

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

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SPOTLIGHT ON AFSA AWARDS

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On the Cover: The 2016 recipients of AFSA's awards for lifetime contributions, dissent and exemplary performance. At center, Ambassador Ruth A. Davis (photo by Joaquin Sosa). Clockwise from top left, Shawn Akard, teaching a class in Jordan; Jefferson Smith, far right, with members of the Locally Employed Staff Committee; Toni Kula, coordinating the embassy beach cleanup drive; Karn Carlson; John Naland; Sara Locke, far right, at the Embassy Beirut Fourth of July party; Mike Honigstein, center, at the Write to Reconcile conference. All photos courtesy of the named individuals. Cover art design by Gemma Dvorak.

Calling It Like We See It

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

This month's *Journal* covers the AFSA annual awards ceremony and spotlights the 2016 award winners. This makes for inspiring reading, as we explore what our colleagues are doing to achieve our collective mission. One friend now serving at the Foreign Service Institute tells me she scours the AFSA awards write-ups for case studies to highlight best practices in her training classes.

The annual awards ceremony is a great AFSA tradition, one that recognizes excellence and courage. The AFSA awards program makes our profession stronger.

AFSA gives a variety of awards—one for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy, several outstanding performance awards and, unique in the U.S. government, four awards for constructive dissent—at the entry level, mid-level, senior level and by a specialist.

This year, after the kind of spirited, principled debate that represents AFSA at its best, only one award for dissent was granted. Governing Board and Awards Committee members agreed on the need for better, clearer guidance on what constitutes dissent in the Foreign Service—beginning with how to distinguish between dissent and the equally important, but distinct, act of taking initiative and finding innovative ways to approach challenges.

We resolved to produce a more

robust definition of dissent in time for next year's nomination process. This column is meant to contribute to that thought process and invite your input.

We in the Foreign Service deploy worldwide—to protect and serve, yes, but also to understand the local context and call it like we see it. Sometimes Washington wants us to deliver something we know is not achievable in that context. Sometimes we know that even trying would cause a backlash and impede achievement of other goals.

It is our obligation to point that out, to offer our best judgment and, when possible, alternatives (see “Foreign Service Core Precepts,” below). This is the basis for constructive dissent as we have traditionally defined it. The State Department's Dissent Channel is one way—the institutional vehicle—to deliver that dissent (see

“The Dissent Channel,” next page).

The same obligations to speak up apply for matters related to the management of our own institution, not just for classic foreign policy issues. We must all think of ourselves as stewards of the Foreign Service and act accordingly, working to establish and maintain well-functioning embassy platforms and healthy career paths for the next generation. Because the Dissent Channel is restricted to “substantive policy” issues, dissent on management matters must be conducted through other channels.

The AFSA awards program recognizes constructive dissent on management issues as well as foreign policy issues. This year's Rivkin Award winner is a great example of the former.

Lest we come across as simply nay-sayers (as we might to interagency

FOREIGN SERVICE CORE PRECEPTS

Excerpt from the Core Precepts

Decision Criteria for Tenure and Promotion in the Foreign Service Leadership Skills/Openness to Dissent and Differing Views

Entry-Level: Exhibits moral courage and intellectual integrity. Publicly supports official decisions while using appropriate dissent channels in case of disagreement. Resolves disputes using appropriate mechanisms.

Mid-Level: Encourages frank communication with colleagues and subordinates. Discerns when well-founded constructive dissent is justified; advocates policy alternatives and guides staff to do the same. Recognizes employee dissent through awards programs.

Senior-Level: Encourages and expects personnel to express opinions and to use dissent channels; accords importance to well-founded constructive dissent and solicits, weighs, and defends its appropriate expression. Recognizes and supports moral courage.



Ambassador Barbara Stephenson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

partners whose leadership principles do not embrace dissent as fully as ours), let me note that we routinely add as much value pointing out what *will* work as we do pointing out what *won't* work.

We who typically understand the local context better than anyone else in the U.S. government are often the first to see that a long-shot goal might just be achievable if we frame the arguments a certain way, avoid that third rail, garner support from this key group while not alerting another too early.

Delivering on those long-shot goals may show incredible, even unusual, initiative and innovation. It may be outstanding performance, but it's not dissent.

The Foreign Service adds tremendous value every time we advise with precision about what will work and what won't work in the local context at our posts. This is a core role of the Foreign Service,

The Foreign Service adds tremendous value every time we advise with precision about what will work, and what won't work, in the local context at our posts.

and it is often the basis for well-founded constructive dissent.

There is something else to consider. When AFSA gives only one award for dissent, a question naturally arises: Is the space for constructive dissent closing? This is both a fair question and a powerful, foundational one, given our role in the interagency "ecosystem."

Pointing out that something Washington wants just won't fly requires courage and often risks repercussions. The perceived *price* for doing the right thing, for engaging in constructive dissent, rises,

I am convinced, when we feel insecure in our careers.

When, for example, mid-level officers need to worry about there being more bidders than jobs, or when senior officers see their career paths blocked by appointees from outside the Foreign Service, we shouldn't be surprised if dissent declines.

Our dissent awards honor those who stand up and call it like they see it. We all need to defend the space for constructive dissent, which is, in my view, inextricably intertwined with defending a strong, professional career Foreign Service. ■

THE DISSENT CHANNEL

Excerpt from 2 FAM 070 Dissent Channel

2 FAM 071 POLICY

2 FAM 071.1 Policy Statement

a. It is Department of State policy that all U.S. citizen employees, foreign and domestic, be able to express dissenting or alternative views on substantive issues of policy, in a manner which ensures serious, high-level review and response.

b. The State Department has a strong interest in facilitating open, creative, and uncensored dialogue on substantive foreign policy issues within the professional foreign affairs community, and a responsibility to foster an atmosphere supportive of such dialogue, including the opportunity to offer alternative or dissenting opinions without fear of penalty. The Dissent Channel was created to allow its users the opportunity to bring dissenting or alternative views on substantive foreign policy issues, when such views cannot be communicated in a full and timely manner through regular operating channels or procedures, to the attention of the Secretary of State and other senior State Department

officials in a manner which protects the author from any penalty, reprisal, or recrimination.

c. Freedom from reprisal for Dissent Channel users is strictly enforced; officers or employees found to have engaged in retaliation or reprisal against Dissent Channel users, or to have divulged to unauthorized personnel the source or contents of Dissent Channel messages, will be subject to disciplinary action. Dissent Channel messages, including the identity of the authors, are a most sensitive element in the internal deliberative process and are to be protected accordingly.

2 FAM 071.2 Scope

The Dissent Channel is reserved for consideration of dissenting or alternative views on substantive foreign policy matters. The Dissent Channel may not be used to address non-policy issues (e.g., management or personnel issues that are not significantly related to substantive matters of policy). Complaints relating to violation of law, rules, or regulations; mismanagement; or fraud, waste, or abuse may be addressed to OIG/INV. Classification challenges should not be addressed through the Dissent Channel.

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Recognizing Excellence and Courage

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Every September, in assembling a detailed report on AFSA's awards program and the year's recipients, we have the opportunity to introduce to you, in an in-depth and personal way, some of the stellar individuals who represent the best of the Foreign Service community.

In June I had the distinct honor of interviewing Ambassador Ruth A. Davis, the 2016 recipient of AFSA's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award. Diplomat, leader, mentor, innovator, trailblazer—if you don't find inspiration in her remarkable story, you won't find it anywhere.

Our spotlight on the AFSA awards, always with particular attention to the unique dissent awards, includes another inspiring story, from Jefferson Smith, winner of the 2016 Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent.

Smith is an FSO who challenged prevailing practice on locally employed (LE) staff compensation and in the process helped secure a living wage for LE staff at U.S. Embassy Kuwait and other posts in the region.

No other dissent awards were given this year, as Ambassador Barbara Stephenson explains in President's Views.

Further on dissent, Ambassador Tom Boyatt's Retiree VP Voice column, "In

Defense of Dissent," is a must-read. Boyatt shares his own dissent story (Cyprus, 1974), reminds us of other significant examples

(East Pakistan, 1970-1971; Yugoslavia, 1993) and salutes the recent "Dissent 51" (Syria, 2016). We also highlight a selection of previous *FSJ* coverage of dissent.

Please see AFSA News for complete coverage of the June 23 awards ceremony and profiles of all of the winners.

We turn to diplomatic tradecraft in the focus section. In "Diplomatic Training: New Trends," Ambassador (ret.) Kishan Rana surveys the international landscape and finds that foreign ministries from London to Kuala Lumpur are expanding and intensifying their emphasis on training in innovative ways.

FSOs Elijah Bush and Todd Hughes are both former foreign language teachers and recent FSI language students. They present a seriously practical guide to finding your way as a language student in "Five Ways to Tackle a New Language."

Then, with language well in hand, it's time to get out to post and plan the perfect VIP visit. Through the lens of a recent presidential visit, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Ted Osius recounts what he's learned about how to plan and manage such a visit. Hints: strategy, advance planning, teamwork, initiative and ownership.

As you may recall, the January-February *Journal's* focus on mental health care for the Foreign Service (beginning with our call for members to share their experiences) generated great interest and brought to light some serious issues and deficiencies in this area. Support for FS children with special needs emerged as an area of particular concern that warranted separate coverage.

So in June we published a *Speaking Out* by two FSOs, "Supporting FS Families with Special Needs Children," that spelled out the challenges facing families and offered suggestions for improving access to the right care. We also published a series of comments from FS parents weighing in on mental health support for their children. Those comments and others made it clear there is concern and confusion about access to care, allowances and other aspects of support.

The office responsible for managing these issues as of 2013, the Child and Family Program, is part of the Bureau of Medical Services Mental Health Services Office. MED graciously offered to clarify the role of the CFP; we, in turn, provided a set of questions to MED, intending to publish a Q&A that would contribute to the conversation.

In our lead feature this month, "MED's Child and Family Program, Explained," Deputy Medical Director for Mental Health Programs Dr. Kathy Gallardo describes the CFP—its origins, aims and responsibilities. She also provides the link to MED's new online FAQ in which the bureau responds to most of our questions.

Moving on to less weighty matters, we bring you, "Creepy Critters We Have Known" by Margaret Sullivan. Nothing like a few cicaks to lighten things up.

In *Speaking Out*, retired FSO and veteran World's Fair hand Beatrice Camp makes a plea to stop ignoring international expos and, instead, do them right. And FS spouse Laura Fabrycky offers a poignant reflection on a family road trip to Syria in 2011. Last but not least, Andrew Parker's image from Liberia speaks for itself. ■



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



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It's Time to Be a "State" Person

Domestic politics and career public service shouldn't mix. I can now count on two hands how many times someone has said to me: "He/she is a 'Clinton/Trump/Fill-in-the-Blank person,' so they don't want to make waves before the election."

According to those I've spoken with, the definition of "waves" can be anything from personnel and staffing decisions to sticking up for one's people or weighing in on possibly contentious policies.

No matter the reason, good leaders—especially career State employees—should never be afraid to do their jobs for fear of the political ramifications.

The fact that some high-level leaders in our organization are playing it safe should be alarming. Further, it should disturb the core of our organization that people at the working level know and accept that this is happening.

Reliance on the outcome of domestic elections weakens the State Department. As career employees, it is our job to internalize the core values of the organization (character, service, accountability, community, diversity and loyalty), to represent national, not partisan, interests and to live the core culture of State and help political appointees adapt to it.

This is my first administration transition as a State employee. I've noticed that at the working level some of us jokingly remind one another of the Hatch Act, or we wonder aloud how we would draft press guidance should a Trump presidency become more probable. But we don't base our on-the-job actions on who may be elected.

Yet some senior personnel are changing their behavior because they're "politicians' people." These are not

appointees—they are career members of the State Department.

I was a member of the military during the Clinton-Bush transition. We all did our jobs without thinking much about the outcome of the Bush v. Gore Supreme Court decision. We never heard of generals who were Bush or Gore people.

Any sort of political behavior deemed detrimental to the organization would have "rung bells" and spurred the organization to action. It would have been exorcised like an evil spirit.

This is not to say that it doesn't happen in the military or other organizations. There is a long list of generals, in fact, who have been ostracized because of their political behavior.

The point is not that it happens, but that organizations with strong, internalized core values can recognize a cancer and have the expertise and the courage to cut it out.

Is this behavior necessary to survive and thrive in the State Department? Do you have to be a "politician's person" to help your people and your organization? If so, if those who are playing it safe for political reasons are right, then fears that we may work in a leaderless institution are justified.

It is not off base to say that we in career public service are held to a higher standard than are politicians. We could never mealy-mouth our way through a debate on the meaning of the word "is"; we should never rest on the selective amnesiac's excuse, "Senator, I have no recollection..."; and we should never pin our professional advancement to the careers of elected officials.

There's no better way to counter this politically motivated behavior than through State's current drive to

build a grassroots culture of leadership. Employees at all levels can get involved with efforts like iLead through FSI and the Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation; they can contribute to professional development portals like Smart Leadership and the Leadership and Management School website; and they can participate in mentoring programs sponsored by the career development advisor (CDA).

Together we can take ownership of the profession of diplomacy.

John Fer

FSO

Washington, D.C.

A Welcome Explication of Hiring Practices

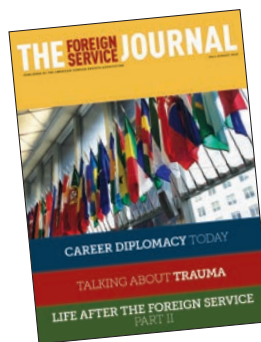
Glenn Guimond's clear explanation of the steps required to become a Foreign Service officer is a welcome explication of hiring practices for new entry-level officers ("Examining State's

Foreign Service Officer Hiring Today," July-August *FSJ*).

I appreciated the opportunity to compare it with the examination process I went through in the early 1960s and to update my understanding of current requirements.

I would urge that it be reprinted as a brochure to be utilized and distributed by recruiters and by retired FSOs who have the opportunity to speak to young people who may be interested in career opportunities with the Department of State.

Perhaps the article that followed on "Opportunities for Students" could also be usefully included in such a publication. (I must admit, though, to some



surprise and disappointment that the first program in the listing, the National Security Language Institute for Youth, requires only a 2.5 GPA.)

Jan Zehner
FSO, retired
Ogden, Utah

Legitimacy and Corruption in Vietnam

I enjoyed the June *FSJ*'s focus on the corrosive impact of corruption, especially having witnessed the distorting and counterproductive effects of poorly managed project funding in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I similarly continue to appreciate State Department Historian Stephen Randolph's analyses (and commentary in the Foreign Relations series), including his case study (based in part on a post-war RAND survey) on the role of corruption in undermining U.S. objectives during the Vietnam conflict.

However, it is critical to distinguish between root causes and attendant symptoms. The Saigon regime's corruption was the latter, and South Vietnam's artificial character and lack of political legitimacy from inception to collapse could not have been cured by a bolder or more consistent dose of American anti-corruption programming.

Salvaged as a non-Communist rump entity after Dien Bien Phu, the Republic of Vietnam inherited the French colonial bureaucracy and erstwhile French/Vichy/Japanese puppet emperor Bao Dai as head of state. The ROV's rejection of the Geneva provision for national elections (which Ho Chi Minh certainly would have won) solidified the fundamental illegitimacy of the regime.

American influence (under Ngo Dinh Diem) merely replaced French domination. Even had the United States adopted a unified and enduring anti-corruption approach, neither Diem nor Nguyen Van Thieu (or the revolving door of generals between them) could have established strong popular legitimacy for a simple reason: The ROV fought for its own separate survival as the de facto successor to a colonial administration, with no more than lip-service paid to Vietnamese nationalism and unification. In contrast, North Vietnam, led by nationalist—albeit

Communist—figures credited for the end of French rule, pursued national unification with ruthless focus that garnered support in large swaths of the South quite ignorant of Karl Marx or Cold War politics.

Saigon fell quickly in 1975, not because the Nixon administration “took its eye off the ball” on corruption or because Army of the Republic of Vietnam generals were pocketing ghost soldier salaries, but because the ROV never was a sustainable entity. And in 1975 (unlike 1965, 1968 or 1972), American forces were not employed to rescue a state that had no legitimate claim to birth or continued existence. It is, in fact, quite plausible that Diem would have fallen earlier had he refused to countenance the corruption that the Saigon elite had mastered during French rule.

Also, the historical record is replete with examples of corruption, profiteering and other malfeasance in North Vietnam during the war; and corruption remains a scourge in Vietnam today. Yet Hanoi won, despite its own corruption and enduring bombing well exceeding the combined totals for U.S. bombing of Germany and Japan in World War

II, because of single-minded pursuit of intangibles—national unity and rejection of foreign interference—supported by a majority of Vietnamese in most sections of the country.

As we champion anti-corruption efforts in our diplomacy (and ensure better stewardship of taxpayer resources in future stability operations), it is critical to identify and learn from the core reasons for our Vietnam tragedy and not again fall under an illusion that we can invent a sustainable partner polity irrespective of a foreign political culture's legitimacy traditions.

Neil Hop
FSO
Washington, D.C.

Aid to Africa: The Policy Context

Permit me to comment on Don Lotter's interesting article regarding aid to education in Africa in the April issue of your excellent journal (“Development Aid to Africa: Time for Plan B?”).

The United States and other donors have been funding education programs and projects in African countries for decades. Many have been quite successful. Others have failed—in most cases not because they were ill-designed or badly managed, but because political strife and civil conflicts ruined them along with other aid activities. Unfortunately, this is likely to continue in many countries.

Mr. Lotter states that “foreign aid has failed to pull sub-Saharan Africa out of poverty,” and refers to “the failure of development aid.” Such opinion deserves comment on several counts.

First, only a country can advance itself. Outside aid can help, but cannot do the job absent a strong will and continued positive effort from the receiving country.



Second, there are about 50 countries in Africa, with a wide range of differing characteristics, and it is not wise to lump them all together. Some, in fact, have moved ahead nicely—Botswana, Mauritius, Ghana, Senegal and Cape Verde come to mind. Others are disappointments.

Next, the success or failure of aid should be judged not only on a country basis, but also in terms of benefits created for large groups of the population even if the country as a whole has not advanced much.

A classic example is the virtual eradication of onchocerciasis (river blindness) in much of West and East Africa, achieved by governments with the help of foreign aid. Millions of people no longer go blind, and large swathes of land that were not utilized are now farmed and grazed.

Other achievements assisted by aid include the creation of potable water systems, the inoculation of millions of children against diseases, increases in literacy, the building of farm-to-market roads and supplying electricity to isolated villages.

Consider also the numerous victims of conflicts helped with humanitarian aid.

Finally, U.S. bilateral aid is partly a tool of diplomacy, supporting our foreign policies. The reason that many aid programs and projects have failed is because the policies they support have failed. Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, the DRC and South Sudan are examples. Blame the policies, not the aid. ■

*Raymond Malley
USAID Senior FSO, retired
Hanover, New Hampshire
and McLean, Virginia*

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“Dissent 51” Stirs Debate

Through the summer, media reports led to commentary from all corners on what is now known as “Dissent 51,” the mid-June State Department Dissent Channel message submitted by 51 members of the Foreign Service criticizing the Syria policy of the Obama administration and urging a stronger military response to the crisis.

Though the message was leaked to the press, the names of the signatories have not been published. Coverage has addressed the details of U.S. policy toward Syria and the dissenters’ critique of it, as well as the merits of official dissent.

Dissent 51 shows that the system of checks and balances is working as it should, Georgetown University law professor Neal Katyal writes in a July 1 op-ed in *The New York Times*. It shows that the president is not surrounded by “yes-people.”

Katyal argues that inter- and intra-agency debates allow for second thoughts and new perspectives and, ultimately, make for better decisions.

“When the loyal opposition dies, I think the soul of America dies with it.” Writing for The Huffington Post on July 5, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Charles H. Rivkin quotes journalist and diplomat Edward R. Morrow in celebrating dissent in the Foreign Service.

Ambassador Rivkin also congratulated Jefferson Smith, winner of AFSA’s 2016 William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Officer. Named for the ambassador’s late father, the award was presented at AFSA’s annual awards ceremony on June 23 (see coverage in AFSA News).

Without commenting on the specifics of Dissent 51, Amb. Rivkin praised Secretary of State John Kerry’s decision to sit down with the dissenters and give them

a careful hearing, adding that the department’s culture of independent thought has helped strengthen U.S. foreign policy.

Somewhat farther afield, in a column in the Indian daily *Asian Age*, retired Indian Ambassador Skand Tayal discussed State’s Dissent Channel and the possibility that a similar institution in India’s Ministry of External Affairs might lead to a more serious consideration of options in foreign policy deliberations.

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor

First U.S. Ambassador to Somalia in 25 Years

Stephen Schwartz, the first U.S. ambassador to Somalia in more than 25 years, took his oath on June 27 and headed to Mogadishu in late July.

A career FSO with 24 years in the Foreign Service, Amb. Schwartz has spent the majority of his career in Africa. He has served in South Africa, Cuba, Kenya, Burundi, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Zambia and Washington, D.C., where he was director of the Office of West African Affairs from 2013 to 2015 and director of the Office of Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Island Affairs from 2015 until being named ambassador.

The last American envoy to Somalia, Ambassador James Keough Bishop, was forced to leave the country in January 1991, just before the final collapse of the Siad Barre government and the outbreak of the Somali civil war.

After two decades of virtual lawlessness, a new, internationally recognized government was established in Somalia in 2012. The country continues to face grave economic problems and multiple security threats, particularly from the terrorist group al-Shabaab.

Amb. Schwartz has stated that the United States will focus on helping the still-young government build and solidify

political, industrial, military, economic and service infrastructure. He will divide his time between the embassy in Nairobi and “The Ark,” a windowless bunker at Mogadishu’s airport, but hopes to re-establish a U.S. embassy in the capital in the coming years.

Another of his stated goals is to strengthen ties between Somalia and members of the Somali diaspora living in the United States.

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Assistant

The Rise of Twiplomacy

Twiplomacy—or “Twitter-diplomacy”—has gone from being an afterthought to one of the first thoughts of world leaders and governments, according to a recent study by public relations firm Burson-Marsteller.

Twitter is the social media platform of choice for most governments—only 20 countries do not have a presence. President Barack Obama, one of the earliest adopters of Twitter (his @BarackObama handle went live in March 2007), is the most followed world leader, with more than 137 million followers from his personal and institutional accounts.

Twitter is being used to create a virtual diplomatic network. The State Department has 3.3 million followers and maintains connections with 213 missions and heads of missions on Twitter. In fact, the @StateDept account re-established ties with its Cuban counterpart two months before official diplomatic relations resumed in July 2015.

Twitter keeps track of the most-talked-about or “trending” topics at all times. Examples of “hashtag diplomacy” to draw attention to specific issues are #bringbackourgirls (relating to the kidnap of Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram) and #END Violence (a campaign to end violence against children).



This depiction of the virtual diplomatic network is color-coded by geographic area, with red indicating Latin America, teal Europe, turquoise North America, yellow Europe/Asia, white Asia, deep blue Oceania, grey regional, pink Africa and bright green Asia/Oceania.

Hashtags serve as a rallying cry, helping to give recognition to causes and often bringing them to an international audience.

So what's next? The Twiplomacy study has found that world leaders who are active on Twitter have also embraced Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Now governments and foreign ministries are increasingly turning to niche apps, such as Snapchat, Vine and Periscope, to reach the next generation of voters.

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor

Work for Uncle Sam? Be Careful About Wading into the 2016 Election

Americans have no shortage of strong feelings about this year's presidential race. But federal government workers need to be careful about what they say about the race, says Josh Lederman of the Associated Press.

There is a complex web of restrictions

which limits political activity by government workers, especially when they're on the clock. Not all the rules are obvious, and they vary widely for different types of employees.

As election season heats up, agencies from the White House to the U.S. Postal Service are trying to educate workers about what they can and can't do without violating the Hatch Act.

Under the Hatch Act, government employees in the United States cannot engage in political activity while they are on duty or in their office or work vehicle, with few exceptions.

In their private time, federal employees are free to advocate for candidates, donate money, even speak at a rally or fundraiser, as long as they don't mention their official titles. But they can't solicit or collect donations from others, even on their own time.

Members of the Foreign Service and their families posted overseas, who are "on duty" 24/7, are prohibited from partici-

pating in any partisan political activities related to U.S. elections. The only exception is if they are acting in a "nonpartisan official capacity."

Even Secretary of State John Kerry has to be careful. In June he had to deflect a question about the presidential candidates when asked by a student at Oxford University.

"I'm not allowed under our law to get into, actually full-throatedly, into the middle of the campaign," Kerry said before moving on to another topic.

For detailed information on the Hatch Act and State Department rules on political activity, see the AFSA website, www.afsa.org/hatchact.

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor

Travel Advisories ... on the United States

Three countries have issued travel warnings urging their citizens to stay on guard when traveling to the United States, *The World Post* reported on July 10.

Following several shootings by police officers, protests under the banner of Black Lives Matter and the killing of five police officers in Dallas, Bahrain warned its citizens to "be cautious of protests or crowded areas."

The Bahamas suggested that visitors to the United States should be careful when visiting U.S. cities due to "the shooting of young black males by police officers," telling Bahamian travelers (90 percent of whom identify as being of African heritage) "to exercise extreme caution in affected cities in their interactions with the police."

The United Arab Emirates advised students and visitors in the United States as follows: "Please be aware of immediate surroundings and avoid crowded places when possible."

50 Years Ago

FSJ Editorial: Senior Seminar Grads in the Rose Garden

It was a hot, muggy afternoon Thursday, June 9. The Rose Garden was nearly filled with Senior Seminar graduates, their families, some well-wishers and a few Presidential aides. President Lyndon B. Johnson's message was pointed yet sweeping. ...

He said: "The ... special ties between the President and the Foreign Service should always be close. ... The Foreign Service, like the Office of the President, belongs to no one department. It serves the whole of government."

We agree fully that our relationship with the President must be extraordinary if we are to do well the jobs facing us in the area of foreign affairs. Moreover, we fully endorse the concept that ours is the Foreign Service of the United

States (and not merely of any one organization or agency).

The President looked to us for answers to the questions of what we can do now "which will enlarge the prospects of life" for all peoples a generation and more from now. He urged us neither to grow impatient nor to be overawed by the tasks ahead—reminding us that politics or diplomacy is not magic and recalling that 13 years witnessed the interval between our Declaration of Independence and our first President's Inauguration.

We applaud the President's remarks and join with him in congratulating the graduates of the Senior Seminar in Foreign Policy.

—From the September 1966
Foreign Service Journal



Guidelines for evaluation are to be created by the president within 18 months, and the State Department is required to update foreignassistance.gov to make "comprehensive, timely and comparable information on covered U.S. foreign assistance" public.

There are some caveats, however: If the administrators of a particular program can prove that making a certain piece of information public would jeopardize the security of Americans, or negatively affect U.S. interests, they may not be required to make it public.

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Assistant

Securing Our Secrets Act Introduced

On July 13 Senators Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), David Perdue (R-Ga.), James Risch (R-Idaho) and Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) introduced the Securing Our Secrets Act in the Senate.

The act appears to be a response to the controversy surrounding Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while serving as Secretary of State.

The bill would require State Department officials to use only government-managed platforms for work activity—unless their private alternative receives a national security waiver.

The legislation would also create information security training programs and allow for random scans of department emails to check for improperly transmitted classified information. It would also require a report of any violations to Congress every year.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation determined that Mrs. Clinton would not face charges relating to possible mishandling of classified data. However, State has reopened its internal review into any mishandling of information. It is not clear how long the investigation will take.

Though seldom the object of travel advisories itself, the United States frequently issues travel warnings on other countries to its citizens. In July alone, the Department of State issued warnings for Bangladesh, Venezuela, Iraq and Mali.

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor

Opening a Window on Foreign Aid

On July 15 President Barack Obama signed the Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Act of 2016 into law. The new law requires government agencies to closely monitor and evaluate all foreign aid programs based on their outcomes.

The legislation also requires data to be

publicly shared down to the award level, improving transparency and allowing the public a window into what's working and what's not. This is to be done through the foreignassistance.gov portal (see the September 2015 Site of the Month).

The stated purpose of the law is to: "(1) evaluate the performance of covered U.S. foreign assistance and its contribution to the policies, strategies, projects, program goals and priorities undertaken by the government; (2) support and promote innovative programs to improve effectiveness; and (3) coordinate the monitoring and evaluation processes of federal departments and agencies that administer covered U.S. foreign assistance."

Contemporary Quote

“ We are living in a world of crises, mistrust and uncertainty. Here is our Olympic answer: The 10,000 best athletes in the world, competing with each other, at the same time living peacefully together in one Olympic Village, sharing their meals and their emotions. In this Olympic world there is one universal rule for everybody. We are all equal.

With the greatest respect we welcome the refugee Olympic team. Dear refugee athletes, you are sharing a message of hope to all of the refugees around the world. You had to flee from your homes because of violence, hunger, or just because you were different. ... In this Olympic world we do not just tolerate diversity, we welcome you as an enrichment to our unity and diversity.

—International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, speaking at the Opening Ceremony in Rio de Janeiro on Aug. 5.

According to the Federal Records Act of 2014, use of a “non-official electronic messaging account” for official (unclassified) business is permissible, provided that messages are forwarded to an “official electronic messaging account” within 20 days.

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor

Traveling with Pets

On July 18, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service launched a new website intended to help international travelers easily determine travel requirements for pets.

APHIS Pet Travel provides information for pets traveling to more than 130 countries and territories, as well as requirements for bringing pets into the United States.

Since other federal agencies may be involved in the importation of pets to the United States, the new APHIS website links to those agencies’ information, too, making it easier to ensure that your pet has the correct paperwork to travel to and from the United States.

not all animals
qualify as
pets



We know that for many members of the Foreign Service, their pet is a family member. We hope that the new APHIS website will be useful to all those looking to take their pets to their next overseas post.

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor

A Radical Proposal for USAID

A radical redefinition of USAID’s core mission has been proposed by Max Boot, a senior national security fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Michael Miklaucic, a career USAID employee and now a senior fellow at the National Defense University, in a recent article featured on ForeignPolicy.com.

“The U.S. needs a dedicated nation-building agency—not to undertake military occupations but to avoid them, by helping allied governments to secure their own territory without need for large numbers of American troops,” the



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SITE OF THE MONTH: www.globe.gov

GLOBE, the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment Program, is an international science and education program sponsored by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation and supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of State.

Announced on Earth Day 1994, the program was launched internationally one year later. This year, GLOBE was expanded beyond a formal school setting to include individuals of all ages.

GLOBE defines its vision and mission thus: “A worldwide community of students, teachers, scientists and citizens working together to better understand, sustain and improve Earth’s environment at local, regional and global scales.”

Participants in this citizen science program are encouraged to engage in local investigations that cover five core fields: atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, soil (pedosphere) and Earth-as-a-system.

The program is implemented through government-to-government agreements, with each country partner responsible for in-country activities.

Observations made locally are submitted to the GLOBE data and information system, and can be accessed freely online. These measurements are combined with read-



ings at automated stations to create a worldwide resource for conducting scientific inquiry.

The GLOBE data and information system has grown to more than 130 million measurements from some 10 million students in 113 countries around the world.

GLOBE is one of the many programs included in CitizenScience.gov, an official government portal launched by the General Services Administration in April to accelerate the use of crowdsourcing and citizen science across the U.S. government.

GSA developed the site in collaboration with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in response to a memo from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy urging federal agencies to establish citizen science and crowdsourcing projects that contribute directly to their missions.

Several other USAID and State Department projects are included in the portal.

—Susan B. Maitra,
Managing Editor

authors state. And it should be under civilian control. The perfect agency for the job? USAID.

As presently defined, however, USAID’s development mission is too broad and undefined to be effective, and because it is “stretched too thin” it fails to provide adequate resources to high-risk places.

“Instead of trying to promote development for its own sake in every poor country in the world, USAID should limit its efforts to enhancing core state functions in strategically important countries,” the authors argue.

Currently, USAID would typically spend only \$2.3 billion of a proposed FY2017 budget of \$22.7 billion on activities that may fall under such a “nation-building” umbrella.

Yet gains in USAID’s current core activities (e.g., poverty alleviation, global health, biodiversity, women’s empowerment, education, sanitation, and economic and agricultural development) are generally temporary and need constant maintenance to avoid backsliding.

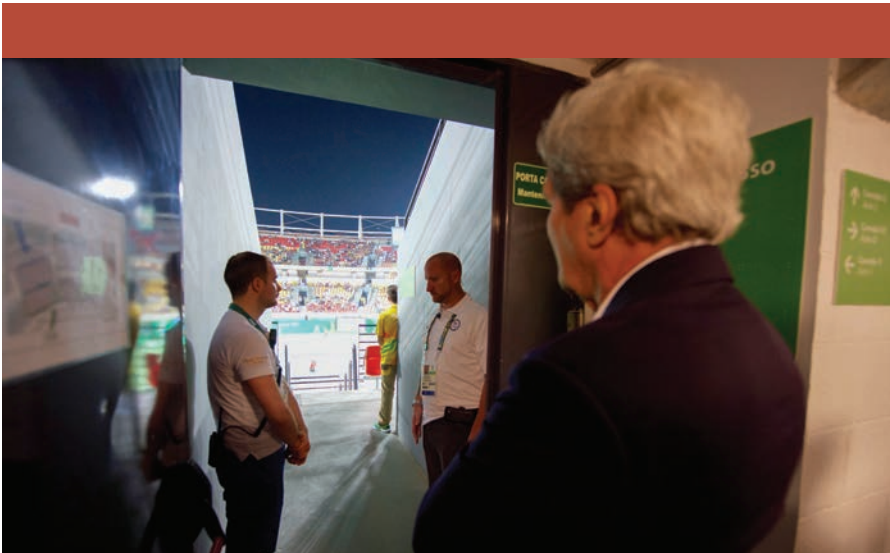
Better to leave that work, Boot and Miklaucic say, to international and nongovernmental organizations that do those things equally well.

They also urge a focus on governance rather than democracy promotion, arguing that the United States can coexist and even work with undemocratic states much better than ungoverned states.

Such a transformation of the agency would exclude more than half of the countries where USAID currently operates, the authors acknowledge.

With an evolving understanding of the security-development nexus, they say, a transformed USAID could help the U.S. avoid continuous military interventions while contributing to the stabilization of failing states.

—Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Assistant



Two DS special agents accompany Secretary of State John Kerry at the arena in Rio.

DS—Protecting the Olympic Team

“They stand discreetly in the shadows, eyes keenly on the look-out, as women’s world number one tennis star Serena Williams perfects her blistering forehand at the Rio Olympics,” says an AFP reporter describing the role of U.S. Diplomatic Security Special Agents in Rio de Janeiro.

A low-key presence, Diplomatic Security has joined with local forces in Brazil to help police the games and protect the athletes competing.

Security has been a major talking point among athletes, officials, fans and media from several countries. The State Department’s advice for visiting Rio makes for alarming reading—carjackings, shootings and muggings are all major concerns, and there have been numerous reports of sexual assaults.

Brazilian authorities are responsible for overall security for the Olympics, but many countries have added their own extra layer to ensure that some of the biggest names in sport are safe.

DS Special Agents are not only a reassuring presence in the background of high-profile Olympic events. At the request of the Brazilian government, they have also been liaising with security and law-enforcement officials throughout

Brazil to provide training in a variety of areas, from airport screening procedures to preventing serious incidents.

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor

Yelp for Government Cafeterias

A federal employee, Jason Walker, has set up a website reviewing a number of government agencies’ cafeterias, reports *The Washington Post*.

Fedgrub.com reviews cafeterias from the Senate Building to the Department of State and targets approximately 313,000 federal workers who work in Washington, D.C., every day.

“I rely on Yelp pretty heavily when I’m looking for new restaurants,” said Walker. “I wanted something to take the mystery out of government cafeterias.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture café has the best reviews so far. The State Department cafeteria rates 3.5 stars (out of 5) while the Federal Aviation Administration cafeteria, at 1.5 stars, has a lot of catching up to do.

Walker hopes his resource will be useful to federal workers in the capital. It may even put some of the lesser known government agencies on the map. ■

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor



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Neglecting World's Fairs Doesn't Make Them Go Away, So Let's Do It Right

BY BEATRICE CAMP

In the search for effective ways to promote the United States abroad, the Department of State has revived some once standard, later abandoned public diplomacy functions such as English-language instruction and American Centers (now American Spaces). Meanwhile, participation in world's fairs, incubated in the same U. S. Information Agency womb, is treated as an unwanted stepchild by the department.

Successful U.S. pavilions at four recent fairs—Milan 2015, Yeosu 2012, Shanghai 2010 and Aichi 2005—welcomed a total of 20 million visitors. This and other achievements came at minimal cost to the U.S. government, which relies on private-sector funding to create and manage our official presence.

By comparison, American Spaces, a current darling of public diplomacy, boast smaller visitor numbers and bigger budgets. The much touted space in Jakarta, which explored the Shanghai Expo for ideas, has cost roughly \$20 million since opening in 2010, while another \$26 million has gone to the new American Space in Rangoon.

Given past world's fair successes, it would be unfortunate if the challenges we faced in Milan—and at earlier expos—

Our problems at recent expos show the pitfalls of today's limited engagement and oversight by the department.

made the department even less eager to sign on for future fairs. A better reaction would be a dedication to doing it right, with a strong partnership between relevant bureaus and a real commitment of resources.

Missing in Milan

Both of these were missing for Milan. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, which traditionally had the lead for world's fairs, happily bowed out of Milan when the Bureau of European Affairs (EUR) accepted the baton. Despite initial enthusiasm, however, EUR limited its investment to a one-person office in EUR/PD and one additional officer in Milan, while ECA adamantly declined any involvement.

Once upon a time, USIA's Exhibits Office and its expo unit had experienced staff who knew how to manage the processes, anticipate problems and deal with the many complex aspects of world's fairs

from a long-term perspective, drawing on the lessons of past expos and planning years ahead. Our problems at recent expos show the pitfalls of today's limited engagement and oversight by the department.

For Milan, the small group in EUR that handled the 2013-2014 Request for Proposal process, selection of a private-sector partner, and signing of agreements with the partner organization and the Milan Expo authority had rotated out by the time career officer coordinators were positioned in Washington and Milan, the pavilion was under construction, and content was created and staff hired.

Almost no one thought to object when the private-sector partner upped the budget from \$45 million to \$60 million, a little-noticed change that loomed large the following year as fundraising fell short. Reportedly, the Friends of the USA Pavilion ended up more than \$20 million in debt, leaving a wide swath of vendors awaiting payment.

The budget shortfall was just one result of the department's failure to designate a permanent office to manage the complex expo process; more fundamentally, and longer-term, it means that decisions about U.S. participation are dragged out until the last possible minute, increasing the cost and complexity involved in creating a pres-



As consul general in Shanghai from 2008 to 2011, Beatrice Camp oversaw U.S. participation in China's 2010 world's fair; in 2014, she was recruited by the State Department's Bureau of European Affairs to coordinate participation in Expo Milano 2015. She recently retired from a Foreign Service career that took her to China, Thailand, Sweden, Hungary, as well as to assignments at the department and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The opinions and characterizations in this piece are those of the author and do not necessarily represent official positions of the U.S. government.



COURTESY OF BEATRICE CAMP

Secretary of State John F. Kerry with student ambassadors at Milan Expo 2015.

ence we can be proud of.

Five years before the Milan Expo, we had even less time—just 10 months—to build a pavilion at the even larger Shanghai Expo 2010. While ultimately racking up acclaim on multiple levels in presenting American culture and values to more than seven million Chinese visitors, the reputation for being one of the last countries to sign on to China’s big party hung on as a juicy media trope of delinquent American leadership.

Time for Decisions

Now, with the window narrowing for a decision on next year’s three-month expo in Kazakhstan, we run the risk of snubbing the first world’s fair in a former Soviet state, even while 90 other countries have signed on. Next on the horizon is the larger, six-month Dubai Expo 2020. Given strong U.S. political, military and commercial interests in the United Arab Emirates, it’s a good bet that we will eventually say yes to Dubai; the question is when.

Rather than face yet another too-little, too-late presence, the department should begin planning now. That means not just relying on the regional bureau, but also requiring the active engagement of the

public diplomacy, economic, energy and environmental bureaus, at a minimum. A well-supported lead office is needed to integrate programs and interests throughout the department and other agencies into a variety of expo programs that support U.S. interests, policies and business.

It’s worth repeating that we have succeeded at recent world’s fairs far beyond the modest U.S. government resources invested. Even while private-sector fundraising foundered, our U.S. pavilion in Milan attracted more than six million visitors during the six-month expo, as well as garnering positive reviews and international press coverage.

First Lady Michelle Obama and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack led presidential delegations to the Milan Expo, while Secretary of State John Kerry gave a speech linking food security and global change during his October visit.

Why Should We Care?

But why should we care about a presence at world’s fairs? What are the benefits?

- “Part trade show, theater of nationalism and techno-utopian fantasyland,” in the words of one academic, world’s fairs



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The entrance to the U.S. pavilion, American Food 2.0, at Expo Milan.

offer government-to-government, people-to-people, business-to-business and expert-to-expert opportunities, as well as all the variations this line-up suggests.

- World’s fairs provide a relaxed setting for diplomacy, an opportunity seized by

the 29 national leaders who paid calls at the Milan Expo, including Russian President Vladimir Putin.

- U.S. pavilions help American companies reach customers, foreign businesses and government officials. Local American

Chambers of Commerce in both Milan and Shanghai were enthusiastic partners of both U.S. pavilions.

- World’s fairs inspire and promote innovation. In Milan, the U.S. pavilion created an accelerator program focused on solutions to global food issues and featured smart glass panels that adapted to sunlight. NASA sent its administrator and four other top scientists to inspire audiences with the agency’s contributions to agriculture and water resources, as well as space exploration.

- Multilingual U.S. student ambassadors introduce visitors to the U.S. pavilion and to American youth and culture; many students who served in recent expos have gone on to Foreign Service and related careers.

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Rather than face yet another too-little, too-late presence, the State Department should begin planning now.

• Expos are an international showcase for architecture and design. The U.K., which used British firms chosen by competition, won acclaim and design awards in both Shanghai and Milan.

Milan offered a taste of how much more can be accomplished, with the United Nations hosting world leaders and nongovernmental organizations on World Food Day, chefs demonstrating how wasted food can be utilized, and the U.S. pavilion's vertical farm illustrating agricultural innovation.

Unfortunately, a number of ambitious ideas generated by the U.S. organizers withered on the vine due to lack of money or support from the department. These included collaboration with the Iowa Writers Workshop on the theme of food and an iftar with the neighboring Kuwaiti pavilion.

Stronger U.S. leadership and a willingness to take risks would stimulate new approaches to working with other cultures in tackling world problems.

After years of half-hearted and last-

minute efforts, it's past time for a whole-of-department effort that recognizes the rich possibilities of participating in these "intellectual Olympics," global events hosted by countries where we have major interests.

As President Barack Obama instructed chiefs of mission this spring: "We've got to keep partnering with nations and people to seize the incredible opportunities at this moment in history. ... Some of you have participated in international fora, and you know that if the United States isn't right smack dab in the middle of it, if we're not helping to set that agenda, it doesn't happen. People look to us for leadership."

We have much to gain from our role in world expos. It's time to stop dithering and do it right. ■

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A FOREIGN SERVICE TRAILBLAZER

The recipient of AFSA's 2016 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award talks about her Foreign Service career and her pioneering work to advance diversity and promote professional excellence at the State Department.

Ambassador Ruth A. Davis received the American Foreign Service Association's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award in recognition of her distinguished Foreign Service career and lifelong devotion to diplomacy at a June 23 ceremony in the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Room (for her speech and coverage of the ceremony, see AFSA News).

Born in 1943, Amb. Davis received a bachelor's degree from Spelman College and a master's degree from the University of California, Berkeley's School of Social Work in 1968. She joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1969.

A trailblazer throughout her 40-year career, Amb. Davis was the first female senior watch officer (SWO) in the Operations Center (1982-1984), the first African-American director of the Foreign Service Institute (1997-2001) and the first African-American female Director General of the Foreign Service (2001-2003). She was also the first and only African-American woman to be named Career Ambassador, the longest-serving officer at that level and, upon retirement, the highest-ranking Foreign Service officer. She is also the first African American to be awarded AFSA's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award.

Amb. Davis' early overseas postings were as a consular officer in Kinshasa, Nairobi, Tokyo and Naples. She went on to hold many senior positions besides those in which she was the "first." She served as consul general in Barcelona (1987-1991), ambassador to Benin (1992-1995), principal deputy assistant secretary for consular affairs (1995-1997), distinguished adviser to the Ralph

Bunche International Affairs Center at Howard University (2003-2005) and senior adviser in the Bureau of African Affairs (2005-2009). Amb. Davis retired from the Foreign Service in 2009.

She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the State Department's Superior Honor Award (1999), and its Arnold L. Raphel Memorial Award for mentoring other, especially junior, officers (1999). She also received two Presidential Distinguished Service Awards (1999 and 2002), the Secretary of State's Distinguished Award (2003), the State Department's Equal Employment Opportunity Award (2005), the Director General's Foreign Service Cup and honorary doctorates from Middlebury and Spelman Colleges.

A lover of opera, Amb. Davis has remained engaged and active in retirement. She holds leadership positions in and works with a variety of organizations to promote women's economic empowerment, recruitment and retention of minority members of the Foreign Service, and the expansion of career-long training in the Foreign Service.

Foreign Service Journal Editor Shawn Dorman interviewed Amb. Davis on June 9.



Foreign Service Journal: Congratulations! I can't think of a more deserving person for the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award.

Ruth A. Davis: Thank you.

FSJ: You grew up in the South during the last years of legal segregation. What impact did this have on you and your decision to go into public service?



AMBASSADOR RUTH A. DAVIS



AFSA/JOAQUIN SOSA

RAD: Growing up in the South at that time was the determining factor in my interest in public service. As a proud child of the South, I bear the scars of segregation and discrimination, but these scars ignited in me a passionate desire to make the world a better place.

You know the legend of the phoenix—the bird that rose from its own ashes and was more beautiful and magnificent than ever. Well, I was born in Phoenix, Arizona, and raised in Atlanta, whose symbol is that bird. Consequently, I always believed that from ashes you could make beautiful things, from chaos you could make peace, and from despair you could bring happiness—but only with hard work, dedication and determination. I knew I wanted to make a difference, and knew that I had to find my niche.

FSJ: *What brought you to a career in diplomacy?*

RAD: When I was a junior at Spelman College, I was awarded the Charles E. Merrill Scholarship, which gave me the opportunity to study and travel abroad for 15 months. I chose to study in Dijon, France, and while there, I met a number of African students who were preparing to return to their respective, recently independent countries to assume active roles in dealing with the political, economic and social problems of post-colonial Africa. I found it an exciting prospect and wanted to be on the ground in Africa as the nation-building process began and as the U.S. government worked to partner with and help support the development of these newly independent countries. What better way to do this than as a U.S. diplomat?

“It was like being in the United States with Mr. Washington and Mr. Jefferson, when they were building our country.”

FSJ: You joined the Foreign Service after getting a B.A. from Spelman College and an M.A. from the U.C., Berkeley School of Social Work. Did you see a connection then, and do you see one now, between social work and diplomacy?

RAD: Yes, there is a strong connection between social work and diplomacy. Social work is about helping and protecting people; it promotes change, development and the empowerment of people to address life’s challenges—it’s about social change at the individual and community level.

I entered the Foreign Service as a consular officer, and one of my mandates was the welfare and protection of American citizens abroad. That covers a lot of ground—from registering American citizens’ births to handling estate issues and many overseas life issues in between, such as ensuring that American citizens in trouble abroad receive equal treatment under local laws.

At the more senior level of the Service I served as U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Benin, where I dealt with development issues and encouraged the empowerment of civil society, especially women. Here in America, we automatically depend on

efficient services provided by our local and federal government. In developing countries, the challenge is to create or improve the managerial and administrative structures necessary to provide basic public services. A background in social work gave me a leg up in helping the Beninese create the basic structures necessary to build and sustain their democracy.

FSJ: Who were your role models coming in?

RAD: My most important role models besides my parents, who taught me the value of hard work, integrity and spirituality, were my college and university professors. Dr. Lois Moreland of Spelman, a promoter of overseas experiences for students, supported my selection as a Merrill Scholar. Also, noted sociologist and author Dr. Andrew Billingsley—who I worked for as a research assistant while he was writing his acclaimed work,

Black Families in White America—taught me a good deal about writing and research that served me well in the Foreign Service.

FSJ: You joined the Foreign Service in 1969. What was it like taking the Foreign Service exam then? Were there other African Americans in your A-100 class? Did you feel welcome?

RAD: Yes, I entered the Service in January 1969. Much like the Pickering and Rangel Fellows, I was a Foreign Affairs Scholar—a program supported by the Ford Foundation that was designed to increase

the number of minorities in the Service. I had just finished my studies at the University of California at Berkeley and found Washington and the Foreign Service to have a much more formal atmosphere.

I received a warm welcome from my fellow Georgian and future Director General of the Foreign Service, Edward “Skip” Gnehm. In fact, Skip and I drove down to Georgia on a couple of long weekends and had the occasion to do a sit-in—against my



Following a meeting on revamping and strengthening State’s visa anti-fraud procedures in 1996, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Ruth Davis meets with her mentor, Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Mary Ryan.

A portrait of Ambassador Ruth Davis, C'65, an elderly woman with short, curly grey hair and glasses, wearing a green and black patterned jacket over a black turtleneck. She is standing in front of a large window with many international flags hanging from the top. The text is overlaid on a dark semi-transparent band across the middle of the image.

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AFSA/ALLAN SAUNDERS

On May 23, Ambassador Ruth Davis re-enacted the photo that appeared in the January 1970 edition of *Ebony* magazine, shortly after she joined the Foreign Service. Says Davis: "I am always drawn to the statue of Atlas because I believe that it is a great symbol of the importance of diplomacy in holding the world together in peace, prosperity and hope."

FSJ: When did you join AFSA?

RAD: I can't be precise, but I believe it was in the latter part of my service as a mid-level officer. Early on, I was disappointed with AFSA. In 1971 Alison Palmer filed a suit against the department on account of discrimination against women in the hiring, promotion and assignment process. In 1976 she re-filed the suit as a class action suit, which was eventually decided in her favor. AFSA did not join or support this class action suit.

But as I advanced in the Service, I observed and appreciated AFSA's efforts to protect the professional interests of its members and to press for important reforms. Now, since I am retired, I appreciate AFSA more than ever for its advocacy concerning pensions and benefits, especially those related to health.



EBONY January 1970
U.S. EMBASSY VICE CONSUL
 Ruth Amy Davis is vice consul at the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. She is in charge of the consular section, which issues passports and visas and is responsible for the welfare and protection of American citizens and their interests in the Congo. Miss Davis (shown at the U.S. State Dept. in Washington, D. C.) was reared in Atlanta and was graduated from Spelman College. While working for her master's in social work at the University of California she did community organization work in San Francisco and Oakland.

EBONY

wishes, but Skip insisted that we would not leave a restaurant below the Mason-Dixon line until I was served. After a while the owners acquiesced, and we were on our merry way.

What I remember most about my A-100 class was the implied expectations. One speaker told us that only about three of our 30-odd classmates would become ambassadors. It was clear to me that my classmates believed those three would come from among the white males.

FSJ: Can you tell us how you came to be featured in *Ebony* magazine in 1970?

RAD: *Ebony* is a monthly magazine primarily for the African-American market, and at that time it had a regular column, “Speaking of People,” that featured African Americans in unusual positions as role models to encourage others to pursue similar careers. In my case, it worked. Years after the photo appeared, I was serving in Naples when I had the occasion to phone the consul in Nice, Eleanor Hicks. Eleanor informed me that she was in the Service because she had seen my photo in *Ebony* and had immediately declared, “I want to be like her.”

Your Career

FSJ: You have been a trailblazer—as an African-American woman in the Foreign Service of the 1970s, as the first African-American career ambassador and other accomplishments. What lessons can you share from these “firsts”?

RAD: I do have many “firsts” to be proud of, such as first female SWO in the Operations Center, first African-American director of the Foreign Service Institute and first African-American female Director General. I was not, however, the first African American to achieve the rank of Career Ambassador; that honor belongs to the late six-time ambassador Terence Todman. It is true, I am the first and only African-American woman to be named Career Ambassador—it’s a lonely group of only six other women: Frances Willis, Mary A. Ryan, Anne Patterson, Elizabeth Jones, Nancy Powell and Kristie A. Kenney. And, of course, I am very pleased and proud to be the first African American to be awarded AFSA’s Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award.

But to answer your question, it is not enough to be the first. That achievement must be followed by a concerted effort to ensure that I am not the last. I was very proud to be honored by the Thursday Luncheon Group in 2009 with its Pioneer Award, which symbolized my blazing a path for others to follow.

Two important lessons I learned are: First, it is incumbent on me as a leader to promote diversity. If I don’t promote diversity, probably no one else around me will, and the status quo, which does not generally include a representative number of women and minorities, will remain acceptable. Second, although I have always been cognizant of my racial identity as a determining factor in who I am, it is more important for me to be defined by my professional accomplishments and my service to humanity, especially to young Foreign and Civil Service personnel in or aspiring to be a part of the foreign affairs community.

FSJ: What posting stands out the most in your memory, and why?

RAD: Cotonou, Benin—where I had the privilege of serving as chief of mission—stands out most. It was a heady time in Benin; the country was struggling to move from a disastrous Marxist-Leninist state to a fledgling democracy in 1991 when it held elections. Subsequently, our mission was instrumental in helping to build the basic structures required to support Benin’s developing democracy.

My very able USAID director, Thomas Cornell, and I chose helping to restore the devastated Beninese education system as our principal aid project, with the caveat that Beninese girls, who were previously excluded, should be included in the education equation. This, of course, had a profound impact on the lives and prospects of girls and an impact on the social fabric of the country. Among many other important undertakings, we assisted in the creation of Benin’s Constitutional Court and the country’s equivalent of our Federal Communications Commission, in addition to supporting Benin’s restructuring to a free and open market economy.

What an exciting, extraordinary time it was for me! It was like being in the United States with Mr. Washington and Mr. Jefferson, when they were building our country and defining American values. Where else, except the Foreign Service, could I have had an impact on the evolution of democracy in a developing country?

And if that’s not enough, serving in Benin put me in touch with my ancestry. In West Africa, I visited ports from which millions of slaves were shipped to the Americas. In Ouidah, Benin, I visited the Tree of Forgetfulness, around which slaves were forced to march in a symbolic severing of ties between themselves, family and Africa. I marched around the tree, but I did it backwards because I never want to forget.

FSJ: What was your favorite posting and why?

RAD: I loved all my postings, but Barcelona deserves a special mention for several reasons. First, I am proud to say, I left the post in a far better condition than I found it. Shortly after arriving, I began a search for better accommodations and stepped up the effort after my consulate was bombed by a group called the Red Army for the Liberation of Catalonia. Fortunately, although the bomb wreaked havoc, no one was killed. It was difficult to find property that met the department’s security and financial specifications. Nonetheless, I was able to locate and purchase what is undoubtedly one of the most impressive consulate building and grounds in Europe.

Second, I faced a significant challenge being the first

“It is not enough to be the first. That achievement must be followed by a concerted effort to ensure that I am not the last.”

African-American U.S. consul general. I am told that my assignment prompted some Catalans to ask, “What have we done? Have we angered the U.S. government?” In the best of circumstances, Barcelona was a very closed society, but I was determined to gain entry and respect—and I did just that. When I departed three years later, the Catalans hosted a farewell dinner for about 300 guests for me at the king’s palace, got a taped message from President Ronald Reagan complimenting my work and brought my parents over to attend the festivities as a surprise.

Lastly, I remain in touch with Catalan friends and contacts. I still work with the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce on women’s empowerment issues and joined with them and the Manhattan and New Delhi Chambers of Commerce as a founding member of the International Women’s Entrepreneurial Challenge, an organization I chair that is designed to create a global network of successful international businesswomen.

FSJ: *What was your least favorite posting and why?*

RAD: On account of language difficulties, Tokyo was my most challenging post. I did not occupy one of the few language-designated positions in the embassy and, consequently, arrived without language training. I had to rely on our locally employed (LE) staff to translate in visa interviews and other business that required local contacts, which was frustrating. Later, as director of the Office of Training and Liaison, as director of FSI and as DG, I pressed for more language-designated positions and more and improved language training.

FSJ: *What life lessons did you learn as a consular officer? What did you like most and least about consular work?*

RAD: The nature and volume of consular work gave me the opportunity, from the beginning of my career, to manage resources and people, especially LE staff. So early on I learned to manage a diverse workforce, while developing an apprecia-

tion for the work of our LE staff. In fact, it is consular work that piqued my ongoing interest in leadership and management. Working daily with the public, both foreigners and American citizens, gave me the opportunity to hone my customer service skills; and starting out in African countries where there were significant numbers of American missionaries, I also learned the relevance of religion to U.S. diplomacy and development objectives.

Having studied social welfare, I was especially attracted to American Citizen Services. I was most frustrated by working with officers who refused to see the value in serving in a consular tour. I believe consular work offers a unique learning experience, but that it is problematic to assign non-consular-coned officers to a second consular tour—as has been the case for far too many FSOs who want to get experience in their chosen career track as soon as possible. This is why I am a proponent of the Consular Fellows Program, which should be expanded to free up personnel to pursue their assigned cones.

FSJ: *You were very involved in planning for U.S. participation in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and in helping Atlanta win the bid to host the 1996 Olympics. Do you have any lessons on “Olympics diplomacy” to share?*

RAD: While serving as CG in Barcelona, I was the consular corps’ liaison to the Barcelona Olympic Organizing Committee. That positioned me to not only work on the 1992 Olympic concerns of the countries represented in Barcelona, but to be an informal liaison for the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, which was bidding on the 1996 games. It was a special privilege to travel to Tokyo with the ACOG for the announcement awarding my hometown the 1996 games, knowing that I had an active role in making the bid process successful.

Working with the 1992 and 1996 Olympics, the latter as principal deputy assistant secretary for consular affairs, gave me a fine appreciation of the value of sports diplomacy in strengthening relations between the United States and other nations, and of the important role the United States plays in making the Olympic Games successful—the Bureau of Consular Affairs for its information sharing and protection of American citizens, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and, most significantly, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security that works with host-country counterparts to help ensure safe and secure games.

FSJ: *During your tenure as director of the Foreign Service Institute from 1997 to 2001, you focused on moving the institutional culture from being training-averse to training-committed.*

Would you say that shift has occurred?

RAD: The State Department has come a long way on the training front since the establishment of the School of Leadership and Management. I will never forget how astonished Secretary of State Colin Powell was when he learned of the negligible amount of time that Foreign and Civil Service personnel in the department spent on training compared to their military colleagues. The value that Powell placed on training was key to instituting basic, intermediate and advanced mandatory leadership and management training.

Consequently, now multiple generations of both Foreign and Civil Service personnel have received leadership training, and others expect to be properly trained and given the tradecraft skills they need to be successful in new jobs. So I would say that there has been a cultural shift in the expectations of the department's workforce and in the value accorded training. However, the personnel gaps incurred, especially during lengthy language training, frequently cause pushback from supervisors and receiving posts.

FSJ: *FSI's School of Leadership and Management, which you established in 1999, is a significant legacy. What has that school accomplished and what remains to be done?*

RAD: While the School of Leadership and Management has brought about a cultural shift in the expectations of the department's workforce and in the value accorded leadership training among department personnel, challenges remain—namely, to rebuild a personnel float to assist with vacancies caused by training-related absences, and to have supervisors give the same priority to leadership skills as is given to analytical, operational and programmatic skills.

Being Director General

FSJ: *You closed your first State magazine column as DG (September 2001, "Seizing the Moment") with this very optimistic line: "While I don't expect to see you doing handsprings of joy in our long hallways, I hope I will soon see a bounce in your step and a gleam of excitement in your eyes, because it's such a great time to be serving the people of the United States of America." The Diplo-*

When my husband died, I didn't expect anything. But the life insurance meant we were able to keep the house and maintain the life we had built together. I'm planning to leave that same legacy for my children."

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“We completely re-engineered the FSO hiring process, reducing the time to hire from more than two years to less than one.”

matic Readiness Initiative was extremely successful, increasing FS ranks by more than 40 percent after years of shortages. What was it like being Director General at that time, essentially in charge of the biggest hiring surge in decades?

RAD: It was a very exciting time. The era of resource deprivation was replaced by a new set of challenges related to hiring, training and assigning the new recruits. We completely re-engineered the FSO hiring process, reducing the time to hire from more than two years to less than one. It required intense coordination with Diplomatic Security and MED to speed up clearances, with FSI to provide orientation and training, and with the offices of Career Development and Assignments and Resource Management to ensure that adequate assignments and positions were available for the people we hired. We finally had sufficient personnel to create a training float, and from a human resource standpoint the picture was very positive.

FSJ: Right after you became Director General, the events of 9/11 occurred. Can you describe what significant changes resulted in the aftermath of the attack, and the impact the “war on terrorism” has had on diplomacy?

RAD: With the war on terrorism, the world has become much more unsettled, placing more demands for professional, smart diplomacy and requiring diplomats capable of dealing with complex, tumultuous, rapidly changing circumstances.

The international challenges today are much more varied and seemingly more intense than when I joined the Foreign Service at the end of the 1960s. International terrorism, nuclear proliferation, cybersecurity, regional conflicts and public health crises are among the issues that diplomats grapple with on a daily basis. The challenge for the State Department is to recruit, train and assign the right people to carry out the changing demands of today’s diplomacy.

FSJ: What is the legacy of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on the Foreign Service and diplomacy?

RAD: Regretfully, most of the increased hiring during the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative was absorbed by the demand for personnel in Afghanistan and Iraq. The State Department now faces increased demand to staff hardship posts and those that qualify for danger pay. State has created a wide range of measures and incentives to encourage officers to bid on these difficult assignments, with mixed results. The mere existence of this demand reinforces the need for a stronger State Department, better prepared to practice smart diplomacy.

FSJ: How would you describe your level of optimism about the state of the Foreign Service today?

RAD: There are numerous problems undermining the strength of today’s Foreign Service, but I am optimistic as long as organizations such as the American Academy of Diplomacy, which recently produced the report “American Diplomacy at Risk,” and AFSA take an active role in supporting and working to improve the quality and professionalism of the Foreign Service.

Diversity and Mentoring

FSJ: You’ve done so much to help increase diversity in the Foreign Service. What is your response to those who say that after years of effort to diversify the Foreign Service, it still has “a diversity problem”? (An example is the May 22 Nick Kraley Foreign Policy magazine article, which cites State Department figures showing that 82 percent of career diplomats are white and 60 percent are male.)

RAD: Section 101 (a) (4) of The Foreign Service Act of 1980 says that the Service should reflect the American population. Consequently, we must continue to strive to ensure that it becomes representative of the mosaic that is America. It has been my experience that unless there is clear and visible support from the highest levels of the department, very little effective action is taken to advance diversity interests.

FSJ: What strategies do you recommend for increasing diversity in the Foreign Service both in recruitment and retention and promotion?

RAD: Among the strategies I recommend are the following:

- The State Department should continue its strong support for the Pickering, Rangel and Payne Fellowships. These are a critical source of diversity and are bringing really outstanding candidates into the Service.
- In terms of recruitment, Diplomats in Residence should step up their efforts to identify minority candidates, referring them to



THE WHITE HOUSE

Ambassador Ruth A. Davis discusses the empowerment of women and education of girls in Benin with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton on July 13, 1995. While serving as ambassador to Benin, Amb. Davis accompanied Mrs. Rosine Soglo, wife of the president of Benin, to the White House meeting.

the fellowship programs, internships, language programs such as the Boren Fellowship and other opportunities that spark interest in careers in the Foreign Service.

- Reach out more effectively to minority audiences, increasing the number of minority takers of the Foreign Service Written Examination.

- Pay attention to the assignment and retention of minorities in the Service. With the mid-level gap closing and promotions slowing down, special attention needs to be given to assignments and training. I was disappointed to learn of the negligible number of African Americans, Hispanics and other minorities assigned as deputy chiefs of mission, principal officers and office directors. If minority officers cannot aspire to positions of responsibility, they will not remain in the Service.

- I am also concerned about the paucity of minority Civil Servants in the Senior Executive Service, more of them at the GS-15 level should be groomed for SES positions in the department. The SES Career Development Program should be offered more frequently, and HR must ensure that those receiving the training are representative of the department's diverse work force.

FSJ: *You've been president and adviser to the Thursday Luncheon Group. How did that group get started, and can you tell us a bit about its work?*

RAD: The Thursday Luncheon Group is one of the leading affinity groups in the department. It was formed in 1973, at a time when African-American participation in the foreign affairs agencies was increasing. Two senior U.S. Information Agency officers brought together colleagues to consider what could be done to

encourage a significant role for African Americans in the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy.

TLG has since grown to about 300 members and actively mentors, recruits and sponsors activities designed to help its members navigate the system, such as career development and EER preparation sessions. TLG joins with the Association of Black American Ambassadors to hold an annual reception welcoming the new cohorts of Pickering, Rangel and Payne Fellows and coordinates with AFSA annually to sponsor an intern in the department.

FSJ: *You've been a champion for mentorship. How is the State Department doing in terms of encouraging mentorship and establishing official mechanisms for mentoring?*

RAD: The State Department has a range of formal mentoring programs available to every employee—Foreign Service, Civil Service and LE staff—and the Rangel, Pickering and Payne programs seek mentors for their participants. While I applaud the department's efforts, I believe that the most effective mentors are those who are developed through situational connections without a formal structure. Such mentors can be found in a variety of settings in or out of the workplace, in professional associations, such as AFSA, or in numerous other places. The major point is to identify and select a mentor who is thoughtful, articulate and able to offer useful career advice.

FSJ: *You chair the selection committee for the Rangel International Affairs Fellowship. How successful has the program been in increasing diversity? How can the foreign affairs agencies retain minority talent once in the Foreign Service?*

“Successful diplomats must have integrity, courage and self-confidence, preferably laced with humility.”

RAD: The Rangel Fellowship program was established in 2002, and it is having an impact on the Foreign Service. The program has selected 243 fellows; and, as of September 2016, there will be 170 in the Foreign Service and 60 in graduate school. While this is an admirable start, there is still quite a bit of work to do. Once these fellows are in the Service every effort must be made to retain their talents. Hence, the department must focus on career development, including training, promotion opportunities, good assignments and employee incentives.

Retirement and Reflection

FSJ: *Can you give us some highlights of the work you've done since retiring from the Foreign Service in 2009?*

RAD: I don't often share this, but I'm going to say it here, hoping that it might inspire others. Here goes: In 1999, I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and told I had a maximum of three years to live.

However, thanks to breakthrough clinical treatments, two bone marrow transplants and continued excellent medical care here at the Washington Hospital Center and at the Myeloma Institute of the University of Arkansas, I am surviving multiple myeloma plus a number of other health issues and have been determined not to let them deter me from making a difference in this world.

I am busily involved in building a global network of successful international businesswomen as chair and founding member of the International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge Foundation, which will celebrate its tenth year of growth and success in 2017.

My other activities include chairing the International Mission of Mercy, USA, which provided aid for orphans following Nepal's April 2015 devastating earthquake and, more recently, sent medical supplies to Ecuador following the April 2016 earthquake. I also chair the annual Selection Panel for the Charles B. Rangel Fellowship program, which has assisted the department's diversity efforts since 2002.

As vice chair of the Association of Black American Ambassadors, I mentor aspiring and professional Foreign and Civil Service personnel and lobby the State Department on diversity issues. As a member of the Defense Language Institute Board of Visitors of Monterey, California, I contribute to the enhancement of language training for members of the U.S. Armed Services. And as senior adviser for the International Career Advancement Program, I provide leadership training to mid-level, underrepresented professionals in international affairs.

Finally, I serve on several boards of directors, including the Senior Seminar Alumni Association, American Academy of Diplomacy and the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs, where I am also vice president.

FSJ: *What do you see as the essential ingredients for a successful diplomat?*

RAD: A successful diplomat must have a combination of strong professional and interpersonal skills. I place leadership and management at the top of the diplomatic skills pyramid. Today's diplomat must be prepared to practice not just diplomacy, but mega-diplomacy. To do so requires a broad knowledge of the world and current issues viewed through a historical lens; vision; good negotiating, verbal and written communications skills; and adept use of information technology. On the interpersonal front it requires the ability to navigate, understand and interpret foreign cultures—language ability being extremely important. Also needed is the ability to work effectively with and inspire both American personnel and FSNs to give their best in accomplishing U.S. goals and objectives. Successful diplomats must have integrity, courage and self-confidence, preferably laced with humility.

FSJ: *Who were some of the people you especially admired or were inspired by during your Foreign Service career?*

RAD: There have been many people I have admired and sought to emulate during my Foreign Service career. In fact, it is the quality of the people I had occasion to observe and work and interact with that proved to be the most stimulating aspect of my Foreign Service experience. I would, however, cite three mentors who stand out because they embody the essential ingredients of a successful diplomat.

I will always be indebted to the late Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Mary A. Ryan, who shared her advice, her counsel and her insights more generously than any other person I know. As a consular officer, she cared about the security and welfare of Americans living, traveling and studying abroad. She also cared about sharing America's message and America's freedoms,

while at the same time protecting America's borders and essential security. But most of all, she loved the Foreign Service, the work of the Department of State and the people who represent America overseas, and she looked after all three.

In terms of career achievement, Ambassador Terence A. Todman was always my polestar. He taught me to strive for the best and to be conscious of my responsibility to make the Foreign Service more inclusive of the American population. He came to the Department of State when segregated dining facilities were in vogue and when no career African-American Foreign Service officer was considered for worldwide assignments. It was next to miraculous that Todman broke the assignment color barrier, always excelling, both overseas and domestically, to become only the 33rd officer in the history of the Foreign Service to be named Career Ambassador.

And finally, in terms of institutional impact, there is Ambassador Edward J. Perkins, the first African-American Director General of the Foreign Service, who played a pivotal role in pressing South Africa to end apartheid and who, as DG, instituted the Pickering Fellowship program that is essential to the department's diversity efforts. He taught me, above all, that one person can have a lasting institutional impact.

FSJ: *How would you describe Civil Service–Foreign Service relations, and what changes have you seen over time?*

RAD: Civil Service and Foreign Service relations continue to be a work in progress, complicated by two different personnel systems with different benefits, protections, rights, and appointment and promotion policies. I am in agreement with Secretary John F. Kerry that each component of State's workforce must work together as one cohesive and vibrant team, which to me means a strong Foreign Service and a strong Civil Service working in unison to achieve U. S. foreign policy goals and objectives.

As Director General, I made every effort to strengthen both systems, especially through the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative, by increasing Civil Service hiring, training and assignment possibilities and re-engineering the Foreign Service hiring process. It is essential for the department to continue developing the potential of employees in both systems. I am particularly pleased with Director General Arnold Chacón's new Civil Service Reform Initiative, which is designed to develop and enhance the career paths of entry- and mid-level Civil Service employees.

FSJ: *Is the Foreign Service as an institution strong today? How has the role of the Foreign Service changed?*

RAD: The Foreign Service as an institution could be stronger. A

good beginning would be to dedicate additional resources to support our domestic and overseas operations.

But there's more to be dealt with, such as questions about staffing, including the encroachment of Schedule Cs; the lack of understanding of the department's role by the White House—witness the exponential growth of the National Security Council, which seems to me a duplication of State's function; the lack of appreciation by Congress of the role of the Foreign Service, which is further marred by partisanship—a low point being the Benghazi hearings that ignored Congresses' responsibility to provide the resources required to keep our people safe overseas; and, finally, a lack of understanding by the American public of what the Foreign Service does.

Moreover, as retired Ambassador Charles Ray is known for saying: FSOs need to exercise more courage in stepping up to the plate on issues like pushing for a career-long 'education and training' system to complement the training they currently get. And they need to adopt a formal code of ethical conduct for the Service as a means to inculcate professionalism in entry-level officers and reinforce it throughout a career.

I do not believe the fundamental role of the Foreign Service has changed, but the exigencies of today's world demand more of modern diplomats. With the proliferation of terrorist groups, physical security is a major concern, especially overseas; moreover, protection of the homeland is the uppermost thought of all visa officers. Diplomats must now pay serious attention to information technology, especially cybersecurity—not to mention the prominence of environmental issues, transnational health issues, refugee flows, and issues of war and peacekeeping. The list goes on, all calling for diplomacy at the highest level.

FSJ: *Are you optimistic about the future of professional diplomacy?*

RAD: Yes. I believe that in this global world of increasing complexity, crisis and challenges, professional diplomacy becomes ever more indispensable. However, the methods and means of practicing diplomacy must evolve to enable it to remain a leading force in sync with the demands of our changing world.

FSJ: *How do you advise young people considering a Foreign Service career?*

RAD: I relish recruiting for the Foreign Service and tell promising young people that our country desperately needs people with their values, intelligence and education. I do not sugarcoat the many challenges of a career in the Foreign Service, but tell them honestly that it offers a unique opportunity for public service that makes a difference in issues with global impact. ■

WHEN PREVAILING PRACTICE FAILS

By relying on prevailing practice to set locally employed staff compensation, we are benefiting from the same labor exploitation that we oppose as a matter of U.S. foreign policy.

BY JEFFERSON SMITH

Most Foreign Service members have a keen understanding of the intricacies of our pay scales and benefits, but we don't often give much thought to how locally employed (LE) staff (formerly known as Foreign Service Nationals, still the preferred term for many) at our overseas missions are compensated. How does the State Department account for local conditions at more than 200 posts to ensure that LE staff are paid adequately?

The short answer is "prevailing practice." Local labor markets are surveyed at each post to determine appropriate compensation for our LE staff colleagues. In economies where prevailing labor practices are driven by free, fair and competitive labor

markets, this model ensures that posts are able to attract, hire and retain quality employees.

But many of the economies in which U.S. diplomatic missions operate are far from free or fair; instead, they are characterized by exploitative labor practices and human rights violations. In such places, following prevailing practice fails to meet the need of the State Department to maintain a corps of professional local employees. Moreover, it puts the department at risk of following the very practices that are condemned in our own reports on human rights, trafficking in persons (TIP) and labor conditions.

Embassy Kuwait, where I am management counselor, and other U.S. diplomatic missions in Gulf Cooperation Council member-states on the Arabian Peninsula have begun to advance the argument that the U.S. government must do better when prevailing practice fails. While we have had success in gaining policy exceptions, the department still needs to do more to lead (rather than follow) prevailing labor practices in exploitative labor markets, even if it requires an act of Congress to do so.

Determining Prevailing Practice

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 requires that the State Department base compensation for LE staff on prevailing wage rates and compensation practices in the host country, but qualifies this requirement with the clause "to the extent consis-



Jefferson Smith has served as the management counselor at U.S. Embassy Kuwait since 2014. A management-conceded Foreign Service officer since 2000, he has previously served in Kingston, Dar es Salaam (twice), Yaoundé, Dublin, Kuwait and Washington, D.C. Mr. Smith is the 2016 winner of the AFSA Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Officer.

tent with the public interest.” In practice, the Bureau of Human Resources’ Office of Overseas Employment has used surveys of data from comparators—comparable organizations and companies operating in the host country—to determine prevailing practice at each post.

LE staff compensation targets at each post are then set at a specified percentile of the prevailing rates. During sequestration, the target was reduced to the 50th percentile, but it has now been raised to at least the 60th percentile or higher, ensuring that LE staff compensation is at least a bit better than average.

In countries with competitive labor markets, such as in the European Union, prevailing practice gives post management and HR/OE the justification needed to fund salaries that in some cases exceed U.S. salaries for similar positions. (I saw this firsthand in Dublin, where some LE staff who reported to me had a higher base salary than I did.)

This happens because the goal of prevailing practice, as explicitly expressed in the Foreign Service Act, is to “provide a resource of qualified personnel ... characterized by excellence and professionalism” and to “strengthen and improve the Foreign Service of the United States by ... providing salaries, allowances and benefits that will permit the Foreign Service to attract and retain qualified personnel.” Posts can only achieve that goal by offering competitive compensation packages to local staff.

In cases where the situation in the host country warrants an exception, the under secretary for management may make a Public Interest Determination. PIDs have been approved in cases of rampant inflation, violent conflict or other extreme conditions that may result in unique difficulties and potentially high attrition. In posts with weak or authoritarian labor regimes (often characterized by human rights and labor abuses), extreme conditions are, sadly, an everyday reality.

Following prevailing practice in such environments fails to achieve the goal of “excellence and professionalism.” This became painfully clear at our posts on the Arabian Peninsula.

The Kafala System

The countries that comprise the Gulf Cooperation Council—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman—share similar labor conditions that are unlike those in the rest of the world. They depend extensively on imported labor; in many of these countries, the population of expatriate workers far outnumbers the country’s own citizens.

The kafala (sponsorship) system these societies use requires each expatriate to have a local citizen employer or sponsor to

Many of the economies in which U.S. diplomatic missions operate are characterized by exploitative labor practices and human rights violations.

work or invest in the residing country. While details vary by jurisdiction, the sponsor often exercises complete control over the expatriate’s living situation and access to financial assets, retains their official documents and can single-handedly prevent them from leaving the country. This leverage can easily be used to pressure expatriate workers to accept unfavorable terms, and perpetuates trafficking in persons and other human rights abuses.

Under kafala, the free market does not function properly. Employees are not fully free to change jobs or negotiate contract terms, and wages can be held artificially low even as the rest of the economy faces significant inflationary pressure. In addition, the expatriate-dominated labor market is fully controlled by the citizen-dominated employers—and only citizens have any influence on local labor laws.

Current State Department policy already allows for exceptions to prevailing practice in cases of high attrition. However, attrition is an ineffective metric for measuring wages in tightly controlled labor markets, as in the GCC. In many cases, third-country nationals (TCNs) are not free to change jobs, or can do so only at great risk.

In Saudi Arabia, for example, expatriates are allowed to transfer sponsorship from a commercial entity to a diplomatic mission, but not vice versa. This means that the mission’s TCN employees are not able to take other jobs even if a better offer becomes available. In the UAE, some nationalities are restricted from transferring sponsorship, and if they leave their job they must return to their home country, or are considered to be in illegal status after just 30 days.

In most GCC countries, the losing employer must voluntarily issue a “no objection certificate” before an expatriate employee can transfer to a new sponsor. In Oman, the losing

State should establish minimum standards, based on the cost of living and poverty guidelines, for compensating LE staff members—regardless of prevailing practice.

employer forfeits a labor certificate and the ability to hire a replacement employee, creating a bonded labor situation.

You Can't Go Home Again

For many TCN employees, returning home is not a viable option. Some Palestinians have never even been to what they consider their home country, while those from Somalia or Syria must watch from afar as their countries are caught in the nightmare of a civil war. Others have accumulated significant debts and are not allowed to leave their GCC host country until they have paid them.

These employees are effectively trapped: unhappy with their jobs, unable to make ends meet or reduce their debt, and separated from family for long periods. It is not uncommon for LE staff to comment that life in these places is not what they had bargained for, and now they are stuck. Low attrition rates in GCC posts reflect the restrictive kafala system, not job satisfaction.

For all these reasons, prevailing practice in GCC countries is equivalent to labor exploitation, and has led to serious TIP concerns and negative findings in official State Department reports. (In 2015, Kuwait was a Tier III country in the Trafficking in Persons report, while Saudi Arabia and Qatar are ranked on the Tier II Watchlist, and Bahrain, the UAE and Oman are Tier II.)

Even if the department uses only organizations that do not engage in trafficking abuses for comparison—e.g., other Western diplomatic missions, the United Nations and reputable multinational corporations—prevailing wages are still influenced by the artificial wage depression created by kafala. So by relying on prevailing practice to set LE staff compensation, we are benefiting from the same labor exploitation that we oppose as a matter of U.S. foreign policy.

In 2015, after four years with no wage increases and the high inflation common in the GCC, many members of our LE staff were in dire financial circumstances. Unable to afford living in these places, some staff resorted to illegally sharing housing with multiple families. Others chose to split their families, sending spouses and children back to their home countries. Some have moved to distant towns, adding hours to their daily commute.

In Kuwait, 91 LE staff members (almost 30 percent of all embassy staff) had been forced to send their spouse and children back to their home country in order to move into cheaper, shared accommodation and save on living expenses. Not only was their standard of living dropping, but they found themselves alone, increasingly unhappy and, ultimately, less productive.

At the beginning of 2015, 70 percent of LE staff members in Kuwait were living below the poverty level as defined by the government of Kuwait; 58 percent were making less than the U.S. poverty level, even though the cost of living is much higher here than in the United States. Yet despite our best efforts, prevailing practice—not the cost of living—continued to drive LE staff compensation policy for the department. And since the data showed we were already paying our staff “above average,” no raise was authorized.

Embassy Kuwait Speaks Out

Under the leadership of Ambassador Douglas Silliman and Deputy Chief of Mission Joey Hood, Embassy Kuwait coordinated an effort among posts in GCC countries to request Public Interest Determinations that would create or enhance allowances for LE staff, beyond prevailing practice. We issued a joint cable in January 2015, cleared by six ambassadors, outlining the failure of prevailing practice at GCC posts.

To support that effort, each mission collected data on rising housing, education and transportation costs, and documented host-government policies that disadvantage TCN employees. Political and economic sections also drafted cables outlining the failures of the kafala system, its disproportionate impact on expatriate workers and the rising cost of living overall. The Near Eastern Affairs Bureau's executive office engaged with HR/OE, the Foreign Service Director General and the under secretary for management to make the case.

Ultimately, the department approved PIDs and implemented additional allowances. At Embassy Kuwait, the result was an average increase of 22 percent in total compensation for local employees, plus education allowances for employees with school-aged children. Thanks to the new allowances, families of LE staff have begun to return to Kuwait. Employee morale,

Low attrition rates in GCC posts reflect the restrictive kafala system, not job satisfaction.

productivity and dedication to the mission have all noticeably improved as a result.

Leading the Way

While the recent improvement in compensation was a desperately needed and much-appreciated remedy, it is still only a Band-Aid for what remains a chronic illness. GCC posts have struggled with these issues for many years and have each found ad-hoc short-term solutions within the constraints of the LE staff compensation system. But these one-off solutions depend too much on the interest and efforts of individual human resources and management officers, and the support of their front offices.

There is a better way.

Because GCC countries are far from being the only exploitative labor markets in the world, the department needs a policy to address failures of prevailing practice wherever they occur. In a concrete demonstration of U.S. policy support for human rights, labor rights and combating trafficking in persons, our missions should lead by example, rather than simply following local practices.

Toward that end, State should establish minimum standards, based on the cost of living and poverty guidelines, for compensating LE staff members—regardless of prevailing practice. Not only would this ensure that no U.S. government employee overseas lives in poverty, but it would give U.S. missions the moral authority to press for labor reforms in our host countries.

Through such steps, we can lead the way to lift prevailing practice to minimally acceptable standards rather than using it to justify unacceptable wages.

Developing procedures to evaluate and establish minimum standards will require effort. Implementing them may even require an act of Congress. But it is the right thing to do, and the only way to guarantee that we achieve the goals of the Foreign Service. We owe it to our Foreign Service colleagues around the world to lead the way on fair labor practices. ■

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A SELECTION OF ARTICLES ON CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT

As a professional association and labor union, AFSA seeks to highlight achievement, outstanding performance and courage and sacrifice within the Foreign Service community. AFSA's constructive dissent awards honor and spotlight those who work within the system to change policy and performance for the better.

AFSA has sponsored a constructive dissent awards program, unique within the U.S. government, for almost half a century. The awards serve as a reminder of the important role of dissent. Each year, AFSA calls for nominations for four dissent awards and presents them during a formal celebration in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Rooms at the State Department. For more information, please visit the AFSA website at www.afsa.org/constructive-dissent-awards.

The Foreign Service Journal continues to focus each year on the role of dissent in democracy and, in particular, in the Foreign Service. Here we call your attention to a selection of articles we have published on this topic.

“Deconstructing Dissent,” by Amelia Shaw, *The Foreign Service Journal*, September 2015.

Amelia Shaw, the 2015 W. Averell Harriman Award recipient, argues that dissent is about integrity and speaking up about the things that matter, regardless of what you think about the possibility for change. Ms. Shaw received the award for her initiative and intellectual courage in fighting for equal legal rights and protections for unmarried women living along the U.S.-Mexico border, who face many obstacles in transmitting their American citizenship to children born in Mexico.

“Cleaning the Air in New Delhi,” by Samuel Kotis, *The Foreign Service Journal*, September 2015.

Samuel Kotis, recipient of the 2015 William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent, writes about using dissent as a tool to advance a sensible, health-conscious approach to combating air pollution in India. Despite initial resistance from superiors, Mr. Kotis committed himself to giving the Indian public access to data from air quality monitors installed in U.S. mission facilities in the country. This inspired new bilateral cooperation between the U.S. and Indian governments.

“What If I Disagree? Dissent in the Foreign Service,” by Ambassador Thomas Boyatt, excerpted from the book *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, 2011.

Ambassador Thomas Boyatt writes about the history and significance of dissent in the Foreign Service. Foreign policy is constantly evolving, never settled; FSOs take an oath to “uphold and defend the Constitution,” swearing allegiance to their coun-

try rather than a certain administration. To fulfill that oath, they must be able and encouraged to “tell it like it is.”

“Advise and Dissent: The Diplomat As Protester,” by David T. Jones, *The Foreign Service Journal*, April 2000.

Protests by Foreign Service officers may not have ended the Vietnam War, but they did lead to the creation of the Open Forum and the Dissent Channel. David T. Jones explains how the State Department was forced to learn that it had to listen to widespread policy dissent if it wanted to maintain a strong diplomatic corps (266, mostly junior, officers resigned from the Foreign Service in 1968 alone).

“AFSA Constructive Dissent Award Winners: Where Are They Now?” by Shawn Dorman, *The Foreign Service Journal*, September 2013.

Eight Foreign Service members honored for dissent over the past 20 years discuss the impact of their decision to voice their opinion on their careers and on U.S. policy.

“Some Thoughts on Dissent,” by John H. Brown, *The Foreign Service Journal*, July-August 2013.

John H. Brown argues that all government employees should be free to speak their minds as openly as possible, but the term “national security” is being wielded by many senior officials to prevent them from doing so. Brown resigned from the Foreign Service in 2003, after 22 years of service, in protest of the Iraq War.

“Integrity and Openness: Requirements for an Effective Foreign Service,” by Kenneth M. Quinn, *The Foreign Service Journal*, September 2014.

Kenneth Quinn, three-time AFSA dissent award recipient, describes how his honesty and candor were often met with resistance and may have cost him some jobs during his 32-year Foreign Service career. But it ultimately allowed him to be proud of his role in our diplomatic corps. He considers constructive dissent not just an option but a responsibility, and encourages senior officials to treasure different viewpoints rather than silence them.

“The Role of Dissent: In National Security, Law and Conscience,” by Ann Wright, *The Foreign Service Journal*, July-August 2013.

Ann Wright, who resigned from the Foreign Service in protest of the Iraq War, revisits her decision and reflects on its ethical implications. She wrestles with questions such as, “How should public servants go about challenging ill-considered policies?” and “Can one continue working for a government carrying out policies one believes constitute moral, ethical or legal failures?”

—Compiled by Shannon Mizzi, Editorial Assistant

Diplomatic Training: New Trends

In foreign ministries around the world, training is undergoing intensification and expansion.

BY KISHAN RANA

An interesting new criterion has emerged to assess foreign ministry performance. Some analysts believe that the seriousness and care with which a foreign ministry handles diplomatic training is a powerful proxy indicator of the efficacy of that ministry. Several elements lie behind this.

Training represents an investment in the future; like all investments, it should be examined in terms of the value delivered. Besides financial resources, there is also the investment of time by officials, trainees and training organizers to be considered. After all, a foreign ministry's most valuable assets are the people it employs, not its fine embassy buildings and the outward diplomacy spectacle.

A diplomat would do well to ask: How does the system in my country reflect these facts in its training programs? One might add another key query: Given that half or more of the diplomats are stationed abroad at any point of time, do we use the distance learning option? And if not, why not?

The U.K. Model's Novel Features

In January 2015, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office established the Diplomatic Academy with features and



Kishan Rana is an author, teacher and former ambassador for India. He is currently an honorary fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies in Delhi.

approaches that deserve attention. (See "The Diplomatic Academy: A First for Britain's Foreign Office" by Jon Davies, *Foreign Service Journal*, July-August 2015.)

With the FCO abandoning its earlier stand that all needed skills will come "on the job," a holdout against professional training has fallen. Some years earlier, the Quai d'Orsay had established its training institution. The U.S. National Foreign Affairs Training Center (still referred to as FSI, the Foreign Service Institute), established in 1947, was an important resource for the FCO in developing the Diplomatic Academy. Like the United States and France, the U.K. will not conduct lengthy induction courses for new entrants. Instead, they have opted for what I call a "focused selective training" model, which is practiced by Australia, France, the United States and others. In this model new entrants receive an orientation and then get to work at the ministry; newly appointed officials also attend short courses on specific themes.

The alternate model—"full-time entry training"—is practiced by Germany, India and almost all of the Latin American countries. Courses run for 12 to 24 months. During this time, new entrants are also exposed to work at the ministry and embassies abroad, but for short sessions. This means that even after joining the diplomatic service, trainees do not get to do full-time work until they graduate a year or two later. Malaysia's hybrid model is interesting—after initial orientation, new entrants get to work at the foreign ministry, going to a full-time, four- to six-month training course at the end of about two years, before their first overseas assignment. It is an excellent combination of both methods.

Four aspects of the U.K.'s Diplomatic Academy are striking.

In essence, [at Britain's Diplomatic Academy] officials are entrusted with their own training discipline. This experiment will be watched with interest.

First, it divides training into three levels: Foundation, Practitioner and Expert. This is simple, logical and, in hindsight, obvious—and it is curious that no one thought of it earlier. Programs and courses are pegged to the different levels while at the same time retaining a larger training vision for professional diplomats, as well as for officials from other agencies. The Diplomatic Academy's staff is lean—just 15—and, presumably, part-time trainers from the FCO and elsewhere will be used.

Second, for the first time “locally employed staff” overseas are included in the training. Many countries give expanded responsibility to locally engaged employees, entrusting to them tasks that go beyond past routine. They carry out not only public outreach and basic investment and trade work, but also what one might call executive tasks: media report analysis, aid management and even some basic political work. This was unthinkable in the past.

Third, in place of classroom teaching, the FCO will use distance teaching and “learning groups.” As Davies has explained: “The modules are designed so that individuals can work through them alone. ... We are putting the responsibility on individuals to make sure that they get involved in a group and work through the curriculum with fellow members.” This means that the individual official is responsible for the pace of learning, presumably forming and joining groups for collective studies and discussion. In essence, officials are entrusted with their own training discipline. I am sure this experiment will be watched with interest.

Finally, there is another novel feature. In Davies' words: “We will also, where appropriate, be hard-wiring some academy learning into our evolving promotion model. Successful completion of the Foundation level, for example, will become essential at one particular step up the ladder. And for entry to our senior management structure, colleagues will have to have reached the Practitioner level in a number of faculties.” The FCO already uses

its remarkable Assessment and Development Centers for rigorous, objective promotion selection, even at the junior rank of second secretary, also treating that exposure as a form of training. The ADC method is expensive to operate and has undergone some simplification since its inception a decade ago; and it may, perhaps, be due for further modification.

World Trends

Training in foreign ministries around the world is undergoing intensification and expansion. Most countries are setting up their own corps of trainers, sourcing them from both academia and the ranks of retired envoys. Whether it is in Kenya, Thailand or Uganda, new training programs and courses are being added and efforts are being made to include officials from other ministries. In China, efforts by the foreign ministry to establish its diplomatic academy at a new campus alongside the China Foreign Affairs University have been postponed, perhaps in a cost-saving move. But the country's 7,000-strong diplomatic service maintains its robust commitment to mid-career training. Each year, 140 Chinese diplomats are selected through an intense competition to attend one-year courses at some of the best universities around the world—a unique effort to groom high flyers for senior positions.

Not many foreign ministry training institutions include corporate managers and representatives of business and industry in their programs, and this is an error. Non-state representatives play an active role in external affairs and are vital in today's public-private partnership model of diplomacy. Their involvement in diplomatic training programs has mutual benefits: they bring perspectives that are useful for diplomats to understand, and diplomats offer them insight into the working of official agencies.

The International Forum on Diplomatic Training—run by the directors of the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, Austria, and Georgetown University's Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service in Washington, D.C.—holds annual meetings of the academies and the institutes that exist now in perhaps more than 80 foreign ministries (see forum.diplomacy.edu). But I am not sure that enough attention is being given to helping the smaller training institutes. Regional-level gatherings of diplomatic academies also take place in Europe, Latin America and Southeast Asia. It is also noteworthy that some academic institutions are adding “practice of diplomacy” to the nomenclature of a few of their professorships. Working diplomats are now found in teaching positions at some institutions. Perhaps the theory-practice gap is now, finally, shrinking.

In Asia, the only foreign service training group that meets annually does so under the “ASEAN-plus-three” formula, which brings together diplomatic training agencies from ASEAN’s 10 members and China, Japan and South Korea. Attending one of these sessions as an invitee about a decade ago, I had suggested that it would be worthwhile holding the meeting under the rubric of a wider group, to ensure that countries such as Australia, India and New Zealand, and some others could be added to this dialogue. It seems logical to extend the footprint of such regional consultation.

In India, the Manmohan Singh government decided in 2009 that all Indian civil servants in the different senior executive services (there are a score of these, all recruited through the Union Public Services Commission) must undergo several weeks of training before promotions at three key levels take effect, broadly between 12 to 28 years of service. At one stroke, “lifelong training” went into operation. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs, which has run its own Foreign Service Institute since 1986, complied with this mandate, partly by outsourcing a large part of the training to a major management training institute in Hyderabad. In my view, this is not the wisest method: It is better to build up one’s own training capacity.

The requirements of diplomatic training are different from the requirements of the domestic civil service. The latter is preoccupied with project management and national development, subjects that are well-researched by the management institutes. Yet such institutes seldom study diplomatic training. It is far better for foreign service academies to look to the experience of counterparts in other countries.

E-Learning Trends

While e-learning remains significantly underutilized by many foreign ministries, Canada was a pioneer in applying information technology. I saw this firsthand during a visit to Ottawa in 2003, when I was persuaded to produce two “self-learning courses” for the Canadian Foreign Service Institute, overcoming my doubts on the quality and method of self-paced delivery. In a way, those self-learning modules resemble massive open online courses (MOOCs) that major U.S. universities and others have subsequently developed for the benefit of hundreds of thousands of users, mostly on a gratis basis. The foreign ministries in Mexico and the United States are among the other major users of distance learning.

Our experience at DiploFoundation (I have been on its part-time faculty for 15 years) has been that to work well, distance teaching in diplomatic studies should involve teach-

Each year, 140 Chinese diplomats are selected through an intense competition to attend one-year courses at some of the best universities around the world.

ers in intense dialogue with class participants, with class size limited to about 20 to 25. The British FCO method appears to be different, with what seems to be a light touch of faculty intervention; it is innovative, presuming that trainees are sufficiently motivated to manage learning by themselves. This bears close observation and assessment.

Balancing resources, both material and human, against evolving needs is a constant challenge, particularly for small countries. Many of them rely largely on free training courses offered by other countries, often with free air travel thrown in. A problem is that some of these courses are heavy on “selling” the host country, and offer rather less by way of professional training. An exception is a two-week course that Malaysia’s Institute for Diplomatic Training offers in Kuala Lumpur on negotiation, a subject that small foreign ministries cannot easily access. At the same time, even small states can develop their own programs. They can find trainers from among their own diplomatic corps, former ambassadors and university academics. Considerable teaching material is available under “creative commons” licenses, such as the lecture texts developed by the teaching faculty of DiploFoundation.

Does training get the attention it merits from the senior level of the foreign ministry? As a diplomatic studies teacher, I have wondered about this. The answer lies within each ministry of foreign affairs. My overall impression is that though the situation has been improving in recent years, it remains far from ideal.

What is worth reasserting to the top management of foreign ministries is that the training function is at the core of human resource development. As with any knowledge-driven organization, developing and managing this resource is a vital responsibility, on which the performance of the entire diplomatic system hinges. ■

Five Ways to Tackle a New Language

Combining different language-learning methods is the best bet for success, say two FSOs with experience as language teachers and students.

BY ELIJAH DAVID BUSH AND TODD HUGHES

The State Department offers excellent opportunities to learn languages and explore different cultures. Drawing on our experiences both as language teachers and as students, we offer the following strategies for tackling new languages. In addition to applying one or more of them, learners may find other useful reference points during conversations with instructors and learning consultants.

Elijah David Bush and Todd Hughes are both FSOs and proud members of the 177th A-100 class of 2014 who recently studied languages at the Foreign Service Institute (and lived to tell about it).



Elijah Bush completed 44 weeks of Turkish in 2015 and now serves in Ankara with his wife and four children. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he had earned a master's degree in teaching second languages from

Utah State University, where he taught entry-level German. He has taught English as a second language as a volunteer overseas and earned a Ph.D. in political science from Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany.



Todd Hughes completed 31 weeks of Russian language study in 2015 and now serves in Yekaterinburg with his wife, who also studied Russian at FSI. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he taught French to high school students in Jacksonville, Florida, and later earned a Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Florida.

from the University of Florida.

There is so much information available at FSI that students are sometimes challenged to find and implement an elusive ideal approach. We propose that optimal learning will happen when multiple approaches are deliberately combined.

Our descriptions of the five learning styles below, based on research by British anthropologist Mary Douglas, discuss the strengths and limitations of each approach, and include some practical applications. Many readers will likely recognize the primary style of past teachers. Being aware of your preferred learning style—as it applies to language learning—can be very helpful.

There is always a gap between what we know and what we do. After enjoying full-time language study at FSI, we each came away recognizing our own shortcomings—and wished we could go back to our former students and apologize to them, and then do a better job. We are fortunate that most of the instructors at FSI are ready and willing to struggle with us to find just the right mix of effective learning techniques.

Here are some of the broad learning (and teaching) principles we have gleaned, along with practical applications.

1. Repeat after Me...

Hierarchical learning relies on top-down, lecture-based instruction. Its experts and instructors come from traditions where learners are viewed as “empty vessels” that need to be filled. Common tactics include drills, workbooks and repetition exercises.

The prevalence of this rule-based, traditional approach is not

surprising, given the requirements for standardized curriculum and final testing across all languages. Its strengths include efficiency and uniformity; but downsides include over-reliance on authoritative experts and the possibility of students blaming “the system” instead of their own lack of effort.

This approach can also prevent students from engaging with the language in a meaningful way. Just as writing an essay, rather than copying one, improves writing skills, creating your own utterances is more effective than repeating someone else’s.

In practice: Incorporate more “expert” samples or native speaker-based listening activities with specific, level-appropriate tasks. For example, listen to short news reports (not lightning-fast hourly updates) with the task of picking out key verbs or a specific set of nouns. Or read children’s books aloud in the target language to train your mouth muscles to make new sounds and sound patterns.

Achieving a series of bite-sized tasks is much more productive than slogging away at high-level exercises that only demoralize us. A more realistic approach to applying our developing language skills helps us recognize our current level and appreciate our progress.

2. I Did It My Way...

Individualism focuses on personal responsibility and preferences. Learners are encouraged to experiment, build their own network(s) and find what works best for them. One-on-one instruction or learning consultations can help identify unique learning styles and adapt learning activities for each person, knowing that each student’s strengths might not overlap with traditional (hierarchical) methods.

This is consistent with Howard Gardner’s *Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, in which he argues that most people have different learning strengths. For example, they may be particularly strong or relatively weak in each of the learning modes: visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile. Unfortunately, traditional classrooms tend to emphasize auditory learning.

Solo time and effort outside of class are key ingredients in this free marketplace of ideas, where the best will compete to rise to the top. Bonus pay and other incentives can also be used to motivate in this paradigm. Downsides include the risk of becoming overly competitive or viewing the curriculum as a race, trying to stay ahead of the pack rather than cooperating to help each other master the content through more collaborative peer learning.

In practice: More verbal and written spot quizzes, including self-quizzing, can help motivate learners. Twenty years of

research, as well as our own experience, bears out the observation that people remember (learn) better when there is an emotional response associated with the experience. Anxiety and fear are often part of learning, and missing items on a quiz can create an emotional response that aids memory. So embrace classroom quizzes. If your classmates are willing, ask for more of them.

To counter the risk of over-doing testing, students and teachers should use humor to laugh off major and minor mistakes. Running lists of funny errors can lighten the pressure: indeed, they are often some of the most memorable parts of learning.

3. We’re All in This Together...

Egalitarianism rejects the first two paradigms above, taking a more harmonious, collective approach toward learning. Diplomatic rank and experience are not relevant when collaborative learning prevails. Instructors facilitate discussions but do not dominate them, allowing students to discover and express grammar principles on their own. Each person also has equal opportunity to speak and ask questions.

One advantage of this approach is the force-multiplier effect that comes through peer correction. Downsides include frustration when classmates learn and process information at different speeds. A mitigation strategy for this inherent weakness is to rotate groups regularly, so that stronger students can work with a variety of weaker students over time.

In a classroom that seems to be stagnating, a tactful request for a new rotation can help an ambitious student get more out of the training experience. Alternatively, try viewing your classmates as equal partners in learning, and use your diplomatic skills to get them more involved.

In practice: Incorporate more group activities and play time into study sessions. Adults and children alike often learn better when drills are in groups and paired with activity—whether moving electronic labels onto pictures on a smart board or physically manipulating strips of paper for Q&As with other students.

Some FSI Arabic-language classes engage in light physical exercise on the lawn during warmer months, such as throwing or kicking a ball while reciting terms, or counting in unison during movements. As a result, participants are less likely to forget Arabic numerals and other linguistic building blocks.

4. It’s a Family Affair...

Familism emphasizes kinship over other social structures and sometimes rebels against the aforementioned more formal approaches. Tactics may take the form of rapid progress through increased home study, such as labeling household items and

practicing together with family members.

Most of us have encountered lucky colleagues who won the linguistic lottery by coming from a multilingual home. The benefits of such an environment can also come from finding ways to enroll one's spouse, partner or kids in full- or part-time language training, so the whole family can learn the target language together.

In addition, sometimes it is useful for students to focus on real-world scenarios and practical situations that facilitate their learning, even if it occasionally takes the place of the prescribed homework.

In practice: Language learning can be very stressful for some students. Home study time, familiar environments and comfortable routines can help. Adults often appreciate consistent structures, such as beginning every class with small group discussions or building each week toward a predictable Friday vocabulary quiz on new terms learned that week. When our teachers did this, we found the routine comforting.

5. I Don't Hate People, I Just Feel Better When They Aren't Around...

Autonomy. Introverts and solitary learners subscribe to this sentiment, and prefer the "hermit option." (You can also think of it as the "Walden Pond" approach to learning.) Withdrawing from social interactions can free up time, energy and brain cells. Loads of language learning happens when we retreat from society and digest in isolation what we have been taught in class.

The first four paradigms described here rely on social settings, but some learners thrive in the muffled, silent solace of the language lab. They instinctively gravitate toward minimalist settings, such as quiet corners, with just notes and flashcards for autonomous practice.

The strength of this approach includes the flexibility to learn when, where and however possible. Talking to oneself is widely recognized as a great learning tactic for language production skills, though it can get a little awkward in public and is probably best done in isolation.

Practice time free from pressure and judgment is a great way to grow. But autonomous learning is insufficient to master a language because the lack of corrective feedback can solidify errors through repetition. It also will not prepare learners for authentic conversation or the rapid exchanges expected during oral exams.

In practice: Incorporate more tech-based (e.g., recorded) speaking activities into your language study to encourage independent, judgment-free practice. This can involve reading pre-written texts, activities that develop pronunciation "muscle

memory" or reinforcing common phrases from daily scenarios to build up automaticity that flows almost involuntarily like a physical reflex.

Hearing your own pronunciation (and errors) can be both mortifying and motivating. Car commuting provides an excellent opportunity for judgment-free verbal practice. Doing this on non-FSI bus rides, though, might entertain or annoy your fellow passengers. Regardless of your setting, be ready for the funny looks that will come your way!

The Value of Syncretic Solutions

What should learners do with this awareness of competing language-learning approaches? See them as possible solutions. Syncretism has been defined as "the attempted reconciliation or union of different or opposing principles, practices or philosophies." Syncretic solutions are ideal in the classroom, creating flexible combinations of the competing methods outlined above. Reconciling multiple learning approaches in the classroom can create opportunities for students to benefit from their classmates' differences and strengths.

There will always be many ways to approach a new language. Each instructor and learner brings their own bias to the task and to the classroom. Awareness of this fact can empower learners to make deliberate decisions about how to use collective and individual resources (chiefly time) most effectively. By consciously embracing and balancing the full range of tactics, learners will have access to more tools. Each of the methods we have outlined can be applied individually as a lens for learning, but blending and overlaying multiple lenses is possible and preferable.

While some gifted learners intuitively latch onto approaches that draw on all of the above philosophies, most of us need to make a deliberate effort to incorporate different methods and to close the gap between what we know and what we actually do. Be aware of your classmates' successful strategies so that you can work with them more effectively to create a harmonious classroom culture.

Deliberately blending these tactics and strategies may be less elegant than sticking with a single approach, but it can be much more effective.

In short, when we can recognize and combine learning styles, we will see greater success in our language learning. ■

Over the Finish Line: Winning Strategies for a Successful Visit

Advance planning and sustained initiative from mid-level officers who own their ideas are the keys to a fruitful high-level visit.

BY TED OSIUS

One of my mentors, Ambassador (ret.) Cameron Hume, said it was crucial to develop strategies far in advance in order to bring concrete accomplishments

over the finish line during a senior-level visit. Anything worth doing takes time, serious effort and an investment of intellectual capital, he said. Mission Vietnam began hearing of a possible presidential visit a year before it actually took place, so we decided to put Ambassador Hume's theory to a test.

At a country team workshop precisely a year before the visit, we began to envision what actions—I like to call them “joint endeavors” as opposed to “deliverables,” because they involve



Ted Osius is U.S. ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. During a 28-year Foreign Service career, he has served in the Philippines, the Holy See, U.S. Mission to the United Nations, Vietnam (twice), Thailand, India, Indonesia and Washington, D.C.



U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Ted Osius, center, with Scott Kofmehl, left, and Alex Titolo at the Hanoi airport to receive President Barack Obama on May 24.

both partners—would truly move U.S.-Vietnam relations to the next level. Communist Party Chief Nguyen Phu Trong has noted that when our two countries engage in practical activities together, we build trust, so at least at the top-most level of Vietnam's hierarchy there was support for a “joint” approach. We concluded internally that a visit would allow us to deepen relations in five areas of engagement: joint prosperity; educational collaboration; environment, science, technology and health; security; and governance.



Crowds wave as President Barack Obama's motorcade passes through Hanoi.

The party chief's visit to the United States and Oval Office meeting with President Barack Obama in July 2015 greatly boosted our chances of success, because it gave our partners in Vietnam's leadership much more room for collaboration with us. At another workshop in October 2015, we decided to be ambitious, and settled on 12 concrete "joint endeavors" to pursue as a mission. We assigned action officers to each, challenging them to develop strategies that would bring their actions over the finish line in time for a possible presidential visit.

Action Officers Take Ownership

In most cases, other U.S. agencies had a leading role providing budget or policy guidance, and their role in these endeavors was invaluable. Throughout the mission, our action officers had the responsibility to take ownership of their issues, keep the country team updated and be constantly on the lookout for opportunities to further the initiative, as well as for bureaucratic obstacles that could sink it. They were responsible to the country team for ensuring success. They became our experts and my chief advisers on how to achieve our goals. When State and another agency don't agree on an aspect of the visit—especially if it's a presidential visit—the National Security Council plays referee. In this case, all agencies involved were on the same page.

In the field of joint prosperity, second-tour Foreign Service Officer Joe Narus took the lead on demonstrating U.S. readiness to assist Vietnam in implementing its commitments under the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, particularly regarding workers' rights, environmental protection and intellectual property rights. Working closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development, he pulled colleagues together to brainstorm, drafted a strategy linked to a timeline and reported to the country team each week on progress achieved. He deployed senior officials regularly to engage counterparts, host events with

private-sector partners and continually reviewed and revised his strategy. We contributed to and were guided by Joe's vision.

In the security realm, mid-level FSO Adam Davis pursued three courses of action: a maritime security assistance package, an enhanced humanitarian assistance and disaster relief access arrangement for the Pacific Command, and training for Vietnamese peacekeepers. As most of Vietnam's military leaders fought us during what they call the "American War," we had to overcome

deep suspicions. The pol-mil cluster led by our defense attaché served as a weekly forum for debate and refinement of strategies, and Adam also updated the country team regularly.



Amb. Ted Osius and Consul General Rena Bitter of U.S. Consulate Ho Chi Minh City at the Trieu To Temple on April 29. Support from the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation helped restore part of the temple complex in Ho Chi Minh City.



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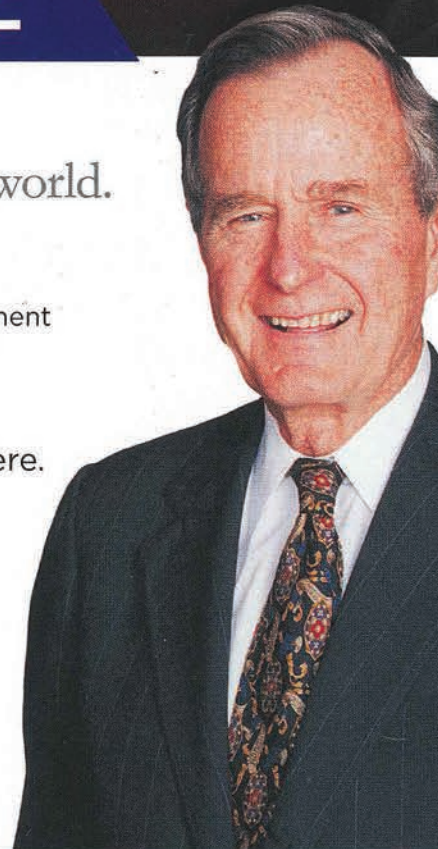
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COURTESY OF U.S. EMBASSY HANOI

President Obama speaks at a town hall meeting of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative in Hanoi.

In the field of education, our intrepid desk officer, Jillian Bonnardeaux, dusted off a Peace Corps agreement that many people had tried to complete during the past decade or so. Working with Vietnam’s embassy in Washington, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs leadership and our embassy team, she corralled lawyers and kept the negotiations moving. Simultaneously, we worked to support the launch of Fulbright University Vietnam, the country’s first private, nonprofit, independent university, based in Ho Chi Minh City. While an independent team conducted negotiations with Vietnamese authorities, our consulate general team, led by Public Affairs Officer Alex Titolo, provided critical support.

Bringing It Home

By the beginning of 2016, we had developed 12 complete strategies for our joint endeavors, and our mission action officers backed up by teams owned each one fully. Deputy Chief of Mission Susan Sutton, Consul General Rena Bitter and I helped coordinate efforts, but each joint endeavor team implemented its strategy with minimal guidance from above. We received generous support from colleagues and leaders at State and the White House, and that support grew over time, bolstered by a series of high-level visits preceding the “Big Visit.”

From January onward, former Vietnam Desk Officer Scott Kofmehl helped orchestrate our efforts from his new perch at the National Security Council. With NSC Asia in the lead, the

White House took our ambitious agenda for the visit and made it more ambitious, pursuing strategies to address the toughest remaining war legacy issues: dioxin clean-up and fully removing a ban on arms sales that had been imposed in the mid-1960s.

Joe, Adam, Jillian, Alex, Scott and many others saw their hard work bear fruit when Pres. Obama made his historic visit to Vietnam in May 2016, accompanied by the Secretary of State, U.S. trade representative, national security advisor, three members of Congress and a thousand others. Our teams brought an astonishing 20 joint endeavors over the finish line—from all five areas of engagement identified a year earlier—during the action-packed visit. Many agreements were concluded at the 11th hour; in fact, three cited in the two presidents’ joint statement as completed were actually signed the day after the official meetings.

Pres. Obama spoke to Vietnam’s citizens in an address whose impact will be felt for many years. He engaged young people and entrepreneurs in ways that inspired and empowered the Vietnamese. Because we had laid the groundwork, our team—in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Washington—provided substantive accomplishments to strengthen the president’s words and interactions during his three-day visit.

Mid-level officers designed and implemented strategies that involved an accurate diagnosis of the challenge, including a realistic assessment of the obstacles to success; clear policy goals that helped keep both governments moving in the same direction; and a set of coherent actions linked to a timeline. They conducted “SWOT” (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analyses on each strategy. Teachers and practitioners of strategy recommend this approach, and our officers and their teams showed that it works.

These officers also learned to be opportunistic, to seize moments to engage higher-ups to advance their strategies. They did not wait for instructions, but rather owned their ideas and took the initiative to turn them into concrete accomplishments that were fueled by, and in turn enhanced, a visit from the president of the United States. Amb. Hume predicted—and we have shown it to be true—that officers who taste what it’s like to design and implement a strategy are changed by the experience. They will never again settle for less than taking their ideas over the finish line. ■

MED'S CHILD & FAMILY PROGRAM, EXPLAINED

Here is an authoritative account of the aims of the CFP, presented as part of the *Journal's* ongoing discussion of concerns regarding support for children and families overseas.

BY KATHY GALLARDO

Raising children has never been easy, and this is especially true in the Foreign Service, where both unique challenges and exceptional rewards come with the territory. The Department of State's Bureau of Medical Services (MED) knows that our parents, like all parents, worry that the decisions they make about their children may have long-term impact. Yet the Foreign Service lifestyle just seems to increase the stakes.

Would my child be better off in the United States? Isn't exposure to other cultures and languages good for children? What do I do if a teacher raises concerns about my child's learning style or social skills? Who do I talk to? What are the options? Caring for Foreign Service employees and their dependents overseas takes many forms for MED, including making sure children with

behavioral health conditions and educational disabilities have access to important services they require.

MED's Mental Health Services division has a primary role in the many clinical and administrative processes involved in support of this goal, a responsibility that dates back many years. However, the State Department's emphasis on hiring over the previous decade and deliberate efforts to support significantly increased numbers of employees and dependents overseas have resulted in new challenges and opportunities for MHS.

Origins of the Child and Family Program

The MED/MHS Child and Family Program was created in 2013 to address the increasingly complex issues faced by many U.S. Foreign Service personnel with dependent children who require specialized educational and behavioral health services. CFP staff member core duties include:

- 1) Case review for educational clearance recommendations to the Office of MED Clearances for school-age children of U.S. government personnel assigned overseas;
- 2) Case review for mental health clearance recommendations for child and youth dependents of government employees assigned overseas;
- 3) Intensive case management of the Special Needs Education Allowance program, involving eligibility determinations, annual renewals and verification of allowable expenses for qualified dependents;
- 4) Consultation for pediatric and adolescent behavioral health medical evacuations for urgent assessment and treatment; and
- 5) Clinical and administrative support to MED personnel overseas.



Kathy Gallardo, M.D., Ph.D., is the deputy medical director for mental health programs for the Department of State. She attended medical school and graduate school at the University of California, Irvine. She went on to complete her post-graduate medical training at Yale University, followed by sub-specialty fellowship training in child and adolescent psychiatry at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland, and Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. Dr. Gallardo joined the State Department medical team in 2011 and has served in Southern Africa and the Middle East. She assumed her current position in the Bureau of Medical Services in August 2016. She has three children and calls Southern California home.

Both MED and MHS leadership recognized the need to move toward a more uniform code of practice in supporting children and families.

CFP is made up of a multidisciplinary team of child psychologists, social workers and child psychiatrists with experience in both clinical and educational systems to closely replicate the functions performed by members of a Child Study Team in a U.S. public school.

Prior to the creation of CFP, the programmatic functions of educational clearance recommendations and special needs funding and case management were performed by MED/MHS Employee Consultation Services clinical social workers; and mental health clearance consultations and medevac support were performed by MED/MHS clearance psychologists and psychiatrists.

In 2013, a combination of factors contributed to the impetus for reimagining MHS structure for supporting children and families. These included resource concerns due to an increased emphasis on traditional Employee Assistance Program work provided by ECS; a desire to streamline the clearance process for families; and a need to ensure consistent application of the SNEA-related Department of State Standard Regulations. Both MED and MHS leadership recognized the need to move toward a more uniform code of practice in supporting children and families.

As with any new program, there have been growing pains. After a reasonable start-up period, an internal assessment was undertaken to gauge the progress of the office in standardizing SNEA case management and servicing the special needs client population. In that vein, a number of endeavors by CFP stakeholders—including MED, the Office of Allowances, the Office of Overseas Schools, the Family Liaison Office and others—have been underway over the past year that are aimed at improving oversight, consistency and accountability of the educational allowance.

The Office of Allowances has been particularly instrumental in efforts to draft an updated informational SNEA ALDAC cable, to clarify Department of State Standardized Regulations and shepherd a number of other SNEA initiatives to assist all involved.

Two Key Processes

MED Clearances. The current MED clearance process for children and youth encompasses three domains: general medical, behavioral health and education. MED/MHS/CFP is responsible for providing clearance recommendations to the Office of MED Clearances for behavioral health and educational needs. When an

employee submits a medical clearance update request for a child to the Office of MED Clearances, the office reviews the documentation for any behavioral health or educational needs and, where present, sends a request for a clearance consultation to MHS/CFP.

MHS/CFP staff then perform a case review as part of the medical clearance process and make a recommendation on what level of need a child has and to what extent the need or needs can be met overseas. Factors that are considered include the condition or disability, level and length of stability, the required treatment or intervention and whether adequate services can reasonably be accessed overseas, among other things.

“Post Approvals” are considered when a child has been categorized as needing a “post-specific” clearance and the employee’s Human Resources career development officer (CDO) submits potential postings to MED for review. Factors that may speed up the clearance process include submission of up-to-date medical and educational documentation, full disclosure of behavioral health and educational needs, and thorough research by parents into the adequacy of resources at posts of interest.

Educational clearances for children may be performed by the CFP with tentative school acceptances received by parents in order to assist an employee in the bidding process. However, an official school acceptance is required for children with special needs before they may travel to post. If official school acceptance is not received, it is the employee’s responsibility to notify their CDO and MED Clearances immediately.

Special Needs Education Allowance. Children. Education. Health care. Money. Individually, these topics often spark rich debate and emotion-laden discussion; in aggregate, the reaction can be incendiary. The Special Needs Education Allowance process pulls all of these together and has traditionally been the most confusing of the CFP responsibilities for parents, providers and post management.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the State Department is committed to assisting employees in meeting the necessary expenses incurred when deployed overseas in providing adequate education for their school-age children.

The education allowances are designed to assist in defraying those costs necessary to obtain educational services that are ordinarily provided free of charge by public schools in the United

States. The goal is to replicate, as closely as possible for those posted overseas, the support that would be available to parents of children in a U.S. public school district using the best Washington, D.C., metropolitan school districts (e.g., Arlington, Falls Church, Fairfax and Montgomery counties) for guidance.

Under the DSSR, a child receiving SNEA must have written evidence that they meet the definition of a child with a disability under the Individuals with Disability Education Improvement Act, and there must be a formal Individualized Education Program (an "IEP") or its equivalent, prepared by a professional medical or educational expert, that delineates which educational services are required to provide for the child's special needs. All documentation should be provided to MED by the employee and is reviewed by CFP.

Finally, appreciating how the MED clearance process interfaces with SNEA is crucial to understanding the benefits and limitations of this educational allowance. The MED clearance process is the first step toward meeting a child's needs overseas. A child is medically cleared for a post if the required services are available at that post, and the SNEA may then be used to offset extra costs for the required services which are not provided free by the school or covered by the employee's medical insurance.

If, on medical clearance review, an employee or spouse has needs which cannot be met at certain overseas posts, MED will inform HR/CDA that the relevant clearance status is "post not approved." Likewise, if a child's medical, psychiatric or educational needs cannot be met at certain posts under consideration, the child will not be medically cleared for the post.

Collaboration

All CFP processes work best when there is a true partnership between parents, Foreign Service medical officers overseas and the various administrative components in the department positioned domestically and abroad.

Employees from the Office of Allowances, the Office of Overseas Schools and the Family Liaison Office work closely with MHS leadership and CFP personnel to assist families in understanding how educational opportunities, educational allowances (including SNEA) and local resources enable children with special needs to be posted successfully overseas.

Given the individualized requirements of IEPs and the IDIEA, CFP strongly encourages parents to contact its staff members and discuss germane elements of the processes for their child.

I encourage readers to visit <http://med.m.state.sbu/mhs/cfp> or www.state.gov/m/med/family/index.htm, where you will find a set of frequently asked questions with CFP's responses. ■



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Creepy Critters We Have Known

Life in the tropics demands that you make peace with a range of “creepy critters” you are bound to encounter.

BY MARGARET SULLIVAN

You can’t live in the tropics without intimate contact with creepy critters. We old hands delight in swapping sagas about these encounters and regaling new arrivals with our tales (the more unnerving, the better) to watch them squirm. Imagine a three-inch flying cockroach that crawls up a loose dress during a posh diplomatic reception—more about that later.

For starters, little house lizards are ubiquitous. Their gentle “tik tik tik” conversation inspired different onomatopoeic names in each place we lived. Gecko, a Malay word, is the most common. They are known as tjitjak in Indonesia (in the new spelling, cicak) and tiki in the Philippines’ Visayas.

With sensuously sprawled, clay-pink bodies, huge round eyes, and four velcro-padded toes splayed out at the end of each widespread leg, they cling to the walls and ceilings or scuttle



Margaret Sullivan has spent much of her life within 15 degrees of the equator, beginning with 18 months in Rangoon as a teenager in the 1950s. She later lived in Kuala Lumpur, Kaduna, Jakarta, Cebu, Freetown and Singapore with her FSO husband Daniel Sullivan and their four children. A longtime blogger for The Huffington Post, as well as an artist, Ms. Sullivan has two books and numerous magazine articles to her credit. A Foreign Service Journal article, “Remembering Another Unforgettable Day,” and this piece are among the essays that will appear in a forthcoming book, Fragments of a Mobile Life.

around to snap up insects. They bring good luck to your house, the locals tell us.

I first met geckos (and their bigger, louder, more dragon-like cousins, toktu) in 1951 when Dad took an assignment in Rangoon with a precursor of the U.S. Agency for International Development. My parents, siblings and I moved into a barn-like prewar house where geckos roamed the nearly 20-foot-high ceilings with impunity, ultimately playing a leading role in a favorite bit of family lore.

Sometime during our second year there, two American ladies of a certain age, friends of friends of friends of Mother’s, came to town as part of an ambitious trip having something to do with doing good works. They had prepared to encounter a vast wilderness. Wearing stout shoes and sensible dresses, they brought along their own primus stove, dry food, pith helmets and water purification pills. We kids thought they were weird, to put it bluntly.

Mother took them up to the Shwedagon, Rangoon’s huge gold Buddhist pagoda built on a sacred hilltop to house eight of the Lord Buddha’s hairs. Like thousands of other people, they climbed steep flights of cool stairs lined with stalls selling all sorts of religious accoutrements—flowers, incense and candles as offerings—and other crafts. (I still serve dinner with a pair of brass spoons Mother bought there and gave us when we married.)

At the top, all visitors remove their shoes to show respect before stepping out onto the sizzling white marble plaza. The main stupa is ringed with small ones, some gold, some white-washed, each dedicated to a particular day of the week and segment of that day. Each worshiper kneels at the appropriate small stupa, puts the candle in a holder, lights it and, bowing several

times, offers the flowers and incense, and prays.

At dinner, the ladies bubbled on and on about their day, and particularly about their visit to what they called the “exotic gold temple.”

“How nice,” one opined firmly. “They must have gotten lighting candles from Catholicism.”

With exquisite timing, a pinky-sized gecko let go of the ceiling. Plop. It landed in one woman’s soup bowl, splashing dollops of the liquid onto the tablecloth.

The Art of Geckos

Years later, as my husband, Dan, our children and I moved from tropical post to tropical post, geckos became our house familiars. And grist for my artist’s mill: Exaggerated, three or four feet long, their brightly painted bodies and bulging eyes, widely splayed toes, curled tails and big bellies sprawled across the ceiling, down a wall, around a corner.

The high ceiling of the downstairs reception room in the American consul’s residence in Cebu, the second-largest city in the Philippines, was the best “canvas.” Soon after we moved in, I climbed a ladder, used crayons to draw the outlines, chose several colors and painted in the shapes. Blue, orange-brown, deep rose? Or was there a red in there? Five geckos graced one corner of the ceiling, twisted together on different planes.

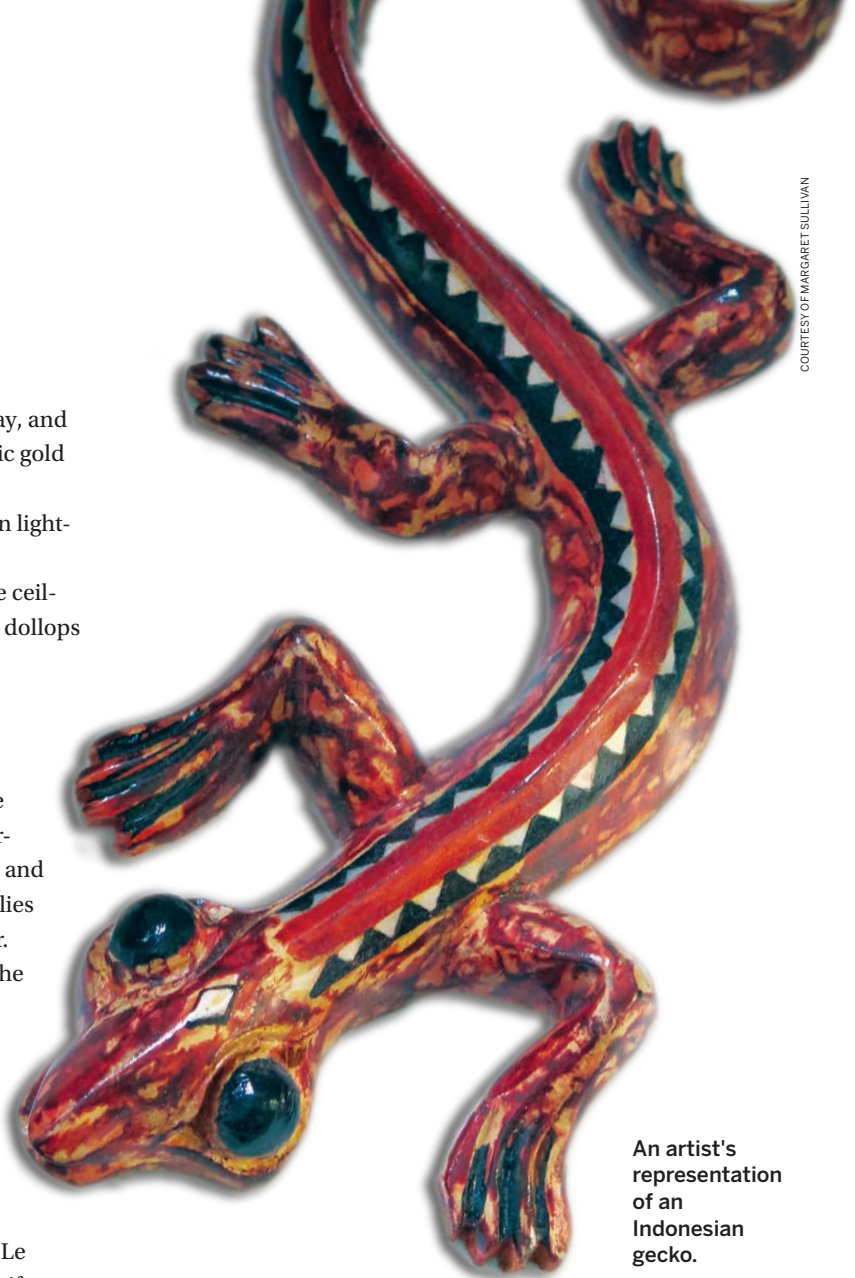
Several nights later, we hosted our first official party. “Le tout Cebu” came, curious about the new consul and his wife. The guests arrived, enjoyed drinks and pika-pika (nibbles), and greeted each other as they continued the day’s gossip and began looking around to see how we had changed the house. In time, the creatures on the ceiling caught a guest’s eye. Then another snuck a puzzled look. Others suppressed a smile.

No one ever said anything to me about the ceiling—then. But when I returned to Cebu years later to visit friends, the first thing everyone always said was: “You had those great geckos on your ceiling.”

The big toktu, on the other hand, were more likely to live on the outside wall by a security light. They were not nearly as cute as their indoor cousins, but they had loud voices! Their distinctive call started with a rumbling “tok tok tok” until it built up to a distinctive “toktuuuuu.” Repeat and keep repeating.

In the Philippines, we were told: “Count the repeats. Seven and 13 are good luck.” Just three calls were bad luck. Once you know, you always count.

Toktu don’t just live by the lights outside. Some of them must be amphibious and love toilet diving. I discovered that the



An artist's representation of an Indonesian gecko.

COURTESY OF MARGARET SULLIVAN

hard way, soon after we arrived in Rangoon. When I got up in the middle of the night to do the needful, I started to sit down without looking. Whoosh! Something ran out from under me. I jumped, having met my first toktu, up close and far too personal.

Snakes Alive

Snakes, of course, don’t make a distinctive sound. They just slither. Some spit. As the daughter of a doctor of worms and parasites, not to mention bugs, I never thought I would teach my kids to be afraid of such critters. After all, I grew up watching snails leave slime trails up my arms and being shown my own intestinal worms in glass tubes.

But in northern Nigeria, with a 5-year-old, a 3-year-old and a toddler who were all much too curious for their own good, Dan and I realized we had to scare the bejeezus out of them about snakes. After six months in a second floor walk-up on the main street of Kaduna (with stuck kitchen drawers we couldn’t open until the dry season, only to then find them so overflowing with

cockroaches that my stomach still churns at the memory), we moved into a brand-new house on the edge of the bush. There we had a garden. Or what would become a garden when the doka (deep-rooted scrub bush) was finally dug out.

With that yard came maciji—snakes. The name of one species, translated from Hausa, was the “there is no tomorrow” snake. We drummed into the kids that when they saw any snake, they must turn and run, shrieking “Maciji!” We instructed the staff, particularly the gardener, to kill every snake they found and show it to me. I lost count of how many.

One Sunday morning in the dry season we invited another American family with children to lunch after church. Peter, the houseboy, appeared around the corner telling us they had a snake for us to see. He certainly did. A python at least 12 feet long, and maybe 18 inches in diameter was stretched out, headless, behind the servants’ quarters.

A few weeks into the dry season, northern Nigerians burn the bush to force a second growth of grass to feed cattle. The smoke stuns various critters, making it a good time to hunt. The night before, we had seen fires across the river and into the distance. Peter and a friend had found the python’s hole. Peter had stuck his leg down the hole, let the smoke-drugged python coil around his leg several times and pulled it out. They had whacked off its head with a machete and carried it back to the compound.

“What will you do with it?” we asked.

“Good to eat,” Peter responded.

Peter and his friend carefully removed the skin, scraped it and staked it out on the ground to dry. They then hacked the body into cross sections about eight inches long and smoked them slowly over a smoldering fire behind the quarters.

We bought the skin, which went to innumerable “show and tells” in our kids’ classes back in the States before we finally trashed it.

We also bought two pieces of the smoked meat and ate one, tastefully prepared by the cook (I never asked how). The meat tasted like and had about the same texture as smoked pork chop.

The other piece remained in the freezer so that when inspectors came from Washington, I could serve it to them for dinner: “We live on the local economy. Do enjoy the python.” Alas, we were reassigned before that opportunity came along. Last seen, that piece was still in the freezer.

Stinging Visitors

Scorpions look like miniature lobsters except that their tails, which end in a nasty stinger, usually curl up over their backs ready to strike. The stings can be extremely painful, and are dan-

gerous for small children.

I first encountered them as a teenager in Rangoon. Without warning, one or more would appear on our living room’s red-concrete floor, tail up and waving. Once one even materialized in the middle of the floor between two lines of dancers doing the Virginia reel!

In fact, scorpions appeared so frequently that we developed a foolproof disposal system. Take a newspaper and plop it on top of the intruder; then drop one or two copies of *Fortune* magazine (best because they were big, thick and heavy) on top of the paper. Jump up and down on the magazines to smash the invader to bits.

After removing the magazines for next time, carefully wrap the squished scorpion in the paper and trash it. Repeat as needed. (We got so blasé that even my 6-year-old brother dispatched scorpions with great aplomb.)

When my own family moved to northern Nigeria, we faced the same threat. The good news was that African scorpions tended to stay out in the yard. But the bad news was that they were bigger than the Burmese variety, and more dangerous.

When our gardener got stung while clearing a flowerbed, his badly swollen hand and arm were an object lesson for the kids. They quickly developed a healthy skittishness about turning over rocks, and learned how to do it without putting their fingers underneath.

We did have one or two scorpions turn up in the house. But our experience paled in comparison with that of some Peace Corps Volunteers who were teachers in a much smaller town further north. They were playing bridge one evening in the walled courtyard of their house. A scorpion climbed over the wall and down toward the ground. The person who was “dummy” whacked it. Soon another came over the wall. And another. Over the course of the evening perhaps 50 appeared. Whoever was dummy was the designated scorpion whacker for that hand.

An Unwelcome Souvenir

When our two-year tour in Kaduna ended, I supervised the packout myself (there were no moving companies then). A local team loaded most of our worldly goods into a lift van that would travel by sea and eventually catch up with us. I packed a separate air freight shipment that would be delivered once we were in our new house in Virginia.

Weeks later, as I was unpacking that box, I discovered a scorpion flopped on top of the stack of dinner plates. I don’t even touch dead scorpions, so I reached for the interloper with a pair of tongs. Up popped the tail. Away it skittered across the plate

and down into the box. Uh oh!

Watching the box from a safe distance until Dan returned, all aplomb lost, I kept trying to think of where in the Washington area you called to treat scorpion stings. Walter Reed? Did we have a phone book yet? Did the phone even work?

“Oh, Dan,” I called, relieved he was back. “There’s a live scorpion in the dish box. Let’s get the box into the carport to finish unpacking it. Here are tongs. Get the plates out. Carefully.”

Dan lifted the plates piece by piece, looking under each one cautiously till the scorpion appeared, nestling itself under the last one.

“You could sell something like that to the zoo,” suggested the van driver who was delivering the goods left in storage.

“No, we need to kill it,” I declared. Which Dan did by squashing the box over it, firmly.

“And burn the box. Now. Who knows how many eggs might be in there? We don’t need scorpions in our Virginia garden.” So he burned it at the bottom of the driveway. That took care of that.

Bravery Above and Beyond

Oh, yes, the giant cockroach up the loose dress? The time: 1960. The place: a reception at the home of the British deputy high commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, then-Malaya. I had worked closely with his wife in a well-baby clinic sponsored by the women of St. Mary’s Anglican Church, so she and her husband were kind enough to invite us.

Dan was the first third secretary the U.S. embassy had ever seen, and that night we were far and away the most junior of the diplomats and government officials at the reception. I could sense the disapproval emanating from the by-the-book, rank-conscious U.S. ambassador’s wife when we greeted her. We then went to find our ambassador. He was talking with the jovial Brit who was still head of the Malayan navy.

Several months pregnant, I was wearing an elegant, loose-fitting party dress. As we stood in the middle of the crowded reception talking to the two men, I felt something crawling up what I assumed was the outside of the back of my dress.

“Dan,” I whispered. “Please brush off the back of my dress.” He did so unobtrusively, but fruitlessly, so I said, “Please reach just inside the neckline and find whatever it is.”

“It” was a huge cockroach.

While Dan rushed to the open veranda door to evict the hitchhiker, I carried on chatting as calmly as I could. The ambassador was clearly not amused. The head of the Malayan navy smiled broadly. Fishing a coin out of his pocket, he presented it to me as a “Royal Medal for Not Screaming: Bravery Above and Beyond.” ■



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Honoring AFSA's 2016 Award Winners



Counselor of the U.S. Department of State Ambassador Kristie Kenney presents the 2016 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy award at the AFSA annual awards ceremony.

On June 23, the American Foreign Service Association held its annual awards ceremony. This year AFSA honored Ambassador Ruth A. Davis with its premier honor, the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award, in recognition of her long and distinguished career as a diplomat.

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson opened the ceremony, particularly welcoming the more than 100 friends and family members of Amb. Davis from across the United States who were in attendance. Amb. Stephenson also recognized previous LCAD award winners, former Senator Richard Lugar and Ambassador (ret.) Thomas Boyatt.

Counselor of the U.S. Department of State Ambassador Kristie Kenney presented this year's LCAD award to Amb. Davis, citing her 40-year career in the Foreign Service, her devotion to diplomacy and her dedication in fostering the rising generation of Foreign Service officers.

Amb. Kenney highlighted the importance of developing people and talent in the Foreign Service. The true assets of the Foreign Service are the people.

Describing Amb. Davis as an example of the best of the Foreign Service, Amb. Kenney said, "Ruth has never once, no matter how big her job or how busy she was, been too busy to coach, mentor and be a

friend to all of the rest of us."

Accepting the award, Amb. Davis acknowledged some of the many mentors and role models who helped to shape her career. Born in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1943, her experience of segregation and discrimination ignited a passionate desire to make the world a better place. She recognized that diplomacy would be the best possible career to allow her to do that, she said.

Stressing the importance of continuous education and training, Amb. Davis said she remains particularly proud of establishing the Foreign Service Institute's School of Leadership and Management, which is helping to

Continued on p. 64

CALENDAR

September 1-30
FEGLI Open Season

September 5
Labor Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

September 7
12-1:30 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

September 11-15
AFSA Road Scholar Program
Washington, D.C.

September 30
7:05 p.m.
Foreign Service Night
at Nationals Park

October 5
12-1:30 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting

October 6
2-4:30 p.m.
Everything You Need to
Know about the TSP

October 9-14
AFSA Road Scholar Program
Chautauqua, N.Y.

October 10
Columbus Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

October 12
2-3:30 p.m.
What Is the Purpose?
360 Feedback in the
Foreign Service

October 23-27
AFSA Road Scholar Program
Washington, D.C.

October 28
Job Search Program
Graduation Reception at FSI



Taking Performance Management Seriously

One of my favorite things about the Foreign Service is the people. Most of our colleagues are smart, dedicated and compassionate, but every now and then a poor performer makes one question how that individual has been “allowed” to remain.

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and I (along with several Governing Board members) ran for office under the banner of “Strong Diplomacy,” vowing that we would use our time in office to strengthen the Foreign Service both internally and in terms of its public image. Unaddressed poor performance threatens both employee morale and institutional reputation, and it’s high time we acknowledge that.

Here’s the bottom line: if supervisors of poor performers do not fulfill their responsibilities by counseling and documenting as many examples as possible, then the employees’ chances of successfully grieving evaluations are exponentially higher. A large percentage of grievances won by poor performers would likely not have succeeded had the relevant supervisors taken decisive steps earlier in the process.

In recent years, the Foreign Service Institute has added modules to supervisory and leadership courses, on managing poor performers and having difficult conversations.

Unaddressed poor performance threatens both employee morale and institutional reputation, and it’s high time we acknowledge that.

But I’d also like to outline a few things here that supervisors should do when they encounter a poor performer:

(1) Do the detailed Work Requirements Statement (not just the work responsibilities portion of the Employee Evaluation Review) within the 45-day timeframe. The earlier you establish in writing your goals and expectations, the earlier you can begin addressing anyone who is veering off course.

(2) Ask the employee what’s behind the poor performance. Is something personal going on, is he or she overworked, or does the employee need training? What can you do to help overcome such obstacles?

(3) Address the first instance of poor performance instead of waiting until they pile up. If the employee turns things around and works to correct the deficiency, you aren’t obligated to mention in the EER that you counseled him or her. Counseling is designed to help people improve, not to punish them. The goal should be to fuel excellence and build on people’s strengths, along with correcting any deficiencies via frequent, rich

conversations. The Foreign Service Grievance Board takes into account proactive and positive efforts (or lack thereof) by the supervisor to improve the employee’s performance when considering a grievance.

(4) Be as specific as possible when counseling. Outline in writing (ideally on the Professional Development Form) steps you expect the employee to take to demonstrate improvement. Schedule a follow-up meeting to assess how the employee is doing, and document the results of that meeting. If examples of poor performance or conduct as well as your efforts to improve the situation are clearly documented, the FSGB will find it much easier to assess a grievance fairly.

(5) Whenever you need to reallocate work, such as shifting reporting portfolios, meet with the affected employees, discuss your thinking and expectations, and adjust work requirements. If the change is the result of poor performance, document it. Far too often we see cases where employees are removed from projects or duties, only to be penalized in their EERs for sub-par

performance which led to the changed responsibilities. Talk to the people you supervise early, clearly and often. And did I mention the need to document all this in writing?

(6) Don’t go it alone or you risk making it look like a personal vendetta. Keep your supervisor(s) informed about not only the poor performance, but also what you’re doing about it. Ensure that your supervisor agrees with your approach and will support your decisions. Encourage your supervisor to counsel the employee. No reviewing officer wants to learn of problems for the first time when they see a draft EER.

Yes, we are all busy, and good performance management takes time and energy—but I guarantee you that you will be glad to have all that documentation at hand if a grievance is filed. If we want the Foreign Service to maintain its reputation for excellence, we need to ensure the professional development of our people and, just as importantly, retain the ability to separate (through proper procedures) those who fail to uphold our standards of performance or conduct. ■



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

The Golden Rule: Paradox or Words to Live By?

Which is the real Golden Rule—"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" or "Whoever has the gold makes the rules"?

In the case of the Commercial Service—Global Markets and our parent agency, the International Trade Administration, it would seem the latter is much closer to the truth.

As you may know, AFSA wrote to FCS management on May 20, objecting to wasteful spending and egregious cuts to mandatory officer training.

Of particular concern was questionable headquarters travel; who travels where, why, and who they get to bring with them (for example, does an under or assistant secretary really need three or four assistants when traveling—without firms—overseas?). This wasteful spending continued even as management was cutting post payroll, as well as training and local travel budgets.

A key concern for AFSA was to ensure the Commercial Service's ability to effectively train its existing, on-board FSOs. Thankfully, funds for officer language training were restored, thus avoiding a situation in which CS officers cannot compete against their peers and our effectiveness overseas is limited.

Language training, in particular, is essential to help FSOs build rapport with

A key concern for AFSA was to ensure the Commercial Service's ability to effectively train its existing, on-board FSOs.

contacts in the host country, engage with the culture and connect with host government officials, all of which are crucial to our mission.

What else did AFSA's protestations produce? A lot of worried faces, but no end to questionable and duplicative headquarters travel. Is it any wonder that officers are beginning to question whether

in the newly consolidated ITA, "the meeting is the metric"?

One thing we have learned is that while the budget for the CS—GM has gone up 25 percent overall in the past 10 years (\$261 million to roughly \$325 million today), ITA Centralized Services charges—the cost for CS—GM to be a part of ITA and the Commerce Department

—have gone up 167 percent (from \$18.9 million in 2006 to \$50 million today).

Again, is it any wonder that we are seeing such an increased concentration of spending—and travel—here at the Commerce Department while the field suffers and declines?

So, when management or leadership implores the field to tighten their belt, do more with less or dare to be different, remember the Golden Rule. If there is little or no desire to reduce—or hold the line on—headquarters spending or travel, why not cut the field? ■

NEWS BRIEF

LONG TERM CARE PREMIUM HIKES

Recent news about large rate increases for Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program has our members, and employees and retirees across the U.S. government, very concerned.

AFSA has sent a letter to the relevant House and Senate Committees, urging them to hold hearings on this issue and is also working with other unions that represent federal workers to coordinate advocacy at the agency and congressional levels.

Meanwhile, FLTCIP enrollees should receive a 2016 Enrollee Decision Period packet of personalized options: (1) maintaining current coverage with premium increase (default if no action taken); (2) reducing coverage to maintain current premium; and, (3) various mixes of the first two. A fourth option (offered to some) caps benefits at the policy's value while stopping premiums.

The deadline to decide is Sept. 30. Enrollees should contact LTC Partners (www.LTCFEDS.com, or call 1-800-582-3337) to explore options. Members should note that these increases parallel what has been happening in private markets.

The industry is experiencing real turbulence; many companies have stopped LTC coverage, and John Hancock is the only carrier still bidding on the FLTCIP business. That business will remain fragile until insurers get the actuarial realities right and interest rates increase.

See the August AFSA Newsletter (www.afsa.org/retiree-newsletters) for more information, and look for Retiree VP Tom Boyatt's special report in the October *FSJ*. ■

—Janet Hedrick, Member Services Director



In Defense of Dissent

Recently 51 Foreign Service officers serving in the State Department and abroad signed a dissent memorandum criticizing the Obama administration's Syria policy and calling for a more robust military response for both strategic and humanitarian reasons. The dissenters and their views are already referred to as "Dissent 51."

The public reaction has been generally favorable. Even those strongly disagreeing with the dissenters reluctantly lauded their courage. They were right to do so. Since 1970 some dissenters have prospered; others have seen their careers wither. All have done their duty.

Dissent as a duty flows from the Foreign Service officer's oath of office. We swear "to support and defend the Constitution of the United States." Our loyalty must be first and foremost to the national interest, and that means we must give political leaderships our best analysis and advice, whether such is welcome or not.

With respect to Syria, some commentators criticized the fact that the dissent was made public. Others were dismissive, claiming that the State Department's "Dissent Channel" never makes a difference to foreign policy.

Here is my take based on the personal experience

of having used the Dissent Channel to attempt to change our Cyprus policy in 1974, over 25 years as a judge on the panel selecting winners of the William R. Rivkin Award for "constructive dissent," and on the study incident to lecturing entering FSOs on "Advocacy and Dissent" since 1988.

On the issue of making dissenting views public, the choice is neither easy nor clear. If career diplomats take their dissenting views to the media and Congress, it is "leaking," bordering on disloyalty. If the administration argues its views to the media and Congress on background, it is "strategic communications." I chose to keep my dissent in house, and have been haunted by that decision since.

My dissent failed to change policy. As a result, the Greek military junta staged a coup on Cyprus that overthrew President Makarios, which led to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, which led to an attack on our embassy in Nicosia in which my friend and colleague, Ambassador Roger Davies (among others), was murdered.

If I had "gone public," it might well have generated a policy change blocking the Greek colonels' coup on Cyprus, which would have erased the Turkish pretext for invading the Island, which would have allowed

Roger Davies to raise his children. The decision on "outing the dissent" is neither easy to make, nor easy to live with.

The claim that the Dissent Channel never matters is historically inaccurate and shallow. The six major dissents since establishment of the Dissent Channel contradict the cynicism. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, dissent against the policy in Vietnam was wide-spread among career officers. Without a Dissent Channel, several resigned. Within a decade the views of the dissenters had been vindicated by events on the ground.

In 1970-1971 more than 20 FSOs at the consulate general in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and in the department sent a Dissent Channel message criticizing U.S. inaction in the face of a murderous onslaught by the West Pakistan Army. *The Blood Telegram* (Knopf Doubleday, 2013) gives an excellent account of this perhaps unavoidable tragedy; Archer Blood was consul general in Dhaka at the time.

In 1974 dissent over Cyprus policy failed. Historical articles and books have since made it clear that the responsible FSOs correctly analyzed the situation and proposed specific actions that might well have forestalled the crisis and avoided the subsequent policy and human disasters.

In the mid-1990s, more than a dozen FSOs dealing with the disintegration of Yugoslavia sent a dissent memorandum arguing for a robust military response to Serbian ethnic cleansing. Secretary of State Warren Christopher met with the dissenters and within a short period U.S. policy changed dramatically. President Clinton ordered action against the Serbs, including the bombing of Belgrade for 79 straight days. Their return to the negotiating table gave the entire region a second chance. (The talks leading to the Dayton Accords were led on the U.S. side by the late Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, an FSO who had resigned over Vietnam.)

Iraq and Afghanistan have witnessed much dissent, formal and informal, involving serving FSOs and their retired colleagues. These debates continue, to the great benefit of the national interest.

Dissent at the State Department has a long and honorable record, which is why Secretary John F. Kerry is respectful of the process. Many among the political leaderships, the media, historians and informed citizens are equally respectful.

It is for us to honor our past, and the brave and loyal colleagues who have joined the honor roll over Syria. We salute you, "Dissent 51." ■

Meet the AFSA Labor Management Team

Who We Are

AFSA is both a professional association and a labor union. While members tend to be familiar with the activities of the professional side of AFSA (i.e., the *Foreign Service Journal*, the annual awards ceremony and outreach to raise awareness and appreciation for the Foreign Service), they may not be as familiar with the work of AFSA's labor management (LM) staff.

The LM staff carries out AFSA's union activities under the direction of the elected agency vice presidents (AFSA has elected VPs for State, USAID, Foreign Agricultural Service and Foreign Commercial Service) or elected agency representatives (with a current vacancy for the Broadcasting Board of Governors).

The staff consists of five attorneys, two labor management advisers and two support staff. Collectively, we have more than 100 years of experience at AFSA.

What We Do

The Foreign Service Act created a unique bargaining unit that includes supervisors and employees performing many different functions (e.g., political officers, doctors, information management specialists, diplomatic security agents and consular officers).

As a union, AFSA has the legal right, as well as the legal

responsibility, to act for and negotiate collective bargaining agreements covering all employees in the bargaining unit, regardless of whether they pay dues to AFSA.

The vast majority of Foreign Service employees are members of the AFSA bargaining unit. Those who are not (for example ambassadors or deputy chiefs of mission) still benefit from the agreements AFSA has made with the various Foreign Service agencies; most agreements apply equally to all employees.

For example, LM has negotiated procedural precepts for the selection boards, grievance and discipline regulations, and open assignment rules, which apply to all members of the Foreign Service.

In addition to negotiating on behalf of all of the members of the Foreign Service, AFSA also assists individual members with a number of issues, including grievances; security clearance issues (including assignment restrictions); Diplomatic Security, Office of Inspector General and Office of Civil Rights investigations; discipline cases; and Accountability Review Board proceedings, to name a few.

Because employees may hire a private attorney or represent themselves in such issues, only AFSA dues-paying members are eligible for these types of LM services.

Why We Do It

Everyone is entitled to due process. One of the objectives of the Foreign Service Act is to ensure a "fair and effective system for the resolution of individual grievances that will ensure the *fullest measure of due process* for the members of the Foreign Service (emphasis added)."

According to AFSA's bylaws, the most important purposes and objectives of AFSA are: "To further the interests and well-being of the members of the association" and "to represent members of the Foreign Service of the United States, in accordance with Chapter 10 (Labor-Management Relations) and 11 (Grievances) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980."

In its role as a labor union, AFSA negotiated the rules relating to how employees are counseled and how their performance is evaluated. It is the LM staff's responsibility to "police" these agreements, ensuring they are honored for everyone, including employees who did not meet performance requirements or who have engaged in misconduct.

Similarly, the discipline regulations, which AFSA negotiated with the foreign affairs agencies, require the agencies to follow the precept



Sharon L. Papp

of "similar penalty for like offense" and to take mitigating factors into account when determining an appropriate penalty.

If you have a grievance or other concern, AFSA's LM staff may be able to assist you or contact the relevant agency on your behalf. Before contacting AFSA, we recommend that you attempt to resolve the problem informally.

If you have been unable to do so, contact AFSA's LM team to see how we can assist you (www.afsa.org/member-guidance).

This is the first in a new series from the LM team. If there is any LM-related topic you would like more information about, please contact Associate Editor Gemma Dvorak (dvorak@afsa.org). We will try to address your questions in a later column. ■

—Sharon L. Papp,
General Counsel

Awards Ceremony
Continued from page 59

change the culture of the Foreign Service and Civil Service.

She also called on the State Department to step up efforts to promote equal opportunities for all races, ethnicities, ages, genders and traditionally under-represented minority groups. Amb. Davis underlined the critical importance of good leadership. “In order to have world-class diplomacy, we must have world-class diplomats—diplomats who understand that our success hinges on good leadership and that leadership is a privilege, not a right.”

See page 24 for *FSJ* Editor Shawn Dorman’s interview with Amb. Davis and page 66 for her acceptance speech.

CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT AWARD

Each year, AFSA’s unique constructive dissent awards



AFSA/JOAQUIN SOSA

honor Foreign Service personnel who demonstrate the courage to speak out on an unjust or inefficient policy or practice and offer constructive alternatives.

This year only one award, the *William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Officer*, was presented. Introducing the award, Amb. Stephenson reaffirmed AFSA’s support for “principled constructive dissent as a core value of the Foreign Service” and noted that, with the recent—highly publicized—use of the State Department’s Dissent Channel, it does not seem that the Foreign Service is backing away from dissent when necessary.

The Honorable Robert S. Rivkin, son of the late ambas-

sador for whom the award is named, presented the award to Jefferson Smith of U.S. Embassy Kuwait. This award, made possible by the Rivkin family, supports constructive dissent by mid-level FSOs.

While in Kuwait, Mr. Smith wrote a thoughtful cable to the State Department requesting reconsideration of compensation standards for posts where prevailing practice is unfair to locally employed (LE) staff.

Although unable to effect a worldwide policy change at this time, Mr. Smith’s efforts did secure a 22-percent salary increase, as well as housing and education allowances for LE staff in Kuwait.

In accepting the award, Mr. Smith paid tribute to LE staff around the world, adding: “Rather than following an unfair labor market, we felt that the embassy should lead the way to better labor practices.” See page 36 for Mr. Smith’s article on dissent.

EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE AWARDS

Dr. Sushma Palmer presented the *Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy* to Mike Honigstein, currently of U.S. Embassy Kabul. The award was created in honor of her late husband, Ambassador Mark Palmer, who devoted

his career to the promotion of democracy.

In his remarks, Mr. Honigstein recalled the uphill battle he and his colleagues led in Sri Lanka. “It seemed like every three months we moved the ball forward on human rights and democracy in ways everyone said was impossible until we actually did it.” Always optimistic, he insisted that with “patience a good plan, and hard work, we can make the world a better place.”

Dr. Palmer also congratulated runner-up USAID FSO Steven Hendrix, currently posted in Ghana.

Former AFSA President John K. Naland received the *Achievements and Contributions to the Association Award*, presented by AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson. Mr. Naland served two terms as AFSA president and one as State vice president; his leadership was crucial when AFSA was able to overcome legislative resistance to Overseas Comparability Pay.

Mr. Naland’s support continued after his AFSA presidency, as he drew attention to matters of importance to our members in his role as director of the Office of Retirement.

Toni Kula of U.S. Embassy Santo Domingo received the *Nelson B. Delavan Award for an Office Management Specialist*, presented by Amb. Thomas Boyatt. Made possible by the Nelson B. Delavan Foundation, this award recognizes the work of a Foreign Service OMS



AFSA/JOAQUIN SOSA

Ambassador Kristie Kenney (left) and AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson (right) congratulate Ambassador Ruth Davis (center) on her achievement.



Top row (l-r)—Amy Clutter, Mike Honigstein, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, Jefferson Smith, John Naland and Joseph Carnes (representing Karn Carlson). Bottom row (l-r)—Shawn Akard, Ambassador Kristie Kenney, Ambassador Ruth Davis, Sara Locke and Toni Kula.



Ambassador Ruth Davis with two former recipients of the Lifetime Contributions Award; former Senator Richard Lugar (left) and Ambassador (ret.) Thomas Boyatt (right).

colleague Joseph Carnes accepted the award on his behalf from AFSA Secretary William Haugh.

Mr. Carlson sent his thanks to AFSA. Highlighting the theme Amb. Davis presented in her opening speech, Carlson urged the Foreign Service to “continually work to take care of our most important resource—the people.”

The hundreds of guests then enjoyed a champagne reception, where they could mingle and congratulate this year’s winners.

AFSA looks forward to continuing the tradition of honoring the best of the Foreign Service, and we encourage our members to think ahead to November, when we will start accepting nominations for the 2017 awards.

Learn more at www.afsa.org/awards. You may watch the entire awards ceremony at www.afsa.org/video, and see photos at www.flickr.com/americanforeignservice. ■

—Gemma Dvorak, Associate Editor, with Awards Intern Eunice Ajayi and Communications Intern Martin Vasev



Sara Locke receives the M. Juanita Guess Award from Jon Clements.



Avis Bohlen Award recipient Shawn Akard with her daughter Claire.

who has made a significant contribution to post or office effectiveness and morale beyond the framework of their job responsibilities.

Accepting the award, Ms. Kula said: “Becoming involved with the embassy community is the best way to not only integrate into life at post, but to also get to know the locals and their country.”

Jon Clements, CEO and chairman of Clements Worldwide, presented the *M. Juanita Guess Award for a Community Liaison Officer* to Sara Locke of U.S. Embassy Beirut. This

award, created and sponsored by Clements Worldwide, celebrates a Community Liaison Officer whose commitment substantially aided the families of Americans serving at posts overseas.

In receiving the award, Ms. Locke noted that, in an embassy environment that is highly restricted, the role of the CLO is deeply important for maintaining morale. Acknowledging her Beirut colleagues, she also thanked AFSA for recognizing the work of CLOs across the world. Mr. Clements also con-

gratulated runner-up Berna Keen of U.S. Embassy Dhaka.

Ambassador (ret.) Avis T. Bohlen presented the *Avis Bohlen Award for a Foreign Service Family Member*, named for her mother, to Shawn Akard of U.S. Embassy Amman. This award, made possible by the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, honors a Foreign Service family member who has advanced U.S. interests with American and foreign communities at post.

While working in Jordan, Ms. Akard helped to triple family member employment in the country, as well as running more than 100 workshops on professional skills for Jordanian university graduates. The runner-up for this award was Amy Clutter, of U.S. Embassy Accra.

The final award was presented to the *Post Representative of the Year*, Karn Carlson of U.S. Consulate Nuevo Laredo. Although he was unable to attend, his

To Soar Like A Phoenix

BY AMBASSADOR RUTH A. DAVIS

The following is excerpted from Amb. Davis' acceptance speech. For a video of the event, visit www.afsa.org/video.

Counselor Kenney, President of AFSA Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, colleagues, relatives and friends who have traveled from throughout the United States to be with us...

I am particularly pleased to have been selected to receive AFSA's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award because, AFSA and I have always been on the same wave length. Even in instances when I was Director General and we didn't agree on the means of achieving our goals, we agreed on the fundamental principal that the key to enhancing the effectiveness of the Foreign Service is through a focus on its people and the resources needed to achieve U.S. foreign policy goals and objectives. Thank you AFSA!

You all know the legend of the phoenix—the bird that rose from its own ashes and was more beautiful and magnificent than ever. Well, I was born in Phoenix, Arizona, and was raised in Atlanta, whose symbol is the phoenix. So I always believed that from ashes you could make beautiful things, from chaos you could make peace and from despair you could bring happiness.

As a proud child of the South, I bear the scars of seg-

regation and discrimination, but these scars ignited in me a passionate desire to make the world a better place.

And so it came to pass, about half a century ago, when I was a student at the University of California at Berkeley, early one morning I was out on the picket line protesting for a Black Studies program. At mid-day, I put my sign down, rushed to the airport, boarded a plane to Washington and entered the U.S. Foreign Service.

The first thing I was required to do was sign an oath that I would not strike against the U.S. government. Oh my! I've been co-opted, I said, and never looked back!

Everybody who knows me, knows that I love the State Department, that I believe it is a wonderful institution, and that the greatest honor of my life has been to serve this organization and the people in it ...

I learned early on what a valuable resource the people of the department are and fully agree with my former boss, Secretary Colin Powell, who said: "Organization doesn't really accomplish anything. Plans don't accomplish anything, either. Theories of management don't much matter, since endeavors succeed or fail because of the people involved."

Someone once said that diplomats must think twice before saying nothing. Well,

that formula just won't work in this complex, tumultuous, rapidly changing world. The international challenges today are much more varied and seemingly more intense than when I joined the Foreign Service at the end of the 1960s ... Today's diplomat must be prepared to practice not just diplomacy, but mega-diplomacy.

It is not enough to recruit the best and the brightest. The department must do everything possible to cultivate the talents and grow the capacity of its people. That means continuous education and training sustained across an entire career.

Nancy McEldowney, director of the Foreign Service Institute, told me: "We often say our people are our most important asset. But far too often we fail to put reality behind the rhetoric. We still push people out to post and into new jobs without giving them the benefit of full training and preparation. We still have a culture that minimizes the value of study and reflection. And we still do not put the necessary resources into training and education."

When AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson was dean of FSI's Leadership School, she drove an effort to build a culture of leadership throughout the department. I applaud that effort and hope it continues. I also hope that more work



CREATIVE COMMONS

will be done to strengthen a culture of learning, so that training is deeply valued, not just by individuals but by the department's principals and in its operational policies.

Good leadership recognizes that diversity is essential in utilizing the best of America's intellectual capital. It is incumbent upon the State Department, and those of you who are in leadership positions, to continue and step up efforts to promote equal opportunity and inclusion for all American employees of the Foreign and Civil Service. I enjoy my continued "voluntary" work with department officials on this issue. I hope they enjoy my help ...

I thank AFSA for the singular honor of the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award. I will value it and this day forever. I close by saying of my amazing career in the Foreign Service and my love for the Department of State that, short of being a multimillionaire, there is nothing that I would rather have done than to be a U.S. Foreign Service officer and an ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the United States of America—in a career where I could soar like a phoenix. ■

Profiles of award recipients compiled by Gemma Dvorak.

THE WILLIAM R. RIVKIN AWARD FOR A MID-LEVEL FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER JEFFERSON SMITH

Compensating Local Staff in Unfair Labor Markets

Presenting the William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level FSO, the Honorable Robert Rivkin pointed out that “dissent doesn’t have to be successful to be important—but it sure is nice when it does succeed.” Recipient Jefferson Smith, he said, is exactly the kind of Foreign Service officer the Rivkin family had in mind when establishing this award; an exemplar of his profession.

Early in his tenure as management counselor at U.S. Embassy Kuwait, Jefferson Smith noted that there were more than 200 third-country nationals (TCNs) from 27 countries working for the embassy as locally employed (LE) staff (formerly known as Foreign Service Nationals, or FSNs).

He also saw that there were no Kuwaiti nationals working at the embassy. The reason for this soon became clear—the embassy did not pay enough to attract them.

In line with department policy of following local practice when setting compensation, many of the TCN LE staff were earning wages and benefits too low to support their families.

In countries with free and fair labor markets, local practice guidelines work well. But in some countries labor markets are simply abysmal and at times foster labor

exploitation and support trafficking in persons and other human rights abuses.

Mr. Smith listened to his LE staff’s stories of “getting by” despite a four-year wage freeze and skyrocketing cost of living. He found that some 40 percent of the TCN employees had sent their spouses and children home because of steeply rising housing and education costs. Other LE staff hailed from conflict zones, so they did not have that option.

Working with other posts in the Gulf region, Mr. Smith took the data he gathered to the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, to the Director General and to the under secretary for management, proposing that the State Department define a new standard for compensating LE staff at posts employing TCNs in an unfair labor market.

Mr. Smith’s commitment to this issue motivated other sections at U.S. Embassy Kuwait to research and produce data about the difficulties faced by their TCNs, including the problems faced by all expatriates (including Americans employed in the local market) in holding Kuwaiti citizen employers to



Jefferson Smith (second from right) meets with the local staff committee members at U.S. Embassy Kuwait.

of LE staff families have been reunited, while productivity and morale have greatly improved.

In his acceptance remarks, Mr. Smith suggested that the department should establish minimum standards below which they simply won’t go, regardless

of the prevailing practice in any country.

“Our Foreign Service depends on LE staff all around the world,” Smith explained. “We owe it to them, to the Foreign Service, and to the American people for whom they work and sacrifice to ensure that the most vulnerable of our employees are paid at least a living wage.”

Mr. Smith’s success in Kuwait will serve as a model as he and others continue to fight for a more equitable way to compensate employees under these conditions.

Jefferson Smith has served in Kuwait since 2014. As a management-coned FSO, he has had opportunities to serve in consular, economic, political and management functions in six overseas assignments and four regional bureaus, including Kingston, Dar es Salaam (twice), Yaoundé and Dublin, as well as Washington, D.C. He and his wife, Stacey, have five children. ■



Jefferson Smith receives his award from the Honorable Robert Rivkin, son of the late Ambassador William Rivkin.

account for labor abuses.

Mr. Smith’s preparation and encouragement to action had an effect. The under secretary for management approved a Public Interest Determination (a policy exception) to create housing and education allowances for LE staff, and moved Kuwait to the top of the list for the next tranche of wage increases.

The result was a 22-percent increase in salary, on average, in addition to the new allowances. With this, dozens

THE MARK PALMER AWARD FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF DEMOCRACY

MICHAEL HONIGSTEIN

Transformational Diplomacy

As head of the political section at U.S. Embassy Colombo, which covers both Sri Lanka and Maldives, Michael Honigstein worked to assist Sri Lanka with reconciliation efforts following its 30-year civil war, supported work toward a democratic transition in Maldives, and promoted human rights in both countries.

In Sri Lanka, the government led by then-President Percy Mahendra Rajapaksa was becoming increasingly authoritarian—using the security forces to repress dissent and tightly controlling free speech. It was widely accepted at that time that Rajapaksa would be president for life; indeed, he had already amended the constitution to remove term limits.

Knowing that any Sri Lankans who spoke out against the regime in power were threatened, killed or simply “disappeared,” Mr. Honigstein worked closely with the other sections and agencies at the embassy to develop a strategy to promote and protect a dialogue on democracy and to support human rights advocates willing to speak out at great personal risk.

Aware that the Sri Lankan authorities were hesitant to kill embassy contacts, Mr. Honigstein ensured that they knew that embassy staff were meeting with those under



COURTESY OF MICHAEL HONIGSTEIN

Michael Honigstein, second from right, attends a conference with the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka in Colombo.



AFSA/JAQUIN SOSA

Michael Honigstein receives the Mark Palmer Award from Dr. Sushma Palmer. The award, which is named for Dr. Palmer's late husband, is being given for the second time this year.

particular threat. He also used embassy statements to create space for discussion in the media.

This approach was not without risk; Mr. Honigstein was directly warned by the Sri Lankan Secretary of Defense—himself a suspected war criminal—to cease his “regime-change” activities.

In January 2015, President Rajapaksa unexpectedly lost his bid for re-election. His opponent ran on a platform of good governance, promoting democracy and protecting human rights. AFSA applauds Mr. Honigstein for his actions in defending these values and enabling the free dialogue of the Sri Lankan people.

Accepting the award, Mr. Honigstein said that American diplomats should “shine a light” in countries where citizens cannot do so themselves. The way to do that is by “sticking to our values—as we are always stronger when we stick by our values—and making statements, pushing U.N. resolutions and making clear what is right. The other way to put pressure on is to find brave people in that culture who are willing to stand up for what is right and support them.”

In a subsequent assignment, as head of the human rights unit in the State Department's Bureau of International Organizations, Mr. Honigstein helped transform the United Nations Human Rights Council into a body that more effectively supported human rights and democracy worldwide. He worked to promote democracy in Iran, North Korea and Côte d'Ivoire, and also ensured a special session on the Syrian crisis.

Mr. Honigstein served earlier as the peace process officer in Israel, worked on the crisis in Darfur in both Washington and Khartoum, and helped open the consulate general—now embassy—in Juba, South Sudan. Other postings include Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe, and the Bahamas. Currently he is developing and implementing strategies to reform the electoral process in Afghanistan at U.S. Embassy Kabul. ■

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION AWARD

JOHN NALAND

Promoting the AFSA Brand

“John’s first term as AFSA president coincided with Secretary of State Colin Powell coming into office,” said AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, introducing John Naland, recipient of AFSA’s Achievements and Contributions to the Association Award.

“John was a strong advocate of the need to grow and properly invest in training the Foreign Service. He was also a superb defender of the career and profession. His quiet diplomatic ability to boldly and clearly express on behalf of AFSA the needs of the Foreign Service was powerful and influential,” she added.

Mr. Naland served as AFSA president from 2001 to 2003 and again from 2007 to 2009. During his second term, he focused on Overseas Comparability Pay or the “pay equity gap” for members of the Foreign Service that had continued to grow.

His consistent focus on this issue made an enormous difference, and it was at the end of his term in 2009 that the first tranche of funds needed to begin to close the gap was appropriated, a significant and historic victory for the AFSA membership.

During that same time frame, the situation in Iraq was at its most difficult for the Foreign Service. Mr. Naland



was on the front lines of the debate about war-zone service, consistently standing up for the Foreign Service when some in Congress and the media questioned their willingness to serve in Iraq.

Leading by example, Mr. Naland announced that he would leave the AFSA presidency three months early to be a team leader for one of the many Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq. By volunteering to serve in Basrah, away from his young family, he showed great integrity.

Under Mr. Naland’s stewardship, AFSA membership grew significantly, and the association’s resources were protected. He was directly involved in developing seminal

reports from the American Academy of Diplomacy and the Foreign Affairs Council and was a strong advocate for assisting other organizations that serve the larger Foreign Service community.

He supported the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, as well as the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide and the Senior Living Foundation of the American Foreign Service. Each of these organizations received a special mention in Mr. Naland’s remarks on accepting the award.

Mr. Naland’s support for the FS community and AFSA has continued. While serving

as director of the Office of Retirement at the Department of State, he found ways to address issues he knew were of direct importance to AFSA members nearing retirement and in transition.

Always accessible and extremely well-informed, Mr. Naland’s unassuming style and quiet demeanor are his strengths. They are, in fact, personal qualities that deserve public acknowledgment.

Currently president of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation, Mr. Naland served as a Foreign Service officer in Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua, as well as in Washington, D.C. ■

THE NELSON B. DELAVAN AWARD FOR A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICE MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST TONI KULA

Coordination and Community: Enhancing Relations in the Dominican Republic

Toni Kula is an ideal recipient of the Nelson B. Delavan Award, according to her colleagues. As the ambassador's office management specialist (OMS), she has made exceptional contributions to U.S. Embassy Santo Domingo, both in her official role and in her extensive voluntary work supporting the embassy community.

Ms. Kula has built excellent relationships with colleagues across agencies, as demonstrated by the number of people who supported her nomination for this award. She has consistently displayed high-quality performance in a challenging office.

When the embassy hosted a VIP visitor in 2015, Ms. Kula's planning and coordination between U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the consular section's Immigrant Visa Unit, public affairs and the front office enabled the visit to go without a hitch. The visitor and his staff were highly complimentary of the professionalism and efficiency of the process.

In presenting the award, AFSA Retiree Vice President Ambassador Thomas Boyatt acknowledged the tremendous contributions OMSs make to U.S. missions worldwide, as well as recognizing Ms. Kula personally.



Toni Kula coordinates embassy volunteers cleaning up Guibia Beach, Dominican Republic.

As the embassy's Federal Woman's Program Coordinator, Ms. Kula organized a widely praised film screening that highlighted the serious problem of sex trafficking in the Dominican Republic. The film was shown to a broad cross-section of Dominican students, entrepreneurs and government officials.

Ms. Kula has enhanced mission morale and the welfare of all of its employees and family members by planning activities ranging from the holiday children's party to organizing yoga classes.

When accepting the Nelson B. Delavan Award, Ms. Kula, a self-described Foreign Service brat, spoke of the importance of building a community while overseas. She encouraged the staff and families of Embassy Santo

Domingo to deliver toys and supplies to an orphanage and to donate shovels, garbage bags, hand sanitizer and their free time to clean up one of the dirtiest beaches in the Dominican Republic.

Following a spate of high-level visitors and generator outages that had shut down operations for days and brought down mission morale, Ms. Kula organized an afternoon ice cream social at which the ambassador and deputy chief of mission scooped ice cream and served cake to express appreciation to embassy employees.

Not forgetting the embassy community's four-legged friends, she also established Patitas Unidas (United Paws), an embassy group focused on animal care and rights.

Ms. Kula's flexibility and cheerful willingness to do any task has helped advance mission goals and the well-being of the embassy community. Ms. Kula joined the Foreign Service in 2002 and has served in San Jose, Paris,

Panama City and Washington, D.C. She is currently posted in Santo Domingo. ■



Toni Kula visits an orphanage outside Santo Domingo, where the embassy community delivered toys and much-needed supplies for the children.

THE M. JUANITA GUESS AWARD FOR A COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE COORDINATOR SARA LOCKE

Embracing Life in Lebanon

Presenting the M. Juanita Guess Award for a Community Liaison Office Coordinator to Sara Locke, Jon Clements noted that it takes a very special CLO to be nominated twice for this award. Ms. Locke, the CLO at U.S. Embassy Beirut and last year's runner-up for the Guess Award, is one such person.

Quoting from her nomination, Mr. Clements said: "There is probably no other person in the mission who receives as much unanimous, universal praise as Sara for her efforts in turning around the rapidly deteriorating morale at U.S. Embassy Beirut."

As a high-threat post where employees live and work with serious security restrictions, morale among staff was low and curtailments were increasing at an alarming rate when Ms. Locke arrived at post in 2014. She recommended that they conduct a morale survey, and then coordinated closely with the ambassador and the regional psychiatrist to figure out how the downward spiral could be reversed.

On receiving the results of the first survey, Ms. Locke created an action committee to respond to the complaints and sugges-

tions from participants. As a result, many policies and practices were changed, with new ideas brought forward and implemented. In particular, she has worked to include spouses in all aspects of embassy life, from social events to emergency preparations, and lobbied on behalf of spouses and family members to find rewarding jobs in the mission.

With many tourist spots considered too dangerous to visit, Ms. Locke sought out new entertainment venues and cultural events, such as concerts, museums, restaurants and food festivals.

Following a suicide bombing just a few miles from the embassy in November 2015, Ms. Locke reached out to the embassy community to ensure accountability and reassure colleagues. Once it was safe to do so, she developed a variety of programs, trips and activities in conjunction with the regional security office, to allow employees to experience Beirut, albeit within the necessarily strict security parameters.

Ms. Locke also helped increase the number of trips off the compound, including a very popular weekend shopping shuttle. This



Sara Locke (right) attends the Embassy Beirut 4th of July party.



Sara Locke conducts emergency training for staff and families at U.S. Embassy Beirut.

change alone significantly improved morale and gave embassy employees a whole new perspective on life in Lebanon; previously, only one trip off compound per week was permitted.

Ms. Locke has continued conducting surveys, and they show that morale is increasing and community members feel that they are being heard.

Accepting the award, she said: "Beirut is an interesting post—though Lebanon is a beautiful and cosmopolitan and enchanting place

with plenty to see and do, the terrorist threats are real, and the security restrictions have a serious impact on our lives, and thereby our morale."

Ms. Locke also thanked the members of the Beirut community for always being willing to participate in events, even if they involve silly costumes and decorating all day.

Sara Locke's tireless efforts on behalf of employees and family members are impressive and have resulted in re-establishing U.S. Embassy Beirut as a post actively sought by Foreign Service bidders. ■

THE AVIS BOHLEN AWARD FOR A FOREIGN SERVICE FAMILY MEMBER SHAWN AKARD

Tangible Results for EFMs and Mission Jordan

Jordan is a key strategic partner of the United States and the embassy in Amman is one of the few family-friendly posts in the region. Shawn Akard's work through the State Department's Global Employment Initiative has helped to build a community for families at post, a tough ask in an increasingly chaotic and radicalized region. For the last four years, she has been invaluable in efforts to improve morale and youth outreach there.

Ms. Akard created and implemented an Appointment Eligible Family Member hiring mechanism at the USAID Mission in Amman, saving the Bureau of Human Resources time and money and decreasing competition for family member employment at post. The approach has been so successful that the State Department plans to replicate it at other posts.

As co-founder of the implementation team for the United Nations Local Expatriate Spouses Association, as well as a professional development group at the embassy, Ms. Akard has helped to triple EFM employment in Amman. In addition to identifying employment and volunteer opportunities, she has conducted 35 workshops for EFMs, serving almost 700 attendees.



AFSA/JOAQUIN SOSA

Award winner Shawn Akard (center) stands with Ambassador (ret.) Avis Bohlen, left, and AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson. The award for a Foreign Service family member is named for Amb. Bohlen's mother.

In the face of alarming youth unemployment figures in the country, Ms. Akard has run more than 100 workshops for Jordanian university graduates on such soft skills as interviewing and résumé writing. Students' letters to the embassy thanking her for her help are a testament to the change a single volunteer can make. She also works with nongovernmental organizations across Amman, raising money for groups that are deeply needed but struggling to survive.

One example is Nour Al Bakara, Amman's first community garden project. For two years Ms. Akard led fund raising efforts and advised members on proper planting procedures, ultimately ensuring that the garden, one of the few safe spaces in Jordan for people with mental and physical disabilities, could

remain open.

She has also volunteered with the Anzeh Aziza Cleanup effort, addressing sanitation issues due to overcrowding by developing anti-littering and environmental awareness campaigns aimed at school children.

Ms. Akard is global employment adviser for the Near East Asia region, currently based in Amman. Previously, as a

volunteer, she wrote grants to fund non-formal education for Iraqi and Syrian refugees. She has worked as a preschool teacher, an addiction counselor for the Department of the Army and as a substance abuse counselor for adolescents.

In a male-dominated culture where approval ratings of America often hover near 12 percent, Ms. Akard has made inroads and delivered tangible results not just for EFMs, but also for Jordanian youth and the larger society.

In accepting the award, she thanked her colleagues and the embassy community in Amman, saying: "I couldn't have done a fraction of the work without being a part of one of the most exciting and dynamic posts in the world. I was surrounded by hardworking, intelligent people who valued my skill, trusted my ability and worked collaboratively to benefit the mission and the country." ■



COURTESY SHAWN AKARD

Shawn Akard teaches a class about LinkedIn to students at the American Corner at the University of Jordan.

POST REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR AWARD**KARN CARLSON****Breathing Life into the AFSA Post Rep Program**

Karn “KC” Carlson assumed his duties as the AFSA post representative at U.S. Consulate General Nuevo Laredo in February 2015. He engaged post management on a variety of issues affecting mission staff, including overtime policies and travel issues.

In particular, he was extremely proactive and helpful in providing member input from several posts in Mexico on the changes to the danger pay policies introduced by the Department of State in September 2015.

Mr. Carlson’s thoughtful and articulate observations on the proposed danger pay changes were among the strongest contributions AFSA received from post reps at affected posts, and this input was important



COURTESY OF KARN CARLSON

Karn “KC” Carlson,
Post Representative of the Year

in discussions with State Department management.

He compiled definitions of terrorism in the U.S. Code and linked them to specific incidents in Nuevo Laredo; he outlined in quantitative terms how the changes would affect the income not only of Foreign Service

employees, but also of eligible family members; and he made a compelling argument as to why AFSA should advocate for a change to the entry-level officer (ELO) bidding equity program.

Mr. Carlson also drafts a periodic AFSA column for the CLO newsletter at post, a duty he shares with other post representatives in Mexico. This is an excellent demonstration of how post reps can best use their position to promote the “AFSA brand.”

Not only did he get the column going; he is also providing the CLO with a regular supply of articles, to keep our members informed even after he departs post. Recognizing the need for his replacement to be selected quickly and according to the

correct procedure, Mr. Carlson has taken steps to publicize the role and method of selection.

Mr. Carlson is exactly what AFSA hopes for in a post rep—someone who is active, in touch not only with his fellow AFSA members, but also with post management and AFSA HQ and doing his best to share information and improve working conditions for his colleagues.

Although unable to attend the awards ceremony, he sent this message: “I want to express my gratitude to AFSA for their tenacity and perseverance in protecting our rights and benefits. In spite of the non-stop drive to reduce expenses, we need to continually work to take care of our most important resource—our people.” ■

Volunteer to be an AFSA Post Representative

Many of AFSA’s Post Representatives have relocated during the summer transfer season, thus some posts are temporarily without an AFSA rep. The role of a post rep is crucial due to the issues now confronting the Foreign Service. All posts without an AFSA rep should hold elections as soon as possible, and smaller posts should designate a volunteer.

To determine if there is a vacancy at your post, visit the post rep page on the AFSA website: www.afsa.org/post-rep-listing.

For an AFSA post rep, there are four important areas of responsibility involved: (1) Representing collective and individual interests of Foreign Service Personnel at post; (2) Transmitting to colleagues AFSA’s advisories on all devel-

opments affecting their career opportunities and conditions of employment; (3) Forwarding to AFSA any proposals, complaints or criticisms originating with the AFSA members at post and (4) Expanding AFSA’s membership.

The only employees excluded from serving as official AFSA Reps are management officials and/or confidential employees.

Posts preparing to hold elections may visit the AFSA website, www.afsa.org/electing-post-rep to review the guidelines for holding elections. Be sure to advise AFSA Washington when a Post Rep is elected so that he or she can be properly certified. For further information contact the Member Services Department at member@afsa.org. ■

AFSA Award Runners-Up

THE AVIS BOHLEN AWARD RUNNER-UP AMY CLUTTER



AFSA/JORQUIN SOSA

Amy Clutter has twice been elected president of the North American Women's Association, an all-volunteer organization based in Accra, Ghana, and serving 400 people from 50 countries.

When Ms. Clutter took over in 2014, membership in NAWA was stagnant. She recruited a new board, formalized responsibilities and developed

a strategy for the organization's future.

NAWA has participated in dozens of grass-roots projects, including constructing an information technology wing in a secondary school, providing latrines for elementary schools, digging wells in two rural villages and purchasing sewing machines for women across Ghana.

Ms. Clutter helped NAWA raise an unprecedented \$25,000 for humanitarian projects—all of which enhance U.S. relations with Ghanaian communities. She continues to generate inspiring new fundraising ideas, such as the international NAWA cookbook and the NAWA craft fair, and is the "go-to" person for countless individuals in the diplomatic community in Ghana.

M. JUANITA GUESS AWARD RUNNER-UP BERNA KEEN

Berna Keen is recognized as an exemplary CLO by her colleagues at U.S. Embassy Dhaka for her conscientious approach to every member of the mission, ensuring that Dhaka remained a family post during a challenging time.

In 2015, a rash of violent political demonstrations crippled embassy operations. Ms. Keen was a victim of this violence when a vehicle in which she was riding was hit by an explosive device. Incredibly, this only strengthened her commitment to her work.

A key voice on the Emergency Action Committee, Ms. Keen facilitated creation of an EFM email list, subsequently added



COURTESY OF BERNA KEEN

to the Global Address List, ensuring that everyone in the mission received security messages simultaneously.

When a series of terrorist murders changed life at the embassy dramatically, personnel were restricted to a two-square-mile area and had a 10 p.m. curfew. With outside entertainment unavailable, Ms. Keen planned a staggering number of events—nearly 90 in 150 days—despite the fact that her office was understaffed.

From wine and cheese parties to pet playdates, and from antique markets to discos in the atrium, she successfully brought the community together during a difficult time.

MARK PALMER AWARD RUNNER-UP STEVEN HENDRIX

During 25 years with USAID Steven Hendrix has served as democracy team leader in Nicaragua, justice program manager in Guatemala and director for national capacity development for Iraq, among many assignments in which he achieved concrete goals advancing democracy.



COURTESY OF STEVEN HENDRIX

In Peru, his recommendations led to undercutting local guerrillas' coca production; in Bolivia, he helped provide legal employment opportunities for poor Bolivians in the coca-growing regions. In El Salvador, he helped former combatants transition to peacetime employment and secured compensation for victims of the conflict.

In Guatemala, Mr. Hendrix led a program to train justices of the peace for 188 unserved communities, facilitating creation of the Public Defense Institute and improving legal services for poor Guatemalans. His approach became a model for programs in El Salvador, Mexico, Colombia and Panama.

In 2005, Mr. Hendrix directed the first comprehensive national electoral observation in Nicaragua and facilitated the approval of new criminal procedures codes. In Iraq, he stood up 18 national ministries and oversaw programs to modernize public procurement and expenditure.

As his colleagues attest, Mr. Hendrix's career has been one of dedication to the advancement of democracy, freedom and governance. He is currently deputy director for USAID in Ghana. ■

Using Diplomacy to Meet the New Threat Set

On June 2, AFSA welcomed former Canadian Foreign Service Officer Daryl Copeland to engage with AFSA members in a wide-ranging discussion about the foreign policy challenges ahead.

Mr. Copeland opened the conversation by stating that the greatest threats to safety and security today are climate change, diminishing biodiversity, environmental collapse, pandemic disease and water shortages.

Unlike more “traditional” threats, which can be specific to a group or region, he said, these new threats affect the entire world. Solving them will require diplomacy that is focused on human centered security and development—something best achieved through dialogue, negotiation and compromise.

But a world system is now emerging, Mr. Copeland said, in which states, groups and even individuals derive power and influence from dissimilar sources—social, economic, political, military or cultural.

This makes diplomatic processes more difficult, since each state or non-state actor (for example, the United Nations or Médecins Sans Frontières) has its own power bases, priorities and aims.

New Tools

Quoting Einstein, Mr. Copeland explained: “No problem can be solved by the same kind of thinking that



Daryl Copeland answers questions from the audience during his discussion of the new threat set.

created it.” Diplomacy has to change; the modern diplomat needs to make use of new tools to be effective.

One of those tools, he suggested, is science diplomacy—specifically, diplomats coming together to advance scientific objectives.

It is important to make the distinction between scientific cooperation—which takes place within the scientific community—and science diplomacy, which is backed by the state.

State-backed science diplomacy is necessary to solve the world’s worst crises. For the best solutions, Copeland feels that it is important to have scientific advisers involved in the diplomatic process from the outset.

This will be a challenge

because scientists and diplomats have different training and ways of thinking, which can lead to difficulty communicating.

The real difficulty, said Copeland, is achieving engagement. Science is a complex, esoteric subject, practiced by people who almost speak a different language.

Science Diplomacy

By helping scientists to speak in terms of “science policy” rather than the language of the lab, diplomats can explain how they can benefit each other and, together, benefit the world.

Copeland singled out the United States as a leader in integrating politics and science. He noted that Secretary of State John Kerry

has a full-time science and technology adviser (currently Dr. Vaughan Turekian) and, while the advice is not always taken, at least it is there to be heard.

During a Q&A session following his talk, Copeland discussed the need to provide science and technology courses within international relations programs, use American Spaces to promote science diplomacy and re-establish science and technology as a priority at the Department of State.

Visit <http://afsa.org/> videos to see a video of the event. ■

—Gemma Dvorak,
Associate Editor



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, June 1, 2016

Hail and Farewell: AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson welcomed Ambassador (ret.) Earl Anthony Wayne as the new treasurer of the AFSA PAC. She also offered the board's thanks to outgoing members Peter Neisuler, Eric Geelan and Youqing Ma.

Consent Agenda: On a motion from State Representative Erin O'Connor, the board approved the consent agenda items. These included (1) the May 4 Governing Board minutes and (2) the appointment of Suzanne Platt as the new FCS representative.

Robert's Rules of Order: On a motion from State Representative John Dinkelman, the board confirmed that the AFSA Governing Board will follow Robert's Rules of Order with respect to the confidentiality of executive sessions.

Washington Nationals Foreign Service Day: On a motion from State Representative Josh Glazeroff, the board unanimously approved a plan to work with the Washington Nationals Major League Baseball team to honor the Foreign Service during a Nationals game.

Governance Committee: Retiree Representative Ambassador (ret.) Al La Porta prepared a memo regarding information handling and requested that it be submitted to the Governance Committee for consideration. On a motion from USAID Representative Jeffrey Cochrane, the board approved the request.

iLead: State Representative Jason Donovan briefed the board on the iLead initiative, which looks at the dissemination of leadership and management tenets throughout the State Department. iLead would like to collaborate with the AFSA Governing Board and AFSA staff to identify how to address challenges and implement best practices.

PEC Draft Code of Conduct: The Committee on the Foreign Service Profession and Ethics representative Eva Groening briefed the board on the committee's work on a draft Code of Conduct. Following discussion of the committee's presentation, a motion was put forward by State Vice President Angie Bryan to look at other ways to get messaging on conduct and ethics out, citing examples such as social media, cables and the *FSJ*. The motion was approved. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, July 6, 2016

Hail and Farewell: AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson welcomed new State Representative Kara McDonald and new FCS Representative Suzanne Platt. She also thanked outgoing State Representative Leah Pease for her work on the AFSA Governing Board.

Consent Agenda: On a motion from State Representative Leah Pease, the board approved the June 1 Governing Board meeting minutes. On a motion from USAID Vice President Sharon Wayne, the board unanimously approved the appointment of Eleanor Tan Piengco to the USAID Standing Committee.

FSJ Editorial Board: The Governing Board reviewed a memo from Chair of the FSJ Editorial Board Beth Payne requesting that they rescind two decisions made by the 2011-2013 Governing Board mandating specific coverage in the *Foreign Service Journal*. On a motion from State Representative John Dinkelman, the Governing Board rescinded

these decisions and reaffirmed the editorial independence of the Editorial Board to select focus topics and articles for the *Journal* (excluding the President's column and AFSA News) as provided for in the AFSA bylaws. The motion passed.

AFSA Position on USAID Hiring: On a motion from USAID Representative Jeffrey Cochrane, a draft policy on agency hiring was referred to the USAID Standing Committee for review and development. The motion passed unanimously.

FSJ Editorial Board Appointment: On a motion from State Vice President Angie Bryan, Lawrence Casselle was unanimously approved to replace Tricia Wingerter as the Governing Board liaison to the Editorial Board.

Committee on Elections Vacancies: On a motion from USAID Vice President Sharon Wayne, the board approved the appointment of William Hansen to the AFSA Committee on Elections.

AFSA Celebrates Strategic Writing: 2016 Kennan Award



2016 Kennan Award recipient Jennifer L. Davis (center) with AFSA State Vice President Angie Bryan and Brig. Gen. Darren Hartford.

Every year, AFSA attends the graduation ceremonies of the National War College at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., to present the George F. Kennan Strategic Writing Award to a distinguished Foreign Service graduate.

At this year's ceremony on June 6, AFSA State Vice

President Angie Bryan and Brigadier General Darren Hartford, the 29th Commandant of the National War College, presented the award to AFSA member and Foreign Service Officer Jennifer Davis for her paper "Congress, the Executive, and the Iran Deal: A Modern Example of the

'Invitation to Struggle.'"

Ms. Davis' winning essay focuses on the significance of the executive and legislative branches working together when dealing with foreign affairs. Ms. Davis not only argues that the Founding Fathers intended this cooperation, but expresses a desire for more Foreign Service members to establish relationships with Congress to better explain the importance of their work.

Ms. Davis chose to write about the cooperation between the president and Congress after working with Secretary of State John Kerry and former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman. Both emphasize the importance of connecting with Congress to improve foreign relations.

Thanks to these wonderful mentors, Davis says, she learned throughout her career that collaboration, communication, flexibility and "a heart that wants to

learn and grow" are all important attributes for an FSO.

Ms. Davis expressed her gratitude to her colleagues for choosing her essay for the George Kennan award. "I was surprised," she says. "To be given an award by my colleagues for something I've written is thrilling."

Joining the Foreign Service in 2003 following a career as a corporate attorney, Ms. Davis has served in Mexico City, Brussels and Bogota, as well as in Washington, D.C. She is married to FSO Nick Harris and is the proud mother of two boys.

For her thoughtful and well-written paper, Ms. Davis received an award of \$1,000 for the purchase of scholarly books. For more information on the George F. Kennan Strategic Writing Award, please visit the AFSA website, www.afsa.org/kennan. ■

—Eunice Ajayi,
Awards Intern



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, July 6, 2016

Reaffirmation of AFSA Committee Membership:

On a motion from AFSA Secretary Bill Haugh, the board unanimously accepted the membership and reaffirmed the mandate of the four standing committees listed in the AFSA bylaws, namely (1) the Elections Committee, (2) the FSJ Editorial Board, (3) the Scholarship Committee and (4) the Constituency Standing Committees.

On a motion from AFSA Secretary Bill Haugh, the board confirmed the membership and mandate of the Governance Committee, the Executive Committee and the Finance, Audit and Management Committee.

On a motion from AFSA Secretary Bill Haugh, the board agreed to consider the requirements and membership of the AFSA Political Action Committee at a later date. ■

Diplomatic Security Begins Recording Interviews

As of June 27, following negotiations between the State Department, AFSA and the American Federation of Government Employees, Diplomatic Security's Office of Special Investigations initiated automatic audiovisual recording of employee interviews conducted in the United States.

This is a major shift from past practice, in which DS/OSI had to obtain permission from the employee to record their interview.

This change applies to both Foreign Service and Civil Service employees who are the subject of criminal and non-criminal investigations.

The Background

In 2013, the department authorized DS/OSI to begin recording interviews of FS and CS employees under investigation. As this was against the long-standing

department policy preventing the recording of employees without permission, AFSA's 2013-2015 Governing Board fought to have the authorization rescinded. However, in 2015, the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources upheld it.

Though AFSA was not legally able to prevent DS/OSI from recording interviews without permission, we did have the authority to negotiate the impact and implementation of such recordings.

Your Right to Representation

Under the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, Foreign Service employees have the right (known as the "Weingarten Right") to be represented by AFSA in an interview if they reasonably believe that it could result in disciplinary action and they

request representation.

The investigating office is not required to remind employees of their right to representation at the beginning of the investigation. We therefore urge all AFSA members to reach out to AFSA immediately on being contacted for an interview.

Furthermore, if you have agreed to be interviewed and subsequently decide that you would like an AFSA representative present, it is not too late to invoke your Weingarten Rights.

What Can AFSA Do for You?

The presence of AFSA during interviews serves several useful purposes. We ensure that the investigator affords you all of your rights and conducts the interview in an appropriate fashion. We can confer privately with you, if necessary, to answer

your questions or provide guidance.

We clarify the investigator's questions, when it appears there is a misunderstanding. We take notes during the interview and review any sworn statements.

If DS, the Regional Security Office, the OIG or Office of Civil Rights contacts you requesting an interview, call AFSA immediately at (202) 647-8160 or email us at afsa@state.gov or member@afsa.org.

We also encourage you to review our guidance on investigations on the AFSA website at www.afsa.org/ig-and-ds-investigation-guidance. You can find the full text of the agreement signed at the conclusion of the recent negotiations at www.afsa.org/vancememo. ■

—Angie Bryan,

AFSA State Vice President

Overseas Voting – Plan Ahead for November

As the November election season approaches, overseas Foreign Service members may need to make arrangements for voting. With a presidential election, Senate and congressional races, as well as state-specific contests, there will be plenty of ballots to be cast this year.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program offers information and instructions for registering and voting while living overseas under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, which covers FS employees and their families.

At www.FVAP.gov, you can check the requirements for your state of residence, register to vote and request a ballot. Each state has different regulations on registration and sub-

mitting a voted ballot! Information is also available at the AFSA website: <http://afsa.org/afsa-voter-registration-guide> and from the Overseas Vote Foundation—www.overseas-votefoundation.org—a nonpartisan organization.

Don't forget the Hatch Act!

All active Foreign Service employees are prohibited from engaging in partisan political activities while "on duty." For information about the rules and regulations regarding political actions while representing the U.S. government, check out our Labor Management guidance page at www.afsa.org/rules-political-activities-federal-employees. ■

USAID Honors Fallen Colleagues at Memorial Event

On June 8, USAID Administrator Gayle E. Smith led a ceremony to honor the memory of fallen colleague Xulhaz Mannan, a locally employed (LE) staff member with USAID's Democracy and Governance Office in Dhaka and a human rights activist. Mr. Mannan was killed on April 25 in his Dhaka apartment.

At the same event, Administrator Smith unveiled a new memorial plaque honoring fallen colleagues from USAID implementing partners. The family of Anita Datar, who was killed in the 2015 hotel siege in Bamako, was in attendance for the unveiling.

USAID Deputy Administrator Ambassador Alfonso Lenhardt opened the ceremony, welcoming Mr. Mannan's family—who had traveled from Bangladesh for the event—and Ms. Datar's family, among other honored guests.

Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Heather Higinbottom, AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, AFSA USAID Vice President Sharon Wayne and the U.S. ambassador to Mali also attended the ceremony.

Xulhaz Mannan's brother, Minhaz Mannan Emon, told the gathering "[Xulhaz] wanted to speak for those whose souls are caged." He urged USAID to continue the work they have been doing in Bangladesh, and encouraged the LGBT community to continue to speak out.



USAID Administrator Gayle Smith speaks at a ceremony to honor Xulhaz Mannan and Anita Datar.

"In a country where sex and sexuality are taboo, work for love," he said, referring to his brother's magazine *Roopbaan* (named for a Bengali folk representation of love).

Placing a tile bearing Xulhaz' name on the memorial wall, Mr. Mannan Emon said that his brother "is still alive in the rivers and green fields of Bangladesh, and here on the walls of USAID."

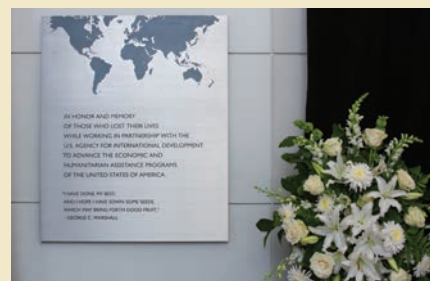
Representing all LE staff at USAID Mission Bangladesh, Muhammad Moinuddin, a colleague of Mr. Mannan's, thanked the agency for honoring his best friend. Mr. Moinuddin had been impressed, he said, by his friend's energy, enthusiasm and ability to stand up for his beliefs.

In her remarks, Administrator Smith recalled her recent trip to Bangladesh to visit the Mannan family,

thanking them for welcoming her in the wake of such a tragedy. She also announced that the USAID Mission Diversity Award would be renamed in Xulhaz' honor.

She then turned to the family of Anita Datar, the only American victim of an attack on the Radisson Hotel in Bamako last year. Ms. Datar worked there for Palladium, an international development firm working with USAID in Mali.

Announcing the formation, in partnership with Palladium, of a legacy fellowship program in honor of Ms. Datar, Administrator Smith described her as "one of us, and the best of us." She spoke particularly to Ms. Datar's



Unveiled at the memorial ceremony, a plaque honoring fallen colleagues from USAID's implementing partners.

young son, Rohan, who was present at the unveiling of the memorial plaque.

Dedicated to those who have died while working with USAID, the plaque features a quote from George Marshall, winner of the 1953 Nobel Peace Prize: "I have done my best, and I hope I have sown some seeds which may bring forth good fruit." ■

—Gemma Dvorak,
Associate Editor

Forging Foreign Service Alliances in the Rocky Mountains



AFSA/MARIA LIVINGSTON

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson meets with Denver Mayor Michael Hancock during her recent trip to Colorado to promote the Foreign Service and meet with policymakers and business leaders.

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and Director of Professional Policy Issues Maria Livingston traveled to Denver in June to meet with policymakers, civic organizations and business leaders.

Part of AFSA's outreach efforts, the trip aimed to increase public understanding of the critical role of the Foreign Service in advancing America's national security and economic prosperity.

Amb. Stephenson met with the board of WorldDenver—a nonprofit organization whose mission is to strengthen and expand the community of engaged global citizens and organizations in Colorado.

A member of the national

association of World Affairs Councils of America and Global Ties U.S., WorldDenver administers the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.

There Amb. Stephenson spoke on the subject of "Women in Foreign Policy" to an impressive group of more than 40 WorldDenver members from all professional walks of life.

The Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce hosted Amb. Stephenson for a business roundtable discussion with representatives from many Colorado industries. Amb. Stephenson explained how the Foreign Service can help them in their pursuits to invest in and export to overseas markets and

fielded questions related to participants' unique situations.

AFSA also hosted a breakfast at the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies that featured Director General of the Foreign Service Arnold Chacón.

Ambassador (ret.) Gary Grappo, speaking on behalf of the university in

his role as a distinguished fellow, welcomed the group and introduced Michael Keaveny, a retired Foreign Commercial Service officer

and head of the FS Retirees of Colorado group.

Amb. Stephenson and DG Chacón discussed their visions for a stronger Foreign Service in 2025 and beyond, as well as the critical role retirees can play in improving the American public's awareness and appreciation of the Service.

The tour concluded with meetings with Colorado Lt. Governor Donna Lynne and Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, both of whom expressed gratitude for the support U.S. embassies and consulates have given to Colorado trade missions abroad.

AFSA looks forward to working in the future with the advocates of diplomacy and development in Colorado and other states. ■

—Orianne Gonzalez,
Communications Intern



AFSA/MARIA LIVINGSTON

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson speaks to Foreign Service retirees at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies.

LGBT+ in Foreign Affairs



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

AFSA Director of Member Services Janet Hedrick, left, meets with members of the State Department's LGBT community at the LGBT+ in Foreign Affairs event held on June 1. The event, which included remarks from Foreign Service Institute Deputy Director Marc Ostfield and Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security Gregory Starr, brought together a number of organizations to provide information and answer questions from attendees.



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

Labor Management Executive Assistant Lindsey Botts, left, introduced AFSA to the event participants and answered questions on AFSA's role at the Resource Fair afterwards. The event—now in its 8th year—is presented by FSI in coordination with GLIFAA.

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The Foreign Service Retirees Investment Club

We welcome new members. The club meets once a month (the fourth Thursday) in the McLean Public Library in McLean, Va. We study market sectors and stocks, discuss buying and selling stock, and invest. Members pay a quarterly fee.

If you are retired (or planning to retire soon) in the Washington, D.C., area and want to learn about investing in the stock market, come to a meeting or two. You will be warmly welcomed.

For more information please call Presiding Partner Louise Crane at:

(703) 471-4327

2016 Foreign Service Youth Awards Ceremony



Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Carol Perez (second from left), FSYP President John Naland (second from right) and FLO Director Susan Frost (far right) with the 2016 Foreign Service Youth Award winners.

On July 8, the Foreign Service Youth Foundation hosted the 2016 Youth Awards Ceremony at the Department of State. Foreign Service children received awards for their art, essay writing, video production, community service and scholarly achievements.

FSYP President John Naland read a letter from Secretary of State John Kerry, in which he discussed his own experiences as the child of a U.S. diplomat and the challenges faced by diplomats' children today. Secretary Kerry commended the FSYP for helping to foster camaraderie and resilience among Foreign Service youth.

This year a Foreign Service Youth Advocacy Award honoring an adult who has demonstrated long-term commitment to Foreign Service youth was given for the first time.

The ceremony, at which Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources Carol Perez was the keynote speaker, also recog-

nized awardees of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide Merit Scholarship Award program.

FSYP Awards

Art Contest

Ages 5-8

First Place: Akeela Valdes, Havana, Cuba
Second Place: Ohlsson Skaret, Bogota, Colombia
Third Place: Lydia Bitner, Athens, Greece

Ages 9-12

First Place: Jacob Newman, Mbabane, Swaziland
Second Place: Francie Silva, Montevideo, Uruguay
Third Place: Sophia Bitner, Athens, Greece

Ages 13-18

First Place: Helen Reynolds, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Second Place: Cora Deininger, Arlington, Virginia
Third Place (tie): Divine Grimes, Fredericksburg, Virginia
 Camryn Carswell, Kaiserslautern, Germany

Essay Contest

Middle School

First Place: Stephen Harvey, Nogales, Mexico
Second Place: Penelope Duran, Cairo, Egypt
Third Place: Hanako Ricci, Ankara, Turkey

High School

First Place: Kai Davis, Budapest, Hungary
Second Place: Lara Welch, Antananarivo, Madagascar
Third Place: Maria Connors, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

KidVid Contest

First Place: Abigail Blaser and Vivienne Phemister, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Second Place (tie): Patrick Hamilton, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
 Molly Bailey and Daisy Bailey, Nairobi, Kenya
Third Place (tie): Tristan Phemister and Sebastian Phemister, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
 Abigail Williams, Bangkok, Thailand

Welcome Home Video Challenge

Ingrid Bayer, Falls Church, Virginia
 Cole Blackman, Vienna, Virginia
 Gregor Deininger, Arlington, Virginia
 Hannah Feeken, Stafford, Virginia

Community Service Awards

Brendan Boyd, Niamey, Niger
 Wiley Skaret, Bogota, Colombia

Academic Merit Awards

First Place: Riena Harker, Beijing, China
Second Place: Alessandra Youth, Managua, Nicaragua

Foreign Service Youth Advocacy Award

Kay Branaman Eakin, Mesa, Arizona

AAFSW Merit Scholarship Awards

College Merit Scholarship: Miranda Walls
Best Essay Award: Magdalena Travis
Judy Felt Memorial Volunteerism Scholarship: Sofia Tipton

To learn more about the FSYP and AAFSW awards, visit their websites at www.fsyf.org and www.aafsw.org.

—Ramona Sandoval,
 State Department Family
 Liaison Office

NEWS BRIEF

**ANNOUNCING THE
AFSA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
ESSAY CONTEST WINNER**

Dylan Borne

11th grade

Benjamin Franklin Charter High School
New Orleans, Louisiana

Dylan will receive a \$2,500 prize, an all-expenses-paid, two-day trip to Washington, D.C., to meet the Secretary of State and tour the U.S. Institute for Peace, and a full-tuition-paid voyage with Semester at Sea on his enrollment at an accredited university. *Coverage of Dylan's trip to Washington, D.C., will appear in a future issue of AFSA News.*

RUNNER-UP

Whitney Zhang

11th grade

Dr. T.J. Ownes Gilroy Early College Academy
Gilroy, California

Whitney will receive a \$1,250 prize and a full scholarship to participate in the International Diplomacy Program of the National Student Leadership Conference held in Washington, D.C. annually. ■

ANNOUNCEMENT

**FEGLI OPEN SEASON
IN SEPTEMBER**

The Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program is having an Open Season from Sept. 1, through Sept. 30. This is the first FEGLI Open Season since 2004. Additional information on the open season can be found at: www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/life-insurance/open-season. A video about the Open Season can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfO2x1Xc5uE&l.

Additional information on FEGLI can be found at: www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/life-insurance/ ■

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Editorial Board Hail and Farewell

The staff of *The Foreign Service Journal* would like to extend heartfelt thanks to outgoing Editorial Board member Duncan Walker and Governing Board Liaison Tricia Wingerter for their service to the *FSJ* and AFSA. Both left the Editorial Board in July.

The *FSJ* Editorial Board works with *Journal* staff to draw up the editorial calendar each year and meets monthly to review all articles submitted for publication, accepting or rejecting each.

Outgoing Editorial Board member Duncan Walker, center, receives an AFSA coin from Chair Beth Payne, right and Foreign Service Journal Editor-in-Chief Shawn Dorman.



AFSA/GEMMA DVORAK

We are pleased to announce that AFSA State Representative Lawrence Casselle has joined the Editorial Board as the new

Governing Board liaison and that Randy Berry, currently special envoy for the human rights of LGBTI persons, will join the board as a regular

member starting in October. We look forward to working with them both. ■
—Susan B. Maitra, Managing Editor

ANNOUNCEMENT



TLAQUE SEDONA-CACTUS-CHRISTMASTREE VIA WWW.RIZTRAVEL.COM

CALL FOR PHOTO SUBMISSIONS

Have you ever made a snowman on the beach? Or left the presents under the...cactus?

Many of our readers are or have been stationed around the globe and have experienced a variety of winter holiday and New Year celebrations. We invite you to submit photos of unusual ways to celebrate the winter holidays, wherever they may be. The best photos will be published in a future issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*.

Please send your high resolution photos to *FSJ* Associate Editor Gemma Dvorak at dvorak@afsa.org. ■



SNOWY THE SANDMAN VIA FORSÅKEN FOTOS ON WWW.FLICKR.COM

■ **Arminta Delle McNeilan Burns**, 78, widow of the late FSO John Burns, of Lantana, Fla., died on Feb. 7 from complications arising from chemotherapy treatments for lung cancer.

Arminta Delle McNeilan was born on Sept. 26, 1937, in Columbus, Ohio, the younger daughter of Steen McNeilan and Mary Cameron McNeilan. After a childhood spent in nearby Groveport, Ohio, her family moved to West Palm Beach, Fla., in 1947. She graduated from Palm Beach High School in 1954, where she excelled at academics and music, playing first flute in the Florida Schools' State Orchestra.

In 1958 she earned a B.S. degree from Florida State University and went on to complete postgraduate work in cancer research at the University of Cincinnati's Christ Hospital. She earned a master's degree in political science at U.C. in 1962, writing her thesis on Sino-Soviet relations.

After her marriage, Mrs. Burns studied Thai politics and language at American University.

Mrs. Burns accompanied her husband, who was one of the U.S. Information Agency's most prominent Africanists, to many parts of the world during his 31-year career (1964-1995) in the U.S. Foreign Service. Their postings included Thailand, South Africa (for two tours), Zambia, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia.

During the couple's diplomatic career, she completed two book manuscripts, including one on the challenges the African National Congress faced in transforming its guerilla resistance movement into a political party that could negotiate for majority rule with the apartheid-supporting Nationalist Party then governing South Africa.

In addition to devoting time to academic research and administrative work, Arminta Burns raised three children and opened her home to friends, visitors, dig-

nitaries and foreign nationals.

Mrs. Burns is remembered as a kind and nonjudgmental friend who was culturally astute and cosmopolitan. She maintained deep friendships and intellectual interests in U.S. foreign affairs and southern Africa, where she lived and visited regularly over the course of 30 years.

In semi-retirement, Mrs. Burns was involved with the Lantana Public Library in Lantana, Fla., supporting its mission financially and through volunteer work.

She was preceded in death by her husband, John Burns, and their eldest daughter, Nancy A. Burns. She is survived by a daughter, Catherine Burns; a son, John Cameron Burns (and his wife, Tibitha Miles Burns); a grandson, Jonathan Steen Burns; as well as a sister-in-law, Ann Burns; a nephew, Lt. Col. Brian R. Whalen (U.S. Air Force, retired); Elizabeth Eagan Whalen; and a niece, Anne-Marie Burns.

In lieu of flowers, mourners may make donations to the Christ Hospital Foundation in Cincinnati, Ohio. To express condolences or make donations, visit PalmBeachPost.com/obituaries.

■ **Ray Lee Caldwell**, 74, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer and former State Department deputy assistant secretary (DAS) with the rank of ambassador, died on June 12 of complications related to Alzheimer's disease.

Mr. Caldwell was born on Oct. 6, 1942, and raised in the former Canal Zone, Panama. He served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Navy from 1964 until 1969, with tours of duty in the Antarctic, Vietnam and with the U.S. military mission to Spain.

In 1971, Mr. Caldwell earned a graduate degree in political science from the University of New Mexico. While pursuing his graduate studies, he met Sally MacKinnon Hisamoto, to whom he was married for 43 years.

Following graduation, Mr. Caldwell joined the Foreign Service. Fluent in Spanish, his first postings were to Mexico and Spain. During his tour in Spain (1976-1980), he worked diligently to help stabilize a volatile political environment in the Basque region, where he served as acting principal officer at the U.S. consulate in Bilbao.

In 1979, Mr. Caldwell received AFSA's William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Foreign Service Officer for his work in Spain to accommodate and incorporate the left into regular political life and deal with regional resistance to the central government.

While staying engaged in Spanish developments, Mr. Caldwell went on to expand his expertise to the field of European security and political affairs during the final decade of the Cold War. He served as the U.S. representative to NATO's High-Level Task Force on Conventional Arms Control and also played a leading role in U.S. nuclear policy during the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations.

Mr. Caldwell served twice as director of the Office of European Political and Security Affairs, as deputy assistant secretary of State for European Affairs, as deputy assistant secretary of State for political-military affairs, and as State's deputy associate comptroller for management policy. Mr. Caldwell also served as director of foreign diplomat training at the Foreign Service Institute.

Ray Lee Caldwell rose to the level of Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, and was confirmed by the Senate in 1995 as DAS for Burdensharing.

The unusual title of Mr. Caldwell's position caught the eye of grammarian William Safire of *The New York Times*, who wrote a column that year about whether

“Burdensharing” should be hyphenated: “Ambassador Caldwell is groaning under quite a load, and I’d like to help him,” Mr. Safire concluded. “But in my personal stylebook he is Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Burden-Sharing.”

After retiring from the Foreign Service in July 1999, Mr. Caldwell began a second career in international affairs as a trainer in conflict analysis and resolution for the U.S. Institute of Peace, a position that took him to Colombia, Serbia and Kosovo and put him into contact with leaders from Africa and Asia.

Mr. Caldwell shared with his children a passion for music, politics and sports. For 10 years, while his children were growing up, he was a licensed U.S. Youth Soccer Association coach and a youth-soccer referee.

In addition to his wife, Sally, of Annandale, Va., Mr. Caldwell is survived by his son, Ian (and his wife, Meredith) of Vienna, Va.; by his daughter, Rachel (and her partner, Michael Landusky) of Columbus, Ohio; by three grandsons, Ethan, Jude and Luke Caldwell of Vienna, Va.; and by two granddaughters, Chloe Harris and Ella Landusky of Columbus, Ohio.

Donations in Ray Lee Caldwell’s name may be made to Capital Caring Hospice.

■ **Maxwell (Bruce) Hirshorn**, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer with the State Department, died suddenly in his sleep on July 7 in Arlington, Va.

Mr. Hirshorn was born on Oct. 18, 1931, in Camden, N.J., the oldest son of Harry and Estelle (née Spector) Hirshorn. He grew up in northwest Philadelphia, Pa., and graduated from the William Penn Charter School in 1949, which instilled in him the Quaker qualities of tolerance, charity and compassion that remained with him for the rest of his life.

Mr. Hirshorn attended Yale College,

where he sang in the Glee Club and managed the squash and track teams. He graduated with a degree in history in 1954 and returned to his hometown to work at his father’s insurance brokerage, Harry R. Hirshorn and Company (now Hirshorn Boothby). The following year, he married his first wife, Anne Sue Friedberg.

It was at this time that he discovered his passion for the law. He first took night classes at Temple University Law School but transferred to the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where he graduated in 1960.

At Penn he was a member of the Lewis Law Club and the Moot Court Board. After receiving the third-highest bar exam score in Pennsylvania, he practiced law in Philadelphia for the next two years.

In 1962, inspired by John F. Kennedy’s call to public service and encouraged by his wife, Bruce Hirshorn joined the Foreign Service. The State Department first sent him and his family to Izmir, where he served as a consular officer. For the rest of his life he enjoyed surprising waiters in Turkish restaurants by conversing with them in their native language.

His next posting was Brussels, where Mr. Hirshorn worked at the United States Mission to the European Economic Community. One of his primary duties involved persuading the United Kingdom to join the Common Market.

In 1970, Mr. Hirshorn was sent to study at the London School of Economics, where he earned an M.S. degree in economics.

When the Hirshorns returned to Washington, he and his wife, Anne, divorced. He met his second wife, Willene Drake, at the Foreign Service Club, where she was a hostess. They married in 1974.

The following year, Mr. Hirshorn was assigned to the American consulate in Hong Kong as an economic officer. In 1977, he was posted to Kuala Lumpur,

where he served as the economic counselor.

In 1981 the Hirshorns returned to the United States, and Mr. Hirshorn worked at the State Department until his retirement in 1985. He returned to school to earn an LLM in taxation from the Georgetown University Law Center in 1986 and was then hired as a partner at Boring & Pilger.

Mr. Hirshorn continued his service to his country as a lecturer at the Foreign Service Institute and the Foreign Agricultural Service. He served on the Governing Board of the American Foreign Service Association from 1993 to 1995, and for many years (through 2015) he helped the *FSJ* with the annual tax guide. He also served as a long-time member of his condominium’s board of directors.

Bruce Hirshorn will be remembered for his decency and compassion, his tremendous work ethic, his commitment to his clients, his devotion to family, his enormous reserves of energy and his dry wit.

He enjoyed challenging his children at squash, table tennis and the occasional footrace. He was an avid filmgoer, enjoyed dancing and winemaking, and loved classical music, New Orleans jazz, klezmer music and opera.

Mr. Hirshorn is survived by his wife of 42 years, Willene (née Drake); his former wife Anne Sue (née Friedberg); and children Barry (and his wife, Linda Sjogren) of Kapolei, Hawaii; Harriet (Marie de Cenival) and Hal of New York, N.Y.; and Dalton of New Orleans, La. He is also survived by his brother, Ralph Steven (and his wife, Natalie) of Philadelphia, Pa.; and sisters-in-law Edith Brooks of Foley, Ala., and Melinda Drake of Lawrenceville, Ga.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Bruce Hirshorn’s name to the American Friends Service Committee or St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

■ **Marilyn Janet Holmes**, 82, the spouse of retired FSO Allen Holmes, passed away on May 17 at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Holmes was born in Paris, France, in 1934. When German troops invaded the country in 1940, she and her mother fled.

In a 2009 interview with her daughter-in-law, Jennifer Ludden of NPR News, Mrs. Holmes recalled German planes strafing and bombing those who were fleeing:

“You get out of your car, and you roll into the ditch, and you hope for the best. And the miracle really is that my mother managed to always make it so that it wasn’t terrifying, and always answered my questions about everything. And, as a result, I have never had a nightmare in my life about the war.” Eventually, they made it to Lisbon, finding safe passage on one of the last ships leaving for the United States.

In America, she devoted herself to education and cultural exchange, working for the U.S. Information Service in Cambodia and producing documentaries for newly emerging African nations in the late 1950s.

In 1959, she married a newly commissioned Foreign Service officer, Allen Holmes, and accompanied him to his first posting, Yaoundé. There she was able to complete her documentary projects and begin her adventure in the Foreign Service.

Mrs. Holmes embraced each new post with insatiable curiosity and an aptitude for languages, making lifelong friends in the process.

Her reputation for helping American diplomatic families adjust to life overseas, and her experience bridging American and international communities in assignments from sub-Saharan Africa to postings in France and Italy, brought Mrs. Holmes to the attention of higher-ups in the State Department.

In 1980 she was appointed director of the State Department’s Family Liaison

Office. In that job, Mrs. Holmes was responsible for helping families confront a range of problems, including cultural and educational assimilation and long periods of separation.

After two years she was recognized for her “extraordinary and invaluable contributions to the Foreign Service and the entire foreign affairs community.” One of her major achievements was negotiating reciprocal work agreements with foreign governments to allow Foreign Service spouses to work abroad.

In 1997 Marilyn Holmes received the Secretary of State’s Distinguished Public Service Award for her work as executive producer of the State Department’s Video Production Unit.

She was recognized for her innovative television news programs designed to keep employees informed on the latest diplomatic developments. In addition, she produced a series of educational training films on sensitive issues involving security and health.

Marilyn Janet Holmes is survived by her husband of 56 years, Allen Holmes; her two children, Katherine Holmes-Chuba and Gerry Holmes; and four grandchildren, Nick, Olivia, Alexander and Aidan.

■ **Claude William (Bill) LaSalle II**, 82, a retired Foreign Service officer, died at his home in Washington, D.C., on June 11.

Mr. LaSalle was the only child of a sugar cane plantation manager and his wife in Louisiana. Educated in demanding Catholic schools and steeped in the colorful culture of his native Cajun country, he reveled in books and stories of the intriguing politics of his area.

Precocious for his age, Bill LaSalle grew to be a sophisticated adult who read cultures like novels and saw the irony and humor surrounding events of the day and the personalities of the times. A natural

storyteller with endless curiosity about the world, he was a convivial traveler; and his warmth and humor easily drew others to him.

Mr. LaSalle majored in English at Loyola University in New Orleans, received a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and taught for several years at Bryn Mawr College, Fordham University and Northwestern University.

In the late 1960s, he accepted consecutive Fulbright Fellowships to teach in then-Czechoslovakia and in Romania. There he encountered U.S. diplomats and decided that a career in the Foreign Service would allow him to engage with the world in a way that wasn’t possible in academia.

Mr. LaSalle served as a cultural officer in Romania, India and Indonesia. Later, as a Senior Foreign Service officer, he directed public affairs programs in the Netherlands and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), and held several positions in Washington, D.C. He was honored several times for his contributions to U.S. diplomacy.

In retirement, Mr. LaSalle continued his voracious reading and pursued his love of travel, food, wine and new experiences. He also was active in several philanthropies.

Mr. LaSalle is survived by several relatives, among them Sidney “Buddy” LaSalle; a cousin, Yvette Romero; and a goddaughter, Olivia Wills.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Bill LaSalle’s name to the International Book Project; The LaSalle Academy (Development Department) in New York City; or College Bound.

■ **Emily Claire Leonard**, 71, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development, died of respiratory failure on April 22 in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, the city of her last posting.

Born during World War II in her mother's hometown of Morgantown, W. Va., Emily Claire Leonard moved with her family to Alexandria, Va., when her attorney father was appointed to a senior post in the Eisenhower administration's Department of Justice.

Ms. Leonard worked summers for the federal government during high school. After earning a B.A. in economics from Wellesley College and an M.S. in management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ms. Leonard worked for a business gaming venture in Cambridge, Mass., before returning to Washington and beginning her career in the Foreign Service.

Ms. Leonard served the U.S. government's overseas programs for nearly a quarter century, initially as a budget examiner for USAID at the Office of Management and Budget (1971-1976).

She then joined USAID, serving as a health economist in the Near East Bureau (1976-1979), as an assistant health officer in Cairo (1979-1982), a regional coordinator for the Middle East in the Bureau of Planning and Program Coordination (1982-1985), and as an assistant director and program officer in Tunisia (1985).

After returning to Washington as a desk officer for the Office of Central American Affairs (1986-1989), Ms. Leonard concluded her career as the senior career officer in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

There she helped reform the justice system, enduring death threats to establish a district attorney's office with nationwide jurisdiction. Her "valiant actions" were honored by the Honduran Bar Association, the Supreme Court of Honduras and the Public Ministry.

She retired from USAID in November 1994, although she returned as a contract manager in Haiti for five months during 1995.

USAID colleagues remember Emily Leonard as a dazzling woman who windsurfed in the Mediterranean, went scuba diving in the Red Sea, and enlivened embassy parties. An accomplished linguist, she conversed easily in French, Arabic and Spanish. In retirement, Ms. Leonard studied law and enjoyed gardening, reading and collecting Central American art. She loved the people of Honduras and quietly provided regular financial help to needy students and families with disabled children.

Emily Claire Leonard is survived by her sister Jennifer Leonard (and her husband David Cay Johnston) of Rochester, N.Y., and their children Molly and Kate Leonard; by her brother George Stephen Leonard (and his wife Kathy) of Monroe Township, N.J., and their children George and Valerie Leonard.

■ **Charles A. McGinley**, 96, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency and the U.S. International Communication Agency, died peacefully at home in Tucson, Ariz., on May 24.

Mr. McGinley was born on Jan. 29, 1920, in Orange, N.J. He served for four years in the U.S. Army and Army Air Force during World War II, and earned B.A. and MLS degrees from the University of Southern California.

Mr. McGinley's Foreign Service career included assignments as a USIA public affairs officer in Cebu, Philippines (1951-1953) and in Benghazi, Libya (1954-1956). In Cebu, he met Teresita Lopez, and they married on Dec. 6, 1954, in Benghazi.

He worked as a regional public affairs officer in Bangkok (1956-1957), as an assistant cultural affairs officer in Taipei (1958-1963), as a book officer in Saigon (1966-1968) and as a cultural affairs officer in Dacca (1968-1971). Mr. McGinley's final posting was as a public affairs officer

with the U.S. International Communication Agency in Perth, Western Australia (1978-1980).

Between postings, Mr. McGinley worked for USIA as a career counselor, chief of the agency's training division and deputy chief of the bibliographic division.

The McGinleys retired to Tucson, Ariz., in 1980 and enjoyed more than three decades of life together with frequent visits from family members.

Mr. McGinley was a committed walker and an avid reader. He enjoyed classical music, gardening and keeping up with current events.

In November 2010, the couple published interesting and humorous anecdotes from their years abroad under the title *Before Noon: Personal Stories from the Lighter Side of Diplomacy*.

Charles McGinley is survived by his wife of 62 years, Teresita; three daughters, Nancy Ostrovsky, Cynthia McGinley Rosen, and Sharon Shaw Reeder; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

■ **Diana Jill Moxhay**, 74, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on May 21 at her home on Peaks Island, Maine, following a brave battle with cancer.

Ms. Moxhay was born on March 17, 1942, in Rye, N.Y., to Jack and Dorothea Moxhay. She graduated from Rye High School and attended Smith College in Northampton, Mass., graduating in 1964.

She had a competitive spirit and participated in sports, particularly lacrosse, throughout her school years. In her professional life, she worked to open doors previously closed to women. Following college, she worked for Radio Liberty Munich and Voice of America, and was subsequently recruited as a Foreign Service officer by the State Department.

Ms. Moxhay had a great facility for

languages, speaking half a dozen comfortably. Her greatest passion, however, was for Russian, which she began learning while at Smith College so she could better understand and enjoy the works of Dostoevsky and other Russian authors.

In 1971, Diana Moxhay became the first female Foreign Service officer posted to U.S. Embassy Moscow. Her mission there focused on creating a deeper cultural understanding between the two superpowers, long before official relations began to thaw.

During the next three decades, she was posted in Chile, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Russia again, Belarus and Austria, reaching the most senior levels of the Foreign Service.

A lifelong champion of democracy and free speech, Ms. Moxhay took particular delight in having incurred the ire of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, both of whom barred her from entering their countries, resentful of her work to empower a free press.

Diana Moxhay is remembered as a woman of refined taste, with a deep appreciation for and encyclopedic knowledge of classical music, opera, ballet and the fine arts; and she was personal friends with numerous prominent Russian dancers, artists and musicians.

Prior to retiring, Ms. Moxhay designed a beautiful home overlooking the sea on Peaks Island, where she could be close to family and friends.

She is survived by her brothers David (and his wife, Judy) and Peter (and his wife, Kathryn, and their children Olwyn, Imogen and Nikolai); and her nephew Christopher (and his wife, Bonnie).

■ **June Beakes Byrne Spencer, 98**, widow of the late FSO James MacGregor Byrne, died peacefully at home in Chevy

Chase, Md., on Oct. 13, 2015. She was a co-founder and the first president of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (originally “Association of American Foreign Service Women”).

Born and raised in Bay City, Texas, June Beakes came to Washington to attend Arlington Hall School. She worked for the federal government during the New Deal years and was posted to Madrid during World War II as a member of the State Department’s Foreign Service Auxiliary.

In 1946, June Beakes married FSO James MacGregor Byrne. She accompanied her husband on overseas postings in Berne, Addis Ababa, Tunis and Brussels. On his retirement from the Foreign Service in 1964, the couple settled in the Washington, D.C., area. Mr. Byrne died in 1979.

Mrs. Byrne married Samuel Spencer, a former president of the Washington, D.C., Board of Commissioners, in 1982. He died in 1997.

June Byrne co-founded AAFSW in 1960 and served as its first president. Foreign Service spouses formed the organization to make their needs and those of their families understood by State Department officials.

As Mrs. Spencer later recounted in her oral history interview with the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, when she first made the suggestion that such an organization with elected officers be formed: “Jaws dropped; there was silence—it was heretical.”

AAFSW advocacy led to creation of the Family Liaison Office, the Overseas Briefing Center and the Foreign Service Youth Foundation. Mrs. Spencer was honored at AAFSW’s Millennium Celebration in 2000.

June Beakes Byrne Spencer is survived by four children and one grandson. ■

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An Education in Time and Place

In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond

Robert D. Kaplan, Random House, 2016, \$28/hardcover, \$18/paperback, \$13.99/Kindle, 287 pages.

REVIEWED BY TRACY WHITTINGTON

Robert Kaplan's latest volume, *In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond*, indulges his love of this enigmatic country.

Part travel writing, part political science, his eclectic writing style can initially frustrate the reader. Whenever he seems on the verge of providing concrete, factual historical information, he veers into lyricism again, musing about a restaurant he visited 20 years earlier.

Halfway through the book, he's still not told the story of Nicolae Ceausescu's fall (he never does), nor elaborated on his assertion that Romania under the dictator resembled a North Korean personality cult (he eventually will). What he has done is offer a digressive chapter on the battles of medieval voivodes and more than a few blow-by-blow analyses of the writings of Romanian intellectuals in the early 20th century.

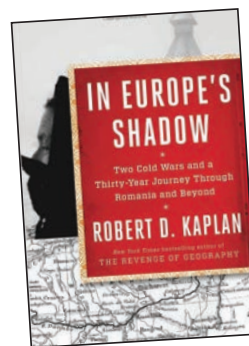
Early on, it's difficult to discern his intent. Readers should persist, however, for the book proves far more complex and engaging than its geographically narrow subject would suggest. Kaplan's central thesis is that Romania has always served as a sort of crossroads, protecting the West from the depredations of Eastern invaders while being left mostly to defend itself.

Romania, according to Kaplan, has always looked West and considered itself part of the West. But its intellectuals and revolutionaries have often, counterintui-

tively, leaned right to a founding mythology rooted in the land that easily turned toward the 20th century's more destructive ideologies of anti-Semitism and fascism.

Kaplan also paints a picture of Russian malevolence in the Balkans, slowly taking over economically what it can't, or chooses not to, militarily, by creating massive energy dependence throughout the old southern satellites.

Indeed, though only one of two enormous influences over the



***In Europe's Shadow* leaves us far more educated about the country's past sufferings and present prospects than anticipated.**

historical lands of present-day Romania (the other being the Ottoman Empire, or Turkey), Russia looms large in the narrative as an ominous cloud the West has failed to notice over the Romanian, and Balkan, horizons.

More than once, Kaplan refers to his almost guilty concern that his *Balkan Ghosts*, in describing the eternal conflicts of the region, led President Bill Clinton and NATO not to intervene early in the former Yugoslavia out of a belief the problems there were intractable. Whether he overestimates his influence or not, Kaplan is clearly scarred (and scared) by the notion that his words could be taken to mean something he didn't intend.

He wants us to understand his dictum that only after knowing a country—its philosophical heritage, its underbelly of oppression, its people at their most elevated and at their most base—should intervention, when necessary, be considered. But, equally crucial, a country's history—however complicated, however messy, however cyclical—should never be used to justify leaving it to its unhappy fate.

Kaplan's skill lies in his ability not just to sketch with words, but to paint portraits that evoke eras and locales and nostalgia.

His narrative isn't linear; he skips backward and forward in time. Starting in 1981 with a journalistic lark from Tel Aviv to Bucharest, he jumps in a mere 250 pages to present-day interviews with former Romanian presidents and a prime minister, to a retelling of

the horrors perpetrated by World War II-era ruler Ion Antonescu, to the aforementioned lives of pre-nation state heroes, to bustling Belle Epoque Bucharest.

He also transcends location, as he retreats farther afield—from the capital, to modern-day Moldova, to the Romanian heartland, the Transylvanian countryside and, finally, nearby Hungary. Through it all, he repeatedly stops to learn from armchair and actual philosophers, the latter mostly through a close reading of their books and biographies.

In Europe's Shadow captures the imagination and gives readers a visceral sense, perhaps Kaplan's visceral sense, of Romania. It also leaves us far more educated about the country's past sufferings and present prospects than anticipated.

When so much news about international affairs is immediate, condensed and resolutely analytical, it can be difficult to release ourselves to the flow of a volume like this, to let it carry us through time and place with no clear destination. But Kaplan has an objective in mind, and when we reach the end, a bit soaked with

images and words, we realize he was firmly at the oars, guiding us to his ultimate conclusions all along.

Tracy Whittington is a Foreign Service officer currently working in the Office of the Historian. She has previously served in the Director General's Policy Coordination Office, the Operations Center, La Paz, Montreal and Kinshasa. She is a member of the FSJ Editorial Board.

Mission Impossible?

Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era

Michael Mandelbaum, Oxford University Press, 2016, \$29.95/hardcover; \$16.49/Kindle, 504 pages.

REVIEWED BY GENEVE MANTRI

Dean Acheson once said that “Britain had lost an empire and not yet found a role.” U.K. Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, when asked what the hardest thing about being prime minister was, quipped: “Events.” Michael Mandelbaum’s *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era* rests between these two competing images of international relations: Is the U.S. post-Cold War history a matter of a choice, or of choices thrust upon us?

Mandelbaum’s book is a much-needed and well-documented attempt to review and possibly revise the history of the post-Cold War world. The book has an epic sweep, but is still readable at 381 pages of text, seeking to encompass a vast array of recent U.S. history from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the Iran nuclear deal.

The core premise addresses a pivotal question: What has the U.S. penchant for nation-building in states far from our shores done for us, or accomplished for them? The author posits that nation-

building as a tool of foreign policy emerging from the end of the Cold War has been an unmitigated failure. The pursuit has yielded little, and cost the United States dearly.

There is much to commend here. Mandelbaum is a serious scholar, and his work deserves serious discussion and examination. One of his former collaborators, Thomas L. Friedman, the éminence grise of globalization, ranks it as one of the most important books for foreign policy intellectuals and policymakers to read.

That said, much of this work, especially the research on Iraq and Afghanistan, has been done elsewhere in more detail. But if one were looking for a single volume to take in all the post-Cold War lessons from the fall of the wall to the Obama doctrine, they could do worse than pick up this one. At its best, it summarizes very complex issues succinctly.

There is an unforced error in Mandelbaum’s analysis: he implies that the United States has an endless array of options, choices and tools at its disposal.

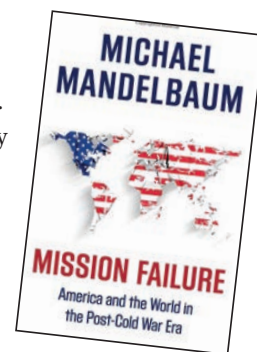
But there are a few nagging concerns. For starters, the sweep is far too broad to reassure the reader that one set of conclusions can apply. Did the author really have to include the Iran nuclear deal, the Middle East peace process and NATO expansion in this one volume? Much of this material is tangential to the core argument of the book and disturbs its coherence.

In nation-building interventions, are we trying to turn these countries into Denmark, or are we merely trying to stop them from becoming another Somalia? What does the Iran deal really have to do

with a search for successful nation-building? The author would have been better off with a tighter focus.

There is also an unforced error in Mandelbaum’s analysis: he implies that the United States has an endless array of options, choices and tools at its disposal. In discussing the Middle East, for example, he implies that the whole multiyear peace process enterprise is a Washington, D.C., policy fixation. He presents the drivers of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its linkage to stability in the region as a matter of fundamental U.S. interest, but then talks about U.S. engagement as an elective.

And there is a recurring theme that U.S. policy failures result from a lack of understanding within the foreign policy establishment, presumably including the Foreign Service. While there may



be faults with the U.S. diplomatic corps, a lack of analytical, cultural and linguistic abilities is not among them. Some problems suffer from a lack of options, policy relevance, tools, resources or political attention. But usually a Foreign Service officer is advocating for all of these.

The heart of the book offers a critique of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Mandelbaum offers key counter-arguments to two of the most controversial decisions of the war: disbanding the Iraqi Army and undertaking de-Baathification, thus precipitating the insurgency. He argues—albeit unconvincingly—that the

Iraqi Army had already disintegrated, and bringing it back would have alienated the people Saddam had oppressed, as would reinstating his party members.

There is a case to be made, as Mandelbaum does, that the United States could have avoided Somalia, as it did Rwanda, on the grounds that these are far-away countries of which we really know very little on a continent the United States has largely ignored for much of modern history.

But there also seems to be some inconsistency in his published views on this point. His earlier book, *That Used To Be Us* (Picador, 2012), written with Thomas L. Friedman, made the case that the United States ignores the impact of the globalized world at its peril. Yet Man-

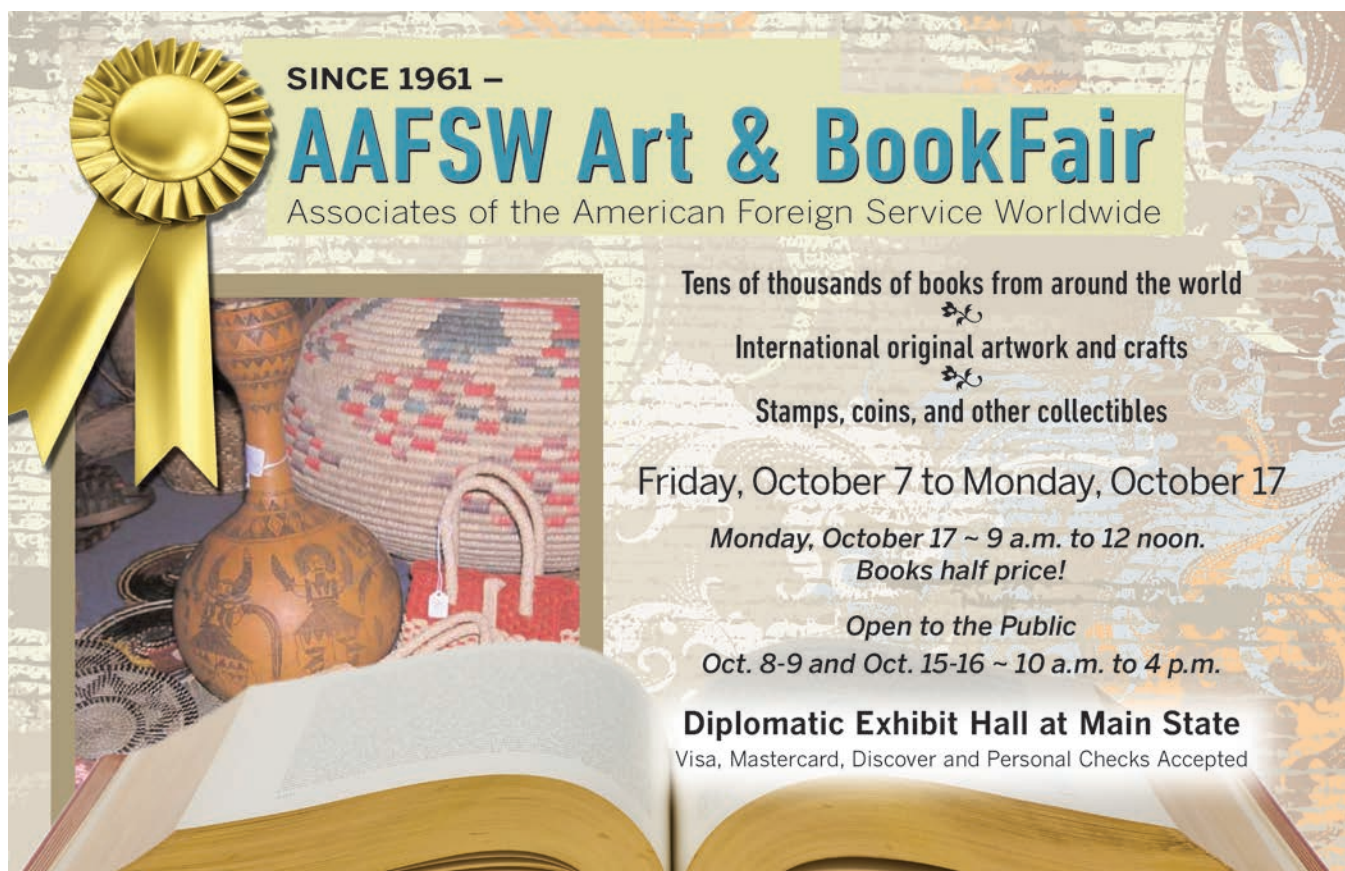
delbaum seems to have disregarded that advice in this recent work.

The United States tried very hard to ignore Bosnia and Kosovo, until the problems threatened NATO and European Union stability. The United States did ignore the 1994 Rwanda genocide, and has been apologizing ever since. And there is an argument to be made that the United States ignored Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion and paved the way for the Taliban, if not 9/11 and our current terrorism concerns. The fact is that there are some problems Washington can't ignore, even if it would like to.

Mission Failure makes an important contribution, but the core question is not simply: How do we do nation-building and get it right? Rather, it is this: In an

interconnected world, can we afford to sit the game out, despite the crudeness of our tools, and what are the long-term costs and consequences of doing so? ■

Geneve Mantri served as the nonproliferation manager at U.S. Embassy Chisinau from 2013 to 2015, where he dealt with trafficking, nonproliferation and WMD issues. Prior to that, he directed Amnesty International's counterterrorism program, and served on former Senator Richard Lugar's staff as a national security fellow. He has served as a consultant to the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Program and the Carnegie Corporation. In August, he joined AFSA's Professional Policy Issues team. He is married to a Foreign Service officer.



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Road Trip to Syria, 2011

BY LAURA MERZIG FABRYCKY

We had no idea then just how slender a needle's eye we were threading when we set off as a family to explore Syria over a long (American) Presidents Day weekend in 2011. Traveling with our 4- and 2-year-old daughters, we planned an ambitious itinerary, secured visas and headed north from our apartment on the western edge of Amman, to the border crossing at Daraa.

The Arab Spring was still in its heady early days. Egypt's youth had electrified the region a month earlier by toppling a dictator. We wondered if Syria, too, would soon taste freedom, but couldn't have anticipated just how hard and with what hell-fury the window that had been cracked open would be slammed down upon a people and a place.

Our happy memories of this trip now seem strange and incongruous alongside accounts of the civil uprisings and the regime's brutal retaliation in places like Daraa, Damascus and Bosra—not to mention the growth of ISIS and ensuing brutal-



Laura Merzig Fabrycky, whose husband is a State Department FSO, is a freelance writer and editor, poet and essayist. Her writing

has been published in *Books & Culture*, the *Review of Faith & International Affairs* and elsewhere. Her first collection of poetry, *Give Me the Word*, was published in 2015. She and her family are currently posted to Berlin.

Five years on, our memories are in a kind of interpretive ruin, and we have no place to fix them.

ity throughout major parts of the country.

As we drove up to the border, we read *Little House in the Big Woods* aloud in the car, eating Goldfish crackers. On the Syrian side of the border, we piled out of the car for passport control. The guards laboriously scrutinized our passports for signs of travel missteps into enemy territory, a familiar, delicate dance of Levantine travel.

Eventually, after much waiting, the kids and I returned to the car. Yet the scrutiny dragged on. My husband, David, attempted to speed up the process with polite chitchat while I continued to read *Little House* aloud in the parked car.

The Goldfish bag was now empty. Frustrated but not quite defeated, David returned to the car. "I need Hannah" (our youngest). Ten minutes later, he emerged from the building beaming, with passports in hand and Hannah in his arms.

Apparently, seeing her energetic blonde pigtails and enormous brown eyes once more helped the guards regain their perspective, and they gave up looking for signs of enmity. We drove off.

Listening to a Dora the Explorer "World Friendship" CD, we made our way through Daraa—where, in a few weeks' time, children who had scribbled anti-regime graffiti on a wall would be dragged

away to torture chambers.

Children's songs from France, Russia, Australia and China blared from the car. Just outside of Daraa, Hannah said she had to go to the bathroom, so we pulled over. I hopped out of the car, but just as I lifted the hatchback to retrieve the plastic potty, Dora's unmistakable voice belted out: "Shalom! From Israel!" Hardly the tones of a delicate dance. We jumped back in the car and zoomed off.

We ventured on to the still-inhabited Roman ruins at Bosra—taking in its basalt amphitheatre, climbing up to a perch to gaze down on the stage, where in March 2015 rebel forces would battle with regime troops. Winding through its ancient, cobbled streets, we stopped to let our girls play amidst the grassy, time-softened remains of a basalt Byzantine cathedral. They played "house" and "farm" around the toppled structures.

David and I sat on upturned column segments watching them, happy that we had ventured here and not to a cloistered tourist resort for the holiday. Residents waved and smiled at us. We waved and smiled back.

Later we headed into the mountains north of Damascus, to Ma'loula—one of the few towns where Aramaic (the language of Jesus) is still spoken. We ran



DAVID FABRYCKY

Laura Fabrycky and her daughters look down at the stage from high up in the amphitheater at Bosra.



DAVID FABRYCKY

Walking through the basalt ruins in Bosra.

inside a smoky, modest café to escape a torrential afternoon rain and had a satisfying meal just below the cliffs where the Orthodox monastery of St. Thecla perches.

After visiting the shrine, we hiked through a famous crack in the rock, bundled against the rainy cold. The apocryphal story tells of a rock that opened to allow an elderly St. Thecla, a contemporary of the Apostle Paul, to flee her persecutors after having faced torture and death sentences many times over in her life.

Two years later, the al-Qaida-linked al-Nusra Front would wage battle with the

Syrian army here, taking lives and kidnapping a dozen nuns.

Back in Damascus, the sights, smells, tastes and faces of the ancient streets left lasting impressions. We purchased a set of glass-paneled copper lanterns from a shopkeeper who, in his doting, fatherly way, gave our daughters little fabric-framed mirrors for their purses. *Mash'allah! Mash'allah!*

He had the lanterns wound tightly in bubble-wrap for our trip back to Amman, assuring us that if any of the panels broke, he would be honored to repair them. *Just*

come back, no problem.

The lanterns have by now even survived a transoceanic voyage. But five years on, our memories are in a kind of interpretive ruin, and we have no place to fix them. It was a good trip. We still say, as we did then, how lovely a place Syria was, even in the shadow of its ruthless dictator and his apparatus of fear.

Yet Bosra's basalt structures have been pocked by bullets, its mosaics punctured, many of its residences demolished. The destruction of sites like these, there and elsewhere, makes us weep, but that pales before the abject suffering and displacement endured by the Syrian people.

How many times have I thought of Thecla's rock and said a prayer for miraculous safe passages for the countless refugees who have suffered unrelentingly in the years since?

The diplomatic life comes with enormous privilege—which, at its best, is twined with a responsibility to venture far beyond the safety of Disney-like surreality; to take real and complicated places into one's own life, as best one can; to meet people, encounter cultures and make memories in places that many will never see.

While some among the American public harbor fear about the unknown and the "other," we think back to the faces we saw—including little ones with bright pigtails and brown, doe-like eyes, just like our Hannah; eyes that should have been compelling enough for a taste of liberty, for an end to the violence, for a livable, human peace—smiling, waving, as our daughters played farm in the gentle ruins of Bosra. ■



Off the coast of Liberia, small-scale fishermen return from a laborious day of fishing. Each vessel displays flags representing the diverse nationalities of the boat owner and the workers on board. The fish trade generates livelihoods for millions of people in Liberia and West Africa generally, and represents a critical source of nutrition. Until recently, the fish population had been decimated by large-scale industrial trawling. However, thanks to a partnership among the Liberian Ministry of Fisheries, the World Bank and the West Africa Regional Fisheries Program, conservation zones where trawlers are not allowed to fish have been established and dedicated to local fishing communities. These efforts have enabled small-scale fishermen to reclaim their livelihoods and improve the quality of life for their families and communities. ■

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Andrew Parks is a Foreign Service officer posted in Monrovia. As an engineering officer with USAID, he works on economic growth, health and education programs as they pertain to the development of infrastructure—including power production; farm-to-market roads; health clinics; community water distribution and treatment systems; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs for rural schools.

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