valuable personal insights and contribute to national and global debates.

Unfortunately, most Foreign Service and State Department employees perceive such vast bureaucratic barriers to publishing while in the Foreign Service that they determine it is not worth the effort. To be sure, those obstacles are very real and very frustrating. I personally experienced practically every one of them in publishing as a State Department employee. It often felt like I was a first-time athlete trying to run a marathon with no end in sight and high jumps at every turn.

But I made it through the process. My book, *102 Days of War—How Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda & the Taliban Survived 2001*, was released in January with only a small amount of information redacted.

Since then, I have held public events at the Brookings Institution and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, spoken on National Public Radio, and published articles in national and international news media—all with the approval of the State Department, and all while serving as an FSO.

And if I can do it, so can anyone else in the Foreign Service.

## A Win-Win Proposition

Publishing is not only good personal career development; it is important for American society. Historical and foreign policy scholarship is a universal good that can inform leaders about difficult decisions and help them avoid the mistakes of the past. And personal stories about life in the Foreign Service help educate the American people about a type of public service that is often overlooked and underreported.

As an American diplomat, I strongly believe in the obligation to protect all classified information. There are simply things that cannot be discussed in the public domain, which can often include current, unresolved issues in international relations.

In general, however, the U.S. government has a keen interest in encouraging its employees to engage in a dialogue with the American people and the world at large. Such exchanges are not only an important element of a functioning democracy, but an essential part of representing the United States abroad.

The rules and regulations for publishing in the Foreign Service can be found in the Foreign Affairs Manual at 3 FAM 4170. All current and former State Department employees who want to publish or speak publicly should review the document in its entirety.

## How the Process Works

The first determination that must be made is whether your material is “of official concern.” The FAM defines official concern as any material that relates to “any policy, program or operation of the employee’s agency or to current U.S. foreign policies, or reasonably may be expected to affect the foreign relations of the United States.” In other words, it is entirely a judgment call. Unless it would be utterly preposterous to mark your material “of official concern,” you can safely assume which verdict the State Department will give.

Personal judgment plays a role. Technically, “Materials that do not address matters of official concern need not be submitted for review” (3 FAM 4172.1-1a). You may make that determination as an individual, but if you possess any doubt about meeting the threshold, forgoing



*Yaniv Barzilai, a State Department Foreign Service officer serving in Baku on his first overseas posting, is the author of 102 Days of War—How Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda & the Taliban Survived 2001 (Potomac Books, 2013). The views expressed in this article are his alone and do not necessarily represent those of the State Department or the U.S. government.*

*Author’s Note: This article has been reviewed by the State Department, Central Intelligence Agency and Department of Defense in order to prevent the disclosure of classified information.*



**The first determination that must be made is whether your material is “of official concern.”**

the clearance process altogether is quite risky and generally not advisable.

The second determination is whether you are acting in a private or official capacity. The latter term implies that an action is part of one’s official discharge of duties on behalf of the State Department. It is important to note that the presumption of private capacity can be overcome by a number of factors, including rank, relationship to the subject matter or the potential for harm to foreign affairs (see 3 FAM 4172.1-6(B)).

Individuals who have put together materials in their private capacity that are “of official concern” are required to submit them for clearance. For current employees in the United States, the reviewing office is the Bureau of Public Affairs (paclearances@state.gov). For current employees stationed overseas, the point of contact is the chief of mission. And for all former employees, the reviewing office is within the Bureau of Administration’s Office of Information Programs, A/GIS/IPS/PP/LA to be precise.

The purpose of the review is solely to “ensure that classified material and other material protected by law are not improperly disclosed and that the views of employees are not improperly attributed to the U.S. government” (3 FAM 4172.1-1a). The review should not address any other issue.

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## In a democratic society with a very active and capable press, many pieces of information may be publicly available but remain sensitive or classified.

### Hurry Up and Wait

The duration of the review remains one of the largest problems in the process. According to 3 FAM 4172.1-5, the review process is “not to exceed 30 days.” But in reality, neither the Bureau of Public Affairs nor the Bureau of Administration adheres to that regulation, although they often try to act in good faith on it.

In cases where State does not get back to the employee within that time frame, 3 FAM 4172.1-7 says: “An employee may use, issue or publish materials on matters of official concern that have been submitted for review, and for which the presumption of private capacity has not been overcome, upon expiration of the designated period of comment and review regardless of the final content of such materials so long as they do not contain information that is classified or otherwise exempt from disclosure as described in 3 FAM 4172.1-6(A).”

Nonetheless, if you do publish material before the review is complete, you must be absolutely sure that no piece of information can be interpreted as classified—and be aware that you proceed at your own (potentially great) risk.

It is important to note that determining whether material is classified is often not as clear-cut as it may seem. Fifteenth-century European history is clearly not classified, while the location of U.S. nuclear weapons unequivocally is. But what about drones? What about

the information disclosed by WikiLeaks or Edward Snowden? When does an event transition from a current issue to a historical case study?

In an open, democratic society with a very active and capable press, many pieces of information may be publicly available but remain sensitive or classified. There are no easy answers to these questions, and they often need to be addressed in context on a case-by-case basis.

### The More, the Merrier

Once the material is submitted, the reviewing office distributes it to other offices and internally clears on it. Who gets to clear the material is solely within the purview of the reviewing office, but it is in this exercise of authority where the most can go wrong.

Within the State Department, the process for clearance typically falls to the regional desk and other offices with “equities”—a purposefully imprecise and vague term that can be bent to mean anything. In other words, no clear and specific guidelines exist that specify who has the authority to determine whether information is classified.

More often than not, the desk officer reviewing the material did not work on the issue being evaluated and therefore does not have the information to make a well-informed judgment. Desk tours typically last just two years, which makes determinations on issues that occurred

years or decades ago difficult and subjective. It is unfair to put desk officers in such a position, and equally unfair to the prospective authors who are only seeking an objective process.

One of the worst-case scenarios is that the reviewing office determines that interagency clearance is necessary. Not surprisingly, that process is a black hole where acquiring information is practically impossible and each agency uses different—and often conflicting—processes and standards to determine if material is classified. The State Department’s 30-day rule also gets thrown out, even though no regulatory foundation exists for ignoring it.

Unfortunately, once the State Department distributes the material to other agencies, it voluntarily gives up its authority to make a final judgment on what is classified, even though it still technically “owns” the process. And if some other agency determines that something is classified—even if that notion is completely ridiculous—the State Department will not overrule it.

### My Experience

In addition to being cleared in a number of offices at the State Department, my manuscript was sent for clearance to the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense and the National Security Council. The CIA utilizes a Publication Review Board, while the Defense Department has an Office of Security Review; each has its own guidelines and appeals processes.

Getting through the interagency and State Department pre-publication clearance processes took me a full year: from Oct. 22, 2012, to Oct. 23, 2013. My manuscript came back after months of delay with hundreds of redactions from the CIA and DOD. I appealed every redaction and

## DOD redacted a map that is in a published, official departmental history and was provided to me by the Special Operations Command history office for republication.

provided extensive lists of my sourcing to prove that all information was acquired from publicly available sources.

To their credit, the CIA ran a clear and transparent process and withdrew practically all objections in response to my appeal.

In contrast, the Defense Department's process was opaque and problematic. DOD redacted a map that is in a pub-

lished, official departmental history and was provided to me by the Special Operations Command history office for republication. Other redacted materials included common unit names and the title of one SOCOM component command listed on the [www.socom.mil](http://www.socom.mil) website. DOD denied my appeal even when confronted with clear and convincing evidence that none of the material was classified.

My only recourse was to sue the U.S. government, which I declined to do. DOD refused to provide explanations for their redactions. And, unfortunately, State never pushed back or advocated on my behalf within the interagency to challenge some of the more absurd redactions. It was a failure to protect my rights as an American citizen and a government employee. Luckily for me, the material that was redacted was not vital to my book, but that is not necessarily going to be the case with other reviews.

The good news is that most clearance requests take just a few weeks and do not entail interagency review. In fact, for straightforward materials like op-eds, or time-sensitive situations like interview requests, State can often act in days or

# 2014 ANNUAL FS AUTHORS

## ROUNDUP

Watch for the November FSJ's annual roundup of books by current and former members of the Foreign Service and their families.



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hours. (It has done so for me on several occasions.) Ultimately, the State Department approves almost every request it receives for publication.

My main advice for anyone embarking on this process is to work cordially within the system, know your rights and the State Department's regulations, and thoroughly cite your sources. If you do, you should feel confident that your material will be cleared for publication and that the State Department will support you.

### Fixing the Process

There is plenty of room for improvement in the pre-publication clearance process. First and foremost, State must do a better job of adhering to the regulations it has set forth in the Foreign Affairs Manual. Anything short of that standard is unfair to everyone involved.

Second, the department should establish clear guidelines on how it distributes material internally and across the interagency community. That threshold should have nothing to do with terms as vague as "equities." Instead, offices and agencies should have the opportunity to clear on material only if that material is the result of "privileged information": information that employees acquire during the discharge of their duties that is not otherwise available.

Third, State needs to ensure that former employees receive treatment comparable to current employees. A significant gap exists between the attention given to current employees by PA and that former employees receive from A/GIS/IPS/PP/LA.

As that lengthy acronym suggests, former employees are relegated to an obscure office in the Bureau of Administration when they seek pre-publication clearance. In contrast, the PA leadership

is often engaged and provides consistent oversight of the review process for current employees. This bifurcation not only creates unnecessary bureaucratic layers and redundancies, but places additional burdens on former employees trying to do the right thing by clearing their manuscripts. This discrepancy should be rectified.

These short-term fixes would go a long way toward improving the pre-publication clearance process for employees. In the long term, however, the State Department should consider establishing a publication review board modeled on the CIA's Publication Review Board.

A State Department PRB would codify a transparent, objective and fair process that minimizes the need for interagency clearance, ensures proper and consistent determinations on what material should be classified, and reduces the strain on the State Department at large, and its employees in particular.

Ultimately, State needs to strike a better balance between protecting information and encouraging activities in the public domain. The pre-publication review process remains too arbitrary, lengthy and disjointed for most government professionals to share their unique experiences and expertise with the American public.

Still, despite the bureaucratic challenges I faced, it is pretty incredible that the U.S. government allowed a young diplomat to write a detailed—and sometimes critical—narrative about sensitive military and intelligence operations that occurred only 12 years ago in an ongoing conflict. In fact, I do not think that any other government in the world would allow that sort of liberty.

But that is the United States of America at its best, and just one more reason I am so proud to represent it. ■

## A LEGAL ALIEN

# Working at State As a Turkish Diplomat

**A Transatlantic Diplomatic Exchange Fellow from Ankara discovers more similarities than he expected when he spends a year in Foggy Bottom.**

BY ÖMER MURAT

**H**owever long my career as a Turkish diplomat lasts, I will always cherish my year (2011-2012) at the U.S. Department of State with the Transatlantic Diplomatic Exchange Fellowship Program. This unique program allows diplomats from NATO and the European Union to work at State for a year. The Turkish Foreign Ministry highly values this opportunity for its diplomats to experience the U.S. foreign policymaking process from the inside, and to facilitate better relations between our two countries.

Excited as I was to be assigned to such an important program, I must confess that I had no real idea just how challenging—and rewarding—an experience it would be. It took longer than I expected to overcome a difficult-to-explain sense that I was some sort of impostor—a feeling exacerbated whenever I met someone who treated me as one of his or her “ordinary” American colleagues. In fact, many of my State Department colleagues were genuinely surprised to learn I am a Turkish diplomat,

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*Ömer Murat is a counselor at the Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C. Since joining the Turkish Foreign Service in 2001, he has also served in Tripoli, Brasilia and Baku. He wishes to thank Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins, Margo Squire and Mahvash Siddiqui for their support during his time at the State Department.*

especially those who had never before met a Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellow.

### Stumbling into Insights

I quickly realized that the Harry S Truman Building is a very serious and complicated place—even more so than Americans themselves. I was on the verge of having a surreal experience every time I roamed its long corridors trying to find a room. I kept wondering, “Where are all the people?”

Once I realized I’d lost my way, I had to ask other people how to get back to my suite, without letting on my concern that they thought I was a stranger or not meant to be here. And I had to do this with proper manners.

Of course, they were never, ever suspicious of me, but always smiling and helpful. Some told me it was a more gruesome feeling to walk around the building before the posters of world cities were mounted on the walls. I salute those who had this brilliant idea, which makes the experience of navigating the building much less claustrophobic.

After these initial “stumbleings,” it did not take long to see that there are more striking similarities than differences between the Turkish Foreign Ministry and State Department, and also between American and Turkish diplomats. Chief among these are never-ending clearances, and the use of acronyms that are only meaningful to those within the building. (As a graduate of a State Department program, I am proud to announce that I will



Cemil Erdem

Ömer Murat at work in the Embassy of Turkey in Washington, D.C.

employ TFM as the acronym for the Turkish Foreign Ministry for the rest of this article.)

Even perceptions of the rivalry between each country's capital and largest city (Washington versus New York, Ankara versus Istanbul) are similar. And yes, those of us in the TFM regard Ankara as one of the "least preferred" places to be assigned, due to long, stressful working hours and lower pay.

Another thing American and Turkish public servants have in common: The vast majority of us are dedicated and hard-working. We are not primarily motivated by material satisfaction, but by the genuine pleasure that comes from contributing to the well-being of our respective nations, and promoting their national interests. However, I would observe that State has much more highly developed mechanisms than TFM for rewarding exceptional individual contributions.

### Opening Portals

During my fellowship I was based in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, which is responsible for managing a broad range of U.S. nonproliferation policies, programs, agreements and initiatives. The spread of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological, and of related materials, technologies and exper-

tise, and delivery systems, is a pre-eminent challenge to American national security. ISN leads the State Department's efforts to combat this grave threat, and prevent terrorists from acquiring WMD, through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

I had an extensive portfolio, but my main responsibility was to support Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins, the coordinator for threat reduction programs. She is also the U.S. chair of the Group of Eight's Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Department of State lead for planning the G-8's annual Nuclear Security Summit.

Because the United States was the host for the 2012 summit, the Department of State needed to set up a website and outreach tools. Among other tasks, I developed and managed the Internet portal that promoted the United States' chairmanship, facilitated several Global Partnership conferences, hosted meetings and reached out to foreign diplomats to further GP collaboration.

At the risk of immodesty, I am delighted to say that the webpage we designed to advance U.S. public diplomacy for the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit, which we kept current throughout the summit and its immediate aftermath, received rave reviews from the National Security Council staff and from across the U.S. government for being comprehensive and user-friendly. I also had the pleasure of addressing a group of students to discuss

the State Department from the perspective of a foreign diplomat.

### **“The Face of Your Country”**

Having strong links with the continental European tradition, the Turkish Foreign Ministry might be a little more formal than the State Department, but State is certainly no less serious about foreign policy. Still, as a huge apparatus trying to manage the broadest range of crises and problems covering the whole world, convenience has to prevail over formality.

Moreover, bureaucracy is not (and could certainly not have been) an American invention. But even if it were, American practicality would make it more palatable.

That said, my time at State has reinforced the impression that career diplomats as a group tend to be a little bit reserved. We also do not approach the task of drafting a cable that analyzes the politics of a country as we would an academic or news article. Instead, we try to get above the current atmosphere to recognize weaknesses in policymaking that could lead to serious mishaps, mindful that there is always another side of the story, and any policy is likely to fail if it doesn't carefully take that side into account. The heavy responsibility of crafting foreign policy usually results in recommendations that reflect strong realism and cautiousness.

I remember that during my orientation at the TFM Academy, a retired Turkish ambassador described being a Foreign Service officer with these words: “You are the face of your own country; people like you are called statesmen.” This is not an easy task, of course. You are expected to be ambitious but not aggressive, purposeful but not obstinate, coolheaded but not dispassionate.

You have to be a master of good rhetoric and writing to be a successful diplomat. You also need to know that most of the time, you will be expected to explain your country's position without revealing many of the facts to which you are privy, but not authorized to disclose. Your loyalty is always to your own country, but a good diplomat has manners that earn the respect of diplomats, politicians and leaders of other countries.

You might have been assigned to an African country for the last three years, but in the capital back home you could be work-

The tension between the Foreign Service and Civil Service at State reminds me of a similar predicament pitting generalists against specialists at TFM a few years ago.

ing on the Balkan desk. This usually means that within a few weeks of starting your new job, you are obliged to be fully in command of the situation there, and able to present talking points with regard to that specific country and region.

### **Specialists and Generalists**

The tension between the Foreign Service and Civil Service at State reminds me of a similar predicament pitting generalists against specialists at TFM a few years ago. But unlike in your system, Turkish specialists were losing influence and relevance within the ministry. As a result, many of them left TFM because they felt they didn't have good career prospects.

To address that problem, a reform process initiated by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu several years ago, and now overseen by Deputy Foreign Minister Naci Koru, has created a second career track for specialists. (I am honored to have been part of that process while working in the Human Resources Department in Ankara before I came to Washington.) So it is now possible for specialists to be appointed as consuls general (albeit not chiefs of mission), although it takes much longer for them to achieve that status than it does generalists.

I am well aware that there is no simple way to manage this tension. But I also tend to doubt there is a way to create a professional diplomatic service without making generalists the backbone of it. If the current State Department personnel system was intended as a deliberate answer to these challenges—rather than as an ad hoc structure that encompasses many different priorities and impulses—I must say that it is not a very convincing one.

### **Building Bridges**

The State Department represents the multicultural facet of the American political system, both at home and abroad, and the Transatlantic Diplomatic Exchange Fellowship Program faithfully reflects this trait, as well. It is not based on reciprocity, but has the sole purpose of building more bridges to, and understanding of, other nations.

I am proud of having had the unique experience of serving as a Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellow, and hope that I contributed to that goal during my time at State—and through this article. ■

## THE INDIAN FOREIGN SERVICE

# The Glass Gets Fuller

**Global winds of change are sweeping through the corridors of India's Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Foreign Service, opening up the process of foreign policy delivery.**

BY KISHAN S. RANA

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*Kishan S. Rana was a member of the Indian Foreign Service from 1960 to 1995, serving as ambassador to Algeria, Czechoslovakia, Kenya, Mauritius and Germany. He was also joint secretary in Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's office from 1981 to 1982, and later headed personnel administration in the Ministry of External Affairs. Ambassador Rana now teaches, writes and advises other governments on diplomatic practice. He is the author of 21st Century Diplomacy: A Practitioner's Guide (Bloomsbury Academic, 2011) and The Contemporary Embassy: Paths to Diplomatic Success (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).*

In New Delhi, the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Foreign Service have long been seen as silos, sometimes criticized at home as aloof and elitist. Yet peers view the IFS as among the best diplomatic services. Foreign embassies in New Delhi sometimes find MEA exasperating. How does one explain such paradoxes?

Global winds of change now sweep through the corridors of South Block—and Jawahar Bhavan, the new second home of MEA—in effect opening up the process of foreign policy delivery. This is the result of several elements: complexity and new issues in international dialogue; a larger role played by both the head of government and by functional ministries; the expanded activities of non-state actors; the ubiquity of electronic and social media; as well as increased volatility of foreign affairs. The same change is transforming diplomacy the world over, forcing foreign ministries to scramble in response.

The Indian Foreign Service is an “integrated” service, designed from its 1946 creation to handle political, commercial, consular and all other external tasks. So, for example, some 70 of the 121 Indian embassies worldwide have commercial sections that are staffed by the Ministry of External Affairs but funded by the Department of Commerce. Unlike the American system, the IFS has no separate commercial service or even a specialist “cone.”

In this “holistic” approach, the IFS is responsible for all political, economic, public affairs and consular work, though some embassy jobs go to officials from outside the IFS (that number is now set to increase, as we see below). In my view, this leads to



efficient handling of political, economic and other branches of external work, giving IFS personnel broad skill sets that help when they rise to head embassies. It also leads me to conclude that integrated diplomatic services are more effective than those that separate political, commercial and public affairs work. However, no comparative study exists in support of this contention, perhaps because there are too many variables involved.

## A Tiny Cadre

The main characteristics of the IFS juxtapose strengths and weaknesses, much like the glass of water that can be seen as both half-full and half-empty. First and foremost, the IFS is miniscule, both in comparison with other major players and in terms of its functional responsibilities. Despite slow expansion since 2007 (when it numbered 650), the “A Branch” (executive level, third secretary and higher) stands at just 850. At the current rate, it may take another 10 years to reach the announced goal of 1,300.

This is much below the Brazilian diplomatic service, even though the latter contends with a smaller number of overseas posts. But looking more closely, the situation is not so dismal; we should factor in the 250 Grade I officials of the “B Branch” of the IFS, since they hold diplomatic rank (as first or second secretaries). Include also the 30-odd interpreters and about 25 of the legal and treaties cadre, who mainly work as desk officers and as first and second secretaries in embassies, and the total strength of the Indian diplomatic corps rises to about 1,200.

But this is still a tiny cadre to staff 121 embassies, five permanent missions and 53 consulates, as well as MEA. At the core, manpower is a major issue, but there is an important flip side to the manpower shortage: most Indian embassies have ample room for local initiative. Enterprising officials, not afraid to take calculated risk in the advancement of bilateral relations, can undertake local actions without New Delhi peering over their shoulders. Ergo, small also equates with nimble; it helps Indian diplomacy to punch far above its weight.

Nonetheless, because of the small size of the IFS, a shortfall in diplomatic capacity remains a major issue. Despite recent



Jawaharlal Nehru Bhavan is the new home of India's Ministry of External Affairs. The red sandstone structure with a built-up area of nearly 60,000 square meters is state-of-the-art and has many green features. It is the first government building that is compliant with the country's 2007 Energy Conservation Building Code and is LEED-certified.

Kishan S. Raina

growth, MEA faces a personnel shortage of its own, with just 400 executive-level personnel in New Delhi. The “headquarters-to-missions” staff ratio (a useful indicator of efficacy) has improved from about 1 to 4.3 in 1999, to around 1 to 2.7 today. (Empirical research has shown that an optimal ratio is around 1 to 1.5 or 2, defining a middle path between a foreign ministry that is relatively too large—which tends to micromanage overseas posts—and one that is too small to digest embassy output or guide them adequately.)

## Capacity Issues

To bolster its capacity, MEA now accepts officials from other government agencies, as subject experts (e.g., in disarmament or aid management) and as providers of administrative services. Plans to induct officials from Commerce and other ministries to work in embassies are now moving forward, overcoming some resistance from the IFS. But many MEA officials continue to refuse deployment to other ministries, even though such assignments are essential both to widen their skills, and to improve inter-ministry relations.

The staffing shortage also means that just a few officers can be spared for academic sabbaticals, which are vital for developing domain expertise in key and emerging subjects in fields ranging from climate change to international economics. (In contrast, the Chinese foreign ministry annually sends 120 mid-level officials to the world's leading universities; these opportunities are keenly contested.)

MEA faces another peculiar capacity problem, a legacy issue

that has now become acute in this age of fast-paced diplomacy. At its apex, the ministry is headed by at least four civil servants of the highest rank (“secretary to the government”); but the foreign secretary, their equal and yet the uncontested leader, bears an impossible burden. As “head of the IFS cadre,” this official must combine four major roles: principal of the foreign policy apparatus; administrative head of the IFS; direct supervisor of relations with a dozen or more key partner countries; and the adviser who accompanies the prime minister and external affairs minister to regional and global summits and major bilaterals. In contrast, though heading sizable MEA divisions, the other secretaries are relatively underworked.

Regrettably, institutional practices and personal agendas have blocked attempts to rectify this over the years. A direct consequence is a shortage of top management capacity to undertake, for instance, implementation of decisions on important bilateral and regional issues that entail protracted domestic inter-ministry dialogue. External negotiation capacity is similarly handicapped, as former State Department analyst Dan Markey noted in a July 2009 *Asia Policy* study, “Developing India’s Foreign Policy ‘Software.’”

Further, many foreign diplomats in New Delhi find it difficult to meet their MEA counterparts; they feel that the ministry’s overriding preoccupation is with Pakistan, China or the United States. Mindful of this, it now conducts monthly briefings for foreign embassies on key issues, led by the foreign secretary or another secretary and typically attended by 100 or more, to present the Indian view on key issues.

### Crafting Domestic Consensus on Foreign Policy

As in every country, crafting domestic consensus on foreign policy issues has become hugely important for New Delhi. This entails sustained dialogue with official partners, be it in relation to foreign trade agreements or World Trade Organization issues, or on energy policy, or development aid projects in neighboring countries that must link with home regions. On some issues the prime minister’s office is an ally in this coordination task, but MEA has to work on its own and reach out to the relevant ministries.

The foreign secretary is the only one with the needed clout to engage the economic ministries and other official stakeholders in such domestic diplomacy along multiple tracks. Toward that



end, MEA recently held its first-ever meeting with the chief secretaries (heads of administration) of all 28 Indian states, to bring them into the foreign policy process—particularly in regard to regional and neighborhood issues.

New thinking is needed to bring Indian states into the foreign policy process, while reaffirming the exclusive role of the central government in the delivery of the country’s foreign policy, as the Indian Constitution mandates. Beyond turf issues and contestation with other ministries lies the elusive goal of a “whole of government” policy.

No less crucial is outreach in the form of regular, structured dialogue with domestic non-state entities such as academia, business, media, science and technology agencies, and think-tanks—all key stakeholders in what is now being called the “national diplomatic system.” MEA has no unit to oversee this as a continual task, though domestic public diplomacy has been pursued actively since 2010, with some success. The recent visa imbroglio involving Devyani Khobragade, deputy consul general in New York, showed that domestic support for MEA remains brittle, however.

### Progress on Personnel Issues

Human resource management has undergone needed transformation, but still faces challenges. An equitable bidding system for overseas assignments is now in place and works well—volunteers are available for the tough posts, such as Baghdad or Kabul, without any rotation diktat. When it comes to promotions, however, MEA (like the rest of the Indian civil service) emphasizes seniority over selectivity out of deep distrust of how the merit principle might work.

Selection to senior grades takes place on the basis of the official’s year of entry. But within each “batch,” or cohort, greater selectivity is now the norm, partly as a natural consequence of growth. On only two occasions (in 2005 and 2007) the foreign secretary was appointed via “deep selection,” bypassing an entire batch and choosing a person from the following year’s list. That led to court appeals and a few resignations.

Subsequent appointments have reverted to selecting the most competent officers, but strictly from the senior-most batch. Contrast this with the method in most other major diplomatic

Small also equates with nimble; it helps Indian diplomacy to punch far above its weight.

services, where appointment to high rank is decoupled from length of service, and is contingent on performance. Japan's service shares India's attachment to seniority.

Indian ambassadorial appointments are almost exclusively from the Indian Foreign Service cadre. Even the few "political" nominees are drawn mainly from among retired officials, whether IFS or the armed services. Still, the distribution of senior (equivalent to secretary or additional secretary) ambassadors does not quite match the relative importance of foreign capitals, as seen from New Delhi.

We find senior ambassadors at locations of obvious importance, be it London, Moscow, Paris or Washington, D.C., but once in a while, Beijing, Berlin, Colombo, Dhaka or Islamabad receives a specially chosen Grade II ambassador. We also find some Grade I diplomats heading consulates in the United States or second-tier embassies; conversely, MEA sends those who are competent to other key locations, even if they happen to be in Grade II or III. Further, a few young officers with barely 15 years of service are now appointed as ambassadors. In a situation where even the best cannot get "fast track" promotions, this indirectly restores equity.

IFS morale is relatively high overall, helped by new practices such as annual conferences of ambassadors. But no system of grievance redress, much less a dissent mechanism, exists. As for professional recognition, in 2012 the family of the outstanding diplomat, S.K. Singh, put forward an annual "diplomat of the year" award, wisely conferred on young or mid-level officials.

### Increasing Professionalization

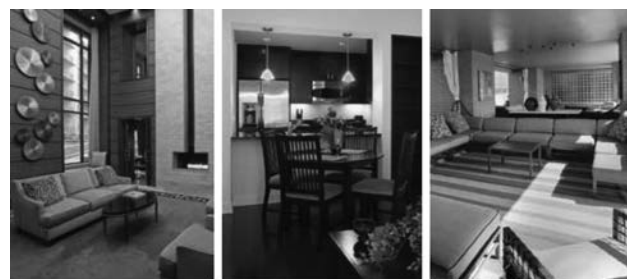
MEA has implemented incremental reform, but now needs action across a broad front to derive full potential from latent strengths. To that end, it recently invited young officers to come up with ideas, and is now studying their reports. This is the same method that the United Kingdom and Germany successfully used some 10 to 15 years ago, on the premise that it is the "youngsters" in the Service who have both the biggest stake in reform and the freshest thinking to offer.

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## Indian ambassadorial appointments are almost exclusively from the Indian Foreign Service cadre.

Happily, MEA has never adopted such buzzwords of corporate management as “balanced score-cards,” “key performance indicators” and “performance contracts,” which unfortunately blight some diplomatic services in developing countries like Botswana, Kenya, Malaysia and Tunisia. But it does need to set up permanent machinery for inspections of embassies and rigorously enforce procedures, whether they involve development of “annual plans” by missions or “handing over notes” by ambassadors at the end of their term.

Under MEA’s “Development Partnership Administration” process (an umbrella unit established in 2012 to implement an expanded aid program that now takes India’s external aid contribution to around 0.2 percent of gross domestic product), embassies also manage aid and have responded well to the new responsibilities.

Training processes at the Indian Foreign Service Institute have expanded and improved, driven by reform across the entire civil service—especially a decision that all officials must attend special courses before they cross career milestones. But more focused training for the IFS is still needed to strengthen professional competence; and this requires MEA to develop its own course materials, simulations and scenarios.

At heart this involves MEA closely managing its Foreign Service Institute, tuning management of the FSI more closely to the ministry’s functional needs. Language training also needs to be strengthened to develop specialized skills in such languages such as Arabic and Russian, to match the interpreter-level expertise that has been developed in recent years in Chinese.

### The Future

Retired officials are given to nostalgia and easy prognostication on what they often see as declining standards in the institution where they had worked. I was closely involved with training IFS recruits from 1996 to 2008, and saw in the new entrants



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## As in every country, crafting domestic consensus on foreign policy issues has become hugely important for New Delhi.

greater diversity in terms of the disciplines studied at university, regions represented and family backgrounds than ever before.

Those who have not studied at English-medium universities start their careers with a significant drawback. But the Foreign Service Institute addresses this gap with special English courses. This also needs strong professional focus so that at conference drafting groups and in negotiations, all officials have fluent English-language mastery.

While greater diversity is a trend in most diplomatic services, in India, expanded affirmative reservations in favor of the underprivileged seemingly lead to varying standards within each cohort. But through their performance, most young officials have shown themselves to be highly competent and dedicated. In the two decades since I retired, this impression has been reinforced during visits to Indian embassies in different countries, where I encounter confident young officials who are articulate and have mastery of their dossiers. The current generation is equal to the best.

Going forward, however, the IFS clearly needs more manpower and a more systematic approach to administration (in place of the tendency toward ad hoc-ism), as well as greater enforcement of accountability, better institutional capacity and improved home connections, including domestic public diplomacy and strong leadership.

In Asia and in almost all the developing world, exchanges do not take place among diplomatic services as they do, for example, within the European Union and in a wide cluster of Western countries through an annual process initiated by Canada a decade ago. Nor do we find any bilateral or regional dialogue among foreign ministries of developing countries on professional issues, be it in Africa, Asia or Latin America. Such conversations have obvious value, since foreign ministries confront similar circumstances in dealing with the international system. ■



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# LIFE AND WORK IN THE Romanian Foreign Service

**A former Transatlantic Diplomatic Exchange Fellow reflects on the similarities and differences between the Romanian and American diplomatic corps.**

BY DIANA TASE

**M**y diplomatic adventure began eight years ago when I joined the Romanian Foreign Service. I have served with enthusiasm and passion both within the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest and overseas, in Prague, Rome, Brussels and Washington, D.C.

Being a diplomat is a career like no other. Where else can you change your job, the focus and location of your work every few years, without actually changing employers? Where else are you constantly encouraged to broaden your expertise and knowledge as well as develop your personal skills, both at home and overseas? Diplomacy is much more than a job; it is a unique way of life, and I love it.

---

*Diana Tase is a member of the Romanian Foreign Service. She currently serves as a legal adviser in the Directorate of International Law and Treaties in Bucharest. Ms. Tase joined the Foreign Service in 2006 and has previously served in Prague, Rome and Brussels. She was a Transatlantic Diplomatic Exchange Fellow at the State Department from October 2012 until September 2013.*

## Talking the Talk

Last year, my path brought me to Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Department of State with the Transatlantic Exchange Diplomatic Fellowship Program. It was my first time traveling outside Europe, and the experience was fascinating and enriching.

The excellent TDF program offers mid-career diplomats from NATO countries the chance to work closely with their American colleagues at the State Department, and for U.S. diplomats to work as TDFs with their diplomat-colleagues in those countries.

I vividly remember my first encounter with the State Department system during my first staff meeting in the Office of Iraq Economic and Assistance Affairs, my host office for the year. I was amazed by the “DOS-lish” language. It was something special: about 45-percent English and the rest ... acronyms.

Seeing my puzzled face, one of my friendly new colleagues reassured me that this happens to all newcomers, and that I’d get used to it. I did. In fact, by the end of the year, my DOS-lish was not bad at all.

Working at the State Department led me to discover amazing, dedicated people. I learned a lot, and feel inspired to continue to build bridges between the Romanian Foreign Service and the U.S. Foreign Service.

## Two Faces of the Same Coin

Similar to the American system, between assignments at missions overseas Romanian diplomats serve in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters in Bucharest. I envision working at headquarters and overseas as being two faces of the same coin. One face, diplomatic work in Bucharest, is similar to that done by other civil servants throughout the Romanian government. We serve as desk officers and work on different projects.

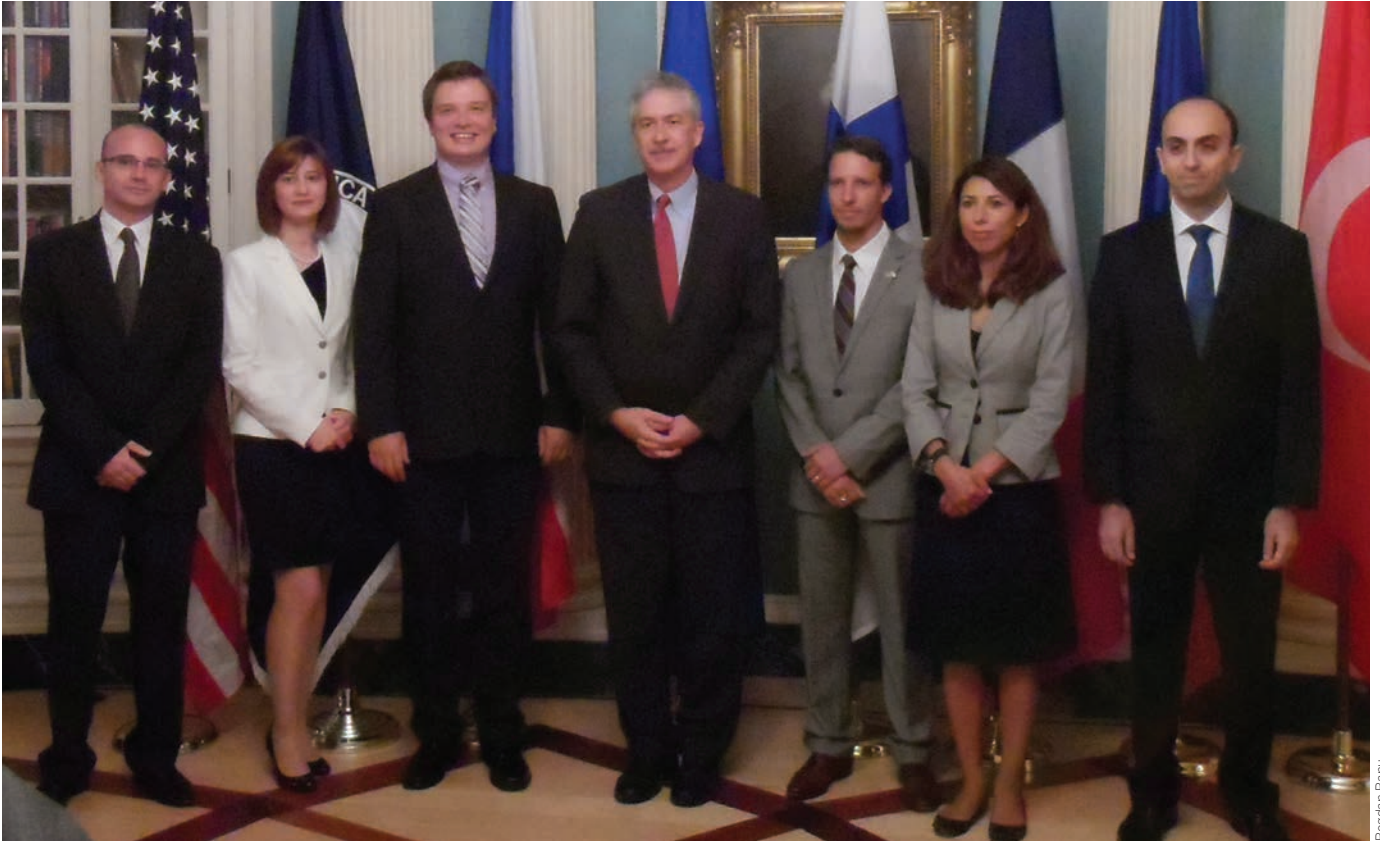
The other face might be seen as the unique one: performing diplomatic responsibilities overseas. At larger missions,



Diana Tase in front of the Central University Library of Bucharest in Revolution Square, where the 1989 Romanian Revolution against communism began.

Andreas Georgiadis

Where else can you change your job, and the focus and location of your work every few years, without actually changing employers?



Bogdan Barbu

Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellows with Deputy Secretary of State William Burns at the 2013 TDF graduation ceremony. From left: Olivier Gauvin (France), Diana Tase, Petr Michalek (Czech Republic), Deputy Secretary Burns, Aaretti Siitonen (Finland), Claude Veron-Reville (European Union) and Arif Yeter (Turkey).

a Romanian diplomat might manage responsibilities related to one of the three major categories: political, consular and trade services. In smaller missions, one officer might do work in all three categories.

### Joining the Corps

I joined the Romanian Foreign Service in 2006 following a hiring process that lasted several months. It was an open contest, and the competition was fierce. The exam was one of the toughest I ever took. There were only a limited number of positions available, after several years with no openings.

The baseline requirements were strict: a university degree (any subject is acceptable, making the career available to those with all kinds of backgrounds and abilities); command of two

The “DOS-lish” language was something special: about 45-percent English and the rest ... acronyms.

foreign languages; and specific skills, abilities and personal qualities like judgment, adaptability and communication and organizational skills.

All those requirements were tested during an extended process that

included several stages: the writing test, where knowledge of specific world events had to be expressed in two foreign languages; an interview to evaluate oral communication and networking skills; and screening processes, consisting of physical and psychological tests, and a background check for the security clearance.

### Building a Career

After completing the admission process, I joined the corps as a diplomatic attaché and was accepted into the political



career path. The other path that our system generally offers is the consular path. Unlike the American system, one can easily “cross” the tracks during a Foreign Service career by following a relatively simple procedure.

During my first year with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, work as a desk officer was blended with professional diplomatic training. The six-month mandatory basic orientation program—similar to the American A-100 class—was intense. Training is run by the Romanian Diplomatic Institute, attached to the MFA. Those classes brought together new and enthusiastic diplomats in learning and friendship. After that, supplementary short, skill-based courses followed.

Despite the general similarities in continued learning processes between our systems, learning additional foreign languages is different in Bucharest. Romanian diplomats generally take foreign language classes after work, during one’s free time and without a compulsory linkage to the further selection for overseas posting. Only some languages—such as Arabic, Russian, Turkish or professional French—are offered through diverse programs developed with private-sector or specialized institutes, such as the French Institute in Bucharest.

### Preparing for a Posting

Generally, the first two years as a member of the corps are spent with the MFA in Bucharest. This is the usual step required to become eligible for the annual selection process for overseas posting. As in the American system, the period between the posting of open positions and the actual decisions is quite intense.

Everyone who chooses to participate in this contest decides on their top choices and submits a three-bid short list to the Posting Committee. Overseas postings can last from six months to four years. The candidate’s experience, expertise, diplomatic rank, personal skills and knowledge of a rare foreign language are assessed by the Posting Committee and everyone is engaged, aiming to emphasize their best qualifications.

### Climbing the Ladder

The Romanian system recognizes eight diplomatic ranks (in descending order: ambassador, minister-plenipotentiary, minister-counselor, counselor, first secretary, second sec-

For Romanian diplomats, the foreign language classes are generally taken after work, during one’s free time.

retary, third secretary and diplomatic attaché) and four consular ranks (consul general, consul, vice-consul and consular agent).

One climbs the diplomatic career ladder by participating in the annual promotion competition when the time

comes. I have been through two competitions during the last eight years. After the fulfillment of the mandatory requirement of years of service, I submitted an individual written request for promotion (allowed for just one step up the grade scale), with a self-evaluation and a director’s evaluation each time. Once the submission is made, the nervous waiting begins in anticipation of the Promotion Commission’s assessment.

This year I will undertake this exercise again, in hopes of being promoted from second to first secretary, after four years of service since my last promotion.

### Work-Life Balance

Every diplomat has personal motivations that lead him or her to embrace diplomatic work. My biggest motivation comes from feeling like my efforts help improve policy or open new doors in Romania’s relationship with a given country. Despite the engagement needed to do your job as well as you can, an important challenge remains: how to achieve a good work-life balance.

Aiming for such balance is essential when moving around the world every couple of years, which can take a toll on families. Spouses face challenges maintaining their own careers while moving the family and having the kids jump from school to school. There is no recipe for achieving the needed balance and, definitely, a case-by-case approach is needed. However, the bidding process for overseas postings plays a very important role.

I hope these glimpses of the way the Romanian diplomatic system works will help create new bridges and spark interest in discovering more about us. Those of us representing Romania and its citizens are fully committed to getting to know you better, and to being strategic partners and friends of the United States.

I have enjoyed sharing these thoughts about our diplomatic careers and lives that, in spite of certain differences, are so similar—whether one is working near the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., or the Dâmbovită River in Bucharest. ■



# FROM FINLAND

## with Warmth

**A Finnish FSO explains some of the unique features of the Finnish Foreign Service, including “sauna diplomacy.”**

BY AARETTI SIITONEN



Timo Behr



Courtesy Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland

Above, Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Helsinki. At left, Aaretti Siitonen visiting a Finnish-funded literacy, women's empowerment and anti-female genital mutilation project near Burao, Somalia.

**D**uring my year as a Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellow at the State Department (2012-2013), I was completely immersed in the work of my bureau, advancing United States goals in South and Central Asia. I even had the chance to travel to the region, visiting U.S. missions to exchange views between posts and Main State. It was a roller-coaster year of briefing checklists, annotated agendas and interagency coordination. I wouldn't trade a minute of it for anything.

When colleagues ask me to describe the differences between the Finnish Foreign Service and its American counterpart, I always respond that it's far more interesting to notice how much we have in common. We share values and face similar challenges, such as the ever-present problem of differing viewpoints at post and headquarters. We both operate in

multiple time zones and wildly different environments; and we both strive to balance diplomatic careers with personal lives. As a result, we can also find common solutions.

Now that six months have passed since I returned to work at the Finnish Embassy, however, the time is right for a more systematic comparison. (By the way, our chancellery on Massachusetts Avenue, the first LEED-certified embassy in the United States, was prominently featured in the April *Foreign Service Journal*.) Even though the trip from Foggy Bottom to Observatory Circle isn't long, it does give some perspective.

### Differences in Scale, but Not Purpose

Just like the State Department, the Finnish Foreign Ministry aims to advance national interests. Thankfully, that term is no longer narrowly defined. Strengthening international stability, security, peace, justice and sustainable development across the planet are all part of our portfolio. Similarly, promoting the rule of law, democracy and human rights is as integral to our

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*Aaretti Siitonen, a Finnish Foreign Service officer since 2010, is currently a political officer at the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C. He was a Transatlantic Diplomatic Exchange Fellow in the regional affairs office of the State Department's South and Central Asian Affairs Bureau from September 2012 to August 2013. Mr. Siitonen previously managed post-conflict development cooperation in Somalia, Nepal and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and worked as a Kosovo Force peacekeeper. He has also authored studies and articles for academic and other publications on transnational democracy, European enlargement and civil society empowerment.*

## The Finnish foreign aid agency was merged with the foreign ministry in the 1990s.

diplomatic work as representing Finland in foreign capitals and international institutions. Sound familiar?

The most obvious difference between the Finnish Foreign Service and that of the United States is the scale of the operation. Our foreign ministry employs about 2,500 individuals, of whom a thousand are local hires; just 570 or so are Foreign Service officers, about half of whom serve abroad at any given moment. The State Department is roughly 20 times larger, and manages more than 250 overseas posts, whereas the Finnish Foreign Ministry runs 93.

That said, operating a small post requires many of the same ingredients as a larger one, ranging from administrative functions to the actual meat and bones of diplomacy. Benjamin Franklin may have kept a household in Paris, and John Adams originally lodged with a landlady in Amsterdam; yet both dealt with the highest authorities in their respective host countries.

A smaller scale can make it easier to set priorities: Rather than try to do or follow everything, we sharpen our focus. Yet even in a small and nimble service like Finland's, it is easier said than done. Every function of a bureaucracy tends to find a way to justify its existence, often with very good arguments. Messages cannot go unanswered for long, and once we take on a challenge, we don't just do an adequate job. We aspire to be exemplary.

From an individual diplomat's perspective, the difference in

scale tends to mean assuming more responsibility, faster. Many of my colleagues who joined the service at the same time as I, four years ago, are already serving as deputy chiefs of mission across the globe.

To put it another way, we are larger parts of a smaller machine. This difference in perspective, combined with the values we share with our American peers, can make for many fruitful conversations between our diplomats in third countries.

Foreign assistance is another case in point. The Finnish foreign aid agency was merged with the foreign ministry in the 1990s; since then, most Finnish diplomats can also expect to take part in development work at some point in their careers.

Considering the fact that the State Department also controls the foreign aid budget, this is not such a big difference. But it does mean that Finnish diplomats need to speak the language of the U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as that of State, if we hope to be truly effective in Washington.



Aaretti Siitonen enjoying cherry blossom season in Washington, D.C.

### No Cones, No Line

There is no formal “cone” system in the Finnish Foreign Service. Officers do specialize to some extent, but we’re still all expected to be jacks-of-all-trades, as well. To help balance this, the Finnish Foreign Ministry employs experts, much like the State Department’s many highly qualified and professional civil servants and contractors, for particular tasks that require more specialized skills.

The clearance system, the multiple layers of staffers and “the Line” are conspicuously absent from the Finnish Foreign Service. We do have equivalent arrangements, but our structure is much less formalized than State’s.

My colleagues in SCA might make fun of me for saying this, but I actually enjoyed the clearance process at State (most of the time!). It makes collaboration the norm, and brings everyone up to speed on the department’s mul-

Finnish diplomats need to speak the language of the U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as that of State, if we hope to be truly effective in Washington.

tifaceted agenda. Taking an axe to the something-for-everyone Christmas tree that the process sometimes produces takes guts; but when used correctly, it is an effective system.

### Longer Postings and More Women

Finnish Ambassador Antti Sierla once observed: "The personnel structure of the Foreign Ministry resembles an aged sherry. Every year a new batch with singular characteristics is added, but the preceding vintages continue to tenaciously affect both the hue and aroma of the whole."

Our foreign postings tend to be three or four years long, and typically a Finnish diplomat will spend the first two years of his or her career at the ministry in Helsinki, gaining experience in different departments. For my part, after having had a new work environment every year for five consecutive years, this posting in Washington, D.C.—hectic and demanding as it may be—feels like a calm haven.

The median age of Finnish diplomats entering the service hovers around 30, so for many it is a second career. The Finnish Foreign Service is also increasingly female. The female to male ratio is set to reach 60/40 by the end of the decade, though the upper echelons are not yet quite as far along on the path to becoming more gender-balanced. The present Finnish ambassador to the United States is the first woman to head our mission here, and it is inspiring to be at the forefront of gender equality in this field of international relations.

To keep in step with the times, the diplomatic corps of all nations also need to become more ethnically diverse. During my year as a TDF, I was impressed by how the State Department is increasingly able to draw on the richness of American society in this regard, as well. Finland is becoming more diverse with every generation, and we will do well to learn from the experience of our American friends.

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## Sauna Diplomacy

Speaking of warm relations, there simply is no substitute for what we Finns call “sauna diplomacy.” Some even argue that it helped keep Finland, which borders modern Russia and shared a long border with the Soviet Union, safe during the Cold War.

The only loanword the English language has taken from Finnish, a sauna is a space to share one’s thoughts in a setting of trust. The aim of sauna diplomacy is not to make anyone uncomfortable, but to hit “pause” for a while, reveal the thinking behind different perspectives, and find common ground.

A sauna is always the first building that Finnish peacekeepers in Kosovo, Afghanistan or elsewhere set up within their perimeters, and it is an integral part of Finnish social life. This past winter, it was especially popular here in D.C.!

## The clearance system, the multiple layers of staffers and “the Line” are conspicuously absent from the Finnish Foreign Service.

It has been great to share this and other facets of Finnish culture with American friends and colleagues during my time at State and later, just as my wife and I have been welcomed into the homes and lives of the people here. We’ve become addicted to turkey with stuffing at Thanksgiving, and find it

hard to imagine a Nats game without half-smokes from Ben’s Chili Bowl. The dynamism, honesty, openness and warmth we’ve found in Washington have simply blown us away.

The natural ease of our countries’ cooperation, both during the fellowship and in my current position back at the embassy, has been truly remarkable. I felt like a part of the team ever since I first stepped into the Harry S Truman Building, and my colleagues at the embassy and I look forward to helping our countries work together on the issues that shape our common future. ■

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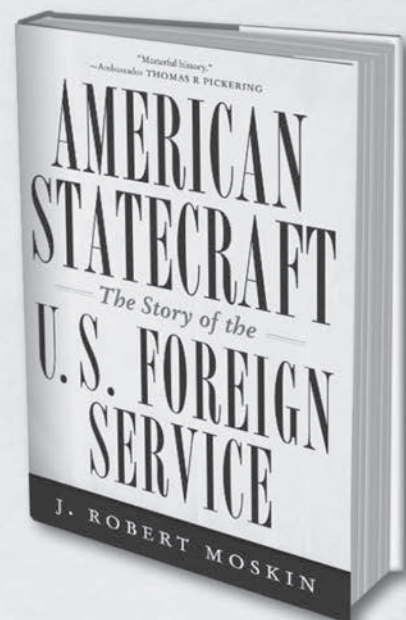
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# OUR WOMAN IN HAVANA

**Even in hostile environments, FSOs effectively represent U.S. interests through open communication. Here is one case study.**

BY VICKI J. HUDDLESTON

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*Vicki J. Huddleston, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, is currently chief of party of the U.S. Agency for International Development's Local Enterprise and Value Chain Enhancement Project, which builds jobs and capacity in Haiti's private sector. Prior to that, she was deputy assistant secretary of Defense for African affairs from 2009 through 2011.*

*Highlights of her Foreign Service career (1976-2005) include assignments as a deputy assistant secretary of State for Africa (1997-1999); ambassador to Madagascar (1995-1997) and to Mali (2002-2005); and principal officer of the U.S. interests section in Havana (1999-2002). Ambassador Huddleston was also a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution and co-director of the Brookings Project on U.S. Policy toward a Cuba in Transition from 2007 to 2009.*

**I**t would be an understatement to say that my three years (1999-2002) as principal officer of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana were full of ups and downs. At one point, Fidel Castro threatened to designate me persona non grata for distributing AM/FM/shortwave radios. Yet some years later Ricardo Alarcon, then president of the Cuban National Assembly, told a forum of American, Canadian and Cuban scholars that I had done a good job there.

And while I became the darling of Miami's Cuban-American community for strongly defending the country's internal human rights groups, they sharply criticized me for my role in resolving the Elian Gonzalez saga.

What my various critics either didn't see, or didn't accept, was that I consistently sought to cultivate a professional relationship of trust and respect throughout my time in Havana, even when our bilateral relations were in conflict. Admittedly, it helped that I liked everything about Cuba: the people, the place and the officials with whom I dealt. But even if I hadn't enjoyed my time there, I had no doubt that my job was to represent the interests of my government through open, continuous communication and compromise.

Toward that end, I accepted the Cuban government as legitimate. After all, it is a voting member of the United Nations. And more governments have diplomatic representatives resident in Havana, a leader of the developing world, than in Mexico City or Brasilia.



Vicki Huddleston, at right, and other U.S. diplomats on a balcony of the U.S. Interests Section that overlooks the “Jose Marti Open Court,” a huge outdoor amphitheater used for political rallies, five floors below. This photo was taken on June 29, 2001, when 30,000 Cubans led by President Fidel Castro rallied to protest the jailing of five Cuban agents in Florida on spying-related charges.

I also made it a rule never to personally insult or denigrate Fidel Castro. After all, if I incurred his enmity I would no longer be able to effectively represent my country.

I was honored to be the eighth principal officer sent to Havana after President Jimmy Carter reopened diplomatic relations in 1977, and both governments opened interests sections in their former embassies,

## Soon after my arrival in Havana, the miraculous rescue of a 6-year-old child in the Florida Straits put our countries on a collision course.

Next, in just three months Castro turned the overgrown and neglected area in front of the chancery into a giant outdoor

which had been closed since 1961.

President Bill Clinton and his advisers selected me to lead the U.S. Interests Section in 1999 with the expectation that my years of experience working on Cuba equipped me to improve relations. I had been deputy director and subsequently director of the Office of Cuban Affairs at the State Department from 1989 to 1993. I had also been an ambassador to Madagascar, so we hoped that title might indicate that we were serious about change. We also knew that Fidel preferred to deal with women.

But just two months after my arrival in Havana in September 1999, the miraculous rescue of a 6-year-old child in the Florida Straits put our countries on a collision course.

### The Elian Gonzalez Saga

Fleeing Cuba in an unseaworthy boat, Elian Gonzalez’s mother had tied him to an inner tube before losing her own life. Days later, he was rescued by a fisherman, taken to a Miami hospital by the Coast Guard, and then turned over to relatives who, despite his father’s pleas, refused to return him to his family in Cardenas, Cuba.

Over the next six months, the Elian saga dominated U.S.-Cuban relations, as Fidel and Raul Castro led “million man” marches demanding Elian’s immediate return. When a State Department spokesman said that the United States would hold Cuba responsible for the safety of its personnel in Havana, Fidel sent schoolchildren arrayed in their Pioneer uniforms to “protect” us. Hand in hand they surrounded the Interests Section, making the United States look like a helpless giant.



amphitheater: the Jose Marti Tribuna Abierta (open court), built to condemn the United States for allegedly “stealing Cuba’s child.”

Ironically, during the construction one of our Cuban guards found buried in the rubble a bronze plaque commemorating the dedication of the “Fourth of July Park.” We hung it on the outside wall of USINT facing the Tribuna Abierta, where a once-close friendship had dissolved into bitterness over the embargo, migration policy and Guantanamo Base.

For their part, Cuban-Americans were equally adamant that right was on their side. Not only was Elian Gonzalez entitled to remain in America; Washington had no right to send him back.

In their eyes, the boy couldn’t possibly be returned to that “prison island,” even if it was into the arms of a loving father, for he was an embodiment of themselves, their dreams and hopes. Even worse, his repatriation would be a victory for their nemesis, Fidel Castro. But in the end, Elian did return, giving Cubans a younger and more modern hero than bearded revolutionaries of the past and present.

### **A Peaceful Resolution Pays Dividends**

Meanwhile, behind the scenes my staff and I worked quietly with Ricardo Alarcon and the head of the North American division of the Cuban Foreign Ministry, Dagoberto Rodriguez. With the White House’s blessing, we agreed on a strategy that would return Elian to Cuba. USINT personnel would visit his father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez, to determine whether he had a strong bond with his son. If so, then Washington would uphold in state and federal courts the father’s right to be reunited with Elian.

The Cubans remained suspicious and uneasy. Elian and the dysfunctional relatives with whom he was living were constantly in the public eye. As some members of Congress considered introducing legislation to make the boy an American citizen, Elian’s rather unpleasant grandmothers visited him in Miami. Throughout a process that took much longer than either capital anticipated, my job was to keep relations on an even keel.

When Elian finally returned to Cuba in June 2000, Fidel Castro and his seldom-seen spouse, Dalia, joined Juan Miguel Gonzalez and his family in the front row of the Tribuna Abierta. They were there with most of the Cuban hierarchy to watch schoolchildren stage a production welcoming the boy home.

From our office balcony, my staff and I also enjoyed the spectacle, but no one acknowledged our presence five stories above.

## **Fidel Castro was not pleased with our outreach, to put it mildly; he hated my little radios.**

We were such a close and trusted enemy that Cuba’s leadership sat below without ever imagining that we might pose a danger.

In fact, our two countries are not real enemies, though it serves the interests of some people to pretend we are. The Cuban-American community continues to seek retribution for Castro’s takeover more than a half-century ago, while Havana uses U.S. sanctions as a scapegoat for its multitude of homegrown ills.

The professional relationship that we fostered with the Cubans during the Elian saga built good will. It may even have contributed to Fidel Castro’s decision to cooperate with the U.S. military at Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Base.

In early 2002, my bosses at State told me that we would begin imprisoning illegal combatants from the war in Afghanistan at Guantanamo Bay. I immediately informed Alarcon, who complained that it was clear that his government had no say in the matter. I replied that while that might be true, public objections would make many people think that Cubans were on the side of the terrorists who had perpetrated the tragic 9/11 attacks.

Castro bought the argument. He not only refrained from criticizing our actions, but ordered the Cuban military to help us ensure that the base was secure from outside attack. They even turned over a portion of Cuban airspace to U.S. air controllers.

### **Little Radios, Big Symbols**

In late 2000 my staff and I created an outreach program designed to empower the Cuban people and, particularly, the dissidents. We distributed hundreds of thousands of books and radios all over the island to libraries run by the Catholic Church, the Masons and independent journalists. We also invited dissidents into our homes so they could meet with other activists, as well as visiting members of Congress and journalists.

The most important visitor was former President Jimmy Carter, who courageously endorsed Osvaldo Paya’s Project Varela (advocating democratic political reforms) in a speech at the University of Havana. Fidel Castro and the Cuban hierarchy sitting in the front row were dismayed when he recommended that they allow a vote to change the constitution, as Project Varela called for.

Since so many Cubans had heard Carter’s words on radio and television, Fidel chose to counter them by organizing his own nationwide petition. He succeeded in making the Cuban Constitution immutable by ordering block committees to go door to

door collecting signatures of every adult in the country. But we didn't have to be successful; we simply had to do what we could to support the activists and give them hope for change.

Fidel Castro was not pleased with our outreach, to put it mildly; he hated my little radios. But Cubans loved them because for the first time in decades, they had access to information not controlled by the state. They now had a choice between tuning into Fidel's speeches, or the BBC or Voice of America. Dissidents could also listen to Radio Marti simply by taking the portable radios to a location where jamming was ineffective.

Castro demanded that we cease distributing the radios. When I refused, he retaliated by gathering some 20,000 people together at Miramar—a large public housing complex on the other side of Havana Bay—to condemn our actions. Undaunted, I attended the rally alongside the chief of the consular section and our human rights officer. Castro was so shocked that for the first time ever, he did not speak at the rally even though he was on stage.

When I returned to the office after the event, which was carried on Cuban radio and TV, prominent human rights activist Felix Bonne was waiting for me. Bonne had been a professor of engineering at the University of Havana before being fired for views incompatible with those of the Communist Party hierarchy. He was then sent to jail for writing and publishing, along with three other well-known, respected Cuban dissidents, a book titled *La Patria Es de Todos* (*The Country Is for Everyone*).

Felix began with praise and then delivered a warning. He told me that though I seemed to him like a colonel leading her troops, I had better be sure I had chosen a battle I could win. He reminded me that I must protect our bilateral relationship.

I knew that he was right. If the Cuban government closed USINT, as Fidel had threatened, we could no longer speak on behalf of the dissidents. Nor would we be able to effectively advocate for them if they were abused or jailed. So, to defuse the conflict, I lowered my profile. But we continued distributing our "little radios"—just more quietly.

## Bilateral Relations Today

My team and I successfully balanced doing things the Cuban government disliked—handing out radios and books around the country, and supporting human rights activ-

**Castro was so shocked I attended the rally that, for the first time ever, he did not speak even though he was on stage.**

ists—with maintaining a professional and productive relationship that gained Fidel Castro's cooperation with our military at Guantanamo Base. I am not sure how much longer we could

have maintained this delicate balance. But one thing is certain: it did not last long after my departure.

Although President George W. Bush had initially maintained and even expanded the Clinton measures that allowed people-to-people travel, the policy had already begun to change as Jeb Bush sought the support of the Cuban-American community for a second term as governor of Florida. My successor as principal officer was encouraged to publicly confront the Cuban government, even as the administration began to reduce travel licenses to Cuba. Hostile rhetoric from both sides increased.

The distribution of radios and books was significantly reduced when the Cuban government curtailed travel by U.S. diplomats to Havana, in response to our government's decision to restrict Cuban diplomats to within 25 miles of Washington, D.C. Then, as tensions heightened, the Cuban government jailed 75 committed human rights activists, independent journalists and trade unionist.

Bilateral relations did not begin to thaw until after the Obama administration took office in 2009, when Havana began releasing some of the human rights activists who had been detained. Currently, our relationship is constructive, and travel to Cuba by Americans exceeds the levels reached during the Clinton administration. But we have never regained the momentum that led to the Cuban Spring of 2002.

## An Amazing Job

I consider myself very fortunate to have been selected to manage our relations with Cuba in Havana 15 years ago. While leading the interests section was an adventure, and great fun, it was also frustrating and infuriating. Yet the assignment afforded me opportunities to make difficult decisions, and to make a real difference.

It also taught me—and perhaps some Cubans and Cuban-Americans, as well—that despite our fundamentally different points of view on many topics, there was no reason we could not work together to resolve some of our differences.

All in all, it was an amazing job—the best of my Foreign Service career. ■

**AFSA MEMORIAL CEREMONY**

**The Foreign Service Remembers Antoinette “Toni” Tomasek**

The Foreign Service family came together in remembrance of USAID Foreign Service officer Antoinette “Toni” Beaumont Tomasek during this year’s AFSA Memorial Ceremony on May 2 at the State Department.

A community health specialist at the USAID mission in Port-au-Prince, Ms. Tomasek died on June 26, 2013, from injuries sustained in a car accident during a medical supply delivery to a local clinic. She is survived by her husband Adam Tomasek and their two children, Amelie (7) and Alexandre (9).

After joining USAID in 2009, Ms. Tomasek was posted to Indonesia, where she was a principal author of its Global Health Initiative, which guides the work of USAID’s mission in the country.

Prior to joining the agency, she had worked on health and development issues both at home and abroad, and served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Paraguay.

AFSA President Robert J. Silverman opened the ceremony with a tribute to Ms. Tomasek and her family. He called it his solemn honor to add her name to the list of 244 others on the memorial plaques that bear witness to the many sacrifices made by members of the Foreign Service.



Facing the Armed Forces Color Guard from the Military District of Washington, AFSA President Robert J. Silverman leads the Pledge of Allegiance (above) during the AFSA Memorial Ceremony at the State Department on May 2 to honor USAID FSO Antoinette “Toni” Tomasek, whose name was added to the memorial plaques (below). Ms. Tomasek died while on duty in Haiti.

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, participating in the ceremony for the first time, spoke of Ms. Tomasek’s life and service: “No challenge was too big or too complex

for Toni, but just in case things got tough, she always kept a bowl of chocolates on her desk for her colleagues. She designed groundbreak-

*Continued on page 48*

**CALENDAR**

June 4  
12-2 p.m.  
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

June 8-13  
AFSA Road Scholar Program  
Chautauqua, N.Y.

June 11  
12-1:30 p.m.  
Luncheon: 177th A-100 Class

June 18  
4-6 p.m.  
Annual AFSA Awards Ceremony

July 2  
12-2 p.m.  
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

July 4  
Independence Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed

August 4  
2-3:30 p.m.  
AFSA Book Notes:  
*More Than Just Diplomacy*

August 6  
12-2 p.m.  
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

August 27  
3:30-5 p.m.  
Adair Lecture at  
American University:  
Ambassador Thomas Miller





## Post-Benghazi Security

I am concerned. Not so much by the world, and the events of Sept. 11—2001 and 2012—but by our institutional response to them. President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Today I worry about how the State Department’s fear of another Benghazi is impacting the Foreign Service.

I recently attended two events featuring Cameron Munter, our former ambassador to Pakistan, and Gerry Feierstein, our former ambassador to Yemen (April 7 Open Forum, on bnet: 1.usa.gov/1n40KOU; and AFSA’s March 25 event: bit.ly/AFSA Mar25).

Both presentations are worth viewing as we think about this question: *Does our collective response to Benghazi threaten to make the Service less knowledgeable about the world, less effective on the ground and, ultimately, less influential with the host country and the United States government itself?*

Earlier this spring I visited colleagues serving in Kabul and Islamabad. It had been three years since I last visited, and several more since I served there. I wanted to see current conditions and hear from members about the effect of the security environment on their professional and personal lives.

**Front Office Leadership.** In both posts I found an employee workforce that

was appreciative of the front office’s efforts to educate employees on the current threat environment, accommodate their travel and movement requests, and ensure the mission was sufficiently resourced to manage the security programs.

Employees and supervisors found the Regional Security Office’s section-specific outreach briefings especially useful in helping to develop, evaluate and prioritize their own travel requests.

**A New Normal?** At the same time, several employees expressed concern about the increasing “militarization” of our diplomatic presence, reflected in everything from the language used to describe travel (Is this mission-critical? or mission essential?) and the equipment used to do it (armored vehicles with Blue Force Trackers) to the Tactical Operations Center monitoring of employee movements.

Several senior officers wondered about the long-term effect on the Service of a generation of officers and specialists who have grown up knowing nothing other than this “new security normal.”

**Chief-of-Mission Authority.** I left both countries thinking more about the question of chief-of-mission authority. One of the effects of Benghazi seems to be increased departmental reach into what were previ-

ously COM decisions. For instance, travel requests that previously could be approved in the field now require approval from Washington’s 7th floor. The “value added” of this “non-tariff” travel barrier should be examined and better communicated to those on the ground.

**Housing.** Kabul and Islamabad are the department’s two largest overseas building projects. They include new embassy office buildings, annexes and residential housing.

While there is universal support for residential housing in Kabul, not everyone is convinced of the wisdom of on-compound housing in Islamabad.

Does it make sense from an operational and policy standpoint, as Cameron Munter asks, to introduce a “membrane” of concrete and barbed wire between the diplomats and the populations they are sent overseas to engage?

The policy of transitioning to off-compound group housing and, ultimately, on-compound housing in Islamabad is worth discussing. The security concerns may indeed outweigh professional concerns, but we need to have such a discussion—and we need to have it with AFSA, the employees’ representative, at the table.

**Training.** Since Benghazi, AFSA has focused on protecting the employee’s ability

to engage and advocated for the language and security awareness training to safely do so (see the December 2013 FSJ). The administration and Congress have rightly improved the “hard” security of our diplomatic facilities overseas. However, more needs to be done on “soft” security (i.e., engagement and training).

This year, for the first time, the State Department authorized posts to language-designate positions for personal security reasons.

Efforts are also under way to provide more Foreign Service employees with language training, especially specialists, in accordance with Benghazi Accountability Review Board recommendation #15.

AFSA is excited about the additional training capacity and possibilities offered by a new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center site in Ft. Pickett, Va. The proposed eligibility expansion and curriculum revision of the department’s signature counterterrorism course (FACT-OT-611) and the development of a new course focused on “doing diplomacy in tough places” are more steps in the right direction.

Together we will need to work through these tough questions. I look forward to engaging with you in the discussion.

*Next Month: Bidding and 360s*



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FCS VP.  
Contact: steve.morrison@trade.gov or (202) 482-9088

## A Positive Force

*Commercial Service Representative Barbara Farrar will step down from the AFSA Governing Board this summer for a new job as assignments officer. Before turning this column over to her for some parting thoughts, I know you all join me in thanking Barbara for her service and wishing her well in her new position.*

—Steve Morrison

I am honored to fill Vice President Steve Morrison's spot in this issue to thank you for electing me and allowing me to serve as the FCS representative on the AFSA Governing Board. Let

employees (including FCS) were held up for more than a year due to the impasse. Steve and I personally brought home the importance of this issue with Capitol Hill staff during AFSA's recent Advocacy Day.

Legislative affairs has been at the forefront of AFSA activity this year, and your FCS reps were actively engaged in these efforts. As we raised issues of interest to the entire Foreign Service, such as Overseas Comparability Pay, I was pleased to learn that Hill staff do understand and care about what we do. Our AFSA VP's regular

small about our new organizational structure, language training, moving, selection boards, security clearances, reviews and more.

I am happy to report that when FCS officers come to AFSA for assistance, we are usually able to help them. I hope AFSA will continue to assist members effectively and be a positive force for

change in our organization.

Serving as an AFSA rep has enabled me to make my own contribution while having an extraordinary professional development experience. Thank you again for putting your faith in me.

Please stay involved and keep making your voices heard! ■

—Barbara Farrar

**I was pleased to learn that Capitol Hill staff do understand and care about what we do. Our AFSA VP's regular contact with congressional staff has a lot to do with that.**

me take this opportunity to reflect on the highlights of the last year and, especially, to thank Steve for his hard work in representing officers' interests.

Starting with the most recent highlight, AFSA was largely responsible for breaking an impasse between the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the State Department over the vetting process of officers up for tenure and promotion. The career advancements of 1,800 Foreign Service

contact with congressional staff has a lot to do with that, as does the grassroots work of our domestic field.

Back in the building, we established a constructive dialogue with management and shared officer concerns biweekly with the Office of Foreign Service Human Capital and quarterly with our deputy director general.

Special thanks to Steve for so diligently following up on each and every question posed by officers. This year, we raised issues big and

### AFSA Welcomes First APHIS Governing Board Representative



At its April meeting, the Governing Board appointed Mark C. Prescott as the first board member to represent AFSA's newest constituency: the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service at the Department of Agriculture.

APHIS, which joined AFSA's bargaining unit in January 2013, works to safeguard the health of animals, plants and ecosystems in the United States; facilitate safe agricultural trade; ensure effective, efficient management of internationally based programs; and invest in international capacity-building through training programs abroad to enhance technical, administrative and diplomatic skills and competencies.

Mr. Prescott's current position is assistant director for international technical and regulatory capacity-building. A graduate of the University of California/Berkeley with a degree in English literature and forestry, he served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Lesotho from 1993 to 1995. He joined APHIS in the spring of 2002 as the veterinary medical officer for the state of New Hampshire and parts of Massachusetts.

In 2006, Mr. Prescott was selected as APHIS' attaché for a three-year assignment developing and negotiating new protocols for the expansion of the export of U.S. agricultural products to Japan. From 2009 to July 2013, he headed up the agency's office in Brasilia. ■

## Agreement on Ambassador Certificates

As most members recall, AFSA unveiled new guidelines for ambassadorial qualifications in February. Our goal was to craft a set of chief-of-mission guidelines that were broad, general and positive—yet specific enough to hit the main areas of expertise needed by both career and non-career nominees to be able to lead an embassy or mission effectively.

A working group of 10 former ambassadors drafted the guidelines and AFSA's Governing Board adopted them in January.

As part of this project, AFSA filed FOIA requests for nominees' "cer-

**AFSA's goal was to craft a set of chief-of-mission guidelines that were broad, general and positive, yet specific enough to hit the main areas of expertise.**

tificates of demonstrated competence"—a document required under the Foreign Service Act of 1980. The State Department's positive response to that request offered a window into this process.

We concluded that more transparency would benefit everyone involved. Publication of the certificate of demonstrated competence prior to a nominee's hearing, together with an effort

to write the certificate to address specific qualifications, would open up the process to the public and address the issue of qualifications for all nominees.

AFSA proposed to the administration that going forward—as part of the Transparency in Government initiative and a forward-looking legacy—the State Department will publish more detailed certificates online in real time. These

revised documents will draw on the AFSA guidelines to illustrate nominees' experience in the four key areas: leadership, character and proven interpersonal skills; understanding of high-level policy and operations; management; and understanding of host country or relevant international experience.

Certificates for subsequent ambassadorial nominees have, in fact, been posted online before each individual's Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing. You may find the certificates on the department's website, [www.state.gov/m/dghr/coc](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/coc). ■

—Ásgeir Sigfússon,  
Director of New Media

## FSPS Annuity Supplement: A Reminder

The Foreign Service Pension System annuity supplement can be confusing. It is a benefit payable to certain employees who retire before age 62, are in the "new" FSPS retirement system and are entitled to an immediate annuity. The purpose of the supplement is to provide a level of income before age 62 similar to that an annuitant would receive at age 62 as part of Social Security benefits.

The annuity supplement is payable from the date of retirement until the month prior to the one in which the annuitant reaches age 62. It is calculated as if the annui-

tant is 62 and fully eligible to receive SSA benefits on the day of actual retirement. The payment is subject to an annual earnings test similar to the one applied to Social Security benefits.

An employee with at least one year of FSPS service and who retires (voluntarily or involuntarily) is eligible for an immediate annuity. Employees who retire at their minimum retirement age (see table) with at least 10 years of service or employees who retire on disability or deferred retirement are not eligible for the annuity supplemental.

To calculate a retiree's

annuity, the department estimates what his or her full Social Security benefits would be. Then it calculates the amount of service under the FSPS, and reduces the estimated full Social Security benefits accordingly. For example, if an estimated Social Security benefit at age 62 is \$20,000 and the number of years under the FSPS is 20 years, the formula would be

\$20,000 divided by 40, times 20: \$10,000.

The FSPS annuity supplement is subject to an earnings test that begins after a retiree reaches the minimum

### What Is Your Minimum Retirement Age?

If you were born...	Your MRA is...
Before 1948	55 years
1948	55 years and 2 months
1949	55 years and 4 months
1950	55 years and 6 months
1951	55 years and 8 months
1952	55 years and 10 months
1953-1964	56 years
1965	56 years and 2 months
1966	56 years and 4 months
1967	56 years and 6 months
1968	56 years and 8 months
1969	56 years and 10 months
1970 or later	57 years



## How Is “When Actually Employed” Working?

AFSA receives many messages from annuitants regarding the Department of State’s When Actually Employed program. We appreciate the feedback provided by our membership about their experiences with the WAE process, and especially suggestions for its improvement.

Most responses concern the current system’s lack of clarity regarding possible opportunities and confusion as to how to get on a bureau’s WAE registry. Annuitants who have communicated with AFSA generally appear to favor a less fragmented approach than the current system.

Last August, the department’s Human Resources Service Center in Charleston launched a WAE central registry. Annuitants interested in possible WAE assignments may provide HRSC with contact information. The sign-up

process takes a phone call and a few minutes of time.

What the process does *not* include is a searchable, keyword-driven resumé or profile system like those used in the HR divisions of corporations, multilateral institutions and nongovernmental organizations everywhere.

Nor are bureaus under any obligation to utilize the HRSC list. As far as we can ascertain, the system does not create any efficiencies or reduce costs. Nor does the process do a better job of informing annuitants of bureau needs.

For all these reasons, as presently designed, the central registry does not yet function as hoped.

AFSA believes the WAE registry/hiring process ought to accomplish specific goals. For bureaus, it should ease the process of bringing on board the best available

personnel from the widest population of potential WAE candidates in a timely fashion, while minimizing operational costs.

For WAE annuitants, it should inform, provide flexibility and be as transparent and fair as possible.

To achieve these goals, AFSA recommends that HR introduce an electronically searchable, Internet-accessible CV and/or EP+ (Employee Profile Plus) database; maintain a list of available positions, including deadlines; and designate a senior officer to manage liaison with bureaus and annuitants. HR could also take on routine paperwork normally done by the bureaus.

To take on new responsibilities, including an upgrade of its IT capabilities, HR may require additional resources. As it moves toward “shared services” and an improved central registry, other bureaus

should utilize it, as well.

We appreciate that bureaus may still identify and approve candidates for positions through a process no different than that used for active-duty assignments. But in the interest of rationalization, WAE appointment authority and paperwork processing, even payroll, could become an HR function.

The department may also wish to consider centralizing the clearance process and modifying cap rules that frustrate both bureaus and annuitants. In addition, we encourage other foreign affairs agencies to introduce WAE-type programs.

AFSA recommends that annuitants continue time-honored networking with bureau coordinators, utilize RNet services, contact the HR Service Center to show interest in a centralized registry, and keep their skills sharp and resumé current. ■

retirement age. The earnings test is similar to the one applied to Social Security benefits and uses the same annual exempt amount, as required by 5 U.S.C. Section 8421a. The current exemption amount for 2014 is \$15,480 of earned income.

Your annuity supplement will be reduced by \$1 for every \$2 by which your calendar year earnings exceed the exemption amount. The reduction, termination or

reinstatement of benefits will become effective on Jan. 1 of the year following the year of income reported.

At the end of each calendar year, the department asks FSPS annuitants who have reached their minimum retirement age to submit an FSPS Annuity Supplement Report (DS-5026). To show continuing eligibility for the annuity supplement, annuitants declare their earned income for that year.

The department then determines whether the annuity supplement should be reduced or terminated. To assure noninterrupted annuity supplement payments, it is important that the DS-5026 be submitted promptly in January.

The department attempts to assure that no overpayment is included in the February annuity payment. However, if an annuitant receives excess funds before

a reduction or termination goes into effect the following year, the department will ask for repayment of this amount.

This information, along with a detailed guide to determining your earned income, can also be found on the AFSA website on the Retiree Services page, and in the resource pages of the annual *Retiree Directory*. ■

—Matt Sumrak, Associate Retiree Coordinator

Continued from page 43



Before the AFSA Memorial Ceremony, the Tomasek family and AFSA President Robert J. Silverman met with Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom and USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah. From left to right: Pres. Silverman; Administrator Shah; Marilyn Beaumont, Ms. Tomasek's mother; Adam Tomasek, Ms. Tomasek's husband; and Deputy Secretary of State Higginbottom. In front are Amelie and Alexandre, Ms. Tomasek's children.

ing programs to work directly with local organizations, and served as principal author for a new Global Health Strategy to guide our work with greater focus. 'I never saw her without a smile on her face,' one friend remembered."

Addressing Ms. Tomasek's family, Administrator Shah continued: "Over the last several months, I have heard from Toni's colleagues around the world who wanted to share their memories of her compassion, vitality and humanity. They spoke of her love of running and her wellspring of energy as she competed in ultra-marathons from Asia to North America. Her friends spoke of her deep pride in Alex and Amelie—and described how she would arrive at work in the morning

brimming with news of their swim meets. And they spoke of her generosity—how Toni learned to knit so she could make handmade gifts for her friends."

Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom also spoke, focusing on the sacrifices inherent in a Foreign Service career: "This ceremony is a poignant reminder that this vital work does not come without danger. The names on these plaques represent courageous women and men who volunteered to serve their country abroad."

Higginbottom continued: "Today, we pay tribute to a woman whose love of country, love of humanity and love of service to others led her to



Following the ceremony, Willie Beaumont, Ms. Tomasek's brother, points out her name to the children.

devote herself to aiding the poor and needy around the globe, to saving lives, to giving hope. Her commitment to helping others inspires us."

Following the ceremony, Ms. Tomasek's family members participated in a video teleconference with Ambassador Pamela White and staff members of Embassy Port-au-Prince.

"Toni is in our thoughts, every single day," Amb. White told the family. Assuring them that she spoke on behalf of every single member of the embassy staff, Amb. White declared that Ms. Tomasek had left a lasting legacy in Haiti.

You may watch a recording of the ceremony on the AFSA website at [www.afsa.org/video](http://www.afsa.org/video). ■

—Ásgeir Sigfússon, Director of New Media

### Foreign Affairs Day Reception at AFSA



On May 2, AFSA threw open its doors for the traditional Foreign Affairs Day reception. A large crowd of retirees participating in the day's activities attended, as did many active-duty members. Members of the AFSA Governing Board and professional staff welcomed the attendees, who enjoyed drinks and hors d'oeuvres. During the reception, local winners of AFSA's art and academic merit awards were honored, as were some local scholarship donors.



## USAID Honors Antoinette “Toni” Tomasek

On May 1, the United States Agency for International Development held a service to honor the life of Antoinette “Toni” Beaumont Tomasek, a former Peace Corps Volunteer and USAID Foreign Service officer who died last year while serving her country in Haiti.

Held in the main lobby of the Ronald Reagan Building, the memorial was attended by 13 of Toni’s family members and her friends and former colleagues, as well as AFSA President Robert Silverman and Acting Director General of the U.S. Foreign Service Hans Klemm.

USAID Counselor Susan Reichle opened with a tribute to Toni and her work, honoring her as a “wonderful embodiment of what USAID is all about” and challenging the audience to emulate her.

After Maria Marigliano sang the national anthem, Adam Tomasek, Toni’s husband of 12 years, rose to speak stoically of her life and how her “enduring smile” will be remembered by all.

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah also spoke, recalling Toni’s warmth and inspiring character and concluding that she would always be remembered by the “whole U.S. Foreign Service family.”

A tile bearing her name



Above, Marilyn Beaumont and Adam Tomasek help the Tomasek children to place the memorial tile for their mother on USAID’s wall of fallen officers. At left, USAID Counselor Susan Reichle opens the USAID memorial for Ms. Tomasek on May 1 at the Ronald Reagan Building.



She served as a community health specialist with an expertise in water,

sanitation and cross-cultural education, and was fluent in Spanish, Indonesian, French, Guarani and, as her husband put it, “the universal language of compassion.”

Her professional career took her across Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, garnering her a wealth of experience and making her a highly respected member of USAID at the young age of 41.

Toni joined the Foreign Service in 2009, completing her first tour as a develop-

ment leadership initiative officer in Indonesia, where she helped to establish an innovative program that offered grants to local organizations working to prevent and treat tuberculosis.

was then added to the memorial wall of fallen officers by Adam and Toni’s two children, Alexandre and Amelie. The Beaumont-Tomasek family was then presented with two memorial tribute wreaths and the condolences of a long line of bereaved guests.

Toni received a bachelor’s degree in environmental engineering from California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo, and a master’s degree in sociology from American University.

ment leadership initiative officer in Indonesia, where she helped to establish an innovative program that offered grants to local organizations working to prevent and treat tuberculosis.

Arriving in Haiti last May to begin her second tour, she quickly established herself as a valuable member of the mission, and was soon consumed with helping the Haitian people—especially children—to live better lives. Tragically, on June 26 of last year, Toni was involved in a car accident and passed away three days later from complications of the crash.

—Bret Matera,  
Editorial Intern

## AFSA USAID Survey: Taking the Pulse of USAID FSOs

Thanks to all of you who completed the recent USAID AFSA survey. This 23-question, electronic survey focused on concerns, commendations and assessments related to the USAID FSO experience in calendar year 2013.

Its purpose is to assemble a picture of the impact of recent changes in the agency, take the pulse of FSOs striving to carry out the agency's initiatives, and obtain relevant data validating current working conditions.

In editing the survey questions, I wanted to encourage as many comments and suggestions as possible. Those who provided comments added valuable depth to the raw data, helping facilitate more meaningful discussions with agency management.

We intend to present the results of the survey and collaborate on action plans for improvement with the Employee Labor Relations Office and the Human Resources and Management Bureaus. The survey results will also be discussed with USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah and Special Representative for the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review Tom Perriello to help in the formulation of USAID priorities.

### Profile of Respondents

The profile of the survey respondents closely coincides with the profile data for

the agency overall. A majority of respondents (77 percent) are assigned overseas. Fifty-one percent are male, and 49 percent are female. Approximately 50 percent of respondents have been with the agency for less than five years and are at the FS-4 and FS-3 pay levels. Almost 50 percent of respondents have minor children residing with them, and another 3 percent report that they are expecting a child.

Overall, USAID FSOs are currently trending to a younger cohort, with 56 percent of respondents 45 years old or younger. In regard to diversity, 80 percent classify themselves as Caucasian.

When compared to national civilian labor force levels, the most under-represented ethnic groups in the USAID Foreign Service are still Hispanic Americans at 6 percent (14 percent in the national labor force) and African-Americans at 8 percent (12 percent in the national labor force).

### Labor Management

Respondents consider three labor management issues to be high priorities for USAID FSOs. They are: "assure equal benefits with State" (63 percent); "improve supervisory skills of FS supervisors" (61 percent); and "increase transparency in the assignments process" (60 percent).

These issues combine to

produce a negative effect on morale and overall job satisfaction. The trend of the results suggests that these concerns will only intensify. For example, in the responses regarding the inequalities in benefits between agencies, 77 percent of those in the 18-31 age group rated the "equalizing of benefits" a high priority, compared to just 54 percent of respondents 45 and older.

Agencies and the private sector alike appear to be at or near a juncture where they need to re-evaluate past employment practices. Our survey confirms outside research suggesting that the millennial generation's "soft" needs of flexibility, transparency, collaboration, supervisor appreciation and support are now becoming top priorities for most members.

### Issue at Post

The only issue at posts that received a high "not satisfied" rating (55 percent) is "Consolidation of Administrative Services" under ICASS (International Cooperative Administration Support Services). The ICASS consolidation has had enough time to correct previously identified problems; however, USAID FSOs have yet to recognize significant benefits.

Major complaints remain regarding its high cost to USAID and the continued poor and unequal customer service in comparison to the

services that were previously provided by USAID itself.

### Support Offices

Three offices—Human Resources, Financial Management and Travel and Transportation—have now been tracked over several years.

**Human Resources.** The overall score for the Human Resources Office dropped in this survey. Its "poor" rating increased from 49 percent (2012) to 55 percent (2013). Its "good" rating dropped from 49 percent (2012) to 43 percent (2013).

Although the 2012 AFSA survey showed that hopes were rising among some that the change in the HR leadership structure in early 2013 would facilitate improvements, this survey indicates that such hopes have been dashed.

Most respondents reported that, to date, there was no improvement in responsiveness and very limited communication.

### Financial Management.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer improved its rating from last year. Respondents who consider its performance "good" rose from 48 percent (2012) to 56 percent (2013). They praised the smoothness of payments to those on ordered departure. Frustrations were expressed, however, on state tax withholding and new time-and-attendance software.

**Travel and Transportation.** Survey results for the Travel and Transportation Division did not reveal any significant change from last year. Although its “poor” rating decreased from 15 percent (2012) to 11 percent (2013), its “good” rating also decreased from 48 percent (2012) to 45 percent (2013) during the same time period.

**Staff Morale**

The agency morale rating has dropped significantly. Thirty-seven percent of respondents rated agency morale “poor” in 2012; in 2013, 47 percent of respondents rated morale “poor.” The “good/fair” rating shows a corresponding drop, from 61 percent in 2012 to 51 percent for 2013.

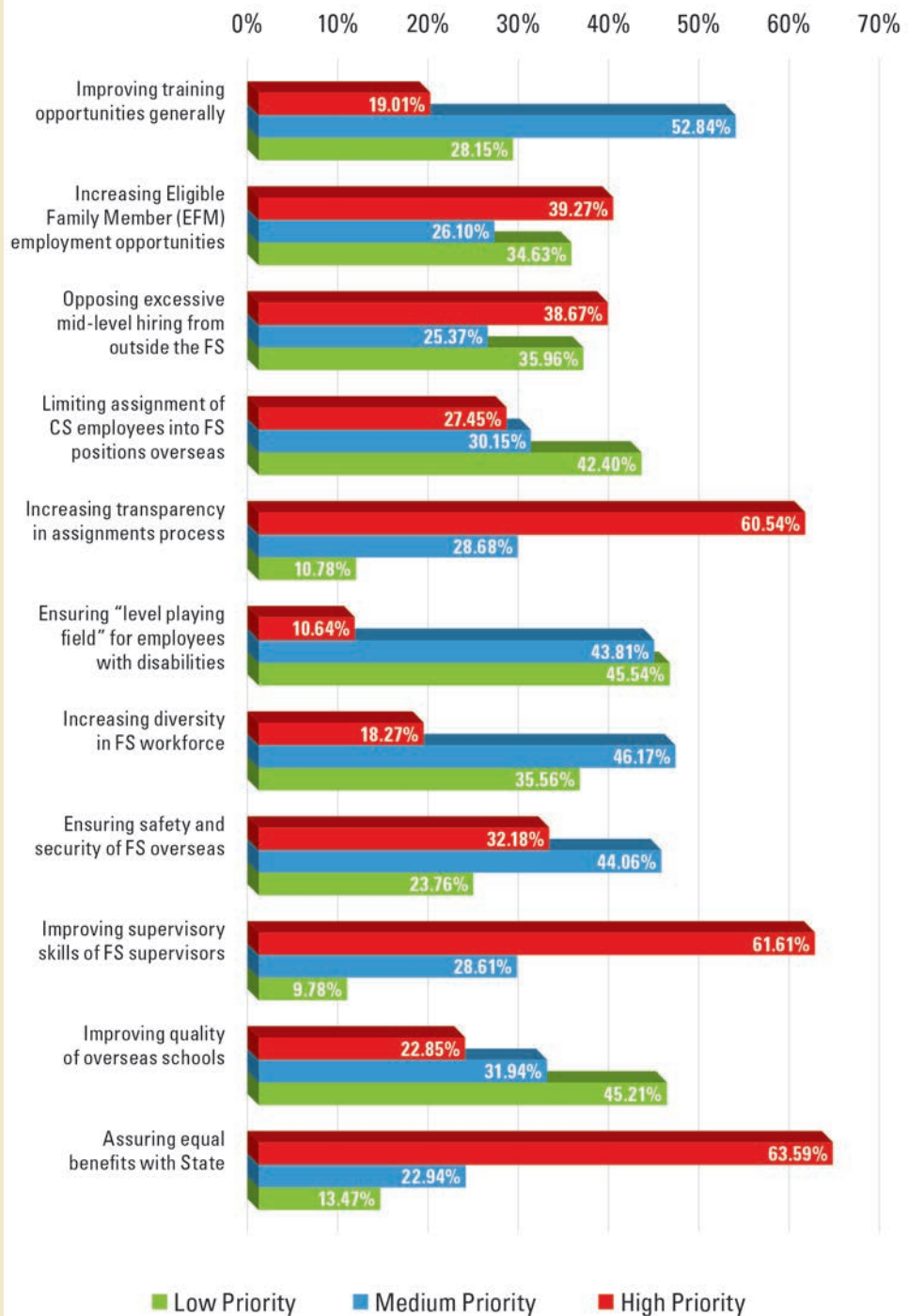
A wide range of concerns were shared by respondents, such as: tension between more seasoned USAID employees and those who have entered within the last five years; an overburdened system with too many “initiatives;” lack of transparency and support from HR; and slow encroachment by State.

In a cross-comparison between questions on the new HR leadership and agency morale, a similarly high percentage of employees (61) rated the new HR leadership “poor” and also determined that morale had dropped.

**USAID Administrator**

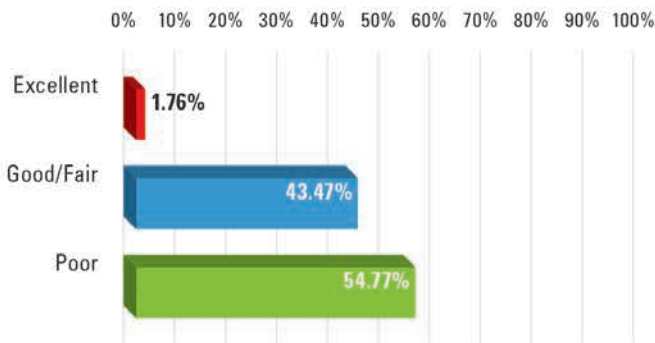
The “poor” rating for the Administrator (question 20) increased from 23 percent in

**Figure 1: Priority Rating for Selected Management Issues**

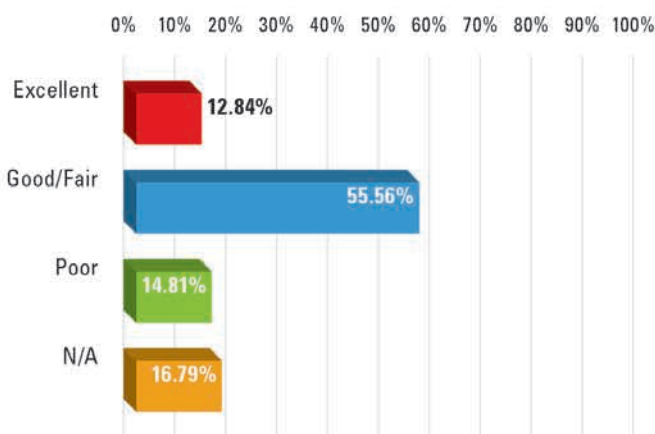


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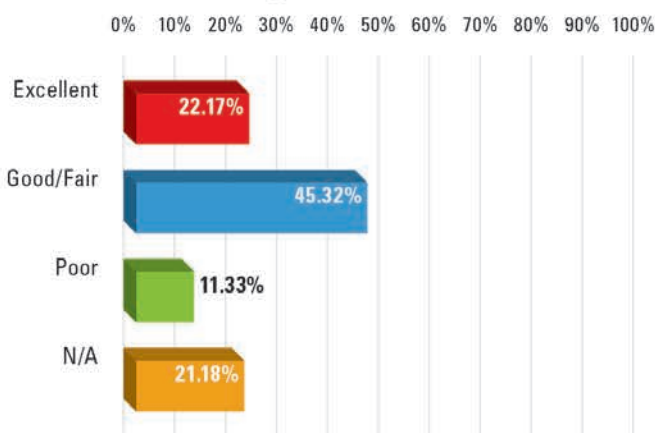
**Figure 2: Overall Rating of Services Provided by the USAID Office of Human Resources**



**Figure 3: Overall Rating of Services Provided by the USAID Office of the Chief Financial Officer (Payroll)**



**Figure 4: Overall Rating of Services Provided by the USAID Travel and Transportation Division**



2012 to 41 percent in the 2013 survey. His overall approval rating (“fair, good, excellent”) for 2013 stands at 58 percent, also a significant drop from 2012 (78 percent). This decline is disturbing and will be pointed out to his office.

Many FSOs originally liked the new initiatives. However, the prevailing sentiment now is that they are too numerous to coordinate and accurately report on, and many do not come with funding. The comments also reflect a recurring theme that work outside of Africa appears to be a lower priority for the Administrator.

**Working Conditions**

The survey indicates a significant perception that overall conditions at work are worsening (42 percent). This is not as bad as it was in 2011 (46 percent) or 2010 (55 percent); nevertheless, it is a setback since 2012, when only 36 percent thought conditions at work were deteriorating. Pay and bonus freezes, work space concerns due to consolidation and micromanagement of the field by Washington were some of the concerns highlighted this year, and are possible explanations for the increased rating.

**Concluding Analysis**

Several important issues have been illuminated in this survey.

First is the tendency for more recent employees in the workforce to have different views than their colleagues from previous

generations. The different characteristics of this new generation of workers are increasingly being discussed in the media.

In terms of numbers, the millennials are the largest generation in American history and, with USAID’s recent mass hiring, the majority of our workforce now fall into this category.

Thus, a bonus of the Development Leadership Initiative program is that USAID has a unique opportunity to be a leader in this regard, simply by virtue of its large population of millennials. If we focus on their primary concerns—such as corporate culture, work-life balance, workplace flexibility, making a difference and being appreciated—we realize that they value the same things that are important to everyone!

The difference is that millennials are more likely to voice their thoughts and to change jobs if their needs are not fulfilled. How the agency handles this will determine whether USAID emerges as a government leader in such issues as work-life balance, as well as how it fares in employee retention.

Next, after a brief upturn, morale has taken a slide back down. Comments suggest that this is related to various factors, including the sense of a disconnect with significant guidance related to HR processes, and a feeling that Washington does not understand the challenges that FSOs face daily.

Inequalities in benefits

## AFSA Leaders Meet Secretary Kerry

On April 14, AFSA leaders met with Secretary of State John Kerry to discuss AFSA priorities and areas of mutual concern.

AFSA officials began by thanking Secretary Kerry for his efforts to ensure that nearly 1,800 Foreign Service employees recommended for promotion, tenure and appointment were finally confirmed by the Senate. They noted that AFSA looks forward to working with his team to advance the nominations of those career officers still awaiting Senate confirmation to senior positions,

both overseas and in the department.

While on the subject of Congress, they reiterated AFSA's desire to achieve permanent congressional authorization of Overseas Comparability Pay. Sec. Kerry said he supported that effort.

Next, the AFSA team stressed the importance of fully funding language instruction and security awareness training, both to enhance professionalism and to keep Foreign Service employees safe overseas and protect their ability to engage with host-country contacts.

Finally, the AFSA team noted the launch of the 2014 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review; the Secretary said he welcomed AFSA's input into the conversation.

AFSA President Silverman was delighted with what he called a positive and productive meeting. He added: "AFSA looks forward to continuing our partnership

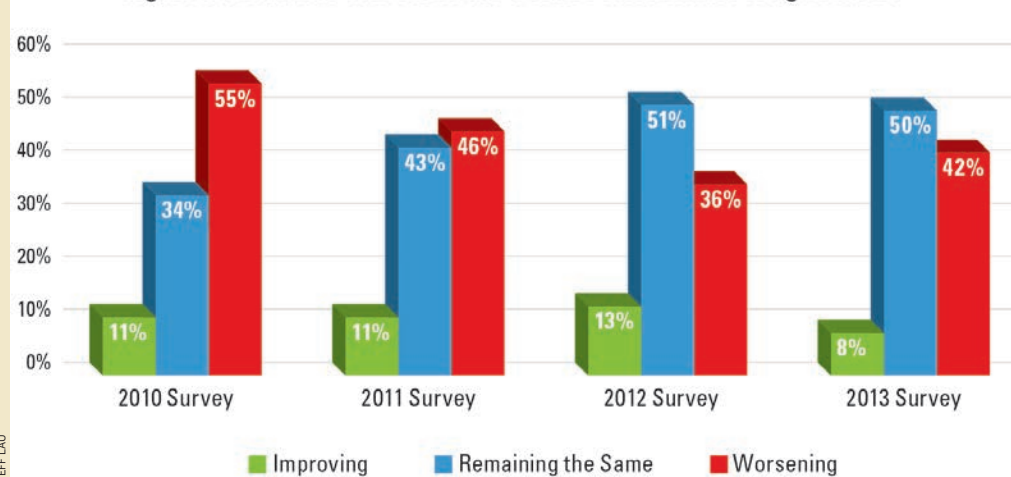


AFSA President Bob Silverman talks with Secretary of State John Kerry.

with Sec. Kerry and his senior leadership as we continue to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Foreign Service and AFSA." ■

—Julian Steiner, AFSA Staff

Figure 5: Conditions of Work for the USAID Professional Foreign Service



between USAID and State further exacerbate the problem.

There were also a significant number of complaints from FSOs overseas that the ICASS consolidation system is highly unfavorable toward

USAID needs.

Looking into this issue, we found that the worldwide ICASS surveys do not show USAID's reporting of dissatisfaction to be significant enough to trigger corrective actions. However, we will

investigate further to find out what the threshold for corrective action is.

The ICASS survey is based on a 1–5 rating scale. Generally, State customers ranked everything 4.1 or better, whereas USAID

averages came in at 3.6, Commerce at 3.5 and Agriculture at 3.8. USAID FSOs need to keep this in mind for the next ICASS survey. If anyone believes the ICASS survey needs readjusting to ensure it captures accurate USAID feedback, please send suggestions to my attention (swayne@usaid.gov).

Leadership sets the tone of any organization. As the "Voice of the Foreign Service," AFSA will continue to engage management on these issues. It is my hope that current leadership will choose to accept these results for what they are: valuable feedback on which to act to make this agency better. ■

—Sharon Wayne, AFSA USAID VP



## AFSA ON THE HILL

# Happy 90th from the Virginia General Assembly!

As part of our efforts to celebrate the 90th anniversary of AFSA and the Foreign Service, we have worked collaboratively with elected and appointed officials to educate the American public about the contributions of Foreign Service employees to national security, economic prosperity and job creation.

With almost 3,000 members of the Foreign Service domiciled in the Commonwealth of Virginia, we are proud to report that the Virginia General Assembly has passed House Joint Resolution No. 406, which was offered on Feb. 28, commending the American Foreign Service Association and honoring the Foreign Service on its 90th anniversary.

The resolution, which received bipartisan support in both the House of Delegates and Senate, was introduced by AFSA's friend and supporter, Delegate Alfonso Lopez (49th District), with the backing of 36 members of the Virginia General Assembly.

Our supporters in the Assembly were delegates Lopez, Bulova, Carr, Cole, Dance, Davis, Helsel, Herring, Hester, Hope, James, Keam, Kory, Krupicka, LeMunyon, Morrissey, Plum, Rasoul, Sickles, Simon, Stolle, Surovell, Tyler, Ware and Watts. In the Senate, we received the support of senators Barker,

Ebbin, Edwards, Favola, Garrett, Howell, Marsh, Puckett, Saslaw, Wagner and Wexton.

We are appreciative of Delegate Lopez's leadership and offer this success story as another example of how AFSA works diligently to promote public understanding of the many outstanding contributions of Foreign Service employees to American society.

## Foreign Service Day

On March 4, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez, D-N.J., introduced S. Res. 369, a resolution to designate May 22 as "United States Foreign Service Day" in recognition of the men and women who have served, or are presently serving, in the U.S. Foreign Service, and to honor those members of the Foreign Service who have given their lives in the line of duty.

Co-sponsors as of May 14 were Senators Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., Ben Cardin, D-Md., Mark Warner, D-Va., Tim Kaine, D-Va., and Richard Durbin, D-Ill.

In the House of Representatives, House Committee on Foreign Affairs member Representative Juan Vargas, D-Calif., a member of the freshman class of the 113th Congress, introduced H. Res. 528 on May 9, supporting the establishment of "United

States Foreign Service Day."

As we went to press, the measure had five co-sponsors: Rep. Alan Lowenthal, D-Calif., Rep. Karen Bass, D-Calif., Rep. Grace Meng, D-N.Y., Rep. Gregory Meeks,

D-N.Y., and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, D-Hawaii.

We will keep you updated on progress in both chambers. ■

—Javier Cuebas,  
Director of Advocacy

## "Return to Homs" Screening at AFSA



Orwa Nyrabia, producer and filmmaker, takes questions from the audience after a screening of his award-winning documentary "Return to Homs" at AFSA headquarters on April 22. The film follows two young Syrian men as their lives are upended by the brutal conflict engulfing their country. Mr. Nyrabia, a native of Homs himself, was in town for screenings of the film at FilmFest DC. The event was organized with the help of the Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

## AFSA-PDAA Partnership Event: How to Reduce the U.S. Public Diplomacy Deficit

On April 16, AFSA and the Public Diplomacy Alumni Association welcomed former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley to AFSA headquarters.

A professor and fellow at the Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication at The George Washington University, Mr. Crowley served at the Department of State from 2009 to 2011. He frequently appears as a commentator in print and on television.

After AFSA President Bob Silverman and PDAA Vice President Joe O'Connell delivered opening remarks, Crowley addressed what he calls the "say-do gap" between U.S. foreign policy rhetoric and the actions

taken. "When you put everything together, we are admired throughout the world for who we are," Crowley explained. "But the world does not like, and in many cases does not understand, what we are trying to do."

Furthermore, he observed, foreign policy decisions are often made without considering their implications for public opinion. "Just as we have lawyers at the table to weigh the legal implications of our actions, we need to have public diplomacy experts to make sure that the policy and operational benefits outweigh the public consequences of those actions."

Because public opinion is becoming increasingly important for the conduct of foreign policy in the age of



P.J. Crowley, speaking at AFSA on April 16.

social media, Crowley noted, it is necessary to engage, connect with and understand the broader public, not just world leaders.

Citing the former dean of the Harvard Kennedy School, Joseph Nye, and Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

Richard Stengel, Crowley declared: "In the 21st century, the one with the best story wins. And we do have a great story to tell."

To view the entire event online, please visit [www.afsa.org/video](http://www.afsa.org/video). ■

—Julian Steiner, AFSA Staff

### NEWS BRIEF

#### AFSA Welcomes Summer Interns

This semester, we welcome a new group of interns to help out with AFSA's operations. Our interns always make an immense contribution to our work, and we hope they learn as much from us as we do from them. Here is the summer roll call.

**Communications:** Two interns will assist the communications department. Julian Steiner will continue from the previous semester; he is a graduate student at The George Washington University. In addition, Cecilia Daizovi joins the team. She is a rising senior at Purdue University studying public relations and strategic communications. She has a strong Foreign Service connection, as her father is a political officer who recently completed his first overseas tour in the Dominican Republic.

**The Foreign Service Journal:** Aishwarya Rajee is a rising junior at Johns Hopkins University majoring in international

studies and minoring in Spanish and economics. She is originally from Princeton, N.J.

**Advocacy and Government Affairs:** Timothy Schoonoven is a junior political science major at The Master's College in Santa Clarita, Calif. Originally from Glendale, Calif., Timothy previously spent a semester as an intern for the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

**Awards:** Evan Bulman will come on board as awards intern. He is from Barrington, R.I., and is a rising junior at Bowdoin College, where he studies economics and political science. Evan was initially drawn to AFSA by his long-term interest in the Foreign Service.

**Executive Office:** Kristen Ricca is studying for a master's degree in politics at New York University, where her concentration is in international affairs. She has an undergraduate degree from James Madison University, and studied abroad in Italy. At NYU, she is a member of the Women's Foreign Policy Group and the NYU International Relations Association.

## AFSA BOOK NOTES

## The Importance of Diplomacy in the Information Age

On April 29, AFSA welcomed retired Ambassador Laurence Pope to speak about his new book, *The Demilitarization of American Diplomacy: Two Cheers for Striped Pants* (Palgrave Pivot, 2014).

Both in that volume and his prepared remarks at AFSA headquarters, Amb. Pope vividly described what he sees as the growing marginalization of the State Department and its Foreign Service.

Among several trends converging to intensify those problems, according to Pope, are the downgrading of professional diplomats in favor of non-career appointees, and the migration of policy functions to the White House and the National Security Council staff.

The ambassador also deplored the growing vogue within State for elevating networking with civic and nongovernmental actors, at the expense of dealing with nation-states.

All these trends are reflected in the 240-page report issued following the 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, which only mentions the Foreign Service a few times. Amb. Pope expressed the hope that the new QDDR process, now underway, will do a better job of empowering the career Foreign Service to deal with the world as it is, utilizing creative government-to-



Ambassador Laurence Pope, speaking at AFSA on April 29.

government diplomacy.

Following his presentation, Amb. Pope engaged in an extensive Q-and-A session

with his enthusiastic audience. He wryly noted that he had few solutions to offer, but hoped that there was value in

asking the questions.

During his 31-year Foreign Service career (1969-2000), Laurence Pope served as U.S. ambassador to Chad from 1993 to 1996 among other senior positions. From 2012 to 2013, he served as chargé d'affaires in Tripoli. He is also the author of *Letters (1694-1700) of François de Callières to the Marquis d'Huxelles* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2004).

To view the event online, please go to [www.afsa.org/video](http://www.afsa.org/video). ■

—Steven Alan Honley,  
Contributing Editor

### Revision of FAM Regulations on Public Speaking and Writing

#### NEWS BRIEF

Many members enjoy speaking and writing in a professional and personal capacity. (Have you thought about contributing to *The Foreign Service Journal*?) Developing these skills is important to an employee's professional development (see promotion precepts). AFSA is particularly interested in protecting the employee's ability to do so in a private capacity.

For more than a year AFSA has been negotiating a revision to the current Foreign Affairs Manual regulations governing public speaking and writing (3 FAM 4170). As mentioned in our 2013 Annual Report, our focus has been to accommodate the rise of social media and protect the employee's ability to publish. We have emphasized the importance of a State Department response to clearance requests within a defined period of time (30 days or less). For those items requiring interagency review, our goal is to increase transparency, communication and oversight.

We look forward to finalizing the negotiations on the FAM chapter soon—stay tuned for its release. ■





## AFSA President Speaks in Austin and New York City

On April 7, AFSA President Robert J. Silverman shared perspectives on diplomatic careers with a class of Pickering and Rangel Fellows at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin. Many of the 20-plus students expressed keen interest in the Foreign Service and other international careers.

The next day, he briefed an overflow crowd of Foreign Service retirees on AFSA priorities before delivering a talk on “Diplomatic Possibilities in the Middle East: Impacts on the Foreign Service.” In it, he declared that the United States has no choice but to stay engaged in the Middle East, despite setbacks and dangers to our Foreign Service personnel at all levels.

Silverman acknowledged



AFSA President Robert J. Silverman addresses the Texas Foreign Service Group at a luncheon in Austin on April 8.

that the Egyptian political landscape is quite complex, but that makes it all the more vital for American diplomats to engage widely with many segments of the population, so we can understand and influence developments.

A wide-ranging Q-and-A session followed.

On April 17, Silverman

briefed students at the School of General Studies at Columbia University in New York on Foreign Service careers and U.S. diplomacy. The school's dean said the program went over extremely well, citing the enthusiastic questions from students.

Both visits were part of AFSA's ongoing outreach

to “opinion leader” groups around the country, which deepens public understanding of diplomacy and development and keeps our members updated on AFSA programs and priorities. ■

—Tom Switzer, Speakers Bureau Director

## New TLG Intern Comes to Washington

As we have done every year since 1992, AFSA is collaborating with the Thursday Luncheon Group to support a minority college student during a 10-week internship at the Department of State.

One of those students, Stacy Session, later joined the Foreign Service. Another intern, Stacy Williams, is the current president of TLG and a member of the Civil Service.

This year's TLG intern, the 24th AFSA has co-sponsored,

is Jayson Douglas, a Baltimore native. A junior at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Fla., Jayson is majoring in political science with a dual minor in international affairs and public administration. An active member of the honors college, he is also president of his school's Student Government Association.

Jayson's strong interest in human rights and conflict resolution has given him a calling to become a Foreign

Service officer. Following his upcoming internship on the India desk in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, he will participate in the fall 2014 education voyage with the Semester at Sea program.

AFSA is also inaugurating a collaboration with the Hispanic Employees Council of the Foreign Affairs Agencies. Modeled on the TLG program, its goal is to support a deserving Hispanic-American college student during a

summer internship at the State Department. We look forward to introducing the first HECFAA intern in next month's issue.

AFSA greatly values our strong relationship with TLG and HECFAA. Special thanks go to their respective leaders, Stacy Williams and Francisco Palmieri, as well as the very supportive staff of the State Department's Office of Recruitment, Evaluation and Employment within the Bureau of Human Resources.

—Ásgeir Sigfússon, Director of New Media

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# THE REVAMPED SAT

## A MUCH-NEEDED OVERHAUL OR COSMETIC SURGERY?

The SAT is being overhauled. What does it mean?

BY FRANCESCA HUEMER KELLY

**I**f you're a student, a parent or even a grandparent, most likely you've encountered the SAT. For much of its century-long existence, this multiple-choice test that aims to assess readiness for higher education has been one of the keys to college.

While a student's high school grade-point average is still the most important part of the college application, colleges also use SAT results in evaluating applicants.

Once called the Scholastic Aptitude Test, then the Scholastic Assessment Test, it's now simply the SAT™. For decades a two-part (Reading and Mathematics) test, the SAT incorporated a mandatory Writing section in 2005.

Recently, the College Board, the nonprofit corporation that oversees the SAT, announced that the biggest revamp in its history will be implemented in the spring of 2016. The SAT will reflect more of what is actually being learned in America's schools, and the College Board will make

test preparation accessible to students of all income levels.

### Behind the Changes

"It is time to admit that the SAT and the ACT [American College Testing] have become far too disconnected from the work of our high schools," College Board President David Coleman has said of the planned changes.

While this statement is probably true, Coleman's inclusion of the ACT college readiness assessment test, the SAT's biggest competitor, was no accident. Detractors claim that the much-heralded SAT revamp is simply a profit-oriented response to the rapidly rising popularity of ACT.

But Coleman stresses that the restructured SAT with its increased accessibility is a game-changer in American higher education, and returns to the original mission and purpose of the SAT: to circumvent the "boarding school to Ivy League" system of college admissions that was prevalent in the

early 20th century—and which some insist still exists today.

In about 1900, professors from a dozen leading U.S. universities formed the College Entrance Examination Board (later the College Board) and developed a standardized entrance examination to level the playing field for college applicants.

The early version of the SAT required simple essay-writing, but by 1926 the College Board had adapted psychologist Carl Brigham's aptitude test for the military into a multiple-choice test for college applicants.

For years, controversy has surrounded the SAT, with opponents alleging that it is not a good predictor of college success and cannot measure important traits like creativity. The fact that a student can "prep" for the exam has also been a source of contention: rather than measuring material learned, detractors say, the SAT merely measures test-taking skills.

By 1959, SAT found itself facing a rival: ACT, a different sort of college entrance examination developed by the nonprofit American College Testing.

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*Francesca Huemer Kelly is a Foreign Service spouse and freelance writer living in Highland Park, Illinois.*

## In 2012, for the first time ever, more students chose to take the ACT than the SAT.

ACT has five sections: English, mathematics, science, reading and an optional writing portion. In 2012, for the first time ever, more students chose to take the ACT than the SAT.

### What Exactly Will Change?

The big picture on the changes is that the SAT will reflect more of what is actually being learned in America's schools, and the College Board will make test prep accessible to students of all income levels. Now to the details:

- The entire process will be more transparent. The College Board is moving away

from using obscure texts, tricky questions and unfamiliar vocabulary. This may well be tied into a desire to exercise more control over SAT prep, but it's a positive step regardless of motive.

- The writing portion will become optional, and scoring will return to its pre-2005 potential total of 1,600 rather than 2,400. Each of the two required sections, Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, and Math, will offer the traditional score range of 200-800. The optional essay score will be added separately. The optional essay will require more text-based analysis than in the past.

Some experts feel that improving the essay and making it optional at the same time sends a mixed message. And, in fact, the College Board has revealed that its member admissions officers are divided on whether the essay is a useful portion of the test.

- Vocabulary words will be more familiar, less arcane. The College Board stresses that the test will emphasize a student's interpretation of the meaning of the word in context. As they put it, "No longer will students use flashcards to memorize obscure words, only to forget them the minute they put their test pencils



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down.” Some experts feel this will result in “dumbing down” the test.

- America’s important founding documents and meaningful texts will be used as a part of every SAT exam. While the College Board’s efforts to engage students in analysis of documents such as the Declaration of Independence are laudable, this may put foreign students at a disadvantage. However, the revised SAT reading portion will also include texts from “global conversations,” using sources from Gandhi to Mandela. For Foreign Service applicants, that may be a plus. Also included will be texts from literature, the arts and science.

- The Mathematics section will be more focused, drawing from fewer math sub-genres. The College Board has renamed

the three subsections “Problem-Solving and Data Analysis,” “The Heart of Algebra” and “Passport to Advanced Math.” The focus will be on real-life math skills such as calculating percentages and ratios, along with a few representative geometry and trigonometry questions.

- Wrong answers will no longer be penalized. The ACT does not penalize for wrong answers, and now the SAT will follow suit. This means that students taking the SAT starting in 2016 should fill in all blanks, even if they don’t know the answer to a particular question.

- Free SAT test preparation will be available immediately through a joint venture with the Khan Academy. Free materials for SAT preparation have always been available, including on the

Khan Academy website, but the private educational prep companies and tutors are still the choice for those who can afford them. And that points to a big issue that the College Board seeks to address: income disparity.

Khan Academy founder Salman Khan joined with Coleman in an April press conference that made much of this initiative as a way for low-income students to access formerly out-of-reach test “prep.” But most experts believe that as long as expensive, and therefore, exclusive alternatives exist, wealthy families will continue to use them.

Still, Khan asserts that these courses will adhere to the highest standards, with the goal of being “the best thing out there—that happens to be free.”

The advertisement is divided into two main sections. The top-left section has a blue background and contains the St. Timothy's School logo, which includes the text "CHARTERED 1832" and "ST. TIMOTHY'S SCHOOL" with a decorative flourish. Next to it is the International Baccalaureate (IB) logo, which is circular and contains the letters "ib" and the text "COLEGIO DEL MUNDO • WORLD SCHOOL • ÉCOLE DU MONDE". The bottom-left section has a yellow background and contains the following text: "St. Timothy's School", "Girls Boarding and Day, Grades 9-12", "Offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program", "Ask us about our new Foreign and Public Service Merit Scholarships", "Openings available for Fall 2014", and contact information: "admis@stt.org | 410-486-7401 | www.stt.org". The right side of the advertisement features a photograph of a long, bright hallway with a wooden railing in the foreground. The ceiling is decorated with numerous colorful flags hanging from the top.

**Time Will Tell**

Is the College Board earnest in its commitment to helping students of all income levels do better both on the SAT and in their college years? The answer is a qualified yes.

“I believe that David Coleman is sincere in his attempt to construct a better SAT,” says Professor Les Perelman, a former director of writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Writing and Comparative Media Studies. His published paper, “Mass Market Writing Assessments As Bullshit,” detailed his own students’ experiments with using “made-up facts” in their SAT essays and receiving top scores.

Perelman believes an assessment test similar to the British A-levels, which gener-

**NOTE:** The 2016 changes do not affect the SAT 2 subject tests. These subject tests are a good way to demonstrate knowledge in specific subjects, such as biology or psychology, and are best taken at the same time the student is finishing up honors, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate coursework in the same subject, while knowledge is still fresh. For more information on the SAT 2 subject tests, go to [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

ally employ writing skills in a Q-and-A format, would be a much better predictor of college success than either the SAT or the ACT, however.

And that is perhaps the biggest question of all: Are these tests even necessary for college admission? After all, more than 800 colleges do not require the SAT or ACT from their applicants, and the list is growing.

As Perelman points out, “The person

who created the SAT, Carl Campbell Brigham, the secretary of the College Board in the early 20th century and a professor of psychology at Princeton, repudiated it in the 1930s.”

Bob Schaeffer, public education director for the National Center for Fair & Open Testing, believes the announced changes are merely cosmetic. “Rather than improve the measurement quality of the SAT, most of the upcoming adjustments seem



**Quite a bit, as it turns out.**

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designed to win back market share from the ACT and slow adoption of test-optional policies,” he says.

Still, several college administrators, including Harvard’s Dean of Admissions William Fitzsimmons, welcome the changes. Fitzsimmons believes they send a message that “good hard work is going to pay off.” Many others are taking a wait-and-see approach.

College of Wooster Senior Associate Director of Admissions Cathy Finks appreciates “the willingness of the College Board to keep the SAT relevant to today’s students and help it be a better predictor for higher education preparedness.” But, she adds, “As the changes have just been announced, we look forward to learning more over the coming years.”

## Resources

- College Board: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
- College Board’s dedicated website on the revamped SAT [www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity](http://www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity)
- Khan Academy: [www.khanacademy.org/sat](http://www.khanacademy.org/sat)
- Free SAT practice tests can be found online, such as at: [www.princetonreview.com/college/free-sat-practice-test.aspx](http://www.princetonreview.com/college/free-sat-practice-test.aspx)
- The National Center for Fair and Open Testing’s list of SAT-optional colleges: [www.fairtest.org/university/optional](http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional)
- “Delivering Opportunity,” March 2014 launch of SAT changes, featuring College Board President David Coleman: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSZbPjBxwMI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSZbPjBxwMI)
- “Mass-Market Writing Assessments As Bullshit,” *Writing Assessment in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of Edward M. White*, Ed. Norbert Elliot and Les Perelman (Hampton Press, 2012).

Meanwhile, Finks echoes the sentiments of most college administrators when she says, “We have found the work a student puts into their four years of high school—thus, the transcript—is the best predictor for success and retention in the Wooster classroom.”

The SAT is here for the indefinite

future, but the proposed changes do signify a realization that better assessment tools are needed. Time will tell if these changes will make a difference in the application process. In the meantime, as always, the best preparation for college is getting good grades in high school. ■

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# WHEN SCHOOL IS HARD

**What do you do when your child is struggling in school? This primer can help get you started on identifying and solving the problem.**

BY MICHELLE GRAPPO

**W**orried about your student's progress at school? Whether your child is 6 or 16, it can be difficult to know where to begin when he or she is struggling..

In the following, I outline an approach that can facilitate real

change, starting with an overview of some of the most common difficulties. The first step, however, is to have your child's hearing and vision checked. (Don't forget to include testing for color blindness.) Sometimes a new pair of glasses solves everything!

## Common Concerns

**Reading.** In the realm of academics, reading is the number-one referral concern. It is a concern not to be taken lightly, either. Researchers have found that after third grade, it becomes significantly more difficult to acquire basic reading skills.

Common problems include difficulty sounding out words and automatically recognizing common (e.g., "sight") words. In high school, comprehension is more frequently reported as a problem. In fact, comprehension may be compromised at any age if there is a deficit in basic reading skills.

If your child is receiving a reading—or any other—intervention, ask whether it is research-based and targets the child's specific weaknesses (have specific weaknesses even been identi-

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*Michelle Grappo has worked in American International and state-side private and public schools. She is a nationally certified school psychologist and now works as an educational and therapeutic consultant.*

fied?). Be wary of hodgepodge interventions by instructors who are not credentialed in the areas of reading or special education.

**Writing.** It is rare, in my experience, to receive a writing referral that is not connected with other concerns, such as reading, motor skills, speech or behavior. Writing referrals generally fall into two categories: mechanical difficulties and production difficulties.

The former could include trouble with handwriting (e.g., holding the pencil, hand fatigue, forming letters, spacing). An occupational therapist should evaluate these difficulties and develop a treatment plan for anything related to the fine motor and visual skills involved in writing, including recommending technological accommodations.

Production difficulties can consist of trouble developing ideas, putting them on paper and organizing them. Sometimes a child just needs help in the form of graphic organizers and idea generation strategies; sometimes the issue goes deeper.

**Math.** Mathematical difficulties are also typically of two types: basic calculation and problem-solving. In truth, math difficulties often stem from complex patterns of weakness in visual-spatial abilities, language development, abstract reasoning and/or memory. Interestingly, students who move frequently may seem to have a math disability, when the real issue is gaps in knowledge due to varied curriculums and timelines.

A student who struggles with basic calculation will often struggle with higher-order problem-solving, as well. Just as in reading, you have to have the fundamentals down so you can devote your cognitive energy to more advanced problems. An experienced educational or school psychologist should assess true math disabilities.





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### Non-Academic Concerns

Most schools, including international schools, also have a variety of specialists on staff, or available on an itinerant basis, who deal with non-academic concerns.

*Speech and language.* Common referral concerns, in my experience, include deafness, stuttering (e.g., disfluency), lack of vocabulary development and difficulty generating and organizing speech. Because language development is so integral to academics, it can be very beneficial to have a speech pathologist weigh in whenever a student is struggling academically. For more information, please refer to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

*Occupational therapy.* Frequently reported concerns include handwriting, visual tracking and visual-motor skills—all important to academics. Please see the American Occupational Therapy Association’s page on Children and Youth for more information.

*Behavior.* There is a wide spectrum of concerns in this area, but they tend to fall into two categories: externalizing and internalizing behaviors.

Externalizing behaviors typically involve “acting out”—children may be described as hyperactive, aggressive, defiant or “out of control.” Internalizing behaviors are those exhibited by “quiet sufferers,” who may be seen as withdrawn, inattentive, anxious or depressed, and difficult to engage.

There are a myriad of factors involved in untangling a behavior issue, from neurological (e.g., executive functioning weaknesses, injury to the brain, developmental trauma) to environmental (e.g., response to a classroom management style). Often it is a combination of factors. In cases of mild to moderate behavior difficulties that continue for more than six weeks, it is strongly advisable to engage a



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mental health professional.

Finally, whether the referral concern is academics or behavior, I strongly recommend getting a thorough evaluation by a licensed American psychologist.

**How to Proceed**

In the school setting, a working relationship with the teacher, teacher’s assistant, specialists and administration will be paramount to your child’s success. You may be at the beginning of the problem-solving process (“Why does my child seem to be reading more slowly than his peers?”). Or you may be farther down the road (“Sally hit another kid—time for our 10th meeting!”).

No matter where you are in the process, it will be essential to work with the

school—not just to solve a problem, but to get key information to better understand your child. They see him or her every day and, whether they realize it or not, will have observed what is and is not working.

Everyone is there in the best interest of the child (or so we hope), so it’s important to build an alliance conducive to cooperation. Also, you never know who your greatest ally may turn out to be.

**Step One: Building Alliances**

*Take stock of potential allies.* Perhaps you know the teacher and principal and have a good relationship with them. But do you know the school psychologist or learning specialist? The reading specialist? School counselor? Social worker? And are these individuals at your parent-teacher

meetings? Because they probably should be!

Seek out the learning specialist or special educator even if your child presents with a non-academic problem. School counselors, special educators and school psychologists all have training in behavior, social and emotional difficulties. Some have more expertise than others, but we often have nuanced and sympathetic views when kids are struggling.

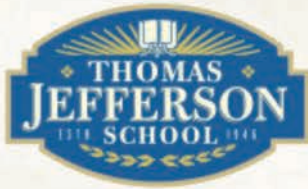
Finally, if you are in a small international school, you may find that the lower school has certain specialists that the upper school does not have. Or vice versa. You may be able to request a special consultation from one of those specialists, even if they do not technically serve your child’s grade level.

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# Barrie



## Seek out the learning specialist or special educator even if your child presents with a non-academic problem.

*Reach out, and build rapport.* How do you approach the learning specialist or counselor? Don't be shy! I recommend stopping by their office at a non-hectic time to set up an appointment. Depending on the severity of the issues, the specialist may already be involved and know about the situation.

They may invite you to meet on the spot, or ask you to return at a mutually agreeable time. Either way, be prepared to give your impression of what's happening, and let them know you would value their opinion.

If you are lucky, you will connect with someone who understands school politics and how to effectively pursue the best interest of your child. For example, there have been times when I've spoken with a child or teacher at the parent's request without mentioning that the parent had sparked my concern. On other occasions, I could conveniently arrange a meeting with the principal because I heard "through the grapevine" about a problem.

### Step Two: Preparing for Your First Meeting (Or Your Tenth)

*Recognize efforts.* Sometimes tensions are running high. The teacher seems averse to helping Tommy. Tommy seems averse to working with the teacher. The counselor is concerned about Marie's lack of interest in school. You are concerned about the school's lack of interest in Marie. And so on.

The point is, everyone must come together to resolve the issue for the sake

of the child. When approaching issues with school faculty and staff, try first to acknowledge the efforts of the school—even if you don't think it has done enough to help. For example, "Thank you, Ms. Smith, for meeting me today. I really appreciate your time." Be sure to cite any extra observations, testing or assessments performed.

*Be objective.* Do your homework and brainstorm objective language to describe your concerns—language that reflects your observations, rather than your feelings. So for example, instead of "Tommy is a mess!" it would be more helpful to say: "We have noticed that Tommy is struggling with chronic disorganization—the planner, the binder and the management of time and assignments."

Most academic skills are easier to describe objectively than behavior. But instead of "Jane is always throwing tantrums at home; she shows no respect," try: "Jane has become very defiant at home, mostly when we want compliance for basic family expectations. Last night we asked her to begin her homework, and she burst into tears and retreated to her bedroom for hours."

*Be specific and try to quantify.* Parents (and schools) must also work to identify the data points you believe are important and how you are monitoring them.

You may have observed that your high school daughter is struggling with reading, even though she is in numerous Advanced Placement classes. But what have you noticed about this struggle? For example,

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she spends excessive time on her assignments. Sometimes her comprehension has holes, as seen on pop quizzes. As a child, you noticed she struggled with sight words but could sound out words. These are all concrete and helpful observations.

*Include your child.* Consider including your middle school or high school student in meetings. Students often have amazing insights into their own problems. At the very least, including your adolescent provides them a sense of ownership over their own education.

### Step Three: What Next?

Explicitly outline how whatever plan you decide on will be monitored, and make sure everyone shares the same expectation of what follow-up will look

like. Will there be daily notes home, weekly calls?

Do not conclude a meeting without scheduling a follow-up session. Depending on the severity of the situation, this could be one week later or six. Meetings will serve to keep the situation on everyone's radar.

Sometimes nothing seems to work, however. How do you know when you have exhausted all the options at a particular school? You may wish to ask your school allies, perhaps privately, "Have we reached the end of the road? Do you think this school is the best fit for my child?" Consider their opinions carefully—if you do not agree, that is okay.

My own rule of thumb is to allow three months, depending on the issue.

Typically, if you and the school have been working diligently and there is absolutely no change after that long, it may be time to be officially "concerned."

Next, ask yourself (and your family), "Are we ready for alternatives?" It may be time to consult with an educational/therapeutic consultant or other expert who knows placements and understands learning and behavior.

Alternatives could be a summer reading remediation program or a summer camp for kids with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder or social skills deficits. Or it could mean a boarding school that caters to learning differences, or a more nurturing therapeutic school.

The options vary as widely as children, but they are out there. ■

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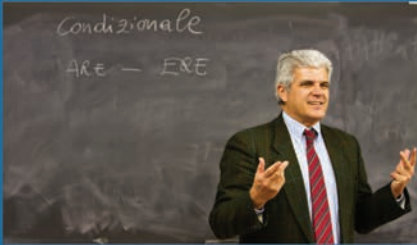
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**Elementary**

Grace Episcopal School	67	116	46/54	NA	NA	PK-5	NA	NA	NA	3	NA	Y	18,040
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**Elementary/Junior/Senior High**

Barrie School	70	340	50/50	NA	23	PK-12	Y/N	N	Limited	10	Y	NA	22,550-27,810
Hampshire Country School	67	25	All boys	100	NA	3-12	N/N	N	Y	65	N	N	51,500
Trinity Christian School	66	680	47/53	NA	1	K-12	AP	N	Limited	17	N	N	13,500

**Junior High/Senior High**

Grier School	68	300	All girls	95	50	7-12	Y/N	Y	Y	120	Y	Y	48,800
St. Anselm's Abbey School	72	248	All boys	NA	2	6-12	Y/N	N	Limited	10	Y	NA	25,000
Stoneleigh-Burnham School	69	155	All girls	71	40	7-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	100	Y	N	48,896
Thomas Jefferson School	69	91	50/50	60	30	7-12, PG	Y/N	Y	N	12	Y	N	43,500

**Senior High**

Asheville School	80	280	50/50	75	19	9-12	Y/N	Y	N	76	Y	Y	47,375
Canterbury School	65	350	60/40	70	17	9-12, PG	Y	Y	NA	80	N	Limited	50,900
Christchurch School	62	221	67/33	60	22	9-12	Y/N	Y	Y/Y	50		Limited	45,600
Portsmouth Abbey School	65	360	55/45	72	23	9-12	Y/N	N*		52	Y	N	52,730
St. Mark's School	77	350	48/52	74	21	9-12	N/N	Y	N	30	N	N	53,000
St. Timothy's School	61	165	All girls	70	20	9-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	19	Y	Limited	50,330

**Special Needs**

Glenholme School, The	63	120	65/35	95	9	5-12, PG	NA	N	Y	30	N	Y	Call
Gow School, The	60	150	96/4	89	33	7-12, PG	NA	N	Y	20	Y	Y	60,000
Landmark School	69	460	60/40	35	3	2-12, PG	NA	N	Y	25	N	N	49,200-65,500

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**Overseas**

Berlin Brandenburg International School	73	700	55/45	20	65	K-12	Y/Y	N	Y	15	Y	N	46,000*
International School Frankfurt-Rhein-Main	72	950	50/50	NA	66	PK-12	Y/Y	N		6		N	21,225
Jakarta International School	65	2,650	50/50	NA	85	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	30	Y	N	12,960-20,900
John F. Kennedy School Berlin	71	1670	50/50	NA	61	K-12	Y/N	N	Limited	15	Y	N	None
Leysin American School in Switzerland	71	330	53/47	100	75	8-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	75	Y	N	78,000**
St. Stephen's School Rome	77	278	49/51	14	64	9-12, PG	Y/Y	N	N	12	Y	N	45,225*
TASIS The American School in England	74	740	50/50	25	46	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	8	Y	N	62,000*
TASIS The American School in Switzerland	74	700	50/50	67	80	PK-7, PG	Y/Y	Limited	N	3	Y	N	83,000**

**Post-Secondary**

Florida Institute of Technology	79	9,110	73/27	30	30	B.A., B.S., M.S., Ph.D.	Y	NA	Y	3	Y	Y	45,950
New School, The	78	10,797	28/72	20	28	B.A., M.A., Cont. Edu	Y/Y	Y	N	18	Y	Y	35,890

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Stanford University Online High School	58	Accredited, diploma-granting independent school (grades 7-12). Advanced academic program. (AP and university-level courses) <a href="http://ohs.stanford.edu">ohs.stanford.edu</a>											

**Other**

Family Liaison, Office Department of State	NA	Information and resources for Foreign Service families. Contact <a href="mailto:FLOAskEducation@State.gov">FLOAskEducation@State.gov</a>											
Foreign Service Youth Foundation	73	A support network for U.S. for Foreign Service Youth worldwide.											
U.S. History Abroad	67	A series of K-8 online history made for American FSJ. Tuition reimbursement is available. Visit: <a href="http://www.ushistoryabroad.com">www.ushistoryabroad.com</a>											

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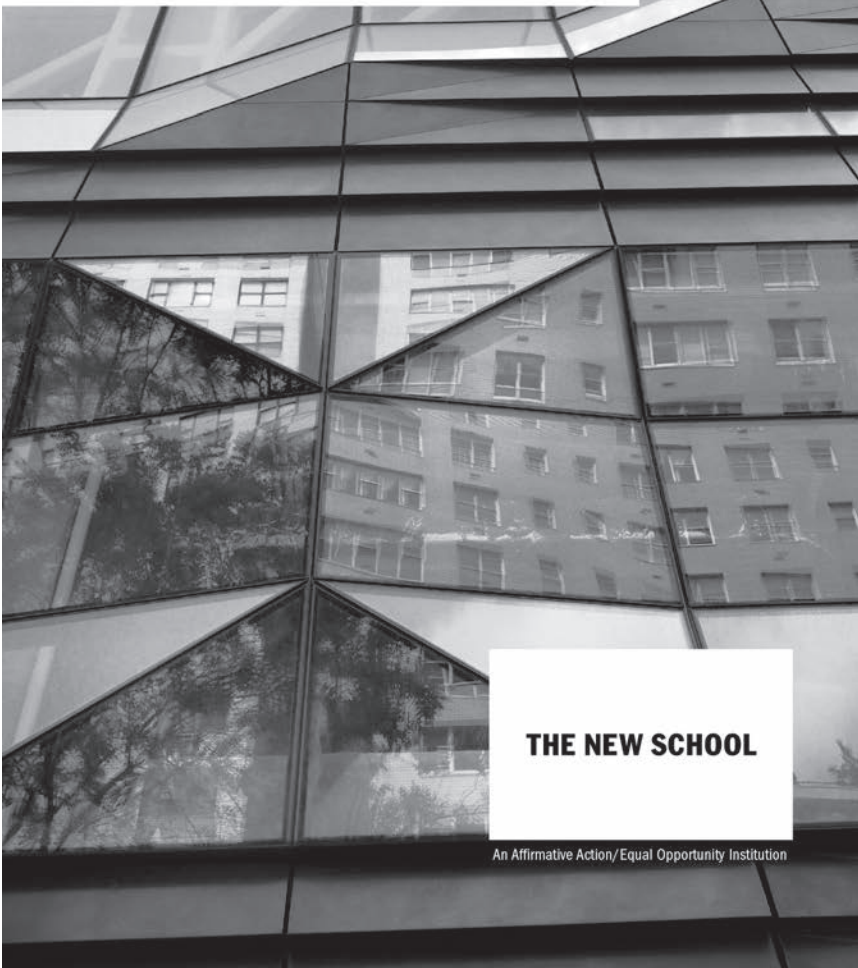


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Dec. 6, 7—register by Nov. 7

These dates are tentative.

Please note that in some countries, you must register for an SAT test date — about 10 days earlier than the above registration dates — through an international representative. Check the College Board website for more details.



**ACT (register online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org))**

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Oct. 25—register by Sept. 19

Dec. 13—register by Nov. 7

Only some of the ACT test dates offer an optional writing test. Whether you take this test depends on the requirements of the colleges you are interested in. If you are a good writer, it's advisable to take the ACT that offers the writing test.

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by Pamela Ward

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by Erin Long



## It Gets Better

### **Seriously Not All Right: Five Wars in Ten Years**

Ron Capps, Schaffner Press, 2014, \$25, hardcover, 248 pages.

REVIEWED BY  
DOUGLAS A. KONEFF

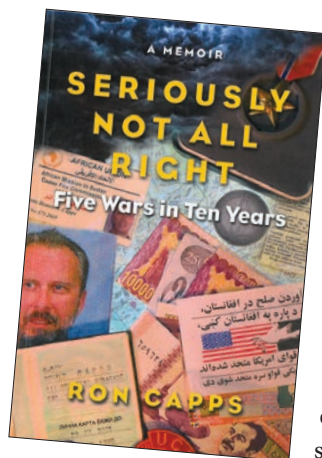
In *Seriously Not All Right: Five Wars in Ten Years*, former FSO

and Army veteran Ron Capps lays out in sometimes graphic detail his struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder over a 14-year Foreign Service career. It was a journey spent nearly exclusively in the most dangerous parts of the world, and one that nearly ended in 2005 with a pistol to his head in East Africa. As he writes, “I lost my sanity...and saw a successful career disintegrate along with a 20-year marriage.”

Capps’ journey raises two central questions. The first is, “How did he reach that point?” The answer is relevant to all of us in the Foreign Service today. A 2007 State Department survey revealed that 17 percent of FSOs serving in stressful environments acknowledged displaying some symptoms of PTSD. According to AFSA testimony before Congress the same year, the real percentage might be closer to 40 percent.

Matters have not improved since then, for more of us are serving in this type of environment than ever before: more than 1,100 last year alone. Between 2003 and 2013, the department noted a fivefold increase in FSOs serving in unaccompanied posts.

PTSD often does not develop overnight. This memoir shows us the cumulative effect of personal observations of human tragedy in Central Africa, Kosovo,



Afghanistan, Iraq and Darfur. Shifting between Army reserve intelligence assignments and Foreign Service postings, Capps constantly deals with the victims of unimaginable suffering: rape, murder, immolation.

With the exception of a single breach of the “chain of command” in Darfur that saved lives, Capps lacked the authority to stop the violence.

### **This memoir shows us the cumulative effect of personal observations of human tragedy in Central Africa, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and Darfur.**

The result was a condition that Brett Litz, a Department of Veterans Affairs psychiatrist, describes as “moral injury”: the damage a person incurs when “failing to prevent, learning about or bearing witness to acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations.”

The second question a reader might ask is, “Why did he continue taking these assignments, even after the emotional effects became apparent?” The answer is deeply complicated. Of course, military assignments (and Foreign Service assignments, for that matter) are not always a matter of choice, and Capps’ background made him a natural choice for these types of jobs.

Besides, as he notes, staff work in Washington, D.C., just did not hold his interest. Capps believed he was at his best when in the field, and whenever that option presented itself, he took it. In his own words, he “wanted to be the man.” It wasn’t until he realized he’d seen

one corpse too many that he requested medical evacuation from Darfur back to the States in May 2006. At that point, his recovery finally began.

Writing has always been an integral part of Ron’s life, and putting his gruesome visions on paper helped him control these painful memories. Culling details from dozens and dozens of notebooks filled during a career spent in violent places, he began to find peace. He went on to create the Veterans Writing Project, a nonprofit program that helps veterans, service members and their families learn to write and, through writing, begin to heal and understand.

This is not just a book for Foreign Service officers or military officers. It is for everyone who has a family member, friend or colleague who has been affected by the ravages of PTSD. It will help us understand them, and know that they really can be “All Right.”

---

*Douglas A. Koneff, a Foreign Service officer since 1993, is currently deputy principal officer in Ciudad Juarez.*

## A Shining Example of Dissent

**The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide**  
Gary J. Bass, Vintage, 2014, \$13.26/paperback, \$14.99/Kindle Edition, 528 pages.  
REVIEWED BY CLINTON S. “TAD” BROWN

When I arrived in Dhaka for my first diplomatic posting 14 years ago, I was saddled with heavy baggage that was essentially invisible to me. Specifically, I had no idea how prominent a role my government had played in Bangladesh’s struggle for independence from Pakistan—one of the 20th century’s bloodiest conflicts, which forced 10 million people

to flee into India in a span of less than one year.

Princeton professor Gary J. Bass gives us an authoritative, yet highly readable account of U.S. policy during this period in *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide*. His title references the dissent cable Archer Blood, then the U.S. consul general in Dhaka, sent to protest Washington's mute reaction to the bloodshed.

Bass focuses on the refusal of President Richard Nixon and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger to rein in Pakistani strongman General Yahya Khan, who was helping them lay the groundwork for Nixon's 1972 trip to China. The pair not only ignored Blood's analysis, but rebuffed domestic and international calls to act.

**When the injustice they witnessed—and the silence from Washington—became too much to bear, the consulate sent the first cable to use the State Department's Dissent Channel.**

Whereas Blood's own memoir, *The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh*, provides an understated chronicle of events from his consulate's perspective, Bass has been able to draw on declassified diplomatic traffic between Washington, Islamabad and New Delhi, as well as audiotapes of Nixon and Kissinger's most frank conversations.

The result is to place in even more stark relief the courage and professionalism of Archer Blood and his team.

Despite physical danger and career risk, Blood and his staff continued to provide detailed reporting of events on the ground and solid analysis of the stakes for U.S. policy throughout the war. When the injustice they witnessed—and the silence from Washington—became too much to bear, first-tour political officer Scott Butcher worked with his colleagues to draft the first cable to use the State Department's Dissent Channel (which had been created with Vietnam policy in mind).

Although he was not one to rock the boat, Blood endorsed the cable, which decried the U.S. government's "moral bankruptcy" in the face of genocide. The message attracted supporters from within the State Department and, once it leaked, from Senator Ted Kennedy and others, but it had no effect on U.S. policy. The

bloodshed continued in Bangladesh, and Blood was quietly replaced with someone considered more dependable. Although Blood eventually became deputy chief of mission in New Delhi, his Foreign Service career never recovered.

When Bass spoke at the State Department's Ralph Bunche Library in February, he implored State Department personnel to do more to honor the courage and professionalism of Blood, Butcher and their colleagues. He is more restrained in his book, which is a pity.

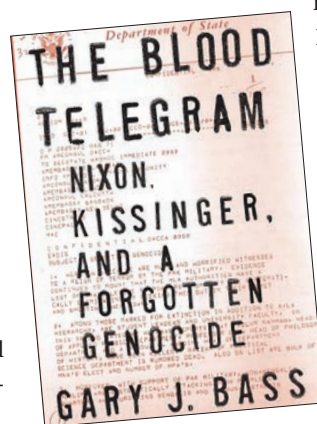
As policymakers debate the peril of over-reliance on high-tech intelligence and social media outreach, his reflections on the value of old-fashioned,

loafers-on-the-ground diplomacy would have planted the book firmly in the middle of today's foreign policy discussions.

Similarly, readers would have benefited had Bass—who has written a good deal elsewhere about humanitarian intervention and foreign policy—had shared his thoughts on this episode's relevance today. He does make passing reference to the ongoing crisis in Syria, but stops short of drawing lessons relevant to America's 21st-century diplomatic challenges.

Nevertheless, *The Blood Telegram* is an invaluable primer about a regrettably obscure period in U.S. diplomacy—and, just as important, an inspiring account of Foreign Service officers at their best. ■

*Clinton S. "Tad" Brown began his Foreign Service career in 2000 as a consular officer in Dhaka. He later served in Nairobi, Yaoundé and Kolkata, and is currently a senior watch officer in the Operations Center in Washington, D.C.*



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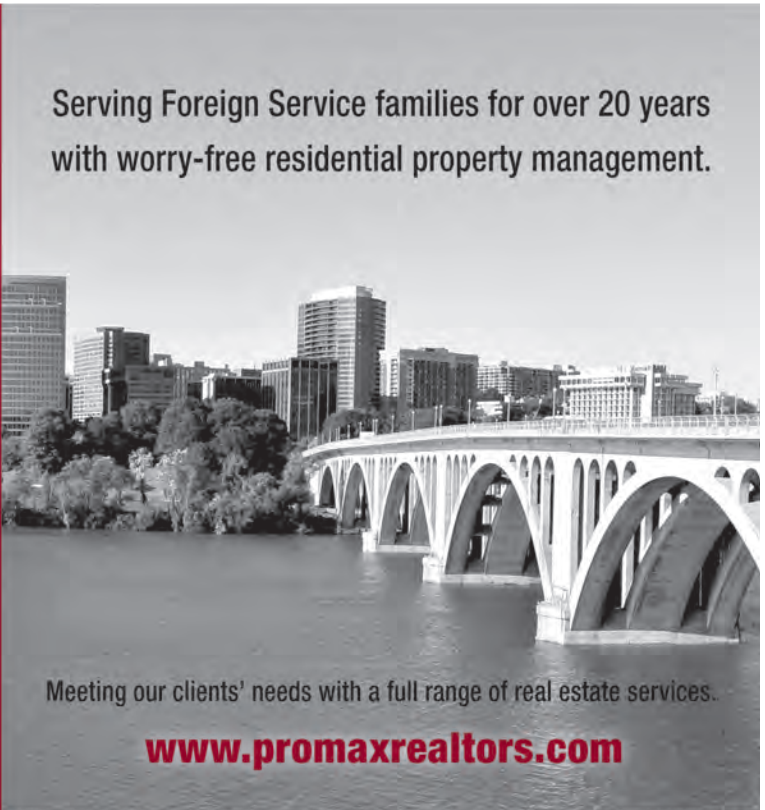
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# CALLING ALL FS AUTHORS!

The November 2014 *Foreign Service Journal* will include a list of recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors.

FS authors whose books have been published in 2013 or 2014, and have not been previously featured in the roundup, are invited to send a copy of the book, along with a press release or backgrounder on the book and author, to:

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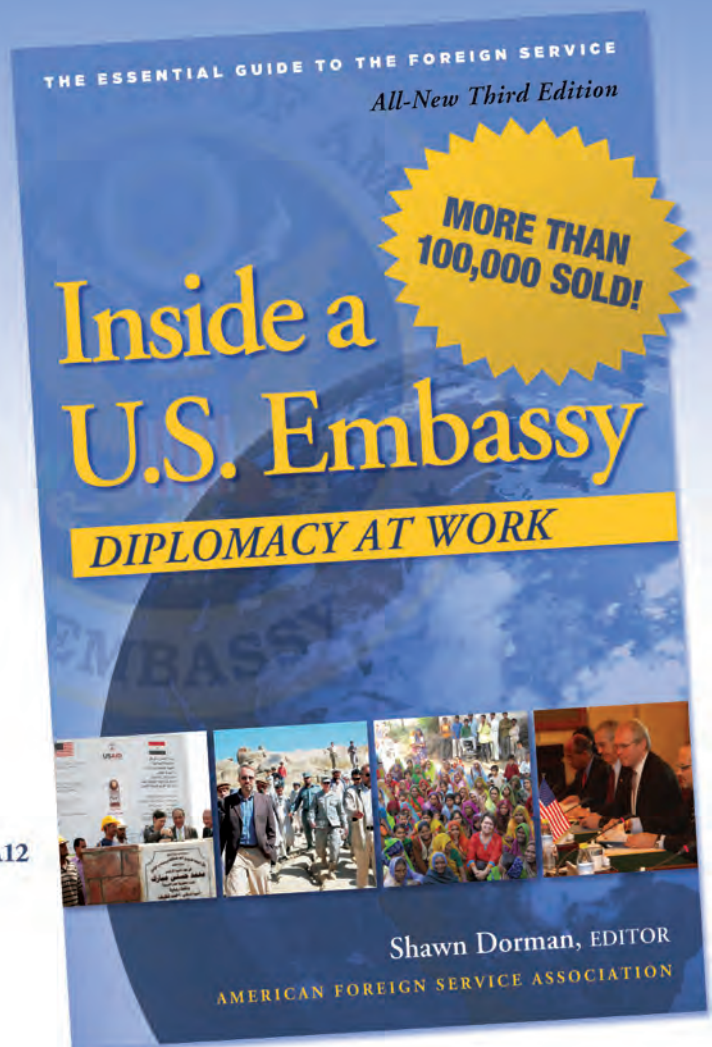
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# Shirley Temple Black: A Natural Diplomat

BY TED WILKINSON

No matter how strongly I've railed in these pages about unqualified political appointments as U.S. chiefs of mission, I want to add a footnote now to cover the unique case of Shirley Temple Black. What an ornament she was for U.S. diplomacy!

My first acquaintance with her was at the United Nations General Assembly in 1969, when she served as a public delegate with the rank of ambassador. I remember one full staff meeting when Ambassador Charles Yost, taking pride in his team of expert advisers, called for a kind of show-and-tell on the Chinese question for the benefit of the public delegates.

The question came up annually whether to admit the People's Republic of China to the U.N. to replace the exiled Chinese Nationalist government on Taiwan. Wedded to keeping the Chinese seat on the Security Council out of communist hands, the U.S. tactic was to have the issue declared an "important question" by a simple majority vote, which would then mean that the PRC could only be admitted by a two-thirds majority vote.

Shirley Temple Black listened raptly as the designated contact officers ticked off reports. An African country was succumbing to Chinese offers of long-term trade

---

*In his 35 years in the Foreign Service, Ted Wilkinson alternated between assignments in Europe and Latin America and missions to represent the United States in international organizations. President of the American Foreign Service Association from 1989 to 1991, he served as chairman of the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board from 2005 to 2011.*

deals and might defect on the "important question" vote. A European neutral had a socialist government sympathetic to China's aspirations, and might vote for admission, but wouldn't go so far as to offend the U.S. with a "no" on the "important question" vote, etc.

Summing up, Amb. Yost said it looked like we might get through another year (it turned out to be nearly the last one) of manipulating the General Assembly to avoid seating Beijing. He turned to the public delegates for comment.

Amb. Black showed no hesitation. "That was absolutely fascinating," she said. "Now I understand how we are keeping Communist China out of the U.N. Would someone please explain to me why?"

The group looked to Amb. Yost, and you could see the ripple cross his face. Even at the U.N., he was more accustomed to carrying out orders from Washington than defending the strategy behind them. The delegates listened politely as Yost did his best to put U.S. policy in the global context.

Despite her refreshing candor in delegation meetings, Amb. Black found the U.N. sessions more awesome than one might have expected. During a plenary, Amb. Yost and his deputy had to leave the chamber for consultations, and a page came to tell us that the U.S. was due to speak in 10 minutes. Mrs. Black was the only accredited U.S. representative present to deliver the prepared text.

"I can't possibly do that," she said, seizing my hand. How ironic, I thought, to be holding the hand of America's best-known actress as she fidgeted with stage fright.

Happily, one of the principals reappeared, and she didn't have to make the fearsome trip to the podium.

Mrs. Black's U.N. experience was only the beginning of a 20-year span of public service. She soon learned her way around government as chief of protocol in the Nixon administration, and impressed Secretary of State Henry Kissinger with her intelligence and discipline.

Before long she was training chiefs of mission and their wives in the ambassadorial seminar. Her assignment as President Gerald Ford's ambassador in Ghana followed and, later, she was chosen by President George H.W. Bush as ambassador to pre-partition Czechoslovakia.

When my predecessor as AFSA president, Perry Shankle, made an inspection visit to Prague, he was impressed with her enthusiasm for on-the-scene reporting. She had taken a short-term apartment rental on Wenceslas Square, where she could witness the "Velvet Revolution" as it unfolded.

After hearing Perry's report, I decided it was high time to invite Mrs. Black to join the professional association representing U.S. diplomats. I wrote to her, and was delighted when she replied: "Your letter has won me over."

It seems that Shirley Temple Black felt at home in the Foreign Service. Not only does her website claim that she was the "first-ever honorary Foreign Service officer," but she was quoted in one obituary (*Pittsburgh Gazette*, Feb. 11) as having reminisced: "If I had had my druthers, I'd have joined the Foreign Service when I was 20." ■



**T**his view of Nepal's Khumbu Khola Valley, at an elevation of about 14,500 feet, was recorded six days into the Everest Base Camp Trek my husband and I took recently. It was a beautiful day, and the colors struck me as absolutely amazing. Cholatse and Arakam are the two peaks visible; at this point Everest was still elusive. A couple of days later, we reached Base Camp and a little beyond, finally climbing to 18,513 feet at Kala Patthar. The entire hike took 11 days, and we were fortunate (in late November/early December) to have few crowds and perfect weather. I took this photograph with a Canon PowerShot S100. ■

*Janice Anderson joined the Foreign Service in 2006. Now in training for an assignment in Angola, she has served in Rwanda, India and Denmark. Her husband, Jerry, is the captain of an 800-foot commercial cargo ship that carries Christmas trees, pigs, cars, frozen food and anything else that will fit into a container back and forth from the United States mainland to Hawaii, Guam and China.*

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