

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

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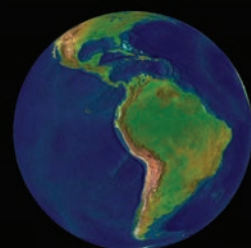
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**On the cover:** Consul General Randy Berry addresses the annual Pride Reception at Consulate General Amsterdam on July 29, 2014, during the Amsterdam Gay Pride festival. Photo: Edgar van de Burgt/U.S. Consulate General Amsterdam.

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# A Story of Foreign Service Leadership

BY ROBERT J. SILVERMAN

Advocating for the Foreign Service has taught me some lessons. Among them is this: the old saw that the Foreign Service has no constituency on Capitol Hill is wrong. We have the Virginia and Maryland delegations, with thousands of Foreign Service members. Then we have a diffuse group who know the Foreign Service somewhat and are interested, but need more information. This situation creates good storytelling opportunities.

Allow me to travel back to December 1991, when Secretary James A. Baker announced that we would open 12 new embassies in the former Soviet Union. The department offered to break assignments and move us to exotic places in Central Asia and the Caucasus. One key requirement was for economic officers to help new countries gain economic independence, and thus effective sovereignty, from Moscow.

This is the story of how the U.S. government got involved in one project, and helped international oil companies build a thousand-mile pipeline to bring Caspian oil and gas to the Mediterranean, bypassing existing Russian and Iranian pipelines and securing the independence of Azerbaijan and Georgia.

It was an improbable project when first raised with the department in January 1993. Support a pipeline that would cross the Caucasus and Taurus mountain



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

ranges, skirt the Armenia-Azerbaijan war in Nagorno-Karabakh, and connect insurgencies in Georgia and Eastern Turkey?

The initial response was a flat no. We can't get ahead of the commercial decision-making; we support multiple pipelines and won't take sides between them. Furthermore, our leadership (Strobe Talbott and Jim Collins) do not want us involved in former Soviet projects opposed by our friends in Moscow.

Several factors converged to change the Washington consensus. The project had an American commercial champion. A major regional ally, Turkey, was committed to it. A steady demand for oil helped. But former players on this issue cite one element as indispensable: Foreign Service officers who persisted in advocating for the project knowing that it was both doable and good for U.S. strategic interests.

I am talking about mostly entry- and mid-level economic officers, together with Civil Service experts, who drafted cables and memos, took assignments that involved energy issues, and had the support of their ambassadors, assistant secretaries and National Security Council senior officials. These career officers were indispensable partly because newly independent, former Soviets sought the comfort of a government-to-government relationship to enter into deals with the capitalists running our oil companies.

More generally, however, the FSOs offered then—and still offer today—a unique combination of skills. They understood the capabilities of the World Bank and IMF, the state export credit agencies

like Ex-Im and OPIC, and the banks, as well as the internal calculations of both the international companies and the local governments. They spoke with each party in his or her own language, but kept foremost in mind the strategic goals of the United States.

So in May 2006, 13 years after the idea was first raised with the department, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline began delivering Azeri oil to tankers in the Mediterranean, preventing both Russia and Iran from gaining a chokehold on Azerbaijan's economic independence. Later a parallel pipeline for Azeri gas was built, giving Georgia an alternative source of supply to Russian gas and helping preserve Georgia's independence.

Foreign Service officers and Civil Service experts were not the only U.S. government players. This was an interagency team effort, largely led by FSOs, but involving the whole of government.

My main take-away from this story has nothing to do with pipelines. (In fact, the success of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan may have led us, and others, to over-invest in pipelines as a potential foreign policy tool.) It has to do with investing in the Foreign Service as the indispensable tool, and in relying on career officials to lead efforts aimed at long-term, strategic results.

You no doubt have many stories that resonate with members of Congress and the public. Please contact AFSA as you think about ways of telling them.

Be well, stay safe and keep in touch,  
Bob

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

# Advancing Diversity and Inclusion

BY SHAWN DORMAN

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 says that the United States should have a professional Foreign Service that is representative of the American people. The 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review for the State Department and USAID echoes that call. But does the Foreign Service look like America? Not yet.

“The Foreign Service Is Too White,” Ambassadors Thomas R. Pickering and Edward J. Perkins lament in a May 18 *Washington Post* op-ed. The most recent statistics available from State’s Office of Human Resources show that as of 2012, 80 percent of State FS officers and specialists were white, 7 percent black, 5.7 percent Hispanic/Latino and 6.6 percent Asian-American. Of the total, 34.8 percent were women. In contrast, the U.S. population in 2013 was about 62 percent white, 17 percent Hispanic/Latino, 12 percent black and 5 percent Asian-American. Of the total, 51 percent were women.

Those numbers do not tell the whole story, of course. For about the last 20 years, the State Department recruitment division has prioritized bringing in more minority candidates, chiefly by working to raise awareness among underrepresented groups of the Foreign Service as a potential career path. But awareness and hiring are only the first major hurdles. The next is

retention, and the jury is still out on that.

Meanwhile, the national conversation about diversity and inclusion continues



Shawn Dorman is the editor of *The Foreign Service Journal*.

to evolve, pick up speed and gain visibility. We begin our focus with a look at the current highest-profile diversity and inclusion issue, rights for LGBT persons (a category that encompasses lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, but can include other gender identities and allies, as well). All eyes are on the Supreme Court and its imminent decision on marriage equality.

The foreign affairs agencies continue to grapple with the changing landscape, both internally for their employees and externally, as they manage and advance diversity and inclusion issues.

This spring, the State Department established a new position—Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons—and tapped FSO Randy Berry to carry the message of inclusivity both at home and abroad. Just before taking up his post in May, Mr. Berry told us about plans for the new role and the ways he’ll try to coordinate across federal agencies to ensure that the U.S. approach to the global protection of the rights of LGBT persons is consistent and focused on tangible results. Find out more in that Q&A, “Aiming for Sustainable Progress.”

In “How Far We’ve Come, How Far We Have to Go,” GLIFAA President Selim Ariturk offers his take on progress for both the group—founded in 1992 as Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies—and the issue, and challenges that remain.

Next, FSO Richmond Blake presents an overview of how the United States is working overseas to promote an LGBT-inclusive human rights agenda.

In our Speaking Out column, “Employee Plus One: Marriage and the War for Talent,” retired Ambassador Michael Guest lauds the major steps toward equality LGBT federal employees have taken, but warns that this is not the right time for State to end the Same-Sex Domestic Partners program.

Considering diversity and inclusion more broadly, FSO Lia Miller looks at two innovative programs that help bring diversity into the Foreign Service, the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship and the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program. Then Consul General Jennifer Zimdahl Galt and entry-level FSO Thao Anh Tran team up to discuss the power of mentorship to sustain that diversity into the senior ranks.

Finally, in “Making Diversity Real,” four affinity groups—Disability Action Group, Blacks In Government, Executive Women @ State and the newly established Arab-Americans in Foreign Affairs—give an overview of their work. We will feature other affinity groups in future issues of the *Journal*.

As Amb. Pickering and Amb. Perkins say in their *Washington Post* op-ed, “U.S. foreign policy is informed and improved by a wider range of experiences, understandings and outlooks. To represent America abroad and relate to the world beyond our borders, the nation needs diplomats whose family stories, language skills, religious traditions and cultural sensitivities help them to establish connections and avoid misunderstandings.”

Read on to find out more about how that’s going. ■



## Lessons of Vietnam

Thank you for the April *Journal's* look back at Vietnam. I was struck by the reference in "History Revisited" (Editor's Introduction) to an AFSA editorial of June 1975 advocating a "post mortem of the Vietnam era...to which the career Service can contribute greatly." You noted that "there is little to indicate that such an assessment was ever undertaken."

One *was* in fact undertaken, albeit in haste, in early May of 1975. It was done in response to a memorandum from the White House requesting an analysis of "The Lessons of Vietnam." I drafted it, but it reflected comments and ideas of literally dozens of FSOs and others who had served in Vietnam over many years and in many different capacities.

It was hardly a definitive study, of course, but it was an honest first attempt to look comprehensively at what had gone wrong and why.

The paper never got to the president's desk. Instead it went to Henry Kissinger (both Secretary of State and National Security Advisor at the time), along with comments from his staff. A few days later, Kissinger wrote to the president, in his own inimitable style, on the lessons of Vietnam.

Our memo (attached) was better, in my opinion.

*David Lambertson*  
*Ambassador, retired*  
*Winchester, Kansas*

(Editor's note: Look for both memos in the July-August FSJ.)

## Perceptions and Misperceptions

The April *FSJ* is outstanding. I knew that it was going to feature Vietnam, but I was not prepared for its impact. The accounts both of what befell Embassy Saigon during the 1968 Tet Offensive and

of how, in 1975, a small group of mid-level FSOs organized and then implemented the evacuation of large numbers of at-risk Vietnamese when Saigon fell drew me powerfully back into that time.

I was not in Saigon in 1968; I had left for my next post (Kinshasa) only months before the Tet Offensive. Although I was in the State Department in April 1975, I was working on the Laos desk, vividly aware of what was going on in Vietnam next door.

We may be grateful that some of these FSOs, in particular Kenneth Quinn, Parker Borg and Joseph McBride, have now had a chance to tell their stories. They acted without official orders and to some extent contrary to them. But I think they represented the Foreign Service at its finest.

The editor's introduction commends, rightly, the call of the June 1975 *Foreign Service Journal* for a "post-mortem" on the Vietnam era. I believe the function was admirably performed, later, by Robert McNamara.

As Secretary of Defense in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, he was among the chief proponents of the Vietnam War. Yet in his books—*In retrospect* (1995) and *Argument Without End* (1999)—he acknowledged, courageously, that we were "terribly wrong." His basis for saying this was a series of conferences that he was instrumental in organizing between senior American wartime leaders, diplomatic and military, and their Vietnamese counterparts, each side giving their view of the course of the war and the negotiations attempting to end it.

Two salient conclusions emerge from McNamara's presentation. One is that the war was unwinnable at any acceptable cost. The other, even more striking, is that

it was unnecessary. The respective sides had views of events and circumstances almost totally at odds with each other.

The American frame of reference was the Cold War and the need to contain communism—hence the "domino theory"—and the Vietnamese frame of reference was their experience of French colonialism. Their interest was in national independence, not spreading communism.

Could such mutual misperceptions be operating also today, in, for instance, our dealings with Iran?

*Theodore L. Lewis*

*FSO and FSR, retired*  
*Germantown, Maryland*



## A Vietnam Backstory

The *FSJ* retrospectives on the fall of Saigon were excellent reading. However, there is another backstory worth telling, which concerns advance warning to us by Vietnamese seers.

After my arrival in Saigon on March 6, 1973, my official duties included interactions with select opinion leaders who in some cases turned out to be practitioners of the occult.

First was President Nguyen Van Thieu's astrologer. In mid-1973 he told me that Thieu would be forced out of office in 1975 "after Tet." This practitioner of Chinese astrology had been consulted by Thieu before the 1967 presidential election and told Thieu he would win. For this reason, he was kept on for regular advice.

Another group of seers with whom I often met were Cao Dai Church educators in Tay Ninh Province. They organized séances led by clairvoyant young women. The "spirits" indicated that the communist conquest was imminent. The Ho

Chi Minh Trail, which moved tanks and troops south, ended near Tay Ninh. When on one occasion I showed videotapes of the Paris Peace Accords in 1973, the Cao Dai politely saw through it as an empty exercise.

One provincial leader in central Vietnam had a remarkable gift of clairvoyance. In late September 1974, he warned that I was exposing my family to grave danger. He seemed to know that my wife and two young children were in Saigon with me.

He said that an order was being prepared for my new assignment, and a message would arrive in two weeks. I asked him if the assignment was in the United States or another country.

He replied that I was going to a cold country, not the United States. Indeed, an official telegram from USIA Washington came in early October offering me direct transfer to Embassy Santiago.

This backstory on seers has a denouement. On April 30, 1975, on local radio, the Voice of America relay reported that President Duong Van Minh, aka General “Big” Minh, had surrendered to the North Vietnamese Army at Saigon’s Independence Palace. The news came to me while the cold autumn wind was blowing in southern Chile, just as the provincial seer had predicted.

*Jose Armilla*  
*FSO, retired*  
*Vienna, Virginia*

## Still Much to Learn

My compliments to Editor Shawn Dorman, the *Foreign Service Journal* staff and the contributors (most of whom I know) to the *FSJ* issue on Vietnam. Each article was uniquely informative and well written. I served in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968, both in Central Vietnam and Saigon. I have visited Vietnam several times since then and have followed closely

how the country has moved along after a period of uncertainty.

There is still much to be learned from the American experience in Vietnam and how it applies to the issues of our day.

*Gilbert H. Sheinbaum*  
*FSO, retired*  
*Vienna, Virginia*

## Connecting With AFSA

I read with great admiration retired Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft’s and AFSA President Robert J. Silverman’s letters in the April 2015 *Journal* concerning inclusion of both diversity and objectivity in selecting recipients of AFSA awards.

As a regular reader of the *Journal* since retiring in 2009, I have observed little diversity and objectivity in the award nominations or selections. Specialists and other minorities (yes, I choose this term even though it seems outdated and overused) do not seem to be included at the same rate as others.

Like many retirees, I regularly attend the State Department get-togethers—for specialists and officers—in my hometown. Some of us have gone on to establish new careers and some have continued to participate in State activities and even continue working, specialists and generalists alike. But there seems to be little or no interest in AFSA and what it does or would like to accomplish in regard to retirees. There seems to be a huge disconnect between these retirees and AFSA.

The recent AFSA survey, also in the April *FSJ*, indicated that members have a number of concerns. On retirement issues, exactly a quarter of those surveyed felt that more needed to be done. Another concern was this: “AFSA seems to be more interested in generalists’ issues rather than specialist.” AFSA needs to take action on these matters.

If AFSA is serious about supporting diversity and inclusion, it must make radical changes to its method of doing business and providing services. A few years ago I was interested in volunteering for a committee but was told by AFSA that if I didn’t live in the Washington, D.C., area it would be on me to make sure that I got to the meetings.

Earlier, I wrote an email to AFSA requesting that the organization be more responsive to those who don’t always think and live inside the Beltway. I was told that it would take time to make any changes.

I am sure changes can be made if AFSA wants to make them. Members should not be limited to what committees or meetings they can participate in just because of their location. Cost is minimal, if any, as there are several ways to videoconference (e.g., Skype).

Members, retired and active-duty, need to become more involved in how our union is communicating and doing its job, even if we are not in the Washington, D.C., area.

I am still sincerely dedicated to the principles of the Department of State. I recently signed on to the AFSA Community and have volunteered to monitor a retiree While Actually Employed group. I am aware that the community itself is new, and I look forward to being one of the monitors on this particular group.

*Juan Becerra*  
*IMO, retired*  
*Rio Rancho, New Mexico*

## Remembering Charles William Thomas

Philip Shenon begins his recent book, *A Cruel and Shocking Act: The Secret History of the Kennedy Assassination*, with a focus on the 1965 reporting from Mexico City by FSO Charles William Thomas, whose all-too-short career in the Foreign

Service has never been adequately recognized.

Thomas, then a political officer at Embassy Mexico City, believed that Lee Harvey Oswald's six-day visit to Mexico City, and his contacts with the Cuban and Soviet embassies there, only six weeks before the assassination, had potential significance that the supposedly definitive Warren Commission report had failed to probe in sufficient depth.

Out of my affection and deep respect for Charles Thomas, I'm moved to bring this new recognition of him to your readers' attention. I served with him in Haiti during my first FS assignment from 1962 to 1963 and was fortunate to have had him as my mentor.

Thomas was 37 years old when he arrived in Haiti in 1961. Port-au-Prince was his third post after Ghana-Liberia and Tangier-Morocco in Africa. As the embassy's political officer, he had the lead in reporting on the situation in Haiti, a country dominated by its radical president, Francois Duvalier. With Fidel Castro a looming threat to the Caribbean area, the United States and Haiti were thrown together in an uncomfortable and unpredictable relationship. Thomas' reporting was widely circulated and regarded as brilliant.

Indeed, Thomas was a bright, energetic officer, who was much admired and from whom much was expected. He was an expert linguist. He had served as a naval officer and fighter pilot. He had completed law school and passed the bar. To us, his colleagues, Thomas was the epitome of an American FSO: loyal, devoted and hardworking.

The news of his onward assignment to Embassy Mexico City struck us as well-deserved recognition of his talents. The subsequent news of his selection out of the Foreign Service was a shock for those

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who knew him and had worked with him. As it turned out, that ruling was a mistake attributable to the department's mis-handling of his personnel file. Sadly, it was probably a contributing factor in his decision to take his own life.

Shortly before his last day in the State Department in 1969, Thomas composed a memo to Secretary of State William Rogers, spelling out the allegations that had been made to him about Lee Harvey Oswald's Cuban contacts in Mexico City and noting that if these became public without further investigation, they could add fuel to continuing conspiracy theories and undercut the Warren Commission report.

State asked the CIA to comment on that memo and his reports. The CIA replied curtly that there was "no need for further action." The department did not follow up.

From interviews Philip Shenon conducted for a new 2014 edition of his book, he wrote in *The Washington Post* on Sept. 24, 2014, that the Kennedy assassination conspiracy theories are still alive half a century later and that even members of the Warren Commission staff have come around to believing that Oswald may have been manipulated, even if he acted alone.

Thomas' warning to Sec. Rogers was prophetic, and it is surely time for the Foreign Service to recognize his heroic persistence and loyalty. We who served with Charles Thomas remember him as a loyal and brilliant colleague, an FSO who deserves to be remembered by the newer generations of the Foreign Service as a devoted American public servant. ■

*Ralph C. (Robin) Porter III*

*FSO, retired*

*Wickford, Rhode Island*

## Eyes on America's LGBT Ambassadors

On March 24, the six current U.S. ambassadors who are openly gay participated in a panel discussion at the Newseum, co-hosted by the Human Rights Campaign, the Harvey Milk Foundation and the affinity group GLIFAA.

The six are John Berry, ambassador to Australia; James “Wally” Brewster, ambassador to the Dominican Republic; Rufus Gifford, ambassador to Denmark; Daniel Baer, ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; James Costos, ambassador to Spain and Andorra; and Ted Osius, a Foreign Service officer and ambassador to Vietnam.

Also attending were GLIFAA President Selim Ariturk and newly appointed Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons, Randy Berry, both FSOs.

Ambassador Osius, the only career diplomat among the ambassadors, discussed how far the State Department has come since he helped found GLIFAA in 1992. At that time, employees ran the risk of losing their security clearance, and ultimately their jobs, if they were discovered to be gay.

“Just a few decades ago, if you worked in the Foreign Service, being gay was your most closely guarded secret,” HRC President Chad Griffin commented. “Today there is no clearer sign of our progress than the fact that there is not one, not two, but six openly gay ambassadors serving this country overseas.”

Amb. John Berry argued that being out and visible is extremely important, and



The six current U.S. ambassadors who are openly gay, at the Newseum panel discussion on March 24 in Washington, D.C. From left, John Berry, James “Wally” Brewster, Rufus Gifford, Daniel Baer, James Costos and Ted Osius.

making sure people in other countries meet and interact with openly gay officials can help move equality issues forward. Amb. Gifford agreed: “Every personal story matters...to be able to talk about who we are, and give a slightly more nuanced version of what it means to be American.”

Amb. Brewster addressed some of the challenges he faced in moving to the very socially conservative Dominican Republic: “You don’t address the people who make the bad comments. All you do is talk about love. ... When you talk about that, the goodness of the people comes out. And it became a social conversation that was needed in the Caribbean.”

Though the department has come a long way, there have never been ambassadors who “represent the ‘L,’ the ‘B’ and the ‘T’ in LGBT. At last year’s GLIFAA Pride event, Secretary of State John Kerry reaffirmed, “I’m working hard to ensure that by the end of my tenure, we will have lesbian, bisexual, and transgender ambassadors in our ranks, as well.”

Amb. Baer perhaps summed it up best: “There is an arc that bends toward justice, but it takes a lot of work to bend it.”

—Shannon Mizzi, *Editorial Intern*

## State—One of the “Best” Places to Work

The State Department was the only federal agency to rank in the top 50 of “best employers” in a new survey by Statista.com released by *Forbes* magazine on March 25.

To create this list, *Forbes* asked more than 20,000 workers from different fields—large companies, nonprofit institutions, government agencies—a simple

question: “On a scale of 0-10, how likely would you be to recommend your employer to someone else?”

Google took the top spot on this ranking—no surprise, certainly. The State Department was the highest-ranking federal agency, coming in 34th. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service ranked next highest at #60.

The Partnership for Public Service publishes its own list each December: “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government.” The views of more than 392,700 federal employees are included in this survey, which ranks more than 389 federal organizations. The State Department also fared well in this survey, ranking 3rd among large-sized agencies for 2014.

The Partnership for Public Service’s data collection and its analysis of that data is impressively thorough. The new *Forbes* list, not so much. *Forbes* notes, for example, that the State Department has 9,761 employees—a number that is clearly inaccurate. The Partnership for Public Service reports nearly 24,000 State employees.

—Debra Blome, *Associate Editor*

## Time to Recognize “The Great Crime”?

April 24 marked the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the period (1915-1923) during which 1.5 million Armenians were systematically displaced and killed under Ottoman rule. Of the remaining population, 90 percent fled to other countries.

The Armenian diaspora, a large part of which lives in the United States, continues to commemorate the trauma of “Medz Yeghern,” the “Great Crime.” Although the genocide is now an acknowledged historical fact, only 25 countries recognize the events of 1915-1923 as genocide. Most—including the United States—do not officially use the term, in deference to Turkey.

Many advocates have expressed hope that the 100th anniversary year will be a turning point. In April, Pope Francis became the first Pope to publicly recognize “the first genocide of the 20th century.” In response, Turkey recalled its Vatican-based envoy, who stated: “I find the Pope’s statement immoral, and can’t reconcile it with basic Christian values.”

Germany, Austria and the European Parliament all reversed their positions of non-recognition in April. Russia and France have long recognized the genocide, and Presidents Putin and Hollande attended the anniversary ceremonies in Yerevan.

From the United States, reality TV star and pop culture fixture Kim Kardashian, who is of Armenian descent and has publicly called for genocide recognition for several years, visited Yerevan for the anniversary. Her trip was widely covered by mainstream media outlets and documented for her reality television show, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*.

Although Kardashian was criticized for her use of, perhaps overly enthusiastic,

## Contemporary Quote

“This administration is under no illusions about the continued barriers to internationally recognized freedoms that remain for the Cuban people, nor are we under illusions about the nature of the Cuban government. When we sat down with our counterparts in Havana, we were clear that our governments have both shared interests and sharp differences. From mail service to counternarcotics to oil spill mitigation, we owe our people a diplomatic relationship that allows an effective pursuit of their interests. On these types of practical issues, we agreed to continue dialogue and increase cooperation.”

—Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roberta S. Jacobson speaking before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Feb. 3.



President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan speaks at the National Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Centennial Ecumenical Service at Washington National Cathedral on May 7 in Washington, D.C.

exclamation points in her anniversary tweets, millions of Twitter and Instagram users heard about the Armenian genocide, probably for the first time.

In Washington, President Barack Obama issued a statement of sympathy, avoiding use of the term genocide. Armenia’s Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian spoke at the National Press Club on May 7 as a member of President Serzh Sargsyan’s delegation to the commemorative events in Washington that drew thousands from the U.S., Canada and elsewhere.

In connection with the anniversary, the Helsinki Commission held a hearing on the effects of continued U.S. non-recognition

of the genocide on April 23, which *The Foreign Service Journal* attended. Chaired by Rep. Chris H. Smith (R-N.J.), the hearing featured testimony from both academics and representatives from the Armenian National Committee of America, the Armenian Assembly of America and the Genocide Education Project.

Mentioned at the hearing was the fact that, as a senator, Pres. Obama advocated for recognition of the Armenian genocide and criticized those who refused to use the term. All five witnesses, as well as Chairman Smith, urged official recognition by the United States.

Van Krikorian of the AAA noted that many Turks are increasingly interested in investigating their national past, but “it is still dangerous to advocate for genocide recognition inside Turkey, and journalists who do so have been imprisoned, tortured and even assassinated.”

Other panelists emphasized that U.S. non-recognition is “hypocritical,” and that the government cannot continue to uphold American values only when convenient. They maintain that recognition would make it more difficult for the Turkish government to suppress free speech and obscure historical truths.

—Shannon Mizzi, *Editorial Intern*

## 50 Years Ago

### On Russian Nature

Among the major peoples of the earth, the Russians have always been insufficiently understood by the rulers and publics of other countries. Yet if we are to live in peace with him, we must learn to understand his nature, which is both virtuous and unchaste, is rich in imagination and vision but short on the organizational talents so essential to 20th-century life.

It is not accidental that those who try to probe the Russian soul have persistently noted one of its ingredients to be an inbred suspicion toward other persons' principles and motivations. Mistrust comes easily to a community which has so often been forced to defend itself against its neighbors and even more distant powers. ... Centuries of contact with all kinds of enemies have made the Russians a people able to detect hidden meanings and intentions with great skill.

To the Russian, any opportunity to procure authentic information is as valuable as money in other societies. Questions asked of foreigners are searching and penetrating. They reveal both a genuine desire to be informed and a process of serious thinking.

—From "The Russian Nature," by James A. Ramsey, FSJ, June 1965.

### USAID Responds to Nepal Earthquake Crisis

The United States Agency for International Development deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team to Nepal, India and Bangladesh following the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that devastated the region on April 25.

The team comprised more than 130 of USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance humanitarian specialists and urban search and rescue personnel from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and the Los Angeles County



COURTESY OF USAID

The U.S. Disaster Assistance Response Team works with canine rescue units to locate survivors in Nepal.

Fire Department. As of press time, the death toll from the quake stood at more than 8,000.

The DART arrived in Nepal on April 29 and began addressing immediate concerns including the critical need for



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shelter. It airlifted 700 rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting to benefit an estimated 7,000 households, or up to 35,000 people. The International Organization for Migration, a USAID/OFDA partner, distributed the plastic sheeting along with other supplies such as rope, wire and basic hand tools.

Search-and-rescue teams coordinated efforts with the government of Nepal and other international USDAR teams to conduct initial damage assessments. They worked with canine rescue units to search for survivors in the rubble of collapsed buildings.

According to an April 29 *Time* article covering USAID responders in Nepal, the

dogs are trained to track the scent of living people in 'high-probability' locations.

In addition, USAID/OFDA contributed \$10 million in humanitarian assistance to address earthquake response and recovery efforts. USAID's Office of Food for Peace contributed \$2.5 million to the operation for the purchase of 1,390 metric tons of rice in support of the United Nations World Food Program's efforts to distribute provisions in the area.

"We're mobilizing emergency shelter for about 35,000 people," said Director of USAID/OFDA Jeremy Konyndyk in an April 27 interview with MSNBC. "We're working with those search-and-rescue teams and we're also talking with the U.S.

military about what assets we might be able to bring in."

For donations and to learn the best ways to help the relief efforts, USAID ([www.usaid.gov/nepal-earthquake](http://www.usaid.gov/nepal-earthquake)) has posted a full list of organizations provided by the Center for International Disaster Information ([www.cidi.org/nepal](http://www.cidi.org/nepal)). Monetary donations to any of these organizations are encouraged.

For most immediate updates, visit the USAID website ([www.USAID.gov](http://www.USAID.gov)) or Twitter page ([www.twitter.com/usaid](http://www.twitter.com/usaid)). ■

—Brittany DeLong, Assistant Editor

## SITE OF THE MONTH: State Department Office of the Historian

The State Department's Office of the Historian (<http://history.state.gov>) is digitizing its multivolume series *Foreign Relations of the United States*. Each volume in the series is a huge collection of U.S. government foreign affairs documents. These volumes "present the official documentary historical record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity."

The series covers events beginning in 1861. Today there are 450 individual volumes, with 11 planned for release in 2015. As of May, 240 of the volumes were available online through the website. Users may conduct full text searches by both topic and presidential administration. The digitization project should be complete by 2018. Volumes covering the last 65 years (164) are also available to download as ebooks.

The most recent online release of a *FRUS* volume relates to the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, and captures a collection of notes and letters from citizens and foreign governments around the world responding to his death on April 14, 1865.

The volumes offer diplomats, scholars and the public unprecedented access to fascinating unclassified and declassified primary source materials tracing the history of the United States' international engagement.

Another terrific resource is a database that lists past principal officers and chiefs of mission and records of the travels of presidents and Secretaries of State. Country profiles include detailed histories of American diplomatic relations with each, and the site also facilitates access to the diplomatic records of these nations where possible.

A unique tool for public education at home and abroad, the website has abundant resources for students and teachers. The ebook versions of the *FRUS* series are available free of charge, and the Historian's Office also creates curriculum supplements for teaching middle and high school students about diplomacy.

Run by Department of State Historian Dr. Stephen Randolph and a team of professional historians, the Historian's Office is responsible for conducting research for officials from the State Department and other agencies, evaluating historical lessons and providing the background information necessary to make today's key foreign relations decisions.

—Editorial Intern Shannon Mizzi and Editor Shawn Dorman





# Employee Plus One: Marriage and the War for Talent

BY MICHAEL GUEST

In 2001, I was sworn in as our country's first Senate-confirmed, openly gay ambassador. Six years later, I pulled the plug on my Foreign Service career, in protest of the State Department's refusal to remedy policies that discriminated against gay and lesbian Foreign Service families stationed abroad.

Those twin milestones seem like ancient history now. Today partnered gay and lesbian employees are covered by the same transfer, housing, training and other support policies their straight married colleagues have long enjoyed. The policy changes pioneered at State have become a template for similar accommodations across the federal foreign affairs agency community.

In addition, six openly gay ambassadors, one a career officer, have been tapped by the Obama administration to serve our country. A new special envoy position has been created to strengthen how we integrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues into our broader human rights policy goals.

Yet these appointments are less remarkable than the paucity of organized



*Michael Guest, a Foreign Service officer for 26 years, served as ambassador to Romania from 2001 to 2004. After retiring in 2007, he co-founded and continues to advise the Council for Global Equality, a coalition of human rights and LGBT advocacy organizations that seek a strong and consistent U.S. voice on LGBT human and civil rights abroad.*

## Department managers have proposed an effective end to the same-sex domestic partner program.

public or congressional opposition to the notion that LGBT human rights matter, or that a gay person can represent our country abroad.

### An Easy Write?

When the *Journal* sought my assessment of how matters have changed for State's LGBT employees, I expected it would be a breeze to write. Our country is changing rapidly on these matters, after all, and Foreign Service policies have changed, as well.

But as we enter the Obama administration's home stretch, department managers have proposed an effective end to the same-sex domestic partner program. Such a move would adversely affect LGBT employee families and careers, blemishing in turn both the administration's and Secretary of State John Kerry's distinguished record of support for LGBT-fair policies.

Ending partners' equal access to benefits would also have negative repercussions for State's Foreign Service mobility needs. It would drop State behind many corporate and multinational employers, too, and set back innovation in how the department retains its talent, gay or straight.

Let me explain.

### The Negative LGBT Impact

On its face, the argument for ending the partner program is simple. Marriage equality now exists in 37 states, and a Supreme Court ruling expected soon, perhaps even by the time this article is published, may institutionalize that equality nationwide.

But that optimism ignores the situation in many of the countries to which LGBT talent and their families are assigned. Given that navigating foreign cultures is bread-and-butter to the department's many missions, State should take greater note of that reality.

From my work with the Council for Global Equality ([www.globalequality.org](http://www.globalequality.org)), I naturally see value in having openly LGBT personnel representing our country abroad, particularly in countries where fairness is little understood. Personally, I also support marriage equality and believe strongly in the public and community commitment that marriage represents. My own marriage is perhaps the best decision I ever made.

Still, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender friends and colleagues at State and other foreign affairs agencies are keenly aware that overseas postings render decisions on whether to marry their partners complex. They are entitled

## A marriage-for-benefits policy could complicate assignment of gay Foreign Service personnel to a range of gay-unfriendly places.

to that same understanding by their employer.

My involvement with the Council attunes me daily to dangers in many places around the world that often attach to LGBT individuals. In some cases, the partners of lesbian and gay foreign affairs agency employees hail from countries where these threats are grave. For them, an act of marriage—entirely traceable in today’s Internet age—could carry negative consequences, especially for families back home.

And just as tabloids already have maliciously exposed the identity of gay people in many homophobic countries, surely they could do the same for our own personnel. In that respect, the public aspects of a marriage-for-benefits policy could complicate assignment of gay Foreign Service personnel to a range of gay-unfriendly places. It also would seem to counter the department’s own interest in assuring worldwide availability of talent.

No doubt State will pledge to implement any change in policy flexibly, to account for special needs. But once out of the bottle, the genie cannot be put back in. A recorded marriage may be fine in Paris. But in today’s world, might open-source knowledge of that marriage impede an onward assignment elsewhere?

### Wider Understanding of Diversity

What I find far more troubling about the department’s trial balloon, however, is what it indicates about State’s blind



Michael Guest on the Jan. 29, 2008, cover of the nation’s leading LGBT newsmagazine, *The Advocate*.

spot in addressing the needs of unmarried employees and their families in the multidimensional workforce its “Strong State” agenda is presumably meant to support.

To be blunt, tying benefits to marriage, rather than to the employee, seems a surprising throwback to ... you guessed it, the administration of President George W. Bush. State leaders during his presidency consistently turned back all requests to address LGBT family needs by citing the supposed limitations of the Defense of Marriage Act.

Citing that law, of course, was a red herring. Family support is as much a prima facie need for LGBT employees

as it is for our straight colleagues, and including partners in the Foreign Affairs Manual’s already-expansive definition of “eligible family members” was an easy and obvious fix.

The “eligible family members” solution was one of the recommendations offered by President-elect Barack Obama’s State Department transition team, on which I served. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton’s early adoption of it led to one of the most striking innovations of the administration’s 2009 domestic partner program: tacit recognition that the department could base the provision of employee benefits on a broad definition of family, rather than on marital status.

Six years later, why would the Obama administration retreat to a retrogressive position—again pinning provision of Foreign Service benefits to marriage, rather than embracing, without qualification, all families that accompany our employees abroad?

### Putting Families First

Instead of ending the partner program, logic would call for its expansion to include all unmarried couples, gay and straight alike.

Since leaving our Service, I’ve been privileged to work with, and learn from, talent-support professionals from some of America’s best corporations. Most understand that their job is as much about retaining talent as it is about offering a solid, entry-level job. Innovative policies to match what their companies’ best employees—single or otherwise—need and expect is a preoccupation, not an incidental concern.

Great companies pull out stops to make themselves employers of choice. They stay out of the marriage license business, opting instead for “employee

plus one” insurance and other benefits policies. If the department isn’t willing to modernize its policies (or is just too cheap to do so), it may as well drop any pretense of being serious about winning the so-called “war for talent.”

An even-handed partner support policy—accessible by all, without respect to marriage—could be based on the relationship affidavit requirements contained in State’s current same-sex domestic partner program. It would reflect service equities across our institution and community. It would be fair, and would help State assure talent mobility to meet mission-based needs. It also would reflect the realities of today’s workforce expectations, in a highly competitive international job market.

Given the strains that overseas service inherently places on newly minted, not-yet-ready-to-marry couples, unmarried employees don’t need shotgun weddings. They need employment mechanisms to support their developing relationships, and to help lead toward stable marriages. Given the fact that unmarried LGBT employee families already can receive partnership benefits, surely legal issues can be resolved to extend those same benefits to all unmarried employees.

## Watching Each Other’s Back

A decade ago, when I was fighting the department’s old, exclusionary policies, I became disillusioned at how little support I received from our Bureau of Human Resources. Indeed, the director general at the time told me flatly and definitively that nothing could be done.

Ultimately, that proved not to be the case.

When Senator Obama’s campaign called me in 2008 and pledged to fix these policies, I began a journey toward believ-

ing again in the political process. By the time I sat down with Secretary-designate Clinton, during the transition, to discuss the discriminatory impact of State’s practices, her leadership in seeking a policy reversal seemed certain. She and Cheryl Mills, her talented chief of staff, approached gender and LGBT equality from the standpoint of principle.

This time, I want to believe that the department’s senior-most career management leaders—those on the seventh floor, and in the front offices of key bureaus—will be our champions. I want them to present the case not only as to why continued LGBT accommodation is needed, for the well-being of gay and lesbian personnel who serve abroad, but how the service equities of our unmarried straight colleagues demand the same treatment for them. I want our career managers to fight for what’s right for the long-term future of our Service, and of the men and women who support American interests abroad.

I say this not to minimize the importance of political leadership. Sec. Kerry is a proven LGBT ally, and one who surely understands that supporting his people is critical to their, and ultimately his, success. I’d like his tenure to be remembered for ratcheting personnel policies forward to better meet the needs of our multifaceted workforce.

But wouldn’t it be heartwarming if those charged with advancing career Service needs were the ones to stand up and champion those changes? Wouldn’t it be reassuring to know that we in the career Service have each other’s back?

The question isn’t whether we career diplomats, past and present, can take a leadership role in transforming our personnel support from good to great.

I know we can. The question is whether we will. ■



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# Human Rights for LGBT Persons: Aiming for Sustainable Progress

## A Q&A WITH SPECIAL ENVOY RANDY BERRY

**Shawn Dorman:** *What will you do as the Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons? What's the job?*

**Randy Berry:** I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to work hard to protect, preserve and advance the human rights of the global lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. I think it's important to highlight that my new role isn't "Special Envoy for LGBT Rights"—it's "Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons." It's a meaningful distinction, since the concept underscores our very approach to these issues—as a core

**Protecting the existence and rights of the LGBT community has become a core issue in the U.S. human rights mission worldwide.**

human rights issue, not as a special or boutique issue. In that role, I'll be engaging in an exciting new public-private type of approach.



*Randy Berry was appointed by the State Department as the first international envoy for the human rights of LGBT persons in February 2015. He joined the Foreign Service in 1993 and has served as consul general in Amsterdam from August 2012 through March 2015 and in Auckland*

*from 2009 to 2012, and as deputy chief of mission at Embassy Nepal from 2007 to 2009. Earlier assignments include Bangladesh, Egypt, Uganda and South Africa, as well as Washington, D.C. He and his husband, Pravesh Singh, have a 3-year-old daughter and a 2-year-old son.*

*Berry graciously agreed to be interviewed over email by Editor Shawn Dorman in April while he was in transit, leaving his post in Amsterdam and heading for Washington via a few days of leave.*

There are key elements of the job that are inward facing, and those that are more outwardly focused. For the former, I'll be playing a coordination role, not only within State, but across federal agencies to ensure, as much as possible, that our approach to the global protection of the rights of LGBT persons is uniform, consistent and focused on tangible results. On the latter, in addition to the usual diplomacy we do with governments, an essential part of my job will be to engage robustly with civil society organizations, foundations and businesses, both in the United States and overseas, on promoting greater respect for the essential human rights of these people.

**SD:** *Will you have a home bureau? DRL?*

**RB:** Yes. One of the most important aspects of the role—to me, and I think to many others who care deeply about the sustainability of our efforts—is that the work of the special envoy is entirely coordinated with the other vital work of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. That's important because we are not working on an issue of special rights—



KARA HALL/CONSULATE GENERAL AMSTERDAM

Consul General Randy Berry hands over Consulate General Amsterdam's first L2 visa issued to a same-sex spouse, Mr. Johannes Conradie, in August 2013.

we're working on an issue of human rights with a particular focus on a global community at risk.

Embedded within DRL, I'll be working to ensure that respect for the human rights of LGBT persons is a key priority integrated into strategies across bureaus at State, and within the government as a whole. I mentioned in my remarks with Secretary of State John Kerry at the end of February that though this position is new, the core work is not—there's an exceptionally talented group within DRL and the department as a whole who have been working hard on these issues since President Barack Obama and then-Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton identified them as a foreign policy priority in 2011. I'm honored to now be working with that team.

**SD:** *Who will you work with inside State and among other U.S. government, nongovernmental and international entities?*

**RB:** Our network and range of partners will be broad and inclusive. Inside State, that means coordination and effective communication with both the regional and functional bureaus to ensure that the Secretary's priority on this issue is being approached in a consistent and meaningful manner. More broadly in government, it means close coordination with our USAID colleagues and with the other agencies working in international policy and programming. It also will require an open and robust dialogue with leaders in U.S. civil society and

**We are not working on an issue of special rights—we're working on an issue of human rights with a particular focus on a global community at risk.**

international organizations, like the United Nations, European Union and Organization of American States, among others.

**SD:** *Who will be your counterparts overseas?*

**RB:** In addition to our government-to-government contacts, I will be placing a key priority on engagement with foreign civil society organizations and with leading business interests. We must be attentive to the needs and opinions of local civil society organizations, since they are doing the most difficult work, under some of the most difficult circumstances. They are also the organizations, not unlike those here in the United States, that



EDGAR VAN DE BURGT/CONSULATE GENERAL AMSTERDAM

Randy Berry engages with Amsterdam University students about his career in the Foreign Service.

## I will be placing a key priority on engagement with foreign civil society organizations and with leading business interests.

have the capacity to work for change in constructive and meaningful ways. Our first rule will be to do no harm. But do no harm doesn't mean do nothing. It means we must engage in creative ways within the context of broad partnerships and coalitions.

One key way we are currently partnering with like-minded governments, private foundations and business leaders is through the Global Equality Fund, which was launched in 2011 as a public-private partnership to support programs to advance the human rights of LGBT persons around the world. Through the fund, we're able to provide critically needed support to civil society organizations in the work that they are doing and

also empower Foreign Service members at our embassies to engage more deeply on these issues. One of the GEF's tools that promotes this engagement is the LGBT small grants program. Through small grants, our network of embassies and consulates is able to provide targeted support to grassroots organizations working to promote and protect the human rights of LGBT persons. I look forward to working to build additional partnerships through the GEF, and beyond.

**SD:** *As a gay FSO, have you faced difficulties working in and with countries where homosexuality is still illegal?*

**RB:** Complications, yes; but difficulties, not really. I've been extremely fortunate to have worked with positive, supportive mission teams throughout my career, and under the leadership of some truly impressive chiefs of mission, who have effectively set the tone in terms of acceptance and equality within our embassies and consulates overseas. I've worked in several countries that criminalize same-sex relationships, including Bangladesh, Egypt and Uganda; but I can honestly say that I never encountered a serious level of difficulty in any of those places. However, I'm also well aware that this is not the norm, and that at least part of that lack of difficulty also stemmed from being a U.S. diplomat, which somewhat shielded me from

the types of harassment and inequality that nationals face in those countries.

**SD:** *Can you tell us about your experience in Uganda and elsewhere, any examples of times when you worked on promoting tolerance and reducing discrimination?*

**RB:** Over the course of my career, I've worked in a number of roles that have dealt with promoting tolerance and reducing discrimination, mostly between either religious or ethnic communities. But the principle of equality remains the same, regardless of the identity of the group.

As a refugee coordinator in the African Great Lakes Region, which was one of my most meaningful tours in the Foreign Service, I spent a lot of time working in displacement camps and with some amazingly dedicated staff within U.N. agencies, the Red Cross and local organizations to care for those who had largely been the victims of tribal or ethnic strife.

A key element there was reintegrating people into their communities and sending the message that diversity is a strength, not a point of division. That's an essentially American viewpoint, isn't it? *E pluribus unum*—out of many, one. In my work in South Africa on the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief account, I worked with organizations seeking to stop discrimination against HIV-positive individuals.

But I'd also note that it took my last tour in Amsterdam, a place renowned for its historical tolerance, to learn that while tolerance is a commendable step forward from division, conflict and persecution, it isn't enough of a goal in and of itself. Tolerance is a point along our path to the embrace of diversity.

**SD:** *Can you share any particular successes and/or times when progress was not possible?*

**RB:** I'm proud of my work in South Africa with the organization Mothers2Mothers, which works with HIV-positive mothers to provide proper health information and to care for, educate and empower young women. While my experiences with the organization related to its first sites in the townships surrounding Cape Town, they're now working extensively throughout Africa and elsewhere.

On the flip side of success, I do recall writing and submit-



In commemoration of the victims of 9/11, Consulate General Amsterdam has an annual event to give back to those less fortunate. Here Randy Berry and staff member Heidi Westfa are frying hamburgers for an Amsterdam homeless shelter in October 2014.

ting, with mission support, the draft human rights report on Uganda in 1998 and 1999, which included a reference to hardships experienced by the LGBT community. Report editors in DRL at the time removed the material, indicating that this didn't fall within our concept of human rights at that time. Now, DRL is the engine that drives our efforts. That's a pretty positive change in my book.

**SD:** *What lessons did you learn from those experiences, and what lessons will you bring to the new position?*

**RB:** I learned to be persistent, consistent and not confuse progress with perfection. Progress and pragmatism will guide my efforts, and we'll need to work to realize that in some places, our successes will be measured in small, but important, ways. It would be a mistake to think that just by applying greater political pressure the United States can effect a change of hearts and minds or of policy.

Engagement to promote greater human rights observance across the board by speaking clearly and openly to governments is important, but it's not going to achieve the results we'd like in every case—particularly in more difficult environments. That will take a broader, more nuanced and sometimes

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**SD:** *In terms of LGBT issues, how has the culture of the State Department changed over time?*

**RB:** I think there has been tremendous evolution, but I have also always found leadership and colleagues within the department to be committed to fairness, open-mindedness and equality. I believe the department mirrors the much broader evolution on equality and treatment of the LGBT community that has occurred in the country during recent years.

**SD:** *What is different today compared to when you came into the Service in the early 1990s?*

**RB:** I entered the Foreign Service just after the policy under which FSOs could lose their security clearances due to sexual orientation effectively ended. That had meant basically losing your job if you came out. So much has changed since then. But I think it's important to note that change came about due to a sense of fairness from department leadership, and also through FSOs engaging and working with allies to ensure change. I'm thinking of Ambassador Michael Guest, our first openly gay career FSO, who faced some formidable challenges; and of those who founded Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies, including Ted Osius, now serving as ambassador to Vietnam. A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of joining an event in Washington where all six sitting openly gay ambassadors were in attendance. That's a fairly visible and tangible sign of progress, though there's still room to go, of course.

**SD:** *What challenges remain? In this position, will you be getting involved in advocacy for LGBT rights at home?*

**RB:** The last few years have seen tremendous positive change in the rights and benefits for LGBT members of the Foreign Service. With the Supreme Court's *Windsor* decision and subsequent steps taken by the Obama administration, even more substantial progress has been made on ensuring that LGBT FSOs receive equal benefits. Clearly, though, challenges remain—including the fact that there are a significant number of countries that fail to provide proper diplomatic accreditation to LGBT family members, which obviously reduces the number of countries in which LGBT families can serve. GLIFAA has done a commendable job of engaging with department leadership on these issues. While I clearly care about, and am personally and professionally affected by, this set of issues, in my role as special envoy I'll be focusing my efforts on progress in the international sphere. ■



# How Far We've Come, How Far We Have to Go: GLIFAA in 2015

**With significant successes to celebrate, GLIFAA is broadening its reach in the campaign for full equality for LGBT individuals.**

BY SELIM ARITURK

**A**s our country has changed, so, too, has GLIFAA. The group that was founded in 1992 as Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies now welcomes more and more members who are neither gay nor lesbian. Some of them identify as bisexual or transgender, and some as allies. With that reality in mind, this year our members voted to make our acronym our name: GLIFAA. Everyone has always been welcome in GLIFAA, and we want to make that openness even more explicit. Similarly, our new tagline is “LGBT+ Pride in Foreign Affairs Agencies.” I suspect most *FSJ* readers will know that LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and

transgender; we like to think the + stands for every additional “letter” one could conceivably think of—including any that our allies might choose.

For those who remember the dark days of the “Lavender Scare,” or have read the book of the same title, and know about the terrible witch hunts to root out all the “pansies” and “pinkos” at State throughout the Cold War, but particularly during the 1950s, our March 24 event with six “out” ambassadors was an inspiring reminder of just how far the march toward equality has brought us.

Imagine: Six out and proud ambassadors on stage, each talking about the work he can do more effectively because he can be open. Now imagine that panel being moderated by Stuart Milk, nephew of the late San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk, who so famously showed us the importance of being out in government service. This may have seemed unimaginable to GLIFAA’s founders in 1992, but in March the whole thing was recorded and beamed around the world on msnbc.com for any post to use as they tell this very American story.

Many of GLIFAA’s founders were in the room for that event. One, Ted Osius, was on the panel as an out ambassador. Another, Jan Krc, was among those who were once kicked out of the Foreign Service just for being gay. Jan sued to get back in, lost, and then, after the law changed, showed his great patriotism by signing up to join our proud Foreign Service once more.



*Selim Ariturk, a Foreign Service officer since 2005, teaches public diplomacy training courses at the Foreign Service Institute. His overseas postings have included Seoul, Baku and Erbil. The president of GLIFAA (originally Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies), he previously served as that organization’s policy director, vice president and first post representative coordinator (when that position was created in 2009). The views expressed here are his alone and not necessarily those of the U.S. government.*

## More than half of Foreign Service postings abroad are in countries that will not grant diplomatic status to our family members.

Have we reached full equality yet? If the next A-100 class were to welcome a lesbian candidate, her straight brother and their transgender sister, would each of them have an equal shot at success in the Foreign Service?

I wish I could say yes. I wish I could say all our work was done. But instead, let me tell you some of the challenges GLIFAA is working on today.

### A Good Start, But...

Let's start with the positive: the great progress we have seen. Employees who fall in love with someone of the same sex may now marry legally in 37 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. The federal government recognizes those marriages, and the employees and their spouses all enjoy the same benefits and protections from Uncle Sam as their heterosexual colleagues. In addition, transgender individuals are serving proudly in the ranks of the department and are counted among family members within our Foreign Service community. And in February, Secretary of State John Kerry announced the appointment of Randy Berry as the first Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons.

With all those accomplishments, why aren't we there yet? Well, to start, many foreign governments do not recognize our relationships. More than half of Foreign Service postings abroad are in countries that will not grant diplomatic status to our family members. In some of those societies, both the government and some citizens are actively hostile to LGBT+ persons, and GLIFAA members serving in such places face discrimination, harassment and violence.

The LGBT+ staff who come to GLIFAA for support are not surprised to learn how much discrimination there is around the world, but they are surprised to learn how little the department does to push back against those governments. Too often, we hear that it's the employee who feels pushed—either to go along and stop complaining, or to find another job.

All of us at GLIFAA are so proud of the six out ambassadors, and of the president and the Secretary of State under whom they

serve. The Obama administration has appointed more openly gay ambassadors than all its predecessors combined. Still, we have not yet seen an out woman, or an out ambassador of color. If we're going to live up to the example of Harvey Milk and other LGBT+ pioneers, we need Secretary Kerry to keep his promise to be the first Secretary of State to appoint openly lesbian, bisexual and transgender chiefs of mission, as well.

This year, transgender employees and family members in the foreign affairs community finally gained access to health insurance. Before that, the Office of Personnel Management required all plans to exclude any care related to gender transition, so many health care providers interpreted that language so broadly that all care for a person who had transitioned was excluded. Thankfully, OPM has changed, and those hurtful days are over. We salute the American Foreign Service Protective Association and Aetna for leading the way by offering plans that welcome our transgender colleagues.

Still, our transgender peers cannot yet count on well-informed, discreet handling of information around their gender status in all personnel, medical and security channels, nor within communities at posts abroad. Being transgender is very different from being lesbian, gay or bisexual. While some are proud to be out, many other transgender individuals want nothing more than to be quietly known as members of the gender to which they belong. Each of us should support their wishes in that regard, and address them as they wish to be addressed.

### Love and Marriage

Many well-meaning friends and colleagues ask, "Now that gays and lesbians can get married just like anyone else, should we do away with domestic partner protections?" The answer is that, quite simply, the unique challenges faced by GLIFAA members mean that we can't get married "just like anyone else." Imagine if that lesbian officer, her straight brother and their transgender sister are all hired into A-100 as Russian speakers, then posted to Moscow, where all three fall in love with Russian women. Who would claim that these employees are similarly situated, much less that each can get married—in Moscow or anywhere—"just like anyone else"?

There is simply no comparison in terms of the challenges they face—and that's why a small but important number of GLIFAA members might never feel safe getting married. In countries around the world, a marriage certificate is a public record, and the sad truth is that any foreign diplomat can march into a Washington, D.C., court and say, "I want a copy of Svetlana's marriage certificate right now."

Today, most American companies recognize *all* domestic partnerships. Wal-Mart and Olive Garden are among those who give domestic partner benefits to their staff, gay and straight alike. More and more young people join the Foreign Service and go abroad with unmarried partners, whether the department pays for it or not. What ambassador would like to tell a partner, gay or straight, in the middle of a natural disaster or terrorist attack: “We’re evacuating post, but I guess you’re not a recognized eligible family member, so best of luck and let us know how it works out?” We believe the fairest way forward for the department is to follow the example set by American business: count all domestic partners as EFMs.

Finally, as much as this progress has benefited our American colleagues, we must remember that our locally employed staff in most countries do not enjoy the same rights and protections, either under U.S. law, or in their home legal systems and societies. In many countries, these colleagues are exposed to severe discrimination, harassment, violence, arrest or even death if they are known or suspected to be LGBT. Sometimes we can and do help LE staff in dire need with asylum applications, but the process of being forced to leave home for your own safety is inherently a traumatic one.

### The Importance of Hope

U.S. missions abroad must reflect our highest standards and the full breadth of our society. So it is important to continue expanding the visibility and diversity of LGBT+ colleagues and family members in the foreign affairs community.

We need to ensure that everyone is up to date on policies that have removed earlier discrimination. And we must press foreign governments to recognize and protect all U.S. diplomats and their families, regardless of sexual orientation or gender, even as we press them to extend equal protection to their own LGBT+ citizens.

Harvey Milk famously said “You gotta give ‘em hope,” and for all of us in GLIFAA, and for so many people who are struggling around the world, our out ambassadors are doing just that.



COURTESY OF GLIFAA

GLIFAA's board of directors with Secretary of State John Kerry (center) and other guests at the June 2014 Pride event at the State Department. Front row, from left: Selim Ariturk, David Kim, AFSA Counsel and winner of the 2014 GLIFAA Equality Award Sharon Papp, Russian-American writer and activist Masha Gessen, Jay Gilliam and Blake Bergen. Back row, from left: John McGuire, Kerry Neal, Robyn McCutcheon, Sec. Kerry, Janice Caramanica of the Office of Civil Rights, Chris Hoh and Jeramee Rice.

## A small but important number of GLIFAA members might never feel safe getting married.

Though it has been a long time coming, our country's progress toward tolerance is inspiring. Although much work remains, we know that we have a president and a Secretary of State who have done a great deal, and who appreciate the unmet challenges.

I remain optimistic that by the end of their terms, we will see a Foreign Service that even better represents the full diversity of our great country. And, I remain optimistic that when I'm in Jan Krc's shoes, looking back on all I've seen in my career, I, too, will see a Foreign Service that is stronger and more diverse than ever. We wouldn't be honoring Harvey Milk's sacrifice if we settled for anything less. ■

# Promoting an LGBT-Inclusive Human Rights Agenda

**The progress of LGBT rights in Europe and the Americas has elicited a backlash in other parts of the world. Strong U.S. leadership can help reverse this alarming trend and mitigate the threat of widespread violence.**

BY RICHMOND BLAKE

**T**he violent extremist group that calls itself the Islamic State recently released a series of videos in which black-hooded men are seen pushing victims from the top of high-rise buildings. The clips depict people gathering below to watch the victims, accused of being gay, fall to their deaths before maiming their corpses.



*Richmond Blake serves as a special assistant in the Office of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights. In 2013, he received the State Department's Human Rights and Democracy Achievement Award for his work as a political officer in La*

*Paz. The master's thesis he co-authored, "Protecting Vulnerable LGBT Populations: An Opportunity for U.S. Global Leadership," was awarded Harvard University's top prize for graduate-level research in the field of human rights in 2011.*

The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community is not only under violent attack from this barbaric violent extremist group, but from various hate groups, vigilantes and governments around the world. Human rights organizations report that so far this year, scores of LGBT persons have been murdered or imprisoned simply because of who they are and whom they love. More than 75 countries outlaw homosexuality, and in at least seven of them, the penalty is death.

The social and political success of the LGBT movement, notably in Europe and the Americas, has elicited a strong backlash in other parts of the world. A Pew Research Center survey reports that in many African and Middle Eastern countries, more than nine in 10 people say they do not accept LGBT people as part of their society.

Eager to win votes or to distract from corruption or other government failings, politicians often play to this popular homophobic and transphobic sentiment. This strategy has resulted in draconian new anti-LGBT laws and frequent arrests around the world, and it exacerbates a cultural climate that not

only permits but encourages harassment and discrimination, which often leads to violence.

### **Providing External Assistance to Support Local Leadership**

In many countries, the LGBT community does not have the financial resources or the political clout to defend itself; and in the places where gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are most in need, the broader human rights community often fails to offer meaningful support. With such widespread animosity, the potential for larger-scale arrests, attacks or even the systematic elimination of LGBT persons remains a serious threat.

In the absence of local support for these vulnerable populations, only the international community, including the United States, can offer the aid this embattled minority group desperately needs. U.S. leadership, expressed through a strong, sustained diplomatic effort, is required to reverse the backsliding on LGBT rights and to mitigate the threat of widespread violence. This human rights priority will necessitate that the United States government employ its full arsenal of diplomatic tools from robust public diplomacy to foreign assistance. But the persistent challenge for Washington and other external actors is how to best offer support without further inflaming the backlash, or opening indigenous LGBT groups up to accusations of being foreign-driven.

Recognizing the inherent risk in providing external support, a U.S. LGBT rights promotion strategy must be flexible, not “one size fits all.” Mindful that effective interventions vary widely across the globe, Washington should develop country-specific strategies in partnership with local gay community leaders.

Following the lead of local LGBT actors and their allies on these issues is essential, since they are the most credible and persuasive voices within their own communities, and have the most finely tuned cultural and political understanding of the opportunities for LGBT rights promotion in their countries. An approach that seeks to lift up and empower the local gay community also offers the long-term benefit of creating powerful, sustainable partners who will become less dependent on external assistance over time.

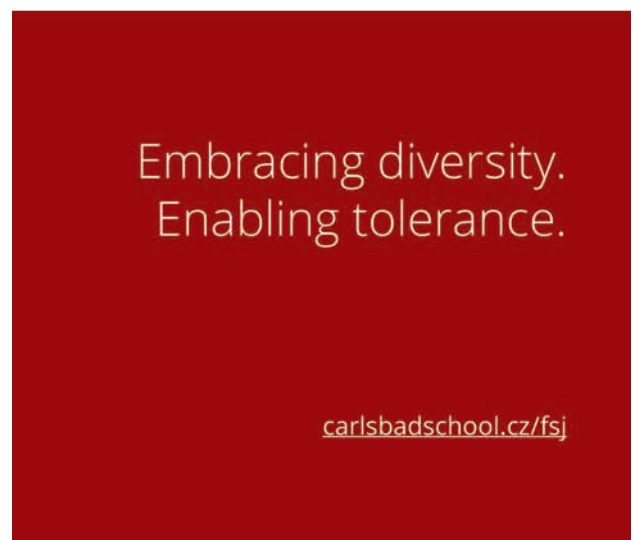


## diversity

/dʌɪˈvɜːsɪti/

*noun*

1. the state of being diverse
2. the fundamental variety of an international education
3. one reason to choose Carlsbad International School





Richmond Blake visits Caquiaviri, Bolivia, in 2013 to meet with female entrepreneurs who formed a sewing microenterprise with the support of the Office of Global Women's Issues. The 18-month project, "Strengthening Sewing Microenterprises to Increase Incomes for Indigenous Women in Rural Bolivia," created eight sewing cooperatives to provide economic opportunity for more than 80 women in the La Paz department community.

### Supporting Our New Special Envoy

The United States has already taken significant steps to address anti-LGBT violence and discrimination worldwide, and there is a history of bipartisan support in Congress for diplomatic efforts to protect the international LGBT community. In 2010, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution condemning anti-gay legislation and encouraging the Secretary of State to closely monitor anti-LGBT human rights abuses and to work to repeal egregious laws.

Secretaries of State Hillary Clinton and John Kerry have been quick to condemn hate-motivated attacks, and they have led multilateral efforts to codify international recognition of rights for LGBT persons. With robust U.S. backing, last September the United Nations Human Rights Council approved a resolution calling for an end to violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. The State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development financially support foreign gay and trans rights organizations, and are also empowering diplomatic missions, using the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor's small grants program, to support LGBT rights-promotion initiatives tailored to local contexts.

Certainly, Sec. Kerry's February appointment of Randy Berry as the first-ever Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons in February is a significant diplomatic achievement, and it is an important sign of the strong U.S. commitment to LGBT rights. The position creates a new realm of opportunity for protecting this vulnerable community, by

raising global awareness about its plight, and will develop and coordinate U.S. rapid-response mechanisms to address new threats. Berry will also amplify the effect of the State Department's work by raising additional funds to support LGBT rights promotion initiatives through public-private partnerships.

But as important as the creation of the position is to advancing a comprehensive LGBT rights-promotion strategy, the special representative will need the support of the entire diplomatic service, especially from frontline officers. Every bilateral relationship has its own nuances, and opportunities for engagement on LGBT issues differ from post to post. Yet there are low-cost options that every mission can immediately pursue, not just to fulfill its obligation to monitor and report on the status of gay rights, but to protect the LGBT population from the violence and discrimination that plague it.

### Offering Support in Hostile Anti-LGBT Environments

Even in country contexts where public U.S. advocacy for LGBT rights could provoke a political backlash, there are opportunities for engagement. U.S. embassies can work behind the scenes to promote LGBT issues within the broader civil society context. Embassies can encourage existing civil society partners to initiate programming or to speak publicly in support of tolerance and nonviolence. Finding and amplifying powerful religious or cultural voices that support protections for the LGBT community could begin to change local attitudes

## Mindful that effective interventions vary widely across the globe, Washington should develop country-specific strategies in partnership with local gay community leaders.

and allow enough space for local organizations to begin to operate safely in the open.

In repressive environments, the U.S. government can work closely with local LGBT organizations to provide seed grants to support local research and monitoring of violence and discrimination and facilitate publication of their findings. Embassies can also provide support for embattled activists to speak at international conferences or multilateral fora, or with foreign media, to refute the claim of some governments that no LGBT persons live within their borders.

U.S. embassies and consulates can subtly signal support of LGBT rights at representational and public affairs events. Embassy Independence Day celebrations, for instance, present an opportunity to expose local political leaders to LGBT advocates and their families. In climates where such individuals are uncomfortable with coming out, embassies can host cultural events, such as art exhibits, featuring the work of anonymous but local LGBT artists and activists. And when illiberal politicians call for violence against gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders, or when repressive governments arrest them and hold sham trials, the U.S. government must send clear and unequivocal signals of its dismay.

LGBT organizations that operate in the most repressive environments indicate that it is typically unhelpful for the U.S. government to take a public role in support of LGBT rights; however, in the most dire situations or in crisis scenarios, most LGBT advocates want Washington to take a strong, public role.

When I was conducting research in Uganda on effective interventions to support the LGBT community in January 2011, for instance, local organizations made clear to me that to combat the anti-homosexuality bill then pending in Parliament,



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## tolerance

/ˈtɒl(ə)r(ə)ns/

*noun*

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2. the highest aim of an international education
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## U.S. missions in hostile environments must work hand in hand with the local LGBT community to identify the red line at which point the benefit of U.S. public intervention would outweigh concerns of a backlash.

they not only supported, but needed public U.S. engagement. (A version of the legislation was later passed and then ruled invalid by the Constitutional Court in 2014.)

Ugandan activists point to the power of Sec. Clinton's public pressure on their government as a successful model, and expressed concern about the potential consequences if U.S. public pressure were to wane. With that in mind, missions representing the U.S. government in hostile environments must work hand in hand with the local LGBT community to identify the red line at which point the benefit of U.S. public intervention would outweigh concerns of a backlash. Ideally, Washington would also rally like-minded countries to sign on to the same plan in advance, to facilitate a rapid, multilateral response when crisis-level, anti-LGBT situations arise.

### Advancing a Public Diplomacy Approach

In countries that provide some legal protections for LGBTs, but where violence and discrimination persist, the U.S. government can play a strong role in accelerating the spread of tolerance. Diplomatic missions can work to empower the local LGBT community by providing seed grants to nascent organizations or to fund joint projects executed by several fractious groups to encourage the consolidation of political power. U.S. embassies can arrange educational exchanges to allow local leaders to seek training in the United States on successful advocacy practices that can then be implemented locally. And by leveraging existing relationships with local law enforcement institutions, missions can conduct human rights training that



is inclusive of LGBT rights, to sensitize local law enforcement to the dangers that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens face and how best to offer them protection.

U.S. embassies can also use a wide array of public diplomacy tools to support the local LGBT community. In fact, last year alone, more than 120 missions engaged in some form of public diplomacy in support of the local LGBT community. Missions can amplify local organizations' outreach on their Web platforms or lend credibility to the organizations by hosting events, like film screenings or research presentations, featuring the participation of high-level embassy personnel, including the ambassador.

Embassies can also host prominent American LGBT media, political or sports personalities, who can use their star power to make personal appeals through local media interviews and other public engagements.

### An Urgent Need

Advocating for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in other societies is extremely difficult—and in many places, it can be dangerous. But the need could not be greater or more urgent. The advocates I have met in my work with the State Department—a straight South African woman whose sister was a victim of the terribly misguided “corrective rape” phenomenon, a prominent Ugandan activist who was later brutally murdered in his own home and a Bolivian transgender woman forced to flee violence in her indigenous community—all press for the same thing: They ask that I share their stories with the American people and the U.S. government.

These activists are not looking to the outside world to solve their problems or to lead their movements. But they are seeking partnership, resources, strategic advice and training, and diplomatic assistance to defend themselves.

LGBT rights are now a core component of our efforts to advance human rights globally—what Sec. Kerry rightly calls “the heart and conscience of our diplomacy.” All U.S. diplomats, especially those serving in the most anti-LGBT environments, have an opportunity and responsibility to advance this national human rights priority.

Working strategically in partnership with local human rights advocates, our diplomats can improve social attitudes toward this vulnerable population. And in the process, they can help eliminate the widespread violence and discrimination that continue to threaten LGBT persons around the world. ■



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# Diversity in Diplomacy: The Mentoring Dimension

**It is one thing to recruit a diverse workforce; it is quite another to sustain that diversity into the senior ranks and reap the benefits. Mentoring is one of the keys.**

BY JENNIFER ZIMDAHL GALT AND THAO ANH TRAN

**D**iversity in all its forms is important at every rank of the Foreign Service. As representatives of the United States, we should reflect our nation's diversity, a core American value from which we draw our strength. A more diverse Foreign Service also will contribute to more effective foreign policymaking.

The different perspectives that come from embracing diversity can give the United States a kind

of asymmetric advantage—the challenge is to leverage that advantage. We need and deserve an organizational culture that incorporates all types of diversity to assure new officers and specialists that they can aspire to successful careers in the Foreign Service.

It is no secret that the Foreign Service needs more diversity. According to the 2014 promotion statistics, gender and racial disparity persists in promotions and the gaps widen at the Senior Foreign Service level. From FS-4 to FS-3, promotion rates for men and women were roughly equal at 42.7 percent for men vs. 40.4 percent for women, whereas from OC to MC, only 23.9 percent of those promoted were women vs. 30.3 percent men. The pool of eligible minority candidates for promotion shrinks significantly at the higher ranks. From FS-1 to OC, of 379 who competed, only 49 were non-white and 127 were women. From MC to CM, only 29 non-whites vs. 132 whites and 44 women vs. 117 men competed for promotions.

We believe that a robust mentorship program is vital to achieving and sustaining greater diversity in the Foreign Service. The State Department's advancements in recruiting minorities and ensuring equity across the diversity spectrum should be expanded to sustain diversity into the senior ranks. We propose embedding diversity into the mentoring program, and offer tips based on our own experience for how mentors and mentees can establish more fulfilling, diversity-focused partnerships.



*Thao Anh Tran served in Guangzhou from 2012 to 2014. She is currently in language training at FSI in preparation for her assignment to a rotational political/consular officer position in Panama starting in late*

*July. Jennifer Zimdahl Galt is in the final months of her tour as principal officer in Guangzhou, where she has served since 2012. She was recently nominated to be the next ambassador to Mongolia. The authors will be maintaining their mentor-mentee partnership across 12 time zones for the next tour, as they have been doing since Thao Anh's December 2014 departure from Guangzhou.*

*The views in this article are entirely those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Department of State.*

## A Diversity-Focused Mentoring Program: A Worthy Investment

The State Department's formal mentoring program for members of the Foreign Service has three components: The first two provide structured mentoring for entry-level generalists and specialists; a third component allows mid-level professionals to request situational mentoring at a specific time to help quickly resolve problems. Mentors and mentees submit forms to the Bureau of Human Resources, and the Mentor Council pairs them up based on shared interests. Both mentor and mentee may dissolve the mentoring relationship at any time by mutual agreement.

A diversity-focused mentoring program has the power to alter participants' behaviors for the better in terms of their ability to interact with a diverse group of people, process diverse ideas and internalize diverse values. It also provides members of under-represented groups with career advancement paths in the Foreign

Service. When managers mentor with a focus on diversity, they acquire a heightened awareness and become strong advocates for diversity across the department. We propose four changes to improve the program's overall effectiveness and establish the vital connection between mentoring and diversity.

### 1. Make sustaining diversity a mentoring program goal.

While the Thomas R. Pickering and Charles B. Rangel Fellowships are good first steps to help bring diverse minorities into the Foreign Service, formal and informal mentor-mentee partnerships can help sustain diversity beyond the recruitment stage. These partnerships enable both parties to reciprocate exchanges and to be included in each other's networks, which will enhance and sustain diversity over time.

**2. Formalize and strengthen the role of A-100 and specialist class mentors.** During A-100 and specialist classes is the ideal time to discuss the role of mentorship and how entry-level



PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION/U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL GUANGZHOU

Consul General Galt and Thao Anh Tran tour the Guangzhou English Training Center for the Handicapped campus during a September 2014 visit to the school to promote education and disability rights in south China. CG Galt delivered a speech to kick off the new academic year; Thao Anh served as her control officer.

officers (ELOs) and specialists can best engage with mentors for their mutual benefit. Class mentors should meet with each ELO and specialist individually or in small groups throughout their training. With a better understanding of the assistance mentors can provide, ELOs and specialists will be more likely to stay in touch and seek additional mentorship opportunities later in their careers. The department should guarantee that all ELOs and specialists will be assigned formal mentors on completion of initial training and before they take up their first assignments.

**3. Mentor-mentee matching should be employee-driven rather than HR-directed.** Instead of the Mentor Council pairing mentors and mentees, we propose that the program supply a list of short biographies of available mentors and allow mentees to decide which would be a good fit for them, possibly via SharePoint or another intranet site. Prospective mentees could search for available mentors, while mentors decide for



CG Galt greets a participant in the 20th anniversary celebration of the Guangzhou English Training Center for the Handicapped, a school that provides disabled students with higher education and English-language skills to prepare them for employment after graduation. Thao Anh is nearby capturing images on an iPad for CG Galt's microblog.

## A true partnership means understanding the diversity that each brings to the relationship.

themselves how many mentees they are able to provide guidance to at any point in time. Mentors and mentees could update the site following a successful match.

**4. Provide incentives for mentoring.** The Director General's March 2015 cable notes that mid-level and senior officers are encouraged to include mentoring among their formal work requirements. We recommend extending this to all FS-1 and SFS officers and specialists, regardless of their positions. This would add depth to mentoring at posts where currently only the DCM or principal officer has formal mentoring responsibilities. We further recommend that the department develop a system of incentives to encourage officers and specialists to become mentors and to take their mentoring responsibilities seriously, particularly with regard to promoting diversity.

### Tips for Successful Diversity-Focused Partnerships

Given the many different personalities in the Foreign Service, each mentor-mentee partnership will likely require a different prescription for success. Interactions within partnerships can help mentors identify talented colleagues from different backgrounds

who could benefit from guidance on tackling professional challenges throughout their careers. As mentors, senior managers gain a better understanding of the talents that exist within the Foreign Service and can deploy human resources in ways that benefit the whole organization. Mentees can learn from watching their mentors in action and, later, emulate their best qualities and behaviors. When senior managers serving as mentors demonstrate respect for diversity, more junior employees, especially minorities from underrepresented populations, will be inspired to stay in for a career.

Our own mentor-mentee relationship is both unique and illustrative. We were fortunate to serve together at Consulate General Guangzhou, and to have reaped immediate rewards from our partnership. Thao Anh's out-rotation to the front office led to her heightened interest in public diplomacy outreach. She had the opportunity to observe Consul General Galt interact with her Chinese counterparts and the Chinese public. CG Galt's encouragement to Thao Anh led to their joint cooperation on several social media projects, including creation of the "Voice of the CG" position, whereby first- and second-tour officers have the opportunity to draft microblog posts for the CG's hashtag. Another example was creation of an interactive map on the consulate website where Chinese netizens can track the CG's travel and public events. Throughout our collaboration, CG Galt benefited enormously from Thao Anh's expertise in social media, which helped strengthen her outreach to diverse audiences. For Thao Anh's part, as a political-coned officer, she was inspired by watching CG Galt in action and plans to bid on public diplomacy positions in the future.

Over the course of two years, we formed a strong partnership that has stood the test of time and geography. Our experience also provided us with insights on how the department can leverage its mentoring program to promote a more diverse and inclusive Foreign Service. Here are our tips for other mentoring partners.

- **True Partnerships.** Successful mentor-mentee pairings are true partnerships that benefit both parties. While the mentor is clearly the more experienced, this should not preclude her or him from also learning from the mentee. A true partnership means understanding the diversity that each brings to the relationship. The key is respect for that diversity and the desire to see it carry through to the highest ranks of the Foreign Service.

*Communication.* Regular and focused communication is

essential for an effective and enduring partnership. Mentees should initiate contact with their mentors and come to every meeting with prepared agendas. We encourage mentees to articulate their expectations.

Being able to effectively manage partnerships with mentors is a great way to learn to be proactive in personal and professional development. Mentees also have the opportunity to learn how to “manage up,” a valuable Foreign Service skill. Meanwhile, mentors should demonstrate interest and commitment by gauging their mentees’ needs and always responding to communications in a timely manner.

*Motivation and expectations.* Mentees should enter partnerships with the appropriate motivation, while mentors should continually challenge their mentees to pursue opportunities that are advantageous for their long-term career prospects. Mentees should not assume mentors are obligated to help them secure future assignments. Instead, mentees should strive to build a foundation of mutual trust and understanding with their mentors. Through regular interaction over time, mentees will learn skills to enhance their competitiveness in the bidding process. Meanwhile, mentors should be prepared to assume multiple roles, including serving as a sounding board and providing accolades and support at certain times.

*Learning and growing equally.* Both parties should actively participate in learning and growing together. Mentees will feel more invested in ensuring a successful partnership if they are given the opportunity to contribute as equal partners and to reciprocate their mentors’ contributions over time.

*Sharing experiences and constructive feedback.* Mentors should strive to encourage their mentees to share their previous experiences and perspectives, and both should be prepared to provide each other positive and constructive feedback. Mentors can help entry-level employees learn the unwritten rules of the Foreign Service, while mentees can provide valuable input as new employees of the department. Mentees are frequently able to provide expertise in areas where their mentors may lack familiarity.

*Networking.* Among the many benefits for mentees is the ability to tap into their mentors’ networks of information and influence. Mentees also will learn to develop mutual trust and interact



PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION/U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL GUANGZHOU

CG Galt listens to Jay Vinyard, a 91-year-old U.S. veteran Hump pilot, describe his experiences in World War II as part of the opening ceremony of the Flying Tigers Heritage Park in Guilin, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on March 28.

## Locally employed and Civil Service colleagues can also be fantastic mentors, lending their cultural and institutional knowledge.

with authenticity—both characteristics that can aid diplomats in their daily work. Since mentors are not usually in one’s chain of command, mentees can freely share concerns without regard to position or EER. Mentoring partnerships offer ELOs a chance to learn to work comfortably with more senior managers.

*Confidentiality.* While mentor-mentee partnerships are not exclusive, any information shared should remain confidential to enhance the openness and strength of the relationship. Mentors should not disclose information in their mentees’ EERs without their prior consent. Mentees should keep private conversations with their mentors truly private.

• **Multiple Partnerships.** Having access to multiple mentors will enable mentees to receive different types of support. We recognize that mentors and mentees will not always live in the same city, and that relationships may evolve over time. For this reason, we recommend that mentees be proactive in seeking out multiple mentors—including a mentor whose personal background, age, gender, race and professional experience differs significantly from their own. In fact, partnerships with great differences between the mentee and mentor offer the greatest learn-

ing potential for both parties given the different insights they can provide each other.

- **Diverse Partnerships.** Employees should seek to form partnerships with colleagues who share a commitment to diversity and professional development. We urge mentors to seek out mentees who do not share their backgrounds or career paths or mentees who have less experience and might benefit from the mentors' guidance. We encourage mentees to seek out senior colleagues from whom they could learn. A mentor's background is less important than his or her willingness to provide assistance and an unwavering commitment to the mentee's short- and long-term career goals. Locally employed and Civil Service colleagues can also be fantastic mentors, lending their cultural and institutional knowledge.

- **Virtual Partnerships.** Given our mobility as Foreign Service members, virtual mentoring enables mentors and mentees to take advantage of today's technological tools to conquer geography and time zones to maintain long-term partnerships. While open and honest communication is necessary for in-person

mentoring, it is an absolute prerequisite for a successful online mentoring partnership. Both mentor and mentee must redouble commitments to be responsive to one another. While we recommend face-to-face interactions whenever possible, electronic communication can offer some advantages. Mentees may be less conscious of their mentors' rank or position and be more forthright in their exchanges.

### Let the Partnerships Begin!

A diplomatic corps that is diverse in gender, race, sexual orientation, national origin, physical ability, and personal and professional background, including the Senior Foreign Service, will help ensure that our Service truly reflects our nation's diversity. It will also ensure that the State Department has the benefit of diverse perspectives and insights in foreign policymaking.

We encourage all officers and specialists to get involved as mentors and mentees. This is a collective effort that demands commitment from all of us. Let's work together to achieve and sustain diversity across the Foreign Service ranks. ■



# Toward a Foreign Service Reflecting America

**T**he Foreign Service is the face of America around the world, both literally and metaphorically. Yet while three women and two African-Americans have served as Secretary of State in the past 20 years, the U.S. diplomatic corps is not so diverse. Historically, and for the bulk of its existence, the U.S. Foreign Service was comprised of upper-middle class white males. This trend held true until the mid-to-late 1970s, when the State Department developed programs and launched various initiatives designed to ensure that U.S. embassies and consulates around the world look like America: diverse and multicultural. The goal remains an ambitious one, and the results so far have been mixed.

The State Department has had great success in recent decades attracting growing percentages of female officers. The trends for both Foreign Service officer and specialist A-100 orientation classes reflect increasing numbers of females in each class. In 2014, one A-100 class (the 178th) had more women than men

**Two innovative programs—the Thomas R. Pickering Fellowship and the Charles B. Rangel Program—have helped bring diversity to the Foreign Service, but challenges remain.**

BY LIA MILLER

(52 women, 48 men). In general, however, despite the narrowing gap, most classes remain male majority. Overall, women represent nearly 40 percent of all active-duty officers. But there is still work to be done; a 2010 study by Women in International Security documents “a pronounced and persistent gender gap in the Senior Foreign Service.”

In recent years, State has done well in recruiting officers from a wide variety of backgrounds through the effective use of internship programs. However, when you look at the mid-level and senior ranks,

the numbers are nowhere near what they should be. Eighty-two percent of current FSOs are European-Americans and they hold 86 percent of senior staff positions at State.

These percentages are not representative of a country that is 17 percent Hispanic, 14 percent African-American and 5 percent Asian-American. Minority groups in the State Department continue to be severely underrepresented: For example, African-Americans make up just 5.4 percent of Foreign Service officers and hold just 5.6 percent of senior staff positions; Hispanics make up 5.1 percent of Foreign Service officers and 4.5 percent of senior staff; and Asian-Americans constitute only 6.8 percent of FSOs and hold a mere 3.8 percent of senior staff positions. These numbers are incontrovertible evidence that State has much more work to do to encourage minority advancement and representation at the highest levels.

## Standing Together

The State Department does support the efforts of affinity groups to foster minority advancement and success. I liken these organizations to the clubs found on any college campus that cater to various groups. For African-Americans, there is the Thursday Luncheon



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*Washington, she has also served in the Operations Center, the Public Affairs Bureau, the Office of Middle East Transitions and in the Office of Maghreb Affairs. She has served overseas in Tunisia, Nicaragua and Oman.*

For more information on the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship, please visit: [www.woodrow.org/fellowships/pickering](http://www.woodrow.org/fellowships/pickering). For more information on the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program, please visit: [www.rangelprogram.org](http://www.rangelprogram.org). For those interested in Foreign Service careers in the State Department or those who simply want to understand more about diversity and recruitment initiatives, please visit the U.S. Department of State site: [www.careers.state.gov](http://www.careers.state.gov), for a wealth of information on the programs highlighted above and much more.

Group—the oldest affinity group at State—and the Carl T. Rowan Chapter of Blacks in Government. Other affinity groups include the Hispanic Employees Council of Foreign Affairs Agencies, the Asian-American Foreign Affairs Association, GLIFAA and the Pickering and Rangel Fellowship Association, to name but a few. The groups that advocate for women in the Foreign Service include Executive Women @ State and Balancing Act, which focuses on the State Department’s work-life balance policies and priorities.

The primary purpose of all affinity groups is to represent, advocate for and support their constituent members. One drawback of this model, however, is that each group operates on a purely volunteer basis and, due to the transient nature of the Foreign Service, often struggles to remain vibrant and active within the confines of the department’s mandates. Thankfully, the various organizations have conducted enough joint advocacy to pressure State to give more sustainable, consistent support to their work.

### Pickering and Rangel Fellowships

State has made progress on recruiting minorities through two innovative programs: the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program and the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program. The flagship Pickering Fellowship, established in 1992 and administered by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, and the Rangel Program, established in 2002 and administered by the Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center at Howard University, are both entirely funded by grants from the Department of State.

Both programs are designed to attract outstanding individuals from all ethnic, racial and social backgrounds interested in pursuing a Foreign Service career. The Pickering Fellowship is named in honor of the six-time ambassador, one of the most distinguished American diplomats of all time, whose career culminated with an appointment as under secretary of State for political affairs. Last year, promotion boards recommended three former Pickering Fellows for advancement into the Senior Foreign Service, the first Pickering to cross the SFS threshold.

Howard University created the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program to honor the New York congressman for his example of global leadership and for his longstanding support of efforts to show the world the diversity that is the strength of America.

Program alumni who make it through the entry-level years do well in the Foreign Service. However, the transition from fellow status to “officer” status can be challenging, which is why the Pickering and Rangel Fellows Association was established in 2010. PRFA creates a professional network and support system for program alumni as they begin navigating the State Department as FSOs. PRFA offers career counseling and mentoring, and hosts a speakers series featuring department principals, subject matter experts and thought leaders.

In addition, the association puts together brown-bag sessions on a variety of topics including career advancement, EERs, bidding, managing up and leadership. Unfortunately, there is a growing trend of Pickering and Rangel fellows leaving the Foreign Service after serving for only one or two years. This is something PRFA and the Bureau of Human Resources are examining, aiming to determine the cause and what, if anything, can be done to ameliorate it.

### Building on Our Progress

Appearing in a 2014 PBS documentary titled “The Foreign Service: In Search of Diversity,” featured on the show *To the Contrary*, former Director General Linda Thomas-Greenfield said this: “It is important for the world to see the face of America and it is important that they understand we are a diverse society and that diversity is our strength.” The Foreign Service has made real progress toward that goal, but much more needs to be done to achieve it.

In terms of a way forward, the State Department needs to invest real thought and time into expanding retention efforts. Though overall attrition rates are low, if you look closely at “who” is leaving, it is largely women and minorities. Why? What is the department not doing to retain these individuals? Or, conversely, what are competing employers doing to attract them?

A starting point for determining the most targeted and responsive retention program would be to examine closely the exit interview information to determine if any trends emerge. The department should also focus on recruiting future FSOs at even younger ages and develop a mechanism to increase awareness of the international affairs arena—specifically Foreign Service careers as an option—for groups that historically have not gotten this exposure or the knowledge that this career path exists for them. State should consider utilizing nontraditional outreach that emphasizes direct engagement. ■



# Making Inclusion Real Affinity Groups in Action

## Introduction

To adequately represent the United States abroad, it is essential that the foreign affairs agencies have a workforce that reflects the rich composition of its citizenry. This is a stated official priority, spelled out in the Foreign Service Act of 1980 and emphasized in the 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

There are more than a dozen recognized employee affinity groups at the State Department, as well as additional groups specifically for members of the other foreign affairs agencies. These groups act to promote and strengthen diversity and inclusion in the foreign affairs workforce. They network and cooperate with each other, and with the American Foreign Service Association, which is the exclusive bargaining agent for the entire Foreign Service.

Management interacts regularly with the affinity groups to ensure fairness and equity for individuals in the work environment both domestically and abroad, and to eradicate harassment, intolerance and discrimination wherever it may be found.

The four affinity groups featured in the following pages highlight the variety and scope of diversity issues and activity in the foreign affairs agencies. We look forward to showcasing other groups and their unique programs in the coming months.

—The Editors





# Promoting Disability Diversity at the State Department

BY AMANDA J. RICHARD

The Disability Action Group has been gaining momentum in recent months. With the election of a new board in December 2014, DAG has undertaken a nonstop exercise to educate, assist and advocate for State employees with disabilities.

While State provides many services to accommodate people with disabilities, most employees are either unaware that they exist, do not realize the process of securing assistance, or are too afraid to self-identify their disability and make the request. As a result, DAG primarily serves as a link between diversity employee constituencies and the department's senior management, Office of Civil Rights staff and Human Resources staff.

Currently DAG has almost 100 members from various State Department bureaus. This is a testament to the diversity that already exists at the department. As interest in DAG continues to grow, the issues become more apparent. There is clearly a need for employees with both long- and short-term disabilities to understand their rights and receive assistance. While assistance is a primary concern, DAG has also been participating in discussions with various parties regarding issues of reasonable accommodation and general compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act Section 508, which requires the federal government to ensure that the electronic and information technology that it develops, procures, maintains or uses is accessible to persons with disabilities.

DAG also encourages awareness of Schedule A hiring, which offers win-win advantages to State hiring officers and employees alike. Its existence, however, is largely unknown. Many people do not realize that a disability gives a person noncompetitive status for Civil Service positions. For example, when hiring a Schedule A, an office with an FTE can go to Selective

Placement Coordinator Lana Hiland to see resumes from the Selective Placement Program talent bank. Qualified Schedule A candidates do not have to apply through regular competitive procedures and can be hired without a job announcement. Thus with Schedule A hiring, offices can accelerate the process and bring people on board faster.

DAG has developed a speaker series with a range of topics aimed at educating the entire State Department on disability diversity. On June 19, the group will host multiple speakers to educate on transitioning to an overseas assignment with a special needs child, a circumstance which has proved to come with a number of challenges.

The group is also proudly celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act here at State in July. Embassies around the world will be celebrating on July 4, but the actual anniversary is July 26. Activities will run throughout

the year, including speakers and exhibits that acknowledge how far disability rights have come.

DAG's mission is clear: promoting disability diversity at the Department of State. With that goal in mind, the group is proud to assist in paving the way for disability education and raising awareness.

For more information about DAG or to find out how

to become a member, visit the group's SharePoint site at <http://collaborate.state.sbu/sites/DAG/> or send an email to [DAG-Council@state.gov](mailto:DAG-Council@state.gov). If you would like more information about Schedule A hiring, please contact Lana Hiland at [HilandLW@state.gov](mailto:HilandLW@state.gov). Interested Schedule A applicants should email [selectiveplacement@state.gov](mailto:selectiveplacement@state.gov).

**On June 19, the group will host multiple speakers to educate on transitioning to an overseas assignment with a special needs child, a circumstance which has proved to come with a number of challenges.**



*Amanda J. Richard is a visual information specialist in the Office of Archiving and Access Systems Management in the State Department's Bureau of Administration. She serves as the 2015 communications and outreach board member for the Disability Action Group at State.*

*Richard was diagnosed at age 7 with progressive sensorineural hearing loss. In 2014, at 31 years old, she received a cochlear implant. She hopes to inspire others by proving that having a disability should not hinder quality of life—professionally or personally.*



# Blacks In Government: Working to Make Diversity Operational

BY MARCUS C. SINGLETON

The USAID Chapter of Blacks In Government continues to work on an issue that precludes America from benefitting from its own history: discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs and other ideologies.

BIG is a national organization founded in 1975 to press for equal opportunity for and eliminate practices of racism against blacks; promote professionalism among blacks in local, national and federal government; provide a communication forum for blacks in various agencies; and provide a nonpartisan platform on major issues that affect organization members.

While many agencies give verbal support to diversity, statistics show that blacks are not being hired or promoted in government agencies at levels that reflect America's demographics. Neither are blacks given sufficient clout to have an impact on policy decisions. For too many agencies, the push for diversity has stopped at merely having people from different backgrounds present.

Working in agencies that pride themselves on implementing U.S. government policy in the overseas arena, it has been important for BIG to advocate moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of thought that all people bring to the table. Diversity involves more than meets the eye: it embraces experience, thoughts, actions and philosophies.

We support members attending the BIG National Training Institute, where professionals come together annually to share experiences and use their collective strength to confront workplace and community issues and increase their professional

exchanges and networks. Interestingly, at this event we typically discover just how isolated many people at all levels feel as they silently deal with obstacles that others do not seem to recognize or encounter.

We are often asked why BIG needs to exist. Looking at recent events, we are reminded that some decisions are still based on what one perceives when he or she observes the ethnicity, skin color or gender of another. There are many talented people who have chosen to make a career through public service and serving their country, yet they are not able to give their maximum effort because they are confined by the narrowness of others. Our organization seeks to help people go beyond their own assumptions and realize what is being missed by walking a mile in the shoes of someone different from them.

Visible diversity is making progress at some levels, but the

invisible diversity often goes untouched. Many of the younger generation, who have been socialized in what America likes to see as a "post-racial society," get their first wake-up call to limitations once they enter the work world. Mentoring programs have become

**Many of the younger generation, who have been socialized in what America likes to see as a "post-racial society," get their first wake-up call to limitations once they enter the work world.**

much more important as people have debates with themselves about to how to react to various situations. Local, state and national governmental agencies are losing out as talented people choose to seek private-sector employment.

We are working to help free young people from the constraints older black Americans endured in public service and encourage them to reach for what ought to be when one chooses to serve our country.

BIG is doing its part to help America achieve its own greatness. If we want to be that beacon for the world, we must help create an environment in which everyone's individual light can shine to brighten the darkness.

In support of the U.S. Constitution, BIG works to operationalize equal opportunity and make it a reality in the life of every public service employee.



*Marcus Singleton serves as the branch chief of overseas security programs in the Office of Security, International Security Programs Division at USAID. He is the president of the USAID chapter of BIG.*



# Executive Women @ State: Breaking Barriers

BY SUSAN STEVENSON

Executive Women @ State was launched in 2007 by a small group of former U.S. Information Agency officers trying to replicate the agency’s Women’s Action Organization at the much larger and more complex State Department. Seeing the value of a strong women’s professional network and support for women’s advancement, they wanted to pursue those goals at State.

At the time, the department had its second female Secretary of State and several women in leadership positions. A 2009 presentation by the Bureau of Public

Affairs Office of the Historian reminded us that:

- The first woman employee was a typist hired in the 1890s.
- The first female FSO was hired in the 1920s but had to resign when she married.
- It wasn’t until the 1970s that the “marriage rule” was abolished, allowing married women to serve as FSOs.
- We now have more female ambassadors, assistant secretaries, deputy assistant secretaries, directors and Senior Foreign and Executive Service members than ever before. Women comprise 40 percent of the State Department workforce, up from 27 percent in 1994.

Many would say the gender wars have been won. But the proportion of women in the Foreign Service has not changed for the past decade, hovering at 30 percent, and the shift to more administrative jobs in the Civil Service has moved many women out of clerical positions—but not necessarily into senior ranks. Partnering with the Office of Civil Rights, EW@S has endeavored to host programs, seminars, focus groups and discussions with senior leaders to explore the barriers that still exist for women.

Currently EW@S’s challenge is to demonstrate to State Department leaders—many of whom are female political

**Currently EW@S’s challenge is to demonstrate to State Department leaders—many of whom are female political appointees—that there is a problem.**

appointees—that there is a problem. HR has agreed to start in-depth exit interviews to learn why women are leaving State at all levels, and we are working with the Foreign Service Institute to tackle unconscious bias that could be holding women back.

We also want to encourage more women to apply for leadership positions to serve as role models, catalysts and mentors for the next generation. This year’s Women’s History Month event featured American University Associate Professor of Government Jennifer Lawless, whose exhaustive research showed that women didn’t run for political office (where they were just as likely to win as men) for the simple reason that no one encouraged them to do so. When they received encouragement, they were more likely than men to dismiss it; and they felt that they had to be twice as good as men to be taken seriously. That could be why more women are not putting themselves forward for deputy chief of mission or chief of mission roles here at the

State Department.

EW@S’s mission is to promote, support and mentor women for senior leadership positions in the department. Specifically, we are committed to:

- Advocating an increase in the number of career women in senior positions
- Overcoming barriers for advancement and retention of women
- Expanding engagement with senior non-career leaders and potential community
- Mentoring the next generation of women leaders.

EW@S now has 1,500 members and a sister organization at USAID. We’ve become active with women in the intelligence services, who have conducted research to see what is preventing women from reaching senior levels there. We have affiliate groups at the mid-level (Associates) and entry-level/junior levels (EJs) to mentor the next generation. From our humble beginnings as a handful of officers in 2007, it is clear that EW@S is fulfilling a need in the community.



*Susan Stevenson is the EW@S second vice president. She is a public diplomacy-coned Senior Foreign Service officer working for the under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs. Juggling a private-sector spouse and three children, she has spent most of her career in East Asia.*



Arab-Americans  
in Foreign Affairs  
Agencies



Deputy Secretary of Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom (center) opened AAIFAA's first social event on Feb. 26. To her right, in the foreground, are AAIFAA Interim Chair Khulood Kandil, AAIFAA Interim Vice Chair Dr. Charles Kiamie III and AAIFAA Founder Jamal Al-Mussawi.

## Celebrating Arab-Americans in Foreign Affairs

BY JAMAL AL-MUSSAWI

In May 2014, the State Department welcomed one of its newest employee affinity groups, Arab-Americans in Foreign Affairs Agencies. Led by an interagency executive board comprised of Civil and Foreign Service professionals, AAIFAA has drawn more than 100 members from throughout the foreign affairs community in its first year alone.

AAIFAA's goal is twofold: to expand workplace diversity and serve as a resource for senior leaders interested in enhancing the department's relationship with Arab-Americans. Deputy Secretaries Antony Blinken and Heather Higginbottom and Director General Arnold Chacón have personally welcomed the creation of the group.

Open to all foreign affairs professionals regardless of their hiring status or background, AAIFAA promotes and applies the cultural, linguistic, personal and professional assets that Arab-Americans and those with an affinity toward the Arab world share. As with other ethnic- and minority-based employee groups, it is also a forum for sharing ideas and experiences among Arab-Americans throughout the interagency community.

To carry out its mission, AAIFAA participates in employee recruitment drives, organizes brown-bag discussions with Civil and Foreign Service personnel, and meets with other employee affinity groups (EAGs). Through interactive meetings, A-100 gatherings and discussions with the Office of Civil Rights, AAIFAA also assists diplomats-in-residence, human resources professionals and Foreign Service retirees to inform prospective Civil Service and Foreign Service employees about the work of the department

and the other foreign affairs agencies.

At State, AAIFAA is working with bureaus to attract a diverse selection of bidders by demonstrating how particular sets of skills can adapt to assignments in a variety of regions, fields and specialties. For example, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Iran and Middle East watchers—reporting officers based in Western European capitals—are among many such examples.

Focusing on both professional development and social networking, AAIFAA is also partnering with senior Arab-American and other leaders at the State Department and beyond to mentor staff seeking career advice. Distinguished ambassadors like Philip Habib, Susan Ziadeh and Ted Kattouf demonstrate Arab-American contributions to American diplomacy in areas of critical national interest. Following in their footsteps, AAIFAA seeks to harness the talent of the next generation of American diplomats.

Since its inception, AAIFAA has experienced rapid growth, thanks to its conviction that fostering and enhancing workplace diversity is not only a common goal across the department, but a necessity to make the foreign affairs community more representative of the diverse nation we represent, both at home and abroad. AAIFAA stands ready to continue paving the path toward greater diversity with its EAG partners, senior departmental leadership and anyone who supports that goal.

As a direct result of these efforts, the foreign affairs community has created more innovative and effective policymaking and advocacy strategies. AAIFAA's work is essential to realize the diversity-enhancement goals of the department, the federal government and our increasingly multicultural nation. ■



*Jamal Al-Mussawi was born in Basrah, Iraq, and grew up in Egypt and California. He joined the Foreign Service as a political-coned officer in 2005, following three years as a contractor in the Foreign Service Institute's political training division. He has served in Bishkek, Bridgetown and Bratislava, and is now studying Arabic at FSI in preparation for his assignment as the political/economic section chief in Muscat in July. He is the founder of Arab-Americans in Foreign Affairs Agencies.*

# The United States and Latin America:

## Individuals vs. Institutions

Understanding the “two paths” in Latin America can lead to effective, long-term policies toward our neighbors.

BY THOMAS E. MCNAMARA

**D**espite modern communications, increased migration, trade and industrial integration, and technological advances, the United States and Latin America still do not understand each other as well as we should. This hemisphere is our neighborhood, and unlike citizens who move from one neighborhood to another, a nation’s neighborhood is permanently fixed. With that in mind, I want to highlight an important impetus for change in our neighborhood, which can reduce the misunderstanding if we recognize and encourage it.

There are two paths in Latin American politics which most Americans do not know. To maintain political order, one path relies on personalism (personalismo); i.e., individual leaders.



*Thomas E. McNamara, a retired career Senior Foreign Service officer, served as assistant secretary of State for political-military affairs, ambassador to Colombia and ambassador-at-large for counterterrorism, among many other assignments. He also worked on the National*

*Security Council staff under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. An earlier version of this essay was delivered as a lecture at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.*

The second relies on democratic institutionalism; i.e., civil institutions. The Western Hemisphere will be affected by which path dominates Latin America’s future.

To be sure, this theory does not explain all of Latin American politics or regional relations because history is more complicated. But the struggle outlined here has been fundamental for 200 years, and must be understood.

### Caudillismo in Latin America

Personalismo (the cult of personality), and its variant, caudillismo (control by a dictatorial leader), are deeply rooted in Latin American, Spanish and Portuguese history. They have dominated Latin American politics since the conquistadors (Cortez, Pizarro, etc.) and were the entrenched political culture during the independence struggles of Bolívar, San Martín, O’Higgins and others. Of course, the phenomenon is not unique to Latin America—think of Stalin, Hitler and lesser examples of tyrants like Mobutu, Qaddafi and Sukarno, “the divine right of kings” and imperial rulers. But in modern industrial democracies, personalismo is a plague on society.

This approach elevates a caudillo (leader) to supreme leadership, often with demigod status. Policies, programs and ideologies are named for him (e.g., Peronismo, Fidelismo, Sandinismo). In such a culture the leader turns institutions into personal tools of power. Any that resist are subverted, exiled or destroyed; a few are

kept as control mechanisms.

Under caudillo rule, corruption is endemic, beginning with the legal system. The rule of law cannot exist without strong, independent political, judicial and social institutions because the law is never self-implementing. It requires agents to make, interpret and execute it. In successful modern societies, separate civil institutions perform the three functions. Dictators, however, usurp all three.

Caudillos come in all shapes, sizes and flavors. They are tactically smart, if superficial, thinkers, who borrow ideologies that reflect the temper of their times. Early in the 20th century, they adopted national-socialist, right-of-center ideologies (e.g., Peron, Trujillo, Somoza, Batista). With fascism discredited, later caudillos embraced Marxism (e.g., Castro, Ortega, Chavez, Morales; Pinochet is the exception).

Wherever they are on the political spectrum, caudillos practice populism and repression. Most are initially elected, but as their popularity weakens, they use brute force. Peaceful transitions are possible, but unusual.

A century ago, Argentina was considered the rising power of the hemisphere. But personalismo has so stifled Argentine politics that institutions cannot stabilize and modernize the nation. Peronism has been a populist political force in Argentina for 70 years; yet Peron has been dead for more than 40 years. Successive Peronist leaders freely redefine the term to suit their needs, and the party dutifully follows.

“Bolivarianismo,” espoused in Venezuela by Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro, is named for a caudillo who has been dead for nearly 200 years. (Imagine a U.S. president governing on a political platform of “George Washingtonism.”) Chávez wrapped himself in reflected glory for political ends, a recipe for instability and corruption. Caudillismo persists in Argentina, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua.

### **The Alternative: Democratic Institutionalism**

The second path, democratic institutionalism, is less firmly rooted in Latin American history, although democratic ideals go back to the independence period. Only after World War II did it gain traction, albeit still the weaker tradition, with an uncertain future. But recently, support for democratic institutions has shown significant growth and electoral success in several countries.

In modern democracies, independent institutions (aka “civil society”) are the foundation of political and economic order, and

Wherever they are on the political spectrum, caudillos practice populism and repression.

of social conventions. They support relatively stable, predictable, fair and peaceful processes. Laws and institutions take precedence over leaders. Leaders are subject to political processes they cannot control (elections, courts, individual liberty) or only partially control (legislation, regulations, appointments to office).

Civil institutions are influenced in return, but they have independent interests, perspectives and objectives.

When developed, democratic institutionalism is stable and progressive because it creates “countervailing power” by distributing power widely. It takes time to develop institutions, and even more time to develop a tradition of relying on them—but eventually a tradition alters attitudes and values, and becomes the dominant culture. It is time for this “hemisphere of liberty,” as Germán Arciniegas called it, to reexamine what constitutes the true foundations of democracy. Free and fair elections are necessary; but they are indicators, not proof, of democracy. After all, a nation can organize fair elections while being fleetingly democratic, or undemocratic.

Multiple, independent institutions are democracy’s anchors. They are accountable to, and respond to, the needs of different sectors of society, but are collectively accountable to the nation. Primary among these are a strong, independent judiciary, an uncorrupted legislature and free-market economic institutions. Without democratic institutionalism, democracy is an illusion or a short-lived phenomenon.

Latin America has these institutions, but their influence is limited because many democratic leaders practice personalism and not institutionalism. In Argentina, not all presidents have been caudillos; but the democratic ones have never effectively countered the caudillo tradition. Likewise, Venezuela’s Rómulo Betancourt was a democrat, but his personalismo lacked focus on the institutions needed to build democracy. Institutionalism is stronger in some countries, and by identifying recent successes and supporting them, we can strengthen maturing democracy. Here are some hopeful and not-so-hopeful examples.

### **The Institutional Approach: Colombia and Chile in the Lead**

Colombia experienced the caudillismo of the colonial and independence periods, and the 19th century saw partisan warfare over centralism vs. federalism. Cultural change arrived by the 1890s through a conservative oligarchy that ruled for 40 years.

During the 20th century, instead of turning to a caudillo, Colombia has elected leaders who value institutional primacy over personal power. Indeed, for a century, Colombia has had only one dictator, Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who was given power in 1953 by the political parties, which then took it away in 1957—a unique occurrence in Latin America.

In the 1980s, the country was confused and demoralized by years of murderous guerrilla and mafia violence that caused some Colombians to support “peace at any price.” President Virgilio Barco built a national capability that confronted both threats, convincing the nation that it could defeat them. Then, he stepped down after one term. His three successors likewise each served one constitutionally limited term. The presidency of Colombia is held in greater esteem than any of its incumbents. And all recent incumbents, save Alvaro Uribe, have understood this.

Colombia benefits from another strong anchor, as well. From 1933 until 1999, the country enjoyed uninterrupted economic growth. Despite its civil conflicts, it has averaged more than 4-percent annual growth since the 1950s. This singular economic feat is mainly due to the country’s respected and well-run government and private economic institutions, which have made Colombia Latin America’s third-largest economy.

By the 1980s, brutal assassinations and bribery by narco-traffickers weakened Colombia’s judicial institutions and the rule of law. Constitutional reforms in 1991 created a prosecutorial system and strengthened institutions, but did not bend them to executive will. Today the narco-mafias are splintered, the narco-guerrillas are suing for peace, and a solid institutional base exists for long-term political, economic and social growth and stability.

Chile’s early history was also steeped in caudillismo. It spent the 19th century enlarging its territory at the expense of its neighbors, capping the century with a civil war among its own oligarchs and military. Democratic institutions with a centralized national government developed during the last century, despite twice being interrupted by long military dictatorships. The second, Augusto Pinochet’s 1973 coup, crushed democracy, but built a strong, “Chicago School” economy, which survived Pinochet’s overthrow in 1990.

The economic institutions built in the preceding 70 years were kept by the democratic leaders who followed Pinochet. As in Colombia, the economic base has supported Chile during its last, tumultuous 35 years, allowing it to become a strong institutional-

It is no exaggeration to say that political pluralism and institutional development in Mexico grew from economic modernization.

ized democracy with a free-market economic base.

### **A Transition Still In Progress: Mexico**

Mexico is a society moving toward democratic institutionalism. For 70 years, Mexico was governed by what Mario Vargas

Llosa called “the perfect dictatorship”—uninterrupted single-party rule. The Institutional Revolutionary Party’s goals equaled the nation’s goals; the PRI funded opposition parties; corruption weakened institutions; an educated elite was coopted; and popular discontent was suppressed. Mexico had an uninterrupted string of “six-year caudillos,” as each president served one term and transferred power peacefully. Meanwhile, the United States and other democratic nations dealt with the PRI’s dictatorship as if it were not one.

In 1993 and 1994, Presidents Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo led Mexico into the North American Free Trade Agreement. NAFTA was a turning point, as its benefits unexpectedly transcended economics, imparting new energy and confidence to Mexico’s growing middle class and private sector. Equally important, after decades of political stagnation, Zedillo addressed serious social problems and conducted free and fair elections.

Mexico’s traditional, anti-gringo, “victimization” ideology gave way to flexible realism. The new Mexico understands that its future depends on a new path. It is no exaggeration to say that political pluralism and institutional development in Mexico grew from economic modernization. Still, Mexico has a long way to go. The old, ingrained PRI culture resists modernization, and development varies from region to region and sector to sector.

President Enrique Peña Nieto must reassert sovereignty over the narco-mafias because these criminals operate with impunity. Reestablishing government control along the U.S. border and through northern and central Mexico will be difficult, long and bloody. Efforts by the last three presidents to confront the mafias have been greatly complicated by remnants of the decrepit, old culture.

Like Colombians, Mexicans can take back their country—but the outcome will remain in question for years.

### **Brazil: A Hesitant Transition**

South America’s largest country spent most of the past century ruled by civilian or military caudillos, who depended on one national institution: the army. Brazil stagnated under a weak con-



stitution, regional conflicts, crony capitalism and lack of institutional modernization. President Getulio Vargas' domination of politics for a quarter-century, followed by a military dictatorship, is an excellent example of the curse of the caudillos.

The transition to democracy and institution-building in Brazil began in the 1990s under two presidents, Itamar Franco and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who led democratic modernization by restructuring economic institutions. In eight years, Cardoso put Brazil on the road to economic and political modernization, then turned over the presidency to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, his opponent in both previous elections.

Despite a radically different background, Lula continued Cardoso's institutionalization efforts, and after eight years, handed off to Dilma Rousseff, the current incumbent. Under her presidency, Brazil's transition is showing serious strains from economic setbacks, corruption and protests.

What used to be ironically called "the country of the future," because the future never arrived there, may remain stuck in the past unless it perseveres on its new path. Of all the region's countries on the institutional path, Brazil has the largest hurdles in its way, and the farthest to go.

### **Caudillo Culture: Venezuela's Curse**

Caudillo politics in Venezuela have kept an otherwise wealthy country far poorer than it should be. Arguably, Venezuela's first free, democratic election was in the 1950s. Since then, Venezuelan leaders practiced personalismo, rather than creating independent, democratic institutions.

Today, the economy is in free fall. Oil revenues have plummeted; inflation is running at more than 100 percent a year; black market currency trades at seven to eight times the official rate; and default on national debt is a near-term likelihood. Venezuela is the lowest-ranked nation in the Western Hemisphere on Transparency International's corruption list, and suffers from electrical blackouts and horrendous street crime. All this in a country sitting atop the largest reserves of oil in the world. Yet, Chávez's hapless successor, Nicolás Maduro, wants more power to save Venezuela from external enemies—not internal failures.

The tragedy of Venezuela is that it has been addicted to oil for generations. This causes national deliriums of nonexistent wealth and power, and leads to disdain for healthy institutions, discipline

The second path, democratic institutionalism, is less firmly rooted in Latin American history, although democratic ideals go back to the independence period.

and planning. Venezuela should look to neighbors like Colombia and Mexico, which struggle with their own demons, but are far better off.

### **The Maximum Caudillo: Cuba**

Fidel Castro is the exemplar of a caudillo whose brutality, power and charisma are

unmatched by other practitioners of the art. He began with a muddle-minded, leftist ideology before swallowing Marxism-Leninism whole, eliminating rivals, merging his disparate movement with the Cuban Communist Party and allying with the Soviet Union. He is the only caudillo to have made that last mistake. His subversion in the Western Hemisphere and militarism in Africa assisted the United States in a relatively successful isolation of Havana during the Cold War. Afterward, most Latin and European nations ignored the embargo and normalized relations with a Cuba weakened and incapable of subversion or militarism.

Cold War containment was a global commitment to counter expansionist policies of the Soviet Union wherever possible, including Cuba. Containment of Cuba was also consistent with American diplomacy supporting the Monroe Doctrine. The Soviet challenge to that doctrine and the danger of Castro to the hemisphere were demonstrated early, when the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis caused the most dangerous clash of the Cold War, reinforcing the value of the policy.

Containment and the embargo made strategic sense during the Cold War, but not since. It is futile to argue that Cuba must be isolated, when Russia is a shadow of the USSR, and neither threatens the neighborhood. When political reality changes, policy must adjust or become irrelevant. Our policy became irrelevant. Ironically, it isolated us by preventing us from influencing the coming changes in Cuba.

Heretofore, we have been hobbled by a peculiar problem. The United States has had no foreign policies with two countries—Israel and Cuba. It has had domestic policies. Relations with these nations have been determined overwhelmingly in the White House and Congress for domestic political reasons, which sometimes coincide with our national security interests. In the past two decades, even when we understood the forces at play in Cuba and attempted to influence them, we were unable to apply coherent policies to achieve our goals. Our national interests

require engaging in Cuba to foster change and move Cuba toward a better future.

Fortunately, President Barack Obama has ordered a comprehensive overhaul of our failed Cuban policy in an effort to change Cuba. How? Neither Obama, nor Raul Castro, nor anyone can know. But the actuarial tables for the Castro brothers tell us change is imminent. Raul hopes for a China-like outcome, but fears a Russia-like outcome. Change is his enemy; the more rapid and fundamental, the more dangerous for him. A wise policy will engage with the weakened regime. We dealt successfully with Stalin, Mao and others. Surely we can do so with the Castro brothers. Diplomacy, which led the United States to success in the Cold War and to assist Chinese leaders in moving their country out of the miasma of Maoism, can be an important tool for us in Cuba. But we must give ourselves the possibility of employing it.

Even so, one big negative is the caudillo factor. Only one entity in Cuba is a strong, unitary, disciplined, ubiquitous, well-armed national institution: the Cuban Army. It has a hand in every aspect of Cuban society. The Cuban Communist Party is another unitary, ubiquitous national institution, but not disciplined or well-armed. It also has the burden of having created a failed “Fidelismo” ideology, a failed economy and a corrupt society. In its current sclerotic condition, the party is unlikely to muster the energy or imagination to lead fundamental change. Therefore, the most likely outcome is an army-led continuation of caudillismo. Only a wise policy, executed in cooperation with our neighbors and the Europeans, can make a better outcome possible.

## Time for a New Approach

Since the Cold War ended, the United States has failed to reassess its global position, much less develop a thoughtful national security strategy. Many of our international difficulties are explained by this failure to set priorities and apply our resources strategically. Instead, we lurch from crisis to crisis guided, at best, by tactical objectives. Our hemispheric policies suffer from this underlying failure, as well.

How we deal with our neighbors further complicates hemispheric relations. Our attention to each region is partial, episodic and crisis-centered. We are the only nation that treats its neighborhood as just another global region. In part, we do this because it is rarely in crisis. Latin America is better governed, more stable and democratic, and less crisis-ridden and poor than most of

# Caudillo politics in Venezuela have kept an otherwise wealthy country far poorer than it should be.

Africa, Asia or the Middle East. It would get more attention, ironically, were it more crisis-ridden.

There are important lessons for us in this. With the right policies and the right leaders, the potential to develop strong democratic institutions in Latin America is

greater than in most of the rest of the world. Introspection and self-evaluation do not come easily to our southern neighbors, however. They must accept that they and their culture are, and have been, the primary force determining their destiny—not the “Colossus of the North.” Conversely, we must learn that our way is not always their way. And to play a constructive role, we need to develop a stronger commitment to, and deeper understanding of, our neighborhood.

Caudillos will not disappear soon, alas. So, wherever possible, we should engage with them diplomatically, but openly support an institutional path to democracy, even if that advocacy damages our relations. In addition, millions of people throughout the hemisphere who are excluded from political, social and economic opportunity by abject poverty and lack of education need to be brought into the mainstream for long-term stability and prosperity.

Hemispheric free trade and economic cooperation should be a cornerstone strategic goal of the United States. To succeed, we need to give the president fast-track authority to negotiate trade agreements. Not surprisingly, nations on the institutional path have, also, been hemispheric leaders in trade and economic cooperation inside the neighborhood and beyond. Colombia, Mexico, Chile and Peru are leaders in the Pacific Alliance along with Costa Rica, another nation practicing institutionalism. The Trans-Pacific Partnership counts Chile, Peru and Mexico among its 12 members.

There are reasons for optimism. Four of the five most populous nations with 75 percent of the region’s population and six of the top 10 economies have started, or are advanced, on the path of democratic institutionalism. It is not an accident that economic reforms were the driving force behind democratic change in Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Brazil. Effective economic institutions have shown a capacity for beneficial spillover effects on political and social developments in Latin America.

Yet progress is not easy or quickly achieved. Institutionalized democracy in Latin America has been, heretofore, the path less traveled; but should our neighbors decide to take it, it will make all the difference. ■

## AFSA Hosts Town Hall Meetings with 2015-2017 Governing Board Candidates

The AFSA Election Committee sponsored a series of town hall meetings on the 2015-2017 elections. These were held on March 25 at USAID, March 30 at the Foreign Service Institute, April 7 at State and April 8 at AFSA headquarters.

Each meeting opened with comments from moderator Robert Farrand, chair of the Election Committee. Presidential candidates then made two-minute statements.

Candidates running for AFSA president are: Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, leading the Strong Diplomacy slate; current AFSA State Vice President Matthew Asada, leading the Future Forward AFSA slate; and current Governing Board member Tex Harris, who is running independently.

Candidates for other Governing Board positions in attendance then made statements before the floor was

opened to questions from the audience.

For coverage of the 2015 AFSA Governing Board election and videos of all town hall meetings go to [www.afsa.org/elections](http://www.afsa.org/elections).

The voting deadline is June 4 at 8 a.m. EST. Votes will be tallied on June 4 and the new AFSA Governing Board will take office on July 15. ■

—Brittany DeLong,  
Assistant Editor



AFSA presidential candidates speak at the Loy Henderson Auditorium at the State Department on April 7. From left: Election Committee Chair Robert Farrand, Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, AFSA State Vice President Matthew Asada and AFSA Governing Board member Tex Harris.

## AFSA Welcomes QDDR Release

On April 28, the State Department released the 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review titled "Enduring Leadership in a Dynamic World."

A four-year blueprint for State and U.S. Agency for International Development activities, the report is

intended to make operations more efficient, accountable and effective in addressing today's global challenges.

The first QDDR was issued in 2010, under then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Secretary of State John Kerry launched the process for the second

report when he appointed former Virginia congressman Tom Perriello as special representative for the QDDR in February 2014.

The special representative's task was not simple. In his remarks announcing the QDDR's release, Sec. Kerry

*Continued on page 63*

## CALENDAR

June 2  
11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.  
Luncheon: Incoming  
USAID Class

June 3  
12-2 p.m.  
AFSA Governing  
Board Meeting

June 4  
8 a.m.  
AFSA Election Voting Deadline

June 4  
AFSA Election Ballot Tally

June 7-12  
AFSA Road Scholar Program  
Chautauqua, N.Y.

June 9  
4-6 p.m.  
AFSA Awards Ceremony

June 10  
12:45-1:45 p.m.  
Luncheon: 182nd A-100 Class  
and 7th CA-LN Class

June 11  
AFSA Book Notes:  
American Ambassadors

June 26  
AFSA Closes at 11 a.m. for  
Annual Staff Picnic

July 1  
12-2 p.m.  
AFSA Governing  
Board Meeting

July 3  
Independence Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed

July 15  
New AFSA Governing Board  
Takes Office

August 5  
AFSA Governing  
Board Meeting

August 26  
9th Annual Adair Lecture  
at American University



## Congressional Advocacy

As members of the executive branch, we are sometimes quick to criticize legislative branch “interference” in the president’s foreign policy prerogative and all too often forget Congress’ constitutionally defined legislative oversight and “advice and consent” roles. This month, I want to describe some of AFSA’s congressional advocacy on behalf of members of the Foreign Service and their families.

**The People:** AFSA is fortunate to have a strong advocacy department with two full-time and two part-time AFSA professional staff who are focused on building relationships with federal, state and city officials and outside organizations. This Governing Board has prioritized AFSA’s expenditure of resources to increase the number of professional staff and provide the advocacy tools necessary to conduct successful member advocacy campaigns.

AFSA also has an independently financed political action committee (PAC) founded and chaired by Ambassador (Ret.) Tom Boyatt, which supports House and Senate candidates in national elections from both sides of the aisle.

Last cycle, the PAC distributed \$40,000 to Republicans and Democrats running for the House and Senate, none of which came from your union dues, all of which

was expressly donated.

However, most important to any of our efforts, are you—the AFSA members—and your families. You are residents, taxpayers and voters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. As such, you have influence on an individual constituent level. This may be in the form of direct advocacy when back on home leave or while taking annual leave here in Washington. Or it could be simply talking about what life is like as a member of the Foreign Service with a member of a congressional or staff delegation visiting your post.

**Priorities:** Last fall the AFSA Governing Board approved a strategic plan (see [www.bit.ly/1EJ9aWO](http://www.bit.ly/1EJ9aWO)) focused on improving benefits and quality of work/life, career and professional development, and security. We captured the key congressional priorities in a one-pager (see [www.bit.ly/1KApRVa](http://www.bit.ly/1KApRVa)) for use at meetings with congressional staff, such as our 2014 and 2015 Advocacy Days.

**Section 326:** New this year was AFSA’s two-page Section 326 report on the “State of the Foreign Service Workforce” (see p. 60). For the first time in 15 years, the department transmitted to the House and Senate AFSA’s congressionally mandated submission, which reflects

concerns raised by the post-9/11 increase in the size of the Foreign Service, the elimination of the mid-level deficits, and retention and diversity issues.

**Reauthorization:** AFSA submitted a separate white paper to our House and Senate authorizing committees for consideration as they draft a Department of State authorization bill. It has been more than a dozen years since Congress passed, and the president signed into law, a State Department authorization.

AFSA wanted to ensure that our committees were aware of key employee priorities such as permanent authorization of Overseas Comparability Pay for the entire Foreign Service (not just the Senior Foreign Service) and Foreign Service-relevant provisions of the Service Members’ Civil Relief Act. As I write this, AFSA is engaged in a daily exchange with our authorizers as they finalize text.

**Appropriations:** For the first time in several years, AFSA also submitted written testimony to the House and Senate appropriations committees, as part of the department’s annual appropriations process, making the case for Overseas Comparability Pay, as well as for the \$99.1 million request for the Foreign Affairs Security

Training Center in Ft. Pickett, Virginia. AFSA has advocated for the construction of this hard-skills training facility to ensure that our men and women receive the training necessary to safely and effectively engage overseas.

**Confirmation:** This year and last year, AFSA worked closely with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to ensure full Senate confirmation of Foreign Service officers’ initial appointment and tenure, and promotion of members into and within the Senior Foreign Service.

**Fellows:** One of my favorite assignments was as an American Political Science Association congressional fellow on the Hill with then-Representative, now-Senator Gary Peters (D-Mich.). I have drawn on those lessons learned to help lead AFSA’s congressional engagement on your behalf, and I highly recommend colleagues consider an APSA or Pearson congressional fellowship.

However, wherever you are, AFSA looks forward to mobilizing you and our more than 16,000 members to help make the case for maintaining what Secretary John Kerry has referred to as “the world’s premier diplomatic and development corps.” ■

*Next month: Farewell as State Vice President*



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FCS VP.  
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## Foreign Service Diversity and the Civil Rights Act of 1964

In light of this month's *FSJ* focus on diversity, I am pleased to turn my column over to Commercial Service Officer Tamarind Murrietta, who wrote the following introduction and letter to Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker.

—Steve Morrison

*Last July, I accepted a position as a Foreign Commercial Service officer and was officially sworn in by Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker. That month, the country celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.*

*I was pleased with the coincidence and began reflecting on the need to address diversity in the diplomatic corps. This led me to send an email to Sec. Pritzker thanking her for swearing us in and highlighting the significance of this occasion.*

*Just recently, I read a column by Gary Silverman in the Financial Times in which he reflected on race in America. He concluded that black lives are not valued the same as white lives in the United States. Mr. Silverman said this is a "particular kind of made-in-America pain."*

*Programs advocating and addressing diversity and equal rights are still needed today. In addition, decades of movement toward equality, including the passage of that vital legislation, should not go under-recognized or under-valued.*

*To that end, I would like to share with fellow AFSA members my message to Sec. Pritzker:*

On the dawn of the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, I paused to reflect on this life-changing legislation. The anniversary was especially noteworthy for me since it coincided with my swearing-in as a U.S. diplomat. The stories of leaps and bounds, pain and suffering recited by my ancestors have made me appreciate the significance of this moment.

While my grandmother was valedictorian of her graduating class and brought oratorical fireworks to her recitation of writings such as "Invictus," she remained primarily a housekeeper and office secretary for most of her life. As fortunate as my grandmother's life has been, and as fortunate as we are to have her in ours, she paid the price for arriving before this momentous act was passed.

As her granddaughter, I exemplify all that can now be attained due in some way to an act that gives all of us the opportunity to be the architects of our own lives.

Being sworn in as a commercial diplomat, I have the remarkable authority to represent our great country in commercial and business affairs, as well as assist small businesses to grow by exporting their products to

other cultures and communities globally. These businesses are essential to American growth.

The anniversary of the Civil Rights Act reminds me of the unparalleled contribution of my ancestors, which steered the existence of the America we see today. My ancestors—the backbone of this great country—led us to the signing of an act that paved the road to my swearing-in. Their great undertakings allowed me to not only fulfill my dreams, but also those of my grandmother, my ancestors and our entire country.

For me and those I love, the occasion of my swearing in was doubly celebratory, landing as it did on this historic anniversary.

As current recruits submit applications for this exciting career, I continue to stand by our organization's efforts to increase the diversity of all who represent it. Racial and gender minorities make up a

small percentage of our commercial diplomatic corps. I offer to work tirelessly to contribute to increasing the representation of all and inciting hope in the many others who have benefitted from the Civil Rights Act and worked so hard to achieve the qualifications necessary to join the U.S. Foreign Service. This hard work is the continuation of the labor of so many.

Madame Secretary, thank you for taking the time to swear in my colleagues and me as the newest group of commercial diplomats. And thank you for taking part in something that has caused my grandmother to wear a proud smile and my ancestors to give a nod of approval. ■

—Tamarind Murrietta

*Tamarind Murrietta is a Foreign Commercial Service FSO currently serving in Nairobi on her first assignment. She joined the Foreign Service in 2014.*

### NEWS BRIEF

#### FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL SALUTES JIM DEHART



AFSA/DEBARLOME

In April, the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board bid farewell to its chair, Jim DeHart, who is departing for his next assignment, as deputy chief of mission in Oslo. AFSA thanks Jim for his service and wishes him well in Oslo. ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA Retiree VP. Contact: lawrencecohenassociates@hotmail.com or (703) 437-7881

## The Case for Mentoring

### men • tor

*v. advise or train  
(someone, especially a  
younger colleague)  
n. a trusted counselor or guide*

The Department of State's Core Precepts provide guidelines by which selection boards determine the promotability of Foreign Service employees. They are, in the words of the department, a "collection of competencies" determined to be essential to a successful Foreign Service career. Throughout, the precepts emphasize the role of mentoring and assisting others to achieve mission goals. Regarding mentoring, the precepts are both explicit, (e.g., "ensures the

*professional development and mentoring of staff") and implicit, (e.g., "actively develops the skills of subordinates or colleagues").*

Permit me to go out on a limb. While mentoring is clearly core to the principles of career development, it is not something the Department of State, its managers or its leadership as a whole has done very well to date.

The stress of overseas service in U.S. diplomatic missions can be overwhelming. Feedback or guidance from supervisors or basic job knowledge may be lacking. Without proper remedy, tensions among staff can demoralize an entire mission. Personnel new to the Foreign

Service and locally employed (LE) staff, overwhelmed culturally by the demands of their American bosses, may suffer disproportionately.

This brings me to reemployed annuitants, or WAEers (When Actually Employed). I have written previously about the WAE program. Specifically, I identified the difficulties retirees report in navigating the program, the shortcomings of the newly created central registry and resource inefficiencies throughout the system.

One thing, I believe, remains unquestioned. WAEers themselves possess skills and experience pertinent to their active-duty colleagues and, specifically,

to their professional development.

For bureaus and posts WAEers are an extraordinary resource, able to hit the ground running. But they could be much more. Since they are already retired, WAEers are not beholden to the evaluation and promotion process and should not fear—as is unfortunately true for many active-duty employees—career-harmful retribution. They ought to feel free to speak their minds, offer guidance and advice, and, yes, mentor colleagues, including LE staff. Who better to understand the challenges than those who have been there before?

Bureaus and posts can better tap the WAE talent in their midst. Mentoring, and even training, can be included as a component of an individual's assignment. Moreover, when the need is evident, WAEers themselves should take up the mantle to assist and guide.

In my own case, when on WAE assignment, I try to deliver basic tradecraft classes for LE staff on such topics as writing, note-taking, briefing and public speaking. Their response is overwhelmingly positive. They especially appreciate that someone, voluntarily, is helping them enhance their own professionalism.

Let's dare ourselves to mentor. ■

### NEWS BRIEF

#### AFSA LAUNCHES PALMER AWARD FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF DEMOCRACY



On April 21, members of the AFSA Awards Committee met with Dr. Sushma Palmer to mark the launch of the awards judging process. This year was the first time the panel considered nominees for the new Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy. Dr. Palmer established the award in honor of her

late husband, Ambassador Mark Palmer, a Foreign Service officer who championed democracy and human rights throughout his career. From left: Perri Green, Todd Andrews, Sharon Wayne, Janice Bay, Dr. Sushma Palmer, Ambassador Steve E. Steiner, Dan Martinez, Ruth Hall and Peter Swiers. ■

## Second Annual Advocacy Day: AFSA Brings the Foreign Service to the Hill



From left: AFSA Director of Advocacy Javier Cuebas, AFSA USAID Vice President Sharon Wayne, guests of honor Susan Bartley and Edith Bartley, AFSA President Robert J. Silverman and AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston.

The American Foreign Service Association spent a day—and an evening—on the Hill on April 15, meeting members of Congress and their staffs to discuss the importance of the Foreign Service to national security, economic development and job creation.

On AFSA's second annual Advocacy Day, AFSA Governing Board members and professional staff visited 12 congressional offices to talk about AFSA's priority issues of career and professional development, overseas security and Overseas Comparability Pay, as well as opportunities for collaboration with the Hill.

Congressional interlocutors were primarily staff of members of Congress who

currently serve as authorizers (Senate Foreign Relations Committee) and appropriators (House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs).

Meetings also included staffers from the offices of presidential hopeful Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Senate Appropriations State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee Chair Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.).

That evening, AFSA hosted its annual congressional reception at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center. AFSA President Robert J. Silverman welcomed congressional guests who came to listen to stories of the Foreign Service told by three speakers.

Rep. Barbara Lee

(D-Calif.), who recently returned from the Summit of the Americas in Panama, is a staunch supporter of diplomacy and development and currently serves on the House Appropriations Committee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs. She spoke passionately on the importance of the Foreign Service and the need to better educate her peers on the benefits of a strong and well-funded Service.

Ambassador Gerald M. Feierstein, currently the principal deputy assistant secretary in State's Bureau of Near East Affairs, talked about

of then-Senator Carl Levin (D-Mich.).

The final speaker, Edith Bartley, vice president of government affairs at the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, shared her own Foreign Service story of courage. Ms. Bartley's father and brother were killed in the 1998 attack on Embassy Nairobi.

FSO Julian Bartley Sr. had been consul general in Nairobi at the time of the attack and Julian Jr., Ms. Bartley's 20-year-old brother, had been working at the embassy for the summer.

Ms. Bartley, who was away at school when the attack happened, has since worked



AFSA hosted a reception on Capitol Hill in honor of Advocacy Day.

his personal experiences overseas. Amb. Feierstein joined the Foreign Service in 1975 and has served in Islamabad (twice), Tunis, Riyadh, Peshawar, Muscat, Jerusalem, Beirut and as ambassador to Yemen from 2010 to 2013. In addition, he discussed his experience as a Pearson Fellow in the office

tirelessly to advocate for victims of international terrorism and to get justice and compensation for Foreign Service families and other embassy employees killed in terrorist attacks while working abroad. ■

—Debra Blome,  
Associate Editor



## AFSA ON THE HILL

# AFSA Scores Victories, Garners Support

AFSA has been busy on the Hill this spring.

### Tenures and Promotions

Capitalizing on lessons learned last year, AFSA started working early with both majority and minority members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the State Department and USAID to urge confirmations of the Foreign Service tenure and promotion list.

Our efforts paid off. Just before leaving town for recess in March, the full Senate confirmed the commission, tenure and promotion of 374 members of the Foreign Service.

We look forward to continuing to work with Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) and minority members on other important initiatives such as the State Department Authorization bill.

### State Department Reauthorization

Congress has not passed an authorization bill for State since 2002, and given that different parties control the executive and legislative bodies, odds are against an authorization this year, as well. However, the authorization language will feed into the appropriations bills. That is why AFSA has been actively engaging the authorizers.

**“American diplomats and development professionals are the best examples of talented people who are on the front line for America.” —Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.)**

In fact, over the last two years, AFSA has met with members of Congress and staff from both sides of the aisle to discuss priorities such as Overseas Comparability Pay, security funding and professional development.

On April 15, we met with the staff of the SFRC’s ranking member, Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), to discuss these issues and convey our support for him in his new role. We have also simultaneously worked to partner with the foreign affairs agencies to advocate for OCP and other issues.

This year, the department submitted AFSA’s addendum to the department’s Section 326 report on the “State of the Foreign Service Workforce” (see p. 60). We also briefed Senate and House committee staff on Foreign Service-relevant provisions of the Service Members Civil Relief Act.

Thanks to these efforts and to members like you who have taken the time to call, write and/or email your elected officials, Congress better understands and val-

ues the Foreign Service, the sacrifices made by you and your families and the extraordinary contributions that you are making to the well-being of our country.

This progress was evident during the April 22 testimony by Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higginbottom before the SFRC on the department’s reauthorization.

In her opening statement, the Deputy Secretary made it clear that the administration’s “top priority is to secure [the third tranche of] OCP...” (To read her full statement, please visit [www.bit.ly/DMRSFRCtestimony](http://www.bit.ly/DMRSFRCtestimony).)

During the Q&A session, Senator Cardin publicly stated his support of full OCP and made it clear that he is ready to work with her and State to make it part of the 2016 State Department Authorization Act, adding, “American diplomats and development professionals are the best examples of talented people who are on the front line for America.”

Several other SFRC members joined the public praise

and recognized the importance of the Foreign Service: “These men and women are the best and the brightest,” Senator David Perdue (R-Ga.) said. “They’re working in very tough situations. They deserve our highest support, and they’re doing a fantastic job right now.”

This strong statement of support for OCP—the strongest made in the past several years—gets us closer to providing long overdue justice to rank-and-file Foreign Service employees and their families.

While we do not expect a reauthorization, most experts forecast either a continuing resolution or another “CRombus.” AFSA’s work with the authorizers will be key to preventing cuts to the international affairs budget (aka the “150 Account”) during the appropriations process.

### International Affairs Budget

The House passed its budget resolution (H.Con.Res. 27) on March 25, despite opposition by AFSA and the Federal-Postal Coalition to certain components. The measure



adheres to the Fiscal Year 2016 post-sequester Budget Control Act discretionary spending cap.

According to the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, the resolution, while bringing the budget into balance in FY2024, would also reduce the overall international affairs budget by 16 percent and its base funding by 7 percent. (To see the FPC letter, please visit [www.bit.ly/FPCletter](http://www.bit.ly/FPCletter).)

Meanwhile, the Senate passed its budget resolution (S.Con.Res. 11) on March 27, but not without a considerable joint effort by the Department of State's Bureau of Legislative Affairs and the USGLC—of which AFSA is a member—to defeat a problematic amendment by Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.).

Paul's proposal, which sought to increase defense spending by \$190 billion by cutting foreign assistance by 50 percent in addition to reducing several other domestic agency budgets, surprised even Washington insiders. Senators voting in favor of the defeated amendment included Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) and David Vitter (R-La.).

Now that both chambers have approved their respective budget resolutions, they are engaged in conference committee negotiations to reconcile the two versions. Once an agreement, also known as a conference report, is approved, each chamber's appropriations

committees will set the FY16 302(b) allocations for each of the 12 subcommittee appropriations bills, including the State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill.

### AFSA Needs Your Support

What we must do now is provide SFRC members with tangible support, particularly Chairman Corker, who has been an ally of the Foreign Service even before taking the reins of the committee.

AFSA has launched several additional advocacy initiatives aimed at educating members and staff about our issues and reminding them that you, your families and your communities are paying close attention to this process.

We ask you to stay tuned for our calls to action and our regular AFSA-net updates on the budget, authorization and appropriations process.

AFSA reminds active-duty Foreign Service employees that it is illegal to lobby Congress using official time or government resources including your .gov email account. Please make sure to read up on the Hatch Act (rules governing political activity by federal employees) and the regulations in the Anti-Lobbying Act before acting. ■

—Javier Cuebas,  
Director of Advocacy

## DACOR Hosts Vietnam Hands



COURTESY OF MICHAEL HACKER

Rufus Phillips (left), Michael Hacker (center) and Anton "Tony" Cistaro (right) were among those who attended DACOR's Vietnam post reunion. Phillips served in Vietnam from 1954 to 1968 in a number of capacities: as a U.S. Army officer, CIA case officer, USAID official and consultant to the Department of State (he wrote "Counterinsurgency in Vietnam: Lessons for Today" for the April 2015 FSJ). USAID FSOs Hacker and Cistaro met in the summer of 1967, when Cistaro recruited Hacker to serve with CORDS (Civil Operations and Rural Development Support) in Vietnam. The reunion at DACOR was the first time the men had seen each other in 45 years.

On April 9, DACOR hosted a Vietnam post reunion at Bacon House. The reunion was open to all who had served in Vietnam at any time.

The crowd of more than 60 diplomatic veterans was a mix of those who had been in Vietnam during the war years and those who served after relations were restored. One attendee had served there as early as 1952.

Following a welcome from DACOR member Bruce Kinsey, Scott Kofmehl, the State Department's Vietnam desk officer, gave a brief update on current relations between the United States and Vietnam. Much younger than most of the attendees, he expressed awe to be in the company of so many Vietnam hands, and recognized the historic role many of them played at the time.

DACOR Executive Director Susan Cimburek called the event a great success. "The strong bonds that united the attendees were evident and there was a great sense of camaraderie," she said.

"We often think of Vietnam as such a defining point for those who served there militarily," Cimburek added. "The reunion shows that those who served there diplomatically had equally profound experiences."

—Debra Blome, Associate Editor

## Working with Affinity Groups to Foster Diversity Across Foreign Affairs Agencies

How does an employer cultivate a diverse work force? It's not an easy task. And if the employer is the federal government and the workforce is spread across all the six foreign affairs agencies, the task is that much more complex.

A key factor in addressing the diversity challenge for the Foreign Service lies in partnerships with employee affinity groups. These groups are formed by individuals with a common interest or goal and are usually built around characteristics protected by equal employment opportunity regulations, such as race, gender and sexual orientation. They are, however, open to all employees and not limited to those of a certain gender, ethnic or racial background.

Employee affinity programs originally emerged during a time when it was rare to see members of marginalized groups in senior positions. For example, one of the oldest groups was founded in 1973 by two management-level U.S. Information Agency Foreign Service officers who saw the need to address a lack of diversity in the Foreign Service.

That group would come to be known as the Thursday Luncheon Group. TLG's goal is to focus on outreach and engagement with State

Department officials in order to advance long-term career opportunities for African-Americans in foreign affairs in both the Civil and Foreign Services.

Since TLG's early days, affinity groups have flourished and are now as varied as the personnel they serve. For example, the Presidential Management Fellows Program, which entails a rigorous selection process, caters to individuals with advanced degrees seeking to join the Civil Service.

GLIFAA was initially formed to challenge a security clearance process that discriminated against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees. Two newer groups, Veterans at State and the Arab Americans in Foreign Affairs Agencies, were founded in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

At a roundtable on diversity in January (see "AFSA Convenes Roundtable Discussion on Diversity" in the March AFSA News), AFSA brainstormed ways to work collectively with affinity groups and human resources offices at State and USAID to improve recruitment strategies and retention and inclusion. "AFSA has a strong—and growing—relationship with the various affinity groups at State and in the other foreign affairs

agencies," says AFSA President Robert J. Silverman. "We appreciate the opportunity to interact with them, as we did in our recent affinity group roundtable. It is one of the best mechanisms we have to hear about issues that impact our members."

The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the State Department's Management Directive 715 Equal Employment Opportunity Program Status Report, which provides statistical data on the department's diversity and inclusion efforts, including identification of workforce development barriers. AFSA has identified several concerns, both in process and substance, regarding the MD-715.

Not surprisingly, almost half of the affinity groups AFSA spoke with were

founded after 2000, reflecting an increase in the diversity of the Foreign Service's workforce and the continued need to address institutional barriers.

AFSA has taken on the challenge of promoting diversity within the Service by incorporating an explicit diversity objective in its strategic plan. It has also been working closely with agency leadership and Congress on several diversity-specific provisions in the current Department of State reauthorization process.

Affinity groups and AFSA agree: diversity is good for business and good for morale. When individuals from different backgrounds, perspectives and experiences come together, they are able to collaborate in new ways to come up with innovative solutions to challenges faced by the Foreign Service and our country in the 21st century. ■

—Lindsey Botts,  
Labor Management  
Executive Assistant



AFSA hosts a roundtable for affinity group representatives on January 15..

AFSA/DEBRA BLOME

## Road Scholars Visit Washington, D.C.

In mid-April, 41 Road Scholars visited Washington, D.C., to learn about the work of the Foreign Service. Hailing from all parts of the United States, Road Scholar participants are typically retired professionals who are active in their communities.

This trip's theme was "The Geopolitics of Nation States and Sovereignty." Participants spent five days attending lectures delivered by active and retired members of the Foreign Service at the Savoy Suites Hotel. These lectures covered a variety of issues in international relations, including the role and structure of the Foreign Service; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; Cuba; the rise of China; the future of Afghanistan; and the battle for Crimea.

They also visited the Italian Embassy in Washington, D.C., where they heard a lecture on U.S.-Italian relations and



AFSA Road Scholars visit the Embassy of Italy to the United States.

the future of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations. In addition, they visited DACOR Bacon House and the Foreign Service Institute, where they were briefed on consular and language issues.

AFSA has been in partnership with Road Scholar, a nonprofit travel company that facilitates educational trips around the world, since 1996. Participants choose AFSA programs from among a number of other offerings

in the broader Road Scholar catalog, which reaches nearly a million recipients. The Road Scholar program is a vital part of AFSA's outreach efforts, with more than 11,000 people having participated over the last 20 years.

There will be additional programs in May, June, September, October and November in Washington, D.C., and Chautauqua, New York. Trip themes include the United States, China and Asia; U.S. Foreign Policy for the 21st

Century; and the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Global Terrorism.

AFSA encourages retired Foreign Service members who would like to share their knowledge and experience to volunteer as speakers for the Road Scholar program. Volunteers or those with questions should contact AFSA's Communications and Press Specialist Allan Saunders at [saunders@afsa.org](mailto:saunders@afsa.org).

—Shannon Mizzi,  
Editorial Intern

### NEWS BRIEF



### THE VOICE OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE: A HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION COMING IN JULY

The U.S. Foreign Service and the American Foreign Service Association were born together in 1924. In this first-ever book about the association's more than 90-year history, author Harry Kopp chronicles the evolution of the Foreign Service and the events that shaped AFSA into what it is today—the professional association and labor union of the United States Foreign Service.

Published by AFSA's imprint, Foreign Service Books, *The Voice of the Foreign Service* takes readers through the early history of diplomacy, from Benjamin Franklin to the Rogers Act of 1924 and the Foreign Service Acts of 1946 and 1980, following the evolution of the Foreign Service and the association through the 20th century and into the 21st.

The book will be available in July through AFSA and all major book retailers. ■



## ISSUE BRIEF

# AFSA Submits Its View on State Department Workforce Development to Congress

Every four years the Department of State submits a Section 326 report to Congress on the status of its Foreign Service workforce. The department is obligated, per statute, to include the views of the exclusive representative of the Foreign Service, AFSA, “on any and all aspects of the report and the information contained in such report.” Below, reprinted in full, is AFSA’s addendum to the Section 326 report, which discusses career path analysis, elimination of the mid-level deficit, peer-constituted Selection Boards, assignment process reform, retention and diversity.

### Report to Congress on Status of Workforce Planning for Foreign Service Personnel Addendum: View of Exclusive Representative

The State Department submits the following addendum to its 2013 report, which represents the view of the exclusive representative of the Foreign Service, the American Foreign Service Association, on workforce planning as called for in 22 U.S. Code § 4173 (c). This report comments on information contained in the original report as well as the Five-Year Workforce and Leadership Succession Plan (Fiscal Years 2014-2018) published in June 2014.

**Career Path Analysis:** AFSA appreciates Congress’ previous support for the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative and Diplomacy 3.0 hiring initiatives, which have enabled the agency to nearly eliminate the well-documented mid-level deficits that were created as a result of the downsizing in the 1990s. The first DRI officer cohort is now approaching the FS-1 level, and the initial D3.0 officer cohort is on the cusp of FS-2 eligibility. AFSA has focused its attention on the “Pig in the Python” problem and on ensuring that the department is able to provide a “regular, predictable flow of talent through the ranks into the Senior Foreign Service” as mandated in Section 601 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. Two-thirds of respondents to a recent AFSA member survey indicated that they were concerned by the personal impact of the department’s failure to fully recognize and address the “Pig in the Python” problem.

One of AFSA’s seven Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review thought papers addressed career paths and professional development. The department has begun to address the impact of the DRI/D3.0 cohorts on promotions and

assignments in the Foreign Service. AFSA recommends that the department continue its efforts to analyze and, for the first time, publish the promotion projections for all cones and specialties. A cursory review indicates that employees will spend more time in grade, be faced with declining promotion rates and have more limited upward mobility. While the department is meeting current position and assignment needs at the mid-levels, the five-year challenge is accommodating the DRI/D3.0 cohorts at the senior levels (O1 and beyond). AFSA recommends the department review the positions and number of individuals serving in Schedule B positions, which have increased significantly in the last six years, to determine whether these positions are all needed and, if so, convert them to the career Foreign Service as part of a long-term structural fix.

**Review Mid-Level Deficit Programs:** The elimination of the mid-level position deficit provides AFSA and the department an opportunity to review the status and structure of programs created to address said deficits. In 2012, the Government Accountability Office described several department efforts to meet the temporary mid-level position deficit, including an enhanced pilot program for Civil Service overseas excursion tours (the Overseas Development Program) and relaxed requirements for conversion from the Civil to the Foreign Service (GAO-12-721). AFSA recommends that the rationale and effectiveness for these two programs be reviewed in light of the elimination of their *raison d’être*, i.e., the mid-level position deficit. AFSA is concerned by the impact of conversions of positions and people on existing members of the Service and has submitted an information request to the department in this regard (see October 2014 FSJ).

**Performance Management and Selection Boards:** AFSA is encouraged by the department’s efforts to improve performance management policy and procedures, which are currently being reviewed by the two parties. AFSA and the department understand that the increased size of the Foreign Service will impact the performance-related workload, with a recommendation to review staffing included in the March 2010 OIG report (ISP-I-10-47). AFSA wants to ensure that employees continue to receive a full and comprehensive review of their potential for increased levels of responsibility. AFSA has filed implementation disputes against the depart-

ment, currently with the Foreign Service Grievance Board, regarding the department's refusal to award all of the meritorious service increases recommended by the 2013 and 2014 Selection Boards. AFSA's recent member survey indicated strong support for the continued role of peer-constituted selection boards in the recommendations for meritorious service increases.

**Assignments Process Reform:** The current open assignment process was established 40 years ago in response to a directive issued by the Secretary of State calling for a more open, centrally directed assignment process. Today, the strains of a larger workforce are showing, and it's time to revisit that call assisted by improved technology and a better understanding of game and matching theory.

Last year's AFSA survey confirmed that assignment system reform was the membership's highest career and professional development priority. AFSA has accordingly proposed that in 2016 the department take a serious look at the assignments process to see how the system can be made more efficient, transparent and user-friendly. Such a review will require additional resources—people and money—to consider key workforce development issues, such as the current assignment policy's impact on the workforce's language proficiency.

In the past, Congress has criticized the department's management of employees' language abilities, paying particular attention to the percentage of language-designated positions encumbered by qualified language speakers (GAO-09-955). In 2013, AFSA and the department also agreed to changes to the Language Incentive Pay program as called for in the department's 2011 Strategic Language plan. While the plan also rightly cites the lack of a properly sized training float as one explanation for the language deficit, another explanation can be found in the selection process for language-designated positions.

**Retention:** AFSA is concerned by the recent increase in non-retirement voluntary separations (see November 2014 AFSA News). The department often cites two numbers supporting its "all is well" claim: overall low, flat attrition rates and a record number of applicants to the Foreign Service. AFSA believes that more rigorous data analysis of those leaving the Foreign Service, in addition to instituting a standardized in-person exit interview of all outgoing employees, will help inform our collective efforts to retain our best and brightest. Similarly, looking more closely at those individuals who are not applying for the Foreign Service, but should be, can improve our efforts to recruit the best and brightest. In last

year's survey, 40 percent of respondents indicated that they were considering leaving due to professional concerns.

**Diversity:** AFSA continued its efforts to support a diverse, innovative and professional workforce (see September 2014 AFSA News). It advocated for changes within the department on the oversight and reporting of diversity, suggesting changes to the MD-715 report and the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. It also proposed reforms to the assignment restrictions and preclusions programs that appear to disparately impact Asian-Americans and other ethnicities (see November 2014 FSJ Issue Brief). Specifically, AFSA has proposed an appeals mechanism for employees informed that they are prohibited from working in or on a country, improved reporting and oversight of how this tool is used, and improved communications with affected employees. ■

## AFSA Congratulates Graduates of Retiree Job Search Program

On March 27, AFSA hosted the graduation reception for the most recent Job Search Program class at the Foreign Service Institute.

AFSA was pleased to honor the 45 Foreign Service employees who were retiring from diplomatic service, and looks forward to welcoming them as retiree members of the association and continuing to work on their behalf to protect their Foreign Service legacy and help them navigate their retirement. ■

—Matthew Sumrak, Retiree Counselor and Legislative Assistant



AFSA Scholarship Director Lori Dec speaks with JSP graduates.

## AFSA President Reaches Out to Students

As the voice of the Foreign Service, AFSA seeks to raise the profile of the Foreign Service and educate the public on the Foreign Service's role in advancing the nation's interests. Helping students at all levels understand the work of the diplomatic corps is essential to that task.

This spring, AFSA President Robert J. Silverman took to the road to speak to young people about the Foreign Service and the rewards of a career in public service.

He met with students at Yale University on March 27, at Princeton University on April 8 and at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville on April 21. He also visited Duke University on Dec. 4.

He explained how the Foreign Service promotes U.S. national interests and builds goodwill among our allies and potential partners, as well as our adversaries.

There was strong interest among students in learning about the Foreign Service as a career and in understanding the Foreign Service exam. At Yale, for example, he met a young woman pursuing a postdoctoral program in public health. She is the daughter

of Nigerian immigrants to the United States and wants to join the Foreign Service to focus on medical problems in Africa. He followed up by putting several students in touch with State recruiters.

As part of AFSA's ongoing Speakers Bureau program (see p. 64), Silverman also addressed several hundred high school students from across the country at the National Youth Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C.

Silverman enjoys the exchanges with students and finds their interest in public service inspiring. This kind of outreach is essential to AFSA's mission of building a constituency in support of the Foreign Service on Capitol Hill and among the public at large.

This view was reiterated recently by Special Representative Tom Perriello, a former Virginia congressman appointed by Secretary of State John Kerry to shepherd the second Quadrennial

**As the voice of the Foreign Service, AFSA seeks to raise the profile of the Foreign Service and educate the public on the Foreign Service's role in advancing the nations' interests.**

Diplomacy and Development Review. Perriello met with the AFSA Governing Board in February, and emphasized the importance of telling the Foreign Service's story. "My nieces and nephews know what a soldier is. They think

they know what a spy is. But they have no idea what you people do and why it's valuable," he said. "I think there are a lot of great conversations to have." ■

—Debra Blome, Associate Editor



National Youth Leadership Forum participants listen to Robert J. Silverman speak on Foreign Service life.

COURTESY OF ENVISION



AFSA President Robert J. Silverman speaks with university students in Tennessee.

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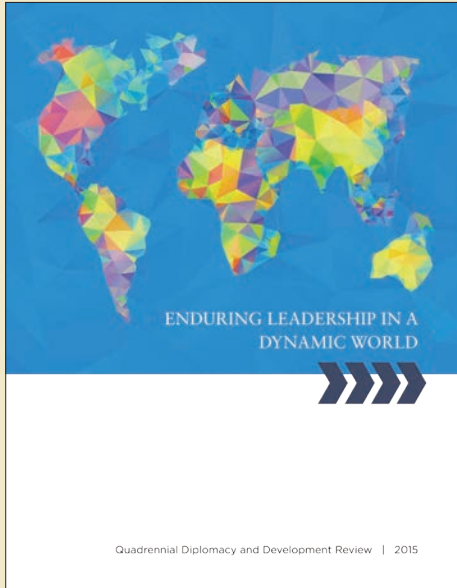


Robert J. Silverman hosts a roundtable discussion with Yale students.

COURTESY OF JACKSON INSTITUTE CAREER SERVICES STAFF

AFSA Welcomes QDDR • Continued from page 51

likened the process of writing it to “putting together one jigsaw puzzle from a box that contains pieces from about six or seven puzzles...you really have to kind of figure out what fits where and what you eliminate and what you don’t have time for and what doesn’t belong there.”



AFSA engaged early with the QDDR team to focus on member priorities. In early 2014, after a six-month drafting process involving extensive research and consultations with members, AFSA provided seven thought papers to the QDDR team that highlighted AFSA priorities including career and professional development, security and technology. Over the next 18 months, AFSA leaders met regularly with Perriello and his staff on these issues.

In the end, the 2015 QDDR incorporated many AFSA suggestions, including provisions for increased investment in fostering a skilled and diverse workforce; better management and mitigation of physical risk; enhanced economic leadership in the depart-

ment; and improved quality of work/life for employees.

While more specific language on career path analysis, expeditionary diplomacy and review of the special envoy and representative offices did not make it into the final document, AFSA hopes that State and USAID will continue to focus on these items as they address the post-9/11 growth in the Foreign Service, post-Benghazi security arrangements and the increase in the number of political appointees.

As the exclusive representative of the Foreign Service, AFSA looks forward to collaborating with both agencies on the implementation of all QDDR recommendations. ■

—*Maria C. Livingston,*  
Associate Editor



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## AFSA Speakers Bureau Grows

In February, AFSA urged members to join our Speakers Bureau, which matches them with universities, organizations and groups around the country who are seeking speakers for events.

Events can range from college classes and World Affairs Councils to Kiwanis Clubs and book groups. AFSA helps these entities connect with an experienced member of the Foreign Service who can speak to a variety of geographic and functional topics, as well as life in the Foreign Service.

The response to our call for new members has been amazing. AFSA's Speakers Bureau nearly doubled in size to more than 300 members.

We've received new requests for speakers to present to high school students, university clubs, alumni groups, civic and religious groups and profes-

sional associations. We are also asking AFSA members to proactively seek out groups and venues, rather than waiting for the public to ask for speakers.

However, we need your help to address a mismatch in geographic representation. More than 70 percent of Speakers Bureau volunteers (220 members) are based in the Washington, D.C., area. Only 10 members are in California, seven in Florida, and the remaining are scattered around the country. Eighteen states have no Speakers Bureau members.

We urge you to join the Speakers Bureau, especially if you live outside the Washington, D.C., area. Visit [www.afsa.org/speakers](http://www.afsa.org/speakers) to sign up. And if you want to recommend a venue that could use an AFSA speaker, send an email to [retiree@afsa.org](mailto:retiree@afsa.org) with "Speakers Bureau Opportunity" in



AFSA Speaker FSO Robin Diallo addresses high school students at the National Youth Leadership Forum on National Security on March 26 in Washington, D.C. Hosted by Envision, the forum gave students the chance to learn firsthand about life as a Foreign Service officer from AFSA speakers.

the subject line.

We'll send speakers an electronic information packet with basic information on AFSA and the Foreign Service. In addition, we'll mail you a free copy of *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, which you can use for personal reference or offer to your host or as a door

prize for the event.

We look forward to continuing and growing support from AFSA members for the Speakers Bureau, a privilege of AFSA membership that builds our Foreign Service legacy. ■

—Todd Thurwachter,  
Retiree Counselor

## Foreign Service Journal Welcomes New Staff

AFSA is pleased to welcome Maria C. Livingston to the communications team as the new associate editor/writer for *The Foreign Service Journal*, responsible for AFSA News.

Maria brings eight years of Foreign Service experience with her to the job. As a public diplomacy-coned FSO, she served in Guatemala

City, Mexico City, the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, and was detailed to the U.S. Executive Director's Office at the World Bank.

A New Mexico native, Maria has a bachelor's degree from the University of Denver and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, where

she was editor of the *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy*.

For the past year and a half, Maria has been a valued member of the FSJ Editorial Board. She is married to a Foreign Service officer whom she met in her A-100 class, and they live in Rockville, Maryland.

We are delighted to have Maria on board. ■



Maria C. Livingston



## AFSA Welcomes Summer Interns

We are pleased to welcome our group of summer interns.

**Advocacy:** Aldo Perez is a student at The George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C. He is from Miami, Florida.

**Awards:** Casey Knerr is a sophomore at Georgetown University, majoring in science, technology and international affairs. Casey is from Berlin, Maryland.

**Communications:** Amy Jones is a second-year student at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. A native of London, she is pursuing degrees in history and international relations.

**Executive Office:** Maryland native Nicole 'Nikki' Roche is a political science major at

Northeastern University in Boston.

**The Foreign Service Journal:** Shannon Mizzi returns for a second semester with us. Originally from Boston, she has a degree in history from the Royal Holloway University of London.

**Advertising:** Isabelle Ninh is a rising senior at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she studies political science. Her hometown is McLean, Virginia.

We thank departing interns Asma Shethwala, Tom Garofalo, William Read, Stephan Skora, Tina Yan, Kavanaugh Waddell and Brianna Pope for their great work this past spring and wish them the best. ■

### NEWS BRIEF



AFSA/DIERA BLOME

### WILLIAM R. RIVKIN AWARD DONOR LUNCHEON

Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Charles Rivkin met with previous recipients of the William R. Rivkin Award during an April 27 luncheon hosted by AFSA. The award has been conferred to a mid-level officer for constructive dissent every year since 1968. From left: Assistant Secretary Charles Rivkin, his wife Susan Tolson and AFSA President Robert J. Silverman. ■



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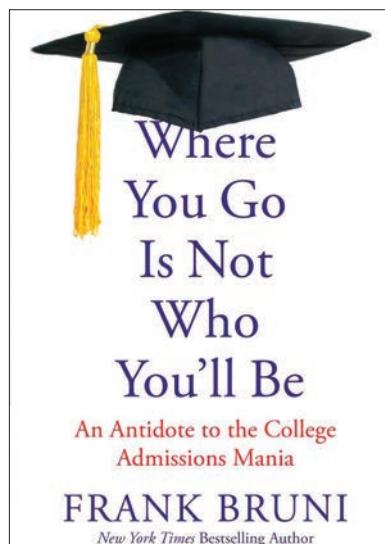
# Frank Bruni Takes On College Admissions Insanity

It's not easy to keep one's footing through the college admissions frenzy. In his new book, journalist Frank Bruni offers perspective and balance that can help ease the process.

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

If you're a high school student in the midst of taking SATs, completing Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes and generally stressing about college admissions, Frank Bruni has a message for you: Relax. Don't think there's only one college that's right for you. He also offers this thought to keep in mind for the end of the process: Welcome rejection.

Bruni, a *New York Times* journalist, has written on topics ranging from Italian food to George W. Bush. His latest tome, *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*, seems a strange book for a childless author to pen, but despite



that—or perhaps because of it—he does a fine job arguing for a sea change in the way America regards college admission.

Filled with anecdotes and backed up

with research, the book seeks to dispel the myth that admission to an “elite” college should be the only goal of our children (and their parents). Instead, the author demonstrates that success in adulthood has to do with more important factors than the college a student attends.

## Students and Families in a Race

Bruni admits right off the bat that his book is aimed at those households in which a premium has been placed on higher education—sometimes for generations. But let's not forget that large numbers of Americans simply go to whichever public or state university admits them. According to Bruni, that's actually a plan worth considering.

His intended audience—students and their families in a race to get into the “right” college—will likely include many Foreign Service families, although

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*Francesca Kelly might herself be considered part of college admissions frenzy, coaching kids on their college application essays. You can find her at [www.essayadvantage.net](http://www.essayadvantage.net). A writer and frequent contributor to the Journal, she's also married to Ambassador Ian Kelly and has seen four children through the college process.*

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## Bruni primarily wants to discourage the thinking among students that there is only one perfect college for them.

FS students who are overseas, thankfully, dodge some of the stateside admissions mania.

In the United States, the situation has become so frenzied that, in some families, the pressure to go to a certain Ivy League or other prestigious school has been present before the child in question is even born. Bruni interviews a distraught parent whose 3-year-old did not get admitted to a high-end New York

preschool because she didn't think to prep him before the admissions event.

It is into this overheated atmosphere that Bruni introduces an idea that is not new, but is still commonly disregarded: What if someone told you that you could go to one of many dozens, even hundreds of U.S. colleges, get a great education and end up after graduation following the same career path as Yale and Harvard grads?

The author primarily wants to discourage the thinking among students that there is only one perfect college for them—the one in the Ivy League or at Ivy League level, or the one that their parents went to 30 years ago, or the one that *U.S. News & World Report* ranks in the top 10.

### The Benefits of Being Turned Down

In fact, says Bruni, not only is it virtually impossible to get into the top-tier schools, but those institutions don't necessarily offer anything that can't be found at other, less selective and often less expensive schools. He opens his narrative with several anecdotes about students who had their hearts set on Ivy



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**Both formal and informal studies demonstrate that, for the most part, the name of one’s undergraduate institution is rarely a defining factor in later success.**

League colleges but were turned away. What happened when they went to so-called lesser schools? Not quite what they expected.

As big fish in smaller ponds (and that “small pond” can also mean a big state school’s honors program as much as a tiny liberal arts college), they often got extra attention from professors,

including mentoring, internship and research opportunities. They were on the dean’s list. They had time for social activities and sports. They made friends who came from diverse backgrounds. In short, they flourished. Not only that, but they came to look upon their initial rejection as a blessing in disguise.

These stories, along with often

inspiring quotes from happy people who attended less prestigious colleges, make up the heart of the book. They are accompanied by the results of both formal and informal studies that demonstrate that, for the most part, the name of one’s undergraduate institution is rarely a defining factor in later success. Character and work ethic are more important.

Some of these studies are not new and have been cited in earlier books. So why does the college admission feeding frenzy persist?

**Feeding the Frenzy**

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olds enrolled in college rose by 32 percent. Bruni doesn't dwell too much on this statistic, but it is significant.

His primary focus is on two relatively modern changes to the college admissions process: the Common Application and the *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings. Each in its own way has contributed to the college admissions race.

The Common App, as it's called, has streamlined the admissions process so that instead of filling out individual paper applications for each college, a student can now hit the "submit" button online, sending one application to many schools. Not surprisingly, this has led students to file more applications than ever before.

More applicants mean more rejections, because most colleges cannot admit more than a certain number of students: There just isn't room, despite an increase in on-campus construction in recent years. (That improvement in facilities is often due more to competition with other colleges than a desire to add more beds. College administrators count on 17-year-olds being drawn in by state-of-the-art fitness centers and vegan cafeterias.)

Then there are the rankings. When *U.S. News & World Report* started its college rankings in the early 1990s, it struck gold. The list rapidly became not only a moneymaker for *U.S. News*, but an easy way for students (and their parents) to select colleges. It also fueled a system which colleges try to "game."

For example, the college can increase "selectivity" by encouraging more students to apply and then rejecting a higher proportion of them. Several colleges have been penalized for inflating their numbers—and those are just the ones who've been caught.





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## When *U.S. News & World Report* started its college rankings in the early 1990s, it struck gold, and fueled a system which colleges try to “game.”

The metrics used by *U.S. News* in determining a college’s worth are also largely subjective, and Bruni is quick and forceful in dismissing them.

An additional factor is an increase in the number of foreign students applying to U.S. universities. The overwhelming majority of American college admissions offices are not need-blind when considering foreign student applications. In

other words, if a student from another country can pay full tuition, he’s a very competitive applicant.

### A Controversial View

In addition to explaining the mechanisms behind college admissions frenzy, Bruni interviews several luminaries, including former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, an alumna of the

University of Denver. She intended to become a concert pianist, but ended up taking an international affairs course that changed her life and provided her with a fine mentor in Professor Josef Korbel. (In an interesting coincidence, Korbel was Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s father.)

The book gets a bit controversial in its examination of the character of today’s elite students. Bruni interviews plenty of past and present Ivy League professors and administrators who describe their students with phrases like “self-satisfied,” “too linear in their thinking” and “a little fragile.” They point out that students who have checked all the right boxes to get into a prestigious school tend to believe that by following



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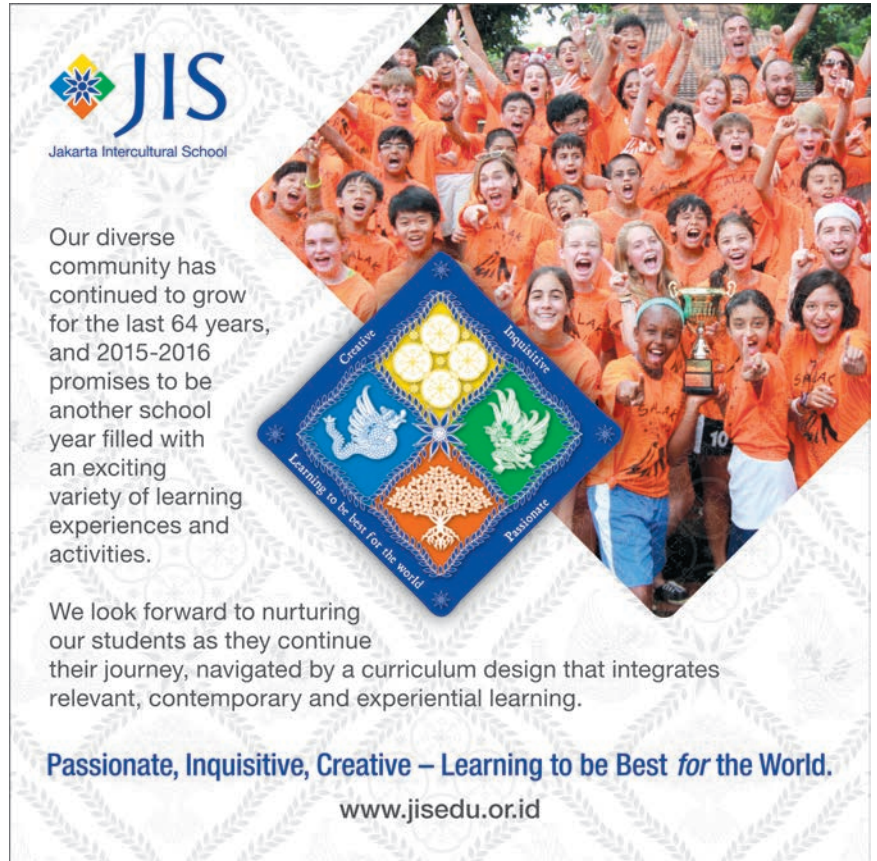
a formula, life will turn out the way they intend.

Although Bruni might incite criticism in his characterizations (and to be fair, he genuinely likes the students he has taught at Princeton), there is more than a grain of truth in his theory that the U.S. college admissions culture has created a generation of students who see getting in as the ultimate prize and the measure of their self-worth, rather than simply the opening of a door to new experiences and growth. He makes a good point about struggle and rejection creating a stronger person.

One of the people he cites is William Deresiewicz, whose 2014 book, *Excellent Sheep*, takes a dim view of the Ivy League. Although Deresiewicz's book, op-eds and talks on campuses have provoked both irritation and admiration, Bruni agrees with some of his assertions. "An elite school composed almost entirely of young men and women who have aced the SATs or ACTs," writes Bruni, "isn't likely to be the most exciting, eclectic stew of people and perspectives."

Bruni is not the first to write a book like this, of course. *Washington Post* columnist Jay Mathews penned the ground-breaking *Harvard Schmarvard* 12 years ago, and Bruni's book is, at least in its early chapters, simply an updated version of Mathews' book. And the late Loren Pope's *Colleges That Change Lives* has had a great deal of influence not only as a book, but also as a website and even a traveling presentation.

All three experts urge calm in the midst of application frenzy, and all argue in favor of the often-overlooked schools that provide an education as good as, or perhaps better than that offered by more selective institutions. While similar in intent to its predecessors,



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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement December 2013

## A Parent's Guide to Psychoeducational Evaluations

BY CHAD C. NELSON

As parents, we strive to help our children as much as possible. Despite our best efforts, however, we may see our children struggling in areas.

These struggles may occur early in a child's development, manifested as difficulty understanding directions, learning to read or managing social interactions. For others, the challenge may arise as a child progresses in age, whether it involves reading comprehension, completing tests in the allotted time period, attending to tasks or organizing tasks and materials.

Despite assistance, these struggles may persist, leaving parents, children and teachers feeling frustrated or helpless. Under those circumstances, psychoeducational evaluation may open the door to a greater understanding of the child for everyone involved and help

point the way toward solutions.

For Foreign Service families, in particular, psychoeducational evaluation may help identify academic intervention and accommodations that may be necessary for children entering or continuing on in American and international schools around the world, as well as transitioning from one school to the other. For FS children who are beginning to make the transition to college, evaluation may help identify accommodations that may be necessary in college. Evaluation can also help students prepare for higher education by identifying the ways in which they learn most efficiently.

Chad C. Nelson is a licensed psychologist in private practice in the Lutherville, Md., area. To see the complete article, go to [www.afsa.org/education](http://www.afsa.org/education).

## The book gets a bit controversial in its examination of the character of today's elite students.

*Where You Go* does not offer admissions advice, as Mathews' book does; nor does it profile alternative colleges in depth, as Pope's book does. But it does offer up-to-date statistics and inspiring profiles, written in Bruni's evocative prose.

### Some Questions

That's not to say there aren't flaws. What are we to make, for example, of the author's notion of success? He casts a critical eye on today's students who pos-

sess a more narrow focus, tending toward more practical majors that will lead to lucrative jobs.

Yet the adults whom Bruni holds up as examples tend to be successful in their work and in their earnings. Yes, they do speak about passion, and the not-always-easy route they took; but their success is nonetheless at least partially defined by their relative wealth.

In today's recession economy, who can blame any student for choosing a

major that will lead to financial rewards? That said, it's important to note Bruni's insistence that college should be the one place where interests can be expanded on; where personal growth should be the goal as much as finding a well-paying career.

It also gives the reader some pause that the students profiled, who for various reasons attend non-prestigious undergraduate institutions, quite often end up earning advanced degrees from Ivy League schools. While his point is that it doesn't much matter where you go as an undergraduate, Bruni, perhaps unwittingly, still portrays Harvard and its ilk as a worthy goal for graduate school.

The implication is that a graduate

*Continued on page 86*



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Indian Mountain School	72	260	60/40	37	12	PK-9	NA	N	Y	52	N	N	45,500
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**Elementary/Junior/Senior High**

Barrie School	77	340	50/50	NA	24	PK-12	Y/N	N	Limited	10	Y	NA	27,650-29,650
Hampshire Country School	93	25	All boys	100	5	3-12	N/N	N	Y	65	N	N	56,200
Holton-Arms School, The	95	645	All girls	0	2.3	3-12	Y/N	N	N	20	N	N	37,000-38,700
International School of Minnesota, The	87	330	51/49	9	35	PS-12	Y/N	N	N	16	Y	Y	35,650
Ridley College	NA	640	55/45	55	33	K-PG	N/Y	Y	Y	41	Y	Y	42,150

**Junior High/Senior High**

Cortona Academy	96	60	50/50	5	25	7-12, GAP	Y/Y	N	Y/Y	4	Limited	Y	35,000 <sup>b</sup>
Grier School	85	307	All girls	85	45	7-12	Y/N	Y	Y/Y	120	Y	N	50,500
Hargrave Military Academy	95	300	All boys	92	12	7-12, PG	Y/N	N	N	76	Y	N	32,800
Massanutten Military Academy	95	110	75/25	100	18	7-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	78	N	N	29,000
Meritas Family of Schools	83	250-1,000	60/40	25	10	6-12	Y/Y	Y	Limited	10-20	Y	N	50,000
Phelps School, The	86	100	All boys	70	35	7-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	24	Y	N	46,800
Saint James School	89	225	60/40	75	25	8-12	Y/N	Y	Y/Y	65	Y	N	44,000
Shattuck-St. Mary's School	96	450	60/40	75	27	6-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	43	Y	N	45,425
St. Margaret's School	90	135	All girls	80	30	8-12	Y/N	Y	Limited	50	Y	Y	47,300
Stoneleigh-Burnham School	84	155	All girls	71	40	7-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	100	Y	N	53,708

\*Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate \*\*Dec.25 through Jan. 1 \*\*\*Parents Orientation <sup>a</sup>Dependent on age/Dismissal time <sup>b</sup>Sibling discount <sup>c</sup>Gateway to Prep School <sup>d</sup>Call school to discuss options <sup>e</sup>Dollar value is subject to exchange rate <sup>f</sup>Aid for Federal Employees

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**Senior High**

Forman School	88	210	65/35	87	13	9-12, PG	Y/Y	Y	Y	42	Y	Y	56,000-68,500
Incamate Word High School	84	520	All girls	2	6	9-12	Y/N	N	N	5	Y	N	21,350
New Hampton School	89	320	60/40	80	25	9-12, PG	Y/Y	Y	Y/Y	70	Y	N	55,900
Portsmouth Abbey School	90	360	55/45	72	20	9-12	Y/N	N <sup>c</sup>	Y/Y <sup>d</sup>	52	Y	N	54,630
Salem Academy	79	172	All girls	57	25	9-12	Y/N	Y	N	25	Y	Y	43,960
St. Mark's School	94	360	53/47	73	21	9-12	N/N	Y	N	30	N	N	55,500
St. Timothy's School	92	194	All girls	70	30	9-12, PG	Y/Y	Y	Limited	19	Y	Limited	50,330
Vermont Academy	71	242	60/40	75	24	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	95	Y	N	51,500
Westover School	93	200	All girls	65	20	9-12	Y/N	Y	Y	90	Y	N	52,350
Worcester Academy	77	497	51/49	33	21	9-12, PG	Y/N	Y	Y	48	Y	N	57,266

**Overseas**

American School of Bombay	70	780	49/51	NA	88	EC3-12	N/Y	N	Y	5	Y	N	15,250-32,400
Berlin Brandenburg International School	68	700	55/45	20	65	K-12	N/Y	N	Y	15	Y	N	43,000 <sup>e</sup>
Carlsbad International School	74	80	55/45	90	95	9-12	N/Y	Y	Y/Limited	74	Y	Y	34,000 <sup>e</sup>
Frankfurt International School	91	1,750	50/50	0	80	K-12	N/Y	N	Limited	19	Y	N	22,967
International School Frankfurt-Rhein-Main	95	920	50/50	NA	70	PK-12	Y/Y	N	N	6	Y	N	13,000-20,600
Jakarta Intercultural School	75	2,500	50/50	NA	85	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	24	Y	N	19,500-32,100
John F. Kennedy School Berlin	87	1,650	50/50	NA	50	K-12	Y/N	N	Limited	15	Y	N	None
Leysin American School in Switzerland	85	340	53/47	100	80	8-12, PG	N/Y	Y	Limited	75	Y	N	88,000 <sup>e, f</sup>
Shanghai American School	69	3,000	52/48	NA	53	PK3-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	10	Y	Y	24,000-37,000
St. Gilgen International School	93	182	51/49	70	50	4-12	N/Y	N	N	27	Y	N	62,000-72,000
St. Stephen's School	92	275	47/53	14	61	9-12, PG	Y/Y	N	N	12	Y	N	35,950 <sup>e</sup>
TASIS The American School in England	81	740	50/50	26	45	PK-12	Y/Y	N	Limited	8	Y	N	59,500 <sup>e, f</sup>
TASIS The American School in Switzerland	81	740	50/50	67	75	PK-7, PG	Y/Y	Limited	N	40	Y	N	84,500 <sup>e, f</sup>

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**Special Needs**

Brehm Preparatory School	91	75	70/30	98	7	6-12, PG	NA	N	Y/Y	50	Y	Y	73,100
Gow School, The	76	150	96/4	89	33	7-12, PG	NA	N	Y	20	Y	Y	62,000
Landmark School	72	467	60/40	34	3	2-12, PG	NA	N	Y	25	N	N	52,900-69,700
Sedona Sky Academy	93	50	All girls	100	10	8-12	Y/N	N	Y	90	Y	Y	102,000

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Stanford High School Summer College	NA	Attend Stanford University during the summer. Students ages 16-19 choose from 145 different courses in over 30 departments. Take courses taught by Stanford faculty & scholars.											
Stanford Online High School	67	Accredited, diploma-granting independent school (7-12). Advanced academic program (AP and university-level courses). <a href="http://ohs.stanford.edu">ohs.stanford.edu</a>											

**Post Secondary**

NYU	99	M.S. in Global Affairs: Environment/Energy Policy, Human Rights and Int'l Law, Int'l Development and Humanitarian Assistance, Int'l Relations, Peacebuilding, Private Sector, Transnational Security											
New School, The	101	10,595	24/76	17	28	B.A,M.A, Cont. Edu	Y/Y	Y	N	18	Y	Y	16,200-42,080

**Other**

Family Liaison Office Department of State	100	Information and resources for Foreign Service families. Contact <a href="mailto:FLOAskEducation@State.gov">FLOAskEducation@State.gov</a>											
Foreign Service Youth Foundation	94	A support network for U.S. Foreign Service Youth worldwide. <a href="http://www.fsfy.org">www.fsfy.org</a>											
Office of Overseas Schools, Department of State	NA	Information and resources on overseas elementary and secondary education options for Foreign Service families. <a href="http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/">http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/</a>											
Office of Allowances, Department of State	NA	Information on applicable overseas education allowances available to Foreign Service families <a href="http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21944.htm">http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21944.htm</a>											

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Continued from page 76

## Foreign Service kids have experienced culture shock, frequent moves and cross-cultural adaptation.

degree from an Ivy League institution or its equivalent (i.e., Stanford, MIT, etc.) still matters in some circles. That cachet may well be valid if the level of coursework and the intelligence of one's peers live up to the school's reputation. Still, some may find this a mixed message.

### FS Kids, in Particular

How does all this affect Foreign Service kids? Well, they often have an edge in the college admissions process,

especially if applying from overseas. Say all you want about highly-touted D.C.-area high schools like Walt Whitman and Thomas Jefferson, but you can't ignore the fact that the competition among their students—and parents—is fierce.

That competition is toned down in most international high schools, because many of the school's students aren't applying to U.S. universities at all. And the disadvantages of not having a plethora of AP or IB courses, or a standard

U.S. government course, for example, are generally outweighed by the appeal of a global nomad who has made his or her way in different foreign cities.

Unlike most of their stateside counterparts, Foreign Service kids have experienced culture shock, frequent moves and cross-cultural adaptation.

Despite these advantages, however, FS families would do well to listen to Bruni's advice and not let college acceptance become a measure of self-worth. One hopes that Foreign Service children are way past playing that game.

Still, it's so very easy to get sucked into the fray, and for that reason and others, *Where You Go Is Not Who You Will Be* provides a reassuring and crucial remedy for college admissions fever. ■



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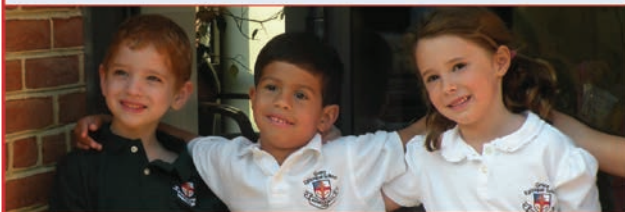
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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement December 2011

## College Applications Checklist for 11th-Graders

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

**W**hen it comes to college admissions, junior year of high school is crunch time. This is when you're expected to take the most challenging courses, get the best grades and start racking up those SAT or ACT scores. Junior year is the last full academic year that factors into acceptance decisions from colleges. It also provides an opportunity to bring up a mediocre grade point average and polish your resumé.

In addition, you can finish—yes, finish—a whole swath of the applications process in 11th grade so that you do not get hit with a ton of pressure the next fall.

This no-nonsense, month-by-month guide from December through August of your junior year will help you get a head start on the college application process and sail through your senior year.

*Francesca Kelly, a Foreign Service spouse, is a college applications essay tutor and writes frequently on educational issues. The college applications checklist for 11th-graders in the December 2011 issue of the FSJ is available online at [www.afsa.org/educationarticles](http://www.afsa.org/educationarticles).*



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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement  
December 2014

### The ABCs of Education Allowances

BY PAMELA WARD

Employees of government agencies assigned overseas are granted allowances to help defray the cost of an education for their children in kindergarten through 12th grade.

The allowances for a specific post are determined by the fees charged by a school identified as providing a basic U.S.-type education. Parents may use this allowance to send their children to a different school of their choice as long as the cost does not exceed that of the “base” school. If the alternative school is more expensive than the “base” school, the difference would be an out-of-pocket expense for the parents.

There are several offices in the Department of State prepared to help you understand how the educational allowances work, and what choices you have for your children. These include the Office of Overseas Schools ([www.state.gov/m/a/os](http://www.state.gov/m/a/os)), the Office of Allowances ([www.state.gov/m/a/als](http://www.state.gov/m/a/als)) and the Family Liaison Office ([www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm)).

We hope that you will get in touch with us if you have any questions about your situation. Although these offices are part of the Department of State, the same allowances apply to most civilian federal employees under chief-of-mission authority overseas. For information or assistance contact [FLOAsk-Education@state.gov](mailto:FLOAsk-Education@state.gov) or call (202) 647-1076.

*Pamela Ward is a former regional education officer in the State Department's Office of Overseas Schools. Her article, originally published in the June 2007 FSJ, has been updated to reflect developments since then.*

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From the *FSJ* Education Supplement December 2014

## American College Rankings: How They Work and What They Mean

BY FRANCESCA HUEMER KELLY

Just as your high school student begins his senior year, guess what pops up on the newsstand? That's right; it's the *U.S. News & World Report* annual special issue of America's top colleges.

Started 30 years ago, this list of ranked colleges has become a huge phenomenon among high school seniors, their parents, alumni, and the colleges and universities themselves. Although newer lists now exist, published by *Washington Monthly* and others, the *U.S. News* rankings are still the most popular.

But how helpful are they? Let's take them apart to see how they work. Then we'll look at some alternative lists of U.S. colleges that may be more useful in finding the right school.

*Francesca Kelly, a Foreign Service spouse, is a writer and college essay tutor. She writes frequently on education issues and is a former editor of AFSA News. For the complete article, go to [www.afsa.org/education](http://www.afsa.org/education).*



# Gap Happy: One FS Student's Experience

Gap years are becoming more popular in the United States as a transition to college. Here's one Foreign Service student's experience.

BY MARYBETH HUNTER

**E**very year, senior high school students worldwide prepare for graduation and beyond. For some that might mean preparing for college or finding a job. For others it means taking a close look at nontraditional options. One option that is gaining popularity (to the tune of a 20-percent increase since 2006, according to Forbes.com) is taking a gap year.

Often taken between graduating from high school and starting college, gap years are largely used to help students define a plan for personal success. While gap years have long been a common practice for students in Europe and Australia, available information indicates that the notion of



On a typical day at one campsite, gap-year students help with construction work in a village.

seeking an enriching experience by taking a semester or year-long break from academics has gained popularity in the United States during the last 10 years.

Several universities have developed service-based programs for accepted, incoming first-year students interested

in deferring their attendance to college and completing internships, traveling or volunteering abroad. The results are impressive. In fact, a recent article in *U.S. News & World Report* credits gap-year students (affectionately known as “gappers”) with better performance and a better sense of purpose in their studies than their non-gapper peers.

Worldwide prevalence and encouraging facts aside, families in the foreign affairs community might still be wondering—how might taking a gap year help a Foreign Service student succeed? To help answer that question, the Family Liaison Office's education and youth team interviewed Foreign Service gap-year student Brooke Coskuner, daughter of State Department FSO Melissa Coskuner, asking her some thought-provoking questions regarding her recent gap-year experience in Kenya.

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*Marybeth Hunter is an education and youth specialist in the State Department's Family Liaison Office.*

## A recent article in *U.S. News & World Report* credits gap-year students with better performance and a better sense of purpose in their studies than their “non-gapper” peers.

**Family Liason Office:** *Students opt for gap years for a variety of reasons. What prompted your decision?*

**Brooke Coskuner:** I wasn't sure what I wanted to study after high school, so I wanted to travel and take some time to discover myself and my interests. Also, I wanted to do something to help others in the world and something that was rewarding.

**FLO:** *In your opinion, what should potential gap-year candidates do to prepare themselves for this type of adventure?*

**BC:** They should definitely have a good idea about what they want to do during their gap year and stay motivated to do just that. Without a plan, some people end up not doing anything during their gap year because of a loss of motivation and no real objectives.

**FLO:** *With the idea of taking a gap year gaining in popularity, there are a number of organizations offering programs. How did you go about choosing yours?*

**BC:** I searched for programs via the Internet, which was overwhelming because there were so many programs offered in so many locations. Eventually, I decided to start with my desired location and the duration of the program, and then researched programs based on those criteria. There were many types of programs and activities offered, so I read up on what kinds of things I would



Gap-year students help finish buildings to house medical dispensaries and a boys' school in Kenya.

be doing in detail. I ended up choosing Camps International because it had great reviews, their activities interested me and it sounded like fun.

**FLO:** *The price of the program would certainly be a deciding factor for many families. What was the overall cost for your gap year?*

**BC:** It always depends on where you choose to go and what is included in the cost. I chose to go to Kenya for two months and, with flights included, it cost about \$4,000. It was a bit pricey compared to some of the other programs, but there were four different campsites with different activities, and food and in-country transportation were included.

**FLO:** *Many readers might wonder what a day in the life of a gap-year student could entail. Can you describe a typical day?*

**BC:** A typical day during the week at one campsite would start at 9 a.m. when we would eat a delicious Kenyan breakfast of porridge or eggs and bacon. After helping to do the dishes, we would walk to a nearby village where we would begin our work project. Our objective was to finish buildings that would house medical dispensaries and a boys' school. We would mix cement and plaster the walls of the buildings.

While we were working, the local children from the village would come and hang out with us. Those kids were so joyful and made us laugh.

We would have lunch around 1 p.m. and go back to work for three more hours. After that, we would go back to our camp and get cleaned up. We would spend the rest of the day playing pool or just hanging out with the other camp participants

and the staff.

On the weekend, we would go to the beach and relax. It was really a wonderful and liberating experience.

At another campsite, we monitored wildlife in Tsavo West, a game park near the coast in Kenya. We followed a family of elephants in this area and also helped with construction of a school in a village there.

In my group, there were many Australians and British kids, and it was great to get to know them. I learned about their culture, as well as the Kenyan coastal culture. I am still in touch with many of them, and two of them came to visit me in Berlin, where I lived with my family after going to Kenya.

COURTESY OF BROOKE COSKUNER

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**“Students should definitely have a good idea about what they want to do during their gap year and stay motivated to do just that.”**

—Brooke Coskuner

**FLO:** *Staying connected to family and friends back home is important to most travelers. How did you communicate with them throughout your gap year?*

**BC:** I bought a SIM card and used my phone, which also had Internet, so I used “Whatsapp” to talk to them; and, occasionally, I made phone calls. I got a pre-paid SIM card from the phone company there [Kenya] that wasn’t too expensive, and that’s how I stayed in contact with my family and friends.

**FLO:** *One would guess that day-to-day life was not always easy for you. What are some of the challenges you faced, and how did you deal with them?*

**BC:** I think the biggest challenge for me was learning how to take care of myself and become more self-sufficient. In the camp experience, all of us had to manage our own laundry, cooking preparations and cleanup. I had to hand wash my clothes every day because there

were no washing machines available. Our clothes got so dirty from all of the construction work we were doing.

The local staff showed us how they washed clothes, rubbing them together with a lot of force and a lot of soap. After a couple of tries, I got the hang of this and learned how to do it so that my clothes were clean. We would hang our wet clothes out in the Kenyan sunshine, and they would dry very fast.

It was also a bit hard in the beginning adjusting to being away from my family, friends and the comforts of home, but that faded pretty quickly as I got to know my campmates and started to engage in our work and experience the fun adventures.

**FLO:** *Making sure you had everything you needed must have been a concern. What did you bring with you that you wish you hadn’t, and what did you not bring that you wish you had?*

### Interesting Gap-Year Facts from AmericanGap.org

- Ninety percent of students who took a gap year returned to college within a year.
- Gap-year students show a clear pattern of having higher GPAs than would otherwise have been predicted, and the positive effect lasts through all four years.
- National statistics show that half of medical school-minded students are taking at least one gap year. The percentage is even higher (60 percent) for undergrads at high-powered research institutions such as Johns Hopkins who are heading for medical schools nationwide.

## Words of Wisdom from a Gap-Year Parent

I didn't worry about her postponing her studies. I was fully supportive of this idea and thought it would help give her some perspective on her life, as well as providing some challenges. The experience gave her the opportunity to be away from familiar and reliable surroundings and helped to develop her vision for the next steps in her life.

—Melissa Coskuner,  
State Department

**BC:** I don't think there was anything I wished I had brought, but didn't. I brought everything I needed from the list that was supplied. I ended up buying some local Kenyan fabric and had some long pants and shorts made for casual wear.

**FLO:** Now that your gap year is over, how have you been able to use the knowledge you gained?

**BC:** Since this was the first time I lived away from my family, I learned to be self-sufficient and gained greater independence. It really helped me to learn about myself and what I was capable of doing. This experience increased my self-confidence and my abilities by taking me out of my comfort zone. I learned to rely on myself, and gained an appreciation for the things I took for granted in my life.

**FLO:** Finally, in what ways do you think you have grown both personally and academically as a result of taking a gap year?

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## Gap-Year Resources

### Books

*The Gap-Year Guidebook 2014: Everything You Need to Know About Taking a Gap-Year or Year Out*, Jonathan Barnes (2014)

*Gap Year: How Delaying College Changes People in Ways the World Needs*, Joseph O'Shea (2013)

*Now What? How a Gap Year of International Internships Prepared Me for College, Career, and Life*, Monika Lutz (2013)

*Gap Year, American Style: Journeys Toward Learning, Serving, and Self-Discovery*, Karl Haigler and Rae Nelson (2013)

*Escape Guide to The Ultimate Gap Year: The Essential Guide To Your Year Out*, Amar Hussein (2013)

*The Complete Guide to the Gap Year: The Best Things to Do Between High School and College*, Kristin M. White (2009)

*The Gap-Year Advantage: Helping Your Child Benefit from Time Off Before or During College*, Karl Haigler and Rae Nelson (2005)

*Planning Your Gap Year: Hundreds of Opportunities for Employment, Study, Volunteer Work and Independent Travel*, Nick Vandome (2005)

### Websites

For General Information:

[www.americangap.org](http://www.americangap.org)

[www.gapadvice.com](http://www.gapadvice.com)

[www.gapwork.com](http://www.gapwork.com)

[www.gapyear.com](http://www.gapyear.com)

[www.outwardbound.org](http://www.outwardbound.org)

[www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)

For Specific Programs:

[www.campsinternational.com](http://www.campsinternational.com)

This organization creates two-week to three-month volunteering programs for 18- to 25-year-olds. Participants live within rural communities surrounded by stunning biodiversity areas while contributing to sustainable project initiatives in Borneo (Sabah), Cambodia, Ecuador, Peru, Kenya and Tanzania.

[www.gapguru.com](http://www.gapguru.com)

This website focuses on gap-year programs that emphasize community development, childcare and sports coaching.

[www.lattitude.org.uk](http://www.lattitude.org.uk)

The Lattitude group offers worldwide volunteer placements for gap-year students. The four-week to eleven-month projects cover a diverse range of interests including teaching, medicine and conservation work.

[www.madventurer.com](http://www.madventurer.com)

This website highlights opportunities for gap-year participants to help empower global communities through sustainable service, transformative learning and adventurous exploration. Opportunities range from two weeks to six months in length.

**“In the camp experience, all of us had to manage our own laundry, cooking preparations and cleanup.”**

—Brooke Coskuner

**BC:** Personally, I have learned to be more independent. While helping the less fortunate, I learned to appreciate the things I have in my life. Academically, I have chosen to study art and graphic design in Berlin, Germany. I think this gap-year experience gave me the courage to choose to stay abroad and study, and also helped me to become more focused on pursuing my long-held interest in art and design.



For more information on how to determine if a gap year might work for a student in your family, please review the Gap-Year Resource list on this page.

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation provides scholarship opportunities for Foreign Service gap-year students going on to their first year of college. For more details on how and when to apply, please contact FSYF at [fsyf@fsyf.org](mailto:fsyf@fsyf.org).

Visit FLO's website for information on a variety of education resources for Foreign Service youth, [www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo). Contact FLO's Education and Youth team with questions at [FLOAskEducation@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov). ■

## Power Dynamics in Today's World

### Is The American Century Over?

Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Global Futures Series*, Polity Press, 2015, \$12.95, paperback/\$8.99, e-book, 152 pages.

REVIEWED BY HARRY C. BLANEY III

This little volume is perhaps the best short read I know about our global landscape, its future trajectory and the implications for global geostrategic power shifts.

A former dean and now professor at the Harvard John F. Kennedy School of Government, Nye is no stranger to Washington foreign policymaking. Among other positions, he spent time on the State Department's seventh floor. In short, he knows both the academic side (he invented the concept of "soft power") and the hard realities of the practice of power diplomacy.

As we all know, there is a furious, and often misguided, debate about the fall of America and the rise of China, Europe and a host of other nations and forces. Nye examines all of these arguments, citing and quoting authors who espouse one viewpoint or another. He brings considerable factual material and analytical skills to bear to see if the views match reality.

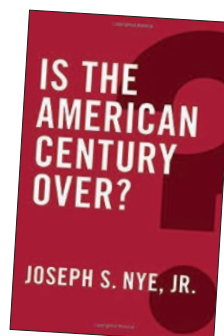
What we see in this book is a concise tour de force examining the international context in which power is exercised, to what end and how it shifts (or does not) over time. While the emphasis is on the role of America, the author's true focus is on relative and shifting power—it is a dynamic look at the phenomenon rather than a static, unidimensional or simplistic expansion of existing, but shifting, trends.

The first two chapters look at "The

Creation of the American Century" and "American Decline." I will skip the argument over when the American Century may have begun because the several alternatives are all somewhat plausible and, in any case, the heart of the matter is the often-popular idea of American global decline.

Nye cites most of the arguments for "American decline"—and these citations alone are worth the price of the book, just to set the stage. He then gets to the real nitty-gritty of the policies, resources, new actors and exercise of power that lie at the heart of American influence in the world.

One quote sums up much of his argument here: "The short answer to



decline of Britain before the two world wars to illustrate how domestic decay (such as falling industrial productivity) reduced absolute power, but it was the rise of others that reduced the country's relative power.

Nye acknowledges that the American Century may change or end as a result of

a "relative" power decline because of the rise of others. He looks at the relative power changes in Europe, Japan, Russia, India and Brazil. The latter has no chance to overtake America, but Nye thinks that China will be the chief competitor and even surpass America in economic growth and size.

But in the next chapter, on China, he

**What we see in this book is a concise tour de force examining the international context in which power is exercised, to what end and how it shifts (or does not) over time.**

our question is that we are not entering a post-American world." Nye believes that in 2041 the United States will still have "primacy in power resources and play the central role in the global balance of power among states..." But he correctly notes that it is necessary to look at "a decrease in relative external power and domestic deterioration or decay."

One key point he makes is that there is "no virtue in either understatement or overstatement of American power." The hubris of a Bush II is not wise, and neither is "withdrawal from the world or nationalistic and protectionist policies that do harm." He uses the rise and

also analyzes that country's many problems and questions whether, in fact, it will stop the American Century in all areas of power. He looks at Beijing's strategy and American responses. He notes that its military power is officially at a quarter of America's by the measure of defense expenditures, but that there are programs that are "off the books."

Nye believes that the American Century will likely continue, but it will not look like the past and will be more complex. The American share of the global economy will be smaller than in the past, for example. But Nye does not believe in simple linear extrapolation of growth rates; he looks at multiple

elements of power including military, economic and soft power.

Nye notes, as some others have, that “transnational issues” are “not susceptible to traditional hard-power instruments.” It is here that diplomacy must work harder and smarter; but, frankly, we have not yet organized our foreign policy process and management structure, let alone our training and assignments at State, to align with this reality.

Nye states, as have President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry, that the United States “cannot achieve many of its international goals acting alone.” This is a perspective that too many in America, and especially in Congress, do not understand.

The key for Nye is: “The problem of leadership in such a world is how to get everyone into the act and still get action.” He is dismissive of those who equate military action with power, and points to the many global challenges where military might is of little use. He decries both those who overreact, resulting in the “waste [of] blood and treasure, as in Vietnam and Iraq,” and those who preach a form of total isolation from the world’s troubles.

Nye concludes that our place in the world could be affected by our own partisan politics, and he is critical of the budget cutters who reduce funding for diplomacy and the military, as well as domestic needs such as education, R&D and infrastructure that make our country great. He believes we need to grow and tax to accomplish these goals.

While he believes the United States should intervene in key crises, Nye holds that Washington should stay out of the business of “invasion and occupation.” He argues for the need to reinvigorate, reconfigure and reinvent international institutions to carry the

work of addressing our most serious global challenges.

This book provides so many insights into the global dynamics of power and its significance that I would make it required reading for all members of the A-100 course, with a class discussion of the implications of these trends and our role in this new and changing world.

It should also be read by all who take the new ambassadors’ class to ensure that our professionals and neophytes are aware of just how complex and challenging the world they are being sent out to manage is.

---

*Harry C. Blaney is a retired FSO who served three assignments as a member of the Secretary of State’s Policy Planning Staff and in the White House. He served overseas at the U.S. Mission to the European Union and NATO. He is former president of the Coalition for American Leadership Abroad, and is now a Senior Fellow at the Center for International Security.*

## Finding the Humor in Following Your Spouse

### Packing Up: Further Adventures of a Trailing Spouse

Brigid Keenan, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014, \$17.37, hardcover, 320 pages.

REVIEWED BY DEBRA BLOME

*Packing Up: Further Adventures of a Trailing Spouse* is a sequel to Brigid Keenan’s 2007 book, *Diplomatic Baggage: The Adventures of a Trailing Spouse*, which she wrote about life as a diplomatic family.

That book covered giving up a career, having children and moving a family around the world. This one is all about what happens next.

Keenan’s witty observations

make for a fun read. She has a knack for characterizing a situation in just such a way that a Foreign Service reader understands.

“Normally it is quite unnerving waking up on the first day of a new posting because you have no idea where—or who—you are, but I had no difficulty this morning for the simple reason that I never went to sleep,” she writes.

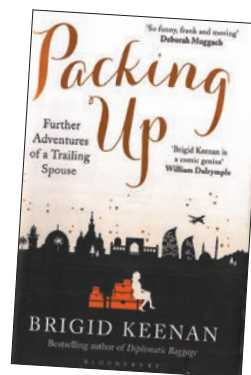
“My bed was so hard I might as well have been lying on the floor, and all I could think was ‘Oh God, what have I done?’ AW should have retired: we could be living cozily in Somerset now, with a play frame in the garden and the grandchildren coming for weekends; but instead we are on the 15th floor of the Radisson Hotel in Baku, Azerbaijan.”

Keenan’s husband—whom she refers to only as AW—is a diplomat for the European Union. The book covers the last few posts of his career and the months immediately following retirement. During this time, Keenan and AW host a wedding, face cancer, become grandparents, train domestic help, quit smoking, gain weight and retire, among other things.

The book is written as a collection of journal entries rather than as a traditional narrative. It begins with a nearly 30-page prologue that sets the scene and brings the reader up to date with the family (10 years have

passed since the writing of *Diplomatic Baggage*).

“When I was writing it,” Keenan says of the book in her prologue, “I noticed that lots of other older women seemed to be publishing their memoirs and said to my





**The book is richest when it showcases the author doing what she does best: observing and humorously describing her life.**

daughter Claudia, ‘If books written by young women are called chick lit, what do you think older women’s should be called?’ After some thought, she suggested decreplit.”

The dated journal entries and Keenan’s self-deprecating prose move the story along, but don’t prevent it from getting bogged down in various tangents. Their peripatetic lifestyle—London, Somerset, Brussels, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, trips to Israel—can be tiresome to keep up with. Keenan’s

sometimes flatfooted political comments may make you wince. And some journal entries are so mundane you wonder why they were ever included.

The book is richest when it showcases the author doing what she does best: observing and humorously describing her life. “The packers have been here all weekend and everything of ours has gone,” she writes near the end of the book. It’s a feeling any FS member who has ever packed out knows well.

“Our beautiful room looks rather empty and sad. To help us with unpacking in England, I asked the packers to write on the boxes what is inside. On the ones containing our bed linens, they have written *Ambassador’s shits*.”

*Packing Up* is full of bits like this, which make you chuckle and nod knowingly without even realizing you’re doing it. This is not a book to read if you’re looking for great insight on the meaning of life, but it is a book to enjoy for what it is: One that’s easy to put down, but also easy to pick back up again. ■

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*Debra Blome is a former associate editor of The Foreign Service Journal.*

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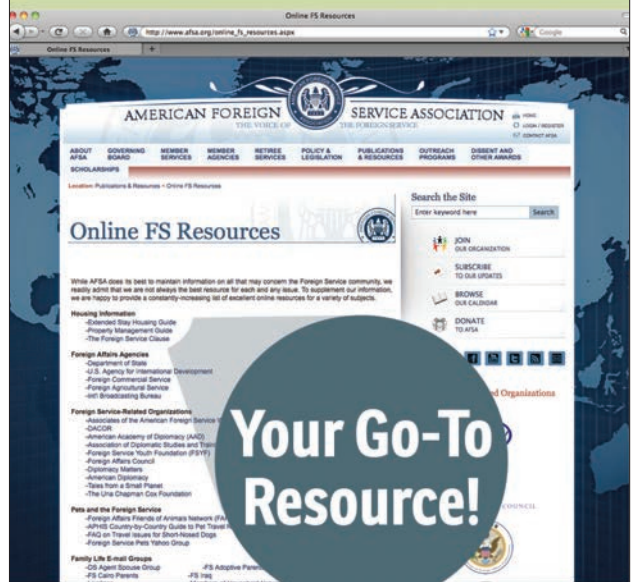
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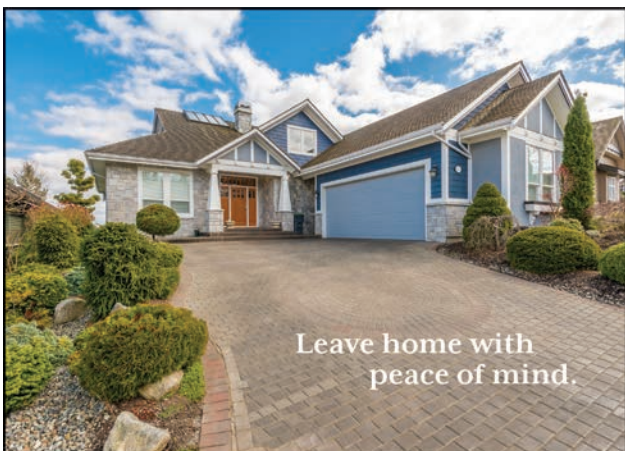
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The steps to the church of Santo Tomás in Chichicastenango, located in the western highlands of Guatemala, are a focal point of the weekly Sunday market where local women sell flowers and incense. Originally built on top of a Mayan altar in 1540, the church reflects the syncretism that has occurred between Mayan and Catholic worship. ■

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*Brandon West and his family are currently serving on their first tour in Guatemala City. His wife, Christina, joined the Foreign Service in the spring of 2013 and has an onward assignment to Guadalajara. Brandon works remotely from their home for a U.S.-based software company and enjoys documenting their Foreign Service experiences at [diplodad.com](http://diplodad.com). This photo was taken with a Canon 6D and EF 17-40mm lens.*

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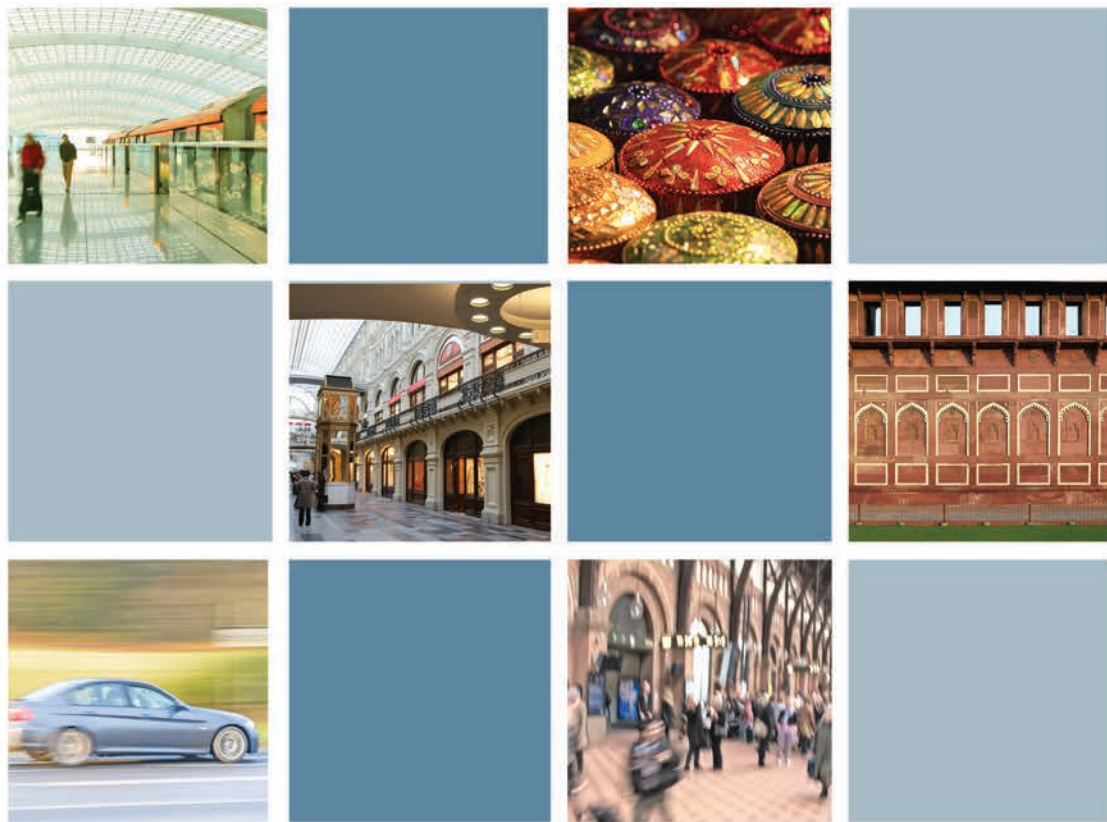
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