

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2020

EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT INSIDE



**HUMAN RIGHTS** DIPLOMACY

**SILICON VALLEY** LESSONS

BRINGING **#AMERICANSHOME**

**FUND FOR  
AMERICAN  
DIPLOMACY**

# **TELLING THE STORY OF FOREIGN SERVICE EXCELLENCE**



*Pictured: the recipients of AFSA's 2019 awards for constructive dissent, exemplary performance and lifetime contributions to American diplomacy.*



Donate online at  
[afsa.org/donate](https://www.afsa.org/donate)

## **Make a tax-deductible gift to the Fund for American Diplomacy and help AFSA tell the story of the Foreign Service.**

AFSA's Fund for American Diplomacy (FAD) is a 501(c)(3) that supports outreach to tell the proud story of the Foreign Service to the American people. The FAD's aim is to educate and build a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service so that we have champions, ideally in all 50 states, prepared to stand up for the Foreign Service and defend our vitally important mission.

**You can make a contribution at [www.afsa.org/donate](https://www.afsa.org/donate)**



## MissionsAbroad®

Enabling you  
to have the  
freedom to  
live and work  
anywhere in  
the world.



Insurance coverage works differently overseas and we understand that. By providing priceless peace of mind around the globe, you can focus on your work abroad. We also make your return to the U.S. easier by continuing your coverage at home.

**Auto • Household Effects • Disability • Health • Life**

**Our coverage goes  
wherever you do.**

1.800.872.0067

Info@Clements.com

**Clements.com/MissionsAbroad**





# CHURCH SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

3 BOARDING SCHOOLS WITH  
SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR FAMILY



## Flexibility. Adaptability. Consistency.

A lot of things are uncertain right now. The quality of a boarding school education is not. With three schools located within driving distance of Washington, DC and multiple year financial packages, Church Schools in the Diocese of Virginia understand Foreign Service families and are ready to serve you whenever the need.

[Learn more today at episcopalschoolsva.org](http://episcopalschoolsva.org)

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

June 2020 Volume 97, No. 5

## Focus on Human Rights



24

### Human Rights Today: A Q&A with Stephen J. Rapp

A veteran prosecutor weighs in on the state of the project to establish and protect human rights around the world.

27

### Reclaiming Human Rights Leadership in a Multipolar World

Growing pushback from many parts of the world points to the need for rethinking our approach.

*By Seth D. Kaplan*

31

### Why U.S. Leadership Matters for the Global Defense, Protection and Promotion of Human Rights

An overarching human rights strategy to support the “globalization of freedom” is needed.

*By Harold Hongju Koh*

35

### From the FSJ Archive Human Rights in Foreign Policy

## Feature

37

### A Song for Unsung Heroes: Getting #AmericansHome from Ecuador

Diplomats at U.S. Mission Ecuador drew on talent, creativity and sheer determination.

*By Amelia Shaw*

## FS Heritage

41

### Partners in the Service: Foreign Service Wives a Century Ago

Foreign Service spouses have always played a critical role in U.S. diplomacy.

*By Molly M. Wood*

## Education Supplement

54

### Can You Really Write All of Your College Application Essays Over the Summer?

Get a jump start on a critical part of the college application process.

*By Francesca Kelly*

66

### College Admissions and COVID-19: An Evolving Landscape

Here are some of the issues and adjustments in the college admissions process to keep an eye on.

*By Rebecca Grappo*

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

## Perspectives

7

### President's Views

COVID-19 and the Path Ahead

By Eric Rubin

9

### Letter from the Editor

Human Rights and Diplomacy

By Shawn Dorman

19

### Speaking Out

Lessons from Silicon Valley:  
Practical Suggestions for a  
Modern Workplace

By Andrew R. Moore

80

### Reflections

Engaging Our Host  
Country's History

By Laura M. Fabrycky

82

### Local Lens

Timor-Leste

By Carole Fenton



## Departments

10 Letters

11 Talking Points

72 Books

## Marketplace

75 Real Estate

78 Classifieds

79 Index to Advertisers

## AFSA NEWS

THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

- 47 Remembering Foreign Service Day
- 48 State VP Voice—Looking Out for Our Newest Colleagues
- 49 USAID VP Voice—Thoughts on USAID and the Coronavirus
- 50 FCS VP Voice—Still Making Things Work for U.S. Companies
- 50 AFSA Engages in Virtual Structured Conversations
- 51 Where We Stand—After the Pandemic
- 52 Plans for Public Outreach Campaign Shift
- 53 AFSA Governing Board Meeting
- 53 New AFSA Benefit: Long-term Car Rentals



47

On the Cover—Illustration by Benedetto Cristofani/the iSpot.

# COVID-19 and the Path Ahead

BY ERIC RUBIN

Let me start by saluting and thanking our colleagues who have helped bring more than 70,000 of their fellow Americans home from overseas in the midst of the pandemic crisis. This was truly a heroic effort, often under the most difficult circumstances, with canceled flights, closed borders and total lockdown in many countries.

Our colleagues who made this happen across the globe are at posts of all sizes, shapes and varieties. Some are in countries with no viable medical care. Others are in places where the threat of civil unrest and violence is constant.

Many of those who stayed at post to assist with the evacuations did not have to. They chose to do so because they were committed to their work and their mission. This is the U.S. Foreign Service at its best.

So, to our colleagues who stayed and sacrificed under tough conditions to rescue their fellow citizens, thank you. You make us proud—and you show our country who we are and what we do.

Moving on, we have strategic thinking to do about how this extraordinary situation will affect the practice of diplomacy going forward. Will there

be more telework and virtual negotiations? Assuredly. Can technology replace human contact in diplomacy? Definitely not.



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

We are going to need to find a new balance, and to do that we will need to step back from the crisis of the moment to think seriously about how we can do our jobs and advance the national interest in what will certainly be a changed world. In thinking about the future of diplomacy, it is important to draw on the examples and the lessons of colleagues who came before us.

As I did for last month's column, I went to my bookshelves again this month, and this time found Sir Brian Urquhart's superb biography of Ralph Bunche, one of the titans of American diplomacy and a true fighter for truth and justice.

Bunche's life is the story of the triumph of optimism and patriotism. And his accomplishments were stunning. Following his service in the Office of Strategic Services during World War II, he played a crucial role in organizing the Dumbarton Oaks Conference that launched the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the postwar global financial system.

He then helped chair the founding session of the United Nations in San Francisco, and from there joined the U.N. as deputy special envoy for the Palestinian conflict.

When the lead U.N. negotiator for Palestine, Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden, was assassinated by Jewish extremists, Bunche moved up and negotiated the cease-fire that ended the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1949. That earned

him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. He went on to lead U.N. peace efforts in the Congo, Cyprus, Yemen and Kashmir, ending his career as Under Secretary General for Political Affairs.

It would be hard to match such a career. But here's the thing. Bunche was African American. When he came to Washington to serve his country during World War II, the only places he could eat were the cafeteria at Union Station and federal agency cafeterias that had recently been desegregated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. When he moved to New York to join the United Nations, he and his son were denied membership at the West Side Tennis Club in Queens, home to the U.S. Open.

And yet Bunche never wavered in his patriotism, his determination to make a difference and his belief in a better future. Before he died in 1971, he wrote:

"You can surmount the obstacles in your path if you are determined, courageous and hard-working. Never be faint-hearted. Be resolute, but never bitter." He concluded: "There will be no security in our world, no release from agonizing tension, no genuine progress, no enduring peace, until, in Shelley's fine words, 'reason's voice, loud as the voice of nature, shall have waked the nations.'"

Let's remember Ralph Bunche as a model of what we seek to be and achieve. And let's keep those words in mind as we navigate some very difficult times as Americans, as members of the Foreign Service and as patriots. ■

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

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

**Managing Editor**  
Kathryn Owens: [owens@afsa.org](mailto:owens@afsa.org)

**Associate Editor**  
Cameron Woodworth: [woodworth@afsa.org](mailto:woodworth@afsa.org)

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

**Business Development Manager—  
Advertising and Circulation**  
Molly Long: [long@afsa.org](mailto:long@afsa.org)

**Art Director**  
Caryn Suko Smith

**Editorial Board**  
Alexis Ludwig, Chair  
Hon. Robert M. Beecroft  
Daniel Crocker  
Joel Ehrendreich  
Harry Kopp  
Jess McTigue  
Christopher Teal  
Joe Tordella  
Vivian Walker  
Hon. Laurence Wohlers  
Dinah Zeltser-Winart

## THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

*The Foreign Service Journal* (ISSN 0146-3543), 2101 E Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 is published monthly, with combined January-February and July-August issues, by the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), a private, nonprofit organization. Material appearing herein represents the opinions of the writers and does not necessarily represent the views of the *Journal*, the Editorial Board or AFSA. Writer queries and submissions are invited, preferably by email. The *Journal* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photos or illustrations. Advertising inquiries are invited. All advertising is subject to the publisher's approval. AFSA reserves the right to reject advertising that is not in keeping with its standards and objectives. The appearance of advertisements herein does not imply endorsement of goods or services offered. Opinions expressed in advertisements are the views of the advertisers and do not necessarily represent AFSA views or policy. *Journal* subscription: AFSA member—\$20, included in annual dues; student—\$30; others—\$50; Single issue—\$4.50. For foreign surface mail, add \$18 per year; foreign airmail, \$36 per year. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Indexed by the Public Affairs Information Services (PAIS).

**Email:** [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org)  
**Phone:** (202) 338-4045  
**Fax:** (202) 338-8244  
**Web:** [www.afsa.org/fsj](http://www.afsa.org/fsj)

© American Foreign Service Association, 2020

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

Postmaster: Send address changes to  
AFSA, Attn: Address Change  
2101 E Street NW  
Washington DC 20037-2990



## CONTACTS



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

**AFSA Headquarters:**  
(202) 338-4045; Fax (202) 338-6820  
**State Department AFSA Office:**  
(202) 647-8160; Fax (202) 647-0265  
**USAID AFSA Office:**  
(202) 712-1941; Fax (202) 216-3710  
**FCS AFSA Office:**  
(202) 482-9088; Fax (202) 482-9087

### GOVERNING BOARD

**President**  
Hon. Eric S. Rubin: [rubin@afsa.org](mailto:rubin@afsa.org)  
**Secretary**  
Ken Kero-Mentz: [KeroMentzKA@state.gov](mailto:KeroMentzKA@state.gov)  
**Treasurer**  
Virginia L. Bennett: [vibennett@gmail.com](mailto:vibennett@gmail.com)  
**State Vice President**  
Thomas Yazdgerdi: [YazdgerdiTK@state.gov](mailto:YazdgerdiTK@state.gov)  
**USAID Vice President**  
Jason Singer: [jsinger@usaid.gov](mailto:jsinger@usaid.gov)  
**FCS Vice President**  
Jay Carreiro: [Jay.Carreiro@trade.gov](mailto:Jay.Carreiro@trade.gov)  
**FAS Vice President**  
Michael Riedel: [michael.riedel@yahoo.com](mailto:michael.riedel@yahoo.com)  
**Retiree Vice President**  
John K. Naland: [nalandfamily@yahoo.com](mailto:nalandfamily@yahoo.com)  
**State Representatives**  
Joshua C. Archibald  
Matthew Dolbow  
Holly Kirking Loomis  
Kristin Michelle Roberts  
Tamir Waser  
Lillian Wahl-Tuco  
**USAID Representative**  
Lorraine Sherman  
**FCS Alternate Representative**  
Mike Calvert  
**FAS Alternate Representative**  
Mary Parrish  
**USAGM Representative**  
Steve Herman  
**APHIS Representative**  
Jeffery Austin  
**Retiree Representatives**  
Mary Daly  
Philip A. Shull

### STAFF

**Executive Director**  
Ásgeir Sigfússon: [sigfusson@afsa.org](mailto:sigfusson@afsa.org)  
**Executive Assistant to the President**  
Richard Bruner: [bruner@afsa.org](mailto:bruner@afsa.org)  
**Office Coordinator**  
Therese Thomas: [therese@afsa.org](mailto:therese@afsa.org)

**PROFESSIONAL POLICY ISSUES**  
**Director of Professional Policy Issues**  
Julie Nutter: [nutter@afsa.org](mailto:nutter@afsa.org)

### ADVOCACY

**Director of Advocacy**  
Kim Greenplate: [greenplate@afsa.org](mailto:greenplate@afsa.org)

### FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

**Director of Finance and Facilities**  
Femi Oshobukola: [oshobukola@afsa.org](mailto:oshobukola@afsa.org)  
**Manager, HR and Operations**  
Cory Nishi: [cnishi@afsa.org](mailto:cnishi@afsa.org)  
**Controller**  
Kalpna Srimal: [srimal@afsa.org](mailto:srimal@afsa.org)  
**Member Accounts Specialist**  
Ana Lopez: [lopez@afsa.org](mailto:lopez@afsa.org)  
**IT and Infrastructure Coordinator**  
Aleksandar "Pav" Pavlovich:  
[pavlovich@afsa.org](mailto:pavlovich@afsa.org)

### COMMUNICATIONS

**Director of Communications**  
Ásgeir Sigfússon: [sigfusson@afsa.org](mailto:sigfusson@afsa.org)  
**Manager of Outreach and Internal  
Communications**  
Allan Saunders: [saunders@afsa.org](mailto:saunders@afsa.org)  
**Online Communications Manager**  
Jeff Lau: [lau@afsa.org](mailto:lau@afsa.org)  
**Awards and Scholarships Manager**  
Theo Horn: [horn@afsa.org](mailto:horn@afsa.org)  
**Strategic Messaging Coordinator**  
Nadja Ruzica: [ruzica@afsa.org](mailto:ruzica@afsa.org)

### MEMBERSHIP

**Director, Programs and Member Engagement**  
Christine Miele: [miele@afsa.org](mailto:miele@afsa.org)  
**Coordinator of Member Relations and Events**  
Ashley Baine: [baine@afsa.org](mailto:baine@afsa.org)  
**Coordinator of Member Recruitment  
and Benefits**  
Perri Green: [green@afsa.org](mailto:green@afsa.org)  
**Retirement Benefits Counselor**  
Dolores Brown: [brown@afsa.org](mailto:brown@afsa.org)

### LABOR MANAGEMENT

**General Counsel**  
Sharon Papp: [PappS@state.gov](mailto:PappS@state.gov)  
**Deputy General Counsel**  
Raeka Safai: [SafaiR@state.gov](mailto:SafaiR@state.gov)  
**Senior Staff Attorneys**  
Zlatana Badrich: [BadrichZ@state.gov](mailto:BadrichZ@state.gov)  
Neera Parikh: [ParikhNA@state.gov](mailto:ParikhNA@state.gov)  
**Labor Management Counselor**  
Colleen Fallon-Lenaghan:  
[FallonLenaghanC@state.gov](mailto:FallonLenaghanC@state.gov)  
**Senior Labor Management Advisor**  
James Yorke: [YorkeJ@state.gov](mailto:YorkeJ@state.gov)  
**Labor Management Coordinator**  
Patrick Bradley: [BradleyPG@state.gov](mailto:BradleyPG@state.gov)  
**Senior Grievance Counselor**  
Heather Townsend: [TownsendHA@state.gov](mailto:TownsendHA@state.gov)  
**Grievance Counselor**  
Pete Lyon: [LyonPC@state.gov](mailto:LyonPC@state.gov)  
**Law Clerk**  
Briana J. Odom



# Human Rights and Diplomacy

BY SHAWN DORMAN

As we get ready to release the June *FSJ*, with a focus on human rights and diplomacy, the COVID-19 pandemic rages on. Many U.S. states are moving to “reopen,” whether or not the conditions for doing so safely (testing, tracing, isolation) are in place.

The *FSJ* Editorial Board and staff have changed the way we operate. We are working and meeting remotely, which is going well.

Due to the “minimize” order from the Diplomatic Pouch and Mail Office, we are not mailing hard copies of the *Journal* to overseas and pouch addresses. But we are sharing the digital versions and are happy to hold hard copies for any overseas subscribers who request them.

Our mission remains the same: to bring you content that is relevant and useful. We will continue to highlight issues of critical importance to the Foreign Service, U.S. diplomacy and world affairs.

In this month’s focus on human rights, three experts present their views on the state of human rights in foreign policy and the current debate about redefining the scope of official human rights strategy.

Stephen J. Rapp sets the scene with responses to wide-ranging questions

about the state of the effort to establish human rights protections around the world.

---

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



Seth D. Kaplan, in “Reclaiming Human Rights Leadership in a Multipolar World,” suggests that growing pushback from many parts of the world against a “Western” human rights agenda points to the need to rethink the U.S. approach.

In contrast, Harold Hongju Koh argues for strong U.S. global leadership in promoting and defending universal human rights based on our founding principles and values.

In his Speaking Out column, Andrew R. Moore offers “Lessons from Silicon Valley” following a three-year “posting” there. And in *FS Heritage*, “Partners in the Service,” Molly M. Wood explores the fascinating history of FS wives in action in the early 20th century.

Laura M. Fabrycky shares her journey to connecting to the rich Berlin history of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in “Engaging Our Host Country’s History,” an extended Reflection.

The Education Supplement contains two articles you’ll want to share with the students in your life: Francesca Huemer Kelly explains how to write all of your college application essays over the summer, and Rebecca Grappo shares news on how to apply to and attend college during the pandemic.

You’ll also find updates on the Foreign Service response to the pandemic—in particular, the repatriation efforts—in Talking Points and in the Feature, “Song for Unsung Heroes: Getting #Americans-Home from Ecuador,” by Amelia Shaw.

In the AFSA President’s Views column, Eric Rubin shares his take on

COVID-19 and the path forward for diplomacy, calling for strategic thinking and learning from the past.

Looking ahead, we have shifted our July-August focus to the FS response to the pandemic, and reached out widely to FS members and other experts to gather various views and angles on this challenge.

For instance, we had a fascinating conversation with Jeremy Konyndyk, who led the U.S. government’s response to the 2014 West Africa Ebola outbreak as head of USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.

A bit of his advice worth sharing ahead of July: “To defeat this, it takes a global effort. ... We need to be learning the lessons from the rest of the world. ... There’s a playbook here, and it’s an at-scale application of basic public health practices using modern tools. ... A pandemic does not have a passport; it does not respect borders. We will not end it domestically unless we end it at a global level.”

The United States, unfortunately, has not taken a global leadership role that the world would expect during a time of crisis, and questions about the future abound.

What will be the “new normal,” and what is the path ahead for the U.S. Foreign Service in a changed world? What happens when you cannot go “the last three feet” to engage face-to-face? What are the new tools for diplomacy, and how can the role of diplomats as conveners be advanced?

Please share your perspectives through letters and article submissions (to [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org)).

Stay well, and keep in touch. ■

## Tex Harris and a Girl Named Alex

In 1995 when the Foreign Agricultural Service gave up its three-year battle to keep me out of the Foreign Service due to my minor daughter's disability, it was the first case of its kind under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

I sent a copy of the final decision to F. Allen "Tex" Harris, who was AFSA president during my brutal bureaucratic battle. Tex, who passed away in February, supported my fight.

I knew of his successful dissent in other battles, including exposing human rights abuses in Argentina, and had called him several times during my three-year battle for disability rights in the foreign affairs agencies. I vividly recall the times Tex called me, to ask about my daughter's health and to offer kind words.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division reversed the FAS stand on the grounds that it constituted associational discrimination against persons with disabilities. A 950-word column in *The New York Times* on Jan. 22, 1995, also helped.

I shared the final decision with Tex and asked him to share it with all foreign affairs agencies and all AFSA members. "Never again" became my motto.

On May 25, 1995, Harris wrote a letter to Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, a former U.S. congressman who had voted for the ADA. A brief three-paragraph letter, it meant the world to my family. It meant Tex Harris

understood my fight was not only for me but for other qualified Foreign Service candidates denied or forced from duty solely due to disability discrimination.

"I'm pleased to commend the Department of Agriculture's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity for the thoughtful decision it issued in James E. Patterson's case (case number

921203)," Harris wrote. "For too long, the Foreign Affairs agencies have disregarded the prohibitions in the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act against discrimination on the basis of an employee's disability, or the disability of a person with whom the employee has a relationship or association, by refusing to offer an accommodation to these individuals."

Harris continued: "In the past, AFSA has had several requests for assistance from individuals who have been unable to get a medical clearance because of either their own disability or one of their family member's."

I understood the sorrow of others who had accepted discrimination as a fact of their lives. They had been told by their government that they were "insurance burdens" and unworthy of diplomatic careers because their disabilities or their disabled dependents would make others "sad" or "uncomfortable." I was told these things.

"We are pleased with the EEO Office's decision in Mr. Patterson's case, in which the office recognized that a reasonable accommodation for an employee whose dependent could not be medically cleared was to permit an accompanied tour and the payment of a separate maintenance allowance," Harris wrote. "The Department of Agriculture's final

decision provides a much-needed precedent in this important area of civil rights law."

Harris called USDA's decision "well-reasoned." He copied his letter and FAS' Final Agency Decision (FAD 921203) to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Secretary of Commerce Ronald Brown, USIA Director Joseph Duffy and J. Brian Atwood.

In turn, I forwarded Tex's letter to disability rights activists, academics and others.

Battling the foreign policy bureaucracy is not for the faint of heart. I choose not to dwell on the "brutal" moments, but to recall the better moments, such as every time I spoke with Tex Harris. He let my daughter and me know we were not alone. ■

*James Patterson*  
FSO, retired  
Washington, D.C.



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

**Submit letters to the editor:  
[journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org)**

## State Department Helps Bring #AmericansHome

Since Jan. 29, when a chartered flight brought nearly 200 Americans home from Wuhan, China, the State Department has been involved in one of the largest repatriation efforts in its history.

As of May 12, the State Department said it had coordinated the repatriation of 85,141 Americans on 886 flights from 131 countries and territories since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. It hasn't always gone smoothly; stressed and stretched, the department has had to work around countries that closed their borders and airlines that canceled flights.

"Nearly every day, incredible stories of our teams' speed and tenacity getting our people home hit my desk," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said at an April 7 press briefing. "These stories could be pulled from a Hollywood script. They're remarkable."

"Our teams are printing emergency passports to get these folks back," Pompeo added. "We call hotels to find spaces for U.S. citizens to sleep to make sure they're near the airport for the moment that the plane will arrive. And we make arrangements for flight crews, and we provide Americans with letters for safe passage. The list goes on and on. It's truly a great piece of work by the United States government on behalf of the American people."

State's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Ian Brownlee is leading the repatriation effort.

The 24/7 State Department crisis cell he heads "coordinates a global, multi-agency team that has rented boats for Americans marooned on the Amazon, redirected a U.S. plane monitoring the illegal drug trade in Latin America to ferry Americans from remote areas to

## Contemporary Quote

With everything that's going on in the world, it's very important to understand that we have a network to support the American people wherever we're at. The ambassador here and his staff have been amazing at communicating with us for making sure we have what we need to be informed, safe and be aware of the risk of the virus. Right now, we're getting ready to get on a plane to head back to the United States, so what I want to tell everybody in America is we still have good people doing good things. Namaste.

—An American speaking from Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu on March 31 prior to boarding a flight back to the United States, as shared on a video posted @USEmbassyKathmandu April 3.

larger airports, and sent a bus to the edge of the Sahara to fetch American campers," *Time* magazine reported on April 20.

"We are tracking many cases of U.S. citizens overseas who are not necessarily close to a capital or other major city, and we're making every effort to help people get to where they can take advantage of our repatriation flights, of course local travel conditions permitting," Brownlee said at an April 22 press briefing.

"For example, in the Philippines we have coordinated sweeper flights to collect U.S. citizens from Cebu, Davao and Iloilo and get them to Manila to fly home," he said. "In Cabo Verde, the team is working to arrange a charter repatriation flight that will collect U.S. citizens from several island locations before an onward connection to Boston. We are working hard and creatively to help those who have come forward to request our assistance, but as I've said on multiple occasions, these flights will not go on forever."

At embassies and consulates around the world, U.S. diplomats and local staff worked tirelessly to help Americans return home. Tweeting under the #AmericansHome hashtag, many shared

their stories on Twitter. A sampling of their tweets is on p.12.

In addition, to help track the coronavirus impact, the State Department has established a Coronavirus Data Analytics Team that will allow employees to easily share all the data being collected about the coronavirus and produce effective data for State Department analysis, Under Secretary of State for Management Brian Bulatao announced on April 3.

"The CDAT will serve as a one-stop shop for data questions and aims to work closely with other collaborating data offices to ensure all COVID data is being managed in one central repository to be shared and leveraged as applicable," he said in a departmental notice.

## COVID-19 Disruption

Following months of disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many Foreign Service members turned their attention to the pending summer transfer season, wondering how much longer it might be delayed. And many families wondered when they might return to post following authorized or ordered departures.

On May 12, the State Department

**U.S. Embassy Kabul @USEmbassyKabul**



April 21

Safety and security of Americans is our core mission. We're proud to have helped bring many #AmericansHome from Afghanistan. #Coronavirus, terrorism, and political crises will never stop us from serving and helping our most important customer – the American people.



U.S. EMBASSY KABUL

U.S. Embassy Kabul staff at Hamid Karzai International Airport.

**U.S. Embassy Dhaka @usembassydhaka**



April 13

Ambassador Miller & Foreign Secretary Momen saw off a 3rd group of American citizens today. On this eve of Bengali New Year, we're thankful for the enduring cooperation, people-to-people ties, and friendship between the #USA & #BD. A safe and healthy new year to all. #COVID19



U.S. EMBASSY DHAKA

U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl Miller and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen see off a group of U.S. citizens April 13 at Shah Jalal International Airport.

**U.S. Embassy Burma @USEmbassyBurma**



April 6

To the 267 American citizens and residents who departed #Myanmar on a U.S. govt-organized flight today, we wish you a safe & healthy return home. Thank you to the Myanmar authorities for facilitating the flight. #AmericansHome



U.S. EMBASSY BURMA

U.S. Embassy Burma staff assist travelers at Yangon International Airport.

**Ambassador Lynch @AmbLynchGuyana**



April 15

Proud to work with the Embassy team to bring nearly 1000 Americans and their families home. Thank you @goeasternair for the partnership! #AmericansHome



U.S. EMBASSY GUYANA

Ambassador Sarah-Ann Lynch talks with a passenger at Cheddi Jagan International Airport in Guyana.

extended a hold on summer transfers until at least the end of June, leaving hundreds of Foreign Service families to wonder when they might depart for their next assignments.

By the beginning of April, the State Department had evacuated 6,000 U.S. diplomats and family members since the start of the outbreak, about half of its overseas presence, according to an April 1 *Wall Street Journal* report.

The Foreign Service community—overseas and stateside, American and local staff—has not been able to avoid the coronavirus. As of May 12, the State Department reported that five employees had died from COVID-19, including two in the United States and three overseas. Their names have not been released.

The department also reported 111 current coronavirus cases among State Department employees in the United States, and 160 overseas, while 221 people had recovered overseas. For people recovering in the United States, that data is not being tracked as of May 12.

U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso Andrew Young, the first U.S. ambassador to learn he had the virus, “was sealed in an isolation chamber and loaded into an evacuation flight” out of Ouagadougou on March 25, *The New York Times* reported on April 4. By April 10, Embassy Ouagadougou tweeted that Amb. Young had fully recovered.

“My treatment is not the same treatment that your average Burkinabe will receive in the coming challenges, because the situation is going to get more difficult in the couple of weeks ahead of us,” Amb. Young told the *Times*. “So I carry that.”

In early May, most State Department employees in the Washington, D.C., area continued to work from home and wondered when they would be allowed to return to their offices.

## Returning Home from Senegal in the Midst of a Pandemic

**D**an Honig, an assistant professor of international development at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, is one of thousands of Americans whom the State Department helped return home from overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic. On April 7, Honig tweeted the following story (edited for length and style, and used with permission from the author).

My family and I took an @StateDept evacuation flight from Senegal to the U.S. I’d like to say a few things about that, focusing on 1) the people who work for State (wonderful) and 2) the impression it left me about the coordinated U.S. airport response to COVID-19 (disturbing).

First ... my family and I were and remain fine. Like, I imagine, many of my fellow passengers, we took the flight over worries about Senegal’s closed borders and what might happen if things got bad there and we couldn’t get back to America for some time.

... On April 3, we joined 150 or so other Americans ... at Dakar’s very empty airport.

The repurposed cargo plane that we entered that morning was operated by the U.S. Department of State’s Operational Medicine team. We all wore masks, the evacuation team PPE.

After everyone received a medical check, the [rep from State] addressed us all from the front of the plane—he had to shout, as cargo planes don’t come with speakers.

“Listen up! This isn’t a normal flight, and we’re not flight attendants—we’re medical professionals. Our job is to get you home safe. Please clean up after yourselves—we only have a few hours in



An employee of the State Department’s Operational Medicine team assists Americans on a flight home from Senegal.

the U.S. before we take off again; we need every minute we can get.”

“How many days you been doing this—flying back and forth evacuating people?” a passenger asked.

“Six. Liberia yesterday, somewhere else day before that, another place tomorrow,” the man replied.

“Do you get overtime for this?” another passenger asked.

The man laughed. “We’re government employees. No. This is our job.” He paused for a moment. “This is why I signed up for this job. I’m proud to do this—I’m honored to help y’all get home.”

Then something remarkable happened—someone started clapping. And then a plane full of people joined in. We were applauding this individual, and his sacrifice, and his help to us. But I was applauding something else, too—and I bet I wasn’t the only one.

I was applauding a government that managed to have people like this man working for it, and the hope it gave me

## Senators Introduce Foreign Service Day Resolution

**F**S Caucus Co-Chairs Senators Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) and Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) recently introduced a resolution to the Senate designating May 1, 2020, as “United States Foreign Service Day.” This bipartisan effort had 11 other co-sponsors.

“Across the globe, American Foreign Service officers work tirelessly to protect and promote our country’s best interests,” said Senator Van Hollen in a nod to members of the Foreign Service. “As we’ve faced new challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, you’ve worked overtime to help Americans abroad and to bring many home. Your efforts are vital to our nation, and I’m proud to recognize your hard work and immense contributions in celebration of the 96th Foreign Service Day.”

“I’d like to salute the members of the Foreign Service on the occasion of the 96th Foreign Service Day,” said Senator Sullivan. “Your day-in-and-day-out work—engaging governments, businesses and individuals around the world—ensures our national security, assists our citizens and promotes U.S. interests abroad. Additionally, at an unprecedented time for our country, your relentless efforts in assisting thousands of citizens and residents to return home, are but one more example of the invaluable contributions of our Foreign Service.”

Here is the text of the resolution.

**Designating May 1, 2020, as “United States Foreign Service Day”** in recognition of the men and women who have served, or are presently serving, in the Foreign Service of the United States, and honoring the members of the Foreign Service who have given their lives in the line of duty. ...

### HEARD ON THE HILL



Whereas the Rogers Act of 1924 established a career organization based on competitive examination and merit promotion;

Whereas in 2020 more than 16,000 men and women of the Foreign Service are serving at home and abroad;

Whereas Foreign Service personnel are supported by more than 75,000 locally engaged staff in nearly 300 embassies and consulates, who provide unique expertise and crucial links to host countries;

Whereas Foreign Service personnel comprise employees from the Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the United States Agency for Global Media;

Whereas the diplomatic, consular, communications, trade, development, security, public diplomacy, and numerous other functions that Foreign Service personnel perform constitute the first and most cost-effective instrument of the United States to protect and promote United States interests abroad;

Whereas the men and women of the Foreign Service and their families are increasingly exposed to risks and danger, even in times of peace, and many have died in the service of the United States;

Whereas employees of the Foreign Service work daily—

(1) to ensure the national security of the United States;

(2) to provide assistance to United States citizens overseas;

(3) to preserve peace, freedom, and economic prosperity around the world;

(4) to promote the ideals and values of the United States, internationally recognized human rights, freedom, equal opportunities for women and girls, rule of law, and democracy;

(5) to promote transparency, provide accurate information, and combat disinformation;

(6) to cultivate new markets for United States products and services and develop new investment opportunities that create jobs in the United States and promote prosperity;

(7) to promote economic development, reduce poverty, end hunger and malnutrition, fight disease, combat international crime and illegal drugs, and address environmental degradation; and

(8) to provide emergency and humanitarian assistance to respond to crises around the world;

Whereas in response to the unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic, all of the foreign affairs agencies of the United States have worked tirelessly to support the people of the United States, often placing their own safety and well-being at risk;

Whereas Foreign Service person-

nel and locally engaged staff have assisted individuals in crisis by providing emergency consular services, repatriating United States citizens abroad, surging the agriculture quarantine and inspection program, providing technical assistance and emergency and humanitarian relief to other countries and populations, and pursuing other efforts that have saved lives;

*Whereas* the foreign affairs agencies and the American Foreign Service Association have observed Foreign Service Day in May for many years; and

*Whereas* it is both appropriate and just for the United States as a whole to recognize the dedication of the men and women of the Foreign Service and to honor the members of the Foreign Service who have given their lives in the loyal pursuit of their duties and responsibilities representing the interests of the United States and of its citizens: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved, That the Senate—*

(1) honors the men and women who have served, or are presently serving, in the Foreign Service of the United States for their dedicated and important service to the United States;

(2) calls on the people of the United States to reflect on the service and sacrifice of past, present, and future employees of the Foreign Service of the United States, wherever they serve, with appropriate ceremonies and activities; and

(3) designates May 1, 2020, as “United States Foreign Service Day” to commemorate the 96th anniversary of the Foreign Service of the United States.

that America might just get through the pandemic, whose peak in the United States we were flying toward. I felt calmer than I had in a few hours.

I’m currently writing a book on mission-driven bureaucrats—that’s what I’d been researching in Senegal; and here was one standing right in front of me (and not the first—embassy staff in Dakar were also wonderful, dedicated and kind throughout this process).

Also true to the narrative of the book, these mission-driven bureaucrats are very hard to “see” most of the time. The name of the relevant State Department bureau (Medical Services) doesn’t have any obvious mention of Operational Medicine at all.

I figured out who the director of the Operational Medicine division was (William Walters, a senior civil servant) only by finding a right-wing screed criticizing him and State for bringing infected Americans home.

So I’m writing this in large part to say thank you to Mr. Walters, @StateDept, and all the other heroes—from grocery store attendants to hospital orderlies to doctors—sacrificing of themselves these weeks.

## FSO Duo Raises Money for Masks

Foreign Service Officers Jack Dart and Kevin Miles, posted to Shanghai, launched a GoFundMe campaign with the goal of raising money to pay for 10,000 masks for healthcare workers in each of five American cities hit hard by the novel coronavirus.

At press time, they had reached nearly \$111,000 out of their \$150,000 goal. The pair say they are sourcing masks from reputable Chinese suppliers to send directly to healthcare providers.

Their efforts so far have raised money

to send 10,000 masks to New York City, and they hope to send 10,000 masks each to Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans and Boston, as well.

Visit [10kmask.org](https://10kmask.org) to learn more.

## State Cables Warned of Safety Issues at Wuhan Lab

After U.S. diplomats visited the Wuhan Institute of Virology multiple times in early 2018, they were so concerned about safety conditions there that they wrote two cables warning Washington about a lack of proper safety procedures at the WIV, and the possibility that the lab’s research on coronaviruses and bats could risk a new SARS-like pandemic.

That’s according to an April 14 op-ed in *The Washington Post* by foreign policy columnist Josh Rogin.

“The cables have fueled discussions inside the U.S. government about whether this or another Wuhan lab was the source of the virus—even though conclusive proof has yet to emerge,” Rogin writes.

“Sources familiar with the cables said they were meant to sound an alarm about the grave safety concerns at the WIV lab, especially regarding its work with bat coronaviruses,” Rogin adds. “The embassy officials were calling for more U.S. attention to this lab and more support for it, to help it fix its problems.”

The State Department declined to comment for his story, Rogin said.

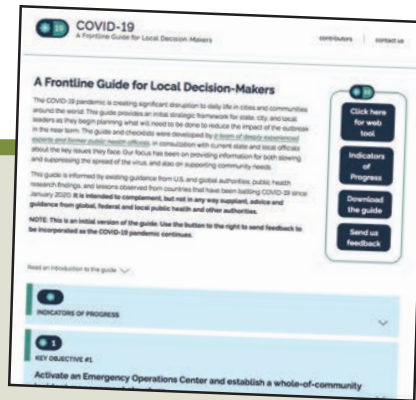
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley told reporters on April 14 that U.S. intelligence officers had looked into the possibility that the coronavirus originated in the laboratory and determined that the “weight of evidence” points to “natural” origins. “But we don’t know for certain,” he added.

## Site of the Month

### COVID Local ([covidlocal.org](https://covidlocal.org))

The COVID Local website bills itself as “a frontline guide for local decision-makers” around the world as they seek to determine what needs to be done to reduce the impact of the novel coronavirus on their communities. The site features a 33-page downloadable guide and checklists developed by a team of experts and former public health officials together with current global, state and local officials.

The guide focuses on seven key objectives for addressing COVID-19 at the community level, including slowing and reducing transmission, focusing prevention on high-risk



groups and mitigating economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each of the key objectives features priority objectives and resources for further learning.

Jeremy Konyndyk, a senior policy fellow at the Center for Global Development and former director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance for USAID, is one of the guide's authors.

At an April 21 press briefing in Geneva, World Health Organization Spokesperson Fadéla Chaib said the available evidence suggests the coronavirus came from animals in China late last year and not from a laboratory.

## Shooting the Messenger

The White House launched a highly unusual attack on the Voice of America on April 10, charging the federally funded but independent news service with promoting Chinese government propaganda in its reporting about the coronavirus outbreak.

The critique, posted on the White House website, bore a provocative headline: “Amid a Pandemic, Voice of America Spends Your Money to Promote Foreign Propaganda.”

It said, in part: “Journalists should report the facts, but VOA has instead

amplified Beijing's propaganda. VOA called China's Wuhan lockdown a successful ‘model’ copied by much of the world—and then tweeted out video of the communist government's celebratory light show marking the quarantine's alleged end.”

“I'm afraid I can't tell you what prompted it,” said Amanda Bennett, VOA's director, when asked about the attack. “It just came out of the blue.” But she quickly issued a lengthy rebuttal, pointing out just some of the many instances where VOA has harshly criticized Beijing's policies on a range of topics.

“One of the big differences between publicly funded independent media, like the Voice of America, and state-controlled media is that we are free to show all sides of an issue and are actually mandated to do so by law as stated

in the VOA Charter signed by President Gerald Ford in 1976,” Bennett wrote in her rebuttal.

“We are thoroughly covering China's dis-information and misinformation in English and Mandarin and at the same time reporting factually—as we always do in all 47 of our broadcast languages—on other events in China,” she added.

## State Releases 2019 Human Rights Report

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo criticized the human rights records of four U.S. adversaries during a March 11 press conference unveiling the department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2019. Calling China's detention of Uyghur Muslims “the stain of the century,” he criticized China, Venezuela, Iran and Cuba as examples of “dark places” where human rights “are infringed on.”

Some human rights advocates criticized the Secretary for aiming his rhetoric only at adversaries, thereby politicizing the report, according to a March 11 *Washington Post* story.

The Center for American Progress, in a March 18 article on its website, echoed those concerns. Secretary Pompeo “was silent about the abuses committed by some of the administration's closest friends, including Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the Philippines.”

But Robert Destro, the State Department's assistant secretary for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, who heads the office that compiled the report, told the *Post* that “any fair-minded person who reads these reports will see that they're pretty hard-hitting across the board. And so we're no more or less hard-hitting with respect to those countries than we are to other countries that are flagged here for having problems.”



## PDAA Honors Outstanding Public Diplomacy Initiatives

**T**he Public Diplomacy Association of America's 2020 Awards for Achievement in Public Diplomacy are out. And whether engaging difficult-to-reach audiences in the Middle East, countering Russian disinformation in the Baltics or resetting a historically contentious bilateral relationship in Africa, the recipients used a mix of outside-the-box thinking, deep understanding of their audiences and superb leadership abilities to demonstrably advance U.S. foreign policy objectives.

The four winners are: Zennia Paganini, Public Affairs Officer, Yemen Affairs Unit (based at Embassy Riyadh); the Public Affairs Section, Embassy Luanda; Meghan Lockett, Assistant Public Affairs Officer, Embassy Vilnius; and Riad Yazbeck, Cultural Affairs Specialist, Embassy Beirut.

The ongoing multiyear civil war between the Yemeni government and insurgent Houthi forces led to the relocation of Embassy Sana'a to Riyadh in 2015. From this office in exile, PAO Zennia Paganini maintained connections with Yemenis in Yemen but also those scattered throughout the Middle East.

She created the MAP initiative—Make a Place for Yemeni Youth—that works to educate diaspora youth, support Yemenis' economic empowerment and strengthen the country's civil society institutions.

A historically contentious quarter-century relationship between the United States and Angola formed the backdrop for the work of PAO Deneysel Kirkpatrick and her seven Locally Employed staff at Embassy Luanda. They broke new ground in strengthening the embassy's relations with the Angolan government and opening new avenues of bilateral cooperation.

The initiative centered on the 2019 commemoration of the 400th anniversary



Public Affairs Officer Zennia Paganini, who works for the Yemen Affairs Unit in Riyadh, talks with Yemeni students in Cairo.

of the first African slaves arriving in the United States. Programs ranging from hip-hop to cooking highlighted the two nations' shared cultural heritage.

A relentless Russian disinformation campaign has targeted Lithuania, intended to stoke nostalgia for its Soviet past, drive wedges in Lithuanian society and portray the country as a failed state rather than the modern democratic success story it is.

Assistant PAO Meghan Lockett played a central role in Embassy Vilnius' efforts to successfully counter this false narrative and remind Lithuanians of the inspirational role their country played in unshackling other captive Soviet bloc nations.

She convinced the nation's public broadcaster to join the embassy's multidimensional "Courage to Be Free" campaign, immediately boosting that campaign's visibility and impact.

Riad Yazbeck, the senior cultural affairs specialist at Embassy Beirut, capitalized on his connections in Lebanon's Shia community to advance not only public diplomacy initiatives but also the embassy's political reporting on this major player in Lebanese politics.

PDAA is a nonprofit, voluntary asso-

ciation of public diplomacy professionals, with some 400 members.

## No Longer Seoul Mates

**I**n 2019, South Korea paid \$923 million toward the cost of keeping America's 28,500 troops in the country, mostly to cover the salaries of local staff and utility bills for bases. It spent another \$10 billion to build a new base for them.

No good deed goes unpunished, however. In November 2019 the U.S. chief negotiator proposed raising the Republic of Korea's 2020 contribution to \$5 billion; his Korean counterpart rejected that demand as excessive. The agreement lapsed at the end of last year.

Over the past several months, negotiators have narrowed the gap between the two sides, and a deal was believed to be close.

But on April 1, General Robert B. Abrams, commander of U.S. Forces Korea, placed nearly half its 9,000-strong local workforce on indefinite unpaid leave, for the first time in the history of the 70-year alliance. Although he insisted the decision simply reflected a lack of "programmed funds" due to the lapse of the cost-sharing agreement, Seoul almost certainly sees it as a hardball tactic.



## MARKETPLACE

**AFSPA**  
afspa.org

**ASU Thunderbird School of  
Global Management**  
thunderbird.asu.edu/  
emagam

**Clements Worldwide**  
clements.com/fsj

**Episcopal Church Schools of  
Virginia**  
episcopalschoolsva.org

**Federal Employee  
Protection Systems**  
fedsprotection.com

**Georgetown University,  
Walsh School of  
Foreign Service, ISD**  
casestudies.isd.  
georgetown.edu

**Jake Realty Group**  
jackrealtygroup.com

**Property Specialists, Inc.**  
propertyspecialistsinc.com

**Richey Property  
Management**  
richeypm.com

**WJD Management**  
wjdpm.com

WHEN CONTACTING AN ADVERTISER,  
KINDLY MENTION  
THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL



### 50 Years Ago

## Superpowers and Peaceful Coexistence

Even a cursory examination of the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union since World War II makes one realize that we are lucky to be alive. Yet, for the past fourteen years or so, the name given by the Russians to this seemingly perilous state of affairs has been “peaceful coexistence.” Since this time span encompasses serious crises in many parts of the world, numerous threats, mobilizations and provocations, it is well to ask what the words mean.

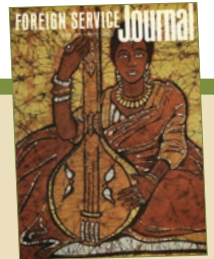
It is clear that peaceful coexistence has not meant an eschewing of competition or conflict. What it has meant, when it has been observed, is a set of ground rules, mainly tacit in nature, governing relations with the United States and its Allies: there still will be competition, but this competition should halt short of war. The term is sanctified in Soviet usage by having been used by Lenin himself, but the way in which it has been applied since about 1955 has forced the Russians to expand and modify Lenin’s definition to justify its more recent practice.

Thus, Lenin saw peaceful coexistence as a tactic, useful merely to postpone the inevitable conflict between socialism and capitalism. It

could be used in periods of communist weakness to give the forces of socialism breathing space to build up their strength for the preordained battle, but it was never more than an expedient; certainly not a permanent feature of ideology.

More recent Soviet leaders, particularly Khrushchev, gave peaceful coexistence a permanent place in Soviet policy and produced suitable ideological modifications to Leninism to give it proper sanction. But why did the Soviet Union feel compelled to enunciate this doctrine, and what were the practical and ideological manifestations of this policy? The proper order for a reply, I believe, is first to examine the circumstances which I think led to the adoption of peaceful coexistence, and then discuss the way it has been practiced and the modifications of Soviet doctrine required to sanction it. This order, in my estimation, corresponds to the way in which this policy (and almost any other) was adopted: a response made to a situation, followed later by the justification.

—Thomas C. Calhoun (FSIO, ret.)  
in the June 1970 FSJ.



Jonathan Pollack, a senior nonresident fellow at the Brookings Institution, noted the irony of the White House requesting assistance from South Korea to combat the novel coronavirus even as it continues to push for more money. “It’s both a colossal mess and potentially

a very dangerous one,” Pollack told *The Washington Post*. ■

*This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Cameron Woodworth, Steve Honley and Shawn Dorman.*

## Lessons from Silicon Valley

# Practical Suggestions for a Modern Workplace

BY ANDREW R. MOORE

Returning to the State Department in 2019 after three years in Silicon Valley brought the joy of homecoming and the pain of loss. The grass is not always greener in the private sector, but it can be—and not just because of the free artisanal kombucha. Even at Google, I found familiar, everyday technical problems and workplace challenges, but the experience also introduced me to new cultural practices and ways of working.

During my time away, the State Department made strides to improve the quality of its work environment, not least in response to the new coronavirus. However, it must do more to modernize.

Here are a few recommendations, developed during my stay in California's innovation hub, aimed at improving how the department supports employees, builds a usable knowledge base, learns from feedback and eases barriers to interoperability.

### Empowering Our Diplomats to Carry Out Foreign Policy

At the State Department, our people are our most valuable asset. Given the department estimates that it costs \$400,000 a year to keep a U.S. govern-

ment employee overseas, we need to make each employee as productive as possible. Just as the military seeks force multipliers to enhance the capability of each warfighter on the front lines, the State Department must ease the logistical burdens, provide more tools and deliver better training opportunities to maximize the effectiveness of our diplomats.

*First, centralize human resources and support functions to reduce points of contact for every employee.* Unfortunately, many State Department processes and procedures were not designed with the employee experience in mind. Most slowly evolved from past practice; and if designed at all, they were fashioned to meet bureaucratic, compliance or liability requirements. Take one look at the human resources forms, and this becomes clear.

Moves to create one-stop-shop customer service centers overseas to handle human resources and administrative needs should be expanded. To find the answer to a question, it can be difficult to know whether to email the HR (now Global Talent Management) Service Center, Help Desk, PayHelp or one of the many people a typical Foreign Service employee regularly inter-

acts with, including local HR representatives, travel technicians, assignments officers, career development officers and more.

While these resources are meant to be supportive, the onus is placed on individual employees to understand and navigate the bureaucratic labyrinth, which detracts from employees' core responsibilities overseas. The most successful employees become masters of bureaucracy rather than masters of their substantive responsibilities.

State should consider mimicking companies that divide human resource responsibilities, offering employees two HR contacts: one for career development and one for everything else. Those two individuals would then manage the internal bureaucracy to find the right answer to any question for each employee. This would enable U.S. diplomats to focus on diplomacy instead of spending, for example, nine months and sending more than 30 emails—as I once did—to receive a \$50 reimbursement.

To implement this change, we should introduce more “design thinking” in government. Design thinking is an iterative method for creative problem solving that begins with empathy for the user (in this case, the diplomat) to identify pain points and diagnose underlying problems. The department should use this human-centered approach to study the difficulties employees have navigating the fragmented talent management support structure, especially through frequent overseas moves. Ser-



*Andrew R. Moore is a Foreign Service officer in Jerusalem. He recently completed J.D. and MBA degrees at Stanford University and worked as an Eagleburger Fellow at Google X. He previously served overseas in Melbourne and Islamabad, and in Washington, D.C., as a line officer in the Executive Secretariat and as a desk officer for Australia and the Pacific region. The views expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State.*

## Imagine a world where an employee travels to a new country, arrives at a U.S. diplomatic facility and immediately gains access to the compound by swiping a global identification badge.

vice provision can then be redesigned to empower our diplomats, not force them to master Byzantine internal regulations.

*Second, leverage employees' capabilities by offering them greater back-office support, such as mapmaking, visualization, research support and data analysis.* We ask a lot of our people overseas to serve the demands of policymakers in Washington, D.C.; we must, in turn, provide them the support necessary to do the real work of forward-deployed diplomacy.

We already have some great tools that are lightly used, not well understood or not intended to be resources. These could be reframed to aid U.S. missions overseas. For example, the Office of the Geographer can support posts worldwide with maps and geographic visualizations. The Office of the Historian and the Center for the Study of the Conduct of Diplomacy can research past examples relevant to present-day challenges.

The same goes for the Ralph J. Bunche Library and its research team, which already assists Foreign Service officers in finding past cables and outside research on important topics. Such support will provide context and help officers write more insightful reports.

As the department offers more training in data and analytics, it should also create a data team that can help gather, sort, use and visualize data to better explain the world to U.S. policymakers and advocate U.S. policy to foreign

governments. This is a common practice in the private sector.

Stanford's centralized research support team is a great example. Its trained specialists support faculty across the university, manage the procurement of datasets, supervise the storage and protection of data, and do preliminary data cleaning and analysis. The team shares insights, ensures work is not replicated unnecessarily and safeguards data. All these capabilities would be force multipliers for officers in the field. The department's new Center for Analytics could fill this role.

*Third, commit time and resources to training to ensure our diplomats are the best prepared in the world.* This has been a perpetual refrain since the department's founding, but resource constraints have meant that time in training for anything beyond language is scarce. In the absence of the long-sought training float, the department has made strides to offer better coursework and more flexible courses online through the Foreign Service Institute. It has also expanded training and exchange programs and broadened its leave without pay policy to facilitate self-directed opportunities. I am a grateful beneficiary of that change.

One way to appeal for greater training resources would be to adopt a practice the U.S. military has used with great success: invite foreign diplomats to train alongside their U.S. counterparts. Just as the National War Colleges host thousands

of the world's best military officers each year, the Foreign Service Institute could train the world's best diplomats, providing greater insight to our own officers and helping build connections with diplomats around the world.

Beyond the training opportunities themselves, one of the greatest—and least-discussed—bars to improved training is cultural. Many employees avoid long-term training for fear it harms their promotion prospects. Just as the U.S. military has done, the department needs to incentivize training to flip this narrative. If the department makes long-term training a desired and promotable position, it will encourage broader participation and find itself with better trained officers.

### Putting Knowledge to Work

While people may be the department's most valuable asset, knowledge is the currency in which they deal. For diplomats, knowledge is power. There is much to learn from those who work in similar, knowledge-based professions, like law and consulting. Companies in these industries don't build products but produce ideas, and offer insights on how to grow, teach, share and retain knowledge.

*The first step is to increase collaboration.* Perhaps the most-lauded accomplishment of former Secretary Rex Tillerson's ill-fated redesign was the re-addition of USAID employees to the global address listing, an email lookup system that allows employees to connect with their colleagues. That was a welcome first step, but we need to go beyond names and emails.

Most other organizations, especially those where collaboration is prized, have internal websites where employees are listed with pictures, previous work

experience and more. These sites are essential at law firms, consulting firms and even technology companies so employees can expand their networks and reach the right people with the right information. Google even makes all its employees' work requirements, what it calls objectives and key results, available on its intranet.

In contrast to current practice, in which it is common for an FSO to never meet their predecessor before taking a new position, such a site could allow officers to connect with many of those who came before them who have important regional or other relevant subject matter experience. This would help lessen the knowledge and productivity gap that typically follows a transition and

could be invaluable in an emergency. Say an earthquake tragically strikes in Pakistan: one could look up colleagues who managed the last natural disaster there, as well as others who listed similar work experience elsewhere in the world on their departmentwide profiles.

*Second, to complement a culture of sharing knowledge and expertise, create better internal and external knowledge repositories.* While Diplopedia, the department's internal wiki page, is a great start, the department should facilitate and encourage employees to author internal pages that share best practices, ideas and tools.

Externally, to better serve and connect with the American people, the State Department should help make

information on international relations more accessible, through a design thinking process. While a new administration is entitled to a website redesign, that process should be informed by how people use the site today based on searches and page views.

Thought should be given to how to display and make historical information intuitively accessible: the annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, for example, are presently grouped by presidential administration and are not available on a single page, to the frustration of researchers and curious lay people alike.

*Third, develop expert career pathways in the State Department.* Employees should have the option to grow in their

SFS

Walsh School of Foreign Service  
Institute for the Study of Diplomacy  
Georgetown University

## Bring the REAL WORLD to your classroom

### Case Studies in Global Affairs

*American foreign policy | Global institutions | Conflict negotiations | Terrorism & security  
International trade | Women, peace and security | Health and science  
and more...*

Join our **Faculty Lounge** for premier access to this unique online library of nearly **250** case studies and simulations — and make diplomacy part of your course

<https://casestudies.isd.georgetown.edu/>

careers by building expertise, not only by managing people and resources, just as in many Silicon Valley companies. For the Foreign Service, the rank-in-person personnel system should facilitate an expert career track. As employees move through Facebook, for example, they can become experts in their field or product managers leading teams and initiatives.

Such a change could also alleviate some of the pressure around promotion quotas by allowing individuals to be recognized for their accomplishments and potential not only as supervisors but as individual contributors to U.S. diplomacy.

## Feedback Is a Gift

The first lesson in business school is that feedback is a gift. Genuine feedback can be both hard to elicit and hard to hear in the professional world. While some professionals, like salespeople, face recorded metrics and others hire executive coaches, in diplomacy performance feedback is far harder to find because of the absence of clear metrics and a culture of direct feedback.

The consular and management divisions have led the charge in surveying employees and gathering responses at the State Department. FSI has also instituted a leadership survey as part of management training, but most employees receive little feedback, even as part of the performance evaluation process.

Employee-led feedback is far more common at high-performing companies. Google holds an annual Googlegeist survey across the entire company to gauge employee sentiment. Google also offers awards for the best postmortem assessments—akin to “hot-wash” sessions in the military—designed to gather reflections on how to improve. At the consulting firm

McKinsey, team-based surveys are sent every two weeks to gauge team performance; this is a helpful tool for leadership to assess when intervention is needed by more senior managers.

*Radical candor may be too much for most diplomats, but the department can encourage employees to get curious and not defensive when presented with feedback.* We all need data and help from others to understand our performance and how we are perceived. Broadening existing surveys to measure performance at each level, at each post, each year would be a great first step (rather than once every five years in an Office of Inspector General survey).

*The department should also teach employees and supervisors to give and receive feedback in ways research suggests are most effective.* For example, encouraging givers to demonstrate a genuine interest in the rated employee’s performance, incentivizing employees to seek feedback and making feedback concrete, actionable and directed at the work itself helps employees disassociate their egos from their actions.

## Global Interoperability

For an inherently global organization that recently adopted a One Team One Mission motto, we are often siloed into regional or functional bureaus and budgets. Imagine a world where an employee travels to a new country, arrives at a U.S. diplomatic facility and immediately gains access to the compound by swiping a global identification badge. The employee’s phone or other department-issued devices connect automatically to the same protected wifi network used at U.S. diplomatic facilities around the world.

The employee sits down in a common area and starts to work with a laptop

with a screen-protector. If problems or questions arise, there is a tech help desk where one’s badge can be scanned, allowing a local tech team to see the individual’s status and devices and provide assistance.

This scenario plays out every day at every Google office in the world. Yes, there are heightened security concerns for the U.S. government; but for unclassified work this should be possible. Greater interoperability will require different parts of the bureaucracy with different budgets to work together, but we can aspire to a day when employees retain their government-issued devices and credit cards across postings.

Because our people truly are our greatest asset, we need to treat them that way. Let’s make their lives easier and remove logistical barriers to productivity, no matter where they work.

## Looking Ahead

After my sojourn in Silicon Valley, I have been pleasantly surprised by some new developments at the department. The Center for Analytics, the streamlining of unnecessary regulation (e.g., the elimination of Fair Share bidding and the “6” in the 6/8 rule) and the launch of new collaboration tools will all simplify the lives of employees and make the department a better place to work.

Perhaps most important is the department’s focus on setting the conditions for success and its willingness to try new approaches informed by data and research.

As the saying goes, “a crisis is a terrible thing to waste,” and now is a great time to build on the department’s response to the coronavirus pandemic to further expand resources to support telework and video conferencing, unteathering employees from their offices and

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 them to [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org).

expanding workplace flexibility.

With a “design thinking” mindset and a recognition of the productivity savings brought about by easing the logistical burden on employees, much more can be done, even within the constraints of government.

In some cases, the greatest barrier to productivity is not the creation of new tools or processes, but their adoption. Organizational change is hard, especially for an enterprise spread across the world.

Yet there is also an advantage to the department’s geographic reach. Each of its more than 270 U.S. diplomatic posts acts as a laboratory of diplomacy, a place where new ideas can be developed and tested before being rolled out to other posts. The challenge is identifying and disseminating best practices.

State can embrace this challenge with open-source engagement and a willingness to elicit employee input, test and iterate. There is much to learn from the best of Silicon Valley and from the practices of well-run companies and foreign ministries around the world.

Yet it is State Department employees who can provide the best feedback to designers and reformers willing to listen. We have inherited this bureaucracy, and with it the responsibility to make the State Department more agile, productive and responsive to the needs of our modern workforce. ■



## Dental Insurance

**Enroll anytime!**

- 1 International Plan:** Offers true overseas coverage: Direct payments to providers in local currencies, multilingual customer service 24/7, and NO out-of-network penalties. The perfect plan for families stationed overseas.
- 2 PPO Plan:** A nationwide policy with the freedom to choose your own dentist, and out-of-network benefits for members who travel. Co-insurance is the same for in-network and out-of-network. No deductible. Adult orthodontia is also covered.
- 3 HMO Plan:** A nationwide policy with lower premiums and no deductible. No calendar year maximum. No waiting period.

 **202.833.4910**  
 [afspa.org/dental](http://afspa.org/dental)

 **afspa**  
AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

UNDERWRITTEN BY:  
 **Cigna**

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL



## READ AROUND THE WORLD

Give your contacts, your friends & family an inside look at diplomacy with a GIFT SUBSCRIPTION to

**THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL**

Visit [www.afsa.org/subscribe-fsj](http://www.afsa.org/subscribe-fsj) for details and to sign up, or email [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org)

**Visit the online archive at [www.afsa.org/fsj-archive](http://www.afsa.org/fsj-archive)**

# Human Rights Today

## A Q&A with Stephen J. Rapp

**A veteran prosecutor weighs in on the state of the project to establish and protect human rights around the world.**

*Editor's Note: Stephen J. Rapp has been at the leading edge of promoting human rights for years, including through prosecuting war criminals in Rwanda and heading State's Office of Global Criminal Justice. In this insightful and wide-ranging interview with the FSJ, Rapp discusses how to raise sensitive human rights issues in diplomacy, how to carefully balance human rights with national security interests, and why human rights must be an enduring feature of U.S. foreign policy.*

ILLUSTRATION BY MARIA CARLUCCIO/THE ISFOT



*Stephen J. Rapp is a senior fellow at the Center for Prevention of Genocide at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. From 2009 to 2015, he was U.S. ambassador-at-large heading the State Department Office of Global Criminal Justice. Prior to that, he*

*was the prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (2007-2009), having earlier served as senior trial attorney and chief of prosecutions at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (2001-2007). Before his international service, he was U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Iowa (1993-2001).*

**In a pragmatic bipartisan foreign policy that balances the pursuit of our national interests with the preservation of our fundamental values and principles, what role should the defense and protection of human rights play in our relations with other countries?**

The U.S. commitment to human rights, and our support for their protection through international norms and law, is essential to our ability to bring together and lead global efforts to confront a range of challenges that threaten us all. You see it in international meetings where countries want to work with us. Some countries are becoming more economically dependent on China, but they still prefer to be at our side. It is only when we act inconsistently with human rights or violate international norms ourselves that we lose them and harm our effectiveness.

Of course, all governments are obligated to give the highest priority to protecting their own citizens; and when they act abroad, they will need to justify these actions as serving this priority. While U.S. administrations led by both parties have taken positive steps to protect human rights across the world, I think that they have all fallen short when it comes to building popular support for these actions as essential to the interests of the American people.

**What is your definition of human rights? Is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights still the fundamental document for human rights work? What bearing does the U.S. Constitution have in this? Is there any particular order of priority in promoting and defending particular human rights, or should**





AP PHOTO/GEORGE R. SKADDING



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/ANOTHER BELIEVER/CC BY SA.3.0

With the world at war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivers his State of the Union address, remembered as the “Four Freedoms” speech, to a joint session of the U.S. Congress on Jan. 6, 1941. Seated behind Roosevelt are Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn, left, and Vice President John N. Garner. Inset: An engraving of the “Four Freedoms” at the FDR Memorial in Washington, D.C.

**there be? (For example, the current administration has focused on religious freedom; is that a reasonable stance?)**

I think that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 says it all very well. From an American point of view, the UDHR answered the summons of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms” speech of 1941, where he called for universality in the repeated phrase “everywhere in the world,” and where he went beyond political rights to economic ones with the inclusion of “freedom from want,” suggesting that governments should act to meet the basic needs of their citizens.

The UDHR was ultimately implemented by two international covenants in 1976. The first, the “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,” restrains government action in ways consistent with the U.S. Bill of Rights. The second, the “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,” requires government action like U.S. political leaders pushed during the eras of the New Deal and Great Society. The United States ratified the first covenant but was almost alone in not ratifying the second. As U.S. officials, we must live with that; but it does require us to make the case that protection for political rights yields responsive governance that is better at delivering “freedom from want.”

My own work has focused on the protection of the most fundamental rights to life and physical integrity, and on the prosecution of those who violate these rights through the commission of mass atrocities. It sometimes seems that my priority is on putting people in jail, while other human rights actors’ priority is on getting people out. But my colleagues recognize that accountability is fundamental to protecting human rights. And I recognize that the less violent deprivations of rights—denial of free expression, association, assembly and of procedural safeguards in criminal cases—open the way for mass atrocities.

I am okay with the present emphasis on religious freedom, particularly as so many of the mass atrocities in today’s world are being committed on a sectarian basis—against the Yezidis in Iraq, the Rohingya in Myanmar and the Uyghurs in China, for

example. At a time when global tides are running in the wrong way, a high-level and active commitment to religious freedom can be wind in the sails of human rights. Of course, I would want to tack in a direction that would ensure that this freedom is protected along with the others.

**Should the United States pursue an expansive vision of human rights at home and abroad—more rights for more people moving forward—regardless of cultural context or social and political consensus among our friends, allies, partners and/or strategic rival states? Should our human rights agenda in a bilateral relationship vary from country to country, and if so, what are the determining factors?**

We cannot whitewash violations, even by governments whose help we need, and maintain credibility and the broader benefits

that come with a values-based foreign policy. Raising such violations can be difficult in our bilateral meetings, but they must be on the agenda, though our position can be delivered with the acknowledgment that every country, including ourselves, has had to deal with similar issues.

I think that one can also pitch the practical benefits of improving protection for human rights. I know that this is difficult when you are talking to a guy whose forces have committed mass crimes, but I will admit to suggesting to leaders that the best way to avoid an international arrest warrant would be to pursue genuine investigations and prosecutions of direct perpetrators. If that happens, it will at least be harder for such leaders to recruit others to commit similar crimes in the future.

Of course, sometimes the requirements of national security require us to work even with criminal leaders. Roosevelt and Churchill allied with and aided Stalin in order to beat Hitler. But in less extreme situations, we often shoot ourselves in the foot by allying with leaders who are mistreating their own people. I remember when it was said that Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza was “an SOB, but *our* SOB” and recall how the shah of Iran was feted by U.S. administrations of both parties. They were hated at home and eventually overthrown, and we have been unable to accomplish much for the people of either country since.

**What are the benefits or pitfalls of the Trump administration’s aims to focus more narrowly on the defense and protection of core “unalienable” rights as opposed to a broader basket of identities, activities and liberties? What is your view of the Commission on Unalienable Rights established by Secretary Mike Pompeo in 2018? What advice would you offer the commission, if asked?**

I was scheduled to see the Commission on Unalienable Rights at Chatham House in London at the end of April. If the meeting had taken place, I would have encouraged a broader view of human rights, both because of the relationship of these rights to each other and because of the need for allies who take a broader view and whose support is necessary if we are to make progress on the international protection of any of them.

**What is the prospect of the U.S. continuing to lead the international human rights agenda in light of current political challenges at home and abroad?**

The Pew Research Center tells us that support for U.S. leadership by citizens of our European allies has fallen precipitously since 2016. Sadly, the polling also shows less dramatic, but still significant declines in favorable views of the United States itself. But at

---

## **I think that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 says it all very well.**

---

the same time, European voters do not strongly support their own politicians when they advocate for human rights or values-based foreign policies. In the past, however, when we led, others joined us in part because of the favorable views of the United States by their citizens. In the future, it will be more difficult, and more costly.

**When you were Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues in the Office of Global Criminal Justice, what were the top U.S. foreign policy goals in the realm of human rights? Has that changed now, and if so, how?**

Let me cite one difference, and it is not only between this administration and the last one, but between the current one and the last two.

In the past, we made it a high priority of the U.S. government that leading alleged war criminals face trial in international courts. In 2001 the George W. Bush administration refused to participate in a donors’ conference in Belgrade unless former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was transferred to The Hague. In 2006 President Bush himself refused to meet the president of Nigeria until former Liberian President Charles Taylor, then in exile in Nigeria, was arrested and sent for trial by the Special Court for Sierra Leone where I was Prosecutor.

From 2009 to 2011, the Barack Obama administration engaged on multiple levels, with both carrots and sticks, to successfully bring the last of the indicted war criminals of the former Yugoslavia, including Serbian Army General Ratko Mladic, to international courtrooms where they would face the survivors of crimes like the murder of 8,000 Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica.

Now there is the case of former Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, who is under an International Criminal Court arrest warrant for genocide and crimes against humanity, and who was overthrown in April 2019 and soon thereafter jailed on corruption charges in Khartoum. There has been justified fears that he will break out and destabilize the fragile transition, and even the military elements of the transitional government have wanted him gone.

Is there any doubt that if the United States exercised its former leadership, he would not have soon been on a plane to The Hague? ■

# Reclaiming

## Human Rights Leadership in a Multipolar World

**Growing pushback from many parts of the world points to the need for rethinking our approach.**

BY SETH D. KAPLAN

There is a growing backlash to human rights in many parts of the world. As Eastern and Southern states gain influence on the international stage, they display unease toward some aspects of the existing human rights agenda. Despite these dynamics, most human rights advocates continue to function as if little has changed over the past 20 years. The human rights project is infused with Western values and has long been dependent on Western power to project influence—and the result is that now, in the face of changed circumstances and new dynamics internation-

ally, its actions risk undermining the very legitimacy of its cause.

The decline in human rights legitimacy takes many forms. The United Nations is increasingly unable to hold states such as Syria and China accountable for gross human rights violations. Freedom House reports that democracy, which is practically synonymous with human rights in the West, “is under assault and in retreat around the globe.” Its *Freedom in the World 2020* report indicates that political rights and civil liberties have registered 14 consecutive years of decline. Meanwhile, foreign-funded civil society organizations that promote human rights are increasingly viewed suspiciously in countries around the world. In a 2014 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace report, Thomas Carothers and Saskia Brechenmacher note how this is true not only in authoritarian regimes such as Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Sudan, Egypt and Venezuela, but also in democracies such as Mexico, Malaysia, Nigeria, Hungary and Israel—all of which have passed or are considering passing legislation regulating the sector.

When repressive regimes push back against human rights goals, their critiques are easy to dismiss. But when people sympathetic to the cause of human rights are expressing skepticism, it reflects something more fundamentally troubling. These critics do not necessarily disagree with the goals of today’s rules-based international system, but rather, as Brazilian academic Oliver



*Seth D. Kaplan, a professorial lecturer in the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at the Johns Hopkins University, is the author of Human Rights in Thick and Thin Societies: Universality Without Uniformity (Cambridge, 2018).*

*He is also the author of the State Department’s “Political Transitions Analysis Framework” (2020) and co-author of the United Nations–World Bank flagship report “Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict and USAID’s Fragility Assessment Framework” (2018). He may be reached at [seth@sethkaplan.org](mailto:seth@sethkaplan.org).*



Dr. Charles Malik, at left, played a critical role in the drafting and adoption of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as rapporteur and, following Eleanor Roosevelt, as chair of the U.N. Human Rights Commission. Here, on being elected president of the 13th session of the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 16, 1958, he receives the gavel from the outgoing president, Sir Leslie Monroe of New Zealand.

Stuenkel writes in *Post-Western World* (2016), they take issue with the “operationalization of liberal norms” and the “implicit and explicit hierarchies of international institutions” that privilege Western countries.

This kind of feedback leads to a cycle whereby Western condemnation helps feed a negative reaction—even in partner countries—which leads to further condemnation, more reaction, and so on. Such a pattern is apparent in the relationship between the West and the Middle East and, to a lesser degree, parts of Asia. It has also seeped into the relationship with Africa as the latter has grown rapidly and become less dependent on Western largesse. This unhealthy dynamic holds back efforts to separate legitimate cultural and contextual concerns from criticisms that merely advance the interests of self-serving leaders and governments abroad. It weakens the overall power of the human rights idea by reducing its moral authority within many communities.

## The Universal Declaration

How did human rights—an idea once powerful enough to unify a vast range of people in struggles against totalitarianism and apartheid—become so divisive? A major factor, ironically, was the overweening dual ambition born of success: Rights advocates have broadened the scope of issues covered by human rights, and at the same time narrowed the room for differences in bringing those rights to life. In so doing, they misconstrue the original goals of human rights, most clearly embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the foundation for much of the post-1945 rights project.

Mary Ann Glendon, Learned Hand Professor of Law at

Harvard University and chair of the Commission on Unalienable Rights, and others have chronicled how the drafters were influenced by a combination of community-oriented and individualistic concepts that enabled them to gain support from a wide assortment of European, Middle Eastern, Latin American, Asian, communist, capitalist, developed and developing countries. The declaration’s framers believed they had adopted a pluralistic document that was flexible enough to respond to different needs in terms of emphasis and implementation, but was not malleable enough to permit any of the basic rights to be eclipsed or subordinated for the sake of others. Everyone—from West, East, North or South—could accept its tenets, and everyone could believe they were morally important.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not present the specific rights as items to be isolated from the others and propagated on their own. Indeed, one of the surest ways to misconstrue—or misuse—human rights is to think that any particular right is absolute, or that all the diverse rights can ever wholly be in harmony with each other. For example, many post-conflict countries need to balance the need for reconciliation, a secure peace and economic development with the need for retribution for crimes committed; there is no universal map on how to achieve this—an overzealous attempt to accomplish the latter can easily undermine the former. In fact, every distinct right must have certain limitations and boundaries and exist within a constellation of other rights for it to have any real meaning. There is no clear blueprint for how to respond when rights conflict. Communities must balance the weight of claims of one right versus another before determining the best course of action.

Understanding why this flexibility was both necessary to achieve agreement and desirable is crucial to appreciating the vision of the drafters and the success of the UDHR over time. The advancement of human rights, after all, depends much more on moral authority than on legal commitments written on pieces of paper. Unless people around the world accept rights as morally binding, such that they become embedded within local values systems, they are unlikely to gain wide acceptance. Universal commitments must allow each culture to flourish as it might see fit. The drafters of the UDHR knew that human rights would only be realized when they were defended in each country “in the mind and the will of the people,” as Lebanese diplomat Charles Malik, one of the major actors on the drafting committee, put it.

The only exception to this flexibility in the UDHR is for a narrow core of “primary rights” that specifies strict restrictions on things like torture, enslavement, degrading punishment and discrimination. This suggests that although all rights in the



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE/FREDDIE EVERETT

**Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo, center left, meets with the Commission on Unalienable Rights at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 23, 2019. Members of the commission are, from left, Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, Professor Hamza Yusuf Hanson, Dr. Christopher Tollefsen, Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik, Sec. Pompeo, Ambassador Mary Ann Glendon (chair), Dr. Peter Berkowitz, Dr. David Tse-Chien Pan, Dr. Russell A. Berman and Professor Paolo Carozza. Not pictured: Professor Kenneth Anderson, Dr. Jacqueline Rivers, Mr. F. Cartwright Weiland.**

UDHR are important and need to be upheld, there was universal agreement that a few have special priority and thus require more rigid enforcement in all contexts. This idea is echoed in the many subsequent human rights treaties that have a set of legally binding, nonderogable or emergency-proof rights.

### The Rise of Individualistic Rights Discourse

The evolution of the rights discourse within the United States and other Western countries—alongside growing secularization and individualization—has prompted many of the growing disagreements over human rights. Whereas liberty was once thought to depend on a healthy body politic and a careful balance of rights and obligations—a modern understanding—since the 1960s, it has increasingly meant individual rights and freedom from constraints, a postmodern understanding.

The ascendance of individualism means that nonindividualistic values—such as those promoting communal duties or tied to religious belief—have been deemphasized. A one-size-fits-all approach—elevating individual autonomy and choice above all other values—has triumphed over the idea of a common standard that could be brought to life in a variety of legitimate ways. The indivisibility and interdependence of fundamental rights have also been forgotten. And the promotion of human rights

## How did human rights—an idea once powerful enough to unify a vast range of people in struggles against totalitarianism and apartheid—become so divisive?

has been tied to the promotion of democracy and free markets.

Meanwhile, the number of rights has risen steeply as various well-meaning special interest groups have sought to harness the moral authority of the human rights idea to their causes. According to the Freedom Rights Project, there are 64 human rights agreements under the auspices of either the United Nations or the Council of Europe, including 1,377 provisions (some of which may be technical rather than substantive). This makes it, as University of Pennsylvania President Amy Gutmann writes in *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry* (2003), “far more difficult to achieve the broad intercultural assent to rights that an international human rights regime requires to be effective.”

Yet as Jacob Mchangama and Guglielmo Verdirame, co-founders of the Freedom Rights Project, note with disappoint-

---

## The number of rights has risen steeply as various well-meaning special interest groups have sought to harness the moral authority of the human rights idea to their causes.

---

ment in *Foreign Affairs*: “Much of the human rights community has not only shied away from expressing qualms about rights proliferation, it has often led the process [of deemphasizing rights proliferation].” In addition to adding rights, activists have been selective in their promotion of rights, often emphasizing new or novel interpretations of rights. For example, human rights advocates often promote LGBT rights, though these rights do not appear in international agreements, while ignoring or downplaying the importance of religious freedom rights, which are included in international agreements.

These changes in focus were accompanied by significant shifts in ambition, especially after the end of the Cold War. As Secretary of State Michael Pompeo noted in a July 7, 2019, opinion piece in *The Wall Street Journal*, “Human-rights advocacy has lost its bearings and become more of an industry than a moral compass.” Western human rights organizations worked to enlarge the international legal infrastructure that supported their efforts, creating state-like institutions such as the International Criminal Court and doctrines such as the “Responsibility to Protect” (which obligates the international community to intervene in states to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity) without clearly limiting their scope and ensuring they would not be politicized. The assumption that Western—American—power would be sufficient to ensure these worked as advertised was unrealistic from the start—and certainly impossible today given the geopolitical landscape.

### American Leadership and a Return to Basics

The U.S. State Department’s Commission on Unalienable Rights, established by Secretary of State Pompeo in 2019, offers an opportunity for the United States to reverse the declining legitimacy of the human rights idea. The commission is designed “not to discover new principles but to ground our discussion of human rights in America’s founding principles,” and to “generate a serious debate about human rights that extends across party

lines and national borders,” as the Secretary explains in his *WSJ* article. The United States is uniquely positioned to restore the role of the Universal Declaration given its historic leadership as a driving force behind the declaration’s adoption and its still-leading role as promoter of human rights worldwide.

Accordingly, the United States should promote a return to basics: the handful of rights prioritized and given little scope for flexibility by the drafters of the declaration. The list, which could be augmented through negotiations, must include protections against genocide; slavery; torture; cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; retroactive penal measures; deportation or forcible transfer of population; discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, nationality or social origin; and protection for freedom of conscience and religion.

This would create a human rights framework that transcends political and cultural perspectives—one that could gain close to universal support because it would stick to what is needed to establish a just society in which every person could live with dignity. It would dampen much of the backlash that the human rights community has generated in many countries outside the West because it would appeal to a core set of values that are shared across groups and cultures and not seek to remake any group or part of the world in a Western image of society.

While some claim that this approach will make it difficult to check rights abuses, the reverse is true. A modest understanding of which rights can claim to be universal will encourage far greater scrutiny of those rights, from a far greater number of actors, especially within each society. The United States would end up taking a harder line on a few core issues everywhere—including with allies—but directly challenge the authority of fewer regimes than it does today, taking a more agnostic attitude to how they organize themselves and address myriad problems. In many places, this would also make cooperation to advance core rights more likely, because the focus would not be on regime change but on regime improvement.

As the world becomes more multipolar, and thus less determined by Western power, the need to take into account non-Western value systems, ideas and ways of organizing society will only grow. Whereas the human rights community provides little scope for incorporating such changes—because it is both uncompromisingly broad and rigid—the United States can offer a new framework that accepts the need for local adaptation and reserves universality to a select group of rights, offering a much better base to preserve the importance of human rights on the global stage going forward. The State Department’s Commission on Unalienable Rights offers just such an opportunity. ■

# Why U.S. Leadership

## Matters for the Global Defense, Protection and Promotion of Human Rights

**An overarching human rights strategy to support the “globalization of freedom” is needed.**

BY HAROLD HONGJU KOH

The United States is founded on the simple, radical idea of universal human rights. “We hold these truths to be self-evident,” our Declaration of Independence says, that just by being born human, a person gains rights that no one—including her own government—can violate without accountability. The Bill of Rights spells out rights to due process of law, free expression, religion, freedom of the press and freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures and cruel and unusual punishments. These freedoms made the United States Constitution, in its time, into the world’s leading human rights instrument.



*Harold Hongju Koh is Sterling Professor of International Law at Yale Law School. He has served as the State Department Legal Adviser (2009-2013) and as assistant secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (1998-2001).*

But these rights were not conceived as just an ideal for the good times. Before the world’s most cataclysmic war, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made clear that America was fighting for the “Four Freedoms”—freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from fear and want. In the war’s bloody aftermath, his widow, Eleanor Roosevelt, helped draft and promulgate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which more than 70 years later remains the seminal articulation of basic human rights. That declaration recognizes that equal and inalienable rights for “all members of the human family [are] the foundation of freedom, justice and peace.” These universal human rights include a wide range of rights, consistent with both the principles on which our country was founded and the more equal and inclusive rights that our Constitution has evolved to represent.

In these challenging times, at home and abroad, what should be the United States’ priorities for promoting and defending human rights? Historically, the United States has been a global leader in the creation and promotion of human rights. American diplomats, scholars, activists and nongovernmental organizations have all contributed to the dramatic global embrace of

---

## Promoting global freedom and cooperation offers the best route to humane solutions to vexing modern problems.

---

rights and remedies that became the international human rights movement, permanently altering governmental practice and forging international agreements and law.

### Three Principles

At the turn of the millennium, when I was privileged to serve as assistant secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), I argued that the United States should conduct its 21st-century human rights policy according to three simple principles that still apply: (1) *Always Tell the Truth*; (2) *Set an Example* through our own domestic human rights practices; and (3) *Act Consistently toward the Past, Present and Future*. Simply put: toward past human rights abuses, consistently promote a policy of accountability combined with reconciliation; toward ongoing abuses, consistently engage bilaterally with foreign governments that violate human rights and multilaterally with allies and private civil society partners who can work with us to promote human rights improvements; and toward the future, consistently give early warning of impending human rights disasters, using preventive diplomacy to prevent atrocities, and supporting democracy worldwide as a long-term antidote against future human rights violations.

These three principles, I argued, should not be applied piecemeal or by the United States alone, but as part of an overarching human rights strategy to support the “globalization of freedom”—both as an end in itself and as a means to build a more humane process of globalization. Promoting global freedom and cooperation offers the best route to humane solutions to such vexing modern problems as cyberconflict, climate change, food insecurity, international crime and terrorism, transborder trafficking and refugee flows, income inequality and the spread of global disease (exemplified by COVID-19, which plagues us as these words are written).

During the last two decades, these global developments have exposed the negative face of globalization. The United States’ response has been “exceptional” in two senses. On one hand, the United States has at times been an exceptional leader, pioneering global advances in civil rights, freedom of expression and religion, and the rights of criminal defendants and minorities, particularly

disabled persons and LGBTQ individuals. Yet, at other times, the country’s global influence has led leaders of both parties to claim exemption from the rules that bind weaker nations, creating a human rights double standard, with the United States on the lower rung. The United States’ ongoing challenge is how to prevent its impulses toward “negative exceptionalism” from weakening its “positive exceptionalism”: its global legitimacy and capacity to provide exceptional human rights leadership.

The present administration has too often chosen the lower rung. It has not consistently told the truth: spreading disinformation and prejudice, calling the truth “fake news,” and routinely attacking the free press, the intelligence community, the independent judiciary and what it calls the “deep state.” At home, the administration has set a disturbing example, relentlessly scapegoating foreigners and ordering draconian immigration measures, some that effectively discriminate based on religion. It has torn families apart and subjected refugees and immigrants—especially innocent children—to severe medical risk and psychological damage. Such policies are not just wrong in themselves; they effectively condone and encourage similar misbehavior by dictators abroad. Nor has the Trump administration shown consistency with regard to past, present or future human rights violations. It has declined to demand accountability toward the past, falling silent about the human rights abuses inflicted by Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Saudi leader Mohammed bin Salman (MBS). The administration has been strikingly inconsistent in its human rights engagement: selectively criticizing human rights violations in Cuba, Iran and Venezuela, while conspicuously ignoring the same violations when committed by such “strategically important” foreign governments as Hungary, Poland and the Philippines.

President Donald Trump has rhetorically supported such leading human rights violators as MBS, Erdogan, Xi Jinping, Kim Jong Un and Vladimir Putin. His short-term focus has hollowed out prior efforts to prevent future atrocities by strengthening early warning or using preventive diplomacy, and his administration has done little to build strong democracies to foster global cooperation. And it has unwisely weakened multilateral cooperation by exiting the United Nations Human Rights Council, undermining human rights in the U.N. Security Council and attacking the International Criminal Court, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization. The U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord will exacerbate climate change and food insecurity worldwide.

Where, instead, has the Trump administration chosen to devote its human rights energies?





STEF/AP/GETTY IMAGES

**The United Nations General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France, on Dec. 10, 1948.**

### The Commission on Unalienable Rights

When Secretary of State Mike Pompeo launched the Commission on Unalienable Rights in 2018, he acknowledged the “truly great achievements” of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But he conspicuously omitted the United States’ founding commitment to a “more Perfect Union”—an America built on inclusion and diversity that grants equal citizenship to minorities of color, women, the disabled, children, LGBTQ people and other marginalized groups. Instead, the commission has focused narrowly on religious freedom, not sustaining a global effort to protect all rights for all people. Some commission members seem more focused on limiting women’s reproductive rights and the rights of LGBTQ persons than on protecting an inclusive basket of 21st-century identities, activities and liberties.

U.S. law requires that a federal advisory committee “be fairly balanced in its membership in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed”; but the commission’s composition visibly lacks ideological diversity. In erecting this unneeded body, the administration has both diverted much-needed resources from and sidelined career human rights experts in the State Department’s own Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, the dedicated entity charged by law with advising the Secretary on human rights issues.

The 1993 Vienna Declaration of Human Rights famously recognized that “all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community



FOR PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

**Eleanor Roosevelt, president of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, holds a poster of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in November 1949.**

must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis.” But the commission’s initial meetings suggest that, instead, it is picking and choosing among those rights it chooses to deem “unalienable”—particularly religious freedom and, within that, Judeo-Christian freedom—and those it now deems “ad hoc,” establishing the kind of artificial hierarchy of rights usually mouthed by autocrats.

Yet like all governments, the United States is legally bound

to obey *all* international human rights obligations embedded in customary international law or treaties that the United States has ratified. The fundamental rights enshrined in the UDHR encompass not just freedom of thought, conscience and religion, but also the rights of immigrants; the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; and the right to equal protection from discrimination; as well as such crucial economic, social and cultural rights as the right to health, including reproductive health.

The commission's initiative to reframe a distinctively U.S. version of human rights gives license to every other country to define for itself which human rights it will choose to recognize: Compare this effort with China's claim to respect only those "human rights with Chinese characteristics." Should the commission continue down this path, its work will only sharpen the U.S. reputation for "negative exceptionalism" and diminish our "positive exceptionalism": our long-term capacity to lead international human rights institutions and innovation.

By downgrading and slanting the role of human rights, this administration has not just rejected the bipartisan foreign policy pursued by many past administrations; it has rejected a time-tested approach to international cooperation to promote human rights and advance the rule of law. When I served as DRL assistant secretary under Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, we worked to pioneer a continuing State Department initiative to build a "Community of Democracies." That initiative's simple underlying notion—echoing Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* (1795)—was that law-abiding nations should live not under world government, but in a law-governed international society, where free sovereign states can engage in mutual discourse to achieve shared goals based on shared respect for the rule of law.

## A Global System to Promote Human Rights

Remarkably, after World War II, the United States helped to erect a version of the global system that Kant envisioned. Through the Marshall Plan, the United States supported the revival of an economically united Europe, led by the European Union and protected by NATO, that became our indispensable global partner in promoting human rights. This approach to global governance formed the basis for the United Nations—our system to end war and promote human rights—and associated international institutions to govern international monetary flows, trade and development. The United States became the indispensable balance wheel of a values-driven system of global governance that empowered like-minded nations to organize ambitious multilateral attacks on all manner of world problems.

The last few years have offered instead a disturbing counter-vision—hauntingly evocative of the "spheres of influence" painted by George Orwell's *1984*—of a system where global megapowers are increasingly indistinguishable from one another in their authoritarianism and commitment to disinformation. These great powers ignore the violation of human rights and the rule of law in other spheres and violate them within their own, forging cynical alliances and manipulating public opinion to make today's adversaries tomorrow's allies. Physical and economic barriers are going up everywhere; European unity is cracking; and the global commitment to human rights and the rule of law seems to be eroding. Without consistent U.S. leadership, we risk returning to the balkanized world that helped bring about the devastations of the last century.

As a nation, we must ask: Are we really ready to follow this dead end? If we downgrade human rights in favor of a more "pragmatic" foreign policy, what makes us different from any other country? After all, advancing human rights is our founding national credo. Abandoning America's leadership role is both contrary to our interests and risks further global destabilization.

It is a false dichotomy to claim that a pragmatic foreign policy must "balance" the pursuit of our national interests with the preservation of our fundamental values, including the defense and protection of human rights. Paramount *among* our national interests must always be the preservation of our fundamental values. For ours is not a country built on a common race, ethnicity or religion. Instead, America is an idea: "we hold these truths to be self-evident." If we do not consistently defend, protect and promote human rights at home and abroad, we will lose our distinctive national identity.

Particularly in a time of COVID-19, climate change and refugee outpourings, U.S. leadership matters in the global defense, protection and promotion of human rights. The coronavirus pandemic has unveiled the close global intertwining of environment, health, economy and human rights. Climate-caused injury destroys animal habitats, triggering zoonotic (animal-to-human) diseases, causing pandemics that shatter lives, exacerbating income inequality and spurring the rise of authoritarian governments that perpetuate climate injury. Unless we break this vicious cycle, more pandemics will surely come.

This unsettling moment of instability and uncertainty makes it all the more urgent that we get back to first principles, both at home and abroad. There is still time to return our human rights policy to simple values: telling the truth, setting an example, and pursuing a consistent vision of human rights protection for the past, present and future. ■

# Human Rights in Foreign Policy

## From the FSJ Archive

---



### **Civil (and Human) Rights** **FSJ Editorial, December 1963**

There is no doubt that discrimination in one form or another against racial and religious minorities exists in virtually every country in the world. It is precisely because the United States is trying to make meaningful not only its pledges to the Charter, but also its declarations of principle in the Constitution and in the Declaration of Independence, that this country occupies the spotlight on this issue.

### **Morality and Human Rights in Foreign Policy** **by John L. Washburn, May 1977**

The Carter administration has just taken office, and is now looking to make human rights a central concern in its conduct of foreign policy.

### **Human Rights and International Order** **by James Nathan, February 1978**

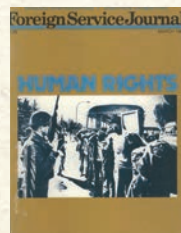
A policy of human rights, like a policy which seeks to delimit "aggression," knows no natural limit. But if a policy geared to the protection of human rights is to be selective, how is the selection to be made?

### **Human Rights and American Policy in Africa** **by Armistead Lee, October 1978**

Whether considering quiet diplomacy or public confrontation, linking human rights to other conditions in Africa has proven to be a delicate challenge.

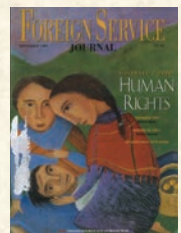
### **Why Bother about Human Rights?** **by Sandy Vogelgesang, May 1980**

Some have belittled campaigns to emphasize human rights as "moralistic crusades," yet there are many legal, cultural and pragmatic incentives for taking a strong stand for human rights.



### **Rights and Reagan** **by Jefferson Morley,** **March 1982**

The Reagan administration needed to do more than fill a position that had been vacant for nine months. The disdain for human rights that the administration had brought to Washington in January failed, if not as policy, then as politics.



### **Diplomacy's Orphans:** **New Issues in Human Rights** **by Tom Shannon,** **September 1991**

We are living through a period of quiet but profound change in the international human rights agenda, which will post new diplomatic challenges to the United States. While the principal human rights issue of the 1980s —political repression—will remain our primary human rights concern through this decade, several new issues have emerged that do not easily fit into our traditional understanding of human rights.

### **Improving State's Human Rights Reports** **by Julien LeBourgeois, September 1991**

State's annual human rights reports have been susceptible over time to faddish public and congressional preoccupations, and to changing Executive Branch criteria.

### **Ideological Warrior:** **An Interview with Michael Novak** **by John Harter, September 1991**

Michael Novak, who served as the U.S. Representative to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, discusses what it's like to defend human rights at the U.N.



### **The Feminization of Human Rights** by Arvonne Fraser, December 1993

An acknowledgement that women, too, have human rights has been long in coming. But the establishment of separate U.N. commissions on human rights and on the status of women confirmed the distinction between

human rights and the equal rights of women.

### **The Saga of Harry Wu**

by Robert Senser, December 1995

When Harry Wu decided to return to China to continue investigating human rights abuses, little did he know his arrest would turn into one of the great human rights dramas on the world stage.

### **Human Rights Report: Luxury or Necessity?** by David Jones, May 1998

Is the Human Rights Report worth the trouble? It portrays the U.S. as Uncle Scold or Global Nanny. It deserves grudging respect for its longevity and for its role in international discussion of human rights, but it has become an increasingly heavy burden for the State Department.

### **American Diplomacy and the Death Penalty** by Harold Hongju Koh and Thomas R. Pickering, October 2003

For a country that aspires to be a world leader in human rights, the death penalty has become our Achilles' heel.

### **After Abu Ghraib: The U.S. Human Rights Agenda** by George Gedda, December 2004

There is no question that the prisoner abuse scandal hurt America's reputation. But the Bush administration has pushed forward with efforts to expand the U.S. human rights agenda, and enjoyed some successes.



### **Reasserting U.S. Leadership** in Human Rights by Edmund McWilliams, September 2007

The U.S. reputation for integrity, just behavior and leadership in upholding global standards is at a low point. How can it be restored?

### **Honoring Patt Derian** by Diana Page, January 2010

Nearly three decades after leaving office, the first assistant secretary for human rights receives a rare tribute.

### **Human Rights, China and 21st-Century Diplomacy** by Michael Posner, September 2012

Developments in China offer new opportunities to reframe the approach to bilateral discussions of human rights.

### **A Human Rights Dialogue with Congress** by Robert McMahon, June 2013

Policymaking on human rights issues is sometimes hindered by poor relations between State and Capitol Hill. Fortunately, there are ways to improve cooperation.

### **Human Rights for LGBT Persons:** Aiming for Sustainable Progress Q&A w/ Special Envoy Randy Berry, June 2015

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

### **How to Strengthen Human Rights Diplomacy** by Samuel C. Downing, September 2019

Though for the past several decades there has been a clear bipartisan consensus for promoting human rights and democracy abroad, and many members of the Foreign Service are called to diplomatic work because of their interest in human rights, the management structure for human rights work at the State Department does not reflect this mandate and tends to disempower those who pursue it. ■

FOR MORE FSJ ARCHIVE ARTICLES  
ON HUMAN RIGHTS, PLEASE VISIT  
OUR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS PAGE:  
[AFSA.ORG/FSJ-SPECIAL-COLLECTIONS](https://afsa.org/fsj-special-collections)

THE  
FOREIGN  
SERVICE  
JOURNAL

# A Song for Unsung Heroes

Getting

**#AmericansHome**

from Ecuador

**Diplomats at U.S. Mission Ecuador  
drew on talent, creativity  
and sheer determination.**

BY AMELIA SHAW

**W**hen the order came down on March 12 that the country would be going into lockdown, many in U.S. Mission Ecuador were still processing what that would mean. School closings. Curfews. A run on the local supermarkets. A medical system overwhelmed.

But for the consular teams in Quito and Guayaquil it simply meant—let's get to work. And for Alex Delorey, Ecuador's consular coordinator with 17 years of Foreign Service experience, this was a situation for which there is no preparation.

"We practice crisis response, for localized events. For an earthquake, or a volcanic eruption. But not this," says Delorey. "We have never experienced a global pandemic where all other countries are equally impacted. So sometimes we had to make it up as we go."

## Mobilizing a Massive Operation

When Ecuador abruptly closed its borders on March 15, an estimated 8,000 Americans reached out to the embassy asking for help to get back to the States. It was up to the embassy and consulate to figure out who they were, where they were, and then get them out.



*Amelia Shaw is a public diplomacy officer at U.S. Embassy Quito. She joined the State Department in 2014, and in 2015 was the recipient of AFSA's W. Averell Harriman Award for Constructive Dissent. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, she was a*

*foreign correspondent for National Public Radio, a TV news producer and a regular contributor to CNN. She has completed tours in Mexico and Laos.*



**U.S. Consulate Guayaquil personnel assist American citizens at José Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport.**

## As curfews tightened, travel by road became nearly impossible, causing an outcry from American citizens in cities across the country.

“It was a massive operation,” says second-tour FSO Scott Risner, who was manning the phones from his home in Quito and working with his colleagues in Guayaquil to figure out who needed help. “There are more than 100,000 American citizens living in Ecuador. We had to quickly collect data and build an information infrastructure to identify which people wanted to leave, and then get them accurate information.”

As of March 15, Ecuador, with a population of some 17 million, had confirmed 37 positive cases of COVID-19 and two deaths. But as elsewhere the virus spread rapidly, particularly in the coastal city of Guayaquil, whose first recorded case was traced to a traveler who returned from Spain. In a matter of days, Guayaquil would lead the nation with 70 percent of coronavirus cases.

For Americans wanting to leave Ecuador, what complicated matters was that, as in many countries, commercial airlines stopped flying. So mission staff had to figure out how

many potential American passengers there were, then contact airlines and convince them there was enough demand to send an aircraft. Once a flight was confirmed, the mission shot out MASCOT [Message Alert System for Citizens Overseas Tool] messages to registrants of the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) and social media posts urging Americans to book their tickets.

In short, it was pretty complicated.

“We were working with airlines to charter planes, we organized humanitarian flights, we set up a processing center at the airport—and then realized that many Americans, while scared, were not necessarily ready to go home,” says Delorey.

As media coverage of the virus in the United States painted an increasingly grim picture at home, stranded Americans in Ecuador wrestled with what to do. To connect people with flights, consular and public affairs teams worked around the clock through social media and also set up a 24-hour phone line run by 40 staff in Guayaquil and Quito.

“The public affairs team even started posting information on a Facebook group, Americans Stranded in Ecuador, which had hundreds of followers,” says Risner. “There were so many rumors out there. We were fighting to give accurate information so people could have faith that these charter flights were even real.”

### A Letter Unblocks a Road

As curfews tightened, travel by road became nearly impossible, causing an outcry from American citizens in cities across the country. Guayaquil’s Consular Chief Gabriel Kaypaghian recounted how creative thinking and teamwork helped get peo-



ple through police barricades to reach international airports.

“People were calling us from Cuenca saying they had no way to get to the airport,” he said, “because taxi drivers were scared.” They didn’t want to make the four-hour drive and risk arrest for breaking curfew. So consular staff came up with the idea to procure a letter from the U.S. ambassador requesting Ecuadorian law enforcement to grant safe passage for American citizens to travel to the airport. It worked.

“The best ideas,” says Kaypaghian, “often come from the bottom up,” from officers working the issues on the front lines. “After a few days, we were able to work with mission teams in management, regional security and consular sections to organize buses from Cuenca and Manta to get people safely to the airport.”

### An Airport Bon Voyage

Consular staff donned face masks and gloves and headed to the airport, helping with logistics and calming frayed nerves of American travelers. First-tour officer Amelia Hintzen remembers the exhaustion of spending a full day fielding congressional

## Despite consular teams working around the clock, flights were intermittent, and it took weeks to get stranded Americans out.

inquiries on American citizens, then heading to the airport that night to support passengers leaving on a 2 a.m. flight.

“It was chaos. People just needed so much help,” says Hintzen. She remembers lending people her cell phone to call their parents in the States, and translating information from airport personnel to scared Americans.

“I was exhausted, but then the adrenalin kicked in,” she says. “What hammered home for me was how important it was for people to see the U.S. embassy there.” Hintzen described how passengers were visibly relieved to see mission staff wearing cargo vests with the American flag on them: “It was like we

## Members of Household Insurance

We offer **travel medical insurance** coverage for your loved ones who are traveling or residing outside of their home country to visit you. *This includes:*

- Domestic Partners
- Parents/in-laws, grandparents
- Family members and friends
- Nannies
- Children age 26 and up



202.833.4910 | [afspa.org/moh](https://afspa.org/moh)

Follow us  [facebook.com/afspacares](https://facebook.com/afspacares)

 **afspa**  
AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

made it all real to them, that they were really going home. Us just showing up and caring—it made people feel better.”

U.S. Ambassador Michael Fitzpatrick was also a common figure at Mariscal Sucre airport in Quito, wearing an American flag bandana around his neck like a cowboy, personally saying goodbye as Americans boarded the planes to go home. “It means a lot to me to go to the airport,” mused Fitzpatrick. “This is why we joined the Foreign Service—to serve the American people. Every single day.”

### Pressure Mounts, Testing Strength

Despite consular teams working around the clock, flights were intermittent, and it took weeks to get stranded Americans out. Some lashed out on social media and others were quoted in international press saying they felt abandoned by their government.

“It was hard to work under all that media pressure,” says Kaypaghian. “Particularly in Guayaquil, which is the epicenter of coronavirus cases for Ecuador.” By late March, the city had captured world attention with grim images of corpses in the streets, and rumors of mass burial sites.

As the days ground on, consular managers became increasingly conscious of the need to take care of their staff.

“Before State, I was a military man for 24 years,” says Quito Consular Chief Delorey. “And in the Army, the attitude is ‘just get it done.’ But that’s not the case here. You have to let people vent, let them express how hard this is, or even tell them to go home and take a break if they need it.”

For Delorey, Operation #AmericansHome was about resilience and creativity. It was also about drawing strength from the direct face-to-face with Americans in need. “My staff were magnificent. All of them wanted to be at the airport, they wanted to be helping—even if it meant exposure,” he says, commenting on the team’s commitment to service. At times he had to convince them to take downtime to rest, so they could face another taxing day.

For Kaypaghian in Guayaquil, strength came from teamwork. “What got us through was the creativity and talent of our officers to find solutions in what was an almost impossible situation,” he says of his staff. “And they did.”

Amelia Hintzen says she drew strength from colleagues



U.S. Ambassador Michael Fitzpatrick, with his signature red-striped bandana, takes a selfie with a departing American family at Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Quito.

U.S. MISSION ECUADOR

---

## As the days ground on, consular managers became increasingly conscious of the need to take care of their staff.

---

around the world going through similar situations: “My friends serving in China who went to evacuate Americans from Wuhan, they were with me all the time, sending me tips on WhatsApp. That mutual support, I grew to rely on it.”

By the beginning of April, Mission Ecuador had repatriated thousands of Americans. The team remains in Ecuador, ready to help many more who have decided to hunker down and wait out the crisis. And like most members of the Foreign Service around the world, they are watching the news from home and trying to keep in touch with family members and loved ones, just hoping they will be okay.

“This is not just professional. It’s also personal,” says Ambassador Fitzpatrick. “We are all separated from our families,” he adds, commenting that his wife and daughter are in the United States. “Helping to reunite Americans with their loved ones in the States, this is our part. This is one thing we can do right now to help in this massive global crisis.” ■

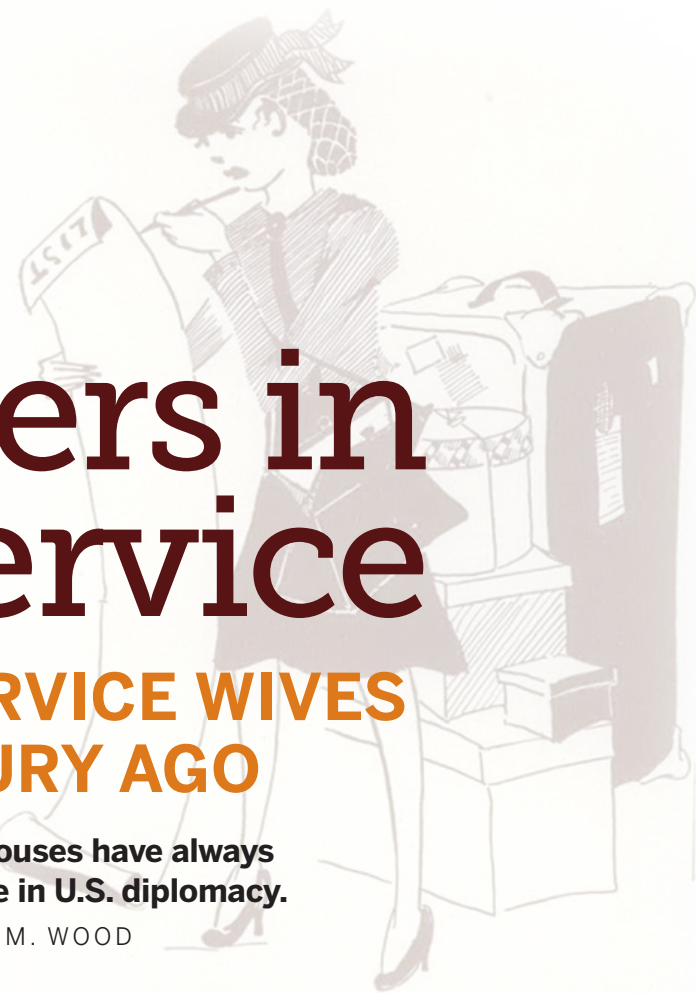


# Partners in the Service

## FOREIGN SERVICE WIVES A CENTURY AGO

**Foreign Service spouses have always played a critical role in U.S. diplomacy.**

BY MOLLY M. WOOD



“ . . . the kind of list which all Service wives have tucked in their largest handbag.”

**I**n 1905, Francis Huntington Wilson, “first secretary” at the American legation in Tokyo, was anxiously awaiting promotion and transfer to the State Department in Washington, D.C. Frustrated, Wilson “finally dispatched his beautiful and charming wife [Lucy Wilson] to Washington for a personal appeal to her friend, Secretary of War William Howard Taft.” Wilson hoped that Lucy Wilson could use her influence with Taft to put in a good word for her husband in Washington political circles.

Taft agreed to take Lucy Wilson to meet with the new Secretary of State, Elihu Root. A White House aide later reported

that “when Root saw the Juno-like face of Mrs. Wilson and watched her sweep across the room ... his eyes began to waver.” Root met Lucy Wilson alone in his office. Shortly afterward, he appointed Francis Huntington Wilson as “third assistant secretary” of State in Washington, D.C.

Lucy Wilson was not the only wife to successfully lobby for her diplomat husband in the early years of the 20th century. In 1911, Hallie Rives Wheeler, wife of an American diplomat posted to St. Petersburg, Russia, told President William Howard Taft “that she did not think her husband would live through another winter in St. Petersburg.” After Wheeler left the room, Taft remarked “that none of us statesmen were proof against a pretty woman,” and he directed Secretary of State Philander Knox to transfer the Wheelers to Rome.

### A Terrific Burden

Diplomats themselves recognized the significant role their wives played in the U.S. Foreign Service. Career diplomat Earl Packer explained that “the wives carry a terrific burden” in the Service, while longtime diplomat Willard Beaulac declared: “I know of no field in which a wife can be more helpful.”

At a time when the State Department considered “character,” “ability” and the capacity to “establish and maintain ... a position befitting the commanding prestige of the United



*Molly M. Wood is a professor of history and director of the Honors Program at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio. She has published articles on the U.S. Foreign Service and American diplomats and diplomacy in academic journals such as*

*Diplomatic History and is currently completing a book manuscript on the social and cultural history of the U.S. Foreign Service in the first half of the 20th century. She previously published an article on Lucile Atcherson Curtis, the first American woman to serve in a diplomatic position overseas, in The Foreign Service Journal (July-August 2013).*

States among nations” as the “essential factors for success” in the Service, officials recognized that beautiful and charming Foreign Service wives could greatly enhance individual careers and American diplomatic representation abroad.

Foreign Service wives managed, without pay, the domestic duties and social obligations needed for the operation of American missions abroad. They also helped establish a powerful American presence overseas. Their visibility increased American prestige and reflected the very best of the “American way of life” to other cultures. The conduct of diplomacy, especially in the pre-World War II era, depended on developing and maintaining relationships with local officials and others in the diplomatic corps.

**Meeting and greeting.** These political relationships, however, were also personal and social, an arena in which wives played significant roles. One wife recalled that her “entire life” in the Foreign Service in the 1930s “was to be devoted to being the best possible hostess.” A knowledgeable observer of the U.S. Foreign Service explained that “personal acquaintance with influential people in governmental and political life is often helpful in advancing the business of the legation.”

It was at the many social occasions that marked diplomatic life where representatives of the host country, other members of the diplomatic corps, and local dignitaries and visitors mingled and gossiped. Edith O’Shaughnessy, the wife of an American diplomat in Vienna in 1910 and 1911, remembered how she “cultivated” influential friendships.

Foreign Service officers relied on their wives to read and interpret both conversations and behavior in these settings, and then relay information back to them. Lucy Briggs explained that “a man who was perhaps not especially gifted was greatly helped by a wife who was friendly and who was interested in what was going on and who was helpful both in personal and professional ways.”



**Secretary of State Cordell Hull’s wife, Frances, gave testimony to the vital role of Foreign Service spouses in the conduct of U.S. diplomacy in the April 1934 issue of *The Foreign Service Journal*.**

Social events provided numerous opportunities to curry favor, collect information and send subtle messages within the diplomatic corps. Hosting them served as a primary opportunity to exhibit American culture and prosperity abroad.

Who a wife invited, and did not invite, to her residence for tea might or might not be a reflection of government policies, but those invitation lists were always highly scrutinized. Officials at the State Department in Washington, D.C., expected wives to reach out to local women in the host country, and to work with them in local charities and volunteer groups.

### **Knowing the locals.**

Because those activities often took wives into different neighborhoods, beyond the borders of the official diplomatic corps’ offices and enclaves, they often knew the local environment, and the locals themselves, better than their husbands who were stuck in the embassy or legation all day.

As Elizabeth Cabot remembered, when she was in Rio de Janeiro, “I *had* to go to market. I *had* to move around [her emphasis]. ... It made you link up with people.” Naomi Matthews explained that when she and her husband were in Australia in the 1930s, she “was with the Australians much of the time ... that’s what you want to do. That’s what you are there for.”

**Obeying rules now bygone.** Wives also understood, as did their diplomat husbands, that the State Department was keeping a close eye on them, and that their conduct and behavior were included in the formal promotion assessments that became a regular part of the Foreign Service after 1924.

As Lucy Briggs remembered, “In those days, when a man’s record was written up, his wife was always commented on. And if she added to his social position in a pleasant way, or if she was helpful in other ways, that was always put down. Or if she was something of a handicap that was put down, too.”

After 1924 the members of the new Foreign Service Person-

## Foreign Service wives managed, without pay, the domestic duties and social obligations needed for the operation of American missions abroad.

nel Board discussed their expectations that wives would make a “host of friends” abroad and would “entertain with a kindly and likeable disposition.”

**Setting up hearth and home.** Wives were also primarily responsible for family logistics. When Foreign Service officers received transfer orders from the State Department, for instance, they often moved immediately to the new post to live temporarily in a hotel, leaving their wives behind in the previous post to make arrangements for the often arduous task, in this pre-flight era, of transporting all possessions, and often children, to reunite the family in the new location.

Yvonne Jordan remembered the difficulties she encountered when trying to move, with an infant son, from Haiti to Helsinki in 1922. In addition, she had to pay for her and the baby’s travel out of pocket after being informed by the State Department that “the travel expense fund was exhausted.”

The haphazard nature of overseas posting made it difficult, if not impossible, to plan ahead. After arriving in a new place, wives shouldered the primary responsibility for setting up the new household, whether it be the ambassador’s residence or a third secretary’s apartment.

The State Department during these years assumed no responsibility for housing its employees, yet still expected that American diplomats and their families be “well housed” to display American power and prestige. Their homes, the daughter of FSO Edwin Kemp and his wife, Anna, remembered, were supposed to embody “American tastes and customs.” A wife who “maintains an attractive home,” she continued, could be “a very real asset to her husband in his task of representing the U.S.”

**Dressing for success.** Wives were also acutely aware of the importance of their outward appearance at all times when in public. Dressing correctly for the occasion demonstrated adherence to diplomatic protocol. Looking good and fashionable also communicated positive messages about American material prosperity and level of civilization.

Dorothy Emerson, for example, claimed to know nothing



## USAID Alumni Association

### JOIN 1,000+ USAID COLLEAGUES!

UAA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) membership organization open to former USAID employees.

#### ✓ YOUR FRIENDSHIPS RENEWED

Use the UAA directory to reach alumni.  
Enjoy quarterly/annual/focus meetings in DC area.  
Participate in organizing US/overseas chapters.

#### ✓ YOUR EXPERIENCE VALUED

Engage USAID leaders in Agency strengthening.  
Mentor new and mid-level FSOs.  
Keep current on *pro bono* & job offerings.

#### ✓ YOUR LEADERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGED

Educate/advocate public on foreign assistance.

Go to [www.usaidalumni.org](http://www.usaidalumni.org) for:  
membership details, services & newsletter.

USAID Alumni Association  
1801 F Street, N.W. | Washington, D.C. 20006  
[www.usaidalumni.org](http://www.usaidalumni.org) is not an official U.S. Government website  
and is not directly related to USAID



### RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

# PEAKE

MANAGEMENT INC.

Navigating this global pandemic safely.

Contact us today to schedule your virtual interview.  
Let's get your property under good management!



[www.peakeinc.com](http://www.peakeinc.com) | 703-891-5316 | [geoff@peakeinc.com](mailto:geoff@peakeinc.com)

# Sources and Resources for Women in the Foreign Service

Sources for this essay include a variety of published histories of the U.S. Foreign Service and published memoirs. The piece also relies on archival research in the Foreign Service Personnel Boards State Department records at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, and on interview transcripts of former Foreign Service officials and their wives, which are located in Special Collections at Georgetown University's Lauinger Library in Washington, D.C. I am grateful to both archives for permission to quote from these collections.

The interview transcripts from Georgetown University have now been added to the extensive and ongoing Foreign Service Oral History Project directed by the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. The transcripts are accessible through the ADST website: [www.adst.org](http://www.adst.org).

Another rich, new primary source for material on women in the Foreign Service is the FSJ Digital Archive, containing 100 years of diplomatic history in the pages of the American Foreign Service Association's monthly *Foreign Service Journal*. For a curated selection of articles on women in the Foreign Service, please see "Women in Diplomacy" and "Foreign Service Families" on the FSJ Archive's Special Collections webpage ([afsa.org/fsj-special-collections](http://afsa.org/fsj-special-collections)).

—M.M.W.

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL/ROBERT STEVENS

## On Repatriation of a Foreign Service Wife

By CHARLOTTE S. LITTELL  
Illustrated by ROBERT STEVENS



"... the kind of list which all Service wives have tucked in their largest handbag."

THE small son and I were at sea. My husband preceded us by a week to his post after having taken "home leave." We headed south over an indolent ocean and my thoughts were weary but I had fulfilled the kind of list which all Service wives have tucked in their largest handbag. It included the essential replenishings for my linen cup-and only summer clothes as we were living in the sub-Tropics.

My little boy spoke happily of seeing his dog and we both felt we were going home, for we had been all of eighteen months in this land we were approaching.

We docked one early morning and I noticed a slightly grim expression on my husband's face as we trotted down the gangplank. "I was transferred to Washington yesterday," he said brightly, "and am to report as soon as possible." "Oh!" was really all there was left for me to say.

Three weeks later we departed for the United States once more, saddened at parting from our friends and a little worn with packing.

We arrived in Washington in the late fall. It was cold and gray and we shivered in hastily acquired woollens.

After a three-days' intensive search we found a furnished apartment and a superior being as a maid, and then I went to the hospital.

Now I had been ailing for over a year and I submitted wily but gratefully to all the equipment and care of an American doctor, and an American hospital.

652

When there was no gadget left to try on me they let me go home and I went, well, and full of awe. The best care we could get abroad had never been like this.

Housekeeping was the next item and I started from the very beginning, as after ten years as a United States wife I had kept house in the amounts of food, new brands of canned fruits and vegetables were only a few of the things which I had to learn.

Neither the Mandarin language nor a workable knowledge of the metric system helped me. The superior maid proved to be a melancholy person who left definitely degraded by doing menial labor, so the trial and error method began and I tried to learn to cook.

Many of my school-day friends are married and not a few have babies, do their own work, and keep the Duce on their fingernails intact, but it was very hard going for me.

Not a policeman saluted on the street. As we all know, most policemen abroad can be kept happy with a beaming smile and a wide-eyed look way street backwards. But not here. Campaigns for Safe Driving urged me to cooperate, so no leniency could be hoped for.

Then there was the matter of being a Government employee. Abroad we represented our country and if we were occasionally overworked and cross we could always think we were of some importance and that cheered us. Here of course my husband is one of many, and was warned by a

**Charlotte S. Littell, a Foreign Service wife, tells the story of getting to post a month behind her husband only to find he has been reassigned back to Washington, D.C. In the December 1939 FSJ, she describes the ordeal of relocating, including the many challenges of going "home."**

about the Foreign Service when she married John Emmerson in 1934. She was given explicit instructions to "wear a long dress—with train—long sleeves, high neck, hat, gloves, no white, no black" when she was to be presented to the Imperial Family of Japan in 1935. By complying with these instructions, she communicated a message of conformity, goodwill and an understanding of diplomatic protocol.

Many wives keenly felt the pressure of the spotlight, which they often referred to as living in the "goldfish bowl" where "you've got to be so careful" to dress correctly, to do the right thing, to not offend anyone. As Elsie Lyon added, the wives also had to avoid "close ties with people in the Embassy or you're playing favorites."

**Managing family life.** Yet there was a real camaraderie inside the American diplomatic corps. Wives regularly referred to the pre-World War II Foreign Service as "one big family" where "you sort of knew everybody."

Elsie Lyon understood better than most the importance of family in the Foreign Service. She and her sisters grew up in a Foreign Service family headed by Joseph and Alice Grew. All the Grew daughters married Foreign Service officers. Lyon's sister Lilla Grew Moffat later remarked that growing up in the

Service gave them excellent training in “the responsibilities and obligations and duties” of the Foreign Service.

The Grew family and others recognized that child-rearing and family life represented another significant part of diplomatic life, even though many Foreign Service wives had little time to care for their children, and usually relied on a nanny or other domestic help. As Yvonne Jordan stated simply, “It was difficult to care for a child” while juggling all her other responsibilities.

Most diplomatic families at this time depended on domestic help, often from locals. Supervising servants fell to the wives. Wives complained that they had to train their servants to perform the duties needed by a diplomatic household, a challenge often compounded by cultural and language barriers. Dorothy Emmerson considered that supervising servants was often “in itself a full-time job” and that this particular obligation was “the most difficult part of the Foreign Service.”

Managing a large staff in a foreign environment was complex, especially given cultural mores, such as the caste system in

---

**Many wives keenly felt the pressure of the spotlight, which they often referred to as living in the “goldfish bowl” where “you’ve got to be so careful.”**

---

India, that were unknown in the United States. In their interactions with servants, wives were thrust into a formal position of authority while living in a foreign culture they often did not understand.

They also did not receive any formal language training (and neither did most Foreign Service officers, with a few exceptions). Many took the initiative to learn a language once they arrived at a new post. Some already had skills in such areas as French or Spanish; others were less adept. Could Barbara Kemp really



## How would your family pay the bills without you?

**AFSPA offers several life insurance policies:**

- **Term Life Insurance**
- **AD&D Insurance**
- **Immediate Benefit Plan** (only for specific agencies)

**Apply anytime!**

 202.833.4910  
 [afspa.org/life](https://afspa.org/life)  
 @afspacares

 **afspa**  
AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION

---

## Wives at that time described themselves not as “helpmates” to their husbands, but as associates or partners who “joined” rather than “married into” the U.S. Foreign Service.

---

be expected to learn “Rumanian”? Yvonne Jordan struggled with Finnish before giving up and declaring it to be a “fiendish language.”

### A Real Career

Foreign Service wives in the early 20th century perceived their quasi-official roles in the Foreign Service as positions of considerable importance and authority. Their work gave them

status and visibility, which often blurred the distinction between private citizen and government employee. They were rightfully proud of the multiple important responsibilities they had in their husbands’ careers and in implementing U.S. foreign policy. They considered that their work for the State Department, even though unpaid, constituted a real career.

Dorothy Emmerson, who started in the Service in the 1930s, expressed frustration whenever someone asked her if she regretted not pursuing a career of her own—she identified her position as the wife of a diplomat to be *her career*. Naomi Matthews appreciated the fact that her husband “always said ‘we’” when he referred to their work and life in the Foreign Service.

Wives at that time described themselves not as “helpmates” to their husbands, but as associates or partners who “joined” rather than “married into” the U.S. Foreign Service. They understood that American diplomatic practice depended on them for a variety of formal and informal duties. Their individual stories have remained mostly untold and have yet to receive the widespread recognition they deserve. ■

## JOIN AFSA IN RETIREMENT

STAY INFORMED • STAY CONNECTED • STAY ENGAGED



AFSA membership won't simply rollover when you retire. Re-join AFSA to support your profession and enjoy top member benefits!

Visit us online at [www.afsa.org](http://www.afsa.org) or email us at [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org).

## The American Foreign Service Association U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE COMMEMORATIVE COIN



The AFSA U.S. Foreign Service commemorative coin is a timeless keepsake that recognizes the service of our members to the Foreign Service. The unique design will serve as a symbol of distinction that members will enjoy displaying and sharing with their foreign affairs contacts, family and friends. The silver finish, 1.75” diameter coin has the Great Seal on one side and the AFSA logo and slogan on the obverse.

To order, visit  
[www.afsa.org/coin](http://www.afsa.org/coin)

# Remembering Foreign Service Day

In 1996, the U.S. Congress set aside the first Friday of the month (May 1 this year) as Foreign Service Day. The day was designated in recognition of the men and women who have served, or are now serving, in the U.S. Foreign Service, and to honor those who have given their lives in the line of duty.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Foreign Service Association and the State Department were not able to host their usual Foreign Service Day activities this year. But AFSA President Eric Rubin offered a video message to AFSA members, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo shared a written message as a May 1 Department Notice.

Every year, Amb. Rubin said, “we gather for a memorial ceremony to commemorate those we have lost and to honor the contributions to national security of today’s Foreign Service. We unveil the names of those added to the memorial plaques in the State Department lobby during the previous year.”

“This year’s commemoration will be different,” he said. “We will not lay wreaths at the memorial walls. In the midst of a pandemic that knows no national boundaries, we will have to remember in our own private ways the men and women of the Foreign Service, past and present.”

Secretary Pompeo’s mes-



AFSA/JACQUIN SOSA

The AFSA Memorial Plaque in Main State’s C Street lobby.

sage reads: “Each year on Foreign Affairs Day, we reflect on the history of our foreign affairs corps—a cohort long familiar with fortitude in the face of adversity. This year’s greatest global challenge, confronting the COVID-19 pandemic, has demanded expertise from all around the world, from logistics and coordination to epidemiology and political tradecraft. Your work, along with that of our international counterparts, has once again demonstrated the critical role of a dedicated cadre of foreign affairs professionals.”

Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) also shared a message.

“Today we celebrate Foreign Service Day, where we recognize the good work of the men and women of America’s Foreign Service,” he wrote on Twitter. “These are people who are representing our great country overseas in capitols around the globe, at

embassies and consulates.”

“I’m very proud myself to be part of a Foreign Service family,” he added. “My father was in the Foreign Service, and my mother was his full partner in that effort. We lived in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Turkey, representing our great country, flying the flag of the United States and trying to promote democracy and human rights around the world. That’s why American leadership is so important, and the men and women of the Foreign Service are the leading edge of that effort.” ■



VIDEO CAPTURE

AFSA President Eric Rubin speaks to AFSA members during a Foreign Service Day video.

## CALENDAR

Due to the evolving situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, please check [www.afsa.org](http://www.afsa.org) for the most up-to-date information. All events are subject to cancellation and/or rescheduling.

June 17  
12-2 p.m.

**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

July 3  
**Independence Day: AFSA Offices Closed**

July 15  
12-2 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

August 19  
12-2 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

August 28  
**Deadline: Nominations for Sinclair Language Awards**

September 7  
**Labor Day: AFSA Offices Closed**

September 16  
12-2 p.m.  
**AFSA Governing Board Meeting**

September 18  
**Fifth Annual Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park**



## Looking Out for Our Newest Colleagues

AFSA is at work on many different aspects of the COVID-19 crisis. We are pushing for answers on the summer transfer season, asking about premium pay for those in critical needs jobs who put themselves at greater risk, and advocating for maximum flexibility for our members as the department considers new guidance.

We have made one area a priority: the continued onboarding of our new generalists and specialists.

The department had maintained that in this environment, it was just too difficult logistically to move ahead with A-100 and specialist orientation classes on a virtual basis. It had notified those affected that once things return to normal, they would be part of the next available class.

In the meantime, these prospective Foreign Service (and AFSA) members had been provided with the means to return home if they have already come to Washington, and told that their household goods could remain in storage at government expense while they waited.

While we appreciate the difficulties of orienting new Foreign Service members remotely, that just wasn't the right answer. AFSA is proud to have played a role in convincing the department to reverse course, which it did in late April.

Both a specialist and an A-100 class, accounting for more than 200 new employees, were scheduled to begin virtual orientation in May and be welcomed into the Foreign Service family.

Bringing these new colleagues on now means that they can feel confident that they made the right choice in committing to the U.S. Foreign Service.

There will likely be twists and turns as these are the first virtual orientation classes, and AFSA will continue to be there to support our newest colleagues.

AFSA is also grateful to Ambassadors (ret.) Dennis Jett and Ron Neumann (president of the American Academy of Diplomacy), who weighed in on online training in a recent article in *The Hill*: "... there is no reason such training wouldn't be as effective. Virtually every university in the country has shifted to online learning for the remainder of the semester. Those graduating in May are not going to get a degree that says they got a second-rate education because they were not seated in a classroom for the final two months."

**Pickering and Rangel Fellows.** AFSA is particularly concerned that the COVID-19 crisis not negatively affect the entry of Pickering and Rangel Fellows into the Foreign Service.

These two fellowship

programs, administered by Howard University, welcome the application of members of minority groups historically underrepresented in the State Department, women and those with financial need.

If it weren't for Pickering and Rangel Fellows, the diversity situation of the Foreign Service would look even bleaker than it currently does.

I had the opportunity, with colleagues from our Labor-Management team, to speak to a number of Pickering and Rangel Fellows in early April. They told us that, in general, there is open communication with the department on the many issues that they face.

We learned from them that the State Department is also committed to conducting virtual training in lieu of domestic and international internships, and that these trainings will fulfill fellowship requirements.

We asked them to share with us a comprehensive list of questions and concerns that we could also raise with our department contacts.

These include a number of important issues that might still be unresolved: Since the fellows are supposed to enter in the July-August time frame, will there be an A-100 class then, virtual if need be? Are there any alternatives for employment in the interim if A-100 is postponed?

Since some of them are students who have demonstrated financial need, will stipend checks for housing be provided, even if the training is virtual? Will health coverage be provided?

### **Never Stop Your Intake.**

This situation speaks to the larger issue of ensuring that even in times of crisis, we make it a priority to maintain our intake of new Foreign Service members.

This is not only the right thing to do for those who have made the commitment to serve our country, but it makes sense from the standpoint of the department's organizational health and diversity.

Too often in times of budgetary constraint across different administrations, we have seen the decision made to stop offering the Foreign Service Officer Test, delay the formation of orientation classes or institute a hiring freeze.

The effect of this on recruitment and morale cannot be overstated. You don't need a business or management background to understand why it's never a good thing to cut off your source of new talent.

We will continue to advocate for all of those who are waiting expectantly to begin their careers with the U.S. Foreign Service and, we hope, to become active members of AFSA. ■





## Thoughts on USAID and the Coronavirus

It's mid-April as I write for the June edition of the *Journal*. Given how the entire world has transformed in just a month, it's challenging to imagine what work, school and life in general will look like by the time this piece is published.

That said, USAID is adapting and planning, both internally and externally, to respond to the unique challenges of COVID-19. Judging from news articles, conversations and analysis, there are signs of hope and progress for the United States as a whole, albeit with varying geographical disparities, amid real concerns for most of the countries in which USAID works.

There isn't enough space to express my admiration for FSOs and the agency's response, but I want to share a few thoughts and words of appreciation.

First, on the operational and programmatic fronts, USAID systems, leadership and personnel have risen to the challenge in supporting employees and their families and advancing USAID's mission.

USAID quickly established a COVID-19 Task Force focused on personnel. AFSA has worked with members and the task force to help address, clarify and resolve problems; bring about enhanced work-life flexibilities and administrative leave; and address per diem and benefit questions, TDY status exten-

sions and myriad authorized/ordered departure concerns and complications.

Each AFSA member and post has a unique situation, but what is clear is the agency's commitment to the safety and security of its employees. AFSA applauds and appreciates the task force volunteers.

FSOs worldwide are stepping up to face unprecedented challenges, often in uncertain and daunting circumstances, many requiring separation from families. There has always been an element of adventure and sometimes risk to Foreign Service life, but the current context is surely unique.

Our Global Health colleagues stand front and center, but this pandemic leaves no sector untouched. USAID is already adapting to mitigate adverse effects and build resilience across sectors, including humanitarian response, economic growth, education, gender, good governance, democracy, the environment and more.

Every day, we continue to see USAID success stories—we have not missed a beat. Our expertise as development practitioners is unparalleled, and the world's need for this expertise has never been greater. Thank you.

Years ago (I have lost count), USAID moved to a web-based mail system, and began orienting its IT systems and operations to

### **USAID quickly established a COVID-19 Task Force focused on personnel. AFSA has worked with members and the task force to help address, clarify and resolve problems.**

better support a mobile, global workforce. As the agency moved to large-scale telework when we felt the impact of the COVID crisis in Washington, the Office of the Chief Information Officer and others mobilized with bolstered IT support, training and engagement.

USAID's IT operations have continued to function with relatively few hiccups. Kudos to the USAID teams that have made this happen (and that keep it going!). I am hopeful that this experience will put to rest nascent anti-telework rumblings, and that the agency will embrace the positive telework lessons shown during this period.

USAID's Acquisition and Assistance team writ large has rapidly mobilized, providing guidance and support to USAID missions, partners and stakeholders, even as they operate in a complex and rapidly changing landscape. The words "government procurement" and "nimble" are not often used in the same sentence, but USAID and our partners are demonstrating commitment, capacity and creativity, leading the way to reorient our assistance to combat COVID-19 while maintaining

critical activities. Amazing.

Countless other USAID employees are ensuring each day that the agency remains not just operational but on the front lines of mitigating, managing and resolving the global pandemic.

At the same time, USAID's workforce continues to advance the agency's institutional strength through "regular" work—FS promotion process webinars, Economic Growth Sector Council consultations, Staff Care sessions, USAID University coursework and Data Literacy hours, to name just a few ongoing agencywide events.

All the colleagues involved in these and other efforts help ensure that the agency remains strong and connected, and that it continues to build its capacity.

Finally, I want to highlight that AFSA remains operational, active and here for you. The amazing AFSA staff are working each day to support the Foreign Service. Please reach out and share concerns, thoughts, stories of hope, lessons learned, anecdotes and ideas. Our shared passion for USAID's mission and our commitment, skills and teamwork will prevail. ■



Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA USAID VP.  
Contact: jay.carreiro@trade.gov

## Still Making Things Work for U.S. Companies

During the week of March 15, as the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated its cold relentlessness, the Commerce Department—along with other government agencies in Washington, D.C.—finally began to take decisive action.

That week, the department decided to quickly (by government standards) shift its operations to virtual platforms to protect its employees and clients. By the following week, about 90 percent of the Commercial Service was working remotely in some form or another.

Overseas, embassies and consulates were slightly ahead of the pack, streamlining—and in some cases, curtailing—operations completely.

Stateside, companies canceled business trips and annual meetings, and show organizers postponed, and then later canceled, major trade shows all over the world.

Given the face-to-face, transactional nature of international business, commercial work became an early casualty as fear over the pandemic spread. These were clearly uncharted waters for everyone, and our clients as well as our commercial officers had to figure out a way forward under this new normal.

All the while, kids were out of school practically everywhere, and their schools were figuring out how distance learning was going to work. As a result,

**Our folks in the field have continued to interface with clients and partners daily, finding new and innovative ways to connect people and businesses.**

parents were now wondering how to cope with a new, uncertain work-life balance.

While overall economic activity has slowed significantly, the economy itself did not stop working, and businesses continue to adapt. They know they need to position themselves for the future, whatever that may look like.

No one understands this more than our commercial officers and our professional commercial staff worldwide. Our folks in the field have continued to interface with

clients and partners daily, finding new and innovative ways to connect people and businesses, pushing the limits of available technology.

As we all continue to adapt to the circumstances and challenges, new virtual services will likely become an important additional tool in the commercial toolbox. Let's hope the technology can keep up, and that the department will make the necessary investment in those tools and the people who make it all work. ■

## AFSA Engages in Virtual Structured Conversations

AFSA's Professional Policy Issues department began a series of virtual structured conversations in April, checking in with members and hearing about their concerns in the field during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first conversations in this series were with FSOs at the FS-2 level.

PPI held six structured conversation sessions for FS-2 officers and planned to hold several sessions with

specialists in May. Attending sessions from AFSA were President Eric Rubin, State VP Tom Yazdgerdi, PPI Director Julie Nutter and Labor Management Counselor Colleen Fallon-Lenaghan.

Between six and 10 officers participate in each structured conversation, where members can discuss the ups and downs of their Foreign Service careers and the challenges of Foreign Service life.

AFSA has been holding in-person structured conversations since 2016. But social distancing has spurred the association to start offering virtual sessions, which—for the first time—allow AFSA members posted overseas to participate.

These direct conversations enable AFSA to faithfully represent members' interests to agency management and to the Foreign Ser-

vice's bipartisan supporters in Congress. AFSA plans to continue these sessions in a virtual format at least until the pandemic is over, and perhaps beyond.

AFSA members are always welcome to email concerns to member@afsa.org. ■



## After the Pandemic

As I write this in mid-April, the United States is gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shut down most economic activity, put millions of Americans out of work and placed health workers on the front lines.

By late April or early May, we will likely have seen the peak of American deaths from the virus, experts say. It is difficult to focus on anything but the horror right in front of us.

One day, however, we will go back to our regular lives. We will see family and friends we have missed; we will go to the office again. Just as after 9/11, some will have lost loved ones. Just as after 9/11, the shock will change us. And just as after 9/11, we will have a choice in how to respond.

How will our foreign policy leaders react? How will the U.S. Foreign Service respond?

Many of the predictions on the pages of respected journals are dire. A common theme appears to be that the pandemic is accelerating historical forces already well underway: a further deterioration of international institutions; a deepening and widening of nationalism; a more profound zero-sum international landscape.

Former Deputy Secretary of State Bill Burns, writing on April 6 for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where he serves as president, takes the long

view and is realistic about the inevitability of these forces. However, he notes that we can decide to respond differently. He writes:

“Rebalancing America’s national-security instruments and rebuilding both hollowed-out institutions and the dignity of public service will be urgent priorities. Leaders in Washington will have to shift the terms of engagement with allies, expecting more but also listening more.

“They will also need to level with the American people about the limits of our power, avoid the ideological fever dreams that have done so much harm to our interests, and demonstrate in practical terms that our leadership abroad is accelerating—not undermining—renewal at home.”

Burns’ observations outline some of the more hopeful outcomes of the pandemic in an age of tempered American power. They also provide a possible roadmap for action.

Most promising would be a return to faith in expertise, which would highlight a strength of the Foreign Service. Drawing on this possibility, we could help our members strengthen their professional expertise even more and advocate for not just adequate training, but gold-standard training for the Foreign Service.

Second, the heroism of

### Most promising would be a return to faith in expertise, which would highlight a strength of the Foreign Service.

diplomats, health care workers and community leaders so evident in recent media coverage might inspire a new generation of leaders in our local, state and federal government institutions, restoring some of the lost dignity of government work.

Current numbers of those taking the Foreign Service Officer Test are extremely low, and we could intensify our efforts to support our recruiters through AFSA’s public outreach, especially to colleges.

Third, the work of this pandemic is saving lives, something about which our diplomats know a great deal, especially those who have helped American citizens stay safe in health crises and natural disasters.

To Burns’ last point, with more positive media attention to how diplomats have assisted American citizens abroad, we could more easily spread our current messaging that diplomats are the first line of defense in protecting Americans.

In this connection, the positive media attention may also give a boost to our efforts toward Foreign Service parity with the military, e.g., exemptions for physical residency requirements for in-state college tuition,

exceptions to fines for breaking leases and elimination of the restriction on Foreign Service members receiving their pensions when re-employed in another government position.

We could double our efforts with Congress and state legislatures to achieve parity with our military colleagues.

Fourth, a crisis exposes limitations and opportunities. We have seen the limitations of purely national responses to the pandemic, which were not adequate.

We could seize the opportunity to make the case to build up international cooperation and international institutions again, instead of breaking them down. The attempt would be challenging, but worth the struggle.

The foregoing is not to say that the historical forces fighting against international cooperation will not be extremely strong; it appears history has been on their side for some time.

But it certainly gives AFSA and our members something to fight for coming out of this pandemic. It provides the smallest glimmer of hope—but sometimes a glimmer is enough. After all, diplomacy is an optimist’s profession. ■

## Plans for Public Outreach Campaign Shift

In the April *Foreign Service Journal*, we shared plans for AFSA's public outreach efforts aimed at broadening the U.S. Foreign Service's domestic constituency.

That campaign, which we planned to launch this spring and will now delay by a few months, will be focused on reaching out to new, nontraditional audiences to educate them about the Foreign Service and its role in keeping Americans safe.

When the pandemic struck, the world's attention and worry shifted to watching the spread of the novel coronavirus across the globe. At the same time, stories hit the news about dedicated Foreign Service members who were working on the front lines to mount the response against COVID-19 and bring Americans home safely.

The work our Foreign Service colleagues are doing illustrates exactly the message of our planned communication campaign: The United States Foreign Service serves as the country's First Line of Defense.

For the general public, the work of U.S. diplomats may seem rather removed from their day-to-day reality. But today's uncertain and unprecedented times provide a stark example of the importance of the U.S. presence around the world, helping Americans abroad but also working with other

U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE  
The First Line of Defense

countries to keep Americans at home safe.

Stories of the work diplomats are doing to repatriate Americans—and others like them, whether it be about the work of members of the Foreign Service in areas of cybersecurity, public diplomacy or climate diplomacy—illustrate how diplomacy is America's first line of defense.

These stories will help new audiences understand who we are and why our work matters.

AFSA's spring plans and timelines have shifted, including for Foreign Service Day, when we had planned to launch the public outreach campaign.

Our engagement plan remains the same, however: to implement a community college initiative, to host webinars and participate in podcasts, and to host an educational event on Capitol Hill, among other things.

We still need you, our members, to help make the campaign a success. We now expect its launch in late summer or early fall. As the world slowly returns to a new normal, we will reevaluate the

timelines and reach out to you with further information.

In the meantime, we are monitoring social media and continue hearing from our active-duty colleagues to stay abreast of what is happening in the field.

We are actively incorporating this material into our messaging and are exploring more robust use of virtual technologies.

We are also building a First Line of Defense page for the AFSA website, where the general public will be able to access the many engaging and enlightening stories of Foreign Service work in service to America.

As always, if you have any questions or stories, or if you are interested in being involved in this campaign, please contact AFSA's Strategic Messaging Coordinator, Nadja Ruzica, at [ruzica@afsa.org](mailto:ruzica@afsa.org).

During April, AFSA coordinated a letter-writing campaign for Foreign Service Day (which occurs on the first Friday each May). AFSA encourages members to send letters in support of the Foreign Service to their local media outlets.

In one letter, which appeared in the Coastal Courier of Hinesville, Georgia, retired Information Management Specialist Vella Mbenna wrote:

"As the new coronavirus pandemic continues its march across the world, members of the Foreign Service have been working around the clock to bring home thousands of Americans stranded abroad. My spouse is one of those members of the Foreign Service working...in one of the most dangerous posts.

"These brave Foreign Service members have triple worries—worry about their families back in the United States or elsewhere in the world, worry about fellow Americans they are helping to return to the United States, and worry about their own personal health and safety. They worry, but they still conduct their duties as U.S. diplomats. They continue to serve as proud Americans."

We thank all of you who wrote letters to your local newspapers discussing the benefits that members of the Foreign Service provide to American citizens. ■



## AFSA Governing Board Meeting, April 15, 2020

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and social-distancing recommendations, the AFSA Governing Board met via teleconference on April 15.

The board made the following decisions, which will need to be ratified at the next in-person Governing Board meeting, according to AFSA bylaws.

**Legal Defense Fund:** The board unanimously approved an immediate payment of \$9,780 to reimburse the attorney fees for an AFSA member pulled into the Southern District of New York and impeachment cases.

**Legal Defense Fund:** The board unanimously approved a \$7,200 reimbursement via the legal defense fund for legal costs incurred by four Senior Foreign Service officers working for USAID who filed an Equal Employment Opportunity complaint.

**Member Dues:** The board voted unanimously in favor of submitting a proposal for a referendum on a base dues increase to the Committee on Elections. (Note: According to AFSA bylaws, any proposal to increase dues by more than the Consumer Price Index must be submitted to a referendum and approved by AFSA members.) ■

### NEWS BRIEF

#### NEW AFSA BENEFIT: LONG-TERM CAR RENTALS

In this time of uncertainty and relocation due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, many AFSA members may need access to a safe means of transportation.

AFSA contacted the three car rental companies that already offer AFSA members a discounted rate to request that long-term rentals be included in the discount. All three quickly agreed to honor the 25 percent discount for long-term rentals. As long-term leases are not available online, the discount can be applied only when contacting the rental company by phone. This allows them to confirm that the type of vehicle needed is available at the site for a long-term rental.

For more details about how to sign up for these rentals, visit [bit.ly/afsa-car-rental](http://bit.ly/afsa-car-rental). ■

**Windecker** Financial Planning LLC  
Financial Planning & Investment Advisory Services



|                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| CASHFLOW & BUDGETS  | INVESTMENT ADVICE |
| RETIREMENT PLANNING | HOME FINANCING    |
| COLLEGE SAVING      | ESTATE PLANNING   |
| INSURANCE PLANNING  | TAX PLANNING      |

*Independent, Fiduciary, Fee-only Financial Planner  
30+ Years Living and Working Overseas  
Focused on Foreign Service Professionals*

GEORGE WINDECKER, PRINCIPAL  
(571) 310-3520  
[GWINDECKER@WINDECKERFP.PRO](mailto:GWINDECKER@WINDECKERFP.PRO)



VISIT US AT [WWW.WINDECKERFP.PRO](http://WWW.WINDECKERFP.PRO)

*Helping do what's best for you...*

### Financial Analysis

Former State Department Employee  
Stationed Overseas Understands Unique  
Financial Situation of Foreign Service

Services Include:

- › Tax Preparation
- › Financial Analysis
- › Retirement Analysis
- › Lump Sum Retirement Options

### MARY CORNELIA GINN

10303 Greenwood Place  
Oakton, Virginia 22124  
Phone: (703) 938-0074  
Email: [mcginn@verizon.net](mailto:mcginn@verizon.net)

# Can You Really Write All of Your College Application Essays Over the Summer?

Get a jump start on a critical part of the college application process.

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

**R**ight now, halfway around the globe, an American high school junior is gearing up for the U.S. college admissions process. Let's give her the way-too-peppy name of Rachel Resilient.

Rachel isn't sure what she wants to major in, but she's interested in history, psychology and biology.

Since her parents have established residency in Virginia\*, she will apply to state institutions, such as the University of Virginia (UVA), William & Mary and George Mason University. She has close relatives in the New York area, so she's added New York University, Barnard, and Drew University in New Jersey.

And, although she's never visited the campus, she's included the University of Michigan, as well as two small Midwest liberal arts colleges that are generous with financial aid: Knox College in

Illinois, offering a high percentage of international students, and Denison University in Ohio, her mom's alma mater.

Her counselor also suggests the University of Mary Washington, another Virginia public school, because it's close to D.C. and requires no supplemental essays. Rachel adds it to her list.

Rachel has set a lofty goal: to finish all her college admissions essays by the end of summer. Taking time off for a two-week trip to the States, that gives her roughly six weeks to write—not a lot of time when applying to 10 colleges. Rachel's counselor has urged students to break the process down into steps and then calendarize those steps. And, most important, complete the tasks written in the calendar!

First, Rachel makes a list of the tasks in the order in which she will accomplish them. Then she counts backward on her calendar from the start of senior year. She ends up with this:

**June 29-July 4:** List all essays and due dates, group essays with similar prompts, and brainstorm topics (1 week).

**July 5-18:** Write main essay (almost 2 weeks).

**July 19-Aug. 3:** Vacation (2+ weeks).

**Aug. 4-23:** Write supplemental essays (almost 3 weeks).

**Aug. 24:** Start of school.

Notice that the supplemental essays are last on her to-do list. That's because while all her colleges require a main essay, not all require supplemental essays. But there's another reason to leave these until the end of summer: colleges may not post their supplemental essay prompts until August. (That said, many will stay the same for 2020-2021, including the Common Application main essay prompts.)

Can she do it?

## Gathering the Necessary Information

Rachel takes a few days to relax after completing 11th grade before creating a spreadsheet listing her colleges. She then uses both the Common App and individual colleges' websites to find guidelines, deadlines and essay prompts. If Rachel has established a relationship with a college admissions representative, she



*Francesca Huemer Kelly, the spouse of a retired Foreign Service officer and ambassador, counsels students on their college application essays through [www.essayadvantage.net](http://www.essayadvantage.net). A freelance writer, co-founder of the website *Tales from a Small Planet* and former editor of *AFSA News*, she also has served as a college counselor at two international schools.*

will ask if supplemental essay prompts for next season will change. If she hasn't been in touch with a rep, she will use this year's prompts as a guide.

Good news: Every one of her colleges takes the Common App, which will streamline the process. Now she has a list that looks like this:

#### **UVA**

(Deadlines: Early Action (EA) Nov. 1) Common Application (CA) main essay, plus two supplements: one about community (from a choice of four prompts), and one for the College of Arts and Sciences about a favorite work of art, literature, etc.

#### **William & Mary**

(No EA; Regular Decision (RD) Jan. 1) CA main essay, plus supplement about what makes you unique.

#### **George Mason** (EA Nov. 1)

CA main essay, plus Honors College supplement about favorite literature.

#### **University of Mary Washington**

(EA Nov. 15) CA main essay.

#### **University of Michigan** (EA Nov. 1)

CA main essay, plus three supplements: Community, Activity, "Why Michigan?"

#### **NYU** (RD Jan. 1)

CA main essay.

#### **Barnard** (RD Jan. 1)

CA main essay, plus "Why Barnard?" and "Converse with a woman from history."

#### **Drew** (EA Dec. 15) CA main essay.

#### **Denison** (RD Jan. 15) CA main essay.

#### **Knox** (EA Dec. 1) CA main essay.

Notice that Rachel will be applying Early Action where it's offered. (She cannot afford to apply Early Decision because her family needs to compare financial aid offers.) She intends to submit all applications by Oct. 15, even those that aren't due until January. That

will allow her to focus on academics and enjoy the holidays.

She's also heard that the Common App website can get slow around deadlines. And because her grades and scores are strong, and she's already asked two teachers for letters of recommendation, there's no reason not to apply early.

To her surprise, it takes Rachel more than a week to obtain all the data and organize these lists, and now she wishes she had started working on this during the last week of school.

### **What Exactly Will Rachel Have to Write?**

Now Rachel goes through her colleges' essay prompts and groups similar essays together to come up with a list of what she has to write.

Some colleges don't require supplemental essays at all: Mary Washington, NYU, Drew, Denison and Knox. She finds reassurance in the knowledge that if for some reason—say, a global pandemic—she cannot finish all of the supplemental essays, at least she can easily apply to five great schools by writing just one main essay.

Finally, Rachel has a detailed list to work from. For similar categories of essays, Rachel plans to write one rough essay, then tweak it for different colleges.

### **Brainstorming the Main Essay Topic**

Rachel tackles the main essay first. She enlists her friends and family to help her brainstorm topics for it. The result is a list of possible ideas:

- The story of when Rachel and a friend got lost on a hike and how they got back to safety.
- The family dogs Rachel has rescued/adopted in different countries.
- Homeschooling during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- How Rachel ended up backstage with Maroon Five.
- Rachel's lifelong passion for basketball.
- Handling the loss of her grandmother from overseas.

She decides against the "getting lost" story, as it happened when she was 8; although if she could find a metaphoric connection with feeling lost and found when moving to different countries, it could work. Likewise, she was 10 years old when Maroon Five came to the Dominican Republic, where her dad was the cultural attaché. The story's tone feels too "privileged," with no real lesson learned; and colleges prefer more recent experiences anyway.

Homeschooling during COVID-19? No; probably every teenager in the world

**1. Main essay** for the Common App of up to 650 words.

**2. "Why This College?" essay** (Michigan, 550; Barnard, 250).

**3. "Community" essay** (UVA, Michigan; both 250-300).

**4. "Favorite work of literature" essay** (UVA, 250-300; George Mason, up to 750).

**5. "Extracurricular activity" essay** (Michigan, 150).

**6. Unique essay:** "What makes you unique and colorful?" (William & Mary, 500 words).

**7. Unique essay:** "What woman in history would you converse with, and about what?" (Barnard, 250 words).

## Rachel enlists her friends and family to help her brainstorm topics for the main essay.

will write about that this season. The sorrow of being far away when her grandmother died? She feels sad even thinking about it, making her reluctant to write; and even stateside kids have lost faraway grandparents.

What about her lifelong love of basketball? Rachel has won numerous awards and intends to play at the intramural level in college. She decides that would make a better topic for Michigan’s “extracurricular activity” essay.

That leaves dogs. Rachel, a devoted

dog-lover, has volunteered at rescue organizations in three different countries, and—surprise, surprise—the family has ended up adopting three dogs. Rachel could write the story of adopting each dog and how important volunteering was to her, while throwing in colorful details that illustrate her familiarity with each country. Perhaps most important, this is an essay Rachel can’t wait to write.

But first, she needs to brainstorm topics for the supplemental essays to make sure no topics overlap.

### Sorting the Supplemental Essays

Word limits vary widely on supplemental essays, so Rachel may have to expand or contract an essay when tweaking it for different colleges. While students should never go over a word limit, they can be well under it if the essay is cogent and well written. In fact, most admissions officers prefer a shorter, tightly constructed essay over one that’s longer but rambling.

**Why this college?** Rachel will write about her passion for history in the first part of this essay, setting a descriptive scene about how she became fascinated with the ancient world upon encountering Cleopatra’s Baths off the Aegean Coast of Turkey.



**G**

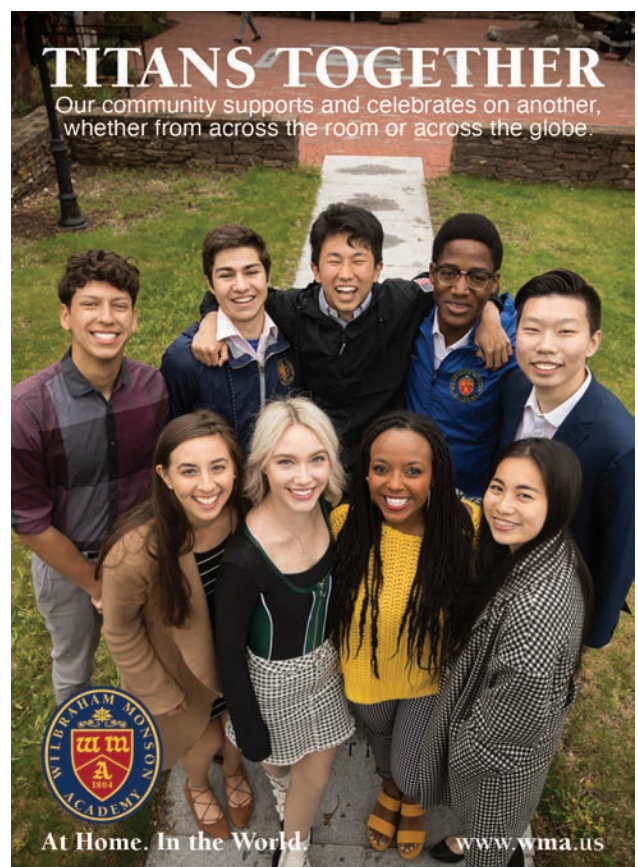
## The Gow School

Gow is a coed college prep boarding school for students, grades 6-12, with dyslexia and similar language based learning disabilities.

Come explore Gow.





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



## TITANS TOGETHER

Our community supports and celebrates on another, whether from across the room or across the globe.

At Home. In the World. [www.wma.us](http://www.wma.us)



She will tailor the second half of the essay to each college, naming specific classes, professors, etc., where she can develop her interest in history further. Barnard wants 250 words, and she'll expand the essay for Michigan. Because Rachel is still undecided about her major, she will also mention a few classes she's excited about in subjects other than history.

For more detailed advice on writing the "Why This College?" essay, visit <https://afsa.org/why-college-essay>.

**Community.** Rachel decides to write about her local and global communities of Third Culture Kids. To be able to tweak this essay for several colleges, Rachel will write about her most meaningful community in the first half of the essay, and then gear the second half to each college.

While students should never go over a word limit, they can be well under it if the essay is cogent and well written.

Because UVA and Michigan request similar word counts, she will not have to adjust these for length.

She will start the essay with a snapshot of a children's Halloween party that she and other embassy teens organized, then discuss being a volunteer monitor for an online local TCK community. She'll end with her plan to forge new bonds with other international kids, mentioning specific clubs or houses at each university.

Rachel now realizes she should

do more research on her colleges. She will need to find specific classes to cite, professors she's familiar with, and extracurriculars she will take part in. She will try to fit this research in while traveling.

**Favorite work of literature.** UVA's College of Arts and Sciences asks for a surprising work of art, literature, etc., and George Mason wants to hear about the most compelling work you've read. Rachel chooses her favorite book, *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller. If she writes 500

## PIONEERING · REFLECTIVE · EXCELLENT · CARING



### EDUCATING FUTURE GLOBAL CITIZENS

Come to Berlin Brandenburg International School, a private, state-approved and inclusive, English-medium School:

- Ages 3–19 years
- All four International Baccalaureate programmes offered in English
- Co-ed day & boarding school
- 1:7 teacher/student ratio
- 68 different nationalities
- State-of-the-art sports facilities
- 356,000 m<sup>2</sup> green campus near Berlin
- Impressive range of daily extracurricular activities
- SATs offered and US focused career advice by our careers counsellor
- Currently 120 of 700 students from the US

### LIVING IN AN INTERNATIONAL BOARDING SCHOOL IN GERMANY

Join our lively boarding community at Berlin Brandenburg International School.

- Supervised boarding in modern single and double rooms with private showers
- Professional mentors available 24/7
- Regular community activities and trips
- Additional support in English and German

Schopfheimer Allee 10  
14532 Kleinmachnow  
+49 (0)33203 8036 – 0  
[office@bbis.de](mailto:office@bbis.de), [www.bbis.de](http://www.bbis.de)



Rachel gets some feedback on her main essay from a trusted family member. (Having too many editors can get confusing and dilute the writer’s voice.)

words—well under the limit for GMU, but fine for a tightly written essay—it will be easier to shorten the same essay for UVA. She digs out a paper she wrote on this book, but she’s aware that most colleges do not welcome academic writing, so the paper will mostly serve as inspiration.

**Extracurricular activity.** Rachel will write 150 words for Michigan about her love of basketball and her growing

leadership experience (she’s now team co-captain), focusing on engendering a sense of mission and camaraderie.

The two “unique” essay prompts are already fairly well defined, so Rachel doesn’t need further brainstorming on them at this stage.

**Writing the Main Essay**

Now that the essay topics are all spelled out, Rachel can get down to writing the

main essay. She starts by creating a paragraph structure, with an opening hook:

1. Vignette of her three very different dogs playing together; how their lives have changed.
2. Background of her interest in volunteering for dog rescue organizations; why she cares.
3. The differences and similarities between the three shelters/countries.
4. How her responsibilities grew as she grew older, and what she learned.
5. Back to her dogs: how they are her family’s “newest Americans,” yet remind her of the countries they came from and inspire her to continue helping the world’s street dogs.

**SIGNATURE PROGRAMS:**

Woman in Science and Engineering (WISE) partnership with Johns Hopkins University

Nationally and Internationally recognized Riding and Polo Programs

110 - Acre Campus

Focus on female achievement, leadership and socio-emotional development

**GARRISON FOREST SCHOOL**

ALL GIRLS NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BOARDING GRADES 8 - 12



Garrison Forest School.  
*You Can. You Will.*

GFS.ORG  
300 Garrison Forest Road,  
Owings Mills, MD 21117

Time is now running short before vacation. Rachel crafts a rough draft in a couple days' time, then hones it over two more days. Finally, she gets some feedback from a trusted family member. (Having too many editors can get confusing and dilute the writer's voice.)

In about 10 days, Rachel is done with her main essay. Because she was enthusiastic about the topic and created a structure before starting to write, it wasn't as difficult as she'd anticipated.

### Back from R&R with Two Weeks to Go

After returning from vacation, Rachel finds herself jet-lagged, distracted by friends and uninspired. Finally, she checks the Common App to make sure

supplemental essay prompts have not changed, then gets to work. She plans to write each morning and see her friends in the afternoon only if she has made real progress on her essays that day.

This is easier said than done. By three days before the start of school, she's still behind. She might save Michigan's application for later ...

She now has a short draft of the "Why This College?" essay for Barnard and a Community essay for UVA; if she has time, she'll tweak them later for Michigan. She doesn't even start the basketball essay for Michigan now. But she does complete very rough drafts of the *Catch-22* essays for UVA and George Mason.

Now school is starting, and she

hasn't even begun the unique essay for William & Mary or the conversation with a historical woman for Barnard. She considers dropping her application to Barnard but has a flash of inspiration during a study hall, envisioning herself sitting at a Jerusalem café asking Golda Meir questions about the call of leadership.

Rachel hates the William & Mary prompt about what makes her unique, but the college is one of her top choices. She procrastinates for another week, knowing the application isn't really due until January. But she's mighty tired of the college application process and realizes she wants it to be over. Rereading the prompt, she notices W&M's encouragement to "make us laugh."

**Grier SCHOOL**

**OUTSTANDING EDUCATION**

www.grier.org | 814-684-3000 | admissions@grier.org

**DIVERSE STUDENT BODY**

- ▶ Grades 7-12
- ▶ Academic Rigor
- ▶ Learning Support

After returning from vacation, Rachel plans to write each morning and see her friends in the afternoon only if she has made real progress on her essays that day.

Rachel's sense of humor is her signature; like her favorite character Yossarian, she sees absurdity in everything. Could she tweak some of her *Catch-22* essay to write about humor under pressure? She'd have to use examples that show this trait, rather than simply insist she's funny, which isn't effective.

She casts her mind back to 2016,

when her family ran out of toilet paper in a country with continual shortages, and how she and her sister giggled while gathering ginkgo leaves as a possible substitute. She laughs about state-side cousins freaking out over bathtub centipedes, when she has experienced a botfly larva growing under her skin. Soon she has enough to construct an

essay that shows a completely different side of her. She may even send this essay to any of her colleges that accept additional materials.

In the end, Rachel doesn't finish all her essays by the start of school. Remember that her list was ambitious, with quite a few supplementals, and her momentum was disrupted by vacation. As her schedule grows heavier, she ends up taking Michigan off her list.

But here's the main thing: she finishes most of her drafts by the end of September, then spends the next few weekends polishing them up. By mid-October, she's ready to submit her college applications—and get on with her life. ■



ST. TIMOTHY'S  
SCHOOL



Offering the **St. Timothy's School Foreign and Public Service Scholarship** annually to the daughter of a public servant. Contact Admissions: 410-486-7401 or [admis@stt.org](mailto:admis@stt.org).

[stt.org](http://stt.org) ★ International Baccalaureate  
All-girls boarding and day ★ Grades 9-12  
145 rural acres ★ One hour from D.C.



## A Flexible Career for FSO Spouses

### Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Master's Degree  
Post-baccalaureate Certificate  
Fully Online or On Campus  
P-12 Teacher Certification Option

Teach English for

- International schools
- Language schools
- Public schools
- Adult education
- Military programs
- Refugee resettlement

[tesol.umbc.edu](http://tesol.umbc.edu)



# Your dream job is a global adventure away.

## Global Leadership for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Thunderbird's top-ranked Masters of Global Management prepares leaders with the future-ready skills and hands-on experience that global organizations demand in this era of rapid technological transformation. Choose from 16 concentrations, including Global Business, Global Digital Transformation, Sustainability Solutions, Integrated Healthcare, and more. Or, customize your own path to the top.

Start today at [thunderbird.asu.edu/mgm](https://thunderbird.asu.edu/mgm)

## #1 master's in management

Thunderbird School of Global  
Management

– Times Higher Education and  
The Wall Street Journal, 2019

## #1 in the U.S. for innovation

ASU ahead of Stanford and MIT

– U.S. News & World Report,  
5 years, 2016–2020

# SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

Go to our webpage at [www.afsa.org/education](http://www.afsa.org/education).

| School                                  | Page Number | Enrollment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Gender Distribution M/F | Percent Boarding | Percent Int'l. | Levels Offered | AP/IB* | TABS common application | Accept ADD/LD | Miles to Int'l. Airport | International Students Orientation | Holiday Break Coverage** | Annual Tuition, Room & Board (US \$) |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|--------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>■ ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH</b>  |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| Garrison Forest School                  | 58          | 520                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | All Girls               | 30               | 8              | PK-12          | Y/N    | N                       | Limited       | 20                      | Y                                  | N                        | 66,810                               |
| Stuart Hall School                      | 4           | 326                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 168/158                 | 24               | 23             | PK-12          | Y/N    | Y                       | Y             | 143                     | Y                                  | Y                        | 8,100 (PK)-52,600                    |
| <b>■ JUNIOR HIGH/SENIOR HIGH</b>        |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| Grier School                            | 59          | 300                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | All Girls               | 85               | 40             | 7-12           | Y/N    | Y                       | Y             | 120                     | Y                                  | N                        | 55,900-56,900                        |
| Linden Hall                             | 63          | 207                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | All Girls               | 63               | 39             | 6-12, PG       | Y/N    | N                       | Limited       | 31                      | Y                                  | Limited                  | 59,670                               |
| St. Margaret's School                   | 4           | 101                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | All Girls               | 63               | 22             | 8-12, PG       | Y/N    | Y                       | Y             | 50                      | Y                                  | N                        | 41,100-51,400                        |
| Southwestern Academy                    | 69          | 114                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 65/35                   | 75               | 75             | 6-12, PG       | Y/N    | N                       | N             | 27                      | N                                  | Y                        | 21,250-51,500                        |
| Wilbraham & Monson Academy              | 56          | 415                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 56/44                   | 49               | 30             | 6-PG           | Y/N    | Y                       | Y             | 28                      | Y                                  | Limited                  | 62,300                               |
| <b>■ SENIOR HIGH</b>                    |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| Christchurch School                     | 4           | 210                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 60/40                   | 70               | 25             | 9-12           | Y/N    | Y                       | Y             | 50                      | Y                                  | Y                        | 56,720                               |
| EF Academy                              | 68          | 700                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 55/54                   | 97               | 95             | 9-12           | N/Y    | N                       | Limited       | 38                      | Y                                  | N                        | 37,000-59,000                        |
| St. Timothy's School                    | 60          | 185                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | All Girls               | 70               | 30             | 9-12, PG       | N/Y    | Y                       | Limited       | 20                      | Y                                  | N                        | 33,900-59,900                        |
| <b>■ OVERSEAS</b>                       |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| Berlin Brandenburg International School | 57          | 740                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 50/50                   | 20               | 65             | K-12           | N/Y    | N                       | Y             | 15                      | Y                                  | N                        | 42,000                               |
| John F. Kennedy School Berlin           | 65          | 1,617                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 50/50                   | NA               | 47             | K-12           | Y/N    | N                       | Limited       | 15                      | Y                                  | N                        | None                                 |
| St. Stephen's School                    | 65          | 300                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 47/53                   | 15               | 64             | 9-12, PG       | N/Y    | N                       | Y             | 12                      | Y                                  | N                        | 44,380                               |
| <b>■ SPECIAL NEEDS</b>                  |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| The Gow School                          | 56          | 155                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 126/29                  | 95               | 33             | 6-12, PG       | N/N    | N                       | Y             | 25                      | N                                  | Limited                  | 68,000                               |
| <b>■ DISTANCE LEARNING</b>              |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| TTU K-12 (Texas Tech)                   | 69          | 1970                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 48/52                   | NA               | 54             | K-12           | Y/N    | N                       | Limited       | NA                      | N                                  | NA                       | 3,000-4,600                          |
| <b>■ OTHER</b>                          |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| Thunderbird School of Global Management | 61          | 388                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 53/47                   | 13               | 45             | NA             | NA     | NA                      | NA            | 19                      | Y                                  | Y                        | 12,388-36,425                        |
| AAFSW                                   | 64          | Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide; Publisher of Raising Kids in the Foreign Service. A volunteer organization that supports Foreign Service employees, spouses, partners and members of household. <a href="http://www.aafsw.org">www.aafsw.org</a> . See FSHub.org. |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| FLO                                     | 71          | Family Liaison Office: Information and resources for Foreign Service families. Contact <a href="mailto:FLOAskEducation@state.gov">FLOAskEducation@state.gov</a> .                                                                                                                       |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| FSYF                                    | 64          | Foreign Service Youth Foundation: A support network for U.S. Foreign Service youth worldwide. Go to <a href="http://www.fsyf.org">www.fsyf.org</a> .                                                                                                                                    |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |
| Nomad Educational Services              | 71          | Nomad Educational Services provides college counseling and test prep tutoring for expats and TCKs. Contact Nomad for more information about school-year or summer programs: <a href="http://nomad-ed.com">http://nomad-ed.com</a> .                                                     |                         |                  |                |                |        |                         |               |                         |                                    |                          |                                      |

\*Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate \*\*Dec. 25-Jan. 1 NA, Not applicable

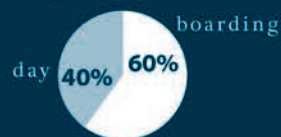


Looking for a friendly, diverse school community with top-notch academics, robust arts and STEM programs, and athletics that includes riding?

We invite you to visit *Linden Hall*, the oldest all girls' boarding and day school in the US, in vibrant Lititz, Pennsylvania.

**LINDENHALL.ORG/FSJ**  
**717-626-8512**  
**ADMISSIONS@LINDENHALL.ORG**

## FAST facts



STUDENTS REPRESENTING



Enrollment:  
 220 girls in grades 6-12

**LINDEN HALL**  
 FOUNDED IN 1746

AAFSW's FSHub.org:  
The Comprehensive Information Resource  
for the Foreign Service Community



Education is one of the Hub's many categories.  
Find out about AAFSW Merit Scholarships  
and much more at <http://fshub.org/education/>

AAFSW is the volunteer organization that supports the Foreign Service community through advocacy, information sharing, programs, awards and youth scholarships.

Join AAFSW!  
[WWW.AAFSW.ORG](http://WWW.AAFSW.ORG)



FOREIGN SERVICE  
**YOUTH**  
FOUNDATION

Embrace the Adventure!

FSYF supports Foreign Service youth as they transition from post to post.



We have much to offer:

College Scholarships, Art & Essay Contests,  
Community Service Awards, Youth Newsletters,  
Workshops & Webinars, Family-friendly Activities



Visit Us: [www.fsyf.org](http://www.fsyf.org)

CFC# 39436

Contact Us: [fsyf@fsyf.org](mailto:fsyf@fsyf.org)

Join Us:

\$20 for 1 year    \$50 for 3 years  
\$150 for a Lifetime



FSYF is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to supporting FS youth

**What do diplomats do?  
Who works in an embassy?  
What is the Foreign Service?**

Find the answers...

## Inside a U.S. Embassy

**DIPLOMACY AT WORK**

*The essential guide to the Foreign Service.*

*Inside a U.S. Embassy* has been adopted for more than 60 university courses, as well as at least a dozen courses for U.S. military personnel. Help AFSA raise awareness about the Foreign Service and the role of diplomacy and development by sharing the book when you teach a course or give a presentation.

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

Phone orders: (800) 848-6224

Special AFSA Member Discount: 40%, use code **6AFSA**

Questions? Email [embassybook@afsa.org](mailto:embassybook@afsa.org).



THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
All-New Third Edition

**MORE THAN  
100,000 SOLD!**

## Inside a U.S. Embassy

**DIPLOMACY AT WORK**



Shawn Dorman, EDITOR  
AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION



JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL  
Berlin, Germany

## 60 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

John F. Kennedy School  
Teltower Damm 87-93  
14167 Berlin, Germany  
[www.jfks.de](http://www.jfks.de)  
[welcome@jfksberlin.org](mailto:welcome@jfksberlin.org)



### Providing students with an exemplary education since 1960

- Bilingual/bicultural German-American education for grades K-12
- High School Diploma and German Abitur
- Strong Advanced Placement program
- Internationally recognized music and fine arts program
- Excellent placement rate in top US and international universities
- Desirable location in a southwestern suburb  
just 20 minutes from downtown Berlin
- Accredited by NEASC

**Please contact:** Racso Cortinas,  
Elementary School Principal  
[rcortinas@jfksberlin.org](mailto:rcortinas@jfksberlin.org)  
Brian Salzer, Managing Director  
[bsalzer@jfksberlin.org](mailto:bsalzer@jfksberlin.org)



+ scholarship

## A world class education in the *heart* of Rome

St. Stephen's International  
Day & Boarding School

+ independence

+ integrity

+ care

+ creativity

### St. Stephen's School *Rome*

Via Aventina 3, 00153 Rome, Italy  
tel: +39 065750605 / email: [ststephens@sssrome.it](mailto:ststephens@sssrome.it)



[www.sssrome.it](http://www.sssrome.it)

Fully accredited by the Council of International Schools and the New England Association of Schools & Colleges

# College Admissions and COVID-19

## An Evolving Landscape

Here are some of the issues and adjustments in the college admissions process to keep an eye on.

BY REBECCA GRAPPO

**N**o international crisis has thrown both students and universities into as much turmoil and uncertainty as the current COVID-19 situation. But as in any crisis situation, institutions and the people who work in them must adapt and explore new ways of approaching challenges.

Colleges are adapting daily to our new shared reality in their approach to the key questions around college applications, admissions and enrollment. To paraphrase one college admissions official, the key words are “flexibility” and “nimbleness”: Students want to get into universities, and universities need students.

So what changes can we expect in the coming weeks and months? Based on what we know now, here are some of the

topics creating the most buzz (as of this writing in April).

**Standardized testing.** Many highly selective colleges, including the institutions that make up the University of California system, are announcing that they will be “test-optional” for next year, and the list is growing daily. But what does that really mean?

It could mean a variety of things. Be ready to see terms such as **temporarily test-optional** (we’ll do this for those applying in 2021, but do not plan to extend it); **piloting test-optional** (we’ll try this for two or three years, see how it goes, and then reevaluate whether or not we need standardized tests to make good decisions); **test-optional** (we do not require them now and have no plans to ever re-institute them); and **test-flexible** (you can submit the ACT or SAT, APs or SAT Subject tests, IB predicted results or

other combination of widely recognized testing—but you don’t have to submit any).

Here is another term students should learn: **test-aware**. That means that although they are now optional, some students will still be submitting their test scores. So should you still take them?

**Test-optional** does not necessarily mean test blind. Some colleges will still remain **test-aware** if scores are submitted. Thus, you can be sure that if a student already achieved a high score, she will submit it. Note what Boston University has to say about it on its website:

“Prospective students and applicants must decide for themselves whether or not to include standardized test scores with their application for admission to Boston University. When making this decision, students should consider the totality of their academic record, their contributions both in and out of the classroom and to their communities, and whether they feel confident that the sum of these experiences fully reflect their academic ability and potential.”

Another point to consider is that



*Rebecca Grappo, M.Ed., has had a 35-year relationship with the Department of State as both a former employee and Foreign Service family member. She is the founder of RNG International Educational Consultants, LLC, which specializes in helping students around the world with the college application process as well as boarding school and therapeutic placements.*

while a college might be **test-optional**, it might still consider test scores for merit aid awards. (This could change next year, though, if few students submit scores.) Therefore, it would be a good idea to have standardized test scores ready to send, even if the student chooses not to submit them at the time of application.

Lastly, ACT and SAT have announced they are working on an electronic version of the test that students can take online and at home. This has been met with a massive outcry from some opponents in the college admissions community over concerns of fairness, access and equity for students. As this article was going to print, this debate was still playing out. So stay tuned.

**Financial aid.** The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) uses the prior-prior year of taxes. If something has changed in the family's

ACT and SAT have announced they are working on an electronic version of the test that students can take online and at home.

financial situation, the student or parent can contact the head of financial aid or enrollment to discuss any extenuating circumstances. This is a good tip for Foreign Service families in general because of frequent moves, allowances that change, loss of income when the accompanying spouse changes jobs, and so on.

Every American university has a net cost calculator on its website to help determine the estimated family contribution. Be aware of which institutions meet full financial need, are generous with merit scholarships or may be “need aware” in admissions. Have “the talk” as

a family about affordability before going too far down the application road.

Will financial aid still be available in the future? Certainly, everyone wants that to be the case. However, the financial crisis resulting from the coronavirus pandemic is going to hit some colleges harder than others, and may significantly affect their financial award dollars. Some colleges may even find themselves in financial trouble.

To check out the financial stability of a college, you can search for the size of the endowment, the Form 990 that all nonprofit institutions are required to file with the IRS, audit statements or the

## How to Stand Out in the New Process

One concern that I hear again and again is this: If selective colleges no longer require standardized testing, and students have had their extracurricular activities suspended, then how will colleges evaluate candidates, and how can applicants stand out in the process?

Some things will remain the same: Admissions officers will be looking at the courses students have taken, the trajectory of their grades and whether or not they have challenged themselves academically.

Those colleges that require them will also look closely at the teacher and counselor letters of recommendation, as well as the personal statements that students write about themselves. The college-specific supplemental essays will be more important than ever, especially those that ask some version of the “why us” question.

But perhaps most important, admissions officers are

talking about this unusual period of time as a unique opportunity to show them who a student really is. When stripped of all the “busy-ness” of high school student life, they will be asking the question, “Who are you?”

College admissions officers will want to know what passions or interests students have chosen to pursue, how they have used their time, or how they might have contributed to their community. Further, admissions officers have stated that leadership comes in many forms, and it's not just about being the president of a club or team.

During this time, students are urged to think about their true interests so that qualities such as intellectual curiosity, creativity, compassion, grit and determination can be easily demonstrated in the application.

—Becky Grappo

## To Keep Up on the Changes...

**T**his shortlist of websites can help you stay current on college admissions procedures and requirements. No one site tells the entire story, but they are pieces of what is now a constantly changing puzzle.

**ACT** – [act.org](http://act.org)

**NACAC** – [nacacnet.org](http://nacacnet.org)

**Common APP** – [commonapp.org](http://commonapp.org)

**Coalition for College** – [coalitionforcollegeaccess.org](http://coalitionforcollegeaccess.org)

**University of CA APP** – [admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply-now.html](http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply-now.html)

**FAFSA** – [studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa](http://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa)

**CSS Profile** – [cssprofile.collegeboard.org](http://cssprofile.collegeboard.org)

**FinAid** – [finaid.org](http://finaid.org)

**Comprehensive** – [rnginternational.com/college](http://rnginternational.com/college)

—Becky Grappo

school's rating by agencies like Moody's or Standard and Poor's. When even iconic institutions like the University of Pennsylvania or the University of Chicago send out emails to staff telling them to tighten their belts, you know that budget concerns are going to be widespread.

**Pass/fail grades.** There has been a lot of discussion about pass/fail grades for this semester as students complete their studies online. At the time of this writing, no one is even talking about pass/fail until we know whether students can go back to school next fall.

For now, colleges say that they will scrutinize grades up to March of this year more closely, and then again once everything returns to normal again. So students should try to put forth their

Contact us for offerings unique to American Foreign Service families

**EF ACADEMY**  
International Boarding Schools

## Study alongside your peers at EF Academy

Where American Foreign Service Students thrive

- Study the IB or US High School Diploma in an unmatched international community
- Flexible rolling admissions and study plan for 2020/2021
- Campuses in Pasadena, New York and Oxford

Katlin Freschi, Tel: +1 914 495 6069, Email: [katlin.freschi@ef.com](mailto:katlin.freschi@ef.com)  
[www.efacademy.org](http://www.efacademy.org)

# SOUTHWESTERN ACADEMY

San Marino, California  
Rimrock, Arizona

## THE PLACE WHERE YOU BELONG

Southwestern Academy is a college preparatory boarding and day school where you can find your fit, both academically and socially.

Up to 175 students, grades 6th-12th, attend Southwestern, from all over the United States and around the world.

[admissions@SouthwesternAcademy.edu](mailto:admissions@SouthwesternAcademy.edu)  
Tel. (626) 799-5010 Ext. 5

ONE SCHOOL  
TWO UNIQUE CAMPUSES  
Suburban | Rural

[WWW.SOUTHWESTERNACADEMY.EDU](http://WWW.SOUTHWESTERNACADEMY.EDU)



## Education Solutions for the Entire Family!



TEXAS TECH  
UNIVERSITY.

From *kindergarten through high school, bachelor's to doctoral degree programs*, Texas Tech University has fully online options for your education. Pursue your own degree while the kids are enrolled in TTU K-12. **Anytime, Anywhere.**



Find out today how we can help your family at [elearning.ttu.edu/FSJ](http://elearning.ttu.edu/FSJ)

## Students should try to put forth their best effort, regardless of whether or not they get a letter grade.

best effort, regardless of whether or not they get a letter grade.

Also, students should keep in mind that teachers are still going to write future letters of recommendations for colleges. Will they say that when the going got tough, the student took a hiatus from hard work? Conscientious effort will continue to be rewarded.

**Extracurricular activities.** College admissions officers have reiterated that they understand what students are going

through, and thus know that extracurricular activities will be interrupted. But what else will you be doing with your time outside of class?

Jeff Schiffman, the director of admissions at Tulane University, says: “If you include on your Common Application activities section a list of all the books you read for pleasure during your social distancing, I’ll love it. Get creative ... We will love seeing anything you did during this wacky time.”

AP exams, SAT subject tests, IB exams, A-levels, French Baccalaureate exams—oh, my! The big news this year is that the AP exam will be a 45-minute, online exam, instead of the usual 3-hour exam, and will cover content taught up until March only instead of the entire year’s course. Will colleges still grant credit for three-quarters of a class? This is still being discussed by many universities.

The International Baccalaureate exams were also canceled for this year’s seniors, and graduating senior IB Diploma candidates will not be penalized for it. However, current juniors in the IB Diploma program still need to remain focused; everyone expects that next year, the IB exams will be back.

FROM THE FSJ EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT DECEMBER 2019

## VSFS: The Federal Government’s E-Internship Program

BY JACOB BORST

Internships are great for professional experience: they build the student’s résumé, and they guide the student in determining a job path and/or graduate degree program. But for students interested in working in foreign affairs, there’s one big problem: most available internships are in the Washington, D.C., area. And for many geographically challenged students, it simply isn’t possible to move there for an unpaid temp job.

That’s where VSFS comes in. Launched in 2009 in the Department of State as the Virtual Student Foreign Service program, it allows students to work remotely for a federal agency. In 2017 VSFS changed its name to “Virtual Student Federal Service,” to reflect the fact that there are now more than 70 participating organizations, more than 40 of which are federal agencies, including USDA, VA, DHS, DOS, OPM and HHS.

The State Department has led the effort to get



American college students from around the world involved in our foreign policy process through this e-internship program. While VSFS interns are unpaid, students benefit by gaining professional experience and marketable skills,

increased knowledge about a particular agency, networking contacts and a line item on their résumé showing they have interned for a federal agency or internationally recognized organization.

*Excerpted from an article by Jacob Borst in the December 2019 FSJ. Jacob Borst interned with AFSA and The Foreign Service Journal in summer 2018, with the Virtual Student Federal Service during the 2018-2019 school year, and with the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training in summer 2017.*

*For more on the VSFS opportunity, please see the feature story by Avha Sadeghi, “How to Intern at State Without Leaving Home,” in the January-February 2015 FSJ.*

Other external leaving exams, such as the French Baccalaureate and A-levels, have also been suspended this year. Again, universities in North America, the U.K., Europe and elsewhere know that they have to take this into consideration when making admissions decisions.

One more note about SAT subject tests: Few universities in the United States still require them, but carefully read the language on college websites. Some websites state clearly that they are “not required,” or they are “recommended,” or they are “considered if submitted.” Even Yale is changing its language around this to be less rigid in its requirements.

If you are applying outside the United States, pay particular attention

to requirements for students graduating with a standard American high school diploma. U.K. and European universities often require SAT or ACT exams, SAT subject tests or AP exams with certain minimum scores, and may not have as much flexibility to waive these requirements.

**Virtual visits and other types of engagement.** Colleges and universities know that students cannot come to campus to visit now. In response, virtual campus visits have never been more prolific or informative.

Check out college websites for virtual tours, YouTube videos, webinars, virtual college fairs or other opportunities to engage with admissions representatives, students and faculty. Admissions

officers are there to help students make those connections.

**What might colleges be looking for now?** Despite the challenges presented by coronavirus, college admissions officers are still looking for enthusiastic students who exhibit intellectual curiosity, want to learn and work hard, and know their institutions well. They still want and need students who will make a positive impact on the college community, the local community and the world.

Though the admissions process might need to adapt to the realities of COVID-19, colleges’ essential mission has not changed. They need you as much as you need them. ■

**nomad**  
★college application  
essay workshop

**Join Nomad this summer for an online two week college application essay workshop.**

21 Instructor-supported modules  
Personalized feedback  
Live end-of-summer Q&A session

**Enroll online at**  
[www.nomad-ed.com/summer-workshops](http://www.nomad-ed.com/summer-workshops)

*"Thank you for the help you have given me in this college journey. At the beginning I was struggling to even come up with a half decent college essay topic. The workshop gave me the skills to get into the colleges I wanted to, and also to apply for tons of scholarships with confidence. I was able to put together an essay that I am extremely proud of." -M.A.*

**nomad**  
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES  
[www.nomad-ed.com](http://www.nomad-ed.com)

Dr. Lauren Steed supports TCK/CCK and expat college applicants through test prep, essay coaching and mentorship for the entire college applications process from list-development to applications.

Sessions open for June, July or August

# Considering Homeschooling Overseas?

The Family Liaison Office (FLO) has resources to assist parents who are weighing the option of homeschooling.

On FLO's website you can review a list of Homeschooling FAQs that includes accreditation, curricular choices, and allowances applicable to overseas homeschooling, as well as information on legality in each host country.

Visit [www.state.gov/flo/education](http://www.state.gov/flo/education) to learn more.

**FLO**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Advocacy Programs Services

## Diplomacy at the Highest Level

### To Build a Better World: Choices to End the Cold War and Create a Global Commonwealth

Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Twelve*, 2019, \$35/hardcover, \$17.99/ebook, 528 pages.

REVIEWED BY JOSEPH L. NOVAK

The stakes were high: world peace and the future of the Eurasian land mass hung in the balance. In *To Build a Better World*, Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice probe the steps taken by the administration of President George H.W. Bush in dealing with the fast-changing situation in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. Few had predicted the onrush of events that year, and Zelikow and Rice readily admit that the Bush administration was playing catch-up.

Both authors are well known. Zelikow, a professor at the University of Virginia, was counselor at the State Department and executive director of the 9/11 Commission. Rice, a professor at Stanford University, served as the 66th Secretary of State and as President George W. Bush's first national security adviser.

Some of the material in *To Build a Better World* was explored in the authors' previous collaboration, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Harvard University Press, 1995). Yet *To Build a Better World* offers a wider perspective by linking past events to the current international situation and uses previously unavailable resources. After all, both authors were at the NSC during the 1989-1991 time frame and had a unique opportunity to witness events.

They note, for example, that “the crisis

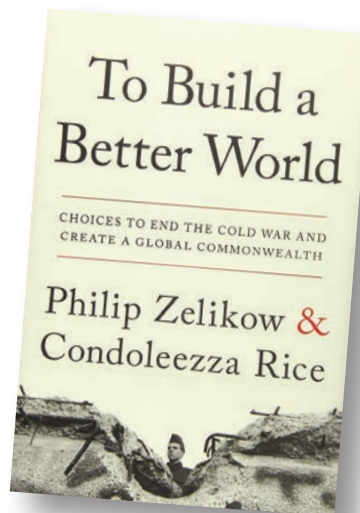
in East Germany crept in through the side door,” with East Germans taking advantage of the sudden lifting of travel restrictions and streaming into the West. Massive internal demonstrations placed mounting pressure on the sclerotic East German regime. Washington's focus was on making sure that authorities did not launch a bloody crackdown on peaceful protesters, as had happened months earlier at Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

In this effort, the Bush administration had a true partner in Mikhail Gorbachev, the pro-reform leader of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's position at home was shaky, however, and he needed Washington's support. Zelikow and Rice review in detail how the Bush administration did its best to “help Gorbachev politically and economically and raise his odds for success; at the same time consolidate the Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe and lasting arms control.”

The book also highlights Chancellor Helmut Kohl's unswerving focus on German unification (achieved in 1990) and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's misguided efforts to put a brake on that process.

As the Soviet Union hurtled toward collapse, Washington was concerned about control of the Soviet nuclear arsenal and the possibility of widespread instability. The Bush administration demonstrated diplomatic expertise in developing a comprehensive policy framework to deal with the fluid situation based on its idea of “a Europe whole and free.”

It then worked with agility in rallying



allies and partners. The Bush administration also exhibited a high level of respect toward its former adversary—there was no “spiking the football” over the setbacks the Soviet Union faced.

Despite its excellent track record, some U.S. moves were poorly executed. These include President Bush's widely criticized

“Chicken Kiev” speech of August 1991. In the speech, Bush seemed to indicate that the United States did not fully embrace the prospect of Soviet constituent states declaring independence from Moscow. By December 1991, the Soviet Union had disintegrated, and Gorbachev was out of a job.

Zelikow and Rice allow that much has happened since 1991 and use the rest of their book to examine what became of the “New World Order” created in the wake of the Cold War. The bad news is that it is splintering.

Among other destabilizing developments, they highlight a revisionist Russia led by Putin, the rise of an increasingly powerful China, and a European Union rocked by migrant and financial crises in addition to the 2016 decision by the British to exit the bloc.

Because the United States has been wearied by “endless wars” in Afghanistan and Iraq, its confidence and commitment to international engagement have ebbed in recent years. The authors note: “For all of those who had chafed under what they sometimes called American unilateralism, it was suddenly a real possibility that America would simply stay home.”



The question posed in the final section of the book is whether democracies can fend off the wave of populism and anti-West authoritarianism, which is vitiating the order set up after the end of the Cold War.

The authors conclude on a positive note, portraying the United States as a country that has the capacity to regenerate and reengage. They quote President Franklin Roosevelt, who stated in 1943: “I have distinct reservations as to how good ‘the good ole days’ were. I would rather believe we can achieve new and better days.”

One shortcoming of the book is that it is a bit austere, without many of the illustrative vignettes that can add to prose. The final section, and its review of events of the last 30 years, also seems hastily put together.

That said, *To Build a Better World* is a valuable book. The authors make clear how well served the United States was by a foreign policy apparatus led by Secretary of State James A. Baker, and that included, among many other outstanding public servants, Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and Ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock (both career diplomats).

The larger point made by Zelikow and Rice is a vital one: the art of diplomacy is a serious business, and success (as shown in 1989-1991) requires coordinated policy planning, steadiness of purpose and tactical skill.

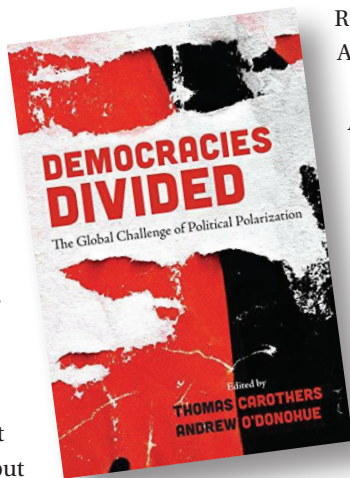
---

*Joseph L. Novak, a Foreign Service officer, serves as a senior adviser in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs at the State Department in Washington, D.C.*

## The Wrong Kind of Leadership

### Democracies Divided: The Global Challenge of Political Polarization

Edited by Thomas Carothers and Andrew O’Donohue, Brookings Institution Press, 2019, \$34.99/paperback, ebook available, 280 pages.



REVIEWED BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Although the coronavirus crisis has temporarily pushed the 2020 U.S. presidential campaign into the shadows (to the relief of many voters, I suspect), this book could not be more timely. *Democracies Divided* is the first book-length comparative analysis

of the impact of political polarization on democracies, old and new, around the world.

Editors Thomas Carothers, senior vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Andrew O’Donohue, a former fellow in that program, have assembled an excellent lineup of authors who bring deep local knowledge and experience to their assessments of the state of democracy in Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Poland and Turkey—and the United States.

The inclusion of that last case study by Carothers may surprise some readers. But while careful not to draw the comparison explicitly, Carothers makes a solid case that the decline of democratic norms in America represents a sort of canary in the global coal mine.

To illustrate what I mean, here are quotes from three of the case studies. See if you can guess which of the countries they describe:

- *Polarization has eroded fact-based public debate, facilitated a dramatic retrenchment of democracy, divided civil society and hurt social cohesion.*
- *Writers, scientists and intellectuals are being attacked and derided solely for expressing even the slightest differences in perspective on political or cultural matters.*
- *A number of pro-democratic and anti-racism grassroots organizations have been organizing pro-refugee rallies and demonstrations, but the ruling party and right-wing media have widely promoted the narrative that refugees are a threat to both national security and cultural identity.*

Remarkably, none of those critiques appears in the chapter examining the United States—but they all could have. (The first is about Turkey; the second, India; and the third, Poland.)

*Democracies Divided* is not simply a diagnosis of what has gone wrong, however. Each case study discusses actions that concerned citizens and organizations in these societies are taking to counter polarizing forces, whether through reforms to political parties, institutions or the media. And in the final chapter, the book’s editors distill from the case studies a range of possible ways for restoring consensus and defeating polarization in the world’s democracies.

But that list of remedies is quite short, alas. And when one looks at what has happened in most of these countries (particularly India) since the book was published last September, it bears out Carothers and O’Donohue’s rueful wisdom on the last page:

“In key respects, polarization is a type of negative externality—those who play the most significant role in producing it

All nine contributors bring deep local knowledge and experience to their assessments of the state of democracy in their respective countries.

mostly benefit from it and bear little of the cost, while ordinary citizens suffer from the degradation of the rule of law, less effective policymaking and diminished levels of governmental accountability.”

With the exception of the Brazil chapter, which is the only one weighed down by page after page of graphs and analysis, the book is geared toward lay readers. Admittedly, the subject matter will primarily interest civic activists, political actors, scholars and ordinary citizens in societies beset by increasingly rancorous partisanship.

But even if your interest in political science happens to be minimal, you’ll find excellent, succinct overviews of each country’s history and demographics. Indeed, I could readily imagine the book as a resource for the Foreign Service Institute’s area studies department. ■

*Steven Alan Honley, a State Department Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997 and editor-in-chief of The Foreign Service Journal from 2001 to 2014, is a regular contributor to the Journal. He is the author of Future Forward: FSI at 70—A History of the Foreign Service Institute (Arlington Hall Press, 2017).*

100 YEARS OF  
DIPLOMATIC  
HISTORY

INCLUDING SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
OF CURATED ARTICLES

afsa.org/fsj-archive  
afsa.org/fsj-special-collections

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL  
DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Calling  
~ ALL ~  
FOREIGN  
SERVICE  
Authors!

In November 2020  
THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL  
will highlight recently published books  
by Foreign Service-affiliated authors.

Authors from the Foreign Service  
community whose books have been  
published in late 2019 or 2020 are  
invited to send us a copy of the book,  
along with a press release or backgrounder  
on the book by September 4.

For more information,  
and for instructions on how  
to submit your book and materials,  
email [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org).

Deadline for submissions is September 4.



See our unique State Department offers  
at [JackRealtyGroup.com/State.php](http://JackRealtyGroup.com/State.php)



Or email us at [State@JackRealtyGroup.com](mailto:State@JackRealtyGroup.com)  
or contact us by phone 202-364-3066

## SALES • RENTALS • MANAGEMENT

- Residential Property Management  
*(Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia)*
- Specialists in Long Term Diplomatic Leasing
- Experienced Leasing Agents
- Boutique Service
- Automated Clearing House (ACH) Rent Payments
- Online Account Access
- Secure Leases



LEASING • MANAGEMENT • SALES • FSO EXPERTS

- Rent your home FAST! Average time to rent is under 30 days
- Comprehensive tenant screening process with perfect track record
- Receive rent deposits within 2-3 business days anywhere in the world
- 24/7 online account access and emergency on-call service
- 40+ years of property management and real estate experience
- **NO HIDDEN FEES!**



[fso@richeypm.com](mailto:fso@richeypm.com) | 703.721.7233

**OUR NO-RISK GUARANTEE**  
No long-term commitment – try us for 90 days risk free!



## VIP OFFER

FOR FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL!

- ✓ 50% OFF management fees for the first 60 days
- ✓ FREE professional marketing photos
- ✓ FREE in-home consultation to get your house ready before you leave
- ✓ FREE rental analysis to maximize rent price

**ACT NOW!**

*Offer expires July 31, 2020*

Visit  
[www.richeypm.com/foreignservice](http://www.richeypm.com/foreignservice)  
for more info!



One fan.



Many fans.

Our reputation speaks for itself as we celebrate more than 35 years of service.

WJD Management

Residential property management and leasing specialists serving all of Northern Virginia and clients around the globe.

*Property Management is our only business!*

Get to know us at [wjdpm.com](http://wjdpm.com) or email our Director of Operations Gina Talotta at [gina@wjdpm.com](mailto:gina@wjdpm.com).



## Property Specialists, Inc.

A professional and personal service tailored to meet your needs in:

- Property Management
- Tenant Placement
- Tax-deferred Exchange
- Real Estate Investment Counseling

---

Specializing in  
**PROPERTY  
MANAGEMENT**

---

4600-D Lee Highway Arlington, Virginia 22207

(703) 525-7010 (703) 247-3350

Email: [info@propertyspecialistsinc.com](mailto:info@propertyspecialistsinc.com)

Web address: [propertyspecialistsinc.com](http://propertyspecialistsinc.com)

Serving Virginia, Maryland and D.C.

# THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

guide to

# EXTENDED STAY HOUSING

Your Go-To Resource!

Find it online at

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

## CORPORATE HOUSING in Washington, DC



### Stay with Confidence.

We have certified corporate housing providers on staff.

- TDY per diems accepted
- Sliding scale welcome
- Local woman-owned business
- Wireless broadband internet
- Fantastic Foggy Bottom and Dupont locations
- Certified corporate housing providers on staff
- All major credit cards accepted
- Room and ride packages available.



**Corporate Apartment Specialists**  
Throughout Metropolitan Washington, DC

[www.CorporateApartments.com](http://www.CorporateApartments.com)

(800) 914-2802 | F: (703) 979-2813 | [sales@corporateapartments.com](mailto:sales@corporateapartments.com)

# MOVING?



## TAKE AFSA WITH YOU!

Send your address updates to  
[member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org)

WASHINGTON MANAGEMENT SERVICES

# WMS™

ASSET AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Since 1983, Washington Management Services has been connecting residential property owners with qualified, responsible tenants in the DC metropolitan area. Let us show you why we are the partner of choice for Foreign Service residential property owners and tenants.



4405 EAST WEST HIGHWAY  
NUMBER 306  
BETHESDA MD 20814

PHONE 301 654 1400  
FAX 301 654 1426  
[WWW.WMSDC.COM](http://WWW.WMSDC.COM)

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

### LEGAL SERVICES

#### ATTORNEY WITH OVER 25 YEARS'

successful experience SPECIALIZING FULL-TIME IN FS GRIEVANCES will more than double your chance of winning: 30% of grievants win before the Grievance Board; 85% of my clients win. Only a private attorney can adequately develop and present your case, including necessary regs, arcane legal doctrines, precedents and rules.



Bridget R. Mugane  
Tel: (301) 596-0175 or (202) 387-4383.  
Email: fsatty@comcast.net  
Website: foreignservicelawyer.com

**EXPERIENCED ATTORNEYS REPRESENTING** FS officers in grievances, performance, promotion and tenure, financial claims, discrimination, security clearance and disciplinary actions. We represent FS officers at all stages of the proceedings from an investigation, issuance of proposed discipline or initiation of a grievance, through hearing before the FSGB. We provide experienced, timely and knowledgeable advice to employees from junior untenured officers through the Senior FS, and often work closely with AFSA.

Kalijarvi, Chuzi, Newman & Fitch  
Tel: (202) 331-9260.  
Email: attorneys@kcnlaw.com

### PET TRANSPORTATION

#### PET SHIPPING WORLDWIDE:

ACTION PET EXPRESS. Veteran owned since 1969.

Tel: (888) 318-9696.  
Email: info@actionpetexpress.com  
Website: www.actionpetexpress.com



### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

**Former FSJ Editor** and author available to help with your memoir, novel or article. Whether you need editorial guidance, copy-editing or just an objective eye, I'm here for you. Rates negotiable.

Steven Alan Honley  
Tel: (202) 479-9114.  
Email: SAHonley@his.com

#### Writers Wanted

Precision Content has multiple openings for part-time writers willing to work a minimum of 25 hours per week. We write blogs and website content for internet marketing companies servicing a variety of niches. We start all writers at \$1000/month based on a 25-hour week.

Contact: Bill Gaskill  
Tel: (757) 298-3285.  
Email: bill@precisioncontentllc.com

### REAL ESTATE

Tom was my "go to" Realtor in Northern Virginia for 25+ years. Posted overseas, having access to an ethical Realtor who understood our needs and profession, could offer advice on residential and investor real estate and trends, paid attention to detail, and could be unconditionally trusted was invaluable to my family. As a retired SFSO and full-service VA-licensed Realtor, I provide this same service but at your pace. Please contact me to learn more about how my personalized service differentiates.

#### ALAN DAVIS, REALTOR\*

Long & Foster  
Burke/Fairfax Station/Clifton  
6045 Burke Centre Parkway, Burke VA 22015  
Cell/Text: (571) 229-6821.  
Email: alandavisrealtor@gmail.com  
Website: www.alandavisrealtor.com

**FLORIDA'S PARADISE COAST**—Naples, Bonita Springs, Estero  
Excellent amenities, activities, cultural events in beautiful Southwest Florida. Outstanding home values.

Thomas M. Farley, LLC. Retired SFS.  
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Realty.  
Email: tomfarley@BHHSFloridaRealty.net

**SUNNYSIDE PROPERTY.** Over 30 furnished Arlington VA Walk-to-Metro rentals. We own and manage all our properties. Studio to 5 BR houses. Unique renovated, maintained homes in vintage buildings. Completely furnished, all inclusive (parking, utilities, maid). Starting at \$2,500/mo. We work with per diem. Welcoming Foreign Service for 10+ years!

For all listings/reservations:  
Website: <http://www.SunnysideProperty.net>

Want to buy or sell **property in Virginia**? This FSO (ret.) with 20 years of real estate experience is available and happy to help.

David Olinger GRI, Long & Foster, Realtors  
Tel: (703) 864-3196.  
Email: David.olinger@LNF.com  
Website: <https://www.longandfoster.com/DaveOlinger>

**HEADING OUT? HEADING "HOME" TO DC?** As an immigrant and Foreign Service spouse, I know what a hassle international moves can be—especially without a GSO or CLO! Whether you're looking to buy, sell or rent, in DC or VA, I can help smooth your transition. For a realtor who understands the unique needs and strains of Foreign Service life, go to [justcallmarian.com](http://justcallmarian.com)!

McEneaney Associates  
Tel: (703) 967-1796.  
Email: MThompson@McEneaney.com  
Website: [www.justcallmarian.com](http://www.justcallmarian.com)

**BUYING OR REFINANCING A HOME?** Jeff Stoddard has specialized in home finance for FSOs for 20 years and is able to provide FSO-specific financing.

Contact: Jeff Stoddard  
Tel: (703) 725-2455.  
Email: [groupstoddard@gmail.com](mailto:groupstoddard@gmail.com)

**SARASOTA FLORIDA REALTOR** Marian Walsh (FSO Spouse) is your real estate guide to retirement living in Sarasota—the cultural capital of the Sun Coast.

Marian Walsh, Medway Realty  
Tel: (941) 483-0803.  
Email: [florida.walsh@gmail.com](mailto:florida.walsh@gmail.com)

### TAX & FINANCIAL SERVICES

**IRVING CPA, PLLC.** Scott Irving, CPA, has more than 20 years of experience and specializes in Foreign Service family tax preparation and tax planning.

Tel: (202) 257-2318.  
Email: [info@irvingcpa.com](mailto:info@irvingcpa.com)  
Website: [www.irvingcpa.pro](http://www.irvingcpa.pro)

**Joel Cassman CPA LLC.** Retired Foreign Service Officer with 30+ years tax experience. Specializes in international and real estate tax issues.

Tel: (571) 221-0784.  
Email: joelcassmancpa@yahoo.com  
Website: www.JoelCassmanCPA.com

**PROFESSIONAL TAX RETURN PREPARATION.** Arthur A. Granberg, EA, ATA, ATP, has more than 40 years of experience in public tax practice. Our Associates include EAs & CPAs. Our rate is \$150 per hour; most FS returns take just 3-4 hours. Located near Ballston Mall and Metro station.

Tax Matters Associates PC  
4600 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 414  
Arlington VA 22203  
Tel: (703) 522-3828.  
Fax: (703) 522-5726.  
Email: aag8686tma@gmail.com

## ■ TEMPORARY HOUSING

**CORPORATE APARTMENT SPECIALISTS.** Abundant experience with Foreign Service professionals. We work with sliding scales. TDY per diems accepted. We have the locations to best serve you: Foggy Bottom (walking to Main State), Woodley Park, Chevy Chase and several Arlington locations convenient to NEATC. Wi-Fi and all furnishings, houseware, utilities, telephone and cable included.

Tel: (703) 979-2830 or (800) 914-2802.  
Fax: (703) 979-2813.  
Email: sales@corporateapartments.com  
Website: www.corporateapartments.com

**DC GUEST APARTMENTS.** Not your typical “corporate” apartments—we’re different! Located in Dupont Circle, we designed our apartments as places where we’d like to live and work—beautifully furnished and fully equipped (including internet & satellite TV). Most importantly, we understand that occasionally needs change, so we never penalize you if you leave early. You only pay for the nights you stay, even if your plans change at the last minute. We also don’t believe in minimum stays or extra charges like application or cleaning fees.

Tel: (202) 536-2500.  
Email: DCDIGS@gmail.com  
Website: www.dcguestapartments.com

**DCLuxe Properties.** Washington, D.C., corporate housing, offering large fully furnished and generously equipped one- and two-bedroom units in the heart of the popular Dupont Circle neighborhood. In-unit washer/dryer, cable TV, high-speed internet and weekly housekeeping are standard amenities. Your privacy is important to us—no shared spaces or large apartment buildings. The subway, grocery stores, drug stores, dry cleaners and restaurants are all within 3 blocks of your unit. We have more than 20 years of experience with USG sliding-scale per diem.

See [dcluxe.com](http://dcluxe.com) for more information and photos; contact us at [host@dcluxe.com](mailto:host@dcluxe.com).  
Live like a local!

**FURNISHED LUXURY APARTMENTS!** Flexible Terms. Great Location: Shaw / Ledroit Park. Utilities included. 2 & 3 bdrms. Parking.

Tel: (202) 368-8167.  
Email: [info@bny-development.com](mailto:info@bny-development.com)  
Website: <https://www.airbnb.com/rooms/42905319>

Contact Molly Long to be included in this section: [ads@afsa.org](mailto:ads@afsa.org) or (202) 719-9706.

# AD INDEX

When contacting one of our advertisers, kindly mention you saw their advertisement in *The Foreign Service Journal*.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Calling FS Authors / 74  
Foreign Service Night at Nationals Park / Inside Back Cover

## CLASSIFIED ADS

Classifieds / 78, 79

## EDUCATION

ASU Thunderbird School of Global Management / 61  
Berlin Brandenburg International School / 57  
EF Academy / 68  
Episcopal Church Schools in the Diocese of Virginia / 4  
Family Liaison Office / 71  
FSJ Schools-at-a-Glance Chart / 62  
Garrison Forest School / 58  
Georgetown University, Walsh School of Foreign Service / 21  
Gow School, The / 56  
Grier School / 59  
John F. Kennedy School, Berlin / 65  
Linden Hall School / 63  
Nomad Educational Services / 71  
St. Stephen’s School, Rome / 65  
St. Timothy’s School / 60  
Southwestern Academy / 69  
TTU K-12 (Texas Tech) / 69  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County TESOL / 60  
Wilbraham & Monson Academy / 56

## FINANCIAL

MCG Financial Planning / 53  
Windecker Financial Planning / 53

## INSURANCE

AFSPA—Dental / 23  
AFSPA—Life / 45  
AFSPA—Travel / 39  
Clements Worldwide / 3  
Federal Employee Defense Services / Back Cover

## MISCELLANEOUS

Address Change / 77  
AFSA Retiree Membership / 46  
Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide / 64  
Foreign Service Youth Foundation / 64  
FSJ Archive / 74  
FSJ Extended Stay Housing / 77  
FSJ Marketplace / 18  
FSJ Subscription / 23  
Fund for American Diplomacy / Inside Front Cover  
*Inside a U.S. Embassy* / 64  
U.S. Foreign Service Commemorative Coin / 46  
USAID Alumni Association / 43

## REAL ESTATE, HOUSING & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Corporate Apartment Specialists / 77  
Jack Realty Group / 75  
PEAKE Management / 43  
Property Specialists, Inc. / 76  
Richey Property Management / 75  
Washington Management Services / 77  
WJD Management / 76

# Engaging Our Host Country's History

BY LAURA M. FABRYCKY

In recent years, after multiple Foreign Service assignments, I have come to recognize how rarely I saw the histories of our host countries as stories on their own terms, especially ones I could learn from as an American, and not merely as local curiosities or intellectual entertainments.

Berlin opened my eyes. It is full of captivating stories, some closely entwined with our own. In fact, since World War II, some of the greatest expressions of American rhetoric, from President John F. Kennedy's famous "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech to President Ronald Reagan's "Tear Down This Wall," belong to this great city.

Our family lived on Berlin's southwest side from 2016 to 2019, and our children attended the specially chartered binational and bilingual John F. Kennedy School. As we settled into our new home in the fall of 2016, however, I was feeling strangely alienated from our home back in the States because of the partisanship that was cleaving our nation.

My hope was renewed by a very local story, one about the World War II-era German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1916-1945). Learning about Bonhoeffer's life, how he assessed what it meant to be German and what that responsibility meant for him, would prove to be a unique source of nourishment for my civic imagination.



Laura Fabrycky gives a tour of the Bonhoeffer-Haus in Berlin in 2019.

During our first year in Berlin, I visited his former family home—the Bonhoeffer-Haus—many times. Each visit offered new angles of discovery and meaning, especially during the final reflective pause in the top-floor bedroom where the Gestapo arrested Bonhoeffer in 1943.

Since 1987, when it was officially memorialized, the Bonhoeffer-Haus has been a place for visitors to learn about his life and think responsibly about their own. Though I had read a few of Bonhoeffer's devotional writings and a biography, it was not until I saw this house and culture in situ, and listened to Germans interpret his local

legacy, that I began to truly relate to Bonhoeffer's story, and what I could learn from it.

Eventually, I asked if I could volunteer there as a guide. To my amazement, I was welcomed and issued a key. It hung on my keychain alongside my U.S. government-issued house and official post office keys, tokens of my responsibilities to particular places and their stories.

For the remaining two years of our Berlin tour, I walked more intentionally in the pages of another people's history, guiding English-speaking visitors from all over the world through Dietrich Bonhoeffer's incredibly brief, light-filled life.

Learning to tell his German story—amid the tumult of the first half of the 20th century—required that I pay better attention to my own American

habits of heart and mind, and to how I narrated our nation's civic stories.

For one, my German colleagues at Bonhoeffer-Haus told a more communal story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer than I knew, depicting him less as a singular hero (as we Americans prefer our

heroic tales) but rather as a man who was marked by his belonging to others.

By all accounts, his destiny as the sixth of eight children born to Dr. Karl and Paula Bonhoeffer, a well-to-do family in Berlin's Grunewald neighborhood, should have been secure and comfortable, with a future full of bright accomplishments.

Like his parents and siblings, he was intellectually and emotionally gifted,



Laura Fabrycky at Bonhoeffer's desk during her first visit in November 2016.



Laura M. Fabrycky is a Foreign Service spouse, mother of three and the author of *Keys to Bonhoeffer's Haus: Exploring the World and Wisdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Fortress Press), which was released in March. She last wrote for the Journal in 2016, "Road Trip to Syria, 2011."



skilled in the arts of friendship, music, scholarship, teaching and community-building. Each of these skills he first learned at home, in a loving, large and relatively happy family that treasured humanism and conviviality, and honored obligations to others.

Their lives were engulfed not once but twice by war, and by the many civic and political troubles that shook Germany during the first half of the 20th century. Like so many of that generation, his life was swallowed up and eventually ended by the specter of National Socialism.



**Dietrich Bonhoeffer with students in the spring of 1932.**

Bonhoeffer realized early on that Nazi ideology posed a profound danger to Germany. He disagreed robustly and publicly with many of his fellow Christians who enthusiastically embraced the party and its ideology.

In a radio address in early February 1933, Bonhoeffer even warned against a *Führer* (leader) who becomes a *Verführer* (misleader), never naming Hitler but describing the social dynamics of his rule with unmistakable clarity. Bonhoeffer spoke, wrote and organized against Nazi influence in the German church.

In 1939, friends in the United States offered him a teaching position at a seminary in New York—an honorable plan of escape from Germany and its wartime demands. Initially, Bonhoeffer

## How am I connected, and in some ways obligated, to others, even to those with whom I have robust disagreements?

accepted, but after only a few weeks in the United States, he returned to Germany to embrace his responsibilities to his country and its struggle for a hopeful future.

After several years in German military intelligence (*Abwehr*), where he worked as a double-agent helping to smuggle Jews out of Germany and build links with the outside world for the German resistance, Bonhoeffer was arrested by the Gestapo at his family home in April 1943, on a minor and unrelated charge.

When the Valkyrie plot by German generals and a group of civilian allies to overthrow Hitler failed in July 1944, Bonhoeffer's small role in that larger operation was also eventually unearthed.

After two years of imprisonment, he was put to death on Hitler's orders on April 9, 1945, in the Flossenbürg concentration camp, just weeks before Allied forces

arrived to liberate it.



**Bonhoeffer-Haus in Berlin, Germany, 2008.**

One of Bonhoeffer's central lessons in life was his practice of asking questions, to himself and his family and friends. These are not German questions but human ones—true for all people, everywhere.

They are particularly challenging to individuals engaged in the nomadic For-

eign Service life: To whom and to where do I belong? How have those people and places influenced me? What do I owe my fellow citizens? How am I connected, and in some ways obligated, to others, even to those with whom I have robust disagreements?

These questions about civic participation and belonging matter even when our citizenship is practiced far beyond our nation's shores.

At the Bonhoeffer-Haus, I was always struck by how my German counterparts spoke openly about the guilt and shame of their history, and how important it is to grapple with history in order to better prepare for the future.

Learning about the man in the context of his home, I was reminded that the small, seemingly insignificant decisions we make day by day do, in fact, make up and influence history.

Like Bonhoeffer, we who belong to particular people and places are implicated in history, too, whether our names ever grace a history textbook or our house is ever memorialized for visitors. That most elemental truth about our American civic life still bears repeating, especially for those who will come after us.

I have since surrendered my key to Bonhoeffer-Haus, and our family has settled into our next posting, as those of us living this privileged Foreign Service life continue to do. We now live, work, learn and try to serve among new people and new places.

Here, in our new home outside Brussels, I have not stopped looking for the stories that this new place offers, especially as a way to inform and care for our own American stories. ■



**T**his photo was taken just around sunset in Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste, in February. My husband and I were in a taxi on our way to dinner, and we passed this group of children playing at the ocean front, creating their own fun. I love how the power of the wind is captured in the waves and in the children's hair. ■

*Carole Fenton is a Foreign Service family member. She and her FSO husband, Tom, are posted to Embassy Bangkok, and were in Dili on a TDY assignment. Their previous assignments include Khartoum and Budapest. The photo was taken with an Apple iPhone SE.*

Please submit your favorite, recent photograph to be considered for Local Lens. Images must be high resolution (at least 300 dpi at 8" x 10", or 1 MB or larger) and must not be in print elsewhere. Include a short description of the scene/event, as well as your name, brief biodata and the type of camera used. Send to [localens@afsa.org](mailto:localens@afsa.org).

*AFSA is pleased to announce the fifth annual*

# ***Foreign Service Night*** **AT NATIONALS PARK**

**September 18, 2020 @ 7:05 p.m.**



*Nationals*

**VS.**



*Marlins*

Visit [afsa.org/nationals2020](https://afsa.org/nationals2020) for more information,  
including how to buy tickets.

This is a great way to reconnect with Foreign Service colleagues,  
especially those returning home from overseas service.





*Former Ambassador  
William B. Taylor*

# FEDS Protection Covered Me

- ✓ Several of my colleagues were asked to testify before Congress.
- ✓ All of us needed legal representation.
- ✓ Several of us had professional liability insurance. Most of these firms declined to cover my colleagues' legal expenses.
- ✓ FEDS Protection covered me. I am sticking with them.



**Professional Liability Insurance**  
866.955.FEDS (3337)  
[www.fedsprotection.com](http://www.fedsprotection.com)