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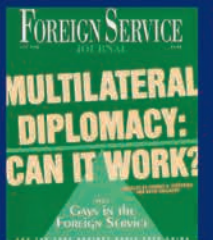
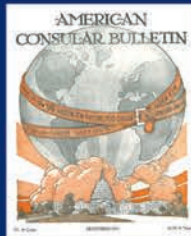
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THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

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Cover Image—THEISPOT.COM/Robert Neubecker

We Are Career Professionals Serving Our Country

BY ERIC RUBIN

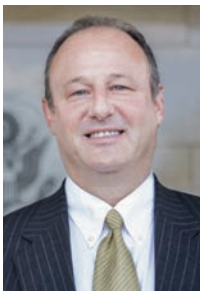
This is not an easy time to be a member of the U.S. Foreign Service. Nor an easy time to be involved in efforts to advance our country's interests and the primary objectives of our profession: ensuring America's security and prosperity and promoting peaceful resolution of disputes and the negotiated settlement of conflicts.

Our new governing board at AFSA is determined to support our members in the face of what is probably the most significant set of challenges our Service and our institution have ever faced.

Let me start out with an appeal to all Foreign Service members: Please stay. A significant percentage of our Service is eligible for immediate retirement. Others may be debating whether they are able to stay under current circumstances. My earnest request is that you stay if you can. The Foreign Service needs you. Your country needs you.

Just as the United States needs experienced professional air traffic controllers, food inspectors, forest rangers and FBI agents, it needs experienced career diplomats. That means us. America's role in the world remains pivotal. With-

out U.S. leadership, almost everything will be worse. I believe that, sincerely. I hope you do as well.



Ambassador Eric Rubin is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

We serve under difficult circumstances and take our families to tough places. At times we risk our lives. What do we ask in return? We ask to be treated with respect and to be recognized and valued for our dedication to our country and for the sacrifices that we and our family members have made.

Unfortunately, some of our colleagues have not experienced that respect in recent months. The clear politicization of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, as documented by the State Department Inspector General, is one glaring example. To date, there have been no consequences for those responsible.

The lack of senior Foreign Service jobs is not just an issue for the Foreign Service; it is an issue for American diplomacy. We currently have no active-duty Foreign Service officers serving in any assistant secretary of State positions. This is an unprecedented situation with no equivalent since the Second World War.

And the number of career officers serving as ambassador is at one of the lowest points since records have been kept. This is not just about jobs for our colleagues. It is about ensuring that our country has experienced career professionals serving in critical positions around the world.

A word about AFSA. We have nearly 100 years of experience representing the

Foreign Service, and we do so with passion and commitment. But we can only do this with your help. We welcome and we need ideas and contributions from our members. Please share your suggestions and thoughts with us on our social media pages and, if you wish, through direct email communication to our board members. All of us can be reached via the links on the AFSA website (www.afsa.org).

While we certainly recognize the seriousness of current challenges, we are pressing ahead with efforts to get more positions established—or reestablished—overseas; to ensure adequate funding for our agencies and operations; and to support recruitment of a diverse, representative workforce. Let's all keep working together to advance these objectives.

A special request to our colleagues from the other foreign affairs agencies: please keep in touch with AFSA, and share your suggestions and input.

I look forward to hearing from you and working with you, and I thank you for your commitment and dedication to serving our country and the ideals that it represents. Tough times require even stronger commitment and engagement. At this very difficult time, let's demonstrate who we are and what we can do. That is the meaning of the oath to the Constitution that we all have taken. ■

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PROFESSIONAL POLICY ISSUES

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Diplomats Write

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Welcome to the annual celebration of books by members of the Foreign Service community. It's always a treat to see what our friends and colleagues write and publish; and it's inspiring. This year we present 46 new volumes by FS members. The author of one of the books, FSO Patrick McEachern, also contributes our cover story, "What Does North Korea Want?"

With titles like *Lions at the Legation*, *Masters of Mayhem*, *Ideology and Collapse*, *Egyptian Advice Columnists*, *The Back Channel*, *Crossing the Sahara* and *Drunk at the State Department*, there's surely something for everyone. The 17 memoirs illustrate the unique adventures of diplomatic life. The title of one of those captures it best: *No Ordinary Life*.

In addition, the Of Related Interest section features 24 recent books that are not by FS authors but cover relevant subjects, including China. In the mix, you'll find *Belt and Road*, *China's Dream*, *Visa Lottery Chronicles*, *Jerusalem and Washington*, and *The Sit Room*, as well as a murder mystery with an FSO protagonist, and a primer on Russia.

We hope these selections offer an enlightening and comforting break from the sometimes surreal realities of Foreign Service work today. To put it bluntly, we are in an era of anti-diplomacy. The U.S. president tells us it'll be no problem getting a new, a fourth, national security



Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.

adviser because "It's very easy, actually, to work with me. You know why it's easy? Because I make all the decisions—they don't have to work." This would be amusing if it weren't so dangerous, reflecting as it does the absence of a functional foreign policy process.

No wonder so many U.S. diplomats today ask themselves whether to stay or go. Dozens of senior-level Foreign Service officers have left since 2016, many of them pushed out (directly or indirectly). So many of the mentors for the Service are gone. International agreements that diplomats spent months or years to negotiate have been torn up, and relations with allies strained.

We've seen the recent op-eds from two mid-level FSOs who chose to leave (see Talking Points). In this edition's Speaking Out ("There Is No 'Complacent State'"), FSO Andrew Kelly responds to the public resignations with a discussion of Foreign Service professionalism.

Ambassador Eric Rubin looks at the situation today in his President's Views column and offers an appeal to the Foreign Service to "please stay." The Foreign Service, the country, "needs you."

The United States must continue to engage with the world, regardless of the actions and policies of any one administration. And we need U.S. diplomats and development professionals out in the field to do that.

Thank you for serving. Please keep in touch with AFSA, and please keep the conversation going on these pages. ■

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Greenland: What's the Deal?

The Trump administration is planning to open a U.S. consulate in Greenland for the first time in decades, the Associated Press reported Aug. 23.

In a letter to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, AP reported, the State Department said a consulate would be “a critical component of our efforts to increase U.S. presence in the Arctic and would serve as an effective platform to advance U.S. interests in Greenland.”

The State Department already has a Greenlandic affairs officer, who works out of U.S. Embassy Copenhagen, according to AP, and expects to open the consulate, with a staff of seven, in the territory’s capital, Nuuk, in 2020.

The news came on the heels of a diplomatic row over President Donald Trump’s expressed interest in the United States purchasing Greenland from Denmark, which has dominion over the territory and its 55,000 residents. “Strategically, for the United States, it would be very nice,” the president told reporters Aug. 18. “Essentially, it’s a large real-estate deal.”

“Greenland is not for sale,” Denmark’s Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told reporters the next day. “Thankfully, the time where you buy and sell other countries and populations is over.”

After learning of the prime minister’s remarks, Mr. Trump announced on Twitter that he was canceling an upcoming visit to Denmark because Ms. Frederiksen had “no interest in discussing the purchase of Greenland.”

The incident left some members of the Foreign Service community aghast. “Sometimes it is hard to believe that what Trump is saying and doing on the world

opposition to routing a Russian natural-gas pipeline through Danish waters, our cooperation in the global fight against terrorism, our attitude toward Russia and China—and our common security and environmental challenges in the Arctic region.”

Rasmussen added: “I consider Trump’s interest in Greenland as a sign that his administration is taking a serious interest in the Arctic and its future.”



stage is actually happening,” Nicholas Burns, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO and now with the Harvard Kennedy School, told *Vanity Fair*. “This is one of those days.”

Commenting on the abrupt cancellation on *The Atlantic* website on Aug. 29, former Prime Minister of Denmark and General Secretary of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen said simply, “What a pity.” The trip would have provided, he said, “an opportunity to discuss our shared

FAO Suspended for White Nationalist Views

The State Department placed Foreign Affairs Officer Matthew Gebert on administrative leave in August after the Southern Poverty Law Center, a civil rights organization, revealed his involvement with a white nationalist group.

SPLC’s Hatewatch, which monitors white nationalist movements, released an extensive report Aug. 7 alleging that Gebert “oversaw the Washington, D.C.-area chapter of a white nationalist organization, hosted white nationalists at his home and published white nationalist propaganda online.”

White people should establish “a country of our own, and we will retake this thing lickety split,” Gebert (using the pseudonym “Coach Finstock”) said in a May 2018 episode of a white nationalist podcast, according to Hatewatch. “We need a country founded for white people with a nuclear deterrent. And you watch how the world trembles.”

Gebert, 38, works for the State Department’s Bureau of Energy Resources.

“It is inconceivable he got security clearance twice,” Amos Hochstein, who served as special envoy and coordinator for the State Department’s international energy affairs office from 2014 to 2017 and was Gebert’s boss, told *Politico*. “If Gebert was Muslim or a person of color,

it would have been caught. Neo-Nazis are not all shaved heads and tattoos, they are hiding in plain sight. I'm horrified Gebert worked for me at the State Department."

"White supremacy and all forms of bigotry or racism are completely unacceptable and do not belong in our government," a spokesperson for the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Michael McCaul, told CNN. "Lead Republican McCaul would expect the State Department to hold accountable any employee determined to engage in that type of reprehensible behavior."

Gebert's brother, Michael Gebert, told CNN Aug. 15 that SPLC's report was accurate, and that he reported his sibling to the FBI in July because he was concerned about his hateful views.

"The Department of State cannot comment on personnel issues but is committed to providing an inclusive workplace," a department spokesperson told reporters.

Resigning in Protest

Former Foreign Service officers Chuck Park and Bethany Milton both made waves when they resigned from the State Department and publicized their decisions in columns in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, respectively.

Park, a member of the 157th A-100 class, joined the Foreign Service in 2010. "I was 26, newly married and more than a little idealistic when I set off for my first diplomatic assignment almost a decade ago," he wrote in an Aug. 8 *Washington Post* column.

"According to a certain type of right-leaning conspiracy theorist, that would make me part of 'The Deep State'—a shadowy government within the government that puts its own interests above the expressed wishes of the electorate," he continued. But, he wrote, "they have it all

Contemporary Quote

Before we sat down at the table it was already clear that these were surrender talks, and it is the Afghan government and the Afghan people that are going to pay the price. ...

We need a right-sized force, which I think we have had now, and a long-term commitment. It's not a high price to pay, neither in blood nor in treasure. I would see it as a pretty good insurance policy against a return of 9/11 to maintain that insurance policy as long as we need to. ... That is the key security point in all of this.

The Taliban is no kinder or gentler than they were prior to 9/11, when they ran that country. They seek to run it again. So when they come back, it's a pretty safe bet al-Qaida will come back with them. We've seen this movie before, and to set the stage for what we saw on 9/11 to me is incomprehensible and indefensible. ...

Our military certainly didn't lose the war. The politicians just got tired of it and said, 'Let it go.' And that's what we're doing. We'll pay the price for that down the road, as will the Afghans.

—Ambassador (ret.) Ryan Crocker, interviewed on *PRI's The World* radio program, Sept. 5.

wrong. Your federal bureaucracy under this president? Call it 'The Complacent State' instead."

Three years since President Trump's election, he said, he has not seen organized resistance from within. "To the contrary, two senior Foreign Service officers admonished me for risking my career when I signed an internal dissent cable against the ban on travelers from several majority-Muslim countries in January 2017," he wrote.

"I'm ashamed of how long it took me to make this decision," Park concluded. "My excuse might be disappointing, if familiar to many of my colleagues: I let career perks silence my conscience. I let free housing, the countdown to a pension and the prestige of representing a powerful nation overseas distract me from ideals that once seemed so clear to me. I can't do that anymore."

Milton, meanwhile, spent 11 years

as a consular officer. In an Aug. 26 *New York Times* column, she wrote: "When a diplomat joins the State Department, she sits through two presentations toward the end of her weeklong orientation class. One is an afternoon session about the State Department's storied Dissent Channel, which lets employees speak out internally about foreign policy decisions free from the fear of retaliation. How to use it, when to use it, what it means.

"The other is a much shorter presentation, one that lasts all of 15 seconds: 'The day you can no longer publicly support your administration's policies is the day you need to resign,'" Milton continued. "I publicly supported this administration longer than some and for less time than others, and there are no easy answers to these questions.

"Every individual has his or her own commitments, own beliefs and own red

lines; there is no inherent shame or honor in choosing to work for this administration or not, so long as it is a conscious choice,” she wrote. “Some of the most noble work is being done by those who have chosen to stay in the State Department, advocating sensible policies or simply keeping the important bureaucracy of our lead foreign affairs agency running.

“When you’re a Foreign Service officer, your job is to support the administration. Without exception. Despite my personal views, I spent more than two years working to carry out the administration’s immigration and foreign policy priorities. I continued to do so until the very minute I handed in my badge and headed to the airport,” she concluded.

“But on Friday, I cleared immigration and officially returned to life as a private citizen. And today I have a new challenge: putting my time and energy into helping elect new leadership that serves the true interests of all Americans, regardless of where they were born.”

(See *Speaking Out*, on p. 17, for a response to the Chuck Park resignation from FSO Andrew Kelly.)

U.S., Russia Scrap INF Treaty

The United States officially withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty on Aug. 2. President Trump had announced the administration’s intention to exit the treaty in October 2018.

The INF Treaty was signed by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in December 1987. It prohibited either party from fielding conventional or nuclear ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers, eliminating an entire category of weapons.

Because of their relatively limited range but fast speed, this class of missiles was considered especially volatile during crises: they could be used to launch nuclear attacks allowing barely any time to react. As a result of the treaty, both the United States and the Soviet Union destroyed more than 2,000 missiles by the time the treaty went into force on June 1, 1991.

“Russia is solely responsible for the treaty’s demise,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in an Aug. 2 statement. The United States alleges that during the mid-2000s Russia developed and fielded multiple battalions of a noncompliant missile, the SSC-8 ground-launched cruise missile.

Washington first spelled out its concerns with Russia over the missile in 2013, and went on to raise the subject of the violation in more than 30 engagements, including at the highest levels. But, according to the State Department, “we were met only with obfuscation, falsehoods and denials.”

China’s burgeoning military development may also have influenced the U.S. decision to withdraw from the treaty. “If Russia’s doing it and if China’s doing it and we’re adhering to the agreement, that’s unacceptable,” President Trump said at a campaign rally last year. China was never a signatory to the INF Treaty, allowing it to build up a significant inventory of missiles.

About 95 percent of China’s missile force falls within the intermediate-range category, according to Admiral Harry Harris, then-commander of the U.S. Pacific Command and current U.S. ambassador to South Korea. However, most Chinese missiles are conventional; the United States and Russia possess more than 90 percent of global nuclear weapons.

The Pentagon announced Aug. 19 that it had tested a conventional ground-

launched cruise missile with a range of more than 500 kilometers, the first such test since the United States withdrew from the treaty. It would have been non-compliant under the INF.

In response to the test, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Aug. 23 ordered the Russian Ministry of Defense to “take comprehensive measures to prepare a symmetrical answer.”

OIG: Politically Motivated Harassment at State

An Office of the Inspector General report, released in August, found evidence of the mistreatment of career employees in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO).

“These inappropriate practices included disrespectful and hostile treatment of employees, accusations against and harassment of career employees premised on claims that they were ‘disloyal’ based on their perceived political views, and retaliation associated with conflicts of interest,” the report stated.

The Washington Post on Aug. 15 called the report “a sweeping condemnation” of political appointee Ambassador Kevin Moley—assistant secretary for international affairs and former ambassador to the U.S. Mission to International Organizations in Geneva—and his former senior adviser, Mari Stull.

Ms. Stull, a former lobbyist and wine blogger known online as *Vino Vixen*, is no longer with the department. But while serving, she vetted the social media accounts of senior-level Foreign Service members in search of “signs of ideological deviation,” *Foreign Policy* reported in June 2018.

The OIG found that Amb. Moley and Ms. Stull “frequently berated employees, raised their voices, and generally

50 Years Ago

Communication and Controversy: The Future of Foreign Service Reporting

During the past two years we have had at least three significant opportunities to evaluate the functions of the Foreign Service of the United States. ... It may be time to make an inquiry into the very purpose and nature of Foreign Service reporting, to ask if the function itself is as vital as we have assumed it to be, and to ask if the traditional approach to reporting is relevant to our times. In the process, we have to face some questions about the nature of the Foreign Service. ...

There are a number of factors at work which may reduce the relevance of the "traditional" style of Foreign Service reporting. Most important is the information explosion and its associated effects. ... Another factor is the changing milieu in which we live and operate. This is not the relatively static world of the assumed positions and hierarchial [*sic*] relationships of the colonial era, the cold war, or "Pax Americana." ... A closely related factor is the spread of controversy itself, of challenges to various establishments and ways of thinking. ... The Foreign Service is now recruiting among a generation of young people who have grown up in this milieu of controversy. ...

It is a reasonable lesson of history that an organization confronted by changes of this magnitude should not resist them, but should exploit them to its own advantage. This will

require a basic change of philosophy in the Foreign Service, particularly in its approach to reporting.

The basis of this philosophy must be the recognition of the fact that Foreign Service reporting cannot be comprehensive, and that it need not be comprehensive. ...

A corollary is that the Foreign Service must recognize that its primary duty is not simply to report information, but to *make judgments and recommendations* [emphasis in original]. ...

We must also break away from our fixation on the cleared written document in its never-changing formats. ...

Foreign Service officers are often exhorted to be daring, original, and aggressive, but the system continues to discourage those who are. The only way we can have old, bold Foreign Service officers is to institute rewards for courage and perceptiveness. ... One approach is to upgrade the process of evaluating reporting, and to link it to the personnel system. ...

The future of the Service depends on our staking out new purposes, in addition to the old, and focusing on the essential and discarding the unimportant.

—FSO Michael A.G. Michaud,
excerpted from his article by the
same title in the October 1969
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Site of the Month: what3words.com

Making the rounds in some Foreign Service circles is a geocoding system that could save your life. What3words calls its service “the simplest way to communicate precise location,” and emergency and government services from South Africa to Mongolia have begun to use it.

What3words has divided the entire world into squares, each three meters square in size. The service assigns a unique set of three words to each of the 57 trillion squares. You can download the smartphone app to use the service anywhere, or go to the What3words website.

For example, type in the AFSA headquarters address, 2101 E St NW in Washington, D.C., and the front entrance comes up as “bells.hidden.reveal.” Put in Department of State, and the 21st Street entrance to State is “larger.shift.issues.”

The three-word addresses are easy to say and share, and are as accurate as GPS coordinates, the company notes. For instance, they note that the GPS coordinates for their headquarters in London—51.520847, -0.19552100—are a mouthful to say compared to the three-word phrase “filled.count.



soap” that means the same thing.

FSOs on the popular FS Facebook group Trailing Houses report that some security officers overseas recommend the free service. But it’s important to determine if emergency services where you are located are using it yet.

Beyond public safety, What3words can be helpful to family members or friends trying to find each other at the mall, sports arena or other public place in the United States or abroad. Using the app, you can send someone your precise location, or open your address in another mapping service such as Google Maps. What3words is available in more than 35 languages.

What3words notes that its mapping service is two-dimensional, however, so if you want someone to know your location when you are in a high-rise building, you will have to give your three-word coordinates plus which floor you are on and your apartment or room number.

engaged in unprofessional behavior toward staff.” They also reportedly retaliated against employees who had held their jobs during the Obama administration. Ms. Stull, the report said, referred to some employees as “Obama hold-overs” or “traitors.”

Nearly 50 out of 300 domestic IO employees have departed since Amb.

Moley took over leadership of the bureau, according to the OIG report, and almost all of them cited poor leadership as one reason that they left the bureau.

The State Department’s response was included in the report. Accepting the OIG recommendations, State indicated it would submit a “corrective action plan” within 60 days.

The report is the first of two from OIG that investigates allegations that Trump administration political appointees retaliated against State Department employees, *Politico* reported, adding that the second report is still being drafted.

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee, called the findings “offensive” and said that Amb. Moley should “resign or be fired,” according to *Politico*.

Amb. Moley, in a response to the OIG findings included as an appendix to the report, said the misconduct attributed to him “does not represent the person I am or have ever been.”

“I will be the first to admit the failure on my part to have done more to address the situation,” Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan told IO employees at an Aug. 29 town hall meeting, according to *Foreign Policy*. Under Secretary for Political Affairs David Hale, also at the town hall, encouraged IO employees who were hurt by political retaliation to come to him to seek remedies, *Foreign Policy* reported. “There’s absolutely no doubt that what was going on was completely unacceptable,” Hale is quoted as saying. “Misconduct is a soft word, frankly, to use for what has occurred.”

Israel Denies Entry to U.S. Codel

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu banned U.S. Representatives Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) and Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) from visiting Israel on Aug. 15, hours after President Trump, in a tweet, said that allowing them to visit “would show great weakness.”

In July, Israeli Ambassador to the United States Ron Dermer had said that the two congresswomen would be allowed to visit Israel “out of respect for the U.S. Congress and the great alliance

between Israel and America," *The Washington Post* reported Aug. 15.

In announcing the ban, Prime Minister Netanyahu said that all members of Congress are welcome to visit, with the exception of those who support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel over its alleged failure to uphold international law vis-à-vis the Palestinians.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman supported the move. "The United States supports and respects the decision of the Government of Israel to deny entry to the Tlaib/Omar Delegation," he said in an Aug. 15 statement. "Like the United States, Israel is a nation of laws. We support Israel's application of its laws in this case."

Reaction in the U.S. Congress was swift. "The decision of the Israeli government to deny entry to Israel by two Members of Congress is outrageous, regardless of their itinerary or their views," House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), one of Israel's staunchest supporters in Congress, said in an Aug. 15 statement.

"I call on the Prime Minister to reconsider this decision and ensure that all Members of Congress who wish to visit Israel and/or the West Bank will be received with the proper respect and recognition they are due."

Democrats were outraged by the president's tweet and Prime Minister Netanyahu's decision, and some analysts argued that the Trump and Netanyahu administrations were turning the U.S.-Israeli relationship into a wedge issue in American politics.

"What a bulldozer to drive through the bipartisan consensus on Israel. What a gift to the BDS movement, which until now, most Americans had never heard of," former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Shapiro wrote in an Aug. 15 article for *The Atlantic* website. "What a self-own."



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Former FSO Sentenced to 40 Years

Former FSO Steven Hadley Hassan, 52, of Frederick, Maryland, was sentenced to 40 years in federal prison for sexually abusing minors overseas to produce child pornography and for transporting these images to the United States, the Department of Justice reported in an Aug. 13 press release. Hassan has been detained since his arrest in June 2018.

In his guilty plea, Hassan admitted to sexually abusing young girls from 2010 to 2013 in U.S. government-provided housing in the Philippines and South Africa, where he was posted by the State Department. From 2014 to 2018, Hassan, under a number of aliases, shared thousands of images of the girls to an online file-sharing network.

“Steven Hassan preyed on vulnerable young girls, including foreign nationals, while representing the United States,” said U.S. Attorney Robert K. Hur. “This sentence demonstrates that we will find and bring to justice those who victimize children.”

Diplomats' Mail at Risk If U.S. Leaves Postal Union

The Trump administration announced a year ago, on Oct. 17, 2018, that the United States was starting the one-year withdrawal process from the Universal Postal Union, a 145-year-old United Nations organization that regulates global mail delivery.

As of press time, the UPU is scheduled to meet in late September to consider changes to the organization's rules and rate structures, in particular a Trump administration proposal to normalize rates on packages sent to the United States from heavy net exporting countries that have been kept artificially low for decades.

The administration has said that it will remain in the UPU if certain changes are adopted. Because countries are required to give one year's notice before withdrawal, the United States could leave the postal union as early as mid-October.

Should the United States go through with the withdrawal, the Diplomatic Post Office (known by DPO) will experience—at best—significant interruption, if not outright elimination while the United States would have to negotiate new bilateral postal service agreements with other countries.

While pouch deliveries will not be affected, DPO deliveries for any Foreign Service personnel at U.S. missions overseas will be affected. The potential ramifications are obvious to all members of the Foreign Service, particularly when it comes to delivery of medical supplies and medications.

AFSA has raised the possible harmful effects of withdrawal on Foreign Service families with senior officials in State's Bureau of Human Resources and has been working with the Military Officers Association of America, as APO services may be affected as well.

While the legal authority to withdraw from the UPU lies with the executive branch, AFSA is also warning Congress of the negative implications DPO interruption or elimination would have for our diplomats.

The State Department's Bureau of Administration is well aware of this problem and has been working to mitigate possible challenges and seek alternative solutions. AFSA advises all members to read the recent ALDAC on this issue (19 STATE 76584), as well as any embassy-issued management notices.

AFSA will keep following the issue and will update members as needed. In the meantime, please heed the guidance from

the Department of State: Plan to purchase crucial supplies early so that your deliveries reach you before mid-October.

Hiring Freeze Hurt U.S. Diplomacy, OIG Finds

The federal hiring freeze imposed by the Trump administration beginning in January 2017 had devastating effects on the State Department, which did not lift the freeze even after it was lifted on other agencies in April 2017, according to an August report by the State Department's Office of the Inspector General.

“Several bureaus charged with protecting security, health and life safety reported to [the inspector general] that the hiring freeze had significant detrimental effects,” said the report, which was ordered by Congress.

According to the OIG, 96 percent of 151 embassies and consulates surveyed and 95 percent of 38 domestic bureaus said the hiring freeze “had a somewhat negative or very negative effect on overall operations.”

Ninety-seven percent of overseas posts and 100 percent of domestic offices told OIG that the hiring freeze had a significantly negative effect on employee morale and welfare.

The hiring freeze at State was not lifted until Secretary of State Mike Pompeo resumed hiring in May 2018. The freeze primarily affected eligible family members (who experienced a 20.7 percent decrease in employment during the hiring freeze) and Civil Service employees (who faced a 7.1 percent decrease), the OIG found. Foreign Service employment levels decreased by 1 percent over the period. ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Cameron Woodworth, Dmitry Filipoff and Susan B. Maitra.

There Is No “Complacent State”

BY ANDREW KELLY

On Aug. 8 *The Washington Post* ran a letter from former Foreign Service Officer Chuck Park explaining why he resigned from the Service and referring to those who remain as the “complacent state.”

Chuck and I joined the U.S. Foreign Service together and were part of the same A-100 class, the five-week crash course in diplomacy given to all newly commissioned Foreign Service officers. One of the first things impressed upon us was that American diplomats serve their country by implementing the foreign policy of the president of the United States; and in the event we could not do that, it was incumbent on us to resign.

Chuck is right to leave the Service given that he is no longer comfortable representing the U.S. government. Since 2017 a number of FSOs have made similar decisions, either resigning or retiring from the Foreign Service. Some have shared their reasons for leaving in op-eds, cable news interviews and even an appearance on a comedy program. In this regard, Chuck’s op-ed is unique only in the harshness of his assessment of those of us who remain.

However, he is wrong in supposing that the career Foreign Service is complacent in anything. Foreign Service officers have an obligation to stay out

of politics. This is not complacency. It is professionalism.

The Decision to Serve ... or Not

I was glad to see *The Washington Post* publish Ambassador Dennis Hays’ succinct rebuttal to Chuck’s letter. However, there is a danger that much of the public will think many, if not most, FSOs feel the same as Chuck.

Unfortunately, few Americans even know that the U.S. Foreign Service exists, at least not until a former FSO pops up on the news. I suspect that when many people hear that an FSO has resigned, they imagine a pinstriped cookie-pusher in Paris or some bureaucrat in D.C. handing off a stack of papers to a colleague. As *FSJ* readers know, that couldn’t be further from the truth.

The work we do as Foreign Service officers, both abroad and back home, is incredibly important. If we don’t do it, it doesn’t get done. And while every FSO must answer his or her conscience when it comes to deciding to serve, the decision is not, as Chuck implies, as simple as weighing one’s political convictions against “perks and a pension.” For most of us, there is also the question of duty.

Convincing the American people and politically appointed officials that

the career Foreign Service really does place duty above partisan considerations is made more difficult by former officers who feel the need to publicly justify their private decision to resign. Don’t get me wrong. It’s a free country. Former FSOs have a right to go on network news to speak about why they resigned. Whether they *should* do so is another matter.

Understanding the FS

It is essential that the American public understand the Foreign Service and its vital work for the country. I’m a former Army officer, and suggest that when a Chuck Park resignation, or some other news item, causes Americans to ask, “What is an FSO anyway?” we as a service stand to benefit by explaining our similarity to another better-known service, the U.S. military.

Few Americans outside the D.C. Beltway know an FSO, but most people know someone who served in uniform. Americans understand and trust the military out of a general appreciation of its mission and a respect for the professionalism and competence of our servicemen and women.

The fact is that the armed services and the U.S. Foreign Service are similar, especially when it comes to our officer corps. Both swear exactly the same oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. Most people who enter armed or foreign service, and nearly all who make it a career, do so at least partly out of patriotism.

Drawn from several federal agencies, but primarily the Department of State,



Andrew Kelly joined the Foreign Service in 2010. He is currently the political-economic section chief in U.S. Consulate General Surabaya. He previously served in Manila and Sofia. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, he served two tours in Iraq as an Army officer in the 82nd Airborne Division. His “Reforming Entry-Level Assignments” appeared in the July-August 2016 *FSJ*.

Convincing the American people and politically appointed officials that the career Foreign Service really does place duty above partisan considerations is made more difficult by former officers who feel the need to publicly justify their private decision to resign.

FSOs are the commissioned members of the U.S. Foreign Service, America's diplomatic corps. Required by Congress to spend the bulk of our career overseas, we serve in U.S. embassies and consulates around the world, and at headquarters in Washington, D.C. Contrary to popular belief, a majority of U.S. ambassadors are career FSOs who rose through the ranks.

While we don't wear uniforms, the modern Foreign Service follows an "up or out" promotion system nearly identical to the U.S. military. We share similar institutional cultures, similar missions and an equivalent system of rank-in-person. If that weren't enough, military veterans make up about a fifth of Foreign Service personnel.

Our perks and compensation are similar to the military, and we also sacrifice. Everywhere the military goes, we go—but we also go, and live, where the military does not. Many of our postings are to places where you can't drink the water. Just under a fifth are to places so dangerous that we are not allowed to bring our families.

Foreign Service officers and specialists are targets for assassination and have been killed in terrorist attacks and while serving in war zones. Others have perished in plane crashes, shipwrecks, natural disasters and from tropical disease—all occupational hazards in our line of work.

The Work We Do

In the same way that "every Marine is a rifleman," every FSO is responsible for representing the United States government in an official capacity. As in the military, our officer corps is divided into specialties whose everyday duties can range from the prosaic to the riveting—and, more often than not, those duties have little or nothing to do with a particular administration's policies or politics.

Take me, for example. In my job, the first thing I do every day is go through the rigorous, but not particularly awe-inspiring, steps of unlocking a remote U.S. diplomatic facility so the rest of the staff can report to work. Then I check whatever requests came in from the State Department overnight and decide how much of my to-do list must be sacrificed to addressing these new tasks. If I'm lucky, during the afternoon I will have time to meet with a local official or finish some of my required reports.

There are also times when what I do is deadly serious—like when coordinated suicide attacks ripped through churches a short way from the consulate and my family's apartment. Washington needed answers immediately. Who was being targeted? Were any Americans injured? Had police neutralized the threat, or were attackers still at large?

My colleagues and I, the only Americans equipped to answer those ques-

tions, began working the phones in a foreign language. Within minutes I was talking to a woman sheltering in one of the bombed churches. Within half an hour I was able to give the department a "good enough" appraisal of what was going on.

In the days and weeks that followed, it was cables researched and drafted by my team that provided State and other agencies a steady flow of information and analysis pertaining to the attacks.

Recently a colleague and I, both Army veterans who served in Iraq, cried as he recounted searching through hospitals and morgues for a young American who was wounded during an even more devastating attack. My friend found this young woman, paralyzed and intubated, tucked away in the corner of an overwhelmed emergency room.

Separated from her traveling companions during the attack, she had been alone for many hours while doctors worked around her, her identity unknown. She wept tears of relief when my friend found her, gripped her hand, asked her to confirm her name and whispered in her ear, "Don't worry. The ambassador knows where you are, and we're going to get you home."

Sadly, American citizens were killed in that attack. It was career FSOs who helped the grieving families get their loved ones home. We are also often the only people visiting Americans imprisoned overseas and those who have found themselves unexpectedly hospitalized or in other dire straits. And it is critical insights from FSOs scattered across the globe that make up most of the classified foreign affairs briefing material presented to our elected leaders.

Speaking Out is the *Journal's* opinion forum, a place for lively discussion of issues affecting the U.S. Foreign Service and American diplomacy. The views expressed are those of the author; their publication here does not imply endorsement by the American Foreign Service Association. Responses are welcome; send to journal@afsa.org.

The Question of Duty

Career diplomacy is a vocation, and we accept the challenges of that vocation alongside the rewards. Vocations don't end at retirement. Retired diplomats, like retired soldiers, can and should continue to contribute in their fields. However, they should also consider that with their emeritus status comes an obligation to respect and strengthen the foundation on which the Foreign Service institution is built.

An American president and the State Department officials he appoints to implement his foreign policy should be able to trust the discretion, loyalty and good faith of a career FSO, regardless of that FSO's personal politics or worldview. Partisan opinion pieces from those headed out the door undermine that trust, to the detriment of the entire Foreign Service. ■

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What Does North Korea Want?



ver the past year, U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean Chairman Kim Jong Un have held three unprecedented summits—in Singapore in June 2018, in Hanoi in February 2019, and in Panmunjom along the DMZ in June 2019. Where the current process of engagement

will lead is difficult to foretell, but the basic contours of the discussion are more predictable.

Each of the three summits sparked a flurry of interest from all walks of life, with press outlets meticulously documenting the personal drama and idiosyncrasies of the leaders and their encounters, including their hotel and transportation selections. The summits also sparked a lively debate in the foreign affairs



FSO Patrick McEachern previously served as a North Korean analyst in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research and as North Korea watcher at Embassy Seoul. He is the author of three books on North Korea, including North Korea:

What Everyone Needs to Know (Oxford University Press, 2019). He currently serves as the unit chief for Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. government or the Department of State.

It is hard to tell where the recent, unprecedented summitry will lead, but here are some guidelines by which to measure progress.

BY PATRICK MCEACHERN

community over the assumed content of the conversations and wisdom of engaging the North Korean leader at all, so it is useful to bring several basic aspects surrounding the dialogue into clearer focus—namely, North Korea's fundamental concern for national security and the issue of specific economic sanctions relief.

Diplomats will also appreciate the importance of sequencing in a negotiation, and this article explains the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's preferred ordering of transactional discussions as seen from the past three summits. Chairman Kim has highlighted economic benefits through sanctions relief as his early priority, offering some movement on the nuclear issue in exchange. But his government has also noted publicly that later stages of negotiations will require the United States to address North Korea's own security concerns in the region to elicit more substantial and far-reaching nuclear concessions.

North Korea's Two Broad Goals

A great deal has been written about what the United States expects from the negotiations. Experts have dissected the term "denuclearization" to expose different interpretations of what

the United States seeks—or should seek—and what the North Koreans might be willing to give in return. Some administration advisers demand a complete end not only to the DPRK’s nuclear program but also to its chemical and biological weapons programs and its missile programs. Others add the need to see an end to North Korea’s dire human rights record, conventional threats to its neighbors and a range of illegal activity from smuggling to counterfeiting. Still others present a more targeted agenda of incrementally rolling back North Korea’s nuclear program first before turning to the fuller range of U.S. objectives.

These debates center on foreign policy toward this difficult country on issues vital to U.S. national security rather than on Pyongyang’s own strategic ambitions and near-term goals. In this article I zero in on a basic question: What does North Korea want? In my recent book, *North Korea: What Everyone Needs to Know*, I tackle this question from a variety of viewpoints that explore the country’s history, society, politics, economics and regional relations. My purpose here, however, is more limited. I focus only on what North Korea wants from the United States in relation to the diplomacy underway.

It is easy to impute motives to the North Koreans. Few have direct interaction with DPRK leaders, leaving analysts free to speculate on what the Kim Jong Un government seeks. However, Kim has been fairly clear on both his strategic aims and near-term diplomatic asks as a matter of public record. By evaluating what the North Koreans have said repeatedly in public to both their domestic and international audiences, as well as public comments by American officials following the summits, one can identify two broad North Korean goals: national security and specific economic relief. The North Koreans have noted that security is the country’s larger concern, but its near-term demand relates to its economy.

Immediately following the most recent U.S.-DPRK summit in Hanoi, President Donald Trump told reporters that Kim Jong Un “wanted the sanctions lifted in their entirety.” The president’s senior officials, most notably Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, clarified that Kim had wanted an end to those provisions of



United Nations Security Council sanctions that applied to general economic activity. The administration decided in Hanoi that North Korea’s offer related to its Yongbyon nuclear complex was insufficient to merit this level of sanctions relief.

The distinction between all sanctions and the specific sanctions relief Kim sought, as well as the value of nuclear concessions focused only on Yongbyon, require some explanation.

Near-term Demand: Targeted Sanctions Relief

The United States has imposed sanctions on North Korea unilaterally since the country’s inception, but the U.N. Security Council sanctions that Chairman Kim referenced are much more recent. His grandfather, Kim Il Sung, was instrumental in declaring the establishment of the DPRK in 1948. Two years later, he invaded U.S.-backed South Korea, initiating the Korean War. Not surprisingly, the U.S. government did not look fondly on American companies doing business with the enemy, and North Korea’s invasion triggered sanctions through the Trading with the Enemy Act.

Cold War-era politics brought the addition of sanctions related to North Korea’s status as a communist and socialist state. Its egregious human rights record and its history of state-sanctioned drug smuggling and terrorism, counterfeiting of U.S.



Kim's empowering of his diplomats and technical experts to meet their American counterparts is the necessary next step.

currency, proliferation of missile and nuclear technology, and a host of other offenses have led North Korea to be sanctioned under multiple overlapping authorities. There is no near-term prospect for relief of U.S. sanctions that could spur bilateral trade, and North Korea did not ask for this in Hanoi.

Kim Jong Un's sanctions relief demand was much more targeted and has a shorter history. After North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006, the U.N. Security Council began issuing a series of resolutions with sharper and sharper teeth. During the first decade after the inaugural nuclear test, these multilateral sanctions focused on denying North Korea the tools to build a nuclear weapons program and moved into restrictions on luxury goods for the regime's elite. Previous North Korean claims that its nuclear infrastructure was intended for nuclear energy production had convinced few after the first nuclear crisis in the early 1990s, but North Korea's public demonstration of its weapons ambitions with its first nuclear test allowed all veto-wielding Security Council members—including Russia and China—to condemn and sanction the program.

Nonetheless, North Korean nuclear tests and long-range missile launches continued. More countries, most notably Japan and the Republic of Korea, restricted their own trade with North Korea further in the years after 2006. Even as the fiercely nationalistic Kim regime continued to articulate a desire for self-reliance and built an autarchic economy to support it, the regime became increasingly reliant for foreign goods and economic inputs like oil on a single neighbor: China. China grew to account for more than 90 percent of North Korean trade; yet even Beijing could not rein in Pyongyang on the nuclear issue, and Sino-North Korean relations deteriorated.

In 2016, Beijing assented to put greater pressure on North Korea. Following the country's fifth nuclear test, China voted in favor of new U.N. Security Council sanctions that did not simply seek to limit North Korea's ability to import nuclear-related material or apply restrictions on North Korea's elite like travel bans or luxury goods import prohibitions. China agreed to pre-

clude what would otherwise be considered legitimate trade in an economically significant sector: minerals and coal.

Offer Related to Yongbyon

North Korea could not export coal and other minerals, which were critical components of its foreign currency-earning exports. Subsequent resolutions would expand restrictions on North Korean trade and foreign currency-earning activities. The U.N. Security Council banner is important to urge other countries to cut off sanctioned trade with North Korea, but the most important element was Chinese enforcement. As North Korea's dominant economic partner that shares a land border, Beijing could then and can now undercut the sanctions' pressure entirely. However, the Chinese have largely held firm, which has proven pivotal to preserving American leverage in nuclear discussions with the North Koreans.

Public comments by senior administration officials suggest that Kim Jong Un's opening demand in Hanoi sought to roll back this series of sanctions in place since 2016. This is a targeted and transactional request that would not transform North Korea economically. Removing the last three years' worth of heightened sanctions would return North Korea to its early 2016 status. It would not allow foreign investment to flow into North Korea; nor would it recast the country's economy or external relations.

In exchange, as Secretary Pompeo explained after the Hanoi summit, North Korea offered limitations on its Yongbyon nuclear complex. Yongbyon is North Korea's most famous nuclear site. *Foreign Service Journal* readers are likely familiar with Yongbyon's name because it has been the centerpiece of North Korea crisis diplomacy for more than a quarter-century. However, it is no longer North Korea's most significant fissile material production facility. Yongbyon's plutonium reactor is limited to producing about a bomb's worth of plutonium each year, and its uranium enrichment facility is relatively small.

We have known from public sources for almost a decade that at least one other, much larger uranium enrichment plant is located elsewhere in the country. North Korea's enrichment program outside Yongbyon also has the capacity for substantial growth in its production capability, while Yongbyon is relatively static. As such, it is important but not the prize it once was. Reasonable people can disagree on whether it was in the U.S. interest to accept North Korea's offer, but Kim did not seem to present a second offer to come off this initial demand. The Hanoi summit showed Kim's near-term ambition to achieve partial sanctions relief in exchange for limited nuclear dismantlement, but he ultimately failed to achieve it.

Strategic Aim: National Security

North Korean leaders have stressed that the country's nuclear program is targeted at what Pyongyang views as the American existential threat to its existence. North Korea learned from the 1991 Persian Gulf War that numerical superiority of military personnel would not prevail against superior American military technology. They likewise note that the 2003 Iraq War showed them that only an actual nuclear weapons capability can deter the conventionally superior American military from pursuing regime change.

More recently, North Korean state media has stated explicitly that sanctions relief is the near-term ask, but national security is the ultimate goal. From North Korea's perspective, nuclear weapons do a good job of deterring a more technologically advanced military's ability to oust the Kim regime. For more substantial North Korean denuclearization concessions beyond the initial offer, the United States would have to go beyond sanctions relief and address North Korea's security fears in a tangible way.

Amid the summit diplomacy the Trump administration has made a significant concession to ease the country's security fears. North Korea has long complained about the semiannual U.S.-South Korea military exercises, which they see as a security threat. The United States suspended these exercises twice since the first U.S.-DPRK summit in Singapore, though the administration resumed the exercises in August. The North Koreans must utilize scarce resources like fuel to mobilize forces while heightened U.S. military assets and personnel are in the region for the exercises. If the United States were to launch a preemptive strike on North Korea, they reason, a military exercise would be the perfect cover to plus-up for an invasion.

The United States and the ROK have repeatedly noted that the exercises are defensive, meaning they allow the two militaries to drill to respond more effectively to possible North Korean provocations or invasion. Suspending the exercises limits U.S.-ROK military readiness. It is not a cost-free move, but alternative training arrangements can mitigate some of the downside risk for the United States and South Korea. North Korea had refrained from long-range ballistic missile flight tests and nuclear testing amid the exercise freeze, but predictably expanded shorter-range ballistic missile launches after the exercises resumed. The pause to create room for diplomacy had not produced more tangible results in the intervening months.

While North Korea finds the U.S. military presence on the Korean Peninsula threatening, it is less clear exactly what it would require of the United States to feel secure enough to permanently dismantle the nuclear program. Pyongyang has called



The U.N. Security Council banner is important to urge other countries to cut off sanctioned trade with North Korea, but the most important element was Chinese enforcement.

for a peace treaty to end the Korean War. Declassified records from Kim Il Sung's conversations with his socialist counterparts as late as the 1970s show the North Koreans understood a peace treaty as a pretext to end the permanent stationing of U.S. troops in South Korea.

More recent Track 2 engagements (nongovernmental discussions) provide contradictory interpretations of what Kim Jong Un today may seek from a peace arrangement, and it is by no means clear whether he has envisioned a neatly laid out endgame. However, North Korea's demand regarding military exercises during the U.S.-DPRK summitry shows that Kim Jong Un considers that chipping away at U.S. Forces Korea's capabilities in exchange for incremental limitations on its own nuclear capabilities is part of the equation.

While it is possible to imagine Kim Jong Un wanting to achieve what his father and grandfather never could—removal of all foreign troops from Korean soil—it remains to be seen whether such an arrangement would be ultimately achievable or desirable for U.S. interests in Korea and the region. In the context of long-standing U.S.-DPRK distrust, Kim Jong Un has not prioritized a transformed relationship with the United States where it counts most, among his top diplomatic demands. President Trump has fashioned himself a different type of American leader, so one may reason that Pyongyang would be naturally suspicious that any deal with him may not survive into the following administration—or his own second term.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Kim's offers to date suggest he is focused first and foremost on a transactional deal to reduce immediate economic pain and make incremental security advances. In general terms, his demands are not that much different from those articulated by his father since the early 1990s, and President Trump's pursuit of a denuclearized

U.S.–North Korea Nuclear Negotiations: A Timeline

1985 ■ North Korea joins the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) under Soviet pressure.

1991 ■ President George H.W. Bush announces that the United States has removed all nuclear weapons from South Korea, a long-held North Korean demand to agree to denuclearize.

1992 ■ North Korea and South Korea agree to denuclearize the peninsula.

1993 ■ North Korea threatens to withdraw from the NPT, but suspends withdrawal following talks with U.S. diplomats in New York.

1994 ■ The United States and North Korea sign the Agreed Framework, freezing Pyongyang's nuclear program.

1999 ■ North Korea suspends testing of long-range missiles in exchange for U.S. easing of economic sanctions for the first time since the beginning of the Korean War in 1950.

2000 ■ June: South Korean President Kim Dae-jung meets with DPRK President Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang, the first summit between Korean leaders in five decades.

2000 ■ October: North Korean General Jo Myong Rok meets with President Bill Clinton in Washington, and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright travels to Pyongyang to discuss the country's ballistic missile program.

2002 ■ President George W. Bush challenges North Korea's compliance with the Agreed Framework and characterizes the country as part of an "axis of evil" with Iraq and Iran in the State of the Union Address.

2002-2003 ■ The Agreed Framework breaks down as the United States claims North Korea admitted to running a secret uranium-enrichment program, and North Korea denies it. North Korea withdraws from the NPT.

2003 ■ Six-Party Talks (South and North Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States) open in August.

2005 ■ Sept. 19: Six-Party Talks produce a joint declaration in which North Korea commits to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons and implement International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and the terms of the NPT in exchange for a U.S. assertion that it has no intention of attacking North Korea.

2006 ■ Oct. 9: North Korea conducts its first nuclear test, which prompts U.N. Security Council condemnations and trade sanctions. A low yield from the test leaves question whether North Korea could successfully detonate a nuclear device.

2007 ■ The six parties agree to two action plans in February and October in which North Korea commits to halting operations at Yongbyon and then starting to disable the reactor in exchange for a series of political, economic and energy concessions from the United States and its allies.

2008 ■ Pyongyang declares 15 nuclear sites and 30 kilograms of plutonium in June; in exchange, President George W. Bush rescinds some trade restrictions, waives some sanctions and announces a plan to remove North Korea from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. The State Department announces preliminary agreement with North Korea on verification, but discussions break down by December.

2009 ■ Pyongyang rebuffs Obama administration efforts to revive the Six-Party Talks, ejects monitors from its nuclear facilities and tests a second

North Korea is roughly similar to the objective of his last three predecessors. Technological advancement in North Korea's nuclear program and reordering of priorities have updated each side's top asks and suggested a different sequencing for negotiations, but the basic outlines of a deal to address each side's core demands have been present and explored in multiple rounds of high-stakes diplomacy for decades without completely resolving the fundamental issues at hand. This has led to understandable skepticism that any deal is possible and begs the question of what is new this time.

The main difference between the latest diplomacy and previous rounds is the personal involvement of the two leaders. There is no precedent for U.S.-DPRK summitry prior to the Trump-Kim meetings, and it has created new opportunities and challenges. Contrary to prior rounds of diplomacy, there was no ambiguity about whether the Singapore Declaration reflected the position of the top leaders in both systems. At the same time, however, Chairman Kim also did not unleash his negotiators to lay out a series of quid-pro-quo that would pro-

nuclear device. That test is successful and erases ambiguity about whether North Korea had fully crossed the nuclear threshold. First bilateral meetings take place in December.

2011 ■ Kim Jong Un takes power in Pyongyang after the death of his father, Kim Jong Il.

2012 ■ North Korean nuclear operations are briefly suspended in exchange for a pledge of tons of food aid after months of negotiations. The deal breaks down within weeks when North Korea launches a long-range rocket.

2013-2014 ■ Diplomacy stalls as Washington and its allies ratchet up sanctions. North Korea carries out nuclear tests and increases testing of ballistic missiles.

2017 ■ President Donald Trump redesignates North Korea a state sponsor of terrorism after Pyongyang conducts its sixth nuclear test. Pyongyang boasts it can reach U.S. soil with nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the Trump administration threatens a military strike.

2018 ■ March: South Korea's national security adviser announces in Washing-

ton that President Trump has accepted an invitation to meet Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang. This follows diplomatic overtures between North and South spurred by the Winter Olympic Games, hosted by South Korea.

2018 ■ June 12: Kim and Trump hold a historic meeting in Singapore, issuing a joint declaration pledging to pursue lasting peace and complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

2019 ■ Feb. 27-28: Second Trump-Kim summit ends early without an agreement when leaders disagree over the terms of a deal, including sanctions relief and denuclearization.

2019 ■ June 30: President Trump becomes the first sitting U.S. president to set foot in North Korea when he steps across the border at Panmunjom to meet Kim; the two agree to restart stalled nuclear negotiations.

Sources: *Council on Foreign Relations, "North Korean Nuclear Negotiations, 1985–2019" and Arms Control Association, "Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy."*

vide a roadmap to a phased, transactional deal. He preferred instead to try to engage President Trump directly, which led to another two summits without an implementable agreement. It appears Kim may have figured out that this tactical approach will not produce the type of technical agreement needed to address his concerns.

The next step to look for is far less dramatic than the world has seen over the past eighteen months. Kim's empowering of his diplomats and technical experts to meet their American

counterparts is the necessary next step to tee up a deal on each side's core demands that the leaders could endorse. Yet another dramatic summit may do more to capture the headlines, but it would almost certainly be for naught. The best hope for making another summit productive is for teams of technical experts on both sides to sit down to iron out a phased approach to denuclearization, sanctions relief and a structured response to North Korea's security concerns. That step alone would be far more newsworthy. ■

Resource List

Patrick McEachern, *North Korea: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2019)

Anna Fifield, *The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un* (PublicAffairs, 2019)

Sandra Fahy, *Dying for Rights: Putting North Korea's Human Rights Abuses on the Record* (Columbia University Press, 2019)

Van Jackson, *On the Brink: Trump, Kim, and the Threat of Nuclear War* (Cambridge University Press, 2018)

Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, *Hard Target: Sanctions, Inducements, and the Case of North Korea* (Stanford University Press, 2017)

Byung-Yeon Kim, *Unveiling the North Korean Economy: Collapse and Transition* (Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

Victor Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (Ecco Press, 2012)

Justin Hastings, *A Most Enterprising Country: North Korea in the Global Economy* (Cornell University Press, 2016)

FOCUS ON FOREIGN SERVICE AUTHORS

In Their Own Write



We are pleased to present this year's collection of books by Foreign Service members and their families.

The *Foreign Service Journal* is pleased to present our 18th annual Foreign Service authors roundup in plenty of time for holiday orders.

Our primary purpose in compiling “In Their Own Write” is to celebrate

the wealth of literary talent within the Foreign Service community, and to give our readers the opportunity to support colleagues by sampling their wares. Each entry contains full publication details along with a short commentary. As has been the case for more than a decade, a majority of the titles are self-published.

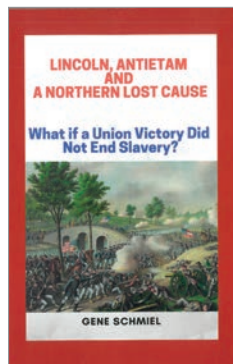
Our annotated list of books—written, edited or translated by Foreign Service personnel and their family members in late 2018 and 2019—is not a comprehensive or definitive record of works by FS authors; we rely on the authors themselves to bring their books to our attention.

This year we're featuring 46 volumes—7 works of history and biography, 8 books on policy and issues, 9 works of fiction and poetry, a potpourri of 5 works on food, parenting and expat life—and no fewer than 17 memoirs. As usual, we also include in this month's focus a selection of recent books “of related interest” to diplomats and their families that were not written by FS authors.

For the few books that cannot be ordered through Amazon or other online outlets, we have provided the necessary contact information. This year's roundup was assembled with the vital assistance of Publications Coordinator Dmitry Filipoff, Contributing Editor Steven Alan Honley, Associate Editor Cameron Woodworth, Managing Editor Kathryn Owens and AFSA Intern Caroline Quinn.

—Susan Brady Maitra, Senior Editor

BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY



Lincoln, Antietam and A Northern Lost Cause

Gene Schmiel, independently published, 2019, \$13.99/paperback, 202 pages.

What if, even after the Union had won the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation, slavery had remained legal in the United States?

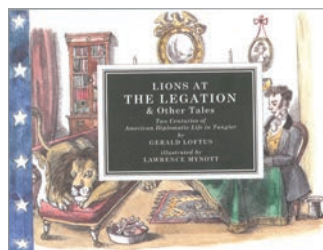
In this thought-provoking speculative history, written in a “you are there” style using the words of the participants themselves, award-winning Civil War historian Gene Schmiel shows exactly how such a tragic outcome could have occurred.

He takes as his starting point the Battle of Antietam (Sept. 17, 1862), which was perceived as a victory for the Union—one that emboldened President Abraham Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation the following January. But had General Robert E. Lee made different tactical decisions and won that battle, he could have created what Schmiel calls a “Civil War butterfly effect” that irrevocably changed American history.

Schmiel reminds readers that Lincoln primarily intended the Emancipation Proclamation as an incentive for the states of the Confederacy to rejoin the Union—even if they did not abolish slavery. So, as he lays out in this book, that dreadful institution might well have endured even after the war's end.

Gene Schmiel retired from the Foreign Service in 2002, after a 24-year career that included tours as chargé d'affaires in Djibouti, Bissau and Reykjavik, among many other assignments. Before joining the Service, he was an assistant professor of history at St. Francis University in Pennsylvania, and has taught at Marymount, Shenandoah and Penn State universities.

He has written and lectured about the Civil War since the 2014 publication by Ohio University Press of his award-winning book, *Citizen-General: Jacob Dolson Cox and the Civil War Era*.



Lions at the Legation & Other Tales: Two Centuries of American Diplomatic Life in Tangier

Gerald Loftus, illustrated by Lawrence Mynott, Tangier American Legation, 2018, \$20/paperback, 54 pages.

For two centuries, U.S. diplomacy in Morocco—the first nation to recognize American independence—focused on Tangier. In 1821, when the legation building was given to the United States,

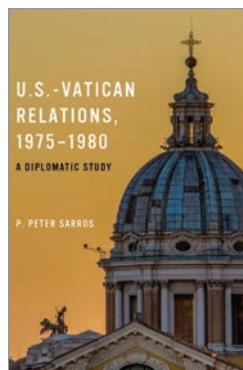
it became the first American diplomatic property, earning the designation of being the only U.S. National Historic Landmark outside the United States.

Wonderfully illustrated and concisely organized, *Lions at the Legation* features key episodes in U.S.-Moroccan relations as viewed from the perspective of the legation in Tangier. From surviving French bombardment in 1844 to hosting President Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet in the early 20th century, *Lions at the Legation* captures an abundance of historical events.

The title of the book refers to an "emoluments" dilemma that transpired in the 1830s, when consuls were presented with lions as gifts from the Moroccan sultan to the U.S. president. As a distraught Consul Thomas Carr wrote to Secretary of State John Forsyth on Sept. 3, 1839: "I have exerted myself to the utmost to prevent the presentation of any animals from the Emperor ... [but] they replied it was perfectly out of their power to prevent it, ... that a Moorish agent who should thus refuse to convey a present to his master would very justly have his head cut off"

Gerald Loftus, a Foreign Service officer from 1979 to 2002, served as director of the Tangier American Legation Institution for Moroccan Studies from 2010 to 2014. He has written about the long history of Moroccan-American relations on permanent display at the institution's museum at www.TALIMblog.org.

Lawrence Mynott is an English artist living in Tangier.



U.S.-Vatican Relations, 1975-1980: A Diplomatic Study

P. Peter Sarros, University of Notre Dame Press (ADST-DACOR Diplomats and Diplomacy Book), 2019, \$50/hardcover, 496 pages.

The U.S. relationship with the Holy See has often been turbulent, but especially so from 1975 to 1980 when FSO P. Peter Sarros helped lead the U.S. mission at the Vatican as chargé

and ambassador. During this short period, U.S.-Vatican relations experienced two American presidential administrations, three presidential envoys and three separate popes.

Drawing on official documents as well as Sarros' diaries and notes, this unique book shows how the United States and the Vatican often worked together behind the scenes to influence major issues of the day.

Sarros sheds light on the Vatican's response to the Iran hostage crisis, the Helsinki process and Cold War rivalries. Confidential consultations led by Sarros and U.S. envoys were

ultimately successful in securing Vatican support on international issues.

Sarros concludes that U.S. diplomacy was largely successful during this period because it complemented the Vatican's own international strategy of increasing its influence through supporting a global balance of power while also resisting the spread of communism in Europe.

P. Peter Sarros is a retired senior Foreign Service officer whose career spanned four decades. He served as chargé d'affaires and ambassador of the presidential mission at the Vatican from 1975 to 1980. He taught diplomacy at George Mason University and served as diplomat-in-residence at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies.



Using Nature's Shuttle: The Making of the First Genetically Modified Plants and the People Who Did It

Judith M. Heimann, Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2018, \$32/paperback, 194 pages.

"Using Nature's Shuttle is a delightful account of the history of GMOs ... [told] through the eyes of the scientists working in Ghent, Belgium ... on what is probably the

greatest advance in agricultural biotechnology since the invention of agriculture," says biochemist and Nobel laureate Sir Richard Roberts.

Judith M. Heimann conducted intensive interviews with more than two dozen of the individuals involved to present the story of a group of idealistic, young scientists at a public university in Belgium—often the first in their families to go to college—who made history in the realms of plant microbiology and molecular biology by harnessing a particular strain of million-year-old soil bacterium that could genetically modify certain plants in a particular way.

They and their colleagues and rivals then figured out how to use that knowledge to genetically modify a variety of plants to make them safer and healthier for man, beast and the environment. The modified plants were more affordable and simpler for farmers to grow and helped improve people's overall well-being, especially in the developing world.

A former FSO and diplomat's wife, Judith Heimann has spent most of her life abroad, including more than 20 years as a diplomat in Benelux countries. She is the author of *Paying Calls in Shangri-La: Scenes from a Woman's Life in American Diplomacy* (2016), *The Airmen and the Headhunters* (2007) and *The Most Offending Soul Alive* (1999).



Masters of Mayhem: Lawrence of Arabia and the British Military Mission to the Hejaz

James Stejskal, Casemate, 2018, \$32.95/hardcover, 304 pages.

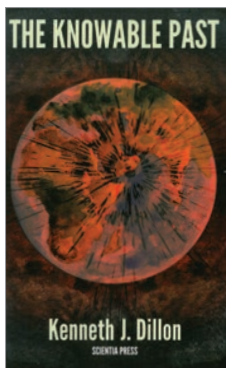
T.E. Lawrence—Lawrence of Arabia—was one of the earliest practitioners of modern unconventional warfare. The tactics and strategies he developed during the Arab Revolt, which took place during World War I, were later

used by revolutionaries like Mao Zedong and Nguyen Giap in their own wars of liberation. Both men kept Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* close at hand.

James Stejskal's book explores how Lawrence and the British Military Mission supported unconventional warfare in the Hejaz (the mountainous area of northwest Saudi Arabia that gave rise to early Islam and contains the sites of many holy places) during the Arab Revolt. To do this, they created the Hedgehog force and formed armored car sections and other units. This culminated in operations against the Ottoman Turkish Army that enabled Field Marshal Edmund Allenby to achieve victory in 1918.

James Stejskal is a military historian and conflict archaeologist who specializes in the research and investigation of irregular warfare. He is the author of numerous articles and two previous books: *Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the U.S. Army's Elite, 1956-1960* (2016) and *The Horns of the Beast: The Swakop River Campaign and World War I in South-West Africa, 1914-15* (2014).

He is the husband of Ambassador Wanda Nesbitt, a Foreign Service Career Minister who is currently dean of the FSI School of Language Studies.



The Knowable Past

Kenneth J. Dillon, Scientia Press, 2018, \$25/paperback, 320 pages.

Approached from the right angle and with a little luck, the past will, upon occasion, reveal its secrets to us. Specifically, this book spells out the theory that the Earth originated in the outer solar system, and argues that tidal forces during approaches of Mars caused the great mass extinctions of our planet's prehistory.

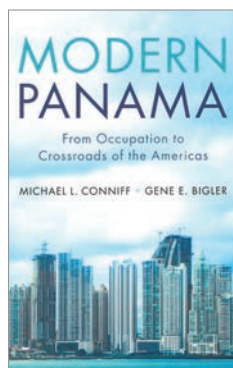
The Knowable Past revises and enhances the Venus Theory of Immanuel Velikovsky, which says that Mars has repeatedly come

close enough to the Earth to set off various catastrophes.

The book also investigates other mysteries from ancient and modern history, including the origins of the Etruscans, strategies of the world wars, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the John F. Kennedy assassination and the run-up to the 9/11 attacks.

This book is primarily geared to historical and scientific detectives, but it is not just for them. Anyone who seeks a better understanding of the past can find food for thought in it.

Kenneth J. Dillon served as a Foreign Service officer, with an emphasis in intelligence analysis. He has a Ph.D. in history from Cornell University and has taught at several universities, tried his hand at tech business and written books on history, science and medicine. A defender of orphan causes and targets of scientific rejectionism, he lives in Washington, D.C.



Modern Panama: From Occupation to Crossroads of the Americas

Michael L. Conniff and Gene E. Bigler, Cambridge University Press, 2019, \$32.99/paperback, 364 pages.

Although the 1977 Carter-Torrijos Treaties set the stage for Panama finally to control all of its own territory, including the Panama Canal, little has been written about how the country has

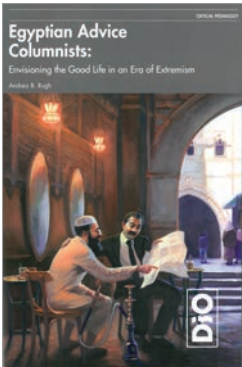
fared since then—both as the manager of a major waterway and as a sovereign nation in a turbulent region. *Modern Panama* seeks to fill this major gap in Latin American history.

Despite the country's continued struggle with political corruption, Michael L. Conniff and Gene E. Bigler argue, changes since the turnover of the Canal have been largely positive. Panama has become a stable, functioning democracy with a growing economy and a higher standard of living.

Michael L. Conniff is a professor emeritus of history at San Jose State University. He is the author of *A New History of Modern Latin America* (2017, with Lawrence Clayton and Susan Gauss); *Panama and the United States*, 3rd ed. (2012) and *Black Labor on a White Canal* (1985).

Gene E. Bigler is a retired Foreign Service officer who worked on the transition of the Panama Canal from U.S. to Panamanian ownership. He has also taught political science and public policy analysis at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, the Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración in Caracas, Venezuela, and other institutions in the United States and Latin America.

POLICY AND ISSUES



Egyptian Advice Columnists: Envisioning the Good Life in an Era of Extremism

Andrea B. Rugh, DIO Press Inc., 2019, \$32.95/paperback, 266 pages.

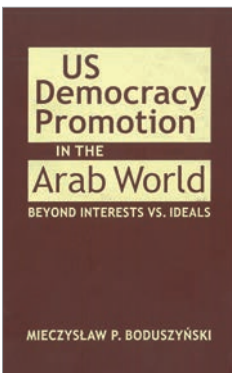
A few months after religious zealots assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981, the *Al-Ahram* newspaper launched a column responding to letters from Egyptians caught up in the problems of daily living. The

columnist, Abdul Wahab al-Mutawa, a self-proclaimed humanist, published complaints about government services and offered solutions to personal problems. *Al-Ahram* also presented advice columns penned by religious sheikhs, most of them affiliated with Al-Azhar University, who sought to demonstrate Islam's relevance to modern life.

This book, part of the publisher's Critical Pedagogies Series, is the first to draw on this rich material to examine the columnists' prescriptions for leading a good life and their modeling of moderation.

Andrea B. Rugh has been a technical adviser for USAID projects on the Middle East, South Asia and Africa, and was a research associate at Harvard University's Institute of International Development from 1987 to 1994. She also worked for Save the Children and UNICEF in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and has written 13 books on the cultures and societies of the Middle East.

Mrs. Rugh is the wife of Ambassador (ret.) William A. Rugh, a 30-year Foreign Service veteran who served as chief of mission in Sana'a and Abu Dhabi.



US Democracy Promotion in the Arab World: Beyond Interests vs. Ideals

Mieczyslaw P. Boduszynski, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2019, \$85/hardcover, 240 pages.

Former FSO Mieczyslaw Boduszynski examines the role the promotion of democracy has played in American foreign policy since the Arab Spring uprisings in the early 2010s. The

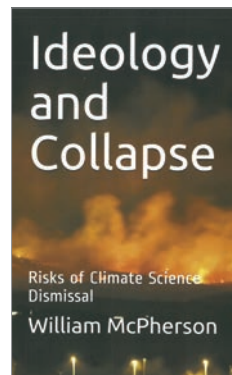
Obama administration, he notes, supported the promotion of

democracy during the uprisings, but two years later retreated from democracy promotion in those affected countries.

What role democracy promotion should play in U.S. foreign policy remains a hot topic, particularly with regard to the Middle East, and the case studies here bring much food for thought. The author supplements his firsthand view of the Arab Spring as a U.S. diplomat in the region with a wide range of interviews with policymakers in Washington.

"Boduszynski's analysis is lively and engaging and offers valuable insights into both the individual predispositions and the bureaucratic interests that led the United States to lean in at first, but then ultimately back away from a robust policy of democracy promotion," says Michael Carpenter of the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement. "It also provides a compelling theoretical framework for understanding ... how and why the U.S. came up short in its response to the Arab Spring."

Mieczyslaw Boduszynski teaches U.S. foreign policy at Pomona College. Before that, he worked for the State Department, with postings in Albania, Kosovo, Japan, Egypt, Libya and Iraq. He is also a frequent op-ed contributor to publications such as *The Washington Post*, *Foreign Affairs* and *The Los Angeles Times*.



Ideology and Collapse: Risks of Climate Change Dismissal

William McPherson, independently published, 2019, \$9.95/paperback, 254 pages.

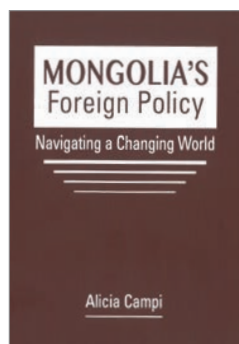
As the consequences of climate change become more ominous, societies across the globe are threatened with collapse. Even so, the actions of individual governments thus far have

not proven effective in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. While there are many reasons for this, the principal issue is an ideology that prioritizes economic growth and untrammelled markets above all else, thereby preventing necessary actions to head off disaster.

This book examines the sources of this mindset, then discusses the specific reasons the Trump administration refuses to recognize and deal with the effects of global climate change—despite recent reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the U.S. government's own National Climate Assessment, which have all laid out the urgency of action in unmistakable terms.

The author also contributed three chapters to *Climate Abandoned: We're on the Endangered Species List* (2019), edited by Jilly Cody. Covering the ideology of climate change denial, various myths and political failures, McPherson seeks to explain how the failure to act has often been encouraged through faulty interpretations of science.

William McPherson spent 21 years in the Foreign Service, serving in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Switzerland and Washington, D.C., among other postings. In retirement, he has worked on international environmental issues and is an activist with the Sierra Club on climate change and coal exports. He has published three previous books: *Ideology versus Science* (2014), *Climate, Weather and Ideology: Climate Change Denial* (2015) and *Sabotaging the Planet: Denial and International Negotiations* (2016).



Mongolia's Foreign Policy: Navigating a Changing World

Alicia Campi, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2019, \$85/hardcover, 349 pages.

Strategically located at the crossroads of Central Asia, China and Russia, Mongolia has long attracted the attention of major world powers. How does this traditionally nomadic, but

resource-rich, country envision its place in the modern world? And as it prepares to mark its 30th year as an independent democracy, what challenges does it face?

To answer these questions, Alicia Campi offers a multifaceted examination of the context, formulation and execution of contemporary Mongolian foreign policy. She posits that Mongolia operates in accordance with what she calls a “Wolf Strategy,” whose goal is to ensure that the nation does not become economically or politically dependent on any single power.

Robert Bedeski of the University of Victoria hails *Mongolia's Foreign Policy* as “a must-read” and “a superb study of the challenges and responses of liberated and democratic Mongolia. [In its pages] Campi gives voice to the dilemmas facing this strategically positioned nation.”

A former State Department Foreign Service officer and FSJ business manager, Alicia Campi is the longtime president of the Mongolia Society and the U.S.-Mongolia Advisory Group. She also heads the Chinggis Khan Foundation and teaches at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and at the Foreign Service Institute.

Ms. Campi is the author of *The Impact of China and Russia on United States-Mongolian Political Relations in the Twentieth Century* (2009).



North Korea: What Everyone Needs to Know

Patrick McEachern, Oxford University Press, 2019, \$16.95/paperback, 244 pages.

The largely ceremonial meetings between President Donald Trump and North Korean strongman Kim Jong Un, and the unpredictability of both parties, have done little to quell concerns that the Korean Peninsula's security

situation is an intractable conflict. And that realization, in turn, raises the question, “How did we get here?”

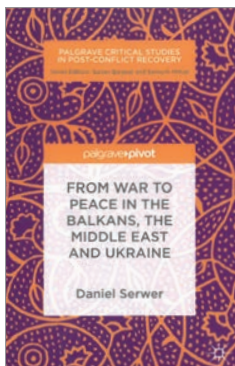
This primer by FSO Patrick McEachern unpacks the contentious and tangled relationship between the Koreas in an approachable question-and-answer format. Among the many topics he addresses:

Why have the two Koreas developed politically and economically in such radically different ways? How have three generations of the authoritarian Kim dictatorship shaped North Korea? What is the history of North-South Korea relations? Why did the North Korean government develop nuclear weapons? How do powers such as Japan, China and Russia fit into the mix? What is it like to live in North Korea and South Korea?

Patrick McEachern has been an FSO for 16 years, serving in Seoul (where he was the chief political officer monitoring developments in North Korea), Tokyo, Bratislava and Washington, D.C., where he was a North Korea intelligence analyst for the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Currently the unit chief for Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, he previously served as a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. He is co-author of *North Korea, Iran and the Challenge to International Order* (2017) and author of *Inside the Red Box: North Korea's Post-totalitarian Politics* (2010).

He is the author of this month's FSJ cover story, “What Does North Korea Want?” (see p. 20).



From War to Peace in the Balkans, the Middle East and Ukraine

Daniel Serwer, Palgrave Macmillan, \$31/hardcover, 145 pages.

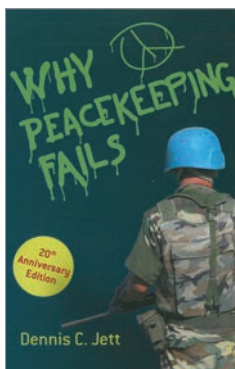
This open-access book focuses on the origins, consequences and aftermath of the 1995 and 1999 Western military interventions that led to the end of the most recent Balkan Wars, highlighting the lessons that can be applied to the

Middle East and Ukraine, where similar conflicts are threatening national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Informed by the experience of a diplomatic practitioner, this book is an accessible treatment of what causes wars and how to make peace. A volume in the Palgrave Critical Studies in Post-Conflict Recovery series, it is ideal for all readers interested in how violent international conflicts can be managed. For a full review of the book, see p. 63.

Daniel Serwer's 21-year Foreign Service career culminated with assignments as deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires in Rome from 1990 to 1993, and special envoy and coordinator for the Bosnian Federation from 1994 to 1996. He is a professor and director of the Conflict Management Program in Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies.

In 2012, with David R. Smock, he co-authored *Facilitating Dialogue: USIP's Work in Conflict Zones*; the following year, Potomac Books published his book, *Righting the Balance: How You Can Help Protect America*. Last year, I.B. Tauris brought out his *The Balkan Solution*.



Why Peacekeeping Fails, 20th Anniversary Edition

Dennis C. Jett, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, \$24.99/paperback, 326 pages.

Since the first edition of *Why Peacekeeping Fails* was published in 1999, the number of United Nations peacekeepers has risen from 15,000 to 100,000, and their missions have become more dangerous and more

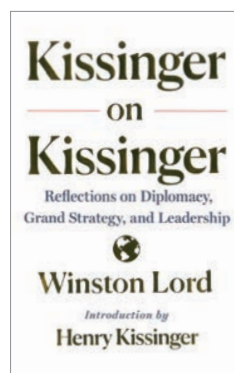
complex, according to author Dennis C. Jett. Peacekeepers today are dying in record numbers and are engaged in missions that are "virtually impossible to bring to a successful conclu-

sion," he writes, in this thoroughly revised 20th-anniversary edition, half of which is new material.

The United Nations spends nearly \$7 billion annually on 14 peacekeeping missions around the globe. Jett examines why the dramatic increase in peacekeeping has occurred, and how terrorism has affected both recent and long-standing peacekeeping operations. He also assesses the prospects of peacekeeping at a time when the United States seems to be withdrawing from the world.

Jett argues that neither U.N. peacekeepers nor governmental violence can prevent the conditions that lead to violent extremism and the need for peacekeeping forces. Unstable countries with weak economies and ineffective governance won't act by themselves, he argues. The international community should apply strong and consistent economic and political pressure and sanctions to promote positive changes, he adds. Aid or trade with such countries should be tied to better governance, human rights and adherence to democratic norms.

Dennis Jett is a professor of international affairs at Penn State University. His 28-year career in the Foreign Service included service as ambassador to Peru and Mozambique, and assignments in Argentina, Israel, Malawi and Liberia.



Kissinger on Kissinger: Reflections on Diplomacy, Grand Strategy, and Leadership

Winston Lord, St. Martin's Press, 2019, \$25.99/hardcover, 176 pages.

Foreign Service Journal readers certainly need no introduction to Henry Kissinger. But nearly a half-century after he transformed America's approach to diplomacy with China

and Russia, laying the foundation for geopolitics as we know it today, escalating tensions are threatening a swift return to the same diplomatic game of tug-of-war that Kissinger played so masterfully.

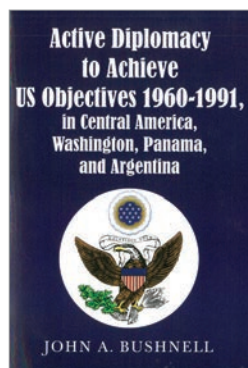
Kissinger on Kissinger is a series of faithfully transcribed interviews conducted by the elder statesman's longtime associate, Winston Lord, which offer Kissinger's thoughts on the specific challenges that he faced during his tenure as national security adviser and Secretary of State, his general advice on leadership and international relations, and stunning portraits of the larger-than-life world leaders of the era.

The result is a frank, informative overview of U.S. foreign

policy during the first half of the 1970s—essential reading for anyone hoping to understand today’s global challenges.

Winston Lord served in the U.S. Foreign Service and the Defense Department early in his career before serving as Henry Kissinger’s special assistant at the National Security Council during the Nixon administration. He later directed the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff, served as ambassador to China and as assistant secretary for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. He is currently chairman emeritus of the International Rescue Committee.

MEMOIRS



Active Diplomacy to Achieve US Objectives 1960-1991, in Central America, Washington, Panama, and Argentina

John A. Bushnell, XlibrisUS, 2018, \$26.99/paperback, 720 pages.

In this book, John A. Bushnell recounts more than 30 years as a Foreign Service officer with a focus on South and Central America.

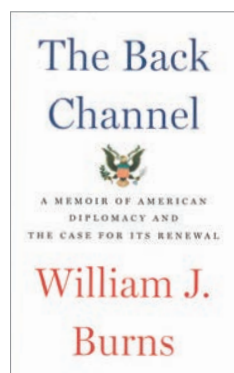
Joining the Foreign Service in 1959, he served early on as an economic officer in Bogotá, Santo Domingo and San José. By 1977 he had risen through the ranks to deputy assistant secretary for inter-American affairs, and later to deputy chief of mission in Buenos Aires.

In 1989, he was named chargé d'affaires in Panama, ahead of the U.S. invasion of Panama to restore the democratically elected government of Guillermo Endara and arrest dictator Manuel Noriega. He received a Presidential Meritorious Service Award from President George H.W. Bush in 1991.

“The culmination of my career was the use of the various skills I had acquired over 30 years in the management of the situation in Panama during the tricky period before the attack, [during] the attack, and getting the new government going thereafter,” Bushnell says of this experience. “In particular I am proud of getting the embassy relationships with our military right in this sensitive situation where the deficiencies in the civil-military relationships had been a problem for a long time.”

Bushnell’s work to make the Kennedy Alliance for Progress more effective and his efforts to support Argentina’s return to

democracy are also covered. The book is based on the author’s oral history as recorded by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.



The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for Its Renewal

William J. Burns, Random House, 2019, \$32/hardcover, 512 pages.

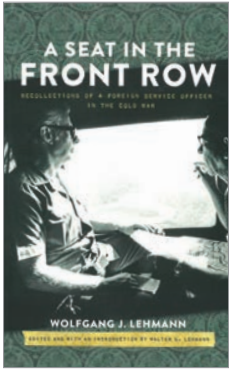
Revered in the Foreign Service community, Ambassador William J. Burns has written a powerful book that shows us why. “Far more than a memoir of Burns’ activities and experiences over-

seas and in Washington,” as Ambassador Bob Beecroft notes in his review in the September *FSJ*, “it is also a powerful and timely advocacy piece for committed and informed diplomatic action in support of American interests and principles around the world.”

In this book, Burns treats the reader to evocative, penetrating portraits of diplomatic counterparts and adversaries, from James Baker and Richard Murphy to Muammar Gaddafi and Vladimir Putin; and he traces the ups and downs of U.S. foreign relations through the Reagan, Bush 41, Clinton, Bush 43 and Obama administrations.

In addition, the back of the book features a fascinating collection of recently declassified cables and memos written by Ambassador Burns on the critical issues of the day.

Burns’ remarkable career from 1981 to 2014 includes his years as Deputy Secretary of State, under secretary for political affairs, executive secretary of the department, ambassador to Russia and Jordan, acting director of policy planning, and NSC senior director for Near East and South Asia. He holds the highest rank in the Foreign Service as a career ambassador. He and his wife, former FSO Lisa McCarty, have two daughters.



**A Seat in the Front Row:
Recollections of a Foreign
Service Officer in the Cold War**

Wolfgang J. Lehmann, independently published, 2019, \$22.99/paperback, 220 pages.

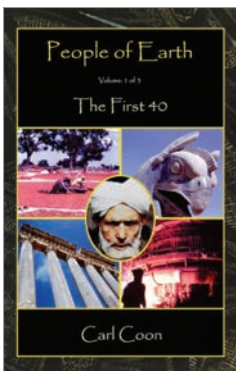
Taking readers from the Anzio beach-head in 1944 to the rooftop of the U.S. embassy in 1975 Saigon, this expansive memoir recounts the wide-ranging life of a Foreign Service officer who did

indeed occupy a front-row seat during the Cold War.

In its pages, Wolfgang J. Lehmann recounts his role in implementing postwar refugee policy, and his years as political adviser to the Bureau for European Affairs, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and U.S. European Command. He also served as deputy chief of mission at Embassy Saigon and played a crucial role in the U.S. evacuation of Vietnam in April 1975, among many other Foreign Service assignments.

Wolfgang J. Lehmann was a Foreign Service officer with the Department of State from 1951 until 1983. He continued his professional activities for another 18 years after that as an independent national security and foreign affairs consultant, concentrating primarily on political and military war-gaming. Beginning in 1983, he organized and chaired the international political teams for the annual Naval War College Global War Game. He died in 2018.

Walter G. Lehmann, the author's nephew, edited the manuscript after his passing and contributed an introduction. An attorney and business consultant for more than 18 years, he is managing partner of the entertainment law firm Lehmann Strobel PC.



People of Earth: The First Forty

Carl Coon, independently published, 2018, \$20/paperback, \$9.99/Kindle, 393 pages.

A collection of vignettes, *People of Earth* attempts to answer, as Carl Coon writes, the “big ‘why’ questions.” In “Preview,” the author plainly states his intention to make sense of his experiences in the hope they will lead to an understanding of humanity.

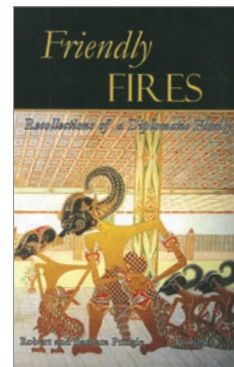
This desire is apparent—while he reminisces about a life unusually led, Coon looks toward how it fits with the human

experience and what that means. Throughout his retelling of these years, Coon celebrates all humanity in uplifting and engaging prose.

An insatiable curiosity and ambitious quest for answers drive this memoir. Coon describes in vivid detail his “first 40 years”: an unconventional upbringing by adventuresome parents, his days in the Army during World War II and then life in postwar Germany, and his time at post in Syria, Morocco, India and Iran, among other countries.

From a young age, Carl Coon traveled around the world with his father, an accomplished anthropologist. He graduated from Harvard University in 1949 with a degree in geography. From 1949 to 1985, he served in the U.S. Foreign Service; his last post was as ambassador to Nepal. In 2013, in recognition of his work with the American Humanist Association, he received its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Carl Coon passed away on Dec. 3, 2018, at age 91, several months after contacting the *Journal* about the completion of this first volume of his autobiography. The second volume, *People of Earth: The Second Passage*, containing essays by Carl Coon and his second wife, Jane, an FSO, about their diplomatic careers and life, was independently published in May 2019.



**Friendly Fires: Recollections
of a Diplomatic Family,
Vols. I & II**

Robert and Barbara Pringle, Piscataqua Press, 2018, \$29.99/hardcover, 446 pages and 442 pages, respectively.

In this two-volume memoir, Robert and Barbara Pringle relate decades worth of diplomatic work and life.

Whether meeting with local representatives of political Islam in Indonesia or serving as the right-hand man to the director of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Robert Pringle's expansive diplomatic career put him on the frontlines of foreign policy decision-making, both in Washington and abroad.

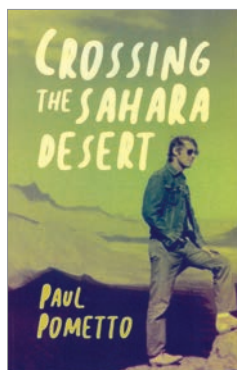
Beside him through it all was Barbara, a loving and understanding wife who not only was supportive but at times instrumental to effective diplomacy.



A major objective of the authors is to highlight the role of a modern spouse in a diplomatic career. Through their different skill sets and personalities, the Pringles were able to complement each other and manage the challenges of overseas living. From flat plane landings and insects in hotel rooms to episodic malaria, Robert and Barbara were able to weather the tribulations of living abroad in hard places.

Robert Pringle retired after 37 years in the Foreign Service. His career included postings in Indonesia, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Africa and Mali, where he served as ambassador. Pringle earned a Ph.D. in Southeast Asian history from Cornell University.

Barbara Pringle retired from her teaching career in 2003.



Crossing the Sahara Desert

Paul Pometto, Word Association Publishers, 2018, \$14.95/paperback, 66 pages.

Having just completed a two-year program as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in West Africa in 1976, Paul Pometto decided to take the long way home.

After studying Michelin maps and borrowed guidebooks, he crossed the Sahara Desert, took a boat to Italy and

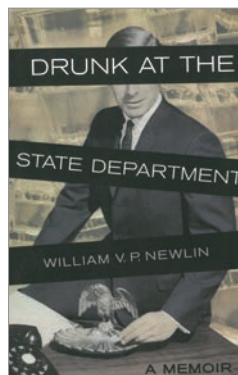
then flew back to Washington, D.C.

His monthlong journey brought him strong cross-cultural friendships, physical exhaustion, priceless vistas and deep frustrations. Hospitalized overnight in a small clinic in Tamanrasset, Algeria, he unhooked himself from an intravenous line to catch a bus that ran only once a week toward the Tunisian border. Most of the memoir is based on the author's day-by-day recollection of the journey, with very few edits.

Over a 42-year government career, Paul Pometto held positions at State as a civil servant, general services specialist and management-coned Foreign Service officer. He spent most of his career in Africa and Europe, serving as deputy chief of mission in Praia, Djibouti and Paris, among many other postings.

Before retiring from the Senior Foreign Service in 2016 at the rank of Counselor, he served in Fort Lauderdale as director of the State Department's Florida Regional Center—a collaborative effort involving more than 130 employees, 11 bureaus and two U.S. Marine Security Guard companies.

Mr. Pometto resides in San Diego but continues to travel widely. He has already visited 146 nations.



Drunk at the State Department

William V.P. Newlin, Four Winds Press, 2019, \$17/paperback, 288 pages.

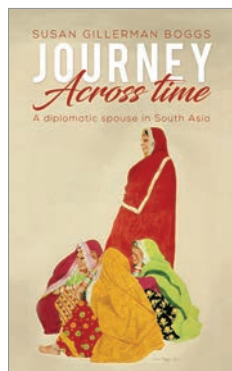
In this candid memoir, which he markets as “*Mad Men* meets the Foreign Service,” William V.P. Newlin recounts his 25-year Foreign Service career as an alcoholic who spent considerable energy hiding his drinking from his wife, children and bosses.

Growing up in high-society Philadelphia and summering in Bar Harbor, Maine, Newlin was surrounded by adults who made cocktails seem glamorous. At boarding school and Harvard, he developed a habit of secret drinking; he continued it at his first diplomatic posting in Paris, and all the way through a career that saw him become consul general in Nice in 1983.

Newlin claims his Foreign Service career was “completely undistinguished,” largely because he was drunk most of the time. But not once did a boss or colleague call him on the drinking. “I don’t know how many others of me there were,” he says.

Newlin’s wife, Louisa, who writes the afterword, says Newlin wrote the book to “exorcise his demons,” and that he has been sober for 30 years. While he still feels enormous guilt over his drinking, she notes, “he did some fine work for State, and it is time for him to stop beating himself up.”

The couple recently celebrated their 63rd anniversary. William Newlin retired from the Foreign Service in 1986. Since then he has written a book about lakes on Mount Desert Island, Maine; mediated in the District of Columbia court system; and for his 80th birthday, sailed across the Atlantic on a Norwegian tall ship.



Journey Across Time: A Diplomatic Spouse in South Asia

Susan Gillerman Boggs, Austin Macauley Publishers, 2019, \$23.95/paperback, \$4.95/e-book, 463 pages.

For 14 years Susan Gillerman Boggs joined her Foreign Service officer husband on five separate tours of duty in South Asia. This memoir chronicles the frustrations and delights of diplomatic life in a culturally fascinating part of the world.

Drawn from hundreds of letters the author wrote home,

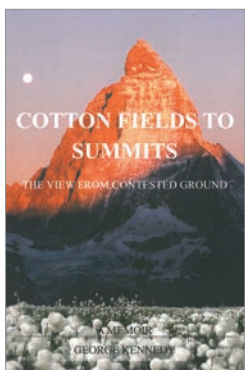
Journey Across Time takes readers through eventful times as the author witnessed massive floods, bomb blasts and the aftermath of politically motivated violence. She describes the view from overseas of Y2K and 9/11.

Journey Across Time features the vibrant festivals and the notoriously chaotic driving of South Asia. These journeys to remote places evoked a sense of thankfulness and appreciation as Boggs came to realize how so many things Americans often take for granted are hard-earned in the developing world.

The author had the opportunity to meet many unusual individuals along the way, from kings, artists and movie stars to Mother Teresa, maharajas and politicians. She portrays them all in lively and compassionate prose.

Susan Boggs is a singer, artist and author who served on the boards of the American Women’s Association in New Delhi and Colombo as vice president for programs. She also served on the board of the Women’s International Club in New Delhi as the newsletter editor.

Journey Across Time is available from the publisher: austinmacauley.com.



**Cotton Fields to Summits:
The View From Contested
Ground**

George Kennedy, SETAF Publishing, 2017, \$20/paperback, 426 pages.

Cotton Fields to Summits tells the story of author George Kennedy’s journey from the cotton fields of South Carolina as a child to the heights of international diplomacy in the 1990s, when he served as consul general in

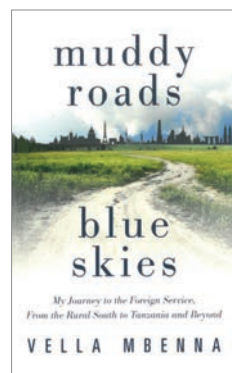
Toronto during the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Throughout his military and Foreign Service career, Kennedy participated in or witnessed numerous historic events. He was on military duty in northern Italy when the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961, and he saw close-up the impact of President John F. Kennedy’s assassination on the German people while assigned to Embassy Bonn. He watched the buildup to the U.S. involvement in Vietnam in 1965 during a tour in the Philippines and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s shuttle diplomacy in Rome to try to end the Vietnam War in 1973.

As deputy assistant secretary, he witnessed Nelson Mandela’s history-making visit to the State Department in 1990 and represented the State Department during White House planning

sessions that led to the Gulf War in 1991. He served as a senior adviser to Ronald H. Brown, the first African American Secretary of Commerce.

Kennedy discusses his “Chorus of Angels,” people in his life who guided him through an unlikely career during which he experienced great heights of success, as well as disappointing setbacks. He talks about how life is ultimately about choices, and how people should bring their best possible judgment to the choices they make.



**Muddy Roads Blue Skies:
My Journey to the Foreign
Service, From the Rural South
to Tanzania and Beyond**

Vella Mbenna, Muddy Roads Press, 2019, \$16.99/paperback, 228 pages.

As a child, Vella Mbenna loved to gaze at the clouds and dream of exploring the world beyond the back roads of her rural Georgia hometown. But after a failed marriage left her jobless, broke

and with a young child to care for on her own, Mbenna moved back in with her parents. Desperate to make a better life for herself and her son, she accepted a job in the U.S. Foreign Service. Though she had never dreamed she would become a diplomat, she went on to enjoy a 26-year career as an information management officer.

Along the way, Mbenna was forced to battle sexism, prejudice and numerous professional setbacks. But she refused to give up. She advanced through the ranks from an FS-9 to an FS-1. She earned a heroism award for her actions after the 1998 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Tanzania (her efforts were central to restoring essential communications with Washington). She also received an Equal Employment Opportunity Award in 2015 for her EEO work at Embassy Tunisia during her last assignment before retiring.

Mbenna’s message is that wherever you are in life right now, you can still go further and reach your highest calling. The book is part motivational memoir and part how-to guide to success. Each chapter focuses on a theme, ranging from dreams and perseverance to forgiveness and gratitude.



**Finding My Mother:
The Red Box**

Marion Naifeh, independently published, 2019, free/online.

In *Finding My Mother*, published and available at the author’s website (marionnaifeh.com), Marion Naifeh channels a deep sense of loss into an active search for belonging. Having experienced her mother’s passing at a very young age, Naifeh laments not

knowing much about Carolyn March Lanphear—until the arrival of a hand-me-down, a red box.

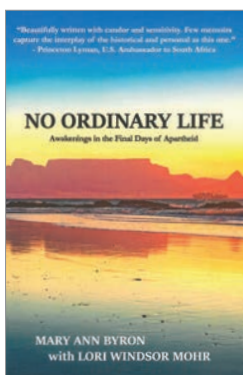
In it are her mother’s letters, artifacts, photographs and drawings from a decade spent in China, working as a missionary alongside her husband, B.W. By way of this unique collection of objects, Carolyn comes to life, and so do Chinese culture and history.

Carolyn’s China was a politically fragmented country on the brink of civil war, and Naifeh smartly shares her father’s grounded reflections with the reader to fill in the current events, which only enhance Carolyn’s perceptive descriptions of life there.

By the last chapter, the reader—and most important, Naifeh—is comfortably familiar with Carolyn March Lanphear and her journey to the heart of early 20th-century China.

Marion Naifeh has spent most of her life abroad, teaching English and English literature for nearly six decades at such institutions as the University of Benghazi, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University and Beijing’s Second Foreign Language Institute.

She and her late husband, FSO George Naifeh, were posted in Iran, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Jordan and China. She is also the author of *The Last Missionary in China* (2003) and an autobiography, *Foreign Service* (2016). She lives in Aiken, South Carolina.



**No Ordinary Life: Awakenings
in the Final Days of Apartheid**

Mary Ann Byron with Lori Windsor Mohr, Mountain High Publishing, 2018, \$16/paperback, 310 pages.

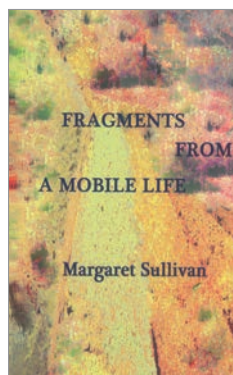
In 1992 Mary is climbing America’s corporate ladder for luxury hotel management, while her soon-to-be-husband, Patrick, is handling sensitive security matters as a Diplomatic Security Service special agent in Wash-

ington, D.C. August of that year will upend their life together, however. They will wed and then leave friends and family for Cape Town, where Patrick is on assignment for two years.

All too soon she will be forced to reconcile the pastoral South Africa she knows from the film *Out of Africa* with the South Africa she meets under apartheid. Life will not be as she imagined. Deftly melding personal narrative with political history, Mary writes here of her and Patrick’s time in Cape Town with sensitivity and maturity.

Indeed, within the first pages of *No Ordinary Life*, on seeing army tanks rolling through the downtown she grasps the gravity of her new situation. This will not be an adventure of her own making but a “political pressure cooker” that tests her mettle. Mary’s relationships with colleagues and her husband will face tremendous stress in these two turbulent and historic years culminating in Nelson Mandela’s election as president—years that bring about her own “awakening.”

Raised in Minnesota, Mary Ann Byron has worked in public relations around the world. In Cape Town she was a community liaison officer and USAID project coordinator at the U.S. embassy. She and her husband, Patrick, live in Colorado.



Fragments From a Mobile Life

Margaret Sullivan, Red Mountain Press, 2018, \$25.95/paperback, 342 pages.

Foreign Service spouse Margaret Sullivan, a columnist for the *Huffington Post* whose work has appeared several times in *The Foreign Service Journal*, has assembled a rich collection of more than six dozen essays about life in 10 countries, in 29 homes, with four kids

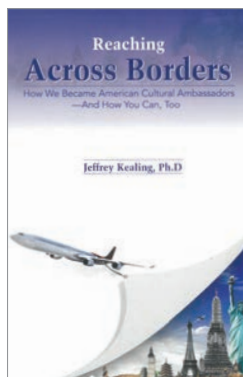
and more than 60 years of marriage to a career diplomat.

Sullivan’s travels took her around the equator, including Burma, India, Malaya, Nigeria, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Singapore. Her experiences span changes in the post-colonial world and women’s lives over several decades.

She learned early on that on top of raising kids and hosting representational events, she needed “portable pursuits” in the days before Foreign Service wives were allowed to be employed. In Sierra Leone, she and a female photographer traveled all over the country to write a book, meeting with people who made everyday things such as baskets, hand weavings and fish nets. While the book was never published, the collection of items they gathered made its way to the Smithsonian.

When a tsunami devastated Sumatra in 2004, the United States Indonesia Society asked Sullivan to help rebuild the educational system that had been destroyed by the disaster. The result was the University of Syiah Kuala Laboratory School, a high school that admitted its first class in 2007.

Born in China to American parents, Sullivan is also the author of *Can Survive, La: Cottage Industries in High-Rise Singapore* (1993) and a children's book, *The Philippines: Pacific Crossroads* (1993).



Reaching Across Borders: How We Became American Cultural Ambassadors and How You Can, Too

Jeffrey Kealing, William Charles Press, 2019, \$13/paperback, \$5.99/Kindle, 240 pages.

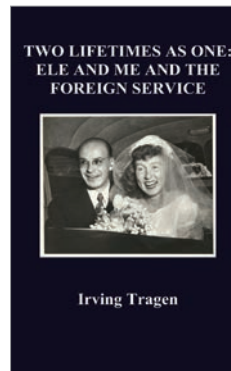
In this memoir, former FSO Jeffrey Kealing retraces the three decades he and his wife and fellow FSO, Shelly, spent working around the world to

make a plea for forming a common connection with people of many nations as globalization draws them closer than ever before.

Reaching Across Borders takes readers on adventures through Romania, Thailand and Japan. Witness the world through the eyes of a couple taking on a variety of interesting assignments whether it be serving as an election monitor in Bucharest, publishing for Japanese businesses or working in a community liaison office in Bangkok. All throughout their experiences they learned the particulars of various cultures, discovering how to bond and succeed no matter the context.

The experience taught them the value of being cultural ambassadors for America. Motivated in part by growing hostility toward globalization and the related political retrenchment today, the author harkens back to the immediate postwar institutions and sentiments that helped create a more connected world, and aims to show how cultural acuity and respect are becoming ever more necessary and fundamental to the human experience.

Jeffrey Kealing has worked as a diplomat, a professor, reporter and editor. He holds a Ph.D. in international education from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.



Two Lifetimes As One: Ele and Me and the Foreign Service

Irving Tragen, BookPatch, 2019, \$36.95/hardcover, 763 pages.

In this touching autobiography that covers decades of marriage and service abroad, Irving Tragen tells the story of a diplomat who could not have carried out his difficult assignments without the support of his loving wife, the late

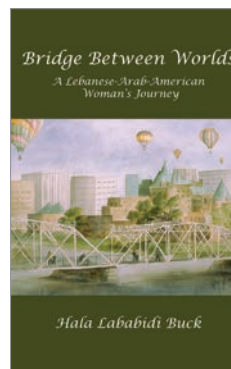
Eleanor "Ele" Dodson.

Irving, who suffered severe hearing loss from the aftereffects of scarlet fever, recounts their odyssey from their first meeting and marriage in 1947 through a dozen assignments in the U.S. Foreign Service and the Organization of American States.

Irving worked in all 33 Latin American and Caribbean countries during a career that spanned nearly 60 years, with a focus on diplomacy, development and the fight against drug trafficking. In *Two Lifetimes As One*, Irving details those assignments, what he learned and how Ele made all the difference.

Irving Tragen served as a Foreign Service officer for 35 years, including senior posts in Latin America and the Caribbean. He lives in retirement in San Diego, where he remains engaged in building friendship and understanding between the United States and Latin America.

This book is part of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training's Memoirs and Occasional Papers Series.



Bridge Between Worlds: A Lebanese-Arab American Woman's Journey

Hala Lababidi Buck, Scarith/ New Academia Publishers, 2019, \$32/paperback, 356 pages.

A professional artist, integrative therapist and diplomatic spouse, Hala Lababidi Buck embarks on a voyage to her birth country to rediscover her roots in Lebanon, a nation that is itself a bridge

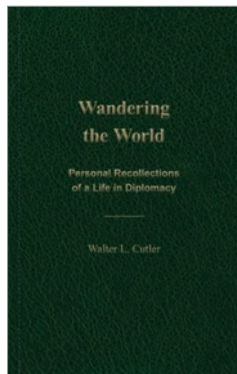
between East and West. A personal story of searching for home and connecting with heritage, *Bridge Between Worlds* is a multifaceted memoir of personal discovery and cultural exploration.

Through poetry, storytelling and art therapy, the author canvasses the transient life that took her across numerous Arab countries. As she discovers what it means to be a multicultural

individual embracing Muslim and Christian identities, she searches for life's meaning and purpose.

Hala Buck grew up in Lebanon and earned a B.A. in art education from the American University of Beirut. She has traveled to 14 Arab countries and accompanied her Foreign Service officer husband, Steve, in seven. Her watercolors have been exhibited internationally, and she has worked as a State Department interior designer. Hala earned an M.A. and taught at Bowie State and George Washington University, and is a board-certified counselor and licensed clinical professional counselor.

Her memoir is a volume in the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training's *Memoirs and Occasional Papers Series*.



Wandering the World: Personal Recollections of a Life in Diplomacy

Walter Cutler, 2017, independently published, \$14.99/Kindle, 326 pages.

In this engrossing memoir, career diplomat and former ambassador Walter Cutler takes readers into highly charged diplomatic scenes around the world.

Among his many diplomatic endeavors, Cutler recalls working diligently on the Paris Peace Accords, studiously analyzing intelligence reports and propaganda coming out of Hanoi and working with senior leadership at State on crafting negotiation strategy—until he, and virtually everyone else at State, learned that the real negotiations were being carried out in secret between Le Duc Tho and Henry Kissinger.

Cutler twice served as ambassador to Saudi Arabia in the late 1980s, helping manage an often-difficult relationship amid intense regional conflict; as ambassador to Tunisia and Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo); and as ambassador-designate to the Islamic Republic of Iran before diplomatic relations were broken in 1980.

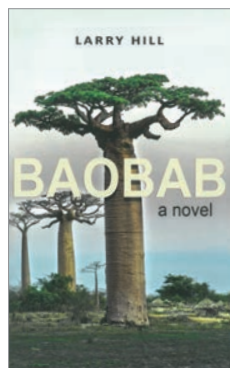
He opened the first American post in Yaoundé, served as political officer in Algiers just after Algeria's independence, and as political-military officer in Seoul at the time of North Korea's capture of the USS *Pueblo*, among many other assignments.

The episodes captured in this lively anecdotal history are at once enlightening, humorous and contemplative.

Walter Cutler currently resides in Washington with his wife, Isabel, and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the American Academy of Diplomacy and the American Foreign

Service Association. He served as president of Meridian International Center from 1989 to 2006.

FICTION AND POETRY



Baobab

Larry Hill, First Edition Design Publishing, 2019, \$14.95/paperback, 326 pages.

Larry Hill certainly captures the reader's attention on the very first page of his second novel, *Baobab*:

“Doctor Michael Eisenstat knew he'd have to fight falling asleep as the ambassador entered the room for his country team meeting. He often dozed,

as there was rarely anything of interest for him at these regular Tuesday morning confabs.

“‘Ladies and gentlemen, we've got 72 hours to leave the country,’ Holden Fairchild III, representative of the president of the United States of America to Zinani, declared unexpectedly. Eisenstat's concern about nodding off vanished.”

As we find out in flashbacks, the good doctor had only recently closed his thriving private practice in Beverly Hills and joined the Foreign Service in search of adventure. His first posting is Zinani, a landlocked West African nation controlled by a ruthless dictator—at least for the moment.

Larry Hill, M.D., is a retired internist who spent 18 years in private practice in rural California and then joined the Foreign Service as a regional medical officer. He served in Mali, Bangladesh, the Philippines, South Africa and China before retiring, and now teaches medical students at his alma mater, the University of California at San Francisco.

His previous novel, *Philanthropist* (2015), was a thriller about crime and aging.



The Black Forest

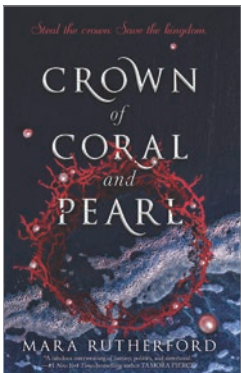
H.K. Deeb, Kindle Direct Publications, 2019, \$10.99/paperback, \$3.99/Kindle, 205 pages.

Inspired by the paintings of Léon Spilliaert and the works of Patricia Highsmith, *The Black Forest* ushers in a plethora of secrets and riddles as mysterious as the characters examining them.

Barbara is a German police officer on an assignment well below her paygrade. Eben, a student from Kansas, exudes idealism. Bill is an American professor with a checkered past.

Their narratives come together in Freiburg, a German university town near the legendary Black Forest, where a local woman's sudden disappearance suggests much more is at play.

FSO Hadi K. Deeb is currently posted in Tashkent, and has served in Baku, Manila, Mexico City and Moscow. He spent two years in Freiburg prior to joining the State Department. *The Black Forest* is his third novel; he is also the author of *A Banker's Tale* (2018) and *The Haven* (2017).



Crown of Coral and Pearl

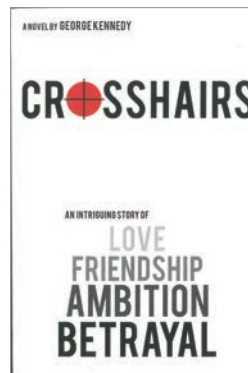
Mara Rutherford, Inkyard Press, 2019, \$18.99/hardcover, 384 pages.

For generations, the princes of Ilara have married the most beautiful maidens from the ocean village of Varenia. But though every girl longs to be chosen as the next princess, the cost of becoming royalty is higher than any of them could ever imagine.

Nor, this young adult novel's intrepid heroine, once dreamed of seeing the wondrous wealth and beauty of Ilara, the kingdom that's ruled her village for as long as anyone can remember. After a childhood accident leaves her with a permanent scar, however, that honor was set to go to her identical twin sister, Zadie—while Nor remained behind in Varenia, never to set foot on land.

Then Zadie is gravely injured, and Nor is sent to Ilara in her place. To Nor's dismay, her future husband, Prince Ceren, is forbidding and cold. As she grows closer to Ceren's brother, the charming Prince Talin, Nor uncovers startling truths about a failing royal bloodline, a murdered queen and a plot to destroy the home she was once so eager to leave.

Mara Rutherford began her writing career as a journalist but quickly discovered she far preferred fantasy to reality. Originally from California, she has lived all over the world alongside her Marine-turned-diplomat husband. *Crown of Coral and Pearl* is her first novel.



Crosshairs

George Kennedy, SETAF Publishing, 2018, \$20/paperback, 393 pages.

This gritty novel, set mainly during the second half of the George W. Bush administration, traces the historic rise of a little-known African American political strategist, Reginald Branson, to the White House.

Narrated by Alfred Turner, a Senior Foreign Service officer who is Branson's best friend, the story of the first black president's rise to power is replete with fist-pumping highs and mind-numbing lows. There is a sense of magical realism about Branson's total devotion to his wife, Josephine, and the power of their partnership to transform lofty and improbable dreams into reality.

George Kennedy is a retired Senior Foreign Service officer whose diplomatic career took him to seven countries and culminated in his appointment as consul general in Toronto. He has kept busy after retirement as a political adviser to several elected officials, an adviser to small- to medium-sized enterprises regarding opportunities in overseas markets and an independent business owner.

Kennedy's previous book, the memoir *Cotton Fields to Summits: The View from Contested Ground* (SETAF Publishing, 2018), is featured on p. 36.



Death in Delmarva

Caroline Taylor, Black Rose Writing, 2019, \$18.95/paperback, 219 pages.

Daphne Dunn works as a lowly stock-room clerk in her cousin's Foggy Bottom grocery store. She's also required to play bill collector to customers who aren't paying for their food, including pregnant Beatriz Cabeza de Vaca, who used to keep house for Daphne's family in better times.

When Beatriz is stabbed to death outside her apartment, Daphne learns the baby has survived and she sets out to find its missing father. She gets sidetracked when a friend facing life-threatening surgery asks Daphne to locate his sister, Charlie. Except for her lip ring and a nasty drug habit, Charlie could be Daphne's twin.

The search for both people leads Daphne to the Delmarva Peninsula and a woman so desperate to cover up her crimes that she is willing to kill anyone in her way. But in the pursuit of justice, a girl's gotta cut a few corners...

Caroline Taylor is the author of four mystery novels and a nonfiction book. She also published a collection of short stories, *Enough! Thirty Stories of Fielding Life's Curve Balls*, in 2018; her entire output of short stories is available at www.carolinestories.com. A member of the Foreign Service from 1969 to 1972, Ms. Taylor served in Tel Aviv and Quito.



Regrets

Juan M. Bracete, Dorrance Publishing Company, 2019, \$15/paperback, 176 pages.

We never learn the surname of Albert, the protagonist of *Regrets*, but we get to know virtually everything else about him. As the novel's title implies, Albert strives to build a fulfilling life despite childhood sexual trauma, which interferes with his

ability to establish stable emotional relationships. No matter where his travels take him around the world, he remains lonely and frustrated.

Juan M. Bracete was born and raised in Puerto Rico and presently resides in Miami, Florida. After practicing law for several years, he entered the Foreign Service and served in Latin America for a stretch of four years. He left the Foreign Service to relocate to El Salvador in 2004, working as a special adviser on public international law to the minister of governance and public security



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Group Term Life Insurance AFSPA's **NEW** policy offers a term life insurance that provides you and your family protection up to \$600,000. It now allows early access to a portion of your benefits to use towards chronic and terminal illness.



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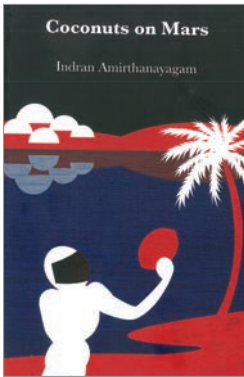


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in El Salvador. Mr. Bracete retired from the Social Security Administration in 2017 after having served for seven years as an attorney-adviser at various disability adjudication offices.

The author hopes that this book will resonate with readers who may be trying to pick up the pieces of their own lives. Even though we all have regrets, he notes, there is always hope that the loneliness and solitude will end.



Coconuts on Mars

Indran Amirthanayagam, Poetrywala, 2019, \$12/paperback, 64 pages.

This whimsically titled volume is the poet’s 14th collection of verse to date. While it is slender in size, it peers bravely into the future even as it looks back to the remembered mists of Indran Amirthanayagam’s Sri Lankan childhood.

As was true of his previous verse, the poet once again embraces love in many languages; crosses all sorts of borders—geographic, linguistic and political; and champions freedom of expression wherever he goes.

Indran Amirthanayagam is a Sri Lankan American poet-diplomat, essayist and translator in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Haitian Creole. He joined the U.S. Information Agency as a Foreign Service officer in 1993, serving in Buenos Aires and Brussels before joining the State Department as a public diplomacy officer in 1996. With State he has served in Abidjan, Mexico City, Chennai, Monterrey, Vancouver, Lima and Port-au-Prince, and is currently a member of the Freedom of Information Act team.

Two more of his books will be published later this year: *Paolo 9*, a bilingual collection that describes the odyssey of Peruvian soccer star Paolo Guerrero before the recent World Cup, and *En busca de posada*, which addresses immigration and the search for a refuge.



Black and Blue in Harlem: A Ross Agency Mystery

Delia C. Pitts, FriesenPress, 2019, \$16.99/hardcover, \$7.99/paperback, 144 pages.

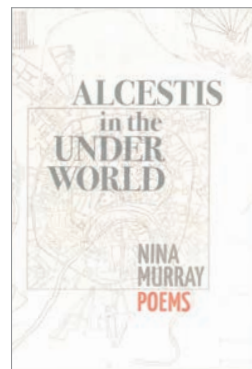
Private investigator SJ Rook arrives home one day during a deadly cold night in Harlem to find his own apartment building is now a crime scene because his unassuming neighbor, Nomie George, took a 15-story plunge

to her death. Might it be suicide, or might it be something else? Rook and his friend NYPD Detective Archie Lin look to find out and open a case.

Rook’s leads keep going dry, and frustration starts to build. But then another gruesome death lands even closer to home. This time it’s a murder in the backyard of Rook’s own detective agency. The Ross Detective Agency is known for taking on those more personal cases where animosity boils and emotions run high. Might a brutal murderer be on the loose, or are things getting more personal?

A stumbling romance, a prying roommate and a greedy gangster add to Rook’s problems. Will he sacrifice his own well-being to stop another death, or will he finally be overwhelmed by mounting personal troubles?

Delia C. Pitts served for 11 years in the Foreign Service, with overseas postings to Nigeria, Mauritania and Mexico. She went on to spend 20 years as a university administrator. She and her husband live in central New Jersey and have twin adult sons.



Alcestis in the Underworld: Poems

Nina Murray, Circling Rivers, 2019, \$14.99/paperback, 80 pages.

Greek myths continue to captivate the modern imagination by offering fundamental truths about human nature. In this book of poems by Nina Murray, the myth of Alcestis’ journey to the underworld finds new salience.

Murray navigates the shifting landscapes of 21st-century living, where the divide between poetry and prose blurs together and where foreign policy meets personal passion. This collection radiates lucid personal tribulations and captivates as well as it informs. The poetry also elucidates the author’s unique experience—working in Moscow as an American diplomat after having grown up in Soviet-era Ukraine.

Nina Murray is a Foreign Service officer, who has served in Lithuania, Canada and Russia. Her poetry has appeared in several journals, including *Ekphrasis* and *The Harpoon Review*. Her translations from Russian and Ukrainian include Peter Aleshkovsky’s *Stargorod* (2013) and the award-winning *The Museum of Abandoned Secrets* by Oksana Zabuzhko (2012). She grew up in Lviv in Western Ukraine.

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Extraordinary Experiences: Tales of Special Needs Abroad

Edited by Kathi Silva, Patricia Linderman, Nicole Schaeffer-McDaniel, Francesca Kelly and Jennifer Dinoia, Tales from a Small Planet, 2019, \$10.99/paperback, 220 pages.

Experiencing another culture is meant to be fun, adventurous and mind-opening. But what happens when you mix the joys of living or traveling abroad with the struggles of having a physical, intellectual, medical or other special need?

In this new book, Foreign Service spouses, a number of whom have been published previously in the *Journal*, share their tales as expats with unique challenges.

This is not a how-to book; it is a book of real-life stories, where you will find inspiration, guidance and insights from ordinary people who have made extraordinary adjustments to their experiences far from home. It is especially timely considering recent intense discussion of special needs issues and policies at the State Department.

The book's publisher, Tales from a Small Planet (www.talesmag.com), is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit with a mission to share uncensored and honest information about the joys and challenges of living abroad. For more than 15 years, Talesmag has helped thousands of internationally employed people, including those on diplomatic, corporate, NGO and educational assignments, evaluate potential postings with perspectives from people who "tell it like it is."



The Adventurers Club

By Julianne Price, illustrated by Marie Wiscombe, 2018, \$8.99/paperback, 22 pages.

New experiences are to be celebrated. This is the simple, yet important message this book conveys to children.

As author Julianne Price, a Foreign Service family member, explains: "Moving has its fair share of challenges, but with the

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Email: mcgfin@verizon.net

right attitude, it can be a transformative journey. As geographically mobile parents of small children, we were disheartened by the lack of positive moving resources. So we set out to do something about it ... helping children, parents and the occasional turtle find adventure in the midst of their own wanderings.”

Julianne Price is an early childhood educator with 14 years of experience in the American public school system, as well as international and British schools worldwide. She has lived in Scotland, Turkey, Spain and Japan, and currently resides in Austria. She dedicates the book to “my own adventurers, Kathryn and Carolyn, and my always-supportive husband.”

Marie Wiscombe is a U.K.-based illustrator and designer with experience in publishing and toy design.



iCAN! A Young Woman's Guide to Taking the Lead
Holly Rodgers Wescott and Joanne Grady Huskey, Xlibris, 2018, \$19.99/paperback, 192 pages.

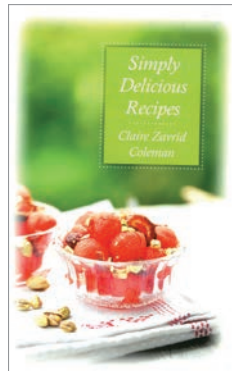
The authors, who co-founded iLive2Lead seven years ago, dedicate this upbeat book “to young women worldwide who are seeking to make their dreams a reality.” In its pages, they explain how they developed their

leadership training program, share some lessons learned along the way and lay out how to actualize a full-fledged project.

Holly Rodgers Wescott lived overseas for many years before returning to the United States, where she and Joanne Grady Huskey co-created their organization. Ms. Wescott is its executive director. Living and working in multiple cultures overseas quickly convinced her of the critical need to equip young women with the skills and inspiration to change the trajectory of their lives.

Joanne Grady Huskey is vice president of iLive2Lead and a co-founder both of Global Adjustments (India), a cross-cultural training company, and the American International School of Chennai (India). She has lived and worked all over the world alongside her FSO (now retired) husband, James Huskey, and received the Secretary of State's Outstanding Volunteer Award for East Asia and the Pacific for her work with disabled children in China in 2014.

Her previous books are *The Unofficial Diplomat* (2010) and *Make It In India* (2015).



Simply Delicious Recipes
Claire Zavrid Coleman, CookBook Publishers, 2019, \$15/hardcover, 75 pages.

What started as an ambition to collect old family recipes grew into a full cookbook filled with original creations with all sorts of cuisines. This diverse collection of recipes is inspired by childhood memories, copious amounts of international

travel and a decades-long diplomatic career.

From a hearty bolognese to stuffed dates, *Simply Delicious Recipes* promises great eating, whether in the form of a bountiful feast or the occasional crisp beverage. Included are helpful tips on alternative ingredients, meal presentation and wine pairing. And at the end of each recipe the author often includes the occasional story to add a personal touch. But beyond excellent recipes and meal ideas, the book offers essential information on food labeling and safety, as well as guidelines for healthy weight loss and managing sodium intake.

Claire Zavrid Coleman served for more than 31 years in the Foreign Service and retired in 2017. Her overseas postings included Germany, India, South Africa and Italy. She is currently an executive assistant at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

To acquire a copy of this book, please write to the author: Claire Coleman, 10007 Cotton Farm Road, Fairfax VA 22032.



Los Superamigos de Centroamérica: Bilingual Edition
Juan D. Cubillo, independently published, 2019, \$9.95/paperback, 24 pages.

The “Superamigos de Centroamérica” are a team of seven young superheroes.

Each representing a nation within Central America, they work together to improve the region and better one another's countries.

A band of migrants is traveling through Mexico but is stopped at a border. The Superamigos fly to the scene to see what can be done. They help the migrants return home, but

recognize that “progress and prosperity won’t happen if they leave their countries alone.” Looking to improve the conditions that spurred migration, the Superamigos go on to build schools, save dying crops, fix homes and feed children. By working together as a team, they “achieved the Central American dream.”

Juan D. Cubillo was born in Costa Rica and immigrated to the United States when he was 5 years old. After earning an undergraduate degree, he joined the U.S. military, then toured the United States to promote literacy and education, and now serves as a U.S. Foreign Service officer in Central America. His published works look to empower Latino youth and promote peace and prosperity in Central America. ■

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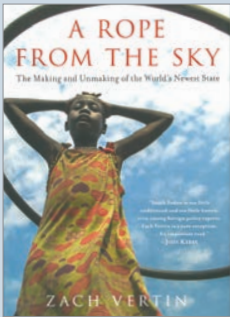
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OF RELATED INTEREST



A Rope from the Sky: The Making and Unmaking of the World's Newest State

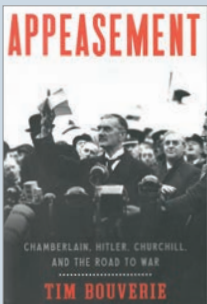
Zach Vertin, Pegasus Books, 2019,
\$29.95/hardcover, \$11.23/Kindle,
490 pages.

A Rope from the Sky chronicles the complexities of South Sudan's struggle for independence, intertwining local

and global narratives.

"The still-unfolding tragedy of South Sudan is too little understood and too little known, even among foreign policy experts. Zach Vertin is a rare exception," John Kerry, the 68th Secretary of State, said of this book. "He has spent his life not just explaining how the promise of this young nation, for which so many sacrificed, was broken so badly, but helping end the bloodshed for a people who have seen far too much of it."

Zach Vertin is a lecturer at Princeton University and a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution's Doha Center. He served in the Obama administration as a senior adviser to the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan.



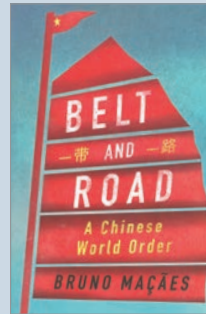
Appeasement: Chamberlain, Hitler, Churchill, and the Road to War

Tim Bouverie, Tim Duggan Books, 2019,
\$30/hardcover, 512 pages.

Appeasement offers a new perspective on Britain's policy in the 1930s and the lead-up to World War II by using diaries, letters, speeches, news commentaries and a plethora of other resources. The

author focuses on British Cabinet politics, indecisiveness and failed diplomacy, which he claims enabled Hitler's domination of Europe and determined Europe's fate. While Bouverie's book is historical, it is an evergreen cautionary tale. Failure to stand up to dictators and aggression can have catastrophic consequences.

Tim Bouverie reviews historical and political books for major news outlets and is a former political journalist for Channel 4 News in the United Kingdom. During his time at Channel 4 from 2013 to 2017, he covered major political events and interviewed high-profile politicians.



Belt and Road: A Chinese World Order

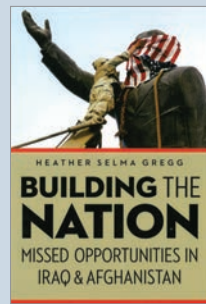
Bruno Maçães, Hurst & Company,
2018, \$28/hardcover, 288 pages.

"This is a remarkably insightful and comprehensive review of China's Belt and Road Initiative, with all its implications for economic development, as well as for the reshaping of the global order,"

says Stephen Green, former chairman of HSBC Bank and chair of London's Asia House, of this book. "America and Europe: take note! This is essential reading for us all."

Author Bruno Maçães analyzes the most ambitious geopolitical initiative of the age, focusing on the physical and political details of the Belt and Road and its impact on the world's economy and politics, as well as speculating on what the world will look like after its completion. Is the Belt and Road about more than power projection and profit? he asks.

Bruno Maçães is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and senior adviser at Flint Global. He is Portugal's former minister for Europe.



Building the Nation: Missed Opportunities in Iraq & Afghanistan

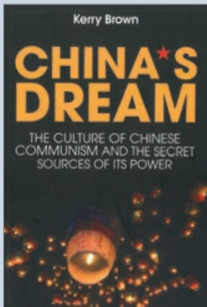
Heather Selma Gregg, Potomac Books,
2018, \$29.95/hardcover, 296 pages.

Building her argument from foreign policy reports and U.S. military officers' interviews, Heather Selma Gregg argues the United States should pay more attention

to true nation-building, like creating a shared sense of identity and purpose within a state's border, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"In a time when the United States increasingly recognizes how inadequate simple theories of state stabilization and state-building are, Heather Gregg offers a powerful new model for what to do after the shooting has stopped," says Scott Guggenheim, senior adviser to Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. "We who live and work in the center of the storm can only hope that her book gets studied carefully by the next generation of policymakers."

Heather Selma Gregg is an associate professor at the Naval Postgraduate School's Department of Defense Analysis.

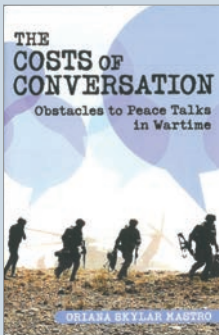


China's Dream: The Culture of Chinese Communism and the Secret Sources of Its Power

Kerry Brown, Polity Press, 2018, \$69.95/hardcover, \$24.95/paperback, \$13/Kindle, 240 pages.

Despite the collapse of similar systems elsewhere, the Chinese Communist Party continues to endure as one of the great political forces of modern times. Kerry Brown investigates the source of the party's power as a cultural, ethical and ideological entity. Brown also explains the history of the party and how General Secretary Xi Jinping is leading a new "cultural revolution" to achieve China's dream: to become the superpower of the world.

Brown, who previously served in Britain's diplomatic service, is the current director of the Lau Chinese Institute at King's College in London. He holds a Ph.D. in Chinese politics and language and is a renowned Chinese history specialist.



The Costs of Conversation

Oriana Skylar Mastro, Cornell University Press, 2019, \$39.95/hardcover, 216 pages.

In this work, Oriana Skylar Mastro explores several questions: What factors influence the warring parties' decisions about whether to talk to their enemy, and when may their position on wartime diplomacy change? How do we get from

fighting to talking?

According to Mastro, states are focused on two strategic costs of conversation: the enemy interpreting diplomacy as a sign of weakness, and the enemy's strategic mindset change to this so-called weakness. Therefore, the strategic cost of talking must be lowered before peace talks with the enemy can begin. By examining case studies, Mastro concludes that communication will only happen when a state believes it has demonstrated strength and its enemy is unable to escalate the war.

Oriana Skylar Mastro is an officer in the U.S. Air Force Reserve and an assistant professor of security studies at Georgetown University.



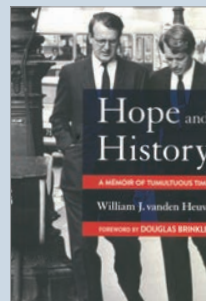
The Fixer: Visa Lottery Chronicles

Charles Piot with Kodjo Nicolas Batema, Duke University Press, 2019, \$24.95/paperback, 224 pages.

The Fixer is an engaging and humanizing look at the U.S. Diversity Visa Lottery, a program much disparaged by President Donald Trump and his supporters. In the past decade, the small West African nation of Togo has seen more Diversity Visa Lottery applicants per capita than any other country (hundreds of thousands of Togolese enter each year).

Author Charles Piot collaborates with Kodjo Nicolas Batema, a Togolese visa broker and "fixer." Batema helps his clients navigate the process of applying for the lottery—and if they win, the even more challenging process of actually qualifying for the visa. Jumping through burdensome bureaucratic hoops requires sleight-of-hand and insider knowledge that only an expert like Batema can offer. Piot also looks at the disappointments and successes of lottery winners who have made it to the United States.

Charles Piot is professor of cultural anthropology and African and African American studies at Duke University.

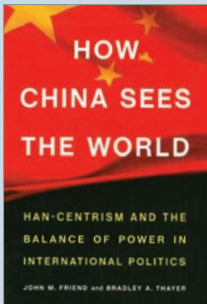


Hope and History: A Memoir of Tumultuous Times

William J. vanden Heuvel, Cornell University Press, 2019, \$28.95/hardcover, 296 pages.

William J. vanden Heuvel, who served as President Jimmy Carter's U.S. ambassador to the United Nations' European offices and deputy U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations from 1977 to 1981, recounts his experiences as a second-generation American, a soldier, a lawyer, a political activist and a diplomat.

Compiling his work from more than eight decades and his adventures with some of the most prominent Americans of his time—men like Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Jimmy Carter—vanden Heuvel addresses issues from desegregation in America to the Holocaust. He also gives a behind-the-scenes view on how individuals like himself have tackled and continue to address some of America's most challenging issues with ingenuity and goodwill, concluding there is still room for optimism in public life despite the hatred and bigotry present in America.

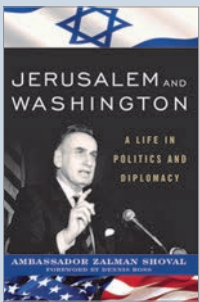


How China Sees the World: Han-Centrism and the Balance of Power in International Politics
John M. Friend and Bradley A. Thayer, Potomac Books, 2018, \$27.95/hardcover, 192 pages.

In this book, authors John M. Friend and Bradley A. Thayer dive into Han-centrism and the threat China poses to the balance of power in international politics. A form of Chinese nationalism, Han-centrism proclaims that Han Chinese are superior to others and are entitled to advance Chinese interests, no matter the cost to other countries or groups.

The idea of Han-centrism continues to become more popular throughout China, leading to a nation that believes it has a right to dominate international politics. Han nationalists' main goal is to reclaim China's prosperity, which they believe was stolen by foreign powers.

John M. Friend is an assistant professor of political science at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University. Bradley A. Thayer is the author of several books and currently a visiting fellow at Magdalen College, University of Oxford.



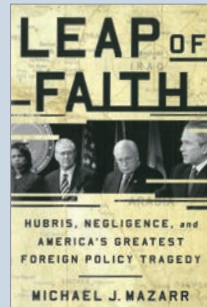
Jerusalem and Washington: A Life in Politics and Diplomacy
Zalman Shoval, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, \$38/hardcover, 368 pages.

In this memoir, Ambassador Zalman Shoval takes readers inside closed doors in Jerusalem and Washington, where world leaders have made major decisions about the Gulf War, the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel's foreign relations.

Ambassador Shoval's account is "essential reading for scholars, diplomats and all who seek to understand America's critical role, past and future, in the Middle East," says former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft.

An early ally of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Shoval successfully navigated complicated relationships among Israel's ministries and political parties. Far more turbulent and challenging was his posting in Washington, where Israel's financial dependence almost caused his expulsion.

Zalman Shoval is an Israeli politician who served as Israel's ambassador to the United States during the George H.W. Bush presidency and during the Clinton administration. He resides in Tel Aviv and often visits the United States.

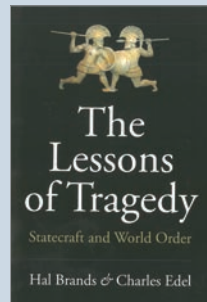


Leap of Faith: Hubris, Negligence, and America's Greatest Foreign Policy Tragedy
Michael J. Mazarr, PublicAffairs, 2019, \$30/hardcover, 528 pages.

Leap of Faith is a deeply researched insider account of how the United States came to invade Iraq in 2003. The author interviewed dozens of people involved in deliberations to invade Iraq, and reviewed all documents so far declassified. He concludes that what he calls "America's greatest foreign policy tragedy" was the result of blunders, intellectual and moral arrogance, and toxic personality traits among political and military leaders.

Faulty assumptions by U.S. officials included assuming the United States could intervene in Iraq with a light footprint and failing to plan effectively for the aftermath of the war. To avoid another such calamity, he argues that we need prudent, careful government leaders and a well-informed populace.

Michael J. Mazarr is a senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation. He has been a faculty member and associate dean at the U.S. National War College.

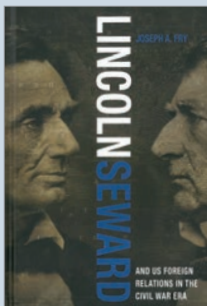


The Lessons of Tragedy: Statecraft and World Order
Hal Brands and Charles Edel, Yale University Press, 2019, \$25/hardcover, 216 pages.

U.S. leaders' memories of the tragic events that led to World War II helped build the postwar order and an era of long-term prosperity. But today, as Americans lose sight of the fact that the descent into war and violence has been a recurring theme in world history, the global order is under sharper threat than at any time in decades.

"Brands and Edel argue persuasively for a return to the 'tragic sensibility' that spurred the creation of all previous international orders," says former Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work.

Hal Brands is the Henry A. Kissinger distinguished professor of global affairs in the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Charles Edel is a senior fellow and visiting scholar at the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney.



Lincoln, Seward, and U.S. Foreign Relations in the Civil War Era

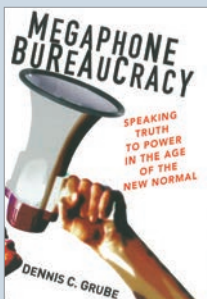
Joseph A. Fry, University Press of Kentucky, 2019, \$60/hardcover, 256 pages.

The American Civil War was not only a tumultuous time for the country domestically, but also for its conduct of foreign relations. In this illuminating account,

Joseph A. Fry describes how President Abraham Lincoln worked with his Secretary of State, William Henry Seward, to manage the uniquely difficult challenge of conducting the foreign affairs of a divided nation.

Deftly navigating rapacious European powers, Seward went so far as to threaten war against any nation that intervened in the Civil War, helping secure a conclusive Union victory.

Joseph A. Fry is Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He is the author of *Dixie Looks Abroad: The South and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1789–1973* (2002); *Debating Vietnam: Fulbright, Stennis, and Their Senate Hearings* (2006); and *The American South and the Vietnam War: Belligerence, Protest, and Agony in Dixie* (2015).



Megaphone Bureaucracy

Dennis C. Grube, Princeton University Press, 2019, \$29.95/hardcover, 232 pages.

Our bureaucratic leaders are increasingly having to govern under the scrutiny of a 24-hour news cycle, hyperpartisan political oversight and a restless populace that is increasingly distrustful of the people

who govern them.

In this timely and incisive book, Dennis C. Grube draws on in-depth interviews and compelling case studies to argue that a new style of bureaucratic leadership is emerging: one that marries the robust independence of Washington agency heads with the prudent political neutrality of Westminster civil servants. These “Washminster” leaders do not avoid the public gaze, nor do they overtly court political controversy. Rather, they use their increasingly public pulpits to exert their own brand of persuasive power.

Dennis C. Grube is a lecturer in public policy at the University of Cambridge. A former political speechwriter, he is the author of *Prime Ministers and Rhetorical Governance* (2013) and *At the Margins of Victorian Britain: Politics, Immorality and Britishness in the Nineteenth Century* (1961).



Nikita Khrushchev's Journey into America

Lawrence J. Nelson and Matthew G. Schoenbachler, University Press of Kansas, 2019, \$25/hardcover, 216 pages.

When Nikita Khrushchev became the first Russian leader to tour America in 1959, he witnessed a country in the midst

of unrivaled prosperity just as the possibility of Cold War-era nuclear annihilation was permeating the public consciousness. *Nikita Khrushchev's Journey into America* looks to fully explore the Russian leader's visit as a critical moment in U.S. history, arguing that it can be understood as one of the most democratic events in an era swept up in great power competition between ideological foes.

Matthew G. Schoenbachler is a professor of history at the University of North Alabama and is the author of *Murder and Madness: The Myth of the Kentucky Tragedy* (2011). His co-author, the late Lawrence J. Nelson, was a professor at the University of North Alabama and the author of *King Cotton's Advocate: Oscar G. Johnston and the New Deal* (1999).



Not for the Faint of Heart: Lessons in Courage, Power, and Persistence

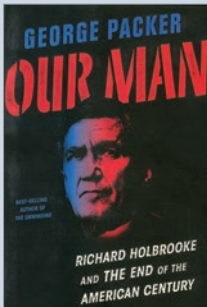
Wendy R. Sherman, PublicAffairs, 2018, \$28/hardcover, 256 pages.

On the forefront of some of the most consequential negotiations in recent diplomatic history, Wendy R. Sherman has amassed a wealth of unique foreign policy experience as a high-level State

Department political appointee during the Clinton and Obama administrations. Her straightforward delivery makes this memoir a heady and entertaining read.

From humble beginnings as a social worker, she rose to top positions in the private and public sector, once quipping: “I joke that I remain a community organizer. ... My caseload just changed.” Sherman served as lead negotiator for the historic Iran nuclear deal, as North Korea policy coordinator and as under secretary of State for political affairs, among other positions.

Wendy R. Sherman is currently a professor of public leadership and director of the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School, and senior counselor at the Albright Stonebridge Group.



Our Man: Richard Holbrooke and the End of the American Century

George Packer, Knopf, 2019, \$30/hardcover, 608 pages.

Drawn from his diaries and papers, *Our Man* provides an intimate portrait of a legendary diplomat possessed by dogged determination and unshakable faith in American ideals who brokered the

Dayton Accords that ended the wars in the Balkans in the aftermath of Yugoslavia's breakup, and served as the Obama administration's special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

But Holbrooke's swaggering personality and headstrong approach often rubbed some the wrong way. As FSO Matthew Asada wrote in his review of *Our Man* in the July-August *FSJ*, "Without the drama there was no Holbrooke, and without Holbrooke there would have been no action."

George Packer is a staff writer at *The Atlantic* and the author of *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America* (2014) and *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq*, a finalist for the 2006 Pulitzer Prize.



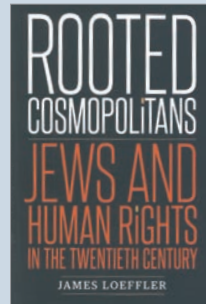
Quest for Status: Chinese and Russian Foreign Policy

Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, Yale University Press, 2019, \$40/hardcover, \$27.95/Kindle, 352 pages.

To explain current Russian and Chinese foreign policy, Deborah Welch Larson

and Alexei Shevchenko adopt social identity theory to show how both countries "used various modes of emulation, competition and creativity to gain recognition from other countries and thus validate their respective identities." Larson and Shevchenko argue that Chinese and Russian foreign policies are formulated based on the countries' individual desires to become key players throughout the world, whether it is policy to participate in multinational organizations or to grow military strength, among other things.

Deborah Welch Lawson is a political science professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. Alexei Shevchenko is a professor of political science at California State University, Fullerton.



Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century

James Loeffler, Yale University Press, 2018, \$32.50/hardcover, 384 pages.

2018 marked the anniversaries of two historic worldwide events: the birth of the state of Israel and the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

By examining several Jewish founders of international human rights groups throughout history, James Loeffler explores the relationship between Zionism and the origins of international human rights. Loeffler's book challenges the assumptions about the history of human rights and introduces a new angle on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

James Loeffler is a professor of Jewish history at the University of Virginia. He is the author of *The Law of Strangers: Jewish Lawyers and International Law in the Twentieth Century* (2019) and *The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (2013).



Russia

Dmitri Trenin, Polity Press, 2019, \$14.95/paperback, 200 pages.

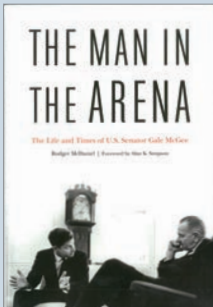
Focusing on 1900 to the present, Dmitri Trenin takes readers through Russia's revolutionary upheaval, the rise of the Soviet Union, World War II and its devastating aftermath, mature socialism and its stagnation, democratic upheaval of

the perestroika era and Putin's stabilization of post-communist Russia.

Today, Trenin cautions, Russia stands at a critical juncture. Following all the turbulent events of the past century, it will take decades for the country to "rehabilitate itself, develop organically, build trust and stimulate cooperation among its own people."

Jack Matlock, a former U.S. ambassador to Russia, calls *Russia* "a brilliant, concise interpretation of 120 years of Russian history, plus an insightful look at the future. Essential reading for all who are concerned about the dangerous—and unnecessary—revival of Cold War tensions."

Dmitri Trenin has been director of the Carnegie Moscow Center since 2008.



**The Man in the Arena:
The Life and Times of
U.S. Senator Gale McGee**

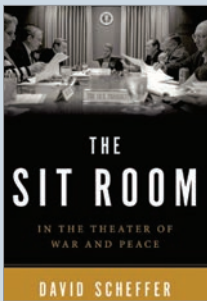
Rodger McDaniel, Potomac Books, 2018, \$36.95/hardcover, 416 pages.

Gale McGee was elected as a senator from Wyoming in 1958 and would go on to have an influential career in both foreign policy and domestic politics.

This biography, a volume in the ADST-DACOR Diplomats and Diplomacy Book Series, recalls an era of bipartisanship in policymaking that helped transform the nation.

Senator McGee played a major role in the 1960s liberal consensus that gave the country Medicare, the minimum wage, the right to collective bargaining and significant civil rights reforms. He was nominated by President Jimmy Carter to serve as the U.S. ambassador to the Organization of American States during the successful approval of the 1978 Panama Canal Treaty.

Rodger McDaniel is a pastor, a former lawyer and served as a Wyoming state senator from 1977 to 1981. He also served in the Wyoming state house from 1971 to 1977.



**The Sit Room:
In the Theater of War and Peace**

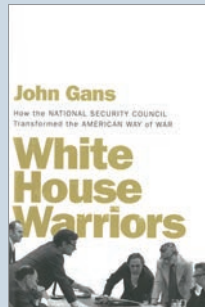
David Scheffer, Oxford University Press, 2018, \$29.95/hardcover, 360 pages.

In this insider account of the White House Situation Room, David Scheffer reveals the intense debates that decided America's response to the Balkans War. *The Sit Room* features an impressive ensemble

of characters, from Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and National Security Adviser Tony Lake to lead negotiator Richard Holbrooke.

The book depicts authentic policymaking at the highest levels of government, and recounts how differing views among diplomats, generals and the White House were ironed out within the policy process.

David Scheffer served on the Deputies Committee of the National Security Council during the early 1990s. Afterward he became the first U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, serving from 1997 to 2001. A graduate of Oxford, Harvard and Georgetown universities, he is currently the Mayer Brown/Robert A. Helman Professor of Law at Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law.



**White House Warriors:
How the National Security
Council Transformed the
American Way of War**

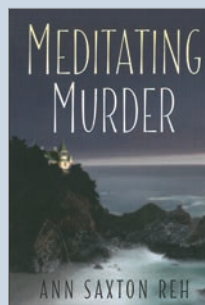
John Gans, Liveright, 2019, \$28.95/hardcover, 272 pages.

Drawing from policymakers and more than 10,000 documents from presidential libraries and archives, John Gans

clarifies the purpose of the National Security Council, reveals how diversely the NSC has been used by presidents from John F. Kennedy through Donald Trump, and offers a look behind the curtain concerning foreign policy and security decisions in Washington.

As former U.S. ambassador to NATO Ivo H. Daalder explains: "When it comes to U.S. national security policy, some of the most powerful and consequential people in Washington are also the least well known. John Gans shines a bright light on these National Security Council staffers and shows how they have influenced presidential decisions on war for decades."

Gans, who previously served as the chief speechwriter at the Pentagon, works as the director of communications and research at the University of Pennsylvania's global policy institute, Perry World House.



Meditating Murder

Ann Saxton Reh, Prospect Street Press, 2019, \$12.99/paperback, 320 pages.

Meditating Murder is a good, old-fashioned mystery, the first in a series featuring diplomat sleuth David Markham, a Foreign Service officer. Cassandra Fitzwilliam is on the Northern California coast in the late 1980s, indulg-

ing her passion for collecting South Asian antiquities and other people's secrets. Her husband, Gerald, a retired ambassador, is worried when a group of houseguests come to prepare an exhibit of Cassandra's collection because he is sure it contains stolen items that will discredit his career. He calls the only person he can count on, fellow diplomat David Markham, who soon finds himself looking for a murderer.

Ann Saxton Reh is a retired educator and military spouse with a penchant for adventure who has lived in six foreign countries while raising a family. She is working on a prequel and sequel to the book, set in Saudi Arabia and India, respectively. ■

The Perfect Professional

Lowell Bruce Laingen 1922-2019

BY JOHN LIMBERT

I did not know Bruce Laingen before I had the honor and privilege of working for him as a political officer in Tehran, where he was chief of mission. I first met him there on Aug. 18, 1979.

In my first days at post, I saw that Bruce Laingen represented the best of our Service. For him the Foreign Service meant: take care of your people; listen to your host country; report the truth; and carry out American policy with honor, humanity and principle. He told me, “You know what you need to do. Do it.” Then he added, “I’m jealous. I wish I was, like you, free to travel everywhere and talk to everyone.”

His assignment in Tehran was to maintain some kind of orderly relationship with whatever system was going to succeed the monarchy. Despite the history of close U.S.-Pahlavi family relations, Washington could not abandon Iran after its revolution. Iran remained important to the United States for its



Ambassador Laingen at the White House following his return from Iran with Vice President George H.W. Bush, First Lady Nancy Reagan and President Ronald Reagan, Jan. 27, 1981.

oil, as a customer for U.S. exports and, most important, as a key part of an anti-Soviet alliance.

John Limbert is a retired Foreign Service officer and academic. During a 34-year diplomatic career, he served mostly in the Middle East (including two tours in Iraq) and Islamic Africa, was ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and president of the American Foreign Service Association. He served with Ambassador Bruce Laingen at U.S. Embassy Tehran, where both were held hostage from 1979 to 1981.

A Challenging Mission

Bruce Laingen's mission was, to put it mildly, challenging. When the Islamic Revolution failed to deliver the promised paradise to Iranians, America—and Bruce Laingen—was the scapegoat. First, we were still there, in our large compound and massively ugly buildings (“Henderson High”) in downtown Tehran. Second, things were not going well. There were violent clashes in ethnic-minority regions. There were brawls between Islamist and leftist gangs in offices, schools and universities. Someone had to be responsible, so all problems were attributed to “American mercenaries.”

The Iranian media—under strong leftist influence—spouted ugly personal vitriol against him. But he never gave up. In July 1979, in the clearest language, he had warned Washington against admitting the Shah of Iran to the United States. His prophetic message said: “It may be the right thing to do, but not now, while Iran is still in chaos.” He predicted three results from admitting the shah:

- The moderate provisional government of Mehdi Bazargan will collapse.
- Any chance of normal U.S.-Iranian relations will disappear.
- The U.S. embassy will be lost.

He was right on all points, but in October 1979, when the U.S. president agreed to admit the shah, Bruce Laingen's wise and prophetic advice was ignored.

I remember two special stories. In 1980, while he, Regional Security Officer Mike Howland and Political Officer Victor Tomseth were detained at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Swiss Ambassador Erik Lang delivered a diplomatic bag with blank employee evaluation reports (EERs) for all embassy employees. Bruce and his colleagues patiently wrote reports on everyone, returned them to Ambassador Lang, who forwarded them to the State Department via the Swiss embassy in Washington.

A few months later I read in a letter from home: “Congratulations. You've been promoted.” I never knew how it happened until we were freed, and I learned the story. It is the best EER I ever received, and I had nothing to do with its composition.



The Laingen family gathered in front of their home after Ambassador Laingen's return from Iran, Jan. 28, 1981. From left: Chip, Penne, Bruce, Bill and Jim.

COURTESY OF THE LAINGEN FAMILY

The second story involved Bruce Laingen's meeting with Mohammad Shirvani, a young Iranian filmmaker visiting Washington in the summer of 2007. (In those less hysterical days, such exchanges were still possible.) After a conversation at Bruce and Penne's Bethesda home, he invited Shirvani to a July 4 neighborhood gathering and introduced him to the neighbors. To put it mildly, the residents were shocked to see an Iranian filmmaker at their party. That July 4 conversation—in which Bruce says that, after 30 years of pointless estrangement, Iran and the United States must find a way to talk to each other—became the most moving section of Shirvani's documentary *444 Days*.

The Perfect Professional

Bruce never gave up seeking some way for Iranians and Americans to stop shouting at each other and begin talking. He never carried a grudge, and saw the good in everyone. When he was chairperson of AFSA's awards committee, he once suggested we consider Henry Kissinger for the association's “Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy” award. He seemed surprised when the response from the group ranged from embarrassed silence to “Over my dead body.” Someone even pointed out to him that Kissinger was partly responsible for President Jimmy Carter's disastrous decision to admit the deposed Shah of Iran in 1979.

A Lifetime of Contributions to American Diplomacy

On June 24, 2010, Ambassador Lowell Bruce Laingen received the American Foreign Service Association's highest award, the Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy, in recognition of his distinguished 38-year Foreign Service career and a lifetime of public service.

Ambassador Laingen served in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1946. He joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1949, and served in Germany, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Malta, where he was U.S. ambassador from 1977 to 1979. Later that year he returned to Tehran on a temporary basis as chargé d'affaires, but within months he was taken hostage when Iranian protestors overran the U.S. embassy and held him captive, with others, for 14 months. For his leadership and courage during that ordeal, he received the State Department's Award for Valor and the Defense Department's Medal for Distinguished Public Service.

From 1981 to 1987, Ambassador Laingen served as vice president of the National Defense University, a post traditionally held by a senior diplomat. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1987.

That year he was elected to AFSA's Governing Board as a retiree representative and appointed chairman of the AFSA Awards Committee (which later became the Awards and Plaques Committee). It was a post he would hold for two decades. In gratitude for his distinguished and dedicated service, the association gave Ambassador Laingen a special award of appreciation in 2006. As a *Journal* report on that ceremony noted: "During his tenure, he succeeded in greatly improving the standing of the AFSA awards and consistently provided wise guidance." The association remains grateful for his generous assistance.

From 1991 to 2006, Ambassador Laingen rendered similarly exemplary service as president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to fostering the highest standards in the conduct



Ambassador Bruce Laingen receives AFSA's Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy on June 24, 2010. John Limbert, at left, presented the award; AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston and President Susan Johnson look on.

of diplomacy. He was honored with AAD's Excellence in Diplomacy Award on retirement from that position.

In addition, Ambassador Laingen served as executive director of the National Commission on the Public Service (the Volcker Commission) from 1987 to 1990, and in 1998 held the Sol Linowitz Chair in International Relations at Hamilton College in New York, where he taught a seminar on the Iranian Revolution. He continued to do public speaking and served on the boards of A Presidential Classroom for Young Americans, the Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania, No Greater Love and the National Defense University Foundation.

—Susan B. Maitra

As was typical of him, Bruce just smiled and said, "Well, he did some good things, too."

It was sad that Bruce's "mission impossible" in Tehran ended so tragically with the attack on the embassy and prolonged hostage crisis. What was so striking about Bruce was that, with

all the fury and madness around him, he never stopped being an optimist and the perfect professional.

I am proud to have known him as a boss, a colleague and a friend.

As the Iranians say, *Ruh-heshaan Shaad*. May his spirit be joyful. ■

AFSA and the Foreign Service Play Ball!



Pictured on the field at Nationals Stadium (from left) are Spirit Award winners AFSA President Ambassador Eric Rubin, AFSA Director for PPI and retired FSO Julie Nutter, AFSA State VP Tom Yazdgerdi and his wife Julia Reed, and FSO Kristin Roberts and her son, Elias.

On Sept. 13, AFSA and the Washington Nationals teamed up for the fourth annual Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park.

More than 400 members of the Foreign Service and their families attended to catch up with friends and colleagues as the Washington Nationals played the Atlanta Braves.

Before the game, AFSA President Ambassador Eric Rubin, AFSA State VP Tom Yazdgerdi and his wife Julia Reed, AFSA Director for Professional Policy Issues and retired FSO Julie Nutter, and AFSA State Representative Kristin Roberts and her son, Elias took to the field to be recognized with the Nationals' Spirit Awards, while the park announcer talked about America's diplomats to the 39,730 people in attendance.

After the Spirit Awards



Fans take in the Washington Nationals-Atlanta Braves game on Foreign Service Night Sept. 13.

ceremony, Ambassador Rubin said he was thrilled with the occasion. "I missed the first three as I was in Bulgaria, but I am glad to be able to be here this year because it's just such a positive, all-American experience. Sharing with tens of thousands of our fellow Americans the experiences

of the real people of the Foreign Service, and their families, is priceless in terms of getting people to understand the importance of diplomacy. I can't wait until next year's game!"

The Nationals were shut out by the Braves, 5-0. Both teams were expected to reach the playoffs. ■

CALENDAR

October 1
AFSA Governing Board Retreat

October 2
4-5:30 p.m.
Reception:
Incoming USAID Class

October 3
11:15 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
Luncheon:
154th Specialist Class

October 9
12-1:30 p.m.
Luncheon: 200th
A-100 Class

October 14
Columbus Day –
AFSA Offices Closed

October 16
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

October 16
4-6 p.m.
Annual AFSA Awards Ceremony

November 1
12-1 p.m.
Job Search Program Graduation Reception at FSI

November 11
Veterans Day –
AFSA Offices Closed

November 19
12-2 p.m.
"The Coordination of FEHB and Medicare" with Paula Jakub

November 20
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing Board Meeting

November 28-29
Thanksgiving – AFSA Offices Closed



Bidding Season Comes Around Again

Well, it's that time of year again: bidding season. Not many folks I know enjoy going through it, especially having to expound on their amazing, unique abilities and qualities (and getting others to do so, as well!).

It's just a necessary, if somewhat unpleasant, part of Foreign Service life. As the American newspaperman and short story writer Damon Runyon said, "He who tooteth not his own horn, the same shall not be tooted."

But this year there is some welcome news.

First, the Fair Share bidding policy has been scrapped. It just wasn't doing what it was intended to do, as AFSA had pointed out frequently to the department over the last two years. Of all high-differential positions open in 2018 cycles, *only five percent of paneled jobs were filled by Fair Share bidders.*

Indeed, instead of encouraging Fair Share bidders to serve in high-differential assignments, the policy more often resulted in these bidders serving in domestic jobs. Sixty-seven percent of Fair Share bidders in 2018 assignment cycles were paneled to domestic or low-differential assignments (including the Priority Service Posts, DCM/Principal Officer, long-term training and details, and the regular cycle).

And this comes against the backdrop of the depart-

ment having ramped up the number of minimum months of service in a high-differential post from 15 to 20 in 2007, and increasing the qualifying differential from 15 to 20 percent in 2017. So, this is one less big bid list headache to have to deal with.

Second, AFSA is pushing back against the department's early drafts of the new Anti-Nepotism Review standard operating procedures, which appear to make it even more difficult for tandems to serve together. In a late-July call with key department personnel, we shared our substantial concerns on the SOPs. The response was that the department's goal is to "get to yes."

While we are currently awaiting the State Department's rewrite of these SOPs, this is a welcome development. Serving as an office director years ago, I remember how difficult it was to panel a stellar officer—a tandem FSO whose partner was in another agency—into one of our posts. It finally happened, but only after months of wrangling, uncertainty and great pain.

There's still more work to be done, but this change will make an opaque and ineffective process more transparent and responsive to the needs of our people. AFSA believes the department must do a better job of helping families stay together while our diplomats do

AFSA believes the department must do a better job of helping families stay together while our diplomats do their jobs of defending and protecting America around the world.

their jobs of defending and protecting America around the world.

Third, after advocating alongside the affinity group Foreign Service Families with Disabilities Alliance for more than two years, we can report that State is negotiating in earnest many critical changes to the Special Needs Educational Allowance.

In June, the department issued "Round One" of guidance in a new Foreign Affairs Manual section, 3 FAM 3280 – Special Needs Education Allowance, which our Labor Management team helped craft. We then submitted comments to the inter-agency Department of State Standardized Regulations on SNEA, which should be finalized by press time, along with the "Round Two" changes to the new 3 FAM section.

We remain hopeful that this new FAM section will open up career opportunities for our members with special needs kids and believe these changes will yield real relief for those whose children need a little extra help to thrive.

In advocating for a benefit that every other major

industrialized country offers its workers, AFSA also joined with other federal employee groups in successfully urging the House to adopt an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act. This will provide federal employees with 12 weeks of paid family leave for the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child; to recover from a serious health condition; or to provide care to a family member suffering from a serious health condition.

The Senate version of the NDAA does not contain a parallel provision, so a House-Senate conference committee will decide whether to include that in the final version to be sent to the president. That decision is expected later this fall, and AFSA will continue to press for this important issue.

Finally, a quick note: AFSA Labor Management has moved! Our new office is at HST 2805 in a newly renovated part of the building at the northwest corner (near the D St entrance, which is expected to reopen in November). Please come by and see us. ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA Retiree VP. Contact: naland@afsa.org

Planning for the Foreign Service and AFSA Centennials

Although the anniversary is still five years away, AFSA has already started planning to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding in 1924 of the U.S. Foreign Service and its professional association, AFSA.

Commemorating these centennials in 2024 will provide a unique opportunity to increase understanding among the American people, Congress and the media about the vital role the Foreign Service plays in sustaining American global leadership.

To begin planning, the AFSA Governing Board in

July established the Centennial Celebration Committee. I was appointed as its chair (having served on the Governing Board during the 75th anniversary celebration in 1999). The other committee members are AFSA Secretary Ken Kero-Mentz and Retiree Representative Mary Daly.

The committee will seek to identify the best ideas for marking the centennial and the steps required to implement them, including looking for external sources of funding. We are starting already because some potential elements of the celebration have long lead times.

For example, we plan to ask the U.S. Postal Service to issue a U.S. Foreign Service Centennial stamp. I played a role in getting stamps issued honoring six U.S. career diplomats in 2006. That process began in 2002. So, our stamp proposal needs to be submitted by next year.

We also plan to try to place displays telling the history and impact of the Foreign Service in heavily visited areas such as the lobby of a U.S. Senate office building, presidential libraries, and perhaps even the National Museum of American History. Because those organizations

set their visiting exhibits schedules several years in advance, now is the time to begin investigating those possibilities.

There are many ways that AFSA could mark the 100th anniversary of the Foreign Service. Other ideas include a TV documentary, podcasts, a 50-state lecture tour, a book, a gala dinner and a congressional resolution.

Our Centennial Celebration Committee will seek to identify the best ideas. We welcome your suggestions. Send them to me at naland@afsa.org. ■

ANNOUNCING THE 2019 AFSA AWARD WINNERS

Exemplary Performance

F. Allen "Tex" Harris

Award for Achievement and Contributions to the Association

Katherine Elizabeth Koehler

Nelson B. Delavan Award for an Office Management Specialist

Laurent Charbonnet

Avis Bohlen Award for an Eligible Family Member

Michelle Ross

M. Juanita Guess Award for a Community Liaison Officer

Christopher Gooch and Nora Brito

Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy

Lawrence Fields

AFSA Post Representative of the Year Award

Constructive Dissent

Anna Boulos

William R. Rivkin Award for a Mid-Level Officer

Timmy Davis

William R. Rivkin Award for a Mid-Level Officer

Moises Mendoza

W. Averell Harriman Award for an Entry-Level Officer

Runners-Up

Robert Works (Palmer Award)

Jonette Cahoon-Vaughan (Guess Award)

Jennifer Allen (Guess Award)

Full coverage of the AFSA awards ceremony and profiles of the award recipients will appear in the December issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*. Please join us for the awards ceremony at 4 p.m. on Oct. 16 in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room at the Department of State. ■



The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019: Opportunities and Implications

Despite the fact that the House and Senate are controlled by different parties, Congress reached a bipartisan budget deal this summer, and the president signed it into law in early August.

Under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019, the new discretionary defense and non-defense caps for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 mark an end to the sequestration threat that has plagued federal spending for most of this decade.

Without this deal, automatic spending cuts would have reduced discretionary spending by 10 percent in 2020 through a mechanism put in place by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

The 2019 budget deal allows for an increase of more than \$100 billion in funding for non-defense domestic priorities over the 2017 level (the non-defense funding cap was \$518.5 billion in FY2017 and is \$621.5 billion in FY2020). Specifically, the deal increased the FY2020 non-defense spending cap by \$24.5 billion over FY2019.

But the increase for non-defense spending is a concern for some members of Congress, as the deal contains a limited number of fiscal offsets, including certain customs user fees and the extension of mandatory spending sequestration

through 2027, that are not even enough to cover the additional interest spending from this bill.

Further, the deal was passed with no long-term plan to lower the federal deficit, and many say the new caps will recklessly increase federal spending.

Despite these concerns, the 2019 budget agreement offers a brighter outlook for the international affairs budget over the next two fiscal years. While the FY2020 non-defense cap is \$15 billion less than House Democrats initially sought, it still represents a boost of almost 4.5 percent above the comparable FY2019 number.

In FY2019, non-defense Overseas Contingency Operations funding made up 14 percent of the international affairs budget. AFSA was pleased to see OCO caps for FY2020 and FY2021 stay the same, at FY2019's \$8 billion.

However, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 is just the first step toward final FY2020 funding.

With caps in place for the next two fiscal years, there is momentum in Congress to finalize FY2020 appropriations that reject the administration's proposed cuts to the international affairs budget.

Keep in mind that Republican House members voted against the chamber's appropriations bills in both

AFSA's message to the Hill has been and will continue to be that the 1 percent of the federal budget the United States spends on development and diplomacy is a cost-effective way to advance America's interests.

the committee and on the floor this summer, at least partly because there was no budget deal in place to control spending.

Even in the event of a continuing resolution to fund all or part of the federal government this fall, statements from members of Congress suggest that the final FY2020 appropriations package, whenever it may pass, will reject the proposed cuts that have threatened the international affairs budget in FY2018, FY2019 and FY2020.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), a co-chair of the Senate Foreign Service Caucus, said at a FY2020 USAID budget request hearing earlier this year: "I just want to second the comments of the chairman [Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.] with respect to the budget that was submitted. It's totally inadequate to support important U.S. foreign policy goals, and I'm confident this committee will address that."

AFSA has worked to solidify this bipartisan support for

development and diplomacy funding on the Hill.

It is important to remember that the international affairs budget is just a small portion of non-defense spending, competing for the same dollars as veterans, childhood development programs, and other domestic priorities.

While AFSA applauds the 2019 budget deal as a catalyst for Congress to move forward with appropriations on a bipartisan basis, the international affairs budget must still be prioritized among the many competing priorities.

AFSA's message to the Hill has been and will continue to be that the 1 percent of the federal budget the United States spends on development and diplomacy is a cost-effective way to advance America's interests.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 presents Congress with the opportunity to showcase its unified support for the international affairs budget over the next two fiscal years. ■

Russ Capps: A Life Well Lived

BY AFSA SECRETARY KEN KERO-MENTZ

AFSA suffered a great loss on Aug. 19, when our friend and colleague Russ Capps—who had served as AFSA's chief operating officer since December 2017—passed away after suffering cardiac arrest while at work. He was 54.

During his all-too-brief time with us, Russ was responsible for updating and enhancing employment and budget policies for AFSA. The expertise he brought was enriched by the time he had served as chair of finance and business operations for the Professional Council of the American Society of Association Executives from 2016 to 2018.

Russ was in the early stages of an ambitious project to review all of AFSA's existing contract relationships with the intention of conserving the association's financial resources. He also was developing an option for student loan repayments for AFSA staff, and everyone on the staff knew his long-running joke about his favorite future infrastructure project—installing a margarita machine in the office.

Russ was born and raised in Fairfax County, Virginia. He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Radford University. He started his career in public accounting, but quickly moved to the nonprofit sector, working in association management since 1991.

He was also a longtime member of the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, D.C., where he sang with one of that group's elite a cappella troupes, Potomac Fever. He served on the organization's board of directors for several years. Indeed, at the Sept. 7 memorial service for Russ at Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., his chorus mates sang several uplifting songs in his memory.

Russ and his husband, Ken Yazge, met on Labor Day weekend 22 years ago and shared their home in Kensington, Maryland, with their two dogs. Russ enjoyed crossword puzzles and gardening. Ken owns a local private fitness center and is also a fireman and EMT in Bethesda. They were married at Antietam Overlook Farm in Maryland in October 2013.

Russ was also a generous person, and an organ donor. Our sadness over his passing is tempered by our knowledge that Russ was able to provide a new lease on life to those who benefited from his generosity.

Russ' passing has deeply affected our small community of AFSA employees and Governing Board members, both past and present. He attended

all of our Governing Board meetings and reported on key issues. He was a steady hand at our headquarters at 2101 E Street NW across from Main State. AFSA is a close-knit team of dedicated individuals who work every day to help our members in the Foreign Service. We are a family, and this loss hit many of us particularly hard.

I was lucky enough to know Russ for more than 25

years, and I can attest that he will be deeply missed. As during any challenging time, AFSA pulled together and kept the business of the association moving. His passing was a reminder to all of us to live each day to the fullest.

As his husband, Ken, asked, please keep his memory alive in everything you do. That's exactly what those of us who knew Russ plan to do. ■



Russ Capps



Russ Capps (right) with husband Ken Yazge and their dogs.

AFSA Announces National High School Essay Contest Winners

The American Foreign Service Association is pleased to announce that Wilson King, a senior at Shepaug Valley School in Washington, Connecticut, is the winner of its 2019 AFSA National High School Essay Contest. His essay was chosen from a pool of nearly 700 submissions from 41 states and five countries.



Wilson King (left), winner of the 2019 AFSA National High School Essay Contest, receives a plaque from Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan.

In the essay, "From Dictatorship to Democracy," Wilson King focuses on the importance of interagency cooperation in military interventions—primarily looking into the impact of American intervention against the Noriega regime in Panama in 1989 and in Somalia three years later.

In recognition of his achievement and hard work, Wilson received a \$2,500 cash prize, a fully paid Semester at Sea educational voyage (for when he's in college) and a trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan. While in Washington, he was also honored at a reception at the United States Institute of Peace.

Collin Wang was this year's runner-up. He is a senior at Detroit Country Day School in Beverly Hills, Michigan. The runner-up prize is enrollment in the international diplomacy program of the National Student Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. Collin attended this past summer.

There were 17 honorable mentions:

- Albert Zhang – Gainesville, Florida
- Emma Alexander – Sugar Hill, Georgia
- Vivian Sandifer – Huntington, West Virginia
- Annalia Lynch – St. Simon's Island, Georgia
- Will Martin – Little Rock, Arkansas
- Cynthia Langkamp – Spring, Texas
- Vibhav Kanyadan – Marietta, Georgia
- Owen Young – Kittanning, Pennsylvania
- Madelyn Cramer – Elk River, Minnesota
- Ian Curry – Makati City, Philippines
- Catherine George – Indianapolis, Indiana
- Ingrid Dornbirer – Marengo, Ohio
- Ainsley Anderson Fawcett – Sonoma, California
- David Jordan – Fort Collins, Colorado
- Sakshi Kolli – Milpitas, California
- Dillon Bantatua – Anaheim, California
- Malaina Kapoor – Redwood City, California

AFSA thanks all the students who took the time to do research and writing and become globally engaged citizens who care about diplomacy and development, as well as the teachers who guided and supported them.

This year's contest was made possible through the support of AFSA's partners, the **United States Institute of Peace**, **Semester at Sea** and the **National Student Leadership Conference**. You can read the winning essay at www.afsa.org/essay.

For *Journal* readers, please share information about the essay contest with the (non-Foreign Service) high schoolers you know and encourage them to consider submitting an essay for next year's contest. The new prompt can be found on the AFSA website essay contest page. ■

The Foreign Service Journal Welcomes New Advertising Manager

AFSA is pleased to welcome Molly Long to *The Foreign Service Journal* and the AFSA publications team as manager of advertising, circulation and business development.

Molly comes to us from the Door and Hardware



Institute, where she managed advertising for the association's monthly publication, *Door Security & Safety*, including all digital opportunities, for nearly 17 years. Before DHI, she sold for a variety of other publications, mostly in the travel category.

Molly lives with her husband and two daughters in Virginia, where they have resided for more than 20 years. Her husband owns a venture capital and business

consulting firm. One daughter is in her senior year of college, and the other is taking a gap year to pursue her love of travel and adventure before starting a career.

Molly, who earned a bachelor's degree from Ohio Wesleyan University, enjoys hot yoga, gardening and walking her dog. She grew up in the suburbs of New York City.

She can be reached at long@afsa.org or (202) 719-9706. ■

AFSA Welcomes Newest Consular Fellows and Foreign Commercial Service Classes

On Aug. 13, AFSA welcomed 37 members of the 15th Consular Fellows class to its headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Ambassador (ret.) Linda Thomas-Greenfield hosted the meal, while table hosts included AFSA Director of Professional Policy Issues Julie Nutter, State Overseas Building Operations Director for the Office of Facility Management Keith Hanigan and AFSA Governing Board Member Philip Shull. Seventy-eight percent of the attendees joined AFSA.

On Aug. 8, AFSA welcomed 16 members of the latest Foreign Commercial Service class to its headquarters in Washington, D.C.

AFSA Director of Professional Policy Issues Julie Nutter hosted the luncheon, while AFSA FCS VP Jay Carreiro and retired FCS Officer James Fluker were on hand to speak with the new Foreign Service members and answer their questions about AFSA and the many ways the association can assist, protect and advocate for them. One hundred percent of the attendees joined AFSA.

Welcome to the Foreign Service! ■

AFSA/CAMERON WOODWORTH



AFSA Governing Board Member Philip Shull (left) talks with members of the 15th Consular Fellows class.

AFSA/DIMITRY FILIPOFF



Retired Foreign Commercial Service Officer James Fluker talks with members of the latest Foreign Commercial Service class.

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Inside the World of Diplomacy



AFSA/CAMERON WOODWORTH

On Aug. 15, AFSA hosted nearly 120 participants in the Smithsonian Associates program "Inside the World of Diplomacy." Ambassador (ret.) Charles Ray (pictured) and AFSA Director of Professional Policy Issues Julie Nutter, a retired member of the Senior Foreign Service, led the audience through an introduction to the U.S. Foreign Service and embassies, using their careers as examples of the many things diplomats do every day around the world. This was the fifth straight year AFSA has collaborated with Smithsonian Associates on this program.

Update Your Information for the 2020 AFSA Directory of Retired Members

It's that time of year when we ask retiree members to make sure AFSA has your most up-to-date contact information—including address, telephone and email address—for inclusion in the 2020 AFSA Retiree Directory.

If you have moved or changed any of your contact information in the last year, please email us at member@afsa.org. If no changes are required, there is no need to act.

The deadline for all changes for the 2020 Retiree Directory is November 1, 2019.

Please note that if you have previously requested that your name not be included in the directory, we have that information recorded and will ensure that it is not included.

Additionally, if you have previously requested not to receive a copy of the directory, we have that information recorded.

For new requests, please email AFSA. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, Aug. 21, 2019

Passing of AFSA COO Russ Capps: AFSA President Eric Rubin made remarks about the passing of AFSA Chief Operating Officer Russ Capps. He spoke about the grief people in the AFSA community feel over his loss and expressed gratitude for how people came together in a time of crisis. The Governing Board observed a moment of silence.

President Job Description Change: Lillian Wahl-Tuco moved to adopt changes to the job description of the AFSA president as outlined in the Governing Board packet. The board approved the motion.

Auditor's Report: Ambassador Rubin called for a vote to adopt the auditor's report. The board adopted the auditor's report.

Foreign Service Grievance Board: John Naland moved to nominate retired Diplomatic Security Officer Nace Crawford to fill the open Foreign Service annuitant seat on the Foreign Service Grievance Board. The board approved the motion.

AFSA Membership Committee: Joshua Archibald and Lorraine Sherman were appointed to serve on the AFSA Membership Committee.

Family/Medical Leave and Leave Donation Policy: John Naland moved to amend the AFSA Employee Handbook to extend family and medical leave and leave donation policy benefits to AFSA employees, as detailed in the Governing Board packet. The board adopted the motion. ■

Learning from the Balkans

From War to Peace in the Balkans, the Middle East and Ukraine

Daniel Serwer, *Palgrave Macmillan*, 2019, \$31/hardcover, free as an open-access e-book at Amazon and other outlets.

REVIEWED BY HARRY KOPP

“Learn from history,” we are told, even as fewer and fewer students devote themselves to the subject. The State Department’s frequent promises “to produce timely lessons-learned analysis” remain largely aspirational. The flower children of yore are now on Medicare and Metamucil, but in matters of foreign policy, it still too often seems that each day is the first day of the rest of our lives.

Daniel Serwer, a former Foreign Service officer and current professor at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies, rows against this current. In his latest book, he gives us a close analysis of war, peace and political evolution in the Balkans after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in 100 pages. In scarcely 50 pages more, he draws lessons from the Balkan experience and considers how they might apply in the Middle East and Ukraine. He is doing the work that others call for, but rarely perform.

American involvement in the Balkan mess came slowly and late. After all, Serwer writes, the Balkans “were small places that did not threaten U.S. national security or offer significant economic interests.” But the 1990s were a “unipolar moment,” when American power was uncontested. In those circumstances, an accumulation of secondary interests—maintaining NATO’s credibility and political unity, preventing refugee flows

that might radicalize European Muslims, responding to U.S. domestic pressures—was sufficient to bring about diplomatic and military intervention, first in Bosnia in 1995 and then in Kosovo in 1999.

It is no easy task for the writer or the reader to follow events in the seven countries that emerged from Yugoslavia in war and tumult (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia). Names and places that dominated the news 25 years ago are already unfamiliar. But repeating themes create a narrative, and the accumulation of facts leads to some surprising conclusions.

The most important of these is Serwer’s contention, backed by solid historic evidence, that “the [ethnic] intolerance required to produce the wars of the 1990s [was] not indigenous, natural or ancient.” Ethnic wars and ethnic cleansing were real, of course, but they were the product of poisonous leadership, not poisoned hearts. Division was a path to power for demagogic politicians, who insisted on “the classic Balkans question: Why should I live as a minority in your country when you can live as a minority in mine?”

Serwer contends that the Dayton accords that ended the war in Bosnia in 1995 were largely a victory for the most important ethnic demagogue, Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic. Milosevic left Dayton with 49 percent of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, territory that had been controlled by his enemy, the Bosnian-Croat Federation. “All armies

and ethnic nationalists on the verge of defeat should have the good fortune to be hauled off to ‘Dayton,’” says Serwer.

Lessons

Lessons drawn from history come with a warning. Policies are complex, outcomes ambiguous and analogies imperfect. Looking backward, analysts and policymakers can pick and choose, indulging their preconceptions. Hence, as Serwer says, “lessons learned are often lessons preferred.” But there are lessons, nonetheless.

- Ethnic boundaries are nearly impossible to draw.

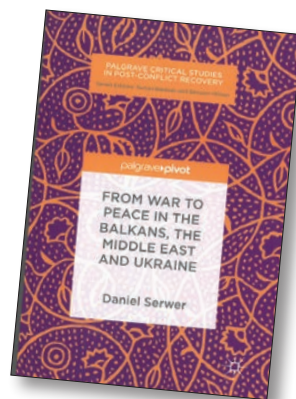
In the Balkans, after years of warfare and ethnic conflict,

borders remain where they were in Socialist Yugoslavia. “If you open the question of borders

in one country,” says Serwer, “you are bound to cause questioning of borders in other countries in the region and possibly beyond.”

What was true in Bosnia and Kosovo is true in Iraq and Syria, and even in Iran, which Serwer points out is only 60 percent Persian. Once raised, the Balkans question—Why should I live as a minority in your country when you can live as a minority in mine?—has no clear answer.

- “Neighborhoods matter,” Serwer says. The pull of Europe—the European Union and NATO—influenced Balkan behavior and continues to do so. The Middle East, however, has no “nearby, attractive, pluralistic, democratic model, current or historical. ... The Middle East needs a set of norms” to reduce the



Division was a path to power for demagogic politicians.

sectarian fears that lead to constant conflict. But there is no normative body—no Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, no Association of South-east Asian Nations—to which Middle Eastern nations can refer or appeal.

• And leaders matter. Milosevic and his sponsorship of ethnic nationalism had parallels in Iraq’s Nouri al-Maliki’s promotion of sectarian divisions and, later, in actions by Ukraine’s parliament to deny official status to the Russian language. When leaders teach that only some of the people belong there, they promote conflicts that can turn to war.

American and European military and diplomatic engagement was decisive in bringing peace to the Balkans. For many

reasons, the story in the Middle East and Ukraine has been quite different. The scale of the challenge is also entirely different—Iraq and Afghanistan are each far larger than the seven Balkan countries together. The total cost of U.S. operations in the Balkans was less than \$30 billion, but on a local per capita basis, the United States spent about 10 times as much money, and deployed about 100 times more troops, in the Balkans than in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Serwer concludes with an appeal for leadership in the Balkans, the Middle East and Ukraine that will adopt “principled commitments to move in the democratic and free-market direction” and “eschew ethno-sectarian appeals

and partition.” Better leadership in the United States is also essential. President Donald Trump, Serwer writes, “disdains international norms and views the world as disordered, hostile and chaotic. That is a self-fulfilling prophecy.”

Serwer offers no prediction here that better days lie ahead—only an assertion that, with clarity about objectives, better days are possible. Today, that seems optimism enough. ■

Harry Kopp is a frequent contributor to The Foreign Service Journal and a member of its editorial board. He is a friend and Foreign Service colleague of Daniel Serwer, whom he has known for more than 30 years.



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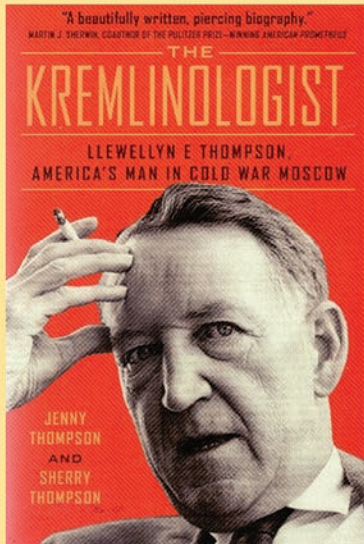
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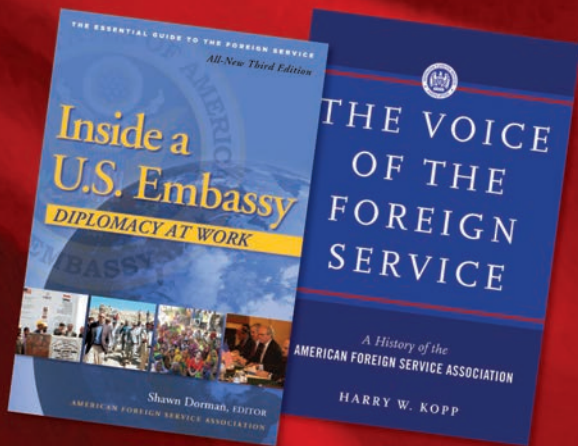
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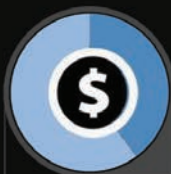
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(signed) Kathryn Owens, Managing Editor

Back to Brazzaville

BY DAN WHITMAN

July 19, 2018. It's been 38 years since I've been to Brazzaville. Still three degrees south of the equator, but now unrecognizable. This time there was air conditioning, isolation from the outside, but also the loss of the smells and rhythms from before.

Gone, the sweetish smell of burning garbage and the mangy thoroughbred dogs left behind by French aid workers and professors as they departed for their summer vacations in France. Gone also, the dirt thoroughfares and the banging of metal on metal: the developing world sounds of people fixing things. Now even poor people just replaced their old, broken cooking pots with new, cheap ones, courtesy of the Chinese.

Not exactly Schliemann's Troy, Brazzaville didn't have much underneath; the old buildings were now dust from decades of civil war and urban renewal. Before the changes, it had seemed more a village than a city.



I was drafting schedules and funding requests in my embassy office. At first, I didn't notice the stranger standing there, but I looked up when he said something. He didn't seem like embassy staff, but security wouldn't have let him in otherwise. He was about my age, maybe a little



The author and his motorbike in Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of the Congo, 1980. The Congo River is visible in the far background.

COURTESY OF DAN WHITMAN

younger. Dressed in a simple, flowing local shirt and worn pants, frayed shoes, his African hair half-gray.

"When I saw you in the hallway last week," he said, "I had the impression I'd seen you before. Is it possible you lived here in about 1980?"

Taken aback, I dropped my pen and offered him a seat. I got up from behind the desk and took the chair next to him.

"Were you at Marien Ngouabi University at that time?" he said. "You look familiar, though naturally a little changed."

"I was there, yes," I said, a little suspicious. "Are you saying you were one of my students back then?"

"No, but I think I remember you from the campus."

"I haven't found anything here I recognize from before," I said as I tried to read his expression. "Do you know the little neighborhood where the pros used to live?"

"I do. Opposite the Marché Filbert Bourou, off the Avenue Simon Kimbangu."

I processed the moment. "Can you take me there if I get a car? Maybe Saturday?"

"*Avec plaisir*," Michel said. He was a grounds manager at the embassy.



Back in 1980 I had lived in modest digs in an academic ghetto, with an Iranian, Brits, French, an Italian, Soviets and a Laotian as my neighbors. All taught at the university named after martyr Marien Ngouabi, the president killed in 1977; he had served as a national figure in a country slighted by history in being given its independence, rather than "winning" it.

Neighbors who'd been there longer than I had disdainfully called the university "*le lycée*," since its standards were not, shall we say, up to the *Grandes Écoles* in France. A Fulbright grant had me teaching English there, and I did my best at it.

After a year and a half, I took away lively memories. They come to me now as *tableaux vivants*:

- Sunsets over the river, beer in hand, as the sky darkened at dusk. A hundred thousand vampire bats filled the sky, lifting off from their day jobs on the *Île du Diable* in the middle of the river, to the mainland where they would find cattle to feed on at night.

- Flan and coffee under the arcades of

Dan Whitman was a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency and Department of State from 1985 through 2009, and now teaches at American University in Washington, D.C. His postings included Denmark, Spain, South Africa, Haiti and Cameroon. He has published books on Africa and Europe, and has written for The Foreign Service Journal. He is the author of Back to Brazzaville (New Academia Publishers, forthcoming).

a colonial French marketplace. A child approaches and says, “*J’ai faim.*” I offer a spoon and a seat at my table; frightened, he runs away.

- Community security guard Gabriel cooks *maboke*—or vegetables and savory fish slowly roasted in palm leaves over an open-pit fire.

- Afternoon run; amazed children laugh and point, “*Moundélé! Moundélé* [weird foreigner]!”

- Shower out of a blue bucket. Two gallons, plenty.

- Geckos stage acrobatics on the wall. Better than Cirque du Soleil.

- A tarantula, big as a freight car, scuttles under my refrigerator to the cool shadows below.



Now, in 2018, I was working a temporary job at the new U.S. embassy. The only building I recognized from before was Blanche Gomez Maternity Clinic, built by the Chinese in the late 1970s, when China’s per capita GDP was one-third that of the Republic of the Congo. For lack of running water, the clinic was never used, and still stood empty.

A new cornice led from Brazzaville’s center to the Case de Gaulle, where the leader of the Free French had held the Brazzaville conference of 1944. It was now the French ambassador’s residence. Built by the government of France, the cornice connected to a bridge to nowhere—aesthetically eye-popping, donated by a newly prosperous China.

The dour Congolese from before seemed gone. Gracious, quick to laughter and easy to deal with, the “new Congolese” seemed to be on social media, able to access some personal funds. Even a Brooks Brothers outlet opened with fanfare during the second week of July.

It seemed the new Brazzaville had pulled up its socks and was eager to join a wider world, held back only by airfare, visas and enough reading material to meet its wishes.



Embassy Brazzaville Locally Employed Staff Member Lejuste Moukoubouka at a local French pastry shop in downtown Brazzaville, 2018.

It seemed counterintuitive that this store could have a clientele in a poor country of four million (doubled from the 1980s), but Congolese assured me it would. “When they have any money at all, they spend it on clothes,” an embassy driver told me.



Michel, the stranger in my office, took me out to the city that Saturday. We saw the Brazzaville crafts market, where you get no hassles, no pressure to buy, and an open and relaxed atmosphere.

“Make an offer on anything in the store,” one stand owner said.

“What I value most here is *you*,” I said.

“You can’t afford me—I eat too much,” answered the stand owner.

It seemed the new Brazzaville had pulled up its socks and was eager to join a wider world, held back only by airfare, visas and enough reading material to meet its wishes. Michel and I scoured the city, discovering much that was new and nothing much from before.



In 38 years, the country had gone through travails and traumas. Corrupting oil deposits abetted factional and regional disputes. North-versus-south edginess came to a head in 1992, with northerner Denis Sassou-Nguesso displaced in elections by southerner, anti-Marxist Pascal Lissouba. Lissouba quarreled with runner-up Bernard Kolélas, and fights broke out.

Now I see that the new “Little” Congo hovers like a sting ray over a murky past. The civil war of 1997-1998, politically inspired and with ethnic overtones, took a steep toll. These days a teachers’ strike shuttered the university, as professors went without pay for five months. As the market price of oil dropped, so did single-product Congolese exports and, with those, the local economy. Asked why teachers weren’t being paid, the government said it had “other priorities.”

Congo-Brazzaville has a long road ahead before realizing its potential. Connected, savvy and determined, its youth and an emerging entrepreneurial class may carry it forward—and certainly out of the doldrums from four decades earlier—or, failing that, get out and live somewhere else.

It’s best for all if they manage to make it at home, and maybe they will. ■



A group of women colorfully dressed in local attire greet a delegation of U.S. Agency for International Development officers led by the chargé d'affaires near Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire, in 2017. Much song and dance welcome the visiting group as locals enthusiastically treat the Americans with warm hospitality. USAID collaborates with the Ivoirians to help fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic, reduce the scourge of malaria, strengthen democracy in the country and improve the local economy. ■

Corey A. Hancock is a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development. He currently serves as the supervisory program officer at Embassy Mexico City. His previous tours include Islamabad, Abidjan, Almaty and Lima.

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