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**On the Cover:** AFSA's 2017 award winners. Centerpiece: Ambassador Nancy J. Powell (center), recipient of the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award, with previous winners (from left) former Senator Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), Ambassador William J. Harrop, FSO Stuart Kennedy and Ambassador Ruth Davis. Clockwise from top right: Aubrey N. Dowd; René Gutel; Wendy Brafman; Ambassador Tulinabo Mushingi; group winners Christina T. Le, Thomas T. Wong, Cecilia S Choi and Mariju L. Bofill; Henry Throop; Elzar T. Camper; Diane Corbin; and John S. Wood. Photographer: Toya Sarno Jordan.

# Building Enduring Support for the Foreign Service

BY BARBARA STEPHENSON

As I begin my second term as AFSA president, having been elected on a platform of continuing the work begun two years ago by the Strong Diplomacy slate, I reviewed my very first President's Views column.

In that maiden column, I made this commitment:

"I will speak to everyone during my tenure as AFSA president of the extraordinary demands that are made of the extraordinary people who answer the call to serve.

"As part of our pledge to worldwide availability, we in the Foreign Service willingly agree—in fact, work hard to prevail in a highly competitive selection process—to take on a career that requires us to serve in remote corners of the globe, often in unsafe and unhealthy conditions of genuine hardship, where good schools for our kids and decent jobs for our spouses are rare.

"We willingly agree to rotate jobs every two to three years as part of our competitive up-or-out promotions system. While that means we never get to settle comfortably in a job and a place we love, we know this is the path to the broad range of experience we need to grow as Foreign

Service professionals and prepare to lead America's foreign policy.

"Ours is a remarkable story of service, of delivering for our country

in the face of unique challenges. I want us to own that story, to take pride and find strength in it, and to share it with the American people."

I renew that commitment to you now, as I begin my second and final term as AFSA president, and I ask that you continue to do your part to own our story and to tell it effectively to our fellow Americans.

Why? Because it is working. I see concrete evidence that our fellow Americans increasingly know who we are, what we do, and why it matters.

For instance, in its reporting on the moving ceremony on Foreign Service Day, May 5, at which we in Washington and many of you at posts around the world paused for a moment to honor the 248 fallen colleagues whose names appear on AFSA's memorial plaques, *The Washington Post* refers to the "nobility" of the Foreign Service.

And in his July 28 *New York Times* Sunday Review piece, Roger Cohen writes, "Over the years, in war zones and outside them, I've known American Foreign Service officers for whom the word 'noble' was not misplaced."

So have I, and, so, I suspect, have you.

Explicit support for the Foreign Service now clearly extends to Capitol Hill, where the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in late July voted out the 2018 State authorization bill. I encourage you to read the entire bill, but particularly want to draw your attention to Section 101, "Sense of the Congress on Importance of Depart-

ment of State's Work," which is essentially a tribute to the Foreign Service and the importance of our work.

Section 101 asserts that "United States global engagement is key," and "United States leadership is indispensable in light of the many complex and interconnected threats facing the United States and the world"—challenges that "cannot be addressed without sustained and robust United States diplomatic and development leadership."

The "vital" work of State and USAID, Section 101 states, "is critical to the projection of American power and leadership worldwide, and without which Americans would be less safe, our economic power would be diminished, and global stability and prosperity would suffer."

If this language sounds familiar, it should, as it echoes messages AFSA has been pushing out across the country, as well as on the Hill, for many months now. In a word: Nine in 10 Americans favor strong American global leadership, which is unthinkable without a strong, professional Foreign Service deployed around the world protecting and defending America's people, interests and values.

To all of you who took up and delivered this message, I say thank you—and please keep up the good work. Own your story of remarkable service. Polish it. Tell it with pride. Every time you do, you make the Foreign Service stronger by building broad and enduring support for us and the essential work we do to maintain America's global leadership. ■



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

**Editor in Chief, Director of Publications**  
Shawn Dorman: [dorman@afsa.org](mailto:dorman@afsa.org)

**Managing Editor**  
Susan Brady Maitra: [maitra@afsa.org](mailto:maitra@afsa.org)

**Associate Editor**  
Gemma Dvorak: [dvorak@afsa.org](mailto:dvorak@afsa.org)

**Publications Coordinator**  
Dmitry Filipoff: [filiipoff@afsa.org](mailto:filiipoff@afsa.org)

**Ad & Circulation Manager**  
Ed Miltenberger: [miltenberger@afsa.org](mailto:miltenberger@afsa.org)

**Art Director**  
Caryn Suko Smith

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**Advertising Intern**  
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## CONTACTS



[www.afsa.org](http://www.afsa.org)

**AFSA Headquarters:**  
(202) 338-4045; Fax (202) 338-6820  
**State Department AFSA Office:**  
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# Stories of Excellence

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Thirty years ago, fresh out of Cornell with a double major in Soviet studies and government, I headed over to Moscow. I was going to fill one of the many jobs vacated when the Soviets pulled all the Russian staff out of the embassy in the wake of the Lonetree spy scandal.

The Americans working for the U.S. diplomatic mission in the USSR had to pick up all the work that had been done by local staff, including the jobs of drivers, nannies, laborers, clerks.

I signed on as a nanny for a U.S. diplomatic family. With a Top Secret clearance from having served as an intern on the Soviet Desk at State, I was quickly recruited to also help out in a stretched political section.

The political section was in a cramped, crumbling, internal part of the “old” chancery—the new one standing empty since listening devices had been discovered embedded inside the walls. Security restrictions in place dictated that American diplomats could not meet with Russians alone, so I got to tag along with political officers to fascinating meetings with dissidents and other contacts.

While harassment and surveillance of U.S. diplomats was ongoing, this was also 1987, the early days of Mikhail Gorbachev’s

*glasnost* and *perestroika* reform effort that saw improved relations with the United States, along with historic U.S.-Soviet summits and nuclear arms control agreements.

This experience showed me the value of diplomacy. It also introduced me to the extraordinary individuals of the U.S. Foreign Service who practice it, no matter the conditions or hardship.

These diplomats, some of the smartest people I’d ever met, were determined to understand the truth of the situation on the ground, to share that with Washington and to help develop, refine and support the administration’s policies.

They served faithfully and effectively, without fanfare or bluster or the expectation of winning a prize. And as a result, relationships were fostered, understanding was gained, and diplomacy worked.

Similarly today, in the face of Vladimir Putin’s order that Embassy Moscow and the U.S. consulates reduce staff by 755, the embassy team will continue doing the diplomacy it’s there to do, no matter what.

The Foreign Service is quite accustomed to “doing more with less,” but sometimes such challenges go to the bone. Current conditions in Washington—the hiring freeze, departmental reorganization (oddly called the “redesign”) and proposed 30 percent budget cuts for State and USAID—present such a challenge.

The hiring freeze, in particular, has left many scratching their heads wondering “to what end?” While limited hiring has

resumed, the disruption continues.

To follow our July-August article, “How the Hiring Freeze Is Affecting Family Member Employment,” we reached out to the FS community for feedback from the field. We heard from dozens of employees and family members: You’ll find a compilation of messages in Letters-Plus, and the full set of responses on our website.

Through the disruptions of unfilled positions and department “redesign,” it is appropriate to remind ourselves—and fellow Americans—of diplomacy’s critical role in national security and the vital work of the U.S. Foreign Service.

This month we focus on excellence. We spotlight many outstanding members of the Foreign Service by sharing the stories of this year’s AFSA award winners. These awards honor FS members who make a difference—through exemplary performance or constructive dissent, by promoting democracy, by supporting their local community and through a lifetime of contributions to American diplomacy.

In these pages we salute Ambassador Nancy Powell, recipient of AFSA’s Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award; constructive dissent award winners Elzar Camper, Wendy Brafman, Mariju Bofill, Cecilia Choi, Thomas Wong and Christina Le; Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy recipients René Gutel and Ambassador Tulinabo Mushingi; and exemplary performance award winners Diane Corbin, Aubrey Dowd, Henry Throop and John Wood. ■



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

## The Trouble with Special Operations

The June *FSJ* on “Diplomats and Soldiers” was an important contribution to professional diplomatic discussion. The focus rubric, “Perspectives on Diplomacy and Defense,” was just right.

Particularly noteworthy is the article “Special Operations and Diplomacy: A Unique Nexus” by FSO and former foreign policy adviser (POLAD) Steve Kashkett. His detailed description of special operations forces (SOF) and the work they do is an important contribution to the education of FSOs.

This is especially so because of the recent prominence of SOF in both the military and civilian worlds. For many, SOF has become the weapon of choice in a long and unsatisfactory war where the traditional tools just don’t seem to work.

For civilians, including those in politics and government as well as the general public, special operations forces have become today’s heroes, today’s “Greatest Generation.” They are pretty much the military image on TV, in the movies and in the media. Fit and grungy young men are seen everywhere. They have become so fashionable that even the CIA has gone into the business.

This rise to prominence is potentially dangerous, however. SOF is seen too quickly as the solution to today’s security challenge. In fact, the SOF instrument is not new, and has been overplayed in the past. President John F. Kennedy thought that the Army’s Green Berets could solve the problem of pajama-clad guerrillas, but it proved to be more complicated.

The problem with the current SOF buzz is that it tends to lead to inflated expectations. It also leads to some confu-

sion about what SOF is. As Mr. Kashkett points out, there are in fact two versions of SOF: the indirect, or engagement, operations (think Army Special Forces) and the direct, or kinetic, operations (think SEAL Team 6 and the killing of Osama bin Laden). These are sometimes colloquially referred to as white and black ops by the military.

The two are very different, but the line dividing them is fuzzy, and they tend to become intermixed in the minds of many civilians and even some military.

This distinction is important when considering the current trend toward extensive and regular global deployment of SOF units.

As Mr. Kashkett notes, “numerous cases highlight the need for close diplomatic-military coordination on kinetic actions that will take

place on foreign soil,” but such action can too easily be seen as aggressive or even neocolonial. The small numbers involved make such deployments seem almost innocuous, and the recent dramatic expansion in the size of the SOF community means that capability abounds.

We not only go to war with the Army we have, but the type of war we fight can be determined by the Army we have. Indirect SOF should be seen as providing military assistance subject to traditional criteria, while direct SOF should be seen as making war; and there should be no confusion about it.

Another conceptual danger lies in separating SOF from other military personnel attached to embassies. Military officers have long been stationed at U.S. embassies as attachés. Military assistance programs, on the other hand, are

a relatively new addition to the embassy family and are deployed only under specific, policy-driven conditions. They are not a standard component of every U.S. embassy. SOF elements should be treated the same way—used sparingly and carefully.

But SOF is relatively cheap, semi-clandestine and in large supply, so the temptation to over-employ appears irresistible. The SOF operation in the Philippines is now in its 17th year and counting. (In fact, if you count their earlier involvement in the Philippine insurrection, it is 117 years and counting.)

Certainly the current indiscriminate spread of SOF programs in Africa—where the local military are generally part of the problem, not part of the solution—should be subject to serious review.

The key quality of special operations forces, after all, is that they are tactical. SOF doesn’t win wars, even small ones, by itself. The military knows this, but too many civilians don’t, because media coverage is about battles covered on the evening news and not about wars.

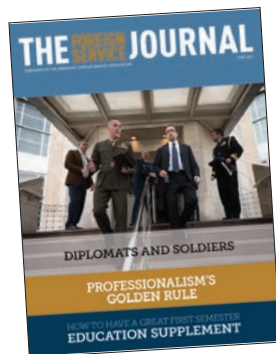
The bottom line is that SOF is useful when part of an effective military strategy. And a military strategy is effective only when part of an effective political-diplomatic strategy.

Clausewitz taught us that long ago, and recent years have made it clear that his insight still stands.

*Edward Marks*  
Ambassador, retired  
Washington, D.C.

## A Pitch for Military Exercises

I appreciated your June issue’s focus on the nexus between diplomacy and defense, and would like to add my own perspective. Military exercises are a unique way to test and teach foreign



policy theories that have real-life, real-time implications.

My participation in the 2017 Eager Lion exercise in Jordan convinced me that military exercises can teach us what the Department of Defense ought to learn about the State Department and foreign policy objectives. Trainings that include a Command Post Exercise, in which military leaders role-play their way through a military campaign in an imaginary country, can also teach State about the effects of military operations in a host country.

For 10 days in May, in addition to my real job as foreign policy adviser (POLAD) to Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade in Bahrain, I moonlighted as the POLAD to Combined Joint Task Force–Blueland in an imaginary country fighting an insurgency sponsored by its neighbor, Redland. What I learned there could fill a course at the Foreign Service Institute.

What should DOD learn? First, partner nations are not monolithic. They face internal threats. Sometimes they inadvertently contribute to internal threats. Second, partners have real reasons for saying no, and continuing to push them can be counterproductive. Third, we can hurt our cause by failing to consider the effects of our actions on host-country nationals.

Fourth, refugees and internally displaced people will not return to their homes unless they can return to something safe and worthwhile. Fifth, some countries do not act in good faith when negotiating peace. And sixth, partnering with irregular forces will have indirect or secondary effects on the host country and the region.

What can State learn about the effects of military operations in a host country?



First, fighting may not take as much time and effort as supply and logistics. Second, DOD sees State and the interagency as a black box. I explained to military colleagues that different bureaus in State, different overseas missions and other agencies

do not always come with unified views, policy preferences and capabilities.

I saw an opportunity for both State and DOD to develop more effective shared approaches to problems. For example, both could benefit from viewing peace talks holistically. Rather than silently resenting the peace talks and restrictions imposed by headquarters, we could shape the talks by offering tangible objectives for negotiations.

Serving at an embassy or on a desk in Washington, we cannot afford to fail or make mistakes, even if we learn from them. The stakes are too high. But we must improve our skills as foreign policy practitioners, just as our military colleagues are constantly honing their skills.

Sending FSOs to participate in complex exercises such as EL17 can provide valuable training, not only for military leaders, but also for FSOs. In today's world, FSOs often find that their best opportunities for shaping policy and making a difference at home and abroad are through sharing experiences with our DOD colleagues.

*Seiji T. Shiratori*

*FSO, POLAD to Task Force 51/5th  
Marine Expeditionary Brigade  
Bahrain*

## Social Media Training for the Future

Amelia Shaw's clarion call to reconsider how the Foreign Service uses social media (May Speaking Out) was as lucid



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as it was timely. Social media platforms are designed to enhance and maintain existing relationships with people and institutions, not just push out U.S. government messages. I commend her for a thoughtful, constructive and proactive article.

Sometimes I also feel like I have traveled back in time when I am working on social media. Ms. Shaw is right to point out that the State Department is behind the times; after all, *we're* being dumped by Research in Motion.

Notwithstanding this unfortunate reality, our Service has made a lot of progress since my first association with the department in spring 2007. Our videos are shorter, our tweets snappier and our photos sharper; and this trend is something that each officer can support and even accelerate.

Ms. Shaw is right to highlight the importance of training, but her focus is too narrow because the economic officer of today may be a public diplomacy officer tomorrow. All officers should consider taking digital diplomacy courses like PY360 (available on OpenNet only).

If FSI training is not possible, officers can enroll in the Hootsuite Academy or the Salford Business School's social media massive open online course (MOOC). Both are free.

Because raters are now required to incorporate how their ratees facilitate the professional development of their subordinates (as appropriate), managers also have a key role in enhancing our Service's social media capabilities and capacity as directed by 15 STATE 87964.

Senior managers need to hold their mid-level managers accountable for "embrac[ing] disruptive technologies" like social media and "devis[ing] strategies to integrate new technologies into

the workplace," as stated in the current "Decision Criteria for Tenure and Promotion in the Foreign Service."

Mid-level managers need to ensure that their officers, locally employed (LE) staff and eligible family members (EFM) *all* look for ways to incorporate social media into diplomacy *before* every meeting or event, to make sure there is sufficient time to take that compelling photo, record an interesting statement on video or prepare a pithy tweet.

Jay Gullish, a former EFM employed under the Expanded Professional Associates Program at Embassy New Delhi, helped persuade our front office to institutionalize this by adding a box to briefing memos and scheduling memos.

Finally, the department can promote the enhancement of digital diplomacy capabilities by incorporating employees' access to Adobe's Home Use Program at the appropriate time.

Ms. Shaw calls for the creation of a cache for best practices to drive social media development within our Service. Fortunately, we already have such a platform: Corridor. While underused, this platform can facilitate dynamic, open and informal conversations among officers involved in public diplomacy.

I invite like-minded officers, LE staff and EFMs to consider joining the Outreach and Social Media community (available on OpenNet only) so that we can learn from each other.

Enhancing our social media capabilities will not be easy, but it is imperative we do so because corporations, governments (at all levels) and leaders are increasingly using social media to communicate with their audiences. If we want people to consider what the U.S. government has to say, we need to consider these platforms (and the tools to

use them) an essential tool of diplomacy.

Let's begin changing now, before someone unfamiliar with the art of diplomacy forces change upon us.

*David S. Boxer*

*FSO*

*Embassy New Delhi*

## Enduring Sexism at State?

Tom Hutson's May letter to the editor responding to the March cover image reminded me that the State Department may still be plagued by sexist attitudes toward female FSOs. It seems that little has changed since my 2005 retirement, which was due in large part to what I perceived as sexism within the department's management structure.

The Foreign Service and the State Department, which claim to have taken great steps to decrease the male-dominated and male-oriented structures that direct our policies, have a long way to go. Don't tell me that we have had three female Secretaries of State and a number of female assistant secretaries. Those are political appointees, not rank-and-file female FSOs.

I refer to how female officers are treated by their male colleagues and the often unequal power dynamics between male and female officers. Want a few hints? Look to the daily micro-aggressions, where men routinely talk over and discount women's opinions, where women are told to "smile" more and act friendlier, where women are patronized and their input and professional acumen discounted.

My guess is that the results of a recent study of female Forest Service officers would be largely congruent with those of female FSOs, were such a study to be undertaken. The McClatchy Washington bureau noted that the complaints of women in the Forest Service study "echoed complaints lodged by women in

the military and *other federal agencies*."

So don't look up to reassure yourselves of the commitment to gender equality. Look down into the ranks, and ask female officers how they are treated in terms of assignments, promotions and day-to-day interactions within the workplace; how they manage the power structure dynamics; and whether they are convinced that the department's claim of commitment to gender equality has shown results.

Whether bureaus or posts have policies in place to ensure equality is meaningless unless they are actually implemented and enforced. It is the everyday relationships between male and female officers in meetings, as well as whether female officers feel they are treated as equals in terms of their input and value, that determine whether sexism in the Foreign Service and the department are on the wane.

*Laura Livingston*

*FSO, retired*

*Bellingham, Washington*

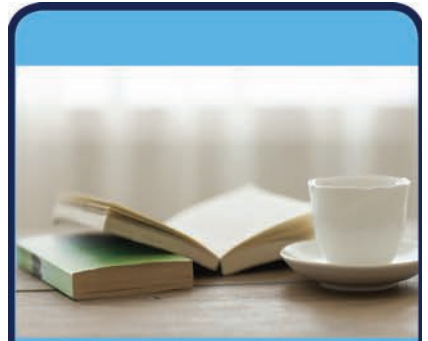
## CORRECTION

The lead focus article in the print edition of the July-August *FSJ*, "An Existential Threat That Demands Greater FS Engagement" by Tim Lattimer, contains an error.

In the fourth paragraph of the last section, "The Role of the Foreign Service," the last two statements are wrongly attributed to Stephanie Kinney.

Ms. Kinney was, indeed, "the only FSO" involved in the 1990s climate negotiations. But nearly 25 years later, in 2015, it was not Kinney, but Tim Lattimer, who was "one of only two FSOs" in the core delegation in Paris. Lattimer believes the Foreign Service can, and must, do better.

We regret the error, which has been corrected in the *Journal's* online edition. ■



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# Impact of the Family Member Hiring Freeze: Feedback from the Field

*The July-August feature, “Out in the Cold,” amplified discussion of the current family member hiring freeze. To better understand its on-the-ground consequences, the Journal invited readers to share their own stories and experiences. Given that some responses could have direct consequences for an employee or family member, we agreed to run some comments from people who preferred to remain anonymous. Each respondent is known to the Journal.*

*The responses were varied and compelling, but there were far too many to publish them all. The following is a representative sampling of the messages we received. Some have been excerpted for space reasons; see the AFSA website for the full set of responses.*

*—The Editors*

## A manager’s perspective

I’d like to offer the perspective of a manager. Our consular section is funded for four EFM positions: Due to the hiring freeze, one remains empty and unfillable after a recent transfer, and the other is filled but the EFM is awaiting a security clearance. She’s been told that even after her clearance is granted, she will not be able to accept the position.

Our two remaining EFMs divide their time between fingerprinting visa applicants, observing DNA collection and performing notary services, leaving them little time to do anything else in our busy section. We now send officers on all prison visits and welfare/whereabouts checks, causing visa and routine service wait times in American Citizen Services to rise dramatically.

We have open positions that need to be filled by cleared U.S. citizens; we have U.S. citizens eager to do the work; Consular Affairs has an operational budget to support these positions; it’s absurd not to allow us to hire them.

*Not for attribution*

## Small posts lose highly skilled workers

Obviously, the hiring freeze has a negative effect on families. However, I would say that posts are negatively impacted even more—particularly smaller posts.

EFMs work hard to make themselves adaptable and may have experience in many different disciplines. Aside from the education and experience they bring in the door with them, many have taken FSI courses to learn a specific State Department skill that will best serve their gaining post. Many have attended and passed multiple FSI courses—the same courses direct hires attend—and have worked in those disciplines for years.

That training and experience does not disappear when they move on to their next post. It is not uncommon for an EFM to be the most experienced person at post in a particular skill, either because there is no direct-hire position allocated to that post or because the position is allocated to an entry-level officer.

In every position I have ever held as an EFM (different at every post), I have been called on to apply knowledge gained from my previous EFM employment. I am certain that I’m not the only

one who has experienced this. Good post management is well aware of the resources their EFMs bring to the table.

*Richard Arnold  
Hermosillo, Mexico*

## Failing to serve Americans in Europe

Simply put, for lack of a consular associate, the quality of consular services for U.S. citizens traveling and living in this European country is compromised. The hiring freeze is preventing a fully trained, qualified and cleared EFM from starting work.

The resulting American Citizen Services staffing shortage means longer waits for passports, birth and death reports and notary services. It means fewer visits to citizens in hospitals and prisons, slower repatriations and less attentive assistance to crime victims.

With Western Europe facing terrorist threats, this is no time to cheat our taxpayers out of the service they pay for.

*Not for attribution*

## I’m not good enough anymore?

As an Army reserve officer (veteran of the Iraq War) and military spouse with an undergraduate degree in economics and an MBA, I find it incredibly difficult to be in the position that I am due to the EFM hiring freeze.

I have worked in the Political and Economic sections at U.S. Embassy Djibouti for more than 15 months; my husband recently received his new assignment to Addis Ababa. The hiring freeze

means there will be no positions for me in Addis Ababa, so I resigned from my EFM position and accepted a contractor position supporting Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. This will require that my family be geographically separated; I will remain in Djibouti, potentially without diplomatic status, and I will incur additional expenses for separate housing and utilities.

During Secretary of Defense James Mattis' visit to Djibouti, I was the control officer responsible for coordinating and planning with the Office of the Secretary of Defense staff, embassy staff and CLDJ/CJTF-HOA military staff members. I was also the control officer for the East Africa Security Synchronization Conference, where more than 26 VIPs (ambassadors and military general officers) came together to discuss security issues in the region.

I have written numerous cables and reports for Washington that are directly tied to foreign policies concerning the mass migration of refugees into the region and human trafficking, as well as other annual reports mandated by Congress.

I find it heartbreaking that I was taken advantage of to accomplish the work of political and economic officers, yet suddenly I'm no longer good enough.

*LaTonya S. Hama  
Djibouti, Djibouti*

## Key positions vacant

I have a strong résumé with broad experience in both private and public sectors and an active Top Secret clearance. Even though my post could use someone just like me to fill several important but now vacant positions, because of the hiring freeze I have returned to private freelance work instead. I am one of the lucky ones who has a more or less portable career.

Our mission, however, has lost the

opportunity to hire a qualified EFM to fill a mission-valuable grants coordinator position or to serve as the community liaison officer (CLO) at a bargain rate.

With a huge embassy community turnover this summer, the absence of a CLO will surely affect mission morale—and if another evacuation is authorized, like the one a couple of years ago, there will be chaos without a CLO to help coordinate.

The high visibility of U.S.-Ukrainian relations means that leaving the grants coordinator position vacant (a position that manages aid programs targeting trafficking, corruption and economic issues) will surely strain the public affairs section.

These are only a few examples of how the hiring freeze will negatively impact Mission Ukraine.

*AmyLyn Reynolds  
Kyiv, Ukraine*

## No more shining light

It is hard enough for a capable and accomplished spouse to put his or her own career ambitions aside to support the other, but the shining light has always been the possibility of working at post. Now that is gone.

From a professional perspective, it's terrifying. EFM's are a vital part of our operations and save us money. We have positions at post that are sitting empty that we can't fill. I'm not sure how long we will be able to operate like this, either in the professional context or in the personal one.

*Shoshauna Clark  
Kolkata, India*

## Mission Japan takes a hit

As at other posts, Mission Japan will be hardest hit [by the EFM hiring freeze] in the Consular section. We cannot

## EFM Hiring Freeze

Eligible family member (EFM) employment is a top priority for AFSA. The issue has been raised repeatedly in recent discussions AFSA leadership has had with members. Members told us that critical post operations were threatened by the State Department's decision not to backfill positions vacated as a result of the normal Foreign Service rotation cycle. As EFM's are often by far the most cost-effective way to get a job done, the decision baffled many members.

AFSA also knows that the loss of EFM employment is a real hardship for families. In our Structured Conversations, members tell us they love their jobs but worry about the impact of their highly mobile service on spouses, many highly educated and with career aspirations of their own.

AFSA will continue to press for a resumption of EFM hiring. Please join us in making the points that EFM hiring is cost-effective, contributes mightily to critical post operations, and is good for families.

—AFSA

replace several of our EFM consular associates and assistants, which means that we will lose valuable support for fingerprinting and other administrative tasks. Our Management and RSO sections will also take a hit.

We are unable to fill or replace the following critical positions: general services travel assistant, human resources assistant, housing coordinator, work order clerk, badging clerk, mail and pouch assistant, and CLO (Osaka). The incumbents are transferring out, and replacements cannot be appointed.

Over the past five to 10 years, State has reduced overseas officer positions with the knowledge that qualified and talented EFMs could fill these positions with savings to the department. For example, the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs abolished the U.S. direct-hire HR deputy position for Japan and replaced it with an EFM HR assistant position (under the Expanded Professional Associates Program).

That EFM just left post, and we cannot refill behind her; she handled some critical portfolios (e.g., employee evaluation reports, EFM employment, duty roster, seasonal hire program, bidding coordination and VIP control room coordination, among others). This work will now fall, along with everything else, on one human resources officer. Around the world, a similar story is playing out across many embassy offices.

From a personal perspective, my wife applied for an EFM position, and her nepotism review was complete and clearance investigation ongoing when the hiring freeze took effect. Now she is unable to follow through with her appointment and, as a result, will not be able to join the Family Reserve Corps when we leave Tokyo. Many other families have similar concerns.

*Ken Meyer  
Tokyo, Japan*

## **We are being discarded**

I am a proud father and a “trailing spouse.” I am also a business executive with more than 20 years of experience. During our family’s first three assignments—in Seoul, New Delhi and Frankfurt—I was fortunate to maintain my own career, successfully transitioning from Canon USA to Canon Korea, then to Canon India and later, during our assignment in Frankfurt, working under

contract for Canon India.

This all changed when my wife was assigned to Beijing. According to State Department regulations, family members are not allowed to work on the local economy there because there is no bilateral work agreement.

I recognized that my only opportunity to be employed during our four-year assignment would be to work within the embassy. I embraced this opportunity and successfully completed the Basic Consular Course. I had applied for, interviewed and accepted a job offer from the Consular section in Beijing prior to the federal hiring freeze taking effect.

EFMs are proud trailing spouses, yet we are also professionals, possessing a sense of devotion to the mission and a desire to be productive members of society. We feel let down. We have proudly served and endured sacrifices, but now we feel that we are being discarded.

*Eugenio Otero-Meléndez  
Beijing, People’s Republic of China*

## **Waiting it out in Baghdad**

I am serving as Embassy Baghdad’s Security Force branch chief in Iraq.

My wife planned to join me—it’s part of the reason why we bid on the position. She is still waiting on the next round of EFM waiver positions to be filled with a January 2018 start date. If she decides to take one of these positions, we will have to extend for her to complete her mandatory 10 months of employment.

I understand the reasons behind the hiring freeze, but it seems that State has taken it further than needed. I hope that we can get this resolved soon.

*Tony Pate  
Baghdad, Iraq*

## **Should we stay in the Service?**

My wife is assigned to a communist country where there are obvious security reasons for cleared Americans to perform a range of functions. We bid on this post in part because of its reputation for offering solid EFM employment.

I have more than 20 years of experience in a field analogous to a general services officer, and secured a job prior to arrival at post, pending a security clearance. The revalidation of my clearance was not completed before the hiring freeze took effect. The job I was to fill remains empty, and the work undone.

We are now trying to sort out the best course of action for our family. Should my wife curtail and return to the United States? Does it make sense for our family to remain in the Foreign Service?

Recent FLO statistics indicate that just 25 percent of EFMs are male, which tells me that even in 2017, men are still reluctant to be the “trailing spouse.” As with our family, I can’t help but think a prolonged hiring freeze will have a disproportionate impact on retention of women in the Foreign Service.

*Not for attribution*

## **Personnel and personal**

The EFM hiring freeze has greatly affected me, both personally and professionally.

Professionally, we are short-staffed in our Consular section, where both American Citizen Services and visa applicant numbers continue to rise. One of our consular assistant EFM hires had received her clearance, and we were just about to bring her onboard, but have not been able to do so because of the freeze.

We had also just received qualified candidates for a consular associate position, but have not been able to continue



the hiring process because of the freeze. In an already short-staffed, medium-sized section, this really hurts—both in the extra work now being done by others, and in the drop in morale of an overworked section.

Personally, the hiring freeze is affecting my bid strategy as I look for my next assignment. My husband has a unique technical security skill set, and two prior posts actually created jobs for him. This is not a possibility in the current environment, and if he cannot work, it's a loss for the department. I have no idea what we will do next.

*Pamela J. Hack*

*Amsterdam, Netherlands*

## Without EFM, our whole embassy is suffering

The summer transfer season hit us particularly hard this year, with a turnover of more than 50 percent in U.S. direct-hire staff. It also had an adverse impact on operations throughout the embassy. From personal experience I've seen how this affected the Information Resources Management, Consular, Regional Security and other sections.

The impact on IRM was initially minimal, as we were nearly fully staffed when the hiring freeze went into effect. However, since then, we have lost our classified pouch assistant and have had to rely on our EFM mailroom supervisor to manage all aspects of handling the pouch. He expects to leave post next summer.

RSO has fared much worse: It has no EFM to handle badging and no coordinator to handle residential security, leaving the office management specialist (OMS) to handle those duties (and still serve as a backup to the front offices of the bilateral mission to Ethiopia and the U.S. Mission to the African Union). I should add that this is her first overseas tour.

Consular has been hit the hardest. The

remaining EFM has picked up the slack to wear multiple hats—from handling American Citizen Services cases to assisting with visa investigations—and has now also been pushed to take the training to serve as an adjudicator. This section had a 75 percent turnover this transfer season, and the personnel shortages have forced the consul general to defer all leave requests for his locally employed staff until new officers arrive.

Elsewhere, our inability to hire an EFM coordinator for facilities means that the 20-year-old family member originally hired to serve as an escort to custodial staff working inside controlled access areas was asked to fill in as acting facilities manager; during one memorable stretch, he was also called on to fill in as an OMS for the chargé d'affaires. The running joke for some time was that personnel shortages put him on track to become the youngest chargé in the department's history.

Staffing gaps also resulted in another EFM spouse filling in as the acting general services officer. The embassy was fortunate that she had a background in logistics and had served as a locally employed customs and shipping agent in her previous job. The situation was similar in HR, where an EFM spouse who was hired to work part-time found herself serving as the acting human resources officer.

It's been a rough summer for us here, and we can only hope that the freeze on hiring EFM's will be lifted sooner rather than later.

*Armando Muir*

*Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

## A "Catch-22" for EFM's

I thought the July article on the EFM hiring freeze ("Out in the Cold: How the Hiring Freeze Is Affecting Family Member Employment") was very thoughtful and

balanced, but the one thing the article does not mention is that if there is no bilateral work agreement in place, EFM's are not even allowed to work on the local market. This puts them in a "Catch-22" situation—not allowed to work outside the embassy, and now not allowed to work inside either.

If this freeze continues much longer, we are going to start seeing some couples and families decide the Foreign Service is not for them. This would be a devastating loss to the ranks of the Foreign Service. We want diversity in our Foreign Service—which includes not only singles but also couples and families.

*Not for attribution*

## Our Force Multiplier

In my current post, a cleared EFM has worked as our classified pouch clerk, escorting the pouch to and from the airport. His departure, with subsequent inability to fill the vacancy, means officers will be required to drop their important work for hours at a time to escort the pouches to and from the airport. It also means that the family member, with a costly Top Secret clearance, will be unable to gain employment at his next post.

Our post no longer has cleared EFM security escorts. This means that normal housekeeping functions, such as waste removal and rest room cleaning, will either be performed by direct-hire officers (in which case the offices will do without those services for potentially days at a time), or the officers will have to interrupt their work to escort the uncleared staff themselves. This is in no way an effective, or economical, use of talent.

Hire the EFM's. They are the force multiplier desperately needed at our overseas missions.

*Not for attribution* ■

## Putin Orders U.S. to Cut Diplomatic Staff

On July 30, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that the United States diplomatic mission in Russia must cut personnel by 755—including diplomats and locally engaged staff—by Sept. 1. Prior to the announcement, the total number of employees stood at about 1,200.

The order is in response to the increased sanctions on Russia approved by Congress on July 22, and which President Donald Trump signed into law on Aug. 2.

In addition to the reduction in staff, Russian authorities seized two diplomatic compounds, a warehouse and a dacha (country house). This mirrors the seizure of two Russian properties in the United States in December 2016.

It is not clear how many American diplomats will be expelled from the country; the bulk of those facing dismissal are likely to be Russian employees of Embassy Mos-



U.S. Embassy Moscow, as seen from the street.

cow and the consulates in St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg and Vladivostok.

“They will have to fire the Russian citizens,” Vladimir Frolov, a foreign policy analyst, told *The New York Times*. “It will create an enormous inconvenience for the U.S. mission here, essentially slowing

down the work but not affecting its core functions.”

Said the State Department spokesperson: “This is a regrettable and uncalled-for act. We are assessing the impact of such a limitation and how we will respond to it.”

The departing American ambassador, John F. Tefft, also expressed “his strong disappointment and protest” over the cuts, which are reminiscent of similar “tit-for-tat” sanctions during the Cold War.

## Letter to S: Don’t Move the Refugee Bureau

A July 16 letter to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson signed by 58 former diplomats and leaders of nongovernmental organizations urges the Secretary to safeguard the roles and mission of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. This was in response to a White House memo obtained by CNN suggesting that PRM and the Consular Affairs Bureau be moved to the Department of Homeland Security.

The signatories, who have served under both Democratic and Republican presidents, also stated their belief that the

### Heard on the Hill

“Adequately funding our diplomatic efforts saves American lives.”

—Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.),  
House Budget Committee hearing,  
July 19

“We are reducing USAID missions and eliminating economic development assistance to 37 countries around the globe, and the issue to me—aside from humanitarianism, the rightness of the cause—is that others will take advantage of our absence.”

—Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), Senate  
Appropriations Subcommittee  
hearing, June 13

“If we don’t lead in security and commerce, as well as in values and ideas, that vacuum will be filled by others, including those wishing us harm. Leading takes resources; sufficient resources are needed for our military for sure, but also for our diplomats working to end many of the conflicts impacting our security.”

—Rep. Ed Royce (R-Calif.),  
House Foreign Affairs Committee  
hearing, June 14

“A world led by U.S. leadership, leading with our values, is a better world.”

—Rep. Ami Bera (D-Calif.),  
House Foreign Affairs Committee  
hearing, June 14

loss of PRM's assistance functions would have profound and negative consequences for the Secretary's ability to influence policy issues.

The letter recognizes the important role that DHS has to play in refugee and resettlement programs in the United States: ensuring robust vetting processes and determining the eligibility and admissibility of all refugees.

However, the signatories expressed concern that DHS does not have the international infrastructure or the necessary expertise in identifying refugee groups in need of protection. Most importantly, DHS is unable to "understand the diplomatic consequences or opportunities to leverage resettlement for U.S foreign policy interests."

The letter was also sent to the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Committees on Foreign Relations and the Appropriations subcommittees on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs.

## Insigniam Survey Results and Next Steps

Results of the Insigniam survey of State Department and USAID employees, commissioned by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, as part of a process to "redesign" the department, were released internally on July 5.

The report revealed wariness among employees about the management of the State Department. "People do not speak optimistically about the future," the report states. In particular, respondents indicated concern that the Secretary of State and President Donald Trump do not fully understand the role of the department in advancing the interests of the United States in the world.

One respondent quoted in the report said: "I am concerned that the dra-

matic reduction in budget, paired with extended staffing gaps at the most senior level, will result not only in the loss of an exceptionally talented group of people from our ranks, but will hamper our impact to fulfill our mission for decades to come."

Other themes in the report reflect the respondents' frustration with outdated technology and duplicative processes (including congressional reporting requirements) they perceive as inefficient.

The report also suggested that consular responsibilities be transferred to the Department of Homeland Security, though it did not indicate whether that suggestion came from employee input.

Sec. Tillerson announced that the next step would be a series of working groups led by Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan and covering five areas of concern highlighted in the report: overseas operations, foreign assistance programs, technology, staffing and administration.

The groups will contribute to a report outlining proposals for reorganization, which the department will present to the Office of Management and Budget by Sept. 15. It's not clear at this time how much influence the survey report and working group conclusions will have on the final plan.

At a Town Hall meeting in the Dean Acheson Auditorium at the State Department on Aug. 8, the Deputy Secretary discussed the "redesign" process and responded to questions from employees.

Sullivan emphasized the importance of employee input to the process, encouraging employees to make use of the special intranet portal, the "Redesign Portal," established to receive recommendations in the five areas of concern.

Sullivan said that he checks the portal every day, and that the messages are promptly forwarded to the relevant

working group to become part of their deliberations.

## Limited Foreign Service Hiring Resumes

On June 30, the State Department announced that entry-level Foreign Service officer classes had been authorized for July and September 2017. The classes will be composed primarily of Pickering and Rangel Fellows, along with a small number of candidates from the Foreign Service roster.

Earlier in June, the State Department had notified about 60 Rangel and Pickering fellowship recipients that they would not be joining the Foreign Service as promised.

This was followed by an outcry from various organizations and members of Congress. AFSA also weighed in.

The Pickering and Rangel fellows were supported by several prominent lawmakers, many of whom signed a letter to Secretary Tillerson, urging him to bring them into the Foreign Service. The decision was reversed on June 29.

Senator Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said, "We're pleased the department is honoring its commitment to these fellows so they can pursue their careers in the Foreign Service."

As we head to press, news is in that State is temporarily withdrawing from participation in the prestigious and popular Presidential Management Fellowship program that brings top graduates into federal government service.

A resumption of Foreign Service hiring, even one that is limited in scope, has been a top AFSA priority for the last six months.

At the Aug. 8 Town Hall, AFSA President Barbara Stephenson asked the deputy secretary about hiring, noting that a steady intake of new employees is critical to staffing in the future.

## Reforming U.S. Foreign Assistance: A CSIS Report

Following President Donald Trump's executive order on March 1, which asked all federal agencies to submit reorganization plans, the Center for Strategic and International Studies convened a task force to analyze the possible outcomes of such reform and make recommendations regarding the future of American security, prosperity and continued global leadership.

On July 24, CSIS released its bipartisan report on the proposed reorganization of U.S. foreign assistance. In it, the authors recognize the need for reform of foreign assistance programs, but disagree with the planned reduction in the foreign affairs budget.

The report establishes the view that U.S. foreign assistance is not merely altruistic—although it makes a huge difference in the world—but a smart investment that contributes to the national security of the United States, stating that “putting American interests first means leading abroad.”

The report reviews the current status of U.S. foreign assistance, noting that it makes up less than 1 percent of the federal budget, and makes the following recommendations:

1. Maintain USAID as an independent agency reporting to the Secretary of State and designate the USAID Administrator as the coordinator of foreign assistance. The Administrator, along with other stakeholders, should create a development strategy that supports and complements the national security strategy.

2. Address duplication of effort and generate budget savings by identifying programs and functions that should shift to USAID from State. Identify and eliminate programs or missions which no longer contribute to the foreign assistance strategy.

3. Modernize the personnel and procurement systems for the Department of State and USAID and streamline the reporting requirements to Congress.

By adopting these recommendations, CSIS argues, the current administration will strengthen American global leader-

ship while increasing efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

## Acting Head of Diplomatic Security Steps Down

On July 26, *The Washington Post* reported that Bill Miller, the director of the Diplomatic Security Service and principal deputy assistant secretary of State for Diplomatic Security, had resigned from the Foreign Service and the Department of State.

Miller had been serving as acting assistant secretary of State for Diplomatic Security, the top DS post, since January, when FSO Greg Starr stepped down with the change of administration.

According to the *Post*, Miller “resigned voluntarily and was not asked to resign or fired,” but sources close to Miller said he “had been hoping to be appointed to lead the Diplomatic Security Service on a permanent basis but was informed that he would not be getting the job.” CBS News, which broke the story on July 25, reported that “officials familiar with the situation say that retirement was not his first choice.”

ABC News also reported on the story, quoting Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), who said that President Trump and Secretary of State Tillerson are “putting American lives at stake” by leaving top DS posts unfilled.

Miller's departure further empties the top ranks at State. ABC News writes that four of six under secretary positions were vacant at the time of Miller's resignation; of 108 other senior roles, “31 are filled by someone in an acting role, and 41 are completely vacant, with two more soon to be empty.”

A 31-year DS veteran, Miller was chosen to lead the Bureau of Diplomatic

### SITE OF THE MONTH: [www.e-ir.info/about/](http://www.e-ir.info/about/)

Founded in 2007, E-International Relations is a U.K.-based non-profit website that describes itself as “the world's leading open access website for students and scholars of international politics, featuring high-quality scholarly content and student-facing resources.” Recommended by academics across the world, the website receives more than three million unique users per year.

E-International Relations provides niche, intersectional information from experts on global issues, including articles, books, interviews, blogs and

reviews. It offers free downloadable books on a variety of subjects, such as *Popular Culture and World Politics: Theories, Methods, Pedagogies to Migration and the Ukraine Crisis: A Two-Country Perspective*.

The site's blogs provide opinion-based commentary on global hot-button issues from a variety of viewpoints, but also focus on issues that matter to students, such as coping with information overload, critiquing academic work and avoiding cliques in the classroom.

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## Contemporary Quote

Foreign policy is what is going to determine our success or failure as a nation. The convoluted security situation the United States faces today can only be solved with a good framework of foreign policy. We can have the greatest military in the world. But if we don't have clarity in our political objectives, if we haven't properly resourced the State Department, if our foreign policy and our allies aren't strong, we'll never be successful. ... I view the Department of Defense as being in support of the Department of State.

—General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaking at the 2017 Aspen Security Forum in Colorado, July 22.

Security in 2014. DS Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs Christian Schurman will take on the job of acting assistant secretary.

## Slow Pace of Nominations Affects Diplomacy

In Washington, D.C., and all around the world, key U.S. diplomatic postings remain unfilled.

AFSA's ambassador tracker indicates that 50 out of 188 positions were vacant as of early August (excluding countries that do not have a diplomatic relationship with the United States). Vacant, in this instance, means that no one has been nominated or confirmed for the position of ambassador.

While the embassies without an ambassador are being ably led by career diplomats acting as chief of mission or chargé d'affaires, foreign governments take note when the ambassador post in their capitals remain vacant. As of press time, Pres. Trump has only put forward 36 nominations.

As Ambassador (ret.) Ronald Neumann, president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, noted to CNN, the process for confirming an ambassador can be lengthy—from financial disclo-

sure forms to security checks and written questions from senators—so most administrations prepare a list of nominees well ahead of time. Not this one.

The shortage of ambassadors “affects our capacity to deal with crises when we don't have people that the president can call on,” says Terry Sullivan, a political scientist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “Something that blows up in North Korea doesn't just blow up in North Korea. It blows up for India. It blows up for Saudi Arabia. It blows up for Germany, because we are connected to all of those places.”

Keep checking AFSA's website, [www.afsa.org/ambassadorlist](http://www.afsa.org/ambassadorlist) for the most up-to-date information about nominations and appointments of career and political ambassadors.

## War Crimes and Cyber Offices Shuttered

Although Sec. Tillerson stated that the reorganization of the State Department had no “predetermined outcomes,” it appears that key decisions about department offices may have already been made.

According to *Foreign Policy*, the special coordinator of the Office of Global Criminal Justice has been reas-

signed, effectively closing the office. A State Department official told *FP* that part of the reorganization would involve folding special envoy offices back in the bureaus, to streamline the policymaking process.

Richard Dicker, director of Human Rights Watch's international justice program, said that the move would be a huge loss for accountability, adding that the independence of the office gave it more weight on the international scene.

Another office apparently under threat is the Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues, which will be folded in to the Bureau for Economic and Business Affairs. Robert Knake, a senior fellow for cybersecurity at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C., described the move as “taking an issue that's pre-eminent and putting it inside a backwater within the State Department.”

James Lewis, a senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, noted that cyber security is a specialized issue; he believes that EB simply does not have the expertise necessary for the United States to keep up with the international field.

## Governors Do Diplomacy

American governors have taken an unusual degree of initiative in conducting foreign policy, largely due to President Trump's controversial policies on trade and climate.

Past months have witnessed governors embarking on high-profile trips abroad to ease relations with other countries and stake out independent policy positions. This year's Governors' Association summer meeting also featured a prominent foreign delegation from various nations, including Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

## Report of AFSA's Planning Committee

The Planning Committee was convened by the Board of Directors of the American Foreign Service Association late last year to appraise the present activities of the Association and the manner in which future activities might evolve over the coming decade.

The principal recommendations of the Committee follow:

As it read the Charter of the Association, the Committee concluded that the Association's principal purposes were to advance the welfare of its membership and "the intelligent, efficient and skillful discharge of the duties of the membership."

These purposes will remain the tasks of the future, and it is to them that the Committee has directed its recommendations. The Committee assumed that the foreign relations of the United States would become more complex in the next 10 years. It assumed that the president would rely increasingly on the Secretary of State for direction and coordination of foreign affairs, provided that the personnel available to the Secretary of State were adequate to the task. The Committee concluded that those concerned with foreign affairs—whether they be serving at home or abroad—will require greater expertness in familiar, as well as new, fields.

The Committee also assumed that to meet these future

requirements, the Foreign Service will have to attract and retain the brightest, most imaginative and dynamic young Americans entering the job market. This, in turn, will require attractive conditions of employment and a concern for the continuing well-being of the employee which do not always characterize the agencies concerned with foreign affairs.

It follows, the Committee believes, that the Association must concentrate in the years immediately ahead on the essential tasks of becoming an organization with a serious intellectual base and an active—even combative—concern for the people at the heart of foreign affairs, regardless of their agency affiliation. Should it succeed in these tasks, the Association may attract to active membership the many who now stand aloof from the Association and may also elicit greater understanding and support from those in American society who have a special interest in the conduct of foreign affairs.

—E. Allan Lightner Jr., chairman of the AFSA Planning Committee. Excerpted from the September 1967 Foreign Service Journal.



Governors Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas, Chris Sununu of New Hampshire and Phil Scott of Vermont, all Republicans, have made free trade a pillar of their message in recent trips as the Trump administration mulls revising or outright rejecting existing trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Gov. Hutchinson traveled to Europe to meet with industry leaders, and Govs. Sununu and Scott traveled to Canada to reaffirm the importance of NAFTA. "We're going to keep pushing this administration so it knows the benefits for countries on both sides of the border," Sununu declared. Gov. Scott says the intent was to give "reassurance that

we're there for them."

Prime Minister Trudeau addressed the Governor's Association meeting in mid-July, the first foreign head of state to do so in the association's 109-year history.

While offering to remain open to updating the existing agreement, Trudeau remarked: "Since the trilateral agreement went into effect in 1994, U.S. trade with your NAFTA partners has tripled. That accounts for millions of well-paying middle-class jobs, for Canadians and Americans. Free trade has worked. It's working now."

The meeting was also attended by officials from Mexico, Vietnam, China and Japan.

Climate change policy shifts also

prompted state-level breaks with the administration. A coalition of 12 states launched the United States Climate Alliance to uphold their commitments to the Paris Agreement on the same day that President Trump announced the United States' withdrawal from the climate accord.

Gov. Jerry Brown of California, a Democrat who co-chairs the alliance, traveled to China days after the announcement to attend an energy conference and meet one-on-one with Chinese President Xi Jinping. ■

*This edition of Talking Points was prepared by Gemma Dvorak, Dmitry Filipoff, Donna Gorman, Susan Maitra and Andrea Philbin.*

# How to Get More Bang for Our FSI Buck: Engaging Foreign Diplomats and Diasporas

BY MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

**N**ow celebrating its 70th anniversary, the Foreign Service Institute is an incredible resource. It is certainly among the best diplomatic training institutions in the world, offering courses in language, area studies, leadership and professional skills.

My experience with India and Indian-Americans, however, has convinced me that FSI could do more. It could play a prominent role in department-wide efforts to better engage two underutilized partners: foreign diplomats and domestic diaspora populations.

The State Department, using FSI's capabilities, should seek to improve tradecraft and increase interoperability with foreign diplomats by sharing best practices and conducting joint simulations and training. FSI can also better engage America's diaspora communities, leveraging their ties with homelands and connecting the department with taxpayers countrywide.

Such efforts will require something of a culture change at FSI, which has traditionally been inward-focused, as well as support from other bureaus. Recently, FSI has expanded outreach to bring in new ideas and new partners in adult education. But

more can be done, even during a difficult budget climate.

At a time when the department is being called upon to build domestic support for our foreign policy and to promote burden-sharing by other governments, enlisting the support of diasporas and engaging foreign diplomats as force multipliers can increase the effectiveness of American diplomacy and reduce costs.

## Foreign Diplomats Are Natural Partners

Foreign diplomats are among the most important interlocutors for the State Department. Abroad, we engage with host-country ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs) on a range of consular, political, economic and other issues.

We cooperate with third-country diplomats, as well, sharing information and addressing common concerns in the host country such as the investment climate or human rights.

Though some foreign counterparts do not share our interests, and like-minded envoys may compete with us occasionally (e.g., on defense contracts), State has much to gain from expanding interactions and influence with foreign diplomats. It's a wonder, then, that the department has

not made a concerted effort to build habits of cooperation with friendly diplomats or help build the capacity of developing-country MFAs.

Most readers will be familiar with the impressive range of programs run by the Pentagon (often in cooperation with State) to develop the capacity of foreign militaries. One of the key strengths of NATO, for example, is the high level of interoperability developed through decades of multinational training and education.

The engagement exposes counterparts to the best practices of the U.S. military, including respect for human rights. It helps the military develop contacts among foreign officers, some of whom end up in leadership. Engagement includes education, for example, at the National Defense University in Washington; the deployment of trainers to assist host-country forces; and multinational exercises around the world.

Some readers may not be aware, though, that many MFAs—from the United Kingdom to Mexico, Turkey and China—apply the same idea to diplomacy. The training courses, typically a few weeks long, are similar to our International Visitor Leadership Program, with an emphasis on host-country culture and policies, including visits outside of the capital. But they usually also share best practices in tradecraft, such as cable writing. The host governments then have an alumni network of foreign diplomats to cooperate with around the world for years to come.



*Michael Rosenthal is currently in Hindi-language training at the Foreign Service Institute before an assignment to Embassy New Delhi. He has served in Kyrgyzstan and Poland, and on the India and NATO desks in Washington, D.C. The views expressed in this article are those of the author alone, and not necessarily those of the Department of State or the U.S. government.*

## The Indian Example

India is particularly active in using the Indian Foreign Service Institute to engage foreign diplomats. New Delhi maintains cooperation agreements with 59 countries. The institute, which has been preparing Indian diplomats since 1986, has trained approximately 1,500 foreign diplomats since 1992.

While on the India desk, I worked with South Asia Area Studies Chair Dr. Kiran Pervez at our own FSI and the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., to build connections and share best practices with India's FSI. Even without a formal agreement, we were able to build some familiarity between the two institutions.

We exchanged syllabi from courses such as A-100, the ambassadorial seminar and economic tradecraft. We learned, for example, that during their equivalent of A-100, Indian diplomats travel to army bases to experience military culture and are assigned a home state to stay in touch with during their careers.

We arranged reciprocal visits by instructors and diplomats. Under Secretary of State Tom Shannon delivered a speech at India's FSI to a graduating class of Indian diplomats. The head of the Indian FSI's economics department visited us in Arlington, Va., while on a personal trip to the United States. He was impressed by the amount of economic theory taught to U.S. officers, and expressed an interest in digital video conference (DVC) lectures by U.S. instructors. The cooperation was helpful enough to the bilateral relationship to be publicized in the 2015 Strategic and Commercial Dialogue by Secretary of State John Kerry and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.

After a year of coordinating these exchanges, I was invited by India's FSI to join 30 other diplomats in its 61st Profes-

sional Course for Foreign Diplomats. I was the first American in the course, as India traditionally invites participants from developing countries. It was an incredible opportunity to learn about the country and gain new perspectives on tradecraft and international relations.

## What FSI Can Do

So what can the department do? To start, FSI could designate a point person to answer initial queries from posts or bureaus about cooperation with foreign counterparts. At little cost, it can share syllabi and best practices with other diplomatic academies, including those from the Center for the Study of the Conduct of Diplomacy. FSI can also encourage introductory visits by foreign diplomats in Washington and officials from overseas.

Foreign diplomats could join simulation exercises in person or by DVC, following the example of FSI's Crisis Management division. FSI instructors can visit counterparts during international travel. Posts can engage host-country academies, offering to speak in courses or arrange DVC sessions with FSI instructors. Posts could use public diplomacy tools such as IVLP or Voluntary Visitor programs to help diplomats visit FSI.

Eventually, the department might establish dedicated training programs at FSI. This will require dealing with funding, security and other concerns, of course. The primary mission of FSI is to train U.S. officials, but Congress has already authorized State to train foreign diplomats in a 1994 amendment to the Foreign Service Act.

In fact, FSI has run limited programs for diplomats from Iraq, Afghanistan and the former communist countries. FSI could send staff to foreign capitals for assessments or short courses, the way the military deploys trainers. Staff can also be detailed to counterpart academies, the way

FSOs are posted to foreign ministries as Trans-Atlantic Diplomatic Fellows.

Although the current fiscal environment is difficult, the FSI budget could accommodate such programs if they were a priority for the department. Regional bureaus and foreign governments could share some costs; the Egyptian government, for example, has sent several classes of new diplomats to visit FSI.

## Outreach to Diasporas

A second area where FSI could do more is in engaging diasporas within the United States. As Americans who care deeply about foreign affairs and who are often active in engaging Congress, diasporas are dependable allies. They are also important bridges to their countries of origin. The department can empower them to expand trade and tourism, clarify U.S. consular and immigration rules, and improve opinion about the United States abroad.

Historically, the department has been cautious about domestic outreach, wary of the Smith-Mundt Act, among other factors. I would argue that the department has paid a price for this in terms of missed opportunities to partner with other Americans and to raise its profile in Congress.

The Office of Global Partnerships and regional bureaus have started to engage diasporas, and department officials occasionally travel domestically for meetings and speeches. But FSI could expand these efforts.

I saw firsthand the benefits of diaspora engagement while in Hindi-language training. During our time in Washington, the Hindi students and instructors engaged religious leaders and appeared on an Indian-American TV talk show via Skype. Our main outreach, however, was through an immersion trip to New Jersey and New York. These trips are primarily intended for language practice, but we



broadened the focus.

We worked collaboratively with the Indian embassy and its New York consulate to organize the three-day trip. One event, where we shared the stage with India's deputy consul general, featured 150 community leaders, as well as New Jersey officials, and was broadcast as a multi-part series on the TV Asia network. In New York, we visited the Indian consulate, its mission to the United Nations and the U.S.-India Business Council.

The trip was covered in four Indian-American newspapers and was even picked up by outlets in India. One headline read, "U.S. Diplomats Surprise Indian Americans with a Flourish of Fluent Hindi."

## A Worthy Goal

Such domestic immersion trips are outreach opportunities. Yet although FSI conducts about 40 total domestic and international trips a year, funding is often in doubt and few engage diasporas in a concerted way. (The Arabic-language trip to Dearborn, Michigan, is a notable exception.) Generally students are focused on their language exam and have little motivation or support to seek policy benefits from the trips.

However, a little coordination with Main State could go a long way. For example, regional bureaus could join the trips to discuss policy, Consular Affairs could answer visa and passport questions and Legislative Affairs could help with congressional coordination. Beyond the trips, diaspora groups could be invited to visit language and area studies classes at FSI. (Both of these can be done via DVC when travel is not possible.) Finally, FSI can work closely with regional bureaus to ensure alignment with policy goals.

I am confident the benefits from this type of outreach will justify the effort. ■



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# It's Practical

## Training the Next Generation of Diplomats

**Knowledge of history, area studies and current international affairs is not, by itself, sufficient to make an effective diplomat.**

BY EDWARD "SKIP" GNEHM

**T**he student stood up and posed this question: "Given the new administration's severe cuts to the State Department's budget, as well as the seeming intent to marginalize diplomacy, should I continue to pursue a career in international affairs in the government?"

I hear this question repeatedly from students keenly aspiring to join the U.S. Foreign Service or other U.S. agencies focused on international affairs. For me, budget cuts notwithstanding, there is but one answer: "There is always a need for effective diplomacy. There has never been a time when it was

more important for you to pursue your dream to join the Foreign Service. America needs you and others like you."

As I pondered that exchange over the next few days, however, the question consuming me was: What should I, and indeed my university, be doing to ensure that this aspiring student is well-trained and ready for the challenges of our profession? Are universities graduating students with the skills they need to succeed in the Foreign Service?

In reflecting on what it means to teach diplomacy, one comes to a stark conclusion: Knowledge of history, area studies and current international affairs is not, by itself, sufficient to make an effective diplomat. At its core, there is a combination of practical skills that define an effective diplomat, and these range from verbal and written communication to problem-solving and leadership. Integrating the full range of skills necessary for a suc-



*Ambassador (ret.) Edward "Skip" Gnehm is Kuwait Professor of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Affairs at the Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University. He is also a member of the Middle East faculty and director of the Middle East Policy Forum. Amb. Gnehm retired from a 36-year Foreign Service career in 2004. He served as ambassador to Jordan (2001-2004), Australia (2000-2001) and Kuwait (1991-1994). He also served as deputy permanent representative to the U.N., as the Director General of the Foreign Service and director of personnel of the Department of State (1997-2000) and as deputy secretary of Defense (1987-1989). He also served as deputy assistant secretary of State for the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula. Other assignments included tours in Vietnam, Nepal, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Tunisia and Lebanon.*

## A Roadmap for New Hires

By Stephen G. McFarland

1. Keep learning about the host country.
2. Meet and build relationships with host-country people.
3. Know the mission of your embassy.
4. Participate in the full range of embassy life.
5. Shape your professional persona.
6. Take the initiative in preparing work requirements.
7. Start developing your own security awareness.
8. If you see something, speak up.
9. Balance work with family and personal needs.
10. You will make mistakes. Acknowledge them.

Find out more in the July/August 2016 issue at [afsa.org/fsj-archive](http://afsa.org/fsj-archive)

## Department of State Opportunities for Students

### U.S. Department of State Student Internship Program

[careers.state.gov/intern/student-internship](http://careers.state.gov/intern/student-internship)  
[usajobs.gov](http://usajobs.gov)

### Boren Awards for International Study— Boren Scholarship (undergrads) and Boren Fellowships (graduate students)

[borenawards.org/boren\\_scholarship/how\\_apply.html](http://borenawards.org/boren_scholarship/how_apply.html)  
[borenawards.org/boren\\_fellowship/how\\_apply.html](http://borenawards.org/boren_fellowship/how_apply.html)

### Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship and Graduate Foreign Affairs Scholarship

[twc.edu/thomas-r-pickering-foreign-affairs-fellowship-program](http://twc.edu/thomas-r-pickering-foreign-affairs-fellowship-program)

### Virtual Student Foreign Service

[state.gov/vsfs](http://state.gov/vsfs)  
[usajobs.gov](http://usajobs.gov)

### Pathways Internship

[usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads](http://usajobs.gov/StudentsAndGrads)

Find out more in the July/August 2016 issue at [afsa.org/fsj-archive](http://afsa.org/fsj-archive)

successful career in diplomacy into university curricula is, therefore, a necessary albeit challenging endeavor.

Recently I headed a task force on “Practice” at The George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs mandated to do just that—to make recommendations on how best to integrate practical skills into students’ university experience. (The “Practice Task Force” was one of four set up by Dean Reuben E. Brigety to focus the Elliott School on STEP— Scholarship, Teaching, Ethics and Practice.)

For our students, we must first identify the skills that are most valuable in the diplomatic profession, and then seek out tangible ways to address them both in and out of the classroom. The goal is, ultimately, to produce well-qualified, competent individuals for careers in the dynamic and challenging arena of international diplomacy.

I present the highlights of our findings here.

### Identifying Primary Practical Skills

The task force surveyed the attributes employers that hire international affairs students rated as very important, important or somewhat important. They fell into four major practical areas: (1) Leadership, Teamwork and Training (critical thinking, leadership and negotiating skills); (2) Policymaking and Policy Management (political analysis, formal briefing, development of policy options, media relations and risk analysis); (3) Analysis (quantitative analysis, long-term forecasting, case management analysis and financial statement analysis); and (4) Communication (writing skills, public speaking, foreign languages, use of online interactive social media, and cross-cultural communication).

Note the similarities to the professional attributes that are used to rate members of the Foreign Service for promotion and for assignment: leadership, intellectual skills, communication ability, interpersonal skills and management.

How then does one design a curriculum or syllabus that gives students the opportunity to develop these skills? One way is to have professors incorporate assignments and classroom engagement activities that reinforce these skills into their syllabi. In fact, the task force’s review of syllabi revealed that the majority of courses *do* this. Elements of critical thinking, writing, political analysis and developing policy options were the most prominent skills addressed. Leadership, risk analysis and public speaking were also prominent in course content.

For example, most professors already assign papers that require in-depth research and analysis. With instruction and guidance, professors can highlight the importance of critical thinking and policy options. What is less often tasked, however, is

the drafting of shorter papers, akin to “action memos” in the State Department. Concise and succinct drafting with well-focused options and recommendations is a particularly valuable skill in government, as well as in the private sector.

### Group Exercises and Scenarios

Group exercises develop interpersonal skills and the ability to work in a group setting. Success requires leadership and an ability to evaluate other views. It also requires discipline. In one of my classes, I divide students into eight working groups. Each group must prepare a presentation for the class on one country in the Persian Gulf. The groups have a finite amount of time during which they are to cover all aspects of that country’s domestic and foreign policy, as well as its relationship with the United States. It is a challenge and forces the group to be well-organized, disciplined with their time and succinct.

Individual class presentations, if properly structured, enhance briefing skills—another important attribute that employers often find to be weak in applicants. Time-limited presentations on complex topics replicate the reality of the Foreign Service workplace. The ultimate accomplishment is enhanced student confidence in his or her ability to brief and to speak publicly.

Another important technique is the use of scenarios or crisis exercises. In my course on the role of an embassy in the conduct of foreign policy, I assign each student to a position on my country team. In the crisis scenario I feed the students data, which they report to the country team. As in real life, some of the information they receive is at variance with that from other sources. In some cases the source itself is questionable. The team must then analyze what they know and make assessments as to what they believe are the facts.

They then have to determine what recommendations they will make to Washington, and why. Inevitably there is much debate and, often, dispute—exactly as in real life. In this course, each student is paired with a Foreign Service officer who has served in the same capacity as the student’s role on my country team. The value of this additional ingredient is obvious. The students gain a practical understanding of their responsibilities and role in a crisis and, importantly, they develop a relationship with a real practitioner.

While this idea may seem a luxury available only at universities located in the Washington, D.C., area, there are, in fact, FS retirees around the country, as well as active-duty officers in Washington, who are able and willing to engage with students by phone or email, if not in person.



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## Special Skill Courses and Other Avenues

Another effective way to enhance the development of these skills is through the design of special “skill” courses (one to three credit hours). These courses are tailored to give students practical exposure to specific skills demanded in their field and by the job market. Examples of such courses include public speaking, briefing techniques and dealing with the press and media. Skill courses can also focus on topics such as the role of the International Monetary Fund, development challenges in Africa, the politics of global oil, etc.

Such courses stress case management, long-term forecasting and financial analysis, among other things. The advantage of these courses is that they can be added to or deleted from the curriculum as events and interests change. They also enable students to seek training or experience in an area they assess as a personal weakness.

As the task force examined how students develop skills for their post-graduate occupations, it was evident that many of the skills that we had identified were, in fact, acquired outside the classroom. Specifically, engagement in student organizations gave students valuable experience in leadership roles, in developing and managing programs and in developing interpersonal skills. Internships are invaluable in exposing students to the workplace environment, giving them concrete experience working with others and establishing a work ethic of reliability, integrity and maturity.

Volunteerism also proves highly valuable in developing key skill sets such as understanding different cultures and navigating environments unlike the ones with which students are familiar. Civic engagement develops new perspectives and requires patience and understanding. Study abroad is yet another experience that proves significant in developing attributes valuable to the international field. Understanding other cultures, speaking foreign languages and coping with the unexpected are skills emphasized in the study abroad experience. Students today are arguably far more engaged in both volunteer work and study abroad than 15 to 20 years ago.

Faculty members play a key role in developing the skill sets students need to find employment in the international workplace. Professors who approach their jobs as academics contribute vitally to their students’ knowledge base, which students will use to make decisions and evaluate situations. When the United States agreed to reflag Kuwaiti tankers, I was one of the few civilians at the Department of Defense who understood the legal implications. My knowledge came from a grueling course in international law. Similarly, a course in international organizations gave me insight into the workings of the United Nations, which

proved invaluable when I served in the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. The contributions made by the academic faculty remain incalculable and are in no way diminished as universities move to incorporate skill development into their curriculum.

Significantly, schools of international affairs now complement their faculty with professionals who have practical experience in their fields. Their role is even more important today, as schools focus on the practical skills needed in the foreign affairs profession. At GW today, for example, there are more practitioners on the faculty than in the past; but, more importantly, the traditional faculty today has a much better appreciation and acceptance of their importance and value.

These practitioners bring their real-life experiences—and an ability to relate theoretical analysis to reality—into the classroom. They place theory as well as historical facts into context, acknowledging the impact of individuals and personalities, domestic politics and competing national interests, etc. Yes, practitioners have stories to tell, but the stories are illustrative, in a demonstrable way, of the realities of the world in which we, as foreign affairs professionals, operate. Students remember stories and the critical lessons learned from those encounters.

## How Well Is Academia Doing?

When we speak of teaching diplomacy, we must give due attention to developing the skill sets that make a diplomat effective. Universities are more attentive than in the past to the need to ensure that their graduates are prepared for the workplace—that when they strike out into the profession they have chosen, they have the skills that employers need.

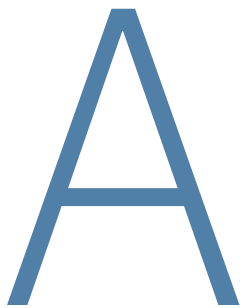
While the “Practice Task Force” documented that faculty already incorporate in their syllabi many of the skills identified as vital to students interested in a diplomatic career; the task force noted that more needs to be done. It urged faculty be more focused on developing these skills. More specifically, the task force called for a requirement in the undergraduate curriculum that students take a set number of skill courses that target the skills that the task force had identified. That leadership in schools of international affairs is now focused on this core need is noteworthy. Re-engineering curriculum requirements and traditional faculty approaches in the classroom are challenges. Change is always a challenge.

So when students ask whether they should pursue a career in international affairs, we don’t just respond: “Yes, there has never been a time when it was more important for you to pursue your dream to join the Foreign Service.” We also say: “And we will give you the skills you need to serve America well.” ■

# Leader, Mentor, Diplomat

## *Ambassador Nancy J. Powell*

**The recipient of AFSA's 2017 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award talks with the *FSJ* about her journey from Midwestern social studies teacher to diplomatic leader.**



Ambassador Nancy J. Powell received the American Foreign Service Association's 2017 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award in recognition of her distinguished Foreign Service career and enduring devotion to diplomacy at a June 20 ceremony in the State Department's Dean Acheson Auditorium. (For coverage of the

ceremony, see AFSA News, page 62.)

The 23rd recipient of this award and the fourth woman to be honored, Amb. Powell was born in Cedar Falls, Iowa, in 1947. She earned her bachelor's degree in history and teaching from the University of Northern Iowa in 1970, and taught high school social studies in Dayton, Iowa, before joining the Foreign Service in 1977.

Throughout her 37-year diplomatic career and into retirement, Amb. Powell never stopped learning and taking on new challenges. A five-time ambassador and the first female U.S. ambassador to India, she has served in a variety of high-level positions both overseas and in Washington, D.C., and has also devoted a

significant amount of her time, talent and energy to mentoring future leaders of the Foreign Service.

Amb. Powell's career centered on South Asia and Africa. Her early overseas assignments to Ottawa and then Kathmandu were followed by a two-year stint (1982-1984) on the Nepal desk in Washington, D.C. She also served as a refugee assistance officer and political officer for internal politics and India-Pakistan relations in Lahore. Then followed assignments as deputy chief of mission in Lomé (1990-1992), consul general in Kolkata (1992-1993), political counselor in New Delhi (1993-1995) and deputy chief of mission in Dhaka (1995-1997).

President William J. Clinton appointed her U.S. ambassador to Uganda in 1997, and in 1999 she became principal deputy assistant secretary of State (PDAS) for African affairs, rising to acting assistant secretary of State for African affairs in 2001. President George W. Bush named her U.S. ambassador to Ghana in July 2001 and to Pakistan in August 2002, where she served until 2004. Amb. Powell then returned to Washington, D.C., as PDAS and acting assistant secretary of State for legislative affairs (2004-2005), becoming acting assistant secretary of State for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs in 2005.



Ambassador Nancy J. Powell delivers remarks on receiving AFSA's 2017 Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy on June 20 in the State Department's Dean Acheson Auditorium.

Among Amb. Powell's unique contributions to American diplomacy is her leadership role in the U.S. response to two high-profile pandemic disease threats. From 2005 to 2006, she served as the State Department's special representative for avian influenza, responsible for coordinating international preparations and assistance to meet the threat under the U.S. National Avian Influenza Strategy. As part of this effort, she designed and set up a special interagency task force within the State Department dedicated exclusively to coordinating all international aspects of the U.S. preparation for and response to the pandemic. Following her retirement in 2014, she was called back to the State Department to lead the response to the Ebola outbreak.

In 2006, Amb. Powell was named the National Intelligence Council's first national intelligence officer for South Asia. She proceeded to lead the NIC's effort to expand coverage of this critical region. The Partnership for Public Service acknowledged her pioneering public service on the critical international issues of pandemic disease threats and terrorism, awarding her the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal for Homeland Security and Law Enforcement in 2006. The Samuel J. Heyman medals, known as "the Sammies," are considered the "Oscars" of U.S. government service.

In 2007 President George W. Bush appointed Ms. Powell U.S. ambassador to Nepal, where she served until 2009, when she was named Director General of the Foreign Service, a position she held until 2012. President Barack Obama appointed her as

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the first female U.S. ambassador to India in 2012, and she retired with the rank of Career Ambassador from New Delhi in May 2014.

Amb. Powell's gift for identifying and developing talent at all levels is well-known. In 2003 she received the State Department's Arnold Lewis Raphel Memorial Award in recognition of her efforts to promote and develop the people around her, especially entry-level officers. In retirement, she has mentored ambassadorial seminar classes.

*Foreign Service Journal* Editor Shawn Dorman interviewed Amb. Powell on July 11.



**Foreign Service Journal:** *Congratulations on the award! It is an honor to have the chance to highlight your outstanding career as a Foreign Service leader and mentor, and your contributions to diplomacy.*

**Nancy J. Powell:** Thank you.

**FSJ:** *You were born and raised in Iowa. Did you meet any diplomats or foreigners growing up there? Did you have a chance to travel much during your youth?*

**NJP:** I grew up in Cedar Falls and Le Mars, Iowa. Foreigners were few and far between. There were only a few foreign students in the colleges in the two towns, plus our Danish neighbors in Cedar Falls and my Swedish-born grandmother. My actual travels as a young person were limited to short family vacations, primarily in the Midwest, but I was an avid reader of books about other parts of the world, was inspired by my high school

world history teacher to follow world events and even used my baby-sitting money to purchase season tickets to the local Rotary Club's series of travelogue films. Later, my summer vacations as a teacher included study programs on Long Island and in Hawaii and Pakistan.

**FSJ:** *After graduating in 1970 with a B.A. in history and education at the University of Northern Iowa, you stayed in the state to teach high school social studies. Would you say that experi-*



ence accounts for your dedication to mentoring Foreign Service officers?

**NJP:** I'm sure it played a part, for I will always be a teacher at heart; but the real motivation came from people like Ambassadors Peter Burleigh, (the late) Arnie Raphel and Beth Jones, who not only helped me and many others, but also encouraged us to embrace mentoring as part of being a Foreign Service officer. I think my teaching helped me in other ways in the Foreign Service. With five classes to prepare for each day, I learned to manage my time and plan ahead. And, standing in front of restless teenagers who wanted to be anywhere but social studies class taught me about leadership, creativity and presence.

**FSJ:** What inspired you to pursue a career in diplomacy?

**NJP:** I wanted to be a teacher from the time I started kindergarten. I think I knew from my elementary teachers that it was a role I could assume as a female, plus I loved school. I enjoyed teaching, but there were few opportunities to advance in secondary education for women at that time in Iowa. Women were elementary principals, and social studies teachers tended to be male coaches. I didn't know about the Foreign Service until I participated in a U.S. government-sponsored program for secondary teachers in Pakistan in 1975.

We met FSOs at the embassy and consulates, who could not have been better recruiters as they described their careers. One of them gave me the application for the written test, which I took in 1975. I was initially most interested in the "Foreign" part of the Foreign Service. It saw it as an opportunity to see the world, to live in different cultures and to do interesting work, even if I wasn't completely sure what that work would be.

**FSJ:** What year did you join the Foreign Service? How did you find the examination and hiring process? How many women were in your A-100 class?

**NJP:** I was part of the 129th class, which started in January 1977, with five women among the 37 members. Three of the women left the Service fairly quickly, but Michele Bond and I remained. As a teacher, I was fascinated by the examination process and how it was being used to evaluate candidates. Like

Diplomacy 3.0 had started before I became DG, but it faced serious problems of coordinating recruiting, on-boarding, assigning and training the new hires.



Ambassador Nancy Powell with A-100 classmates at the AFSA awards ceremony. From left: Ambassador (ret.) Michele Bond, Ambassador (ret.) Lino Gutierrez, Amb. Powell, and Ambassador (ret.) Jimmy Kolker.

everyone else, I thought the hiring process took far too long, but now know I was one of the lucky ones who went through quite quickly.

### Five-Time Ambassador

**FSJ:** What were your first two overseas postings? Were they a good introduction to the Service for you? If so, how?

**NJP:** I joined the Foreign Service and went all the way to Ottawa. It turned out to be an excellent introduction as I rotated through

the consular, political and economic sections. It allowed me to learn about the Foreign Service culture in a familiar environment. My second assignment was as vice consul in Kathmandu, Nepal. Later, the court reviewing the women's class action suit [filed by FSO Alison Palmer in 1976 and charging discrimination in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act] determined there had been a pattern of assigning female political-coned officers to second consular tours. However, Kathmandu was an excellent assignment and proved extremely important for my career. I was a member of the country team and led a consular section with many unusual challenges as we dealt primarily with American



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Citizen Services cases. The assignment set up a career path for me in South Asia and introduced me to several of my mentors.

**FSJ:** *My understanding is that when you joined the Service, you planned to be a political officer, but you eventually became more interested in mission management. What sparked that shift?*

**NJP:** Amb. Arnie Raphael asked me to serve as acting consul general in Lahore for the summer in 1988. It was a game changer for me. We faced numerous security threats in the aftermath of our shooting down of an Iranian airliner, in addition to managing the summer turnover, preparing for the new CG, hosting an inspection team and reporting on Benazir Bhutto's return to Lahore. I loved it and realized for the first time I could realistically aspire to leadership positions.

**FSJ:** *Three of your five ambassadorships were in South Asia: Pakistan, Nepal and India. What set you on that path?*

**NJP:** My trip to Pakistan in 1975 as a teacher really sparked my interest in South Asia, which was further fueled by my tour in Nepal from 1980 to 1982. I was able to travel in Nepal and India at that time, and actively sought to return for multiple assignments in the region.

**FSJ:** *You also served as U.S. ambassador to Uganda and Ghana, among other African postings. What were some of the opportunities and challenges you encountered working in South Asia and Africa?*

**NJP:** I was fascinated by the history of both regions and by their very vibrant cultures. Economic and political development in post-colonial countries fascinated me, both as an analyst and as a policymaker, as we worked in several countries to promote transitions to democracy. It was rewarding to work in India and Pakistan on issues such as nuclear proliferation, antiterrorism and regional cooperation that have a significant impact on our own security. I very much enjoyed the close camaraderie of these posts. The shared hardships made for close friendships.

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

**NJP:** I was incredibly lucky to work with outstanding people



Ambassador Nancy J. Powell presents her credentials to President of India Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil on April 19, 2012.

U.S. EMBASSY NEW DELHI

Mentoring needs to be a part of the department ethos and can be done at all levels.

all through my career. Among the standouts are Ambassadors Peter Burleigh, Arnie Raphael, Beth Jones and Robin Raphael. Each of them combined area expertise and policymaking skills with an active interest in the people working with them. They were excellent advisers and very helpful as I navigated the assign-

ment process. Although I never worked directly with Ambassador Bill Burns, I have great admiration for his quiet, thoughtful approach to the complex issues facing our nation and his consideration for

the people who worked with him.

### Considering Human Resources: Being Director General

**FSJ:** *During your tenure as Director General (2009-2012), State launched Secretary Hillary Clinton's Diplomacy 3.0 hiring initiative. What was your role in that effort, and how did it go?*

**NJP:** Diplomacy 3.0 had started before I became DG, but it faced serious problems of coordinating recruiting, on-boarding, assigning and training the new hires. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Steve Browning spearheaded the Bureau of Human Resource's efforts to remove the roadblocks. This took an incredible amount of persuasion, organization and persistence. My role was to ensure that the department's senior leadership, across several bureaus, understood that this was a priority and that their support to remove the bottlenecks was required.

**FSJ:** *What other projects and challenges were at the top of the list while you were DG?*

**NJP:** Chief among our other goals was to ensure that the missions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan were fully staffed with



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Ambassador Nancy J. Powell (center) opens the U.S. Pavilion at Aero Indian 2013, an international air show at Air Force Station Yalahanka in Bangalore, India. Preparing to cut the ceremonial ribbon with her on Feb. 6 were (front from left) Vice Adm. William E. Landay, III, Defense Security Cooperation Agency director; Heidi H. Grant, Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs; Lt. Gen. Stanley T. Kresge, Pacific Air Forces vice commander; and aviation industry partners.

qualified individuals, and that there were incentives and support mechanisms in place to assist those volunteering (and their families) for these dangerous and high-stress embassies. I was very proud of the Foreign Service for stepping up. We did not have to make any directed assignments.

HR also continued its efforts to adopt new approaches to assignments, career counseling, organization of the HR function within the department and use of information technology. Not everything worked the first time—I haven't forgotten the debacle with the initial rollout of the electronic EER, and the need to redesign and rethink our approach.

**FSJ:** *What impact do you think the current hiring freeze will have on the Foreign Service?*

**NJP:** I think the current approach, especially with regard to entry classes and to eligible family member hiring, is extraordinarily counterproductive and betrays a lack of understanding of how the department works. I am delighted with the decision to go ahead with two A-100 classes, which will include the eligible Rangel and Pickering Fellows, and hope that it signals a willingness to reconsider the ban on hiring within the department and the EFM decision.

The Foreign Service depends on a steady inflow/outflow,

and disruptions in that flow result in problems that persist for a generation. I am offended by the notion that the EFM program is somehow an “FSO welfare” benefit. It ignores the important contributions family members make to missions around the world. Creation and staffing of the positions are governed by a strict set of regulations in order to justify the positions and ensure that all eligible EFM's can compete. The program saves the department money by hiring people whose transportation and housing have already been paid, and whose skills greatly enhance our performance overseas.

**FSJ:** *When did you join AFSA? How was your relationship with AFSA when you were on the management side of the table?*

**NJP:** I think I joined AFSA on the first day of A-100. There is a certain amount of tension built into the relationship when you are the DG, given the different perspectives, especially involving discipline cases. But I think there was mutual respect and a common desire to do what was best for the country and for Foreign Service employees. Then-AFSA President Susan Johnson and I met frequently.

## Diversity and Mentoring

**FSJ:** *When you joined the Foreign Service 40 years ago, it was far less diverse than it is today. Did you ever feel you were treated differently as a woman hailing from the Midwest who had not attended an Ivy League school? If so, how did you handle that?*

**NJP:** The senior officer who welcomed my A-100 class to the State Department told a sexist joke as part of his greeting. The five women in the class used a bathroom break to wonder aloud about what we had gotten ourselves into. It was a pattern that helped to deal with other incidents—there was always a sisterhood that could be relied on to discuss, counsel and act, and often we had support from men who did not share the old culture.

There were a few of my early colleagues who were convinced that the arrival of women (including one from Iowa who hadn't been to one of the Seven Sisters and who didn't drink) meant the Foreign Service was going to hell in a handbasket, and some later on who felt threatened and disadvantaged as women assumed leadership positions. While I did more than my fair share of pouring coffee and taking notes, I also had the sup-

port of more enlightened colleagues and an increasing number of superb women role models. I was encouraged to take on extra responsibilities, such as writing the human rights report in Nepal, serving as a temporary Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs staff aide and as consul general in Lahore to show that I could do the work as well or better than my male colleagues.

The changes mandated in the aftermath of the class action suits and adherence to federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission standards meant that promotions were more closely tied to documented performance, and the assignment process became a more level playing field. It also helped to have a good sense of humor and a willingness to stand up to outright discrimination.

**FSJ:** *How successful has the Foreign Service been in increasing diversity? How can the foreign affairs agencies retain minority talent once those individuals are in the Foreign Service?*

**NJP:** There has been an enormous change in the Foreign Service, but there is more to be done, particularly in championing Hispanics and African Americans. The deputy chief of mission glass ceiling for women disappeared

in the 1980s, shattered by Beth Jones and many others. I was delighted to see some of the SETS, and ambassadorial classes I've mentored have a majority of females.

The department has to compete with American business and academia for our talent pool. Ensuring that our new officers, across the board, have the necessary training to succeed—and have support and mentoring—is essential to keeping them in the Service.

**FSJ:** *You've been a champion for mentoring, receiving the Arnold Lewis Raphel Award in 2003 for your efforts to promote and develop the people around you, especially entry-level officers. How is the State Department doing with encouraging mentorship and establishing official mechanisms for mentoring? How should*



Ambassador to India Nancy J. Powell and U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter depart the Indian Foreign Ministry in New Delhi on July 23, 2012.

WIKIMEDIA/OFFICE OF THE U.S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

The Foreign Service depends on a steady inflow/outflow [of new hires], and disruptions in that flow result in problems that persist for a generation.

*people secure mentor/mentee relationships on their own?*

**NJP:** The formal programs are important, but for me they are far less valuable than the mentoring done by immediate supervisors and senior officers on an individual basis. If you have to be told that mentoring is part of your work requirements, you are probably not going to be very good at it. Mentoring needs to be

a part of the department ethos and can be done at all levels. Given the fluidity of our assignments, someone who has been at post a week may be the old-timer for the newest arrival.

### Reflection

**FSJ:** *While you officially retired from the Foreign Service in 2014, you have been going full speed ahead since then. Tell us how you came to be the State Department's Ebola coordinator, and what that entailed. (And thank you again for sharing your experiences in the article, "Fighting Pandemics: Lessons Learned," with Gwen Tobert for our May focus on global health.)*

**NJP:** I got a call out of the blue in September 2014 from then-Counselor Tom Shannon asking me to come back to coordinate the department's response to the Ebola outbreak. I think my experience leading the avian influenza team and my previous work on Africa with National Security Advisor Susan Rice led to the call. I had been following developments via television from my bench on the beach and was very concerned that the international community did not seem to be stepping up, so it was a little hard to say no.

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My first call was to my former New Delhi DCM, Don Lu, who was stuck in the confirmation process, to recruit him to be my deputy. We then started putting together a small team from the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs and those working on medical and post evacuations. We were a bit of a ragtag operation, but everyone was incredibly dedicated and worked long hours to secure and coordinate international support and to help the missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea cope with the disease and the influx of assistance.

I represented the department at most interagency meetings, in addition to briefing the Hill and doing media interviews. I am hopeful that the lessons learned will result in maintaining a small office capable of tracking potential pandemics and of advising senior leaders when a more robust response is needed before they become major crises.

**FSJ:** *More recently, I understand that you have mentored three recent ambassadorial seminar classes. How is working with ambassadors in training different from the mentoring you did while on active duty?*

**NJP:** I'm actually up to five classes and have enjoyed it very much. For the career people, the emphasis is on helping them adopt successful strategies for leading their missions and avoiding pitfalls that lead to failure. For the non-career appointees, the focus is on helping them to understand how the department works and on their authorities and how to use them.

**FSJ:** *What are the essential ingredients for a successful diplomat?*

**NJP:** I think the key elements are:

- Patriotism, and a recognition that we have a unique privilege to serve the American people, not the bureau or country of our current assignment;
- Integrity in all that we do whether it is adjudicating visas, administering programs or providing analysis of political and economic developments;
- Respect for our embassy and department colleagues, all of whom are supporting our mission no matter what their role, and for host-government officials and citizens;

I struggle to understand our current national security leadership's reluctance to fully engage the department in meeting the complex challenges we face as a nation.

- Energy and enthusiasm for the tasks at hand, as well as for continuing to learn; and
- A well-developed sense of the absurd and a sense of humor.

**FSJ:** *Today's budgetary climate is certainly far less promising than it was when*

*you were Director General. How would you describe your level of optimism about the state of the Foreign Service and the future of professional diplomacy?*

**NJP:** I share the concern of those who believe that the announced cuts in funding and personnel are misplaced and have the potential to do damage to our country and its security. While I support the general concept of a well-informed reorganization of some elements of the department, I am deeply opposed to suggestions that the visa and refugee functions be transferred to the Department of Homeland Security.

I have taken some comfort in the testimonials of our Department of Defense colleagues, members of Congress and former appointees, who have been outspoken in their support for the Department of State and their recognition of the role it needs to play to ensure our national security. I struggle to understand our current national security leadership's reluctance to fully engage the department in meeting the complex challenges we face as a nation. I have every confidence that the Foreign Service will continue to provide their expertise and experience and be willing to serve.

**FSJ:** *How has the role of the Foreign Service changed since you first joined?*

**NJP:** The Service is much larger and much more diverse. Women play a much more significant role in its leadership. Non-State Department agencies have greatly expanded at posts and in their influence in national security decisions. The functional bureaus have expanded to address the growing list of global issues.

**FSJ:** *What advice do you give to young people today who are considering a career in the Foreign Service?*

**NJP:** Go for it! You'll never find a more fascinating career that allows you to serve your nation and to learn something new every day. You will work with an incredible group of people who will become a part of your family. ■



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# The State of Dissent *in the Foreign Service*

**Members of the Foreign Service  
regularly grapple with  
the professional and moral  
dilemma of dissent.**

BY HARRY KOPP

It is hard to believe now, but there was a time, still within living memory, when presidents talked like this: “Let every public servant know ... that this administration recognizes the value of dissent and daring—that we greet healthy controversy as the hallmark of healthy change. Let the public service be a proud and lively career.”

That was President John F. Kennedy on Jan. 30, 1961, in his first address to Congress on the State of the Union.

Then just 10 days in office, Kennedy sought to dispel the stifling air of suspicion and conformity in which the loyalty oaths, security investigations and anti-communist hysteria of the previous decade had smothered the federal workforce.

For the Foreign Service and the Department of State, Kennedy’s words were especially welcome. Under pressure from Senator Joseph McCarthy and his supporters, the State Department in the 1950s conducted a purge of employees who had expressed nonconforming views, conveyed unwanted information, engaged in unconventional behavior or associated with someone who had. Hundreds of civil servants and Foreign Service officers were fired or marginalized, their careers and reputations destroyed.



*Former FSO Harry W. Kopp was deputy assistant secretary of State for international trade in the Carter and Reagan administrations. He is the author of several books on diplomacy, including (with John K. Naland) Career Diplomacy: Life and Work in the U.S. Foreign Service, published in its third edition by Georgetown University Press in July.*

In reaction, the Foreign Service took on a culture of timidity and self-censorship that recoiled from dissent and sought not to give offense or attract attention. The culture put at risk each step in the sequence of honesty on which sound policy formation depends: candor in reporting, analysis untainted by predetermined outcomes and confidential debate of policy options.

An April 1961 *FSJ* editorial, "Daring and Dissent," described what proved to be a recurring dilemma. The FSO, the writer warned, "finds that a calling which has claimed his abiding loyalty ... is being assailed and degraded by irresponsible demagogues. He discovers

that what he may report [may] be distorted and publicly held against him. He learns that his associations can be suspect." Each officer faced a choice: restrict his reporting to "what will harmonize with the temper of the times," report honestly and place "his career and his reputation" at risk, or simply resign.

Officers for the most part followed the safest path. Hannah Gurman, author of a study on dissent in the Department of State (*The Dissent Papers*, Columbia University Press, 2012), wrote of this period: "Fear ... took hold of many Foreign Service officers," who adopted "a strategy of hibernation."

### Professional Dilemmas of the Vietnam Years

In Vietnam the sequence of honesty at the heart of the policymaking process broke down at its starting point, leading to erosion of discipline and rising levels of dissent. "Many FSOs," wrote retired ambassador Kenneth Quinn in the September 2014 *FSJ*, "had considerable difficulty getting their reporting telegrams approved and sent if they dared to express any doubts about U.S. policy."

The problem ran deeper than policy: it went to basic information. Many officers recalled experiences like that of Lars Hydle, a young FSO at the Saigon embassy in 1967. In his 1994 ADST oral history project interview, Hydle said that the political section "was basically trying to make the South Vietnamese government look as good as possible. ... Reports were continually massaged and changed around to make them seem less bad than they were." Negative reports, his superiors warned

The U.S. government did not condone candor in reports from Vietnam. By denying itself honest reporting, the administration confirmed its preconceptions and magnified its mistakes.

him, had to be suppressed, lest they be leaked to the press "and used against the policy."

Of course this attitude exacerbated the problem it meant to solve. Journalist David Halberstam said in his 1950 best-seller, *The Best and the Brightest*, that the inability to get candid

reporting to policy levels through official channels encouraged leaks to reporters like him, who could get the news out through the media.

As Ambassador Chas Freeman wrote in *Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy* (USIP, 1997): "Governments that condone candor will get it. Those that don't, won't."

The U.S. government did not condone candor in reports from Vietnam—not from the Foreign Service and not from the military, whose officers faced pressure to produce data that showed progress in the conduct of the war. By denying itself honest reporting, the administration confirmed its preconceptions and magnified its mistakes.

For many Foreign Service officers, the clash between honest reporting and Service discipline created a professional, if not a moral, dilemma that could not be satisfactorily resolved. According to retired FSO David Jones, writing for the April 2000 *Journal*, "in 1968 alone 266 Foreign Service officers, 80 percent of them junior officers, resigned."

The frustration and anger that many junior Foreign Service officers felt about Vietnam were very much a part of "the temper of the times." In April 1970, some 250 State Department employees, including 50 Foreign Service officers, sent Secretary of State William P. Rogers a statement opposing the just-launched U.S. bombing campaign in Cambodia. President Richard Nixon's impulse was to "fire the sons of bitches," but the department resisted, the impulse passed and the signers kept their jobs.

### The Dissent Channel Is Born

The Cambodia statement led the department to establish a "dissent channel," to give its employees (including those at USAID) a way to communicate dissenting views on substantive policy, in confidence and without fear of retaliation, to senior officials who were required to respond. The Dissent Channel was meant to keep dissent out of the press; but its use, then as now,

## The Blood Telegram

The first message in the Dissent Channel came from the consulate general in Dacca, East Pakistan, now Bangladesh.

In March 1971, the central government's armed forces began a wave of killings of Bengalis in East Pakistan in what proved to be a vain attempt to suppress separatist sentiment in that distant province. The campaign horrified the American consul general, Archer K. Blood, who sent a series of cables urging Washington to take a public stance condemning the atrocities.

Unknown to Blood, or to Secretary of State William P. Rogers, National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger was using Pakistan as the go-between in the still-secret U.S. opening to China. For that reason, among others, Blood's appeals were ignored.

On April 6, 1971, Blood's staff sent a message via the Dissent Channel saying that America had to act "to salvage our nation's position as a moral leader of the free world." Consul General Blood did not sign the dissent,

but appended a note endorsing it.

Kissinger believed the message was written to be leaked, and said that Secretary Rogers thought it "outrageous" that his diplomats were writing petitions instead of reports. Blood was recalled and his career thereafter stunted. Like his earlier messages, the dissent had no effect on U.S. policy.

AFSA gave Archer Blood its Christian Herter Award for Constructive Dissent in 1971. To his credit, Secretary Rogers presided at the ceremony ("I think he was a little embarrassed," Blood said later.) Howard Schaffer, one of the signers of the dissent message, became ambassador to Bangladesh in 1984 and served until 1987. In 2015, U.S. Ambassador Marcia S. Bernicat presented an official copy of the Blood telegram to the government of Bangladesh, where Archer Blood is remembered and revered as a friend of the country.

—H.W.K.

was intended for individual employees engaged with an issue, whose views could not be transmitted through regular channels because of what the Foreign Affairs Manual calls an "inability to resolve concrete differences of opinion."

Hundreds of messages, on average about 10 a year, have passed through the channel since its inception, but only a handful have had an effect on policy. "The Dissent Channel," says Hannah Gurman, "made it possible for the State Department to formally encourage dissent, while ... deflating the most serious threat posed by internal dissenters," namely, public repudiation of administration policy.

Had it been in place at the time, the Dissent Channel would not have contained the Cambodia statement. That statement had no precedent in the Department of State, but it had plenty of precedent in the country at large. Fury over Vietnam swept across the country in that spring of 1970: protest marches and

demonstrations in more than 200 cities and towns; violence at Columbia and Syracuse universities; a march on Washington; construction workers taking clubs to demonstrators on Wall Street; and the fatal shooting by National Guardsmen of four student protesters at Ohio's Kent State University.

The Foreign Service and the Department of State do not exist

The Foreign Service and the Department of State do not exist in a social vacuum.

in a social vacuum. The dissent on Cambodia would not have taken the form that it did, and would probably not have been offered at all, in the absence of this national wave of protest.

The statement was less a reasoned argument for the losing side of an in-house debate (which the Dissent Channel was structured to protect) than a political statement that was a product of its time.

### The Sequence of Honesty

In the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War, too, the sequence of honesty was thwarted from the beginning. On the central

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In the past 18 months, State Department dissents have twice become public and earned headlines.

question of Iraq's possession and development of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, American leadership discounted or disbelieved reporting by United Nations inspectors, crediting instead information provided by an Iraqi defector and other unreliable sources. "The reports were of remarkable clarity," said Marc Grossman, then under secretary of State for political affairs, in his 2006 ADST oral history interview. "Maybe we should have thought, 'How can they be so exact, so precise?' And it was all false." Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV, who had served in both countries, investigated an alleged sale of uranium ore by Niger to Iraq. "Intelligence related to Iraq's nuclear weapons program," Wilson wrote in a July 2003 *New York Times* op-ed, "was twisted to exaggerate the Iraqi threat."

A refusal to accept as valid information that challenged assumptions or disproved hypotheses left facts in dispute. With no accepted body of fact to build on, analyses could be shaped to fit leadership preferences. Foreign Service officers may have been complicit in the erosion of honesty. In 2008, AFSA President John Naland wrote: "Have some senior career officials 'sold their souls' over Iraq ... to advance their careers? I believe they have."

Despite the strategic failures of the Iraq war, and the collapse of the justification offered for its prosecution, Foreign Service dissent from U.S. policy remained at a low level. In contrast to the hundreds who resigned during Vietnam, the number of resignations directly related to the war in Iraq was just three—Ann Wright, John Brady Kiesling and John Brown—all of whom resigned at the war's outset, in the spring of 2003.

Service discipline prevailed. The department threatened to pursue directed assignments but did not need to resort to ordering members of the Service into the region. Over the decade from 2003 to 2012, about 40 percent of the Service had tours of 90 days or more in Iraq or Afghanistan, all as volunteers. Many had misgivings—Secretary of State Condoleezza

Rice wrote in her memoirs that members of the Service “did sometimes appear less than enthusiastic about the president’s policies”—but public dissent was rare.

### The Temper of the Times

Certainly the temper of the times had something to do with the relative lack of dissent. The street and campus protests, the civil unrest and the violent political movements of the Vietnam era were absent. No senior official resigned as a matter of principle, as Under Secretary of State George Ball had done over Vietnam in 1966. Dissent was a lonely business, with no leader and no mass following. It held little attraction.

In the past 18 months, State Department dissents have twice become public and earned headlines. In both cases, social media encouraged mass participation, and mass participation makes confidentiality hard to maintain. A July 2016 Dissent Channel memo on Syria, signed by more than 50 State Department officers, called for “a more militarily assertive U.S. role.” The memo leaked in draft to the press, which published it without the signatures.

More dramatically, State Department officers reportedly numbering more than 1,000 signed a Dissent Channel message at the end of January 2017, protesting the new administration’s executive order, “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,” commonly called the travel ban. *The New York Times* published a version of the memo, without signatures, and said it had circulated “like a chain letter—or a viral video.” White House spokesman Sean Spicer delivered the administration’s reaction: “Those career bureaucrats have a problem with it? They should either get with the program, or they can go.”

Technology makes the collection of large numbers of signatures possible, but dissent messages change their character when signed by a crowd and publicized. The leaking of these memos, even before they were delivered, shifted their audience from the senior officers to whom they were ostensibly addressed to the public at large. The memos became political statements, valued chiefly for their bulk (1,000 signatures!) and used as ammunition in partisan warfare. A memo signed by 1,000 people, or even 50, is sure to leak, as texts are shared online. Without confidentiality and discretion, there can be no trust.

State Department diplomats concerned about the politicization of their profession should be wary. The times are ferociously, vituperatively partisan. Challenging administration policy in public means entering the political arena, where public servants are ill-equipped to play, and where they will almost surely lose. For the good of the Service as an institution, dissent must remain confidential. ■



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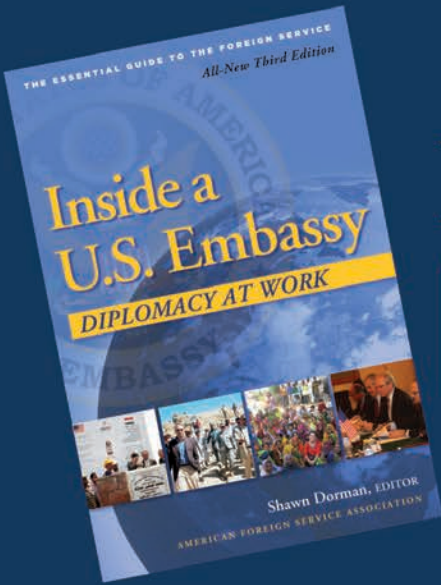
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# In Pursuit of Transparency in Assignment Restriction Policies

**Lack of fairness and transparency in the assignment restrictions process undercuts both employees and the State Department. Asian-American employees took it on.**

BY CHRISTINA T. LE AND THOMAS T. WONG

For many years State Department employees from particular ethnic backgrounds have faced barriers to particular assignments. The process has precluded some Foreign Service and Civil Service employees from serving in certain posts overseas or taking up some domestic positions and even short-term, overseas temporary duty assignments based on their ethnicity.

The assignment restrictions issue has been a long-standing one for Asian Americans at the department. The Asian-Pacific American Foreign Affairs Council was founded in 1981 to support equal employment opportunity for Asian American and

Pacific Islander officers. Renamed the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association in 2007, the association supports the equal employment opportunity mission of the foreign affairs agencies and supports the career advancement of AAPI employees by organizing and hosting career development and leadership seminars, and utilizing the experience and skills of high-ranking officials to impart knowledge on the next generation of AAPI leaders.

Today, AAFAA is an association of some 750 Civil Service and Foreign Service officers, specialists, fellows, contractors, interns and retirees, with the mission to improve recruitment, outreach and professional development of AAPI officers at the State Department.



*Christina T. Le is a career Foreign Service officer currently in long-term language training for her next assignment, to Japan. She has previously served in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, on the Philippines desk in the Bureau of East Asian & Pacific Affairs, and overseas in Greece and Mexico.*



*Thomas T. Wong is a Foreign Service officer assigned to the American Institute in Taiwan in Taipei. His previous postings include Guadalajara and consecutive tours in Washington in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Prior to joining the Foreign Service in 2010, Mr. Wong served in the U.S. Army. His wife, Suzanne Wong, is also a Foreign Service officer and they have two children.*

*Christina Le and Thomas Wong are the current and past presidents of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association, respectively. The views expressed in this article are theirs and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of State or U.S. government. Le, Wong and their colleagues Mariju L. Bofill and Cecilia S. Choi received this year's William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Officer.*

## The Concerns

Employees' concerns regarding the assignment restrictions process were plentiful: it was unfair, lacked transparency and was based on ethnic origin or family heritage. Our advocacy to the State Department on the issue began in 2009 and continued in earnest through 2016.

The case was framed by input from countless numbers of employees who came to us expressing real frustration, disillusionment and anger over the lack of transparency and accountability in the process. In some cases, the department had prioritized hiring these officers because of their language skills, only to turn around and preclude them from using those valued language skills overseas.

While assignment restrictions affect many State department employees of different backgrounds, we accumulated substantial anecdotal evidence that it has disproportionately affected employees of AAPI descent. Our data suggested assignment restrictions were levied with race as a factor, with disregard for mitigating circumstances and even based on incorrect facts.

This seemingly disparate impact of the adjudicative process on AAPI employees was harmful to morale, restricting employees from using their language and cultural expertise to further diplomacy, diverting careers and hindering the full use of the department's diverse workforce. This also created the perception that assignment restriction decisions were based on ethnic origin and ill-defined concerns that AAPI employees may be vulnerable to foreign influence or preference, or that the employees themselves were threats rather than the targets of foreign influence. For example, some employees were prohibited from serving in China, even though they did not have close and continuing contacts there. Meanwhile, AAFAA observed that employees of other races who did possess such connections were not barred. Such disparate treatment fueled suspicions of bias, unconscious or otherwise, against AAPI employees.

The lack of oversight and transparency for assignment restrictions exacerbated the problem. Working with the Ameri-

can Foreign Service Association, we discovered that the process for restricting employees from assignment in certain countries was not grounded in any regulation or guideline, and thus lacked an adequate appeals process. In other words, employees affected by assignment restrictions had no opportunity to appeal that decision.

We also found that the department did not maintain demographic data related to assignment restrictions, even though such information is essential for evaluating the fairness of these programs. Without such records, it is unknown who faces assignment restrictions, for what reasons, and to which ethnic

and racial groups they belong. Such information gaps rendered transparency and oversight for these programs impossible.

The impact of these procedural deficiencies was serious, for both the State Department and AAPI employees. The department recruits many AAPI employees to draw on their abilities in super-

hard languages and cultural expertise. Unwarranted assignment restrictions deny such employees the opportunity to contribute these abilities, thereby hindering the department's efforts to utilize its diverse workforce and better use limited resources. Ultimately, these issues damaged the inclusive professional atmosphere the department seeks to foster and that remains essential to its mission.

## Constructive Dissent Resonates

To remedy the above-mentioned problems, AAFAA worked diligently over the years to advocate for increasing the transparency and fairness of assignment restrictions and to bring this matter to the most senior levels of the department in an effort to seek a resolution. We pushed this issue forward despite concerns about possible detriment to our own professional career advancement, but with the greater good of all our colleagues and the State Department in mind.

Successive presidents of AAFAA consulted with lawyers and senior leaders in the department to try to work within the system to advocate for change. Mariju Bofill first raised the issue with the Secretary of State in 2009, after consultations

In some cases, the department had prioritized hiring these officers because of their language skills, only to turn around and preclude them from using those valued language skills overseas.



with the department's legal advisor, and continued to raise it during the following three years. Cecilia Choi took the baton in 2012, working with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to try to come to a fair solution. In 2013, *The Washington Post* featured an article on the subject, "At the State Department, Diversity Can Count Against You," highlighting the perspectives of several Foreign Service officers.

In 2015, Thomas Wong presented a white paper to then-Deputy Secretaries of State Antony Blinken and Heather Higginbottom, requesting the establishment of an independent and timely appeal mechanism. Along with then-AFSA Vice President Matthew Asada, he organized an event featuring panel speakers from DS and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to discuss the issue directly with department employees.

Assuming the AAFAA presidency in 2016, Christina Le continued to raise assignment restrictions with Deputy Secretary Higginbottom throughout the summer of 2016, asking her to press DS to establish

language in the Foreign Affairs Manual. Ms. Le raised the topic with AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and met with AFSA Vice President Angie Bryan on multiple occasions to discuss AAFAA members' concerns. AFSA was a strong supporter of AAFAA's request, and played an integral role in the negotiations with DS to ensure the language for the FAM is fair and reflects the interests of AAFAA.

In October 2016 President Barack Obama released a presidential memorandum, "Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in the National Security Workforce." In particular, Section 2(c) covers the need for all national security agencies, among them the Department of State, to institute a review process for security and counterintelligence determinations that result in assignment restrictions. Section 3(c) makes "unconscious bias training mandatory for senior leadership and management positions, as well as for those responsible for outreach, recruitment, hiring, career development, promotion and *security clearance adjudication*" (italics added).

## A Way Forward

Finally, at the end of 2016, the State Department published new assignment restrictions guidelines in the Foreign Affairs

Manual. 12 FAM 233.5 addresses the reforms we requested: notification to employees of the factual grounds for their assignment restriction; the opportunity to request a second review of the decision by the director of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (principal deputy assistant secretary of State for DS/DSS) and submit updated information for reconsideration; and empowerment of the director to reverse improperly imposed assignment restrictions.

The new FAM language is a welcome step toward establishing the transparency, fairness and accountability on which the State Department prides itself. Ultimately the new process should allow the department to fully deploy its most valuable resource—its people—to places where U.S. interests will

best be advanced. We are proud that our dissent led to this important change in department policy and applaud the department for its efforts to provide more oversight and transparency in the assignment restrictions process.

We are tremendously grateful to former Deputy

Secretaries Blinken and Higginbottom; our past and present leadership liaisons, Legal Advisor Harold Koh and Ambassadors Hans Klemm and Alexander Arvizu; AFSA; and DS for their leadership and advocacy. This newly articulated process, which includes the opportunity to provide additional relevant information, will benefit not only AAFAA members but all State employees.

The new process will create a more transparent and equitable environment for those affected by assignment restrictions. Thanks go to some two dozen employees for their moral courage in coming forward, both publicly and privately, and sharing their personal stories with us, enabling us to frame our advocacy on the issue. We also thank all AAFAA members who have been involved in this process over the years, including former AFSA Vice President Matthew Asada, for their support, hard work and resolute efforts to effect positive change, all while working within a bureaucratic system that was often inflexible and unyielding.

As a group, we tested the system, stood firm, offered a constructive way forward and, in the end, made a lasting, positive impact on the State Department and its workforce. ■

We pushed this issue forward despite concerns about possible detriment to our own professional career advancement.

# Pushing State to Prevent Illegal Adoptions

**Faced with growing evidence of malfeasance in intercountry adoptions in Uganda, this FSO decided on a course of constructive dissent to correct the problem.**

BY WENDY BRAFMAN

Shortly before I left for Uganda in 2015, a good friend adopted a girl from South Asia. My friend was filled with a host of emotions: She was overjoyed by the prospect of welcoming a child into her life; exhausted by the amount of time and energy spent on the process; and nervous that amid the mountain of documents, background checks and legal proceedings, she might have missed one crucial detail that could derail the entire adoption.

Nevertheless, she eagerly anticipated the arrival of her newly adopted daughter. We threw her a baby shower, helped her set up and decorate her daughter's bedroom, and discussed plans for the child's new life in the United States. When that day finally arrived, all my friend's doubts and worries were washed away,



*Wendy Brafman joined the Foreign Service in 2005. She has served in Kinshasa, Cairo, Baghdad, Kampala and Washington, D.C. Before joining the Foreign Service, she was in private law practice, worked for a nongovernmental rule of law organization in Kosovo and served as a congressional staffer. Ms. Brafman's husband is also a Foreign Service officer. She received a 2017 William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Officer.*

replaced by the overwhelming joy of becoming a parent for the first time.

This is likely the experience most people expect to have when they adopt internationally—and for most, the process, while lengthy, culminates with a profound sense of emotional fulfillment. As many of my consular colleagues can attest, seeing an international adoption through to a successful end is a uniquely rewarding experience. It was an experience I looked forward to having when I arrived in Uganda as the embassy’s consular chief.

Instead, I discovered that the rosy picture many have in their minds about international adoption is not always realistic. I worked on hundreds of adoption cases in Uganda, and I found the system to be rife with fraud, corruption and unethical behavior. I saw many well-intentioned U.S. citizens and Ugandans being deceived by conniving middlemen. I saw children who were separated from their families and their country because unscrupulous outsiders saw an opportunity to make money by dividing the family.

At the same time, I saw some of my own colleagues turn a blind eye to such abuses, despite the fact that our mandate is to help orphaned children find the care, security and love a permanent family can provide. In short, our policy with respect to intercountry adoptions was not meeting this directive, and that is why, ultimately, I made the difficult decision to formally dissent.

### A Growing Number of Discrepancies

I arrived in Uganda with a generally positive view of the process of adoption. But I was aware of certain problems in the country, and as I began reviewing more and more case files, I could not ignore the growing number of discrepancies my investigative staff and I uncovered.

What we found were troubling patterns:

- Evidence that third parties in Uganda were actively recruiting children from their villages to be placed in orphanages or schools (many of them unlicensed) far from their homes.
- Testimony from parents and grandparents who said they did not understand the consequences of the papers they had signed, relinquishing their rights over the children being given up for adoption.

I discovered that the rosy picture many have in their minds about international adoption is not always realistic.

- Stories from families who thought their children would be returned to them after receiving an education in the United States.

- Statements from U.S. citizens who were pressured to hire specific individuals to provide in-country services at exorbitant rates, or to look the other way when government officials were paid to “expedite” the process.

- Falsified paperwork and proof that parents who had been reported deceased were alive and well.

These were not isolated incidents. We found such evidence every week and every month, in the majority of cases we reviewed. I came to understand that we faced an intercountry adoption process in which intermediaries financially benefited from desperate

or insufficiently informed American adopters and vulnerable Ugandans. And I believed that the U.S. government should no longer be a party to such fraud.

Like any good Foreign Service officer, I first made my case to Washington by reporting on what we were learning through a series of phone calls, emails and face-to-face visits. Perhaps naive myself, I expected my colleagues to be as shocked as I was by the evidence. But they were not.

### Pressure from All Sides

Washington remained steadfast in its support for continuing adoptions in Uganda, even as all other countries represented in Uganda were ending them. Pressure, direct and indirect, came in from all sides to maintain the status quo. I was given guidance on how to navigate Uganda’s legal system, how to engage the host government and how to handle the stakeholders—including the petitioners, who could be peremptory and extremely demanding. Members of Congress and their staffs called or wrote to inquire about the status of pending cases and to urge expeditious approvals. Adoptive families, I learned, began criticizing me by name on social media—with one such family even surreptitiously taking my photo at the airport when I was headed away for vacation.

The government of Uganda proved to be an equally disappointing partner in resolving the issue. Few officials work on this matter, and the office charged with overseeing intercountry adoptions has few resources to investigate orphanages or ensure

the welfare of children. An estimated 8 percent of all Ugandan children are orphans, but authorities have little capacity to deal effectively with the problems and needs of this vulnerable population. As a result, Uganda's adoption system is prone to abuse.

As I continued to gather evidence and make the case for a review of the adoption process, stress built up—both in my life and in the lives of my consular staff. Working on this issue was all-consuming, exhausting and deeply frustrating, leading to tensions at home with my Foreign Service spouse. One of my local staff members involved in these cases contemplated quitting because of the stress. As a manager, I sometimes lost sight of other important aspects of my consular responsibilities because of the time and energy I was devoting to adoptions.

I remained convinced, however, that the work we were doing—and the attention we were bringing to the issue—was vitally important and could not be ignored. As consular officers, we are obligated to uphold and implement the law; and as far as we could tell, many adoptions being sought in Uganda were not entirely legal or ethical. So we had an obligation to keep pursuing this path, regardless of the pressure on us.

### A Turning Point

One incident, in particular, convinced me that working “inside the system” was no longer a viable option. In late 2016, two U.S.-citizen families made the difficult decision to return the Ugandan children they had adopted. These families had made significant emotional and financial investments, traveled to Uganda multiple times to meet the children, and raised funds in their local communities to support their applications and meet the substantial costs of the adoption process. But the joys they had experienced on returning to the United States with their adoptive children quickly turned sour, when they discovered there were loving families in Uganda eagerly seeking the children's return.

The agencies involved in the adoption had purportedly falsified the paperwork to make it appear the children had no family to care for them. The adoptive families were unaware of this fact, and the children themselves were too young to understand that their move to the United States was permanent.

The decision to return the children was emotionally devas-

tating for the adoptive parents. After meeting with one of the parents, I knew that the intercountry adoption system in Uganda was fundamentally broken, and our system to safeguard the process was not working. The only solution I saw that could prevent similar tragedies from occurring to other families was to suspend intercountry adoptions—a position the department simply did not support. To save these families, I would have to dissent, formally.

Fortunately, I found much-needed support for the recommendation to suspend intercountry adoption in my own front office. At the ambassador's request, I documented our findings as thoroughly and dispassionately as possible. Ultimately, we dispatched nearly two dozen cables back to Washington laying out our arguments with clear evidence. Because I could express

my dissent through regular channels, in particular the comment portions of the cable, I did not have to use the Dissent Channel. And while the department has not yet fully accepted our recommendations, they have taken steps in the right direction. I am com-

forted by the fact that I stood on principle and made these issues known more widely.

What gives me hope is the fact that the State Department has taken some meaningful actions to correct these problems. Earlier this year, State took the unprecedented step of debarring an American adoption agency, one that had been facilitating adoptions worldwide for many years, including in Uganda. This was a true watershed moment in our efforts to eliminate the system's abuses. Moreover, thanks to stronger fraud warnings, families are more willing to wait out the process as we conduct thorough investigations of each case. Indeed, some families have even withdrawn their adoption petitions after our investigators discovered evidence of fraud.

### The Emotional Aspect of Dissent

On reflection, what strikes me most about this entire dissent experience is the emotional aspect of the process. As Foreign Service officers, we care deeply about the work we do—whether it is promoting human rights, advocating for environmental protections, or protecting refugees and vulnerable populations. And with such work come strong emotions—especially in the case of adoptions, where you can immediately see the benefits of your

One incident, in particular, convinced me that working “inside the system” was no longer a viable option.

In the end, to do the right thing,  
I had to rely on the facts in  
front of me, as we all must if  
we are to do our jobs correctly.

actions. It is truly difficult not to become emotionally involved when you know what's at stake.

Therein lies the danger. The entire process is emotionally charged for the adoptive families—from the anticipation of bringing a child into the family, to the financial commitment, to the uncertainties of a long and complex procedure in a foreign country. But it is also an emotional experience for the consular officer overseeing the case. Emotions can cloud judgment, making officers more willing to overlook potential problems. Certainly, the temptation exists to approve an adoption case to fulfill a family's dreams.

When confronted with wrongdoing or malfeasance, a different set of emotions comes into play. Many of us might prefer to confront a flawed policy with either resentment or apathy. But such feelings distort the message and ultimately undermine the legitimacy of a reasoned and constructive dissent. Had I responded emotionally, it is doubtful I could have changed anything about adoptions in Uganda.

Still, I found the process of dissent itself emotionally draining. Like others before me, I worried about the ramifications of my actions. Would I have the ambassador's support? Would Washington block me from future jobs because I openly voiced my criticisms? In the end, to do the right thing, I had to push aside these concerns. I had to rely on the facts in front of me, as we all must if we are to do our jobs correctly.

Difficult as it was for me to take this path, I know it was the correct one. The messages of support I received from colleagues around the world are sufficient proof that dissent remains a critical part of our profession, and that we must all have the courage to speak out when the evidence is clear. We may be filled with unfamiliar or contradictory emotions in the course of our lives and professional careers, but we should never let them cloud our judgment in deciding what is right. ■

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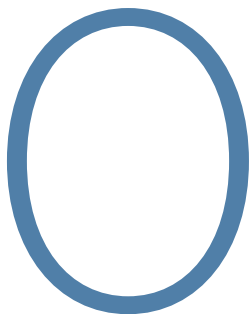
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# DS Could Advance Overseas Visa and Passport Security

**Diplomatic Security programs can help protect the United States from the threat of terrorist entry, but the State Department hasn't promoted DS as the interagency lead.**

BY ELZAR T. CAMPER



bedience is not patriotism. History has shown that dissent is central to any democracy and to the sustainability of a healthy and productive organizational culture. The State Department is unique in having a formal avenue to express an alternative view without fear or frustration.

The importance the department has historically placed on the value of dissenting opinions speaks to the ideal of fairness; regardless of political affiliation, beliefs or bureau represented, freedom to express your opinion remains a core value, and is a State Department tradition that must be preserved.

President Donald Trump's Jan. 27, 2017, Executive Order, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," started a nationwide conversation about protecting our borders. The Dissent Channel cable I sent immediately afterward, "Empower and Promote Diplomatic Security to Achieve Its Visa and Passport Security Program Mandate Overseas," specifically focused on the State Department's implementation of policies mandated by 22 U.S. Code 4802 and 4807. These laws cover the responsibility of the Secretary of State for conducting investigations relating to illegal passport and visa issuance or use, and for establishing a Visa and Passport Security Program in the Department of State.

I did not discuss the travel restrictions coupled with the



*Elzar T. Camper is the 2017 recipient of the F. Allen "Tex" Harris Award for Constructive Dissent by a Foreign Service Specialist. Mr. Camper has served in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Washington Field Office, as branch chief of operational threats and analysis at Diplomatic Security headquarters, and overseas in Karachi, Cairo and Kabul. Born in Norristown, Pennsylvania, Mr. Camper earned a B.S. degree in criminal justice with a minor in computer science from West Chester University of Pennsylvania in 2005. He also earned master's degrees in software engineering and information science from Pennsylvania State University in 2012 and 2008, respectively.*

*This article is based solely on the author's opinion, is written from his perspective and does not represent the views of the U.S. government. The author acknowledges that he is not an expert in the complexities and potential legal and bureaucratic hurdles that exist, in any current Diplomatic Security-Consular Affairs negotiations or in broader U.S. government initiatives.*

president's E.O., because my intent was to address the order's objectives rather than the more controversial implementation methods. Many in the State Department rightfully focused on the ideal of fairness; my approach was to propose solutions based on best practices to achieve the order's stated aims.

### The E.O. vs. Current Practices

The language of the executive order directly reflects the mission statement of the Diplomatic Security Overseas Criminal Investigation program (OCI). For instance, the E.O. states its purpose thus: "to identify individuals seeking to enter the United States on a fraudulent basis with the intent to cause harm, or who are at risk of causing harm subsequent to their admission." The order further speaks to the importance of in-person interviews and databases of identity documents, along with the problems of duplicated documents, evaluating criminal intent and similar issues.

The DS Visa and Passport Security Strategic Plan presented to Congress in 2006 called for the aggressive expansion of this OCI initiative to meet three specific, strategic goals: defending the homeland and foreign partners from terrorist attack through aggressive and coordinated international law enforcement action; detecting terrorist activity, methods and trends that exploit international travel vulnerabilities; and disrupting terrorist efforts to use fraudulent documents by strengthening the capacities of foreign partners.

OCI has already laid the foundation to achieve and produce much of the desired information and capabilities outlined in the E.O. via the overseas Assistant Regional Security Office for Investigations (ARSO-I) program, which is embedded in consular sections worldwide. OCI has also made significant contributions to other White House priorities, such as the disruption of transnational criminal organizations involved in human trafficking and smuggling of people, including special-interest aliens.

### Recommendations

My Dissent Channel message contained a number of recommendations: setting up a Visa Security Task Force Pilot Program, led by DS, with established reporting requirements to identify country-specific threats to visa security; mandating and supporting the establishment of ARSO-I—vetted host-nation law

enforcement units in strategic locations; increasing the amount of fraudulent document identification and impostor detection training and providing an independent (non-Leahy) funding source for document inspection equipment that can be easily donated to host-nation officials; re-negotiating existing agreements with other U.S. law enforcement agencies to increase the amount of law enforcement information shared with consular officers for use in the adjudication process; and expanding DS headquarters' analytical support for the ARSO-I program to cover open source analysis and social media exploitation of specified applicants.

Pres. Trump's executive order stated his desire to increase the U.S. government's ability to apply additional screening to visa applicants by using information known to the respective host country

to assess an applicant's intent. However, the majority of these countries do not track or cannot produce records in a suitable format. In addition, identifying an individual's intent is complicated by cultural differences and a lack of context. Moreover, the lack of automation and advanced internet services throughout most of the world, including the countries identified in the order, is exactly why the State Department needs to leverage and promote the expertise of DS—specifically its implementation of vetted host-nation units—as a matter of policy.

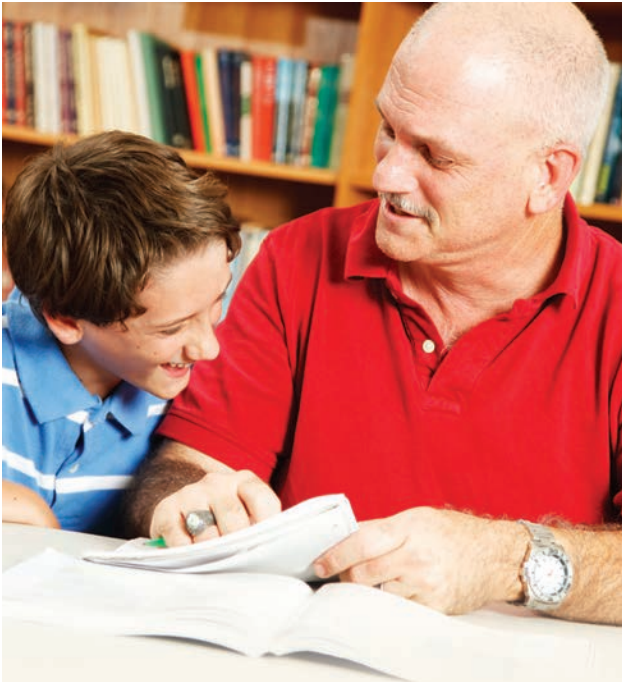
### The Department Response

The Diplomatic Security Bureau's leadership used some of these recommendations as talking points during working group sessions with the Bureau of Consular Affairs. DS also used some of them when meeting with officials from the National Security Council to discuss future visa security initiatives.

The State Department's response was DS-centric rather than department-centric, and was in line with requirements outlined in the Foreign Affairs Manual. It also directly or indirectly addressed the majority of topics I raised in my cable. The department acknowledged that DS plays a leading role in the State Department in implementing visa security initiatives, and outlined the many proactive steps DS is taking to increase its international footprint and law enforcement actions under the ARSO-I program. The department also agreed that it may be time to update the 2006 Visa and Passport Security Strategic Plan.

The department did not, however, address the underlying

The State Department agreed that it may be time to update the 2006 Visa and Passport Security Strategic Plan.



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The idea of promoting DS to the interagency community as the lead for overseas visa passport security is still a bridge too far.

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issue that causes DS to be undervalued and frequently unrecognized within the broader interagency community for its work to protect the integrity of the global visa security program. The department's response highlighted DS-specific initiatives within the context of what DS is trying to achieve as a single bureau negotiating and competing with large domestic agencies.

Unlike other bureaus, DS does not wield influential command of the department, especially pertaining to visa security and law enforcement matters within the interagency community. DS strategic initiatives in terms of visa and passport security measures and law enforcement action have not been fully adopted, understood or supported by the State Department.

The point of my dissent was to show that the department does not empower or promote DS to achieve its Visa and Passport Security Strategic Plan. In responding, the department supported my overall belief that it appreciates the contributions DS makes to the U.S. government's visa and passport security and law enforcement programs, and will approve the expansion of the ARSO-I program in support of these initiatives.


However, it seems that the State Department is still not ready to use its influence to raise DS's stature within the law enforcement community. The idea of promoting DS to the interagency community as the lead for overseas visa passport security is still a bridge too far, and may result in overseas visa and passport security initiatives being completely outsourced to a third-party agency.

### Lessons Learned

Perception and perspective are critical components to consciously weigh when forming and distributing an opinion. Everyone handles contradictory information differently, and possesses an instinctive and often emotional bias that can distort the way an author's message is received. In addition, the importance of "framing," and the effect it has on how a message is interpreted, cannot be overstated. ■

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# A New Citizen of LONDON Shines on the Other Side of the THAMES

**U.S. Embassy London in Nine Elms will set new standards for security and sustainability. Here are some insights into how it got there.**

BY RICHARD LEBARON

**I**n her outstanding 2010 book, *Citizens of London*, Lynne Olson describes the roles of three Americans at the outset of World War II. At that time, journalist Edward R. Murrow, banker Averell Harriman and Ambassador John Gilbert Winant made such an indelible mark on U.S.-U.K. relations that they became iconic figures in Britain's modern history. Another distinguished citizen of London is emerging today. It is not a statesman or even a

person, but rather a building—the brand, spanking-new embassy of the United States, located across the Thames from Chelsea.

As deputy chief of mission in London from 2007 to 2010, I had the privilege of being involved in a small way with the selection of the site for the new embassy, and also played a small role in the architectural competition for the stunning new building that U.S. diplomats are scheduled to occupy at the beginning of next year. In my view, three aspects of the project deserve special mention: the site, the security at the new mission and sustainability.

## Site Selection: A Difficult Process

The move was dictated by the inability to properly secure or economically renovate the 1960 Eero Saarinen-designed building on Grosvenor Square in the Mayfair section of London. But the shift to new premises was not certain until an appropriate site could be found for a new diplomatic mission. That process was long and complicated, and very nearly unsuccessful.

Some critics of the planned move had convinced themselves



*Ambassador (ret.) Richard LeBaron served as deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires at U.S. Embassy London from 2007 to 2010. He retired from the Foreign Service in 2012 after a 33-year career. LeBaron was ambassador to Kuwait from 2004 to 2007. Previously he served as deputy chief of mission in Tel Aviv, chief of economic and political affairs in Cairo, and in a variety of other positions abroad and in Washington, D.C. He is currently a non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.*



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The new U.S. Embassy London as seen from the Thames River.

that the new site would end up being close to Heathrow Airport, if not even further out of town, a pattern that they had seen in the site selections for new U.S. missions in other parts of the world. But moving out of central London was never a serious option. If the U.S.-U.K. “special relationship”

was to continue to be taken seriously, we needed to maintain a prominent position in the cityscape of London.

However, after a multiyear search, the State Department came very close to concluding that we might have to make do with a renovated Grosvenor Square site after all, even though it could never meet security standards and various critical utilities updates would be very costly. Actually finding a building site, and finding it where we did, surprised us and became an important part of the story of this project.

When I first told Londoners, not to mention Americans familiar with London, that the new mission would be in the Nine Elms neighborhood, many had to ask where that was. Until recently a neighborhood of light warehouses and a wholesale market, Nine

After a multiyear search, the State Department came very close to concluding that we might have to make do with a renovated Grosvenor Square site after all.

Elms was just a gleam in developers’ eyes in 2007, yet the site is as close to 10 Downing Street and the Foreign Office as the current embassy, and has a view of Parliament, as well. The U.S. mission is the first foreign embassy ever to be constructed on the south bank of the Thames, but

others are now following.

Located along the river between the Battersea Power Station and the Vauxhall headquarters of the British Secret Intelligence Service, the new site was ripe for development but lacked an anchor. Much to the delight of borough officials, the embassy project became that anchor, resulting in a tremendous amount of new residential and office space in what is essentially central London.

It was gratifying to make this contribution to a neighborhood of London that actually needed development. Despite the historical and emotional connections to Grosvenor Square, it will also be satisfying to say goodbye to some of our complaining neighbors in stuffy Mayfair. Perhaps they will be more content with the

“six-star” hotel the Qatari sovereign wealth fund will install at the Grosvenor Square location.

### Security and Design

In the spring of 2009, the principals from the four finalist firms in the architectural competition gathered in London to get a better feel for the site and the complex requirements of building there. As chargé d'affaires during the transition period between the Bush and Obama administrations, I was asked to address them as they finished their initial survey.

Security must never be the only objective. Our diplomatic missions need to reflect the open society they represent.

I told them a story: When I was ambassador to Kuwait, I made a habit of asking guests who visited my embassy office if they were treated with courtesy as they entered our mission. In one case, I asked an older gentleman whether the security measures (which included a Kuwaiti armored personnel carrier) had made him nervous. His response: “Oh, no, Mr. Ambassador, I wasn’t nervous. I was scared!”

I challenged the architects to turn that story on its head: when



U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT/OBO

The new U.S. Embassy London up close. The lightweight plastic scrim that give a soft and billowy look to the exterior are embedded with photovoltaic cells that can convert sunlight into energy. At the same time, they will act as sunscreens to keep interiors from overheating.



GEOGRAPH.ORG.UK/IAN.S/CC-BY-SA.2.0

The old U.S. Embassy London on Grosvenor Square, viewed from Brook Street.

a visitor comes to visit the U.S. ambassador to the U.K. in his new office, I want that visitor to exclaim how wonderful it was to come to the new embassy, how the security was efficient and reassuring but not overwhelming, and how he or she recognized the tra-

ditional welcoming nature of the American people as they made their way into the building that represents the United States.

In the designs they submitted, the three architectural firms competing for the project appeared to take to heart the advice about making the embassy a secure yet welcoming place. Within the strict guidelines demanded by the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security, all three presented designs that were open and welcoming in different ways. All three used innovative architectural and landscaping features to achieve security goals.

I was standing beside James Timberlake (partner in the Philadelphia firm KieranTimberlake) at the 2010 unveiling of their winning design when *The Guardian's* architectural critic asked

The building will supply and reuse its own water. It will not only conserve power but also be able to sell surplus energy to its neighbors.

him, "Where is the fence?" The response: "There is no fence." The design successfully integrated security into a welcoming and impressive structure—not Fortress America.

Security of our diplomatic facilities is, of course, a fraught topic, and will

only become more so with the recent terrorist attacks in London. But there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and there is no perfect security. Our diplomats know that their workplace can never be completely invulnerable, and they accept that they run risks in the normal course of living and working around the world. Risk can be managed effectively with the right combination of physical security, intelligence cooperation and good judgment. But security must never be the only objective. Our diplomatic missions need to reflect the open society they represent.

The innovative design of our new presence in London will need to be combined with well-thought-out training for staff on how best to welcome visitors in a secure and friendly manner. Too often, the design of our human interactions at embassy entrances

is an afterthought and the execution is left largely to a contracted security firm. These firms may have a basic understanding of security, but they are not in the diplomacy business. When they first enter our embassies, visitors often encounter a contract security person issuing brusque, Transportation Security Administration-like instructions. That's not good enough for any U.S. embassy and would be especially unfortunate for an embassy that consciously seeks to project openness through its design.

Nor is it necessary to display a lot of firepower, such as having the U.K. police brandishing submachine guns at the gates. (At U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv, where I was deputy chief of mission during the Second Intifada, I never once actually saw the weapons carried by the Israeli guards, but I am confident that we were no less secure.)

### New Standards of Sustainability

One of the reasons the embassy needed to move from Grosvenor Square was the huge utility bill and the aging internal infrastructure. Built at a time when environmental efficiencies were far down the list of requirements, Saarinen's building was hard to fuel and difficult to maintain. The new embassy will set new standards of sustainability achieved by only a few major buildings anywhere.

Having toured the site when it was about 80 percent complete, I was stunned to see how both the workspace and the spaces open to the public incorporated outside light based on detailed lighting design. The cutting-edge scrim on three sides of the structure helps manage light and energy. The building will supply and reuse its own water. It will not only conserve power but also be able to sell surplus energy to its neighbors. Once again, however, ensuring that all these systems actually work the way they are supposed to will require conscientious, trained managers.

The American "citizens of London" Lynne Olson described were by no means perfect, and they attracted a good deal of criticism along the way to becoming respected historical figures. The new embassy should expect the same—architecture critics are a prickly bunch, and I would be astonished if they provide more than grudging acceptance when they write reviews in the coming months. However, they should not forget the unique security challenges of building a new U.S. embassy, nor discount the triumph of essentially sparking a now bustling new neighborhood in central London.

And the ambassadors and staff who occupy this structure should never forget that its principal purpose is to put America's best face forward. A building is never *just* a building. ■

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## AFSA Awards Honor Foreign Service Excellence



AFSA/TOWA SARINO JORDAN

The 2017 AFSA Constructive Dissent and Exemplary Performance Award winners and runners-up, from left: Thomas Wong, Diane Corbin, Michael Murphy, Ambassador (ret.) Nancy Powell, Aubrey Dowd, John Wood, René Gutel, Maria Barrón, Elzar Camper, Wendy Brafman, Henry Throop, Christina Le, Ambassador Tulinabo Mushingi, Mariju Bofill and Cecelia Choi.

AFSA's 49th annual awards ceremony took place on June 20 in the Department of State's Dean Acheson Auditorium, where more than 300 guests gathered to recognize Foreign Service excellence.

It was an inspirational occasion, where the honorees for lifetime contributions, constructive dissent and exemplary performance showed themselves to be the kinds of Foreign Service leaders that our profession needs and is uniquely adept at creating.

Twelve award recipients and three runners-up were highlighted for their outstanding work; please see addi-

tional coverage on each of them beginning on page 76.

In opening the ceremony AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson spoke of the privilege that AFSA feels "in recognizing the dedication, patriotism and sheer excellence of the professional career Foreign Service."

She acknowledged the five former recipients of the Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy who were in attendance—Senator Richard Lugar, Stu Kennedy and Ambassadors Bill Harrop, Rozanne Ridgway and Ruth Davis—and the presence of most of the Foreign Service leadership at

**There is no better testament to the excellence and expertise of the Foreign Service than the stories of these [awards recipients] and their contributions to our national security.**

*—Ambassador (ret.) Nancy J. Powell*

State and USAID.

Among those showing their appreciation of the recipients and their achievements were Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Tom Shannon, acting Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Bruce Wharton, USAID Counselor Tom Staal, Assistant Secretary Daniel Smith, and acting Assistant Secretar-

ies Stu Jones, John Heffern, Peter Barlerin, Virginia Bennett, Bill Miller, Justin Siberell and Mark Taplin.

The afternoon's first award was for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy. This year's recipient, Ambassador (ret.) Nancy J. Powell, received a standing ovation in honor of her exemplary career.

From humble begin-

nings as a school teacher in Dayton, Iowa—population 900—she retired as one of the most admired members of the career Foreign Service, with postings as ambassador to five countries, service as Director General of the Foreign Service, the personal rank of Career Ambassador and a reputation as an outstanding mentor to countless individuals from entry-level officers to senior ambassadors.

In her remarks, Amb. Powell expressed her gratitude to the many mentors and collaborators who guided, advised and supported her during her career, a theme which was later echoed by many of the other award recipients.

She specifically highlighted Ambassadors Peter Burleigh, Howard Schaffer, the late Arnold Raphel and A. Elizabeth Jones. “While we all know them for their regional expertise and policy-making skills,” Powell said “I had the additional joy of knowing them for their encouragement, their empathy and their exemplification of Foreign Service leadership at its finest.”

In closing, Amb. Powell pledged that from her



AFSA/TOYA SARRNO JORDAN

2017 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy winner Ambassador (ret.) Nancy Powell, with four previous recipients of AFSA's most prestigious award. From left, Senator Richard Lugar, Ambassador (ret.) Bill Harrop, Amb. Powell, Stu Kennedy and Ambassador (ret.) Ruth Davis.

“bench on the beach,” she would “continue to work as a private citizen to help secure the resources you need to conduct your essential roles in designing and implementing America’s foreign policy, in ensuring the security and smooth functioning of our missions that serve the American people and the interagency community, in guaranteeing that you have the training you need to succeed, and in building on the progress made in mitigating poverty, disease and disasters around the globe.”

See page 31 for *FSJ* Editor Shawn Dorman’s interview with Amb. Powell.

## CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT AWARDS

Turning to the awards for constructive dissent, Amb. Stephenson made the case that in the Foreign Service, “we strongly believe that it is our duty to call things as we see them, because that’s in the best interest of our country. In many cases, we may provide input that calls into question the wisdom of a policy direction or challenges the validity of a procedure. Doing so is a core element of leadership in the Foreign Service context, a duty that is required of us. The six members of the Foreign Service we honor today

**Good ideas withstand scrutiny. Our country is stronger for this Foreign Service community that encourages integrity and intellectual honesty to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.**

—Cecilia S. Choi

## CALENDAR

September 4  
Labor Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed

September 7  
12:1:30 p.m.  
A Moderated Conversation  
with FSO Oni Blair

September 8  
7:05 p.m.  
The Second Annual  
Foreign Service Night  
at Nationals Park:  
Nationals vs. Phillies

September 10-14  
AFSA Road  
Scholar Program:  
“The Middle East:  
Conflict and Controversy”  
Washington, D.C.

September 11  
12-1 p.m.  
Public Diplomacy Council:  
“9/11 Sixteen Years Later”

September 14  
12-1:30 p.m.  
AFSA Book Notes:  
Career Diplomacy by  
Harry W. Kopp and  
John K. Naland

September 20  
12-1:30 p.m.  
AFSA Governing  
Board Meeting

September 20  
4:30-6:30 p.m.  
AFSA Networking  
Happy Hour

October 2  
12:00-1:00 p.m.  
Public Diplomacy Council:  
“How Finland Is Using  
Public Diplomacy to  
Celebrate Its Centennial”

October 9  
Columbus Day:  
AFSA Offices Closed

**[The department] is not without its blemishes, but it is wholly willing to acknowledge them, then fix them. That's what makes State great.**

*—Thomas T. Wong*

all showed that leadership.”

Ambassador Charles Rivkin presented the William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Foreign Service Officer, to Wendy Brafman in recognition of her efforts to enhance transparency and accountability in Uganda’s intercountry adoption system.

Amb. Rivkin then honored four current and former presidents of the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association for their tenacious efforts to improve the assignment restrictions process at the Department of State.

The hard work of Christina T. Le, Cecilia S. Choi, Mariju L. Bofill and Thomas T. Wong paid off when a new Foreign Affairs Manual chapter was issued in November



From left, Under Secretary of State Tom Shannon, acting Under Secretary Bruce Wharton, Assistant Secretary Daniel Bennett Smith, Ambassador (ret.) Ruth Davis, Senator Richard Lugar, Charles Stuart ‘Stu’ Kennedy and USAID Counselor Tom Staal attended the AFSA awards ceremony on June 20 to show their support for AFSA and to congratulate the award winners.

2016, adding increased transparency to the process.

Amb. Bill Harrop then presented the F. Allen ‘Tex’ Harris Award for Constructive Dissent by a Foreign Service Specialist to Elzar T. Camper, a Diplomatic Security special agent at U.S. Embassy Cairo.

Mr. Camper authored a dissent cable arguing against State Department policy, which he feels has not empowered and promoted Diplomatic Security to lead in implementing many of the increased screening objectives which are already spelled out in its own programs.

**Obedience is not patriotism... The importance the department has historically placed on the value of dissenting opinions speaks to the ideal of hope.**

*—Elzar T. Camper*

**We applaud and continuously promote the indispensable role that diplomats and development professionals play in protecting and serving America’s people, interests and values.**

*—John S. Wood*



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson (right) with 2017 Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy recipient Ambassador (ret.) Nancy Powell in the Department of State’s C Street lobby, ahead of the AFSA awards ceremony on June 20.



Each of this year's dissent recipients shows how the Foreign Service is taking ownership of the organization, making hard choices and refining processes to strengthen the institution.

### EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE AWARDS

Dr. Sushma Palmer next presented the first awards for exemplary performance, the Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy. After recognizing runner-up Maria Elena Barrón, a USAID Foreign Service officer, for her work promoting a democratic transition in Nepal, Dr. Palmer honored Ambassador Tulinabo Salama Mushingi with the 2017 Palmer Award for his efforts to prevent conflict during an attempted coup d'état in Burkina Faso.

Dr. Palmer presented the second 2017 Palmer award to René Gutel, the human rights officer at U.S. Embassy Beijing. Against all odds, Ms. Gutel made significant headway in promoting human rights and making common cause with other democracies in the diplomatic community in China.

Amb. Stephenson presented the Award for Achievement and Contributions to the Association to Foreign Commercial Service retiree John S. Wood, leader of the energetic and engaged Foreign Service retiree group in Austin, Texas, for his effectiveness in telling the story of the Foreign Service to our fellow Americans.

Amb. Harrop then

returned to the podium to present the Nelson B. Delavan Award for Exemplary Performance by an Office Management Specialist to Diane Corbin, who had just returned from an immensely challenging 29-month tour in South Sudan. Judith Brown of the U.S. embassy in Yaoundé was the runner-up.

Jon Clements, CEO of Clements Worldwide, presented the M. Juanita Guess Award for Exemplary Performance by a Community Liaison Officer to Aubrey Dowd of U.S. Embassy Dhaka.

Ms. Dowd generously acknowledged her CLO colleagues in Dhaka and expressed her appreciation to AFSA for acknowledging the important work CLOs do within the embassy community. Michael P. Murphy of U.S. Embassy Algiers was the runner-up.

The final award of the afternoon was the Avis Bohlen Award for Exemplary Performance by an Eligible Family Member. On behalf of the Bohlen family, Mette Becroft presented the award to Henry Throop of U.S. Consulate Mumbai.

A NASA scientist, Dr. Throop has volunteered thousands of hours at multi-



At a champagne reception after the June 20 awards ceremony, friends, family and colleagues celebrate the achievements of the 16 AFSA award winners.

AFSA/TOYA SARNO JORDAN

ple posts to engage local children in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects, including night-time astronomy observations and countless school appearances.

A celebratory champagne reception in the department's Exhibit Hall followed the ceremony, a fitting way to conclude an event whose purpose is to highlight and reward those who carry out their duties in the finest tra-

dition of the Foreign Service.

Please visit [www.afsa.org/video](http://www.afsa.org/video) to watch the full ceremony, as well as selected highlights. Photos of the recipients, ceremony and reception are available at <http://bit.ly/2t1xBO4>. ■

**Promoting human rights overseas is some of the most important and vital work we can do in the State Department. If we are to continue to be an example to the world, we must consistently represent universal values, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of association.**

—René Gutel



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA State VP. Contact: KeroMentzKA@state.gov | (202) 647-8160

## Like a Bridge

We in the Foreign Service understand the need for a strong union and professional association to support and defend us and the important work we do for the American people. I am honored and excited to serve all of you as your AFSA State Vice President over the coming two years.

Having already served four years on AFSA's Governing Board and as AFSA post representative in Berlin (for which I received AFSA's Post Representative of the Year award in 2009), I know well the important role AFSA plays—not only as the “voice of the Foreign Service” to the world beyond Foggy Bottom, but also as your ally and advocate. Together we will weather the challenges we face.

We all know change is hard, but we in the Foreign Service are perhaps uniquely

capable of managing uncertainty and thriving not in spite of change, but because of it. After all, we constantly pick up our lives, our families and our professional expectations and haul them off to new corners of the world, with new colleagues, new challenges and new things to learn.

And at each stop, we find success, advancing American interests as no other organization can or does. Sure, problems arise, setbacks occur and unforeseen threats present themselves. But we carry on in the time-honored traditions of our Service. It's who we are and what we do.

Our esprit de corps holds us together, inspires us to help one another in adjusting to the ever-changing realities of new homes and new jobs, new places and new people. Now is a moment when that spirit of togetherness must

hold to support this Service and this State Department—and AFSA is poised to promote and protect our entire Foreign Service family.

There are reasons for hope: the draconian cuts in foreign affairs budgets initially proposed by some have faced significant headwinds on Capitol Hill. Members of Congress from both parties have made clear their belief that a robust diplomatic and development capability is as critical to U.S. national security as a strong military deterrent.

All indications suggest that Congress plans to back these views with a budget that continues funding for the department at appropriate levels. AFSA continues to engage actively with our allies in Congress, to press for passage of appropriations that reflect the vital work of the Foreign Service and respect members of

the Foreign Service as professionals serving the nation in often difficult and dangerous circumstances.

Change is coming. Rest assured, we will push back where needed, influence decisions where we can and do our best to keep you apprised of what lies ahead. Wherever possible, AFSA will seek to be the bridge that leads the Foreign Service through these troubled waters and onto the path of a future every bit as distinguished as our past. Setbacks may occur, but with your support for AFSA, we will remain strong.

And I will do everything in my power to honor the trust you have placed in me by representing and encouraging that strength through the challenges ahead. This is my pledge. ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA Retiree VP. Contact: naland@afsa.org | (703) 437-7881

## Focus on Retiree Issues

I thank those who elected me as Retiree Vice President for 2017-2019. Like all AFSA Governing Board members, I will support AFSA's efforts to advance the interests of the active-duty Foreign Service. But, in accordance

with my job title, my primary focus will be on issues which impact current Foreign Service retirees and their survivors and which will affect today's active-duty members when they eventually retire. Those issues include:

**Benefits:** The current administration has proposed dramatic cuts in federal retirement benefits which would lower the standard of living for current and future Foreign Service retirees and would make it more difficult

for foreign affairs agencies to attract and retain a talented and diverse workforce. I and others in AFSA will join representatives of other federal employee

*Continued on page 67*



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FAS VP.  
Contact: kim.sawatzki@usda.gov | (202) 720-3650

## Seeking Solutions and Sustainability

As a second-generation FAS Foreign Service officer, embassies and the Foreign Agricultural Service have been a major part of my entire life. They are not just places of employment, but the foundation of who I am today.

Since my earliest memories, they have instilled in me a sense of purpose, duty, joy and pride. My love and loyalty to my country, the Foreign Service and FAS' mission have driven me to serve as the AFSA Vice President for FAS.

I want to work alongside AFSA colleagues from all of the foreign affairs agencies to be the face of the Foreign Service, demonstrate that strong diplomacy is critical for U.S. interests, publicize

the great work we do to the new administration and the public, and protect our retirement benefits that are currently under threat.

I am excited for the opportunity to advocate on behalf of FAS Foreign Service officers and build a strong, sustainable and compassionate Foreign Service.

My "to-do list" includes fixing the time-in-service issue (22 years vs. 27 years) that penalizes top performers; ensuring that there are good job opportunities for Washington-bound FSOs; exploring issues such as giving credit for long-term training and limited career extensions; improving training opportunities; engaging with manage-

ment to strengthen FAS; and ensuring that we all work in a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Foreign Agricultural Service officers are a creative, passionate and dedicated bunch, and I am confident that we can come up with innovative ways to solve the challenges facing us, both current and future.

One of the first challenges I would like to address is the current shortage of FO-1s and FO-2s, which means that we do not have enough officers to fill our positions overseas. Forced assignments may help fill those slots, but at what cost?

The practice of forced assignments encourages more retirements, thereby exacerbating the problem,

and sends the message to all FSOs that the agency may "reward" your decades of dedicated service with a forced assignment. So how do we fill the positions?

As a start, I suggest that FAS management pursue a Re-Employed Annuitants (REA or When Actually Employed) program for retirees to come back to work temporarily to fill gaps, including during transitions so FSOs can take the home leave and training they need for onward assignments.

I am eager to talk with FAS Foreign Service officers, to hear your concerns and suggested solutions. Send your thoughts and ideas to me at kim.sawatzki@usda.gov. ■

*Retiree VP Voice,  
Continued from page 66*

groups in urging Congress to moderate that package of cuts.

**Education:** As director of State's Office of Retirement, I spent a lot of time helping employees and retirees get out of holes they had dug for themselves due to their lack of knowledge of the laws and regulations governing retirement benefits. As Retiree VP, I plan to expand

AFSA's efforts to educate members so they can avoid such problems.

**Member Services:** When members do encounter problems with retirement benefits, I will work with AFSA's retiree counselor and Labor Management Office to assist them. To resolve issues, I will meet with the Office of Retirement and, if needed, travel to Charleston, South Carolina, to meet with the Retirement Accounts Division.

**Outreach:** Retirees play an important role in speaking out in defense of the career Foreign Service and in supporting funding for diplomacy and development. Toward that end, I will work with AFSA's new retiree outreach coordinator to expand advocacy efforts by retirees with a goal of developing a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service.

**Community:** As a member of the Foreign Affairs Retirees of Northern Vir-

ginia, I see the value of such groups around the nation in bringing together Foreign Service veterans to continue the camaraderie we felt while on active duty. I will encourage AFSA to assist those groups in expanding their membership.

If you need assistance or have suggestions, you can reach me at naland@afsa.org. AFSA's Retiree Counselor Todd Thurwachter can be reached at thurwachter@afsa.org and (202) 944-5509. ■



## FCS VP VOICE | BY DANIEL CROCKER

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



## USAID VP VOICE | BY ANN POSNER

Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA USAID VP. Contact: aposner@usaid.gov | (202) 712-1631

# Facing Unprecedented Challenges

With 80 percent of Foreign Commercial Service AFSA members voting in the 2017 AFSA election, it's clear that we are keenly aware of the unprecedented challenges that we face. I want to thank outgoing FCS VP Steve Morrison for serving our interests at AFSA since 2010 and for a smooth succession.

Here are our three major priorities for the next two years.

First, I will help Congress and the administration understand the importance of the work that we do on behalf of U.S. economic security—and the need to fund it accordingly.

The proposal to close 35 posts overseas and a significant number of domestic field offices is quite simply at odds with the administration's desire to enforce trade obligations that help more U.S. companies compete on a level playing field overseas, grow more U.S. exports and attract more foreign investment—all of which contribute directly to the creation of good jobs in the United States.

How do we serve that mission? With a unique global and domestic footprint and an unparalleled culture of outcome-oriented assistance that we document rigorously for more than 28,000 U.S. companies each year.

I plan to let members of Congress know, both directly and through our clients and multipliers, what we do for their constituents—and ask for their

support. With our FY16 results showing that we contribute \$192 to the American economy for every \$1 of taxpayer money spent, there are better places to cut spending.

Second, I will help the Commerce Department spend its appropriations for this mission as effectively as possible. Commerce does so best when it continues to fund and prioritize its highest-performing client-facing professionals.

I will work closely with administration officials to ensure that if any cuts do have to be made, they will have a minimal impact on our ability to serve the U.S. business community with our unparalleled track record of direct, results-oriented engagement.

Third, I will work with other members of AFSA's Governing Board to clarify FCS' role at post, particularly given the ongoing restructuring of the State Department and USAID. In Panama, as part of Ambassador Barbara Stephenson's outstanding country team, I experienced and appreciated her collaborative approach.

I believe that our new AFSA board will be able to inform State's new look and feel in a way that maximizes its ability to advance U.S. national interests as efficiently as possible, with minimal role overlap.

I'll need your assistance to deliver on this platform. Contact me at daniel.crocker@trade.gov. ■

# Promoting USAID Interests

After many years overseas, first as the spouse of a Foreign Service officer and for the last 20 years as a USAID executive officer (EXO), I am eager to use my business management skills, my EXO experience in overseas missions, my exposure to the workings of USAID's Washington, D.C., headquarters and the knowledge I've gleaned from working alongside our immensely talented professionals to serve as your AFSA Vice President.

My special focus will be on the careers, families and lives of USAID's Foreign Service professionals.

My first effort will be to reach out to all USAID FSOs to ask what they value and what aggravates them most about USAID, now and at other times during their careers. I invite you to tell me about the service you would like from AFSA during these tumultuous times.

I want to hear your ideas and insights. Your priorities will steer my efforts. What is most urgent to you will be most urgent for me during the coming months as I try to move initiatives forward.

As you all know, some major initiatives and policy changes are taking place within USAID right now. I want to make sure that the interests of the majority of FSOs in the agency are taken into account as those changes are being made.

For example, as the

revised USAID Foreign Service Performance Management procedures are implemented, I would like to know whether you feel the new procedures are an improvement over the present system. I hope that the replacement system will be less time consuming and will be viewed as fair and rational.

However, while important, revision of performance management procedures is only one of the major topics that preoccupy us about our careers right now. I pledge that my responses to you will always be appropriate, considered and prompt. I will voice your perspectives and represent your concerns in USAID Washington and with colleagues in the State Department. ■

## 2017-2019 AFSA Governing Board Takes Office



Members of the 2017-2019 AFSA Governing Board gather for the first board meeting at AFSA headquarters on July 19. From left: FCS Alternate Rep. Matthew Hilgendorf, Retiree Rep. Amb. (ret.) Al La Porta, BBG Rep. Steven Herman, State Rep. Josh Glazeroff, State Rep. Tricia Wingerter, State Rep. Martin McDowell, President Amb. Barbara Stephenson, Secretary Amb. (ret.) Tom Boyatt, Retiree Rep. Phil Shull, Retiree VP John Naland, Treasurer Amb. (ret.) Tony Wayne, State VP Ken Kero-Mentz and FCS VP Daniel Crocker.

On July 19, the first meeting of the 2017-2019 AFSA Governing Board took place at the association's E Street headquarters.

**Welcome:** AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson welcomed the new board members and thanked them for stepping forward to serve.

**Minutes Approval Committee:** Without objection, a Minutes Approval Committee was created and FCS Vice President Daniel Crocker and State Representatives Tricia Wingerter and Martin McDowell were appointed to it.

**Management Commit-**

**tee:** Secretary Ambassador (ret.) Tom Boyatt proposed the establishment of a Management Committee consisting of the president, secretary and treasurer and to include constituency vice presidents when matters within their purview are discussed. The motion was approved.

**AFSA PAC:** Amb. Tom Boyatt moved to recreate an AFSA Political Action Committee and appoint Amb. Tony Wayne as chair and treasurer, Executive Director Ian Houston as assistant treasurer and Kalpna Srimal as keeper of records. The motion was approved. ■

## Meet the 2017-2019 AFSA Governing Board

The American Foreign Service Association is proud to introduce the elected officers and representatives of the 2017-2019 Governing Board.

The AFSA Governing Board meets on the third Wednesday of each month from 12 to 1:30 p.m. AFSA members are welcome to attend any board meetings and may request copies of the minutes from Jennie Orloff at orloff@afsa.org.



### AMBASSADOR BARBARA STEPHENSON PRESIDENT

Barbara Stephenson has served as president of AFSA since July 2015. As dean of the Leadership School at FSI (2013-2015), she launched a department-wide dialogue—the Leadership Roundtable—to

improve leadership and management to unleash the tremendous talent at State. She served previously as ambassador to Panama and deputy chief of mission/chargé d'affaires in London.

She won a Distinguished Honor Award for delivering the “civilian surge” to Iraq—without breaking the back of the

Foreign Service. She also served as consul general in Belfast and CG and COM in Curaçao, and received a Superior Honor Award for her work on the peace agreement in El Salvador. With more than 30 years of service, she entered as a political officer and has since served interfunctionally, meeting the needs of the Service whenever and wherever called.

In her second term, Ambassador Stephenson will work to seize every opportunity presented by these challenging times to make the Foreign Service stronger in fact and in reputation. She will also continue efforts to improve governance at AFSA to ensure that member dues are used as efficiently and effectively as possible for the benefit of the Foreign Service.



### AMBASSADOR THOMAS BOYATT SECRETARY

Ambassador (ret.) Tom Boyatt entered the Foreign Service in 1959 and retired in 1984 with the rank of Career Minister. As an FSO, he served in every cone and at posts in four of the five geographic bureaus. He served as U.S. ambassador to Burkina Faso (1978-1980) and

Colombia (1980-1983).

Amb. Boyatt earned the Department of State's Heroism Award and AFSA's Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award for his service. He received the William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Officer in 1970 and the Christian A. Herter Award for Constructive Dissent by a Member of the Senior Foreign Service in 1979.

Born in Wyoming, Ohio, Amb. Boyatt received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and a master's degree from Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He is married to Maxine Shearwood. They have five children and seven grandchildren.

Amb. Boyatt has previously served AFSA as president, vice president and treasurer. He ran for the office of secretary because he "wanted to continue to contribute to the excellent work AFSA is doing in governance, outreach and strengthening the Foreign Service Act and the Service itself."



**AMBASSADOR EARL ANTHONY (TONY) WAYNE**  
**TREASURER**

Ambassador (ret.) Earl Anthony Wayne served as a Foreign Service officer from 1975 to 2015. He is currently a Public Policy Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and

a senior non-resident adviser at the Atlantic Council and at the Center for Security and International Studies. Amb. Wayne is also an adviser for HSBC Bank in Mexico and Latin America on countering illicit finance.

Tony Wayne served as U.S. ambassador to Mexico (2011-2015) and Argentina (2006-2009), and as deputy ambassador in Afghanistan (2009-2011). He was assistant secretary of State for the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB) from 2000 to 2006. Prior to his service with EB, Wayne worked as principal deputy assistant secretary of State for European affairs, deputy assistant secretary for Europe and Canada, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. mission to the European Union in Brussels and director for Western Europe at the National Security Council.

In addition to his new post as AFSA treasurer, Amb. Wayne chairs AFSA's political action committee.



**KEN KERO-MENTZ**  
**STATE VICE PRESIDENT**

Ken Kero-Mentz joined the State Department in January 2000 as a member of the 95th A-100 class. An economic-coned officer, he has served overseas in Rio de Janeiro, Baghdad, Berlin, Colombo and

Erbil, in addition to Washington, D.C., assignments in the bureaus of European and Eurasian Affairs and Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

Mr. Kero-Mentz served as AFSA post representative in Berlin, where he received the AFSA Post Rep of the Year award in 2009. He served two tours on the AFSA Governing Board from 2011 to 2015 as a State representative.

Prior to joining the State Department, Mr. Kero-Mentz spent five years on Capitol Hill covering a wide range of legislative issues, including foreign affairs. Raised in Vermont, he earned a B.A. in international affairs with a minor in German, and a master's degree in public administration from the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Ken Kero-Mentz decided to run for the State VP position because he believes strongly in AFSA's dual mission to defend the Foreign Service and protect Foreign Service employees.



**DANIEL CROCKER**  
**FCS VICE PRESIDENT**

Daniel Crocker is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. Prior to his election to the AFSA Governing Board, he was the commercial counselor at U.S. Embassy Madrid, promoting U.S. commercial interests in Spain.

Mr. Crocker was the first director of the Foreign Commercial Service's newly created Office of Digital Initiatives, where he led the successful procurement and global implementation of Salesforce, a customer relationship management product, to capture all of Commerce's trade engagement. He was also the first executive director for FCS Western hemisphere operations, where he managed 230 officials in 14 countries. Mr. Crocker has served overseas in Panama, Mexico, Brazil and the Dominican Republic.

Before joining the Foreign Service, Mr. Crocker worked in the private sector with Schlumberger, Amsted Rail, Webvan, HomeWarehouse.com and as an MIT consultant for Hewlett-Packard. Mr. Crocker is married with two children.

He chose to run for office with AFSA because he "believes that AFSA is in an unparalleled position to advocate effectively for a strong Foreign Service that includes the promotion and defense of U.S. commercial interests."



**ANN POSNER**  
**USAID VICE PRESIDENT**

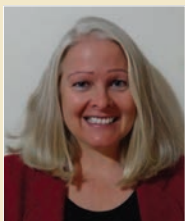
After years of increasingly complex and broad management responsibilities as a Foreign Service executive officer (EXO) at overseas USAID Missions, Ann Posner returned to Washington, D.C., in 2012.

Working with USAID's Human Capital and Talent Management Office, she helped start the Overseas Human Capital Initiative, strengthening coordination and support for USAID's overseas personnel, and worked to revise USAID's telework procedures worldwide.

Ms. Posner served in the Africa Administrative Management Services, dealing with various challenges in the region, including the post-Ebola problems confronting West Africa. She supported overseas posts' evacuation planning and trained country desk officers. Most recently she served in USAID's Overseas Management Division.

Overseas, Ms. Posner has served as supervisory executive officer at USAID West Bank and Gaza, and in Bosnia and Albania. She was deputy EXO at USAID Russia.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Posner worked on a personal services contract as deputy EXO and EXO for USAID Czech Republic.



**KIMBERLY SAWATZKI**  
**FAS VICE PRESIDENT**

Kimberly Svec Sawatzki, a member of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service for more than 20 years, recently completed a tour as the agricultural counselor in Ankara. She previously served as senior agricultural attaché in Moscow and as the

agricultural attaché in Brasilia, as well as on a detail to the U.S. Southern Command.

In Washington D.C., as area director for Africa and the Middle East in FAS' Office of Foreign Service Operations, and in the Office of Negotiations and Agreements, the Grain and Feed Division, and the Dairy, Livestock and Poultry Division.

She has a master's in agricultural economics and international trade from the University of Illinois, and B.A.s in economics, international affairs, and German from the University of Maine. She is married and has one child.

Ms. Sawatzki is "eager to serve as the AFSA vice president for FAS in order to advocate on behalf of FAS Foreign Service officers and build a strong, sustainable and compassionate Foreign Service."



**JOHN NALAND**  
**RETIREE VICE PRESIDENT**

John Naland's 29-year Foreign Service career included service in Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Mexico and Iraq (as leader of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basra). Assignments in Washington, D.C., included the Secretary's policy

planning staff, the White House situation room and the Bureau

of Human Resources (as director of the Office of Retirement). He retired from the Foreign Service in 2015.

Mr. Naland is currently president of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation and coordinator of Foreign Affairs Retirees of Northern Virginia. He is co-author with Harry Kopp of the third edition of *Career Diplomacy: Life and Work in the U.S. Foreign Service* (Georgetown University Press, 2017).

A former U.S. Army cavalry officer who served in West Germany during the Cold War, he is a graduate of the Army War College. Born in Kansas, he grew up in New Orleans and graduated from Tulane University. He is married and has two college-age daughters.

Mr. Naland was AFSA State VP from 1999 to 2001 and AFSA president from 2001 to 2003 and 2007 to 2009.



**ANNE COLEMAN-HONN**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Anne Coleman-Honn is an FS-2 economic officer who has served in four bureaus and across cones. She served most recently as the political unit chief at U.S. Embassy Stockholm.

As a founding member of the Balancing Act employee organization, she has helped to bring best practices from other parts of the federal government—such as the voluntary leave bank and an emergency backup care program for dependents—to the State Department.

As a member of the AFSA Governing Board, she looks forward to continuing to help employees meet their work and family obligations. Part of a tandem couple, she and her husband, Aaron Honn, have three children.

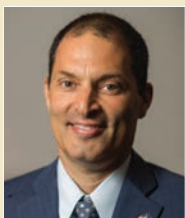


**TRICIA WINGERTER**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Tricia Wingerter is the coordinator for the Ambassadorial Seminar. She is a Foreign Service office management specialist and has served at the Department of State for more than 20 years. She has been posted overseas in Belgrade, Moscow (twice), Tel

Aviv, Managua, Zagreb, Brussels, Beijing and London before taking up her current assignment at FSI's Leadership and Management School, Executive Development Division.

This is Ms. Wingerter's second term serving on the AFSA Governing Board. She looks forward to serving the entire membership and especially on specialist issues. She is married and has two grown daughters.



### **JOSH GLAZEROFF** **STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Josh Glazeroff has 20 years of experience in the Foreign Service. He has served overseas in Santo Domingo, Durban and New Delhi. His postings in Washington, D.C., include Burma desk officer, career development officer in the Bureau of Human

Resources, senior watch officer in the Operations Center and manager of the Office of Fraud Prevention Programs for the Bureau of Consular Affairs. He currently serves as the chief of recruitment outreach for the State Department.

Mr. Glazeroff was born in Detroit, Michigan. He grew up in Newburgh, New York, and earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Harvard College and a master's degree in teaching biology from Brown University.

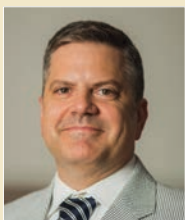


### **LAWRENCE W.K. CASSELLE** **STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Lawrence W. K. Casselle joined the State Department as a Diplomatic Security special agent in 2003. Mr. Casselle is currently serving as deputy director in the Office of Intelligence Operations & Oversight in the Bureau of Intelligence & Research.

Mr. Casselle previously served as the Diplomatic Security branch chief for Overseas Protective Operations, Facilities Protection Division; in the State Department's Operations Center; on the protective detail for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and in Diplomatic Security's New York Field Office. His overseas assignments include United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan and Belize. A native of Las Vegas, Nevada, he is a 1998 graduate of Hampton University with a bachelor's degree in political science.

Mr. Casselle served on the AFSA Governing Board as a State Representative from 2015 to 2017 and currently serves on the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board.



### **MARTIN MCDOWELL** **STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Martin McDowell joined the Foreign Service in 1998 and currently serves as the deputy director in the Office for Central Europe in the Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs. Previous overseas assignments include Slovakia, El Salvador, Moldova and Slovenia.

In Washington, Mr. McDowell also worked as a special assistant to the under secretary for political affairs and as the desk officer for Norway and Sweden. He received an M.A. in

education from the University of Alabama in 1996 and an M.A. in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College in 2010. Born and raised in Alabama, Mr. McDowell and his family now live in Fairfax, Virginia.

Mr. McDowell ran for the AFSA Governing Board because "he wanted to help protect our Foreign Service and help explain what we do and why it matters to the American people."



### **MATTHEW HILGENDORF** **FCS ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Matthew Hilgendorf is a commercial officer with the U.S. Commercial Service, currently assigned to the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, D.C.

Prior to his assignment to the IADB, Mr. Hilgendorf supported Department of Commerce work in the South Asia region as principal commercial officer in Kolkata, and in Washington, D.C., as a member of the U.S.-India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue coordinating team.

A native of New Mexico, he is a graduate of American University and the United World College of the Adriatic. He has previously served overseas in Chile and Mexico, and in the United States as an international trade specialist in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Mr. Hilgendorf stood for office with AFSA because he believes that "when you have an opportunity to make a positive contribution, you must take it—both for your own good and the good of your organization."



### **THOM WRIGHT** **FAS ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Thom Wright joined the Foreign Agricultural Service in 2006 and has served in New Delhi and Jakarta. He is currently the deputy director of the FAS Office of Public Affairs. Mr. Wright holds a bachelor's

degree in French from Evergreen State College and a master's degree in agricultural economics from Michigan State University. He grew up in Washington state and enjoys cycling when he is not spending time with his wife and two children.

Mr. Wright appreciates the chance to serve as AFSA FAS representative as he believes strong dialogue between management and officers of all levels is essential for a healthy and robust Foreign Service.





### **STEVEN HERMAN** **BBG REPRESENTATIVE**

Steven L. Herman is the White House bureau chief for the Voice of America. The veteran correspondent has been a member of the Foreign Service since 2007, when he was named VOA's South Asia bureau chief, based in New Delhi. Subse-

quent overseas posts include Seoul and Bangkok. Mr. Herman returned to the United States in 2016 to cover diplomacy, based at the State Department, before moving to cover the new administration shortly after the inauguration.

Mr. Herman spent 16 years living in Tokyo and working in media before joining VOA as a staff correspondent. A former news reporter for the Associated Press, he began his career in radio and television news in Las Vegas, Nevada. Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, he is a graduate of Thomas Edison State University and holds an M.A. in public diplomacy from Mountain State University.

Mr. Herman is a former president of both the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan and the Seoul Foreign Correspondents' Club. He is also a governor of the Overseas Press Club of America. He ran for office with AFSA because he "felt an obligation to ensure that BBG/IBB/VOA members of the Foreign Service have representation."



### **JOHN (J.J.) HURLEY** **APHIS REPRESENTATIVE**

John (J.J.) Hurley joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in 2002. In 2006 he joined the APHIS Foreign Service. He has held overseas assignments in Panama and Guatemala, where he was responsible

for overseeing binational and multilateral programs controlling insect pests affecting animal and plant health.

Mr. Hurley currently serves in Washington, D.C., with APHIS' Trade Support Team, handling sanitary and phytosanitary trade issues for Latin America. Prior to joining APHIS he was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Honduras. J.J. grew up in a Foreign Service family and gained youthful experience working in several embassies. He and his wife have four children.



### **AMBASSADOR** **ALPHONSE LA PORTA** **RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE**

During 38 years in the Foreign Service, Ambassador (ret.) Al La Porta served as ambassador to Mongolia, political adviser to the commander of NATO forces in

Southern Europe, executive director to the special envoy for the Multilateral Assistance Initiative and director of the Office of Cambodian Genocide Investigations. He earned a B.A. from Georgetown University and master's degrees from New York University and the National War College.

Since retiring in 2003, Amb. La Porta chaired the Southeast Asia area studies course at the Foreign Service Institute, serves part-time in the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and is a consultant on Asian affairs to the U.S. Pacific Command in Honolulu, Hawaii. Since 2009 he has advised the Joint Staff/J7 and the U.S. Africa Command, headquartered in Germany, regarding military exercise programs. In 2008-2009, he served as chief of party for Development Alternatives International on a USAID project to advise the foreign ministry in Pristina, Kosovo.

Amb. La Porta served as president of AFSA in 1997, and served as State vice president before that. He was first elected as a retiree representative in 2015.



### **PHILIP SHULL** **RETIREE REPRESENTATIVE**

Philip Shull retired in 2016 after 31 years with the Foreign Agricultural Service. A native of Wooster, Ohio, his interest in food security and international relations was sparked from living as a boy in India, where he saw severe malnutrition.

Mr. Shull's work maximizing exports of U.S. food and agricultural products and promoting global food security included trade negotiations, capacity building, food safety, biotechnology, marketing and promotion, scientific exchange and economic analysis. His overseas assignments included Korea, Argentina (including Uruguay and Paraguay), Hong Kong, Philippines and three tours in China. His final position was minister counselor for agriculture in Beijing.

Mr. Shull ran for AFSA office for many reasons, among them to use his private-sector contacts to promote public support for the Foreign Service, particularly in the heartland; to defend the Foreign Service against unjustified resource cuts; to help ensure our Foreign Service continues to promote the full range of our traditional diplomatic and economic interests; and to create opportunities for retirees to demonstrate the value of the Foreign Service by sharing their knowledge, experience and insights in universities and other forums. ■

## Behind the Scenes at the AFSA Election



Member Services Representative Natalie Cheung (second from left) and Executive Director Ian Houston (right) process AFSA Governing Board election ballots received by mail at the AFSA headquarters building.

On the morning of June 8, members of the AFSA Committee on Elections gathered to count the votes cast in the 2017-2019 AFSA Governing Board election.

Following closure of the online voting platform at 8 a.m., a committee member collected the paper ballots from a post office nearby and sorting began at approximately 9:30 a.m. at AFSA headquarters.

All votes were checked to ensure they fulfilled the requirements for eligibility. Only two ballots were challenged as unclear.

The committee members worked meticulously to ensure there were no irregularities in the process. Preliminary results were available around 1 p.m., and the final tallies were announced to the membership on June 9.

In total, 4,130 ballots were cast this year: 3,152 online and 978 on paper, an increase in voter turnout from the 2015 election. This figure represents 25 percent of AFSA members eligible to vote.

AFSA thanks Committee on Elections members Susan W. Wong (chair), Harold 'Lee' Brayman, Mort Dworken, Christopher R. Green, Francis A. Hall, David C. McFarland, Peter J. Molberg and Curt Whittaker, for their hard work throughout the election process.

A full breakdown of the 2017-2019 election results can be found at [www.afsa.org/results-2017-2019-afsa-governing-board-election](http://www.afsa.org/results-2017-2019-afsa-governing-board-election). ■



## AFSA Governing Board Meeting, June 7, 2017

**Consent Agenda:** The Governing Board approved the consent agenda items, which were: (1) acceptance of the resignation of Awards and Plaques Committee members Daniel Martinez, Patricia Norland, Bridgette Walker and Chair Annie Pforzheimer; (2) appointment of Kalpna Sri-mal as AFSA-PAC keeper of the records.

**FSJ Editorial Board:** On behalf of the Editorial Board, State Representative Kara McDonald moved that the Governing Board approve the six candidates recommended to be Editorial Board members, and four candidates to be backup members. The motion was approved. Without objection, current board member Eric Green was approved as the new chair of the Editorial Board.

**Scholarship Donors:** The Governing Board reviewed proposed internal policy guidelines for donors to the AFSA Scholarship Fund. Following discussion, the policy guidelines were approved. ■



## AFSA Governing Board Meeting, July 5, 2017

**This meeting was the final one for the 2015-2017 Governing Board.**

**Standing Committees:** AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson requested that members of the standing committees (listed in the bylaws) remain in place until the new Governing Board reviews committee membership.

**Special Committees:** As per AFSA bylaws, Amb. Stephenson moved that the board discharge the special committees established under the 2015-2017 Governing Board—they are the Governance; Executive; Finance, Audit and Management; and Awards & Plaques Committees. The motion was adopted.

**Thanks:** Amb. Stephenson thanked departing members of the Governing Board for their service to AFSA and to the Foreign Service. ■

## Sinclair Award Recipients in Action

Annually, AFSA recognizes outstanding accomplishments in the study of Category III or IV critical languages and their associated cultures through the Matilda W. Sinclair Language Awards. Mastery and professional utilization of foreign languages, and knowledge of the culture of the host country, are invaluable skills in the Foreign Service.

In 2017, AFSA recognized 11 recipients, adding to the more

than 300 members of the Foreign Service who have been honored since the award was established in 1982. Here we highlight seven of this year's recipients as they use their language at post.

AFSA is now accepting nominations for the 2018 Sinclair Awards; nomination guidelines are available on the AFSA website, [www.afsa.org/sinclair](http://www.afsa.org/sinclair). ■



Mariana L. Neisuler is the deputy economic counselor at U.S. Embassy Amman. In April 2017, Ms. Neisuler visited Jordan's largest Syrian refugee camp, Za'atri, where she spoke in Arabic with many of those who have been displaced. Here Ms. Neisuler speaks with two 5-year-olds who have spent their whole lives in the camp.



Brian Corteville is the consular chief at U.S. Embassy Pristina, a position which requires Albanian language skills. Here he enjoys a local restaurant cum bookstore. "Në këtë fotografi, jam duke pirë një macchiato në restorantin tim të preferuar, Soma. E dije ti që Kosova ka macchiatot më të mira ne botë? Ashtu thuhet, të pakten këtu në Kosovë!" Translation: In this photo, I'm drinking a macchiato in my favorite restaurant, Soma. Did you know that Kosovo has the best macchiatos in the world? That's what they say, at least here in Kosovo!



James Waterman is a consular officer in Tbilisi, Georgia. Here he discusses an American citizen services case using his Georgian language skills.



Jacob Rocca (left) studied Japanese while serving in Pakistan. He is pictured at the Foreign Service Institute with FSI distance language mentor, Mariko Price (right).



FSO Gregory Aurit speaks about the benefits of studying in the United States to a group of Japanese high school students at Aoyama High School in Tokyo.



Jacob Glenn uses Hindi daily as he interviews visa applicants at the U.S. embassy in New Delhi. He also utilizes his language skills as he conducts visa outreach trips, like this one with students.



Assistant Regional Security Officer for Investigations Kevin Gonzalez gives a presentation to Chinese local staff during Consular Leadership Day. Using the local language, in this case Mandarin, during a presentation helps to build a connection with the audience, resulting in effective delivery of the message. As an ARSO-I, conducting investigations in the local language helps build essential rapport with interviewees.

Profiles of award recipients compiled by Gemma Dvorak.

## F. ALLEN 'TEX' HARRIS AWARD FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT BY A FOREIGN SERVICE SPECIALIST ELZAR T. CAMPER

### Diplomatic Security as a Leader on Security Initiatives



Diplomatic Security Special Agent Elzar Camper receives the F. Allen 'Tex' Harris award from Ambassador William Harrop.

In January 2017, Special Agent Elzar Camper authored a dissent cable encouraging the department to empower and promote the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to fully implement its visa and passport security program mandate overseas.

Mr. Camper noted that many of the objectives spelled out in executive order 13769 (Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States) related directly to the Department of State's mandate as laid out in 22 U.S. Code 4802 and 4807 and to programs already developed and implemented

by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

Although Mr. Camper believed that current interagency efforts to screen visa applicants were satisfactory, he felt compelled to highlight what he saw as deficiencies and a lack of coherent policies from the State Department. In particular, State's failure to support and promote the Bureau of Diplomatic Security as the interagency lead for ensuring visa and passport security overseas.

Mr. Camper's well-researched and constructive dissent provided a neutral and objective viewpoint on a controversial executive

#### Mr. Camper's dissent provided department leadership with specific recommendations.

order and, crucially, provided department leadership with a series of specific recommendations to effect positive change.

In the dissent cable, Mr. Camper explained why he felt current visa security initiatives were not as effective as they could be and also highlighted the threat of outsourcing visa security to a third party agency. "Diplomatic Security most clearly understands the importance of fairly and safely facilitating travel for all foreign nationals who meet our nation's requirements," he said at the AFSA awards ceremony. He also stated that the Diplomatic Security agency "should be promoted through interagency policy as the department's leading operational authority on overseas visa and passport security initiatives."

With his permission, Mr. Camper's cable was shared with senior leaders in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, where it had an immediate impact. The recommendations contained therein were used to create talking

points for DS working group sessions with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and also during meetings with officials from the National Security Council to discuss future security initiatives.

Speaking about the significance of dissent, Mr. Camper said, "History has shown dissent is central to any democracy, and the sustainability of a healthy and productive organizational culture."

Elzar Camper joined the Foreign Service in 2008. He has served in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Washington Field Office and overseas in Kabul and Karachi, and was most recently the assistant regional security officer for investigations (ARSO-I) in Cairo. ■

## THE WILLIAM R. RIVKIN AWARD FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT BY A MID-LEVEL OFFICER WENDY BRAFMAN

### Protecting Vulnerable Children in Uganda

Wendy Brafman is described by her nominator as a protector of U.S.-citizen parents and vulnerable Ugandan children.

Consular officers at U.S. Embassy Kampala had been raising concerns about adoptions in Uganda. Among their concerns was the fact that documentation was frequently non-existent; if it did exist, documents were often fraudulent.

The Ugandan government was not enforcing its own rules and policies, so vulnerable children were being accepted for adoption and rushed through the system without due diligence. In addition U.S. citizens were being pressured to pay bribes, and adoption intermediaries charged substantial fees.

On her arrival at post in 2015, Ms. Brafman immediately faced pressure to expeditiously process immigrant visas for Ugandan children being adopted by American citizens. However, on investigating, she discovered an increasing number of unethical and fraudulent practices, including cases where the birth family had been misled about what would happen to their children.

The average U.S. family pays more than \$30,000 in fees and expenses in an adoption. With profit to be made, adoption agency offi-

cially duped U.S.-citizen parents into beginning adoption procedures for children who were not actually orphans.

Though Ms. Brafman saw these practices on the ground, she was continually pressed to proceed with cases. The pressure came from the prospective adoptive parents, attorneys and members of Congress advocating on behalf of their constituents.

Cast as “anti-adoption,” Ms. Brafman was vilified on social media and harassed by prospective adoptive families. Adoption agencies even advised their clients that Ms. Brafman was blocking adoptions and that they should not tell the truth when attending the embassy for their interview with a consular officer.

Despite the challenges she faced, Ms. Brafman continued to conduct diligent reviews of all adoption cases and report frequently on the alarming fraud and illegal conduct she and her consular team were discovering.

She also repeatedly raised her concerns about violations of Ugandan law and regulations, initially in conversations with CA



William R. Rivkin Award winner Wendy Brafman (center) with Ambassador Charles Rivkin (left) and AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson. The award is named for Amb. Rivkin's late father.



Wendy Brafman at Embassy Kampala with her colleague Naela, a member of the local staff there.

colleagues and then via cables. She produced a body of 15 reports outlining the preponderance of fraud and the fleecing of U.S.-citizen parents that was occurring in Uganda.

Thanks to her diligence and perseverance, Ms. Brafman persuaded CA to ban a particular adoption provider—not only in Uganda but worldwide. The bureau is also considering formally suspending all adoptions in Uganda to protect the vulnerable children and their

families there as well as U.S. citizens seeking to adopt.

Accepting the award, Ms. Brafman thanked her colleagues at Embassy Kampala for “seeking what is right for U.S. citizens and the Ugandan children they sought to adopt.” Considering the need for constructive dissent, she quoted William Faulkner: “Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed.”

Wendy Brafman joined the Foreign Service in 2005. She has served in Kinshasa, Cairo, Baghdad and Washington, D.C., and is now consular chief in Kampala. Ms. Brafman has a B.A. in French and foreign affairs from the University of Virginia and a J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law. Her husband is also a Foreign Service officer. ■

**WILLIAM R. RIVKIN AWARD FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT BY A MID-LEVEL OFFICER  
MARIJU BOFILL, CECILIA CHOI, THOMAS WONG AND CHRISTINA LE**

## Increasing Transparency and Accountability in Assignment Restrictions



Former AAFAA presidents (left to right) Mariju Bofill, Cecilia Choi and Thomas Wong, with current president Christina Le (far right) at the AFSA Awards ceremony.

The issue of assignment restrictions and advocacy for a more transparent and equitable process has long been a priority for the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association. This is reflected in the fact that not one, but four former and current presidents of the AAFAA were honored with the Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by a Mid-Level Foreign Service Officer.

The AAFAA presidents argued that the assignment restrictions process did not have sufficient transparency, accountability and oversight, and was based on ill-defined concerns regarding foreign

influence or preference.

They also noted that employees of Asian American dissent were disproportionately affected by such restrictions, leading to a perception of mistrust and a bias (conscious or otherwise) against Asian American colleagues. The disparate treatment diverted careers and led some to resign in disillusionment and frustration.

Assignment restrictions also hindered the department's efforts to utilize its diverse workforce, and denied employees the opportunity to apply their language and cultural skills to the department's benefit.

Mariju Bofill first raised the issue with then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2009. The longest-serving president of AAFAA, Ms. Bofill oversaw a 300-percent increase in the association's membership, and increased representation for Asian American and Pacific Islander employees.

During her 2012-2013 term as AAFAA president, Cecilia Choi worked with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to try to come to a fair solution on assignment restrictions.

Thomas Wong (president of AAFAA for two terms, 2014-2016) presented a white paper to the Deputy Sec-

retary of State in 2015 and, with current AAFAA president Christina Le, worked with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and AFSA to negotiate the language for an appeals mechanism.

Ms. Le continued to raise the matter with the Deputy Secretary throughout 2016. She also brought the matter to AFSA President Barbara Stephenson and met frequently with State Vice President Angie Bryan (and VP Matthew Asada before that), as well as with AFSA Labor Management Counselor Colleen Fallon-Lenaghan to discuss the status of the process.

Finally, in November 2016, the Foreign Affairs Manual was updated to include the new regulations for an assignment restriction appeals process.

The presidents of AAFAA successfully advocated for language creating an appeals mechanism that ensures employees receive notification of the factual grounds for their assignment restriction, can address the security concerns and may request a second review.

Collectively, they showed great dedication, patience and passion over the years, working respectfully within the system to get to a positive conclusion that will be beneficial to AAFAA members and other department employees.

Accepting the award, each of the recipients acknowledged that there were many AAFAA members who had bravely stepped forward to tell their stories, even though it may have been unpopular to do so.

Mr. Wong said that recognition of the AAFAA presidents confirmed that “the voices of constructive dissent at any level, if spoken with dignity and respect, can resonate with department leaders, and can contribute toward making State a more diverse, more honorable, and more perfect organization.”

**Mariju Bofill** joined the Foreign Service in 2004. Currently posted to São Paulo, she has also served in Paris,

Guayaquil, Matamoros and Athens. In 2011, she received the Department of State Equal Employment Opportunity Award for her leadership and commitment to promoting diversity. She is accompanied in São Paulo by her husband and their two young children.

**Cecilia Choi** serves as the director for trade and investment at the National Security Council. Her most recent overseas assignment was in Honduras, and she has also served in South Korea and Turkey. In Washington, D.C., Ms. Choi has served in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs.

**Thomas Wong** is an economic-coned officer assigned to the American Institute in Taiwan in Taipei. He previously served in Guadalajara and had consecutive tours in Washington, D.C., in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Prior to joining the Foreign Service in 2010, Mr. Wong served in the U.S. Army. His wife, Suzanne, is also a Foreign Service officer and the couple has two children.

**Christina T. Le** serves as the special assistant to the assistant secretary of State for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. She has previously served in Athens and Monterrey, as well as in Washington, D.C. ■



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## THE MARK PALMER AWARD FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF DEMOCRACY

RENÉ GUTEL

### Promoting Human Rights in China

As the human rights officer at U.S. Embassy Beijing, René Gutel promoted fair treatment of dissenters and political prisoners by the Chinese government.

In China, political dissidents are routinely detained without trial and tortured. Friends and family of known or suspected activists are harassed and threatened. But through creative engagement with the diplomatic community in Beijing and strong relationships with the Chinese human rights community, Ms. Gutel succeeded in persuading the Chinese government to take action on human rights where they might not otherwise have done so.

Considering the different goals and sometimes competing interests of the diplomatic community in China, it can be daunting for diplomats to raise rights-related issues, especially when many fear that focusing on China's human rights record would undermine cooperation between the United States and Chinese authorities.

But by working with her colleagues throughout the



Dr. Sushma Palmer, right, presents René Gutel with the Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy at the AFSA awards ceremony on June 20. Dr. Palmer is the widow of Ambassador Mark Palmer, for whom the award is named.

U.S. embassy and consulates in China, Ms. Gutel helped develop and maintain a strong stance on human rights abuses in China. "If we are to continue to be an example to the world," she says, "we must consistently represent universal values, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of association."

While standing firmly behind the United States' established position on human rights, Ms. Gutel worked with other embassies in China and expanded the network of diplomats willing to work together to promote human rights. Their actions have included issuing statements and jointly attending the trials of detained human rights lawyers and advocates.

Family members of those detained without trial have confirmed that their loved ones received better treatment as a result of international attention to their cases, and lawyers have pointed to reduced sentences for so-called "dissidents" whose trials are attended by diplomats.

Ms. Gutel's advocacy for cooperative action ultimately led to a precedent-setting joint statement at the United Nations Human Rights Council on March 10, 2016, where more than 12 countries registered their profound concern at China's deteriorating human rights record and particularly the ongoing detention of rights activists, civil society leaders and lawyers.

Acting in concert with other countries has reinforced to Chinese authorities that the United States does not stand alone on human rights issues.

Accepting the award, Ms. Gutel acknowledged that aspects of her role can be hard, including documenting instances of torture or learn-

ing that a valued contact has been detained. However, "despite the repression in China, there are reasons to hope," she states. "Of the more than 300 lawyers and activists detained two years ago, only a handful are still in pre-trial detention."

Most impressively, Ms. Gutel has helped keep human rights at the forefront of U.S. policy in China, while still maintaining a productive relationship with the Chinese government and holding productive bilateral dialogues with authorities on rights-related issues.

As a testament to her efforts, reliable partnerships have been formed between the U.S. embassy and Chinese authorities that will aid diplomats as they navigate the evolving relationship.

René Gutel joined the Foreign Service in 2010 and currently serves as the human rights officer at U.S. Embassy Beijing. Her previous overseas assignments include the U.S. mission to UNESCO in Paris and the U.S. consulate in Shenyang. Before joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Gutel was a public radio journalist working at NPR member stations in Alaska, Pennsylvania and Arizona. Ms. Gutel is married to poet John Tynan; they have two young children. ■



## THE MARK PALMER AWARD FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF DEMOCRACY AMBASSADOR TULINABO MUSHINGI

# Upholding Democratic Principles in Burkina Faso

As U.S. ambassador to Burkina Faso, Tulinabo Mushingi earned the moniker “Sid Pawalamde,” which means “truth is not whispered” in Mooré, the local language.

In 2014, Amb. Mushingi publicly voiced opposition to a constitutional amendment, proposed by the ruling party, which would allow then-President Blaise Compaoré to extend his 27-year rule. By communicating the policies of the U.S. government clearly and consistently in public and private speeches and on social media, and by demonstrating the principles of good governance in their day-to-day activities, Amb. Mushingi and the staff of American Embassy Ouagadougou supported the Burkinabe people in their efforts to oust a dictator.

Insisting that Burkina Faso needed “strong institutions, not strongmen,” Amb. Mushingi called for nonviolence and a peaceful transfer of power as protests in the country became an uprising in October 2014. Facing mounting pressure from civilian protesters, Compaoré fled the country and members of the military took power.

Amb. Mushingi called on the military figures in charge to hand over power to civilian authorities, to reinstate the constitution, and to hold free elections. By mid-November

2014, a civilian-led transitional government was in power, and elections were set for November 2015.

As the Burkinabe people began to prepare for elections, Amb. Mushingi continued to meet and engage with the different communities in the country, using his car as a mobile office to keep in touch when traveling.

During this time, according to his nomination, Amb. Mushingi was “approached constantly by people thanking him for being ‘their voice.’”

On Sept. 16, 2015, only two months before the election, the Presidential Security Regiment staged a coup d’état, holding the interim president and prime minister hostage.

Amb. Mushingi condemned the takeover and called for the immediate reinstatement of the transitional government. He met with Prime Minister Zida, then under house arrest, and tweeted a “proof-of-life” picture, reassuring the public and preventing many from taking to the streets seeking revenge.

Demonstrating his profound respect for the democratic process, Amb. Mushingi also helped prevent



Following an attempted coup in September 2015, Ambassador Tulinabo Mushingi sought an audience with deposed Prime Minister Isaac Zida, who was then under house arrest. The embassy tweeted a “proof-of-life” image, which helped prevent violence in the streets. The text reads: “I have just met with Prime Minister Zida, and I can assure you that he is well.”



Ambassador Mushingi reads to students at a school outside of Ouagadougou. Amb. Mushingi often travelled in intense heat to visit communities throughout Burkina Faso and tell them about the United States.

the extrajudicial killing of the leader of the coup, first by securing sanctuary for him with the Vatican’s embassy in

Ouagadougou and then working with a former president of Burkina Faso, the papal ambassador and a cardinal to negotiate his surrender and fair trial.

Recognizing the importance of legitimate elections at this stage, Amb. Mushingi renewed calls to carry on with the vote, never wavering, even as other diplomats discussed a delay.

On Nov. 29, 2015, free and transparent elections were held and, one month later, the new president took office. This marked the first-ever peaceful transfer of power from one civilian president to another in Burkina Faso.

Amb. Mushingi began his diplomatic career working for the U.S. Peace Corps in Papua New Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger and the Central African Republic. He joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1989 and has served in Malaysia, Mozambique, Morocco, Tanzania, Zambia and Ethiopia, as well as Washington, D.C. He received an M.A. from Howard University and a Ph.D. from Georgetown University. Since leaving Burkina Faso, he has been confirmed by the Senate as ambassador to Senegal and, concurrently, ambassador to Guinea-Bissau. ■

## NELSON B. DELAVAN AWARD FOR EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE BY AN OFFICE MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST DIANE CORBIN

### Fostering Community in South Sudan



Diane Corbin (center) reading with Innocent (left) and Cecilia (right), two young girls at the Confident Children out of Conflict home in Juba, South Sudan.

Presenting the Nelson B. Delavan Award to Diane Corbin, Ambassador William Harrop called the role of office management specialist “indispensable” to the effectiveness and ultimate success of the Foreign Service’s overseas mission.

As the only office management specialist (OMS) for the U.S. embassy in Juba, South Sudan, Ms. Corbin’s official assignment was to the front office. However, that does not begin to describe the contribution she made to the embassy community over the 29 months she served there.

As well as day-to-day tasks such as managing the ambassador’s schedule and making sure she had all the materials necessary to do her job, Ms. Corbin was the point of contact and source

of information, guidance and encouragement for the entire community.

In the absence of a community liaison officer at post, Ms. Corbin took on that role as well, reaching out to newly assigned staff before they arrived and providing

photos and documents about life in Juba to ease their entry to post. Her friendly and informative emails not only helped to prepare officers for arrival, but also allayed the concerns of their loved ones about assignments to this remote post.

Ms. Corbin did whatever she could to orient FSOs, make their jobs easier and improve their quality of life—from organizing weekly game nights to arranging for local vendors to visit the embassy compound for a monthly market.

South Sudan has been living with civil unrest for four of the six years since it gained independence; Juba is an unaccompanied post. However, in July 2016, even more intense fighting broke out between government and

opposition forces. Assuming the role of auxiliary consular officer, Ms. Corbin fielded hundreds of calls from American citizens concerned for their safety.

She worked tirelessly to collect their information, which proved invaluable when it became necessary to evacuate U.S. citizens from South Sudan. During the evacuation, she remained at the airport under tough conditions, working to validate and protect U.S. passport information.

Ms. Corbin’s sense of com-

When not occupied at the embassy, Ms. Corbin spent many hours volunteering at a local orphanage. To foster a sense of community in Juba, she organized weekly trips for FSOs to visit the orphanage to work and play with the children.

When accepting the award, Ms. Corbin paid tribute to her colleagues (both FSOs and locally employed staff): “My colleagues assigned to Embassy Juba are the most dedicated employees I have served with in the 15 years of



Delavan Award winner Diane Corbin, at right, helps local women pump water in Juba, South Sudan.

my Foreign Service career. The American staff bid on South Sudan because they care—they want to make a difference. The local staff work to make their country a better place.”

community came to the fore once again when a staff member died suddenly at post. She not only accompanied his remains home to the United States but has maintained contact with his family, offering comfort and helping to process paperwork and provide resources for them.

Diane Corbin has two children and is a proud New Englander (Go Sox!). She joined the Foreign Service as an OMS in 2002 and has served in Guatemala, Panama, Ethiopia and the Dominican Republic, as well as Washington, D.C. ■

## THE M. JUANITA GUESS AWARD FOR A COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE COORDINATOR AUBREY DOWD

### Boosting Morale in Bangladesh

It is a testament to Aubrey Dowd's skills as a community liaison officer (CLO) in Dhaka that AFSA received two separate nominations for her to receive the M. Juanita Guess Award.

In her first week on the job in August 2016, Ms. Dowd was tasked with organizing a "meet and greet" for the embassy community with then-Secretary of State John Kerry. On short notice, she planned detailed logistics for a great event that drew 400 people and was a significant morale boost for the community. It was a taste of what Embassy Dhaka could expect from their new CLO.

In the past two years, Dhaka has changed from a post where children attended a local school and families walked freely to one with a curfew and movement restrictions. Following an attack on July 1, 2016, at a Western style restaurant in which 22 people (including a U.S. citizen) were killed, the post was approved for authorized departure.

On her own initiative, Ms. Dowd created a comprehensive database of all personnel that filled critical information gaps and allowed embassy leadership to quickly answer questions relating to departing families.

During this time, she also

acted as the lead point of contact for embassy families left stranded outside the country when authorized departure was declared in the middle of the school holidays. Ms. Dowd provided regular updates and guidance on rules and regulations for travel and allowances.

"The calm throughout the stormy aftermath of authorized departure" is how one nomination described Ms. Dowd. Her approach proved so successful that the Family Liaison Office and Office of Human Resources at the Department of State are developing best practices based on her methods.

Under increasingly severe security restrictions, it would have been easy to give up on arranging events. Instead, Ms. Dowd worked overtime to boost the morale of the community. Working closely with the Regional Security Office to arrange trips to local shops and restaurants, she increased the number of events from three to 15 per month. She even donated her own laptop to ensure that an embassy trivia night could go ahead after the failure of the provided equipment.

As authorized departure continued into late 2016, Ms. Dowd worked closely with the Regional Medical Officer-Psy-



COURTESY OF AUBREY DOWD

Aubrey Dowd (left) and her colleague Kathy Love prepare the back yard of the chief of mission's residence for the Embassy Dhaka Christmas potluck party.



AFSA/TOYA SARRNO JORDAN

Aubrey Dowd receives the M. Juanita Guess Award from Jon Clements. The award is named for Mr. Clements' mother.

chologist and Regional Medical Officer to create and distribute a post morale survey. A separate survey was created for eligible family members evacuated during authorized departure. Believed to be the first such survey, it will allow the department to better evaluate the effect of evacuation on family members.

Ms. Dowd sat on the American Embassy Employ-

ees Association Board, Interagency Housing Board, Post Employment Committee, country team and the Emergency Action Committee, among other bodies. During each meeting, she represented the needs and wants of the community and crafted mechanisms to relay critical information back to the greater community as

necessary.

Aubrey Dowd has been affiliated with the United States military and government for her entire life, first as a dependent, then a spouse and finally as an employee. She has a B.S. in early childhood education from Augusta State University and plans to pursue a master's degree in social work when she returns to the United States. ■

## THE AVIS BOHLEN AWARD FOR A FOREIGN SERVICE FAMILY MEMBER HENRY THROOP

### Inspiring Young Children with Science



Henry Throop sets up a telescope at Madikweng Senior Secondary school in Limpopo, South Africa, for the students to see the moon and the rings of Saturn.

It is not often that kids from a rural area get to meet a “real NASA scientist,” much less one as enthusiastic and positive as Henry Throop.

An astrophysicist who works as a contractor on several NASA-funded missions and projects, Dr. Throop volunteers a significant portion of time each week to conduct unpaid science-based outreach with underserved students.

During his wife's postings in Mumbai, Pretoria and Mexico City (as well as Washington, D.C.), Dr. Throop worked with embassy public affairs sections to organize outreach opportunities and talks across Mexico, India and South Africa. These have reached tens of thousands of students.

At a typical event held in

Limpopo, South Africa, he spent the day giving three long talks—and answering engaging and inventive questions from the students—followed by an evening observation session, where students and teachers alike queued long in to the night to view the rings of Saturn through one of his telescopes.

In India, Dr. Throop has spoken at schools for disadvantaged children in Mumbai and delivered a lecture at the American Center in Kolkata.

By building people-to-people ties, encouraging kids to pursue careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields, and helping to develop bilateral space-science relationships with each country where he has worked, Dr. Throop's

volunteer work has directly supported the mission goals at each of his posts.

At the awards ceremony on June 20, Dr. Throop reminded the audience that a number of scientific breakthroughs and successes have been brought about by international collaboration. He mentioned the largest telescope in the southern hemisphere, which is a joint project built in South Africa with partners from India, New Zealand, Poland and the United States—countries working together to accomplish things that simply weren't possible 20 years ago.

“These sorts of international projects inspire students,” Dr. Throop said on accepting the award. “They love what the U.S. does, but

they also love what happens in their own country. And by seeing that their own country is part of these collaborations, they can be directly involved in these huge worldwide science projects.”

He also noted that this is only the second time the Avis Bohlen Award has been given to a male eligible family member. “I'm happy to push that number up, in support of all of the great women that the State Department now has rising in their ranks,” he said.

Dr. Throop is a senior scientist with the Planetary Science Institute in Tucson, Arizona, where his research focuses on the outer solar system. He is currently living in Mumbai with his wife, FSO Heidi Hattenbach, and their three children. ■



Henry Throop (center) with Mette Beecroft (left), who presented the award on behalf of the Bohlen family, and AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson (right).

## AWARD FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION

JOHN S. WOOD

### Retirees: A Force Outside the “Beltway Bubble”



Achievement and Contributions to the Association Award recipient John Wood (left) with AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, who nominated him for the award.

“If all Foreign Service retirees were like John, we could create a strong domestic constituency in no time at all,” said AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, introducing John S. Wood, recipient of the 2017 AFSA Award for Achievements and Contributions to the Association, at the June 20 ceremony.

This award recognizes an active-duty or retired AFSA member of any of the foreign affairs agencies represented by AFSA who has made a significant (non-monetary) contribution to the association in its role either as a professional association of practitioners

of diplomacy, or its role as a labor union representing Foreign Service members.

As president of The Foreign Service Group–Texas, in Austin, Mr. Wood has been a tireless advocate for the Foreign Service. Through his efforts, the group punches well above its weight when it comes to events, outreach and influence.

In 2016, The Foreign Service Group was by far the most active in AFSA’s campaign to place letters to the editor highlighting Foreign Service Day in Texas newspapers. The group holds regular luncheons that bring together Foreign Service retirees and attract

high-caliber speakers, from former ambassadors to academics.

It is worth noting that, although this award does not take financial contributions into account, The Foreign Service Group–Texas makes an annual contribution to the Fund for American Diplomacy, AFSA’s 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to raising awareness of the Foreign Service and diplomacy.

Mr. Wood is a proactive AFSA member, brimming with ideas about how to tell the story of the Foreign Service to the American public. His insights are extremely valuable to AFSA’s outreach

team, because he has the benefit of being outside the “Beltway bubble” and is in touch with the interests and world views of those not living in Washington, D.C.

This perspective is invaluable to AFSA as the association aims to reach out to different communities across the United States and let them know how the Foreign Service works for them. He is exactly the type of retiree member that AFSA needs: dedicated, engaged, persistent and with a deep love of his profession.

Accepting the award, Mr. Wood noted: “Geographically dispersed groups like diplomats, their families and friends can be a huge force for good, given a few resources and encouraged to be creative.” He also encouraged those present to visit The Foreign Service Group–Texas’ website, [www.tfsg.org](http://www.tfsg.org) for information about their activities.

Mr. Wood was born in Winnipeg, Canada, and holds a B.S. and MBA, both from Columbia University. A 17-year veteran of the Foreign Commercial Service, Mr. Wood served in Calgary, Mexico City, Mumbai, Bangkok, Seoul, and posts in Washington, D.C., before retiring in 2001. ■

## AFSA Award Runners-Up

### MARK PALMER AWARD RUNNER-UP MARIA BARRÓN

At the start of Maria Barrón's posting to Embassy Kathmandu in 2011 as the director of USAID Mission Nepal's Democracy and Governance Office, the country's political leaders signed an agreement that furthered the peace process begun five years earlier which had ended a decade of civil war and stalled development. The new agreement called for reintegrating Maoist combatants, drafting a new constitution, holding new elections and restructuring the state.



Ms. Barrón played an instrumental role in interpreting the opaque political landscape and advising where U.S. involvement could best help achieve the peace process milestones.

Ms. Barrón's insight and ability to quickly reorient programming enabled the U.S. government to take advantage of new opportunities. With the support of her team, Ms. Barrón managed a complex portfolio of programs that have had tangible and far-reaching impact, such as the reintegration of nearly 20,000 Maoists into society and assistance in the November 2013 elections.

Following the earthquakes in 2015, Ms. Barrón also creatively expanded Embassy Kathmandu's counter-trafficking in persons and local governance programs into the most-affected districts.

Ms. Barrón skillfully guided and shaped U.S. foreign policy, married development and diplomacy skills, and navigated the complex political structures to support Nepal through a defining moment in its history. Ms. Barrón's previous posts include USAID missions in Afghanistan and Mexico.

### M. JUANITA GUESS AWARD RUNNER-UP MICHAEL MURPHY



In the last two years, U.S. Embassy Algiers has undergone a massive transition from a hard-to-fill post to one that is family-friendly, brimming with community and cultural activities. Community Liaison Officer Mike Murphy led the wave of change, demonstrating extraordinary leadership as the embassy transformed itself.

An unaccompanied posting for many years due to terrorist threats, Embassy Algiers had no resources in place to support families. Mr. Murphy improved the embassy's approach to community support, from sourcing baby supplies to recruiting

English speaking nannies. He researched local preschools and organized a playgroup for children from the diplomatic community.

With tight security restrictions still in place, Mr. Murphy persuaded members of the community to contribute to its social activities. Thanks to him, embassy community members now volunteer to lead salsa lessons, crossfit workouts, cooking lessons and other activities. He also established a wellness committee to address morale concerns.

Algiers was one of the few posts without a video in the Overseas Briefing Center, so Mr. Murphy developed one, showing the joys and challenges of living in Algeria. Several new arrivals stated that the video had persuaded them to bid on a post they might never have considered otherwise.

Mr. Murphy is an eligible family member married to Carolyn S. Murphy and has previously been posted to the U.S. Mission to NATO. Prior to that, he served for 22 years as U.S. Army officer, retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 2013.

### NELSON B. DELAVAN AWARD RUNNER-UP JUDITH BROWN

While the Republic of Cameroon fought Boko Haram militants in the Lake Chad Basin region, Judith Brown served with great distinction as office management specialist (OMS) to the chief of mission (COM) at U.S. Embassy Yaoundé.



As U.S. security assistance increased in Cameroon, and with the everyday work of promoting security and good governance, managing pandemic health risks and promoting private sector investment, the pace of the front office became frenetic. But Ms. Brown "brought Zen calm" to the chaos, according to her nomination.

Arriving as the political-economic OMS, Ms. Brown stepped into the role of COM OMS following a sudden retirement. When staffing gaps left Ms. Brown as the sole OMS at post for several months, she quickly adapted, transforming the front office from a place of tension and drama to a place people enjoyed visiting.

In addition to her regular duties, Ms. Brown chairs the Interagency Housing Board, ensuring fairness to the point that not a single appeal has been raised to the front-office level during her tenure. Though it is unusual for a second-tour OMS to chair the IAHB, Ms. Brown's position reflects the broad respect she commands across all sections and agencies at post. ■

## Celebrating Foreign Service Youth Achievements



AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson (far right) and Scholarship Committee Chair Ambassador (ret.) Lange Schermerhorn (far left) with the nine local winners of AFSA Merit Award scholarships at the July 7 award ceremony.

On July 7, the American Foreign Service Association honored its 2017 Merit Award winners and sponsors in a first-time joint ceremony with sister Foreign Service organizations at the State Department's George C. Marshall Center.

More than 55 students, living in the United States or at posts overseas from ages 5 to 18, were honored as awards were presented by AFSA, Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide, the Overseas Briefing Center and the Foreign Service Youth Foundation.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Resources Constance Dierman gave the keynote address. The Family Liaison Office was instrumental in providing administrative support.

AFSA President Ambassador Barbara Stephenson and AFSA Scholarship Committee Chair Ambassador (ret.) Lange Schermerhorn presented awards to nine recipients (out of 24 AFSA awardees) who were present at the ceremony.

In her remarks, Amb. Stephenson praised the resilience of children in Foreign Service families, and recognized the hard work of those receiving awards at the ceremony.

AFSA recipients in attendance were Claudia Amadeo-Luyt; Emma Bachman; Peter Huson, accepting for his brother, Scott; Harry Kamian; Marianna Karagiannis; Jules Levy; Jarrah May; Alice Naland and Jane O'Connor.

Also present were AFSA Merit Award donors John and Priscilla Becker, Jim Elmore of Embassy Risk Management,

*Continued on page 90*

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## Meet the 2017 AFSA Merit Award Winners

**1. Emma Bachman** – daughter of Brian (State) and Jan Fischer Bachman, graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Alexandria, Virginia. She plans to attend the University of Oklahoma and received the Embassy Risk Management Academic Merit Award.

**2. Isaac Burkhalter** – son of Edward (State) and Susan Burkhalter, graduated from Saint Maur International School, Yokohama, Japan. He plans to attend the University of Virginia and received the Louis C. and Valeria Hebert Memorial Academic Merit Award.

**3. Adrianna Carter** – daughter of Mark (State) and Malynda Carter, graduated from American School of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland. She plans to attend the University of Virginia and received a Care First Blue Cross Blue Shield Academic Merit Award.

**4. William Clements** – son of Sue Saarnio (State), graduated from McLean High School, McLean, Virginia. He plans to attend the College of William and Mary and received the John and Priscilla Becker Family Academic Merit Award.

**5. Evan Dastin-van Rijn** – son of Michele (State) and Paul Dastin-van Rijn, graduated from St. John's International School, Waterloo, Belgium. He plans to attend Brown University and received a Joanna and Robert Martin Academic Merit Award.

**6. Vidalia Freeman** – daughter of Jeremy (State) and Cheryl Freeman, graduated from American School of Doha, Doha, Qatar. She plans to attend Utah State University.

**7. Hannah Gage** – daughter of John (State) and Ok Gage, graduated from The American School in Switzerland (TASIS), Lugano, Switzerland. She plans to attend Ohio State University.

**8. Scott Huson** – son of Tim Huson (State) and Anne Braghetta (State), graduated from The Country Day School, San Rafael de Alajuela, Costa Rica. He plans to attend Brown University.

**9. Harry Kamian** – son of Robin Dunnigan (State) and Harry Kamian (State), graduated from Washington-Lee High School, Arlington, Virginia. He plans to attend Williams College and received the Donald S. Memorial and Maria Giuseppa Spigler Academic Merit Award.

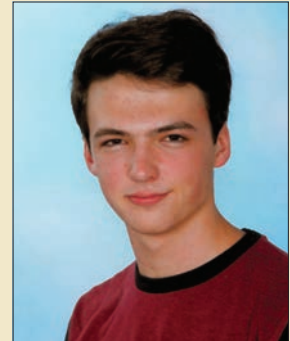
**10. Marianna Karagiannis** – daughter of Alexander Karagiannis (State) and Katherine Ingmanson, graduated from J.E.B. Stuart High School, Falls Church, Virginia. She plans to attend the University of Chicago and received the Promax Management Academic Merit Award.

**11. Augustus "Gus" Kmetz** – son of John (State) Kmetz and Dr. Loretta Bass, graduated from Norman High School, Norman, Oklahoma. He plans to attend Brown University and received a Joanna and Robert Martin Academic Merit Award.

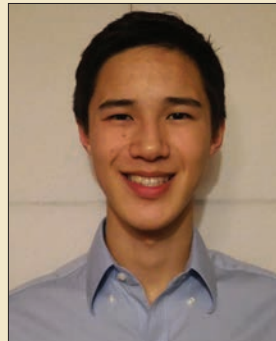
**12. Seamus Lawton** – son of Daniel Lawton (State) and Paula Hawkins, graduated from Methodist College Belfast, Belfast, United Kingdom. He plans to attend Amherst College and received the Turner C. Cameron Jr. Memorial Academic Merit Award.



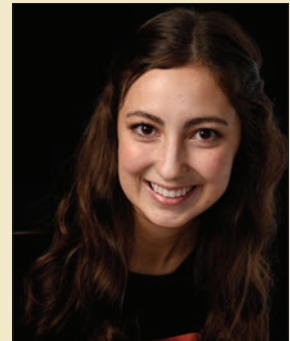
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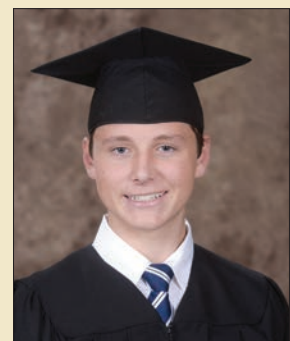
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**13. Alice Naland** — daughter of John Naland (State-retired) and Barbara Reieux, graduated from Washington-Lee High School, Arlington, Virginia. She plans to attend UCLA and received a Care First Blue Cross Blue Shield Academic Merit Award.

**14. Jane O'Connor** — daughter of Matthew O'Connor (State) and Dawn Park, graduated from Urbana High School, Ijamsville, Maryland. She plans to attend Hillsdale College.

### Academic Merit Honorable Mention Winners

**Claudia Amadeo-Luyt**—daughter of Stefanie Amadeo (State), graduated from United Nations International School, New York, New York, and will attend Barnard College, Columbia University. She received an AFSA Academic Honorable Mention Award, the AFSA Best Essay Award and the Linda K. Fitzgerald Memorial Community Service Award.

**Jane Christensen**—daughter of Darin (State) and Elizabeth Christensen, is graduating from George Mason High School, Falls Church, Virginia, and will attend Brigham Young University.

### Art Winner

**15. Grace Thompson** — daughter of Dean (State) and Jane Thompson, graduated from American International School of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania. She plans to attend Miami University and received the Louis C. and Valeria Hebert Memorial Art Merit Award (Creative Writing).

### Art Honorable Mention Winners

**Jarrah May** — son of Kent (State) and Melanie May, graduated from Redondo Union High School, Redondo Beach, California. He is attending Temple University – Tyler School of Art.

### Art Commended Winners

**Lillian Bills** — daughter of Thomas (State) and Rebecca Bills, is graduating from International Community School of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She plans to attend Brigham Young University.

**Ian Boly** — son of Richard (State-Retired) and Wendy Plummer Boly, graduated from Walt Whitman High School, Bethesda, Maryland. He plans to attend Virginia Commonwealth University School of Arts.

**Jules Levy** — son of James Levy (State) and Bonita Shuen, graduated from George Mason High School, Falls Church, Virginia. He is attending George Mason University.

**Katrina Sliter** — daughter of Dr. Karen (APHIS) and David Sliter, graduated from International School of Brussels, Brussels, Belgium. She is attending Bennington College.

### Community Service Winner

**16. Claudia Amadeo-Luyt** — see her biography above and visit [www.afsa.org/scholar](http://www.afsa.org/scholar) for information about her community service. ■



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## Kennan Award Salutes Strong Writing

Each June, the AFSA-sponsored George F. Kennan Strategic Writing Award is bestowed on a distinguished Foreign Service graduate during the National War College's award and distinguished graduate recognition ceremony.

This year's Kennan Award winner is David Schroeder, an AFSA member who was honored for his individual strategic research project, "Ethiopia: The Long and Short of It."

The award is given to a Foreign Service officer for the cumulative effort of his or her research project and the individual's overall writing throughout the academic year. In addition to the Kennan award, Mr. Schroeder received an award for the best short essay in his course.

Mr. Schroeder is an FSO

currently serving as deputy director of economic policy in the Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs. He previously served three-year tours as the chief economic officer in Guangzhou and Tirana.

He also served in Mexico City and Kyiv, and as Serbia desk officer in Washington, D.C. Prior to joining the State Department, Mr. Schroeder practiced law as a trial attorney for 11 years in Alexandria, Virginia.

He is a graduate of the University of Virginia and obtained his law degree from the College of William and Mary. He is married to a fellow career diplomat, Roxanne Cabral. The couple has three sons.

Mr. Schroeder said that it was an honor and "extremely gratifying" to receive this prestigious award, adding



Kennan Award winner David Schroeder (center) receives his certificates from USAF Brigadier General Darren E. Hartford (right) and Ambassador Paul Wohlers (left), commandant and vice commandant of the National War College, respectively.

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE

that "George Kennan was a hero of mine."

Asked about his experience at the National War College, Mr. Schroeder emphasized the value of being able to take a year to think more deeply about the strategies employed by the Foreign Service. He urged his colleagues at the Department of State to seek similar assignments, to think in slower and

deeper ways that can refresh and reframe how the Foreign Service views its work.

AFSA congratulates each of the eight members of the Foreign Service who were honored with National War College writing awards this year, including AFSA members Mark Schapiro and Natalie A. Baker. ■

### Honoring Foreign Service Youth, Continued from page 87



Young attendees admire some of the winning artwork at a reception following the award ceremony.

Gayle Nelson of CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield and Ron Riddell of Promax Management, who sponsored an award for the first time.

Of the 24 Merit Award recipients, 11 were located overseas at the

time they applied. This year, for the first time ever, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service had an AFSA Merit winner. Congratulations to Katrina Sliter, daughter of Dr. Karen Sliter and her husband David, who won an Art Merit Commended Award.

This year, a total of 106 high school seniors submitted applications for AFSA's academic, art and community service merit scholar-

ships. AFSA would like to thank the members of the AFSA Scholarship Committee and 14 other AFSA member volunteers who judged this year's submissions.

For more information on the AFSA Scholarship Program and to view the Merit Awards winners, please visit [www.afsa.org/scholar](http://www.afsa.org/scholar). A recording of the awards ceremony is available on the AFSA website, [www.afsa.org/video](http://www.afsa.org/video). ■

■ **James H. Feldman**, 92, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died on May 26 at his home in Silver Spring, Md., of cancer.

A native of Chicago, Ill., Mr. Feldman was a veteran of World War II and a graduate of the University of Illinois, where he was a member of the Beta Tau fraternity.

Before joining USIA (now part of the Department of State) in 1962, he worked for the Chicago Bureau of the former International News Service, the *Des Moines Register* and the *Cincinnati Post*. While in Cincinnati, he also served as a correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal* and McGraw Hill Publications.

Mr. Feldman served as an information officer and press attaché in India, Belgium and Indonesia. In New Delhi he was editor of *The American Reporter*, an embassy biweekly publication aimed at explaining American foreign policy.

During a Washington, D.C., tour he served as editor of USIA's East Asia Wireless File and as country officer for Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Island countries.

Following retirement from the Foreign Service in 1983, Mr. Feldman served for two years as Washington correspondent for the *Indonesian Observer*, an English-language daily published in Jakarta.

He also served for 15 years as a reviewer with the Department of State Office of Contemporary Documents Review and for six years as a volunteer with the Montgomery County Police Department.

Mr. Feldman was active in community affairs at Riderwood Village Retirement Community in Silver Spring, Md., for almost 16 years, serving three terms as secretary, information officer and chair of the Resident Advisory Council.

He was also a member of the Ameri-

can Foreign Service Association and DACOR.

Mr. Feldman leaves behind four children: James H. Feldman Jr. of Philadelphia, Pa., Regina Koch of Silver Spring, Md., Susan Madden of Sterling, Va., and Henry Feldman of Pikesville, Md.; and three grandchildren.

■ **Esther Winn Krebs**, 95, the widow of Ambassador Max Vance Krebs, died in Greenfield, Mass., on July 3, 2016.

Esther Winn was born in Karuizawa, Japan, the daughter of Presbyterian missionaries. At the age of 7 she returned to Massachusetts, where she spent the rest of her childhood. She received her B.A. from Smith College in 1942 and then married Max Vance Krebs, who was in military service during World War II.

In 1948 the young couple began their long career representing the American people and the American government in diplomatic assignments to Montevideo (1948-1950), Bogota (1950-1952), Antwerp (1952-1955), Manila (1960-1964), Rio de Janeiro (1964-1967), Guatemala City (1967-1970), the Panama Canal Zone (1970-1971) and Buenos Aires (1971-1974).

In 1955, the Krebs returned to the United States, where Mr. Krebs took up an assignment as special assistant to Under Secretary of State Christian Herter. When Herter became Secretary of State on the death of John Foster Dulles, Mr. Krebs remained in his role as special assistant until 1960.

During their tour in Guatemala, U.S. Ambassador John Gordon Mein was assassinated by communist guerrillas. Max Krebs, who was then the deputy chief of mission, was suddenly thrust into the role of "acting ambassador." Mrs. Krebs served with great strength and courage during this frightening and tumultuous time.

Mrs. Krebs was deeply invested in her life as a diplomat's wife. She and her husband strongly believed that they were equal partners in this career, a dedicated and interdependent team. This was the Foreign Service ethos in those days and Mrs. Krebs had all the qualities that made her a successful example of what the diplomat's wife could contribute. She took on the many challenges of this life with her characteristic gusto, strong sense of humor and positive, take-charge attitude.

In their farewell address to Mrs. Krebs, the Buenos Aires Embassy Women described her leadership style with this tribute: "Power and authority may compel, but such things as goodness, friendship, love and truth invite."

In 1974, Max Krebs was appointed ambassador to Georgetown, Guyana. The couple retired in 1976 and settled in the Pinehurst area of North Carolina.

During their time there, Mrs. Krebs served on the boards, and as president, of both the local arts council and the local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

An accomplished singer, she participated in church choirs, singing groups and charity performance events. She played tennis into her 80s, and friends and family members recall her as a "dangerous" bridge player. She and Mr. Krebs continued to enjoy traveling abroad, always exploring new places.

Ambassador Krebs died in 2006. In 2010 Mrs. Krebs moved to Greenfield, Mass., to be near family members.

Mrs. Krebs leaves her son, Timothy Krebs, and her daughter, Marlynn Krebs Clayton (and her husband, Garry Krinsky) both of Greenfield, Mass. She also leaves a grandson, Sasha Winn Clayton, who lives in Washington, D.C.

■ **Selena Nelson-Salcedo**, 38, an active-duty FSO serving as U.S. consul in Bratislava, died suddenly there on June 4.

A native of Minnesota, Mrs. Nelson-Salcedo earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin and a master's degree from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

She joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 2008 and had served in Santo Domingo and in Kuala Lumpur prior to her assignment to Bratislava in 2014. Known for innovation and customer service in consular affairs, she was the recipient of several Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards from the State Department.

Mrs. Nelson-Salcedo was an enthusiastic and skilled student of foreign languages and relished exploring cultures; at her untimely death she spoke five languages fluently. Her passion for civil rights and social justice was reflected in her excellent work as a diplomat around the world.

She was also a dedicated wife and mother. Friends and family members recall her as an exceptional human being with a huge heart, unlimited compassion and an irrepressible smile, who lived life to the fullest.

Selena Nelson-Salcedo is survived by her husband, Jorge, and their daughters, Antonella, age 4, and Gaia, age 3; her parents, Janice Hobbs and Don Nelson; her stepmother, Mary Kay Perrin; her mother-in-law, Consuelo Barbosa; her siblings: Jenna, Jeremy (and his wife, Clara), Micah (and his wife, Lindsay) and Simone (and her husband, John); and six nieces and nephews: Henry, Diego, Emma, Max, Homer and Nelson.

To make a contribution to education funds for Selena Nelson-Salcedo's daughters, go to: <https://scholarshare.ebilling.com>, and enter code CAR6jpB and CAhAU5G (one account for each child).

■ **Sharon Elspeth Oper**, 76, a retired Foreign Service office management specialist, died on June 2 in Longboat Key, Fla.

A native of New Jersey, Ms. Oper was born on Jan. 16, 1941. Her entry into public service began in the early 1970s when she was hired as an aide to Representative Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.).

She established and managed two congressional offices, worked as a field representative and program analyst for the Head Start program, and held professional status in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Congressional Relations before joining the Foreign Service in 1974.

Ms. Oper enjoyed overseas postings in Chile, Spain, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Pakistan, Thailand and Kenya during her 20-year Foreign Service career from 1974 to 1994.

During her last assignment, she was selected as a member of the State Department "advance team" for Secretary of State Warren Christopher and was in and out of the Middle East a dozen times. Four lifelong friendships were born of the intensity of those trips, and Sharon took great pride in watching as three of those colleagues rose to the role of ambassador.

Ms. Oper retired from the Foreign Service in 1995 and settled in Florida.

Admitting that she was terrified of most down escalators and heights in general, friends recall, Ms. Oper insisted she was never afraid of living in strange places. Her life stories were the delight of her friends and evidence of her strength of character—whether the time in Chile when she hid three American nuns from the secret police; or the charming anecdotes involving her aging mother, who lived with her during postings in Thailand and Kenya.

Seven years of living in Africa transformed Ms. Oper into an aficionado of African art and African grey parrots, one

of whom—"Two-Two"—survives her and has been lovingly adopted by local friends with an African grey of their own.

Ms. Oper loved animals, and many friends remember the little dog she had early in her career. She never allowed herself another pup, however, because she knew she would be traveling too often to give a dog the affection it deserved. But she couldn't resist Two-Two, or the hundreds of birds she photographed on the beach just near her home.

Known as "Fluffy" to many in the Foreign Service (owing to a coat she once wore), Ms. Oper was a member of Temple Beth Israel, and a member of a synagogue in every country in which she lived throughout her career. She had a lifelong passion for international cultures and cuisine and for tennis, and was a steadfast supporter of the Democratic Party.

Ms. Oper was a true champion of diversity and inclusion long before those ideas became buzzwords, friends recall. She excelled as a friend: she listened well, and remembered the details. She took your side and worried alongside you, and enjoyed sharing a discussion of current events or a laugh. Her enthusiasm for life was matched only by her ability to find humor in even the simplest moment.

Ms. Oper is survived by her nieces, Zoe Oper and Gail Oper Stumpf; her nephew, Joseph Oper; and by her cousin Beth Vandroff and lifelong friend Sally Arce, both of whom were supportive presences in her last days.

■ **James D. "Jim" Rosenthal**, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on June 20 at his home in San Francisco, Calif.

A native San Franciscan, Mr. Rosenthal graduated from Lowell High School in 1950. He was on the swimming and

football teams, and was editor of the school newspaper. He entered Stanford University in 1950, graduating summa cum laude with a B.A. in international relations in 1953.

Mr. Rosenthal served for two years as a Marine Corps officer. He was particularly proud of his time in the Marine Corps, which he said introduced him to the “real” world and honed his leadership skills. He participated in various Marine Corps events throughout his lifetime.

In 1956 Mr. Rosenthal joined the U.S. Foreign Service. His first overseas post was Port of Spain, where he was administrative officer. He then studied French and Vietnamese at the Foreign Service Institute, and went on to become a noted

Vietnam expert.

Mr. Rosenthal was first posted to Saigon as a political officer in 1961. During the next four years, he was the embassy’s chief contact officer for the politically minded Buddhists, and he also headed up a unique provincial reporting unit designed to assess conditions in the countryside. He was wounded in the communist attack on the embassy in March 1965.

Mr. Rosenthal’s next tour, in 1965, was as assistant professor on the faculty of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was the first State Department representative and civilian on the faculty, and taught comparative politics and international relations.

In 1967 he returned to the Vietnam

desk in Washington, assisting in dealing with the tumultuous political situation in South Vietnam, including the famous Tet Offensive of 1968. In 1970 he was assigned to Paris, where in he helped backstop Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s efforts to negotiate an end to the Vietnam War in the Paris Peace Talks.

His next assignment was as deputy chief of mission and chargé d’affaires in Bangui, where his responsibilities included handling a volatile African leader, Central African Republic President Jean-Bédél Bokassa.

After completing a year at the National War College in 1975, Ambassador Rosenthal returned to take charge of the Indochina desk at the State Department in the wake of the fall of Indochina to commu-

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nist rule. He was part of the first postwar U.S. delegation to Hanoi that sought resolution of the MIA issue and that also explored the possibility of establishing relations. The latter effort was premature and unsuccessful, and the two countries had no relations for the next 17 years.

Mr. Rosenthal followed this tour with an assignment as deputy chief of mission in Kuala Lumpur, where he was instrumental in assisting the very successful Indochina refugee program.

His next posting was as DCM in Manila, then the largest U.S. mission abroad. He not only continued to oversee refugee programs, but also dealt with many issues involving the major U.S. military bases then located in the Philippines.

President Ronald Reagan appointed Mr. Rosenthal U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Guinea in 1983. During his tour the country's nationalist leader, President Ahmed Sékou Touré died, and Guinea began a transition to a more open society and market-oriented economy.

Ambassador Rosenthal concluded his 34-year diplomatic career as deputy director of operations at the State Department.

In 1990 he retired from the Foreign Service, returning to his native San Francisco to become executive director of the prestigious Commonwealth Club of California. He hosted numerous heads of state, high-level politicians and other prominent personalities to this nationally renowned forum.

He retired again in 1996, and then spent much of his time leading and lecturing on tours to Southeast Asia and around the world. He also greatly enjoyed the company of his children, all of whom were born abroad, and six grandchildren, and delighted in getting the entire clan together for cruises and resort stays every year.

Amb. Rosenthal served on the boards

of the Lowell Alumni Association, the World Affairs Council and the Marines Memorial Club. He was board president of the International Diplomacy Council, as well as the University of San Francisco's Center for Asian Studies. He was also chairman of the Foreign Service Association of Northern California for many years.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Britta, of San Francisco, Calif., and his three children: Carolyn, Stephen and Suzanne.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the American Foreign Service Association or DACOR Bacon House in Washington, D.C.

■ **William C. Sherman**, 93, a retired Foreign Service officer and former ambassador, died on July 3 at the Ingle-side Retirement Community in Washington, D.C.

Born in Edmonton, Ky., in 1923, Mr. Sherman graduated from the University of Louisville. He served with the U.S. Navy for more than three years during and immediately following World War II and joined the Foreign Service in 1951. In addition to Japanese, he spoke Italian and French.

During an impressive 35-year career in the Foreign Service, Mr. Sherman held top positions at the Department of State and served in important posts in Asia and Europe.

A leading expert on Asian affairs, Mr. Sherman spent more than 14 years in Japan. He was director for Japanese affairs from 1973 to 1977, after which he was selected as Ambassador Mike Mansfield's deputy chief of mission in Tokyo.

During earlier assignments in Japan he served as counselor for political affairs and as consul general in Osaka. He also served extensively in Europe, and was

based in Rome for five years in the political section.

In the course of his official duties in Washington, D.C., in the late 1960s, Mr. Sherman traveled overseas frequently with President Lyndon Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

In 1981, Mr. Sherman was assigned to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York where he served, with ambassadorial rank, as deputy U.S. representative on the Security Council. In 1984 he returned to Washington for a two-year assignment as deputy assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs.

The Japanese government conferred an official decoration on Ambassador Sherman in recognition of his myriad contributions in fostering U.S.-Japan understanding and friendship.

After retiring from the Foreign Service in 1986, he served for eight years as diplomat-in-residence at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, where he taught graduate students, consulted for both private and government organizations and wrote and lectured on world affairs.

Colleagues cite Ambassador Sherman as the finest Japan expert of his generation. Friends and family members fondly remember his breadth of interests, flawless memory and surpassing decency. The latter, they recall, made a profound impression on all who were privileged to know him.

Amb. Sherman is survived by a daughter, Courtney Simon of New York, N.Y.; a son, Woodson Sherman of Charlottesville, Va.; a son, John Sherman of Columbus, Ohio; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be sent to the Virginia Institute of Autism, Adult Services, in Charlottesville, Va. ([www.viaschool.org](http://www.viaschool.org)). ■



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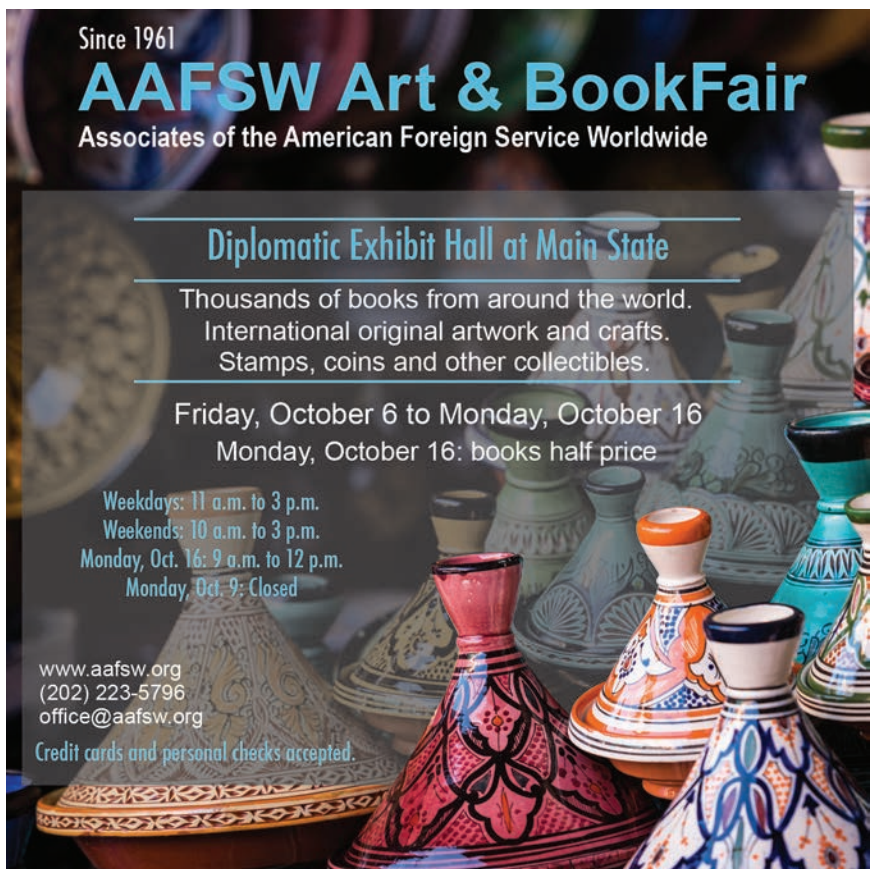
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## A Field Guide to U.S. Diplomacy

### Career Diplomacy: Life and Work in the U.S. Foreign Service, 3rd Edition

Harry W. Kopp and John K. Naland, Georgetown University Press, 2017, \$89.95/hardcover, \$29.95/paperback, 296 pages.

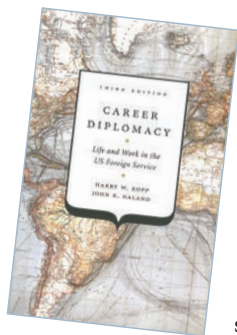
REVIEWED BY CAREY CAVANAUGH

This year may mark a historic shift in American global leadership, as the new administration raises questions about the reliability of international security commitments, moves away from multilateral trade arrangements and joint action on climate change, and de-emphasizes the promotion of democracy and human rights.

President Donald Trump's contradictory statements, tweets and actions have left friends and foes uncertain about exactly where Washington stands on major policy issues and unsure of how best to effectively engage the United States. The task of addressing such uncertainty and facilitating such engagement—as *Career Diplomacy* recounts—traditionally falls to the Department of State and the U.S. Foreign Service.

Regrettably, Trump's team has largely sidelined America's diplomats, questioning both their value and loyalty. It has shown neither an appreciation for their deep, specialized knowledge and expertise, nor an understanding of the critical roles that the State Department and Foreign Service play in protecting and advancing U.S. vital interests.

The consequences of this have been widely reported: easily avoided protocol and policy missteps, uncoordinated government action, significant confusion



about key policy initiatives and plummeting morale among State's career diplomats and civil servants. This book might offer key play-

ers at the White House and National Security Council some much-needed education.

Like an Audubon Society field guide, which provides comprehensive accounts of the traits, habitats

**It is probably the best and the worst time for a definitive work to be published on this subject.**

and behaviors of birds or insects, this outstanding volume details nearly every aspect of career diplomacy in the United States. From the 13 oral assessment dimensions and A-100 classes to dissent, expeditionary diplomacy, tandem couples and LGBT issues, the authors dissect the Foreign Service as an institution, describe the profession, chart typical career trajectories and contemplate the future.

This third edition, by Harry Kopp and John Naland (taking over from the late Charles "Tony" Gillespie), draws not only on the authors' decades of experience as career FSOs, but on interviews with 140 current and former foreign affairs practitioners.

What the authors have produced is encyclopedic in breadth, offering considerable detail on topics that would be hard to find elsewhere. How does the Foreign Service rank-in-person and up-or-out system contrast with that of the Civil Service? What are FSOs paid, and

how does locality pay work? What was the impact of the Palmer lawsuit? Why is there controversy surrounding accountability review boards? There are few important issues that are not addressed herein.

As a reference work, *Career Diplomacy* could prove invaluable for university career counselors, foreign affairs journalists and the Washington diplomatic corps. For some, however, its inclusiveness will make for a difficult read. Aspiring foreign affairs professionals, simply seeking to learn about the functions of a U.S. diplomatic mission, may be better served by Shawn Dorman's *Inside a U.S. Embassy* (AFSA FS Books, 2011).

Those who decide to take the plunge and sign up for the Foreign Service exam, however, will be well served by the authors' extensive elaboration of what remains a unique and complex entry process. New employees at State (Foreign Service or Civil Service) certainly should add Kopp and Naland to their personal professional libraries.

It is probably the best and the worst time for a definitive work to be published on this subject. Best, because a greater understanding of the importance of diplomacy and the contributions made by the State Department and the Foreign Service is desperately needed. Worst, because even though *Career Diplomacy* takes into account the early days of the Trump presidency, there is little doubt that some steps being taken today will have lasting impact. The authors would be well-advised to start working on the next edition.

Many pundits forecast dire times ahead for American diplomacy. *Career Diplomacy*, however, describes a Foreign Service and State Department that remain professional, flexible and



resilient. Both institutions have evolved profoundly, continuously enhancing their ability to help maintain our nation's security, advance its prosperity and promote American values.

It should come as no surprise that many of the presidents and Secretaries of State who first questioned the loyalty of both institutions have left office impressed by the knowledge, determination, energy and discretion of America's career diplomats.

Kopp and Naland quote Henry Kissinger, for example, who declares that he knew of no Secretary of State who did not come to "admire the dedicated men and women who supply the continuity and expertise of our foreign policy. I entered the State Department a skeptic. I left a convert." *Career Diplomacy* reveals why.

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*Ambassador (ret.) Carey Cavanaugh is a professor at the University of Kentucky's Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce. During his Foreign Service career, Amb. Cavanaugh served overseas in Berlin, Moscow, Tbilisi, Rome and Bern, in addition to assignments at the State Department, Pentagon and on Capitol Hill.*

## The Ambassatrix Speaks

### Dirty Wars and Polished Silver

Lynda Schuster, *Melville House, 2017*, \$26.99/hardcover, 321 pages.

REVIEWED BY

DONNA SCARAMASTRA GORMAN

Sixteen-year-old Lynda Schuster is bored at home in the Midwest, angry about her parents' divorce and embarrassed by her mother, a dull suburban housewife. In search of adventure and eager to put some distance between herself and her mother, Schuster flies to London, ostensibly to visit her father, then secretly

buys a ticket to Israel, where she intends to volunteer on a kibbutz.

But it's the summer of 1973, and shortly after she arrives at the kibbutz, located near the Golan Heights, she finds herself in the middle of the Arab-Israeli War. Hooked on the fear, excitement and adrenaline rush of war, she ultimately decides to become a foreign correspondent, working in wartorn and otherwise dangerous locales as far from her suburban upbringing (and from her annoying mother) as possible.

The early part of the book chronicles Schuster's almost accidental entry into the world of journalism and her subsequent adventures as a foreign correspondent in Central and South America, the Middle East and Mexico, where she writes mostly about war and terrorism.

She meets, marries and loses her first husband, a much older war correspondent for a competing newspaper, within the span of a year; the story of how they meet and fall in love takes up prime real estate in this section.

Eventually the young widow meets another man, U.S. diplomat Dennis Jett, and begins a long-distance relationship with him. When he is assigned to Malawi as the deputy chief of mission, she decides to marry him and move her career to Southern Africa.

Like many Foreign Service spouses before and since, she ultimately realizes she isn't going to be able to hold on to both husband and career, so she quits her job to become a full-time diplomat's spouse. Sound familiar?

Foreign Service readers will nod their heads in recognition as Schuster

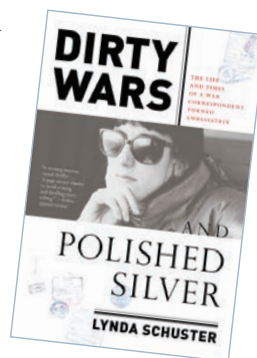
chafes against the limitations placed on her by her position as the DCM's wife. Some of the odd linguistic choices she makes, however, may jar the Foreign Service ear.

For example, she calls the DCM the "deputy ambassador" and, after her husband is promoted, refers to herself as an "ambassatrix" and writes about attending what she calls "Ambassatrix School." Perhaps it's just a nod to her non-FS audience, but such word play might instead be a deliberate roast of diplomatic culture (or at least its buttoned-down caricature).

The book is a curious mix of ridicule and respect for the Foreign Service spouses and employees she meets: ridicule when she encounters spouses who are trying their best to live within the confines of their diplomatic prisons and don't seem as impressively fearless as her journalist friends; and begrudging respect for some of those diplomats and their spouses who work well within the system, surviving evacuations and war just as successfully as they survive boring dinner parties with their foreign counterparts.

Schuster survives an evacuation of her own, from Liberia in 1989. It isn't until she is ordered to leave her husband and dogs behind that she realizes that "in marrying a diplomat, I'd married the State Department, too, and ceded my independence."

Still thinking of herself as a tough war correspondent, she is surprised at the level of helplessness she feels as the fighting in Liberia inches ever closer to the capital while she is forced to stay inside, away from danger. "To be on the ground during a conflict as a civilian," she writes, "watching the inexorable march of violence headed my way, is very different from watching—clear-



**Still thinking of herself as a tough war correspondent, she is surprised at the level of helplessness she feels as the fighting in Liberia inches ever closer to the capital while she is forced to stay inside, away from danger.**

headed and rational—the same situation from afar as a journalist.”

At times her depictions of spoiled diplomats grow stale, especially as she herself is living the same life she ridicules. But certainly any FS spouse can relate to her stories of waiting up for a husband who walks out the door during a crisis and reappears hours later, unable to share anything he knows about what is going on out there beyond the compound gates, where she’s been forbidden to go.

Many spouses have their own horror stories of giving birth abroad, or evacuating a war-torn country on short notice, or even just trying to find one’s place and fit in at each new post.

As a former newspaper correspondent, Schuster knows how to string together a story. The dialogue at times seems forced (can anyone really recall a years-old conversation, verbatim?), but the story itself will pull you in, whether or not you’ve been posted to any of the same countries as Schuster.

Her path from an adventure-seeking teen full of angst and anger at her homemaker mother, to wife (herself a homemaker) and woman seeking her own individual purpose separate from that of her husband, is one that many who have married into the Foreign Service will recognize all too well. ■

---

*Donna Scaramastra Gorman is a freelance writer and frequent FSJ contributor, whose work has appeared in Time Magazine, Newsweek, The Washington Post and The Christian Science Monitor. The spouse of a Diplomatic Security agent, she has lived in Amman, Moscow, Yerevan, Almaty, Beijing and Washington, D.C., where she currently resides.*

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# A Baltic Tale

BY TOM LONGO

**A**s a 14-year-old boy in Boston, I followed the dramatic 1956 uprising in Hungary and its crushing by the Soviet Union with rapt attention. I learned then that in 1940 the United States had refused to recognize the Soviet Union's forcible incorporation of the three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. At the time, that impressed me as a very honorable little corner of American foreign policy.

Today, as tensions with Vladimir Putin's Russia over the status of Ukraine heighten and concern once again haunts the newly independent nations of Eastern Europe, I am reminded of that early introduction to U.S. foreign policy and how, later, the Foreign Service gave me the opportunity to contribute personally to Baltic affairs.

As the Hungarian and Baltics desk officer in the late 1970s, I was the State Department point person for implementing the U.S. Baltics non-recognition policy. As a corollary of the policy we continued to recognize and accredit legations of the three countries. However, survival of the importantly symbolic legations was threatened both by dwindling resources and biological longevity.

By 1979 the three small legations were in financial straits. They had been supporting themselves from Baltic assets in

the United States that had been blocked by our government to prevent their transfer to the Soviet Union.

Each year, on State Department request, the U.S. Treasury would license the release of sufficient resources to permit the three *chargés d'affaires* (Ernst Jaakson, Estonia; Anatol Dinbergs, Latvia; and Stasys Backis, Lithuania) to keep their legations going.

The three, whom I remember vividly, were professional Baltic diplomats who had been in the United States in 1940, and stayed. True Baltic patriots, they should be a lasting source of pride for their countrymen in the three now-independent nations.

As the blocked assets dwindled inexorably, I was faced with a dilemma. Direct U.S. funding of the legations, even if Congress had agreed, was a nonstarter. First, it would have fed the Soviet propaganda line that the legations, like the non-recognition policy itself, were simply puppets in U.S. hands.

Second, direct U.S. support would have made the three supposedly independent legations subject to the annual budget process. Private financing by Baltic-Americans, even if that could be realized, would also have been ridiculed by Moscow.

In researching the issue, I discovered that Latvia's remaining blocked assets included a considerable amount of gold in our Federal Reserve Bank. Since President Richard Nixon had untied gold from its longstanding \$35-per-ounce peg in 1971, its value fluctuated with the market. At the time it was several hundred dollars per ounce.

If I could persuade the Latvian *chargé*

to sell (with U.S. Treasury permission) an amount of gold per year at market price, with the proceeds invested at interest, the yield could suffice to finance all three legations. With periodic gold sales, the arrangement could be supported indefinitely.

It took a year of patient negotiations to persuade Anatol Dinbergs to agree. I then had to persuade the other two *chargés*, as well, because the three countries had not been used to working with each other.

Keeping my State superiors, the White House, interested members of Congress, the Treasury Department and Federal Reserve, as well as Baltic-Americans, informed and quiet—lest we give the Soviets propaganda ammunition—was a challenge. But it worked!

Before I left Baltic affairs on reassignment in 1981, another problem arose. Some 40 years had elapsed since the forcible Soviet takeover in 1940; the three *chargés* were now very elderly, and there was no one with diplomatic credentials to succeed them.

U.S. appointment of successor diplomatic representatives was, of course, out of the question.

But because relevant decisions could be taken by the State Department, with consent from Congress and the White House, we were able to establish that the three *chargés* could nominate their own successors from the respective ethnic communities. These nominations would be subject to tacit agreement from the U.S. government, in the same way that it receives ambassadors named by foreign governments.

It is gratifying to me to know that with these two measures, sovereign representation of the three Baltic states in the United States was ensured until they regained their full independence in 1991. ■



*D. Thomas Longo Jr. was an FSO from 1969 to 1993. He served in Ankara, Budapest, Düsseldorf, Palermo, Ottawa and Washington, D.C. Before joining the Foreign Service, he served in the Navy from 1963 to 1967.*



Please submit your favorite, recent photograph to be considered for Local Lens. Images must be high resolution (at least 300 dpi at 8" x 10", or 1 MB or larger) and must not be in print elsewhere. Please include a short description of the scene/event, as well as your name, brief biodata and the type of camera used, to [locallens@afsa.org](mailto:locallens@afsa.org).

Taken in the pitch black of night, this photo captures the calm of Štrbské Pleso and the stars over the High Tatras Mountains of beautiful northern Slovakia. The glacial lake is located in High Tatras National Park at an elevation of about 4,200 feet above seal level. This area is used as the Winter Olympics training ground for the Slovak nation. ■

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*Chris Shea, a Foreign Service specialist, served as the information technology officer in Bratislava from 2014 to 2016. He joined the Foreign Service in 2009 and has served overseas in Zagreb, Bratislava and Erbil. He visited Štrbské Pleso during his last six days in country, and shot this photo at 1:30 a.m., using a Panasonic GH-4, 20mm, f/7, 26-sec exposure, 400 ISO.*

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