

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

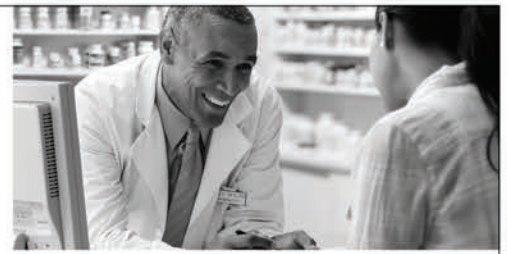
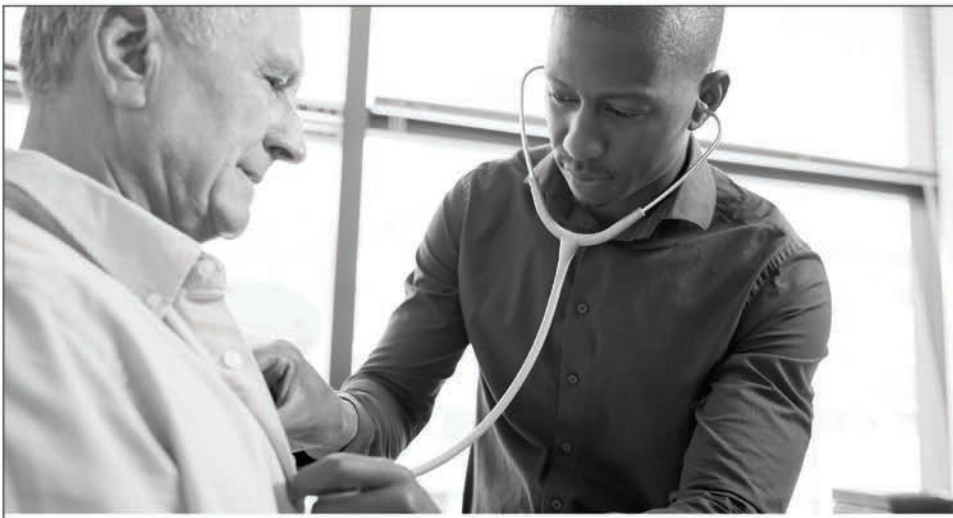
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THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

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On the Cover—Cover art by Alexandra Bowman, inspired by the concept "Diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance." That evocative phrase is introduced by Deputy Assistant Secretary Mirembe Nantongo in her lead article, and originally comes from diversity advocate Verna Myers. Find more of Bowman's work on Instagram @alexbowman.

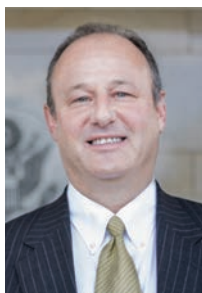
Change Has Come, More Is Coming

BY ERIC RUBIN

This is a time of seismic change for the world, our country, our profession and our institutions.

The global wildfire-like spread of the novel coronavirus and the economic and social shocks that it brought have led to unprecedented challenges. There is no doubt our country could have responded better to the crisis. And while it was widely understood that our society had failed to address fundamental issues of racial and economic fairness, the wave of protest that followed the killing of George Floyd caught many Americans off guard.

This is the first of two back-to-back issues of *The Foreign Service Journal* dedicated to issues of diversity, inclusion and discrimination in our Service. The passing of Representative John Lewis (D-Ga.) reminds us—as he himself often did—that while we have come a long way since the days of Jim Crow and legal segregation, we have a long way to go to become a truly fair and inclusive society. The ongoing debates over Confederate flags and monuments also remind us that we have not succeeded in achieving a common national understanding of the Civil War and its causes, nor of the years and decades that followed the Union victory.



Why do we need to focus on diversity in the Foreign Service today? First of all, because we are still not the Service we are supposed

We are still not the Service we are supposed to be.

to be, one that looks like the country we represent. We're more diverse than we were decades ago, to be sure, but progress has slowed dramatically, and in some respects we have gone backward.

Second, because we have not lived up to our rhetoric. The numbers speak for themselves, and the recent GAO reports are particularly revealing. AFSA recently polled our membership on issues related to racism and diversity. The responses underline how common it is for minority members of the Service to experience blatant or subtle racism and discrimination, and how unrepresentative many of our overseas posts and domestic bureaus are in terms of looking like America.

Of course, the effects of the coronavirus crisis on our Service are real and dramatic. AFSA is working hard to support our members as they deal with the dislocation that 2020 has brought. We have won important victories on issues that are critical to our members in navigating this crisis, and we are very glad that our agencies are bringing on new members of the Service through online training and orientation.

The months ahead will bring more challenges and painful compromises. The loss of consular fees due to the impact of coronavirus will affect State's ability to hire new officers. These fees pay the salaries of many entry-level officers, who serve in consular assignments first.

The separation of families due to post departures related to the pandemic, and the fact that many are still stuck in place due to travel restrictions, has brought a slew of difficult decisions. Overseas schools, which are so important to making accompanied tours possible for families with children, are in some cases facing challenges to their survival. Issues related to COVID-19 testing, quarantine and authorized departure continue to demand creative solutions and the protection of our members and their families.

This brings us to the larger reality: The Foreign Service Act of 1980 is 40 years old this year. It is our foundational legislation, and I believe it is fundamentally sound and should be largely preserved. But the Foreign Service cannot be frozen in amber. We are dealing with major changes in America's role in the world, significant generational changes regarding attitudes and expectations, and the need to rethink and improve how we recruit, hire and retain talent. We also need a hard focus on workplace culture and its importance in fostering respect, inclusion and morale.

We want to hear your views on what needs to be done to improve and modernize our Service. Please share your thoughts with us at member@afsa.org. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to our country and to our shared mission at this very challenging time. ■

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

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It's Time

BY SHAWN DORMAN

This month's focus—addressing race, diversity and inclusion—has been on the calendar since the end of last year when we set 2021 themes. It is not a new topic, nor a new problem; but this moment in our country's history may offer a real opportunity for change that *is* new.

The police killing of George Floyd and all that followed has led to the airing of the Black experience in American diplomacy in a way not widely seen before. As Americans are facing racism and taking stock of how our society and institutions are doing when it comes to equality and inclusion (not so well), so too is the Foreign Service.

For this *Journal* focus, we have brought together powerful voices for positive change from various vantage points, and we hope their insights and recommendations will contribute to the measures, policies, and even the cultural shifts required to create a Foreign Service that can live up to American ideals of equality and inclusion.

Leading the discussion, Deputy Assistant Secretary Mirembe Nantongo presents an inspiring look at why and how diversity (about *people*) and inclusion (about *culture*) matter and what the State Department is doing to deal with

both. She begins by painting a powerful image of diversity vs. inclusion—diversity is

Shawn Dorman is the editor of The Foreign Service Journal.



being invited to the party, while inclusion is being asked to dance.

This concept, originally introduced by diversity advocate Verna Myers, inspired the wonderful cover art. We commissioned Black American artist Alexandra Bowman to bring the vision to life. We trust you will agree that she did.

In “Creating a Culture of Inclusion at State,” Ambassador (ret.) Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley puts forward specific recommendations on building accountability into the system to ensure that promoting inclusion is everyone's responsibility. And Ambassador (ret.) Peter F. Romero suggests specific ways the Foreign Service can truly look like and represent America.

In “Diversity at State: A Dream Deferred and a Collective Responsibility,” FSOs Ana Escrogima, Lia Miller and Christina Tilghman offer an honest assessment of how well the Pickering and Rangel Fellowships have done in advancing diversity at State, and what should change.

Senior FSO Julie Chung shares her deeply personal story in “The Making of a Real American Diplomat.”

In a critical look at barriers to advancement for people of color in the Foreign Service, FSO Patrice Johnson tells us “It's Not Just About Intake: A New Approach to Advancing Diversity.”

And we dove into the FSJ Archive to resurface a selection of articles on diversity in the Foreign Service going back to 1963.

AFSA's legacy on advancing diversity is mixed, and while it is fair to say the

association did not always lead on the issue, it is aiming to play a productive role today in raising and advocating recommendations emerging from the Foreign Service community—through AFSA surveys and meetings and through the affinity groups (who will weigh in next month on these pages).

Our cover stories honor the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. Ambassador (ret.) Jeffrey Feltman shares his insider experience as U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, explaining why “U.N. Relevance Depends on U.S. Leadership.” Ambassador (ret.) James Dandridge brings us a story from the organization's beginnings in “Ralph J. Bunche, U.N. Architect.”

And following our focus on pandemic diplomacy last month, we present a first-hand account from the 2020 Repatriation Task Force that brought home more than 100,000 Americans. Chris Meade, Holly Adamson, Merlyn Schultz and Fany Colon de Hayes—all with the State Department Operations Center's Office of Crisis Management and Strategy—tell us about “Bringing Order Out of Crisis: Behind the Scenes of a Task Force.”

The *FSJ* strives to shine a light on the realities, diverse perspectives and real recommendations on how to move diplomacy forward. Given the groundswell of attention to diversity and inclusion—and the opportunity of this moment—we shifted our October focus to continue this conversation, which we invite you to join by writing to us at journal@afsa.org. ■

Remembering Joseph Diatta

I was saddened to learn of the recent death of Joseph Diatta, a former ambassador from Niger to the United States and a colleague at the Foreign Service Institute's Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) course.

As a facilitator with the FACT course, I had the privilege of working with Amb. Diatta for nearly five years. He demonstrated a quiet dignity, provided a realistic encounter for students, and drew on his personal experiences when teaching the importance of cultural sensitivity, mutual respect and active listening.

Having served as ambassador to the United States and having been one of the chief architects of the 1995 peace agreement that reconciled the Tuareg armed rebellion in Niger, Amb. Diatta brought a unique perspective to the FACT program.

In observing his interaction with students, I was struck by the importance he placed on nurturing relationships, increasing rapport and promoting communication. He understood, better than most, that open communication might at some point save a Foreign Service officer's life or the lives of their colleagues. Joseph Diatta will be missed.

*Michael Maxey
USAID FSO, retired
Fairfax, Virginia*

Endowing the Tex Harris Award

In May, I sent a contribution to AFSA to help establish a permanent endowment for the Tex Harris Award.

I had the privilege of working closely

with Tex from 1974 to 1977 in my first assignment as an FSO. I was working in the European Affairs Bureau, and Tex was on detail to the Environmental Protection Agency.

I also got to know his family during those years, and I am forever grateful to have shared in the generous spirit and warmheartedness that later led them to their courageous actions in Argentina. I worried about them in those years, but

I was not surprised by what they felt compelled to do.

Separately, I doubtless would have joined AFSA anyway; but when I met Tex (on the last day of A-100 orientation), he said to me: "You're an FSO; you have to belong to AFSA." That settled it.

I was an FSO for only five years, but I

have happily been an AFSA member for more than 45 years.

I hope that members of the Foreign Service community who never had the good fortune to know Tex personally will nevertheless find inspiration in him to nurture their own integrity, professionalism and humanity.

*Edwina Campbell
Former FSO
Fort Worth, Texas*

Remembering the Srebrenica Massacre

It has been 25 years since Bosnian Serbs murdered more than 8,000 fellow Bosnians who were Muslim. Despite all our professions since the Holocaust of "Never Again," wanton genocidal killing of noncombatants had occurred once more in Europe.

At the time of the massacre's 10th anniversary (July 11, 2005), I was an FSO serving at U.S. Consulate General Casablanca. Not even the horrors of Abu Ghraib upset my Moroccan colleagues more than the Srebrenica massacre.

While watching the Al-Arabiya news channel's coverage of the 10th anniversary of the massacre, the Moroccans, noticeably upset and even enraged, asked me whether the West would ever accept them, Muslim natives of the first country to recognize the United States in 1777.

After all, the Bosniacs were themselves considered the most Westernized Muslims. Yet, subjected to the Serbs' ethnic cleansing campaign, they were victims of the worst massacre in Europe since the end of World War II, while Srebrenica was ostensibly under U.N. blue helmet protection. (U.N. "safe haven" must be the oxymoron of the 1990s!)

My Moroccan co-workers simply could not fathom how the United States and the West, well aware of the brutal reputations of Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, could let this happen.

The subsequent radicalization of some Bosniacs, like the Chechens before them, should not have surprised anyone—and certainly not members of our profession—remotely aware of what was done to them by the Serbs and the Russians, respectively.

Although the July-August *FSJ* understandably focused on COVID-19 and the widespread public outcry in the United States and elsewhere over George Floyd's murder and police brutality, it was disappointing that the *Journal* did not also feature a remembrance essay on Srebrenica and the international community's failure to stop the Bosnian Serbs' onslaught.

After all, several FSOs, notably area



experts George Kenney and Marshall Freeman Harris, resigned in protest of our government's inaction.

It is incumbent on us to reflect periodically on what was done to the Bosniacs, Darfuris, Kurds, Rohingyas, Chechens, Palestinians and other victimized peoples when confounded by their intransigence and anger.

George W. Aldridge
FSO, retired
Arlington, Texas

Keeping Embassies Running

I read the July-August *Journal* on the FS response to the COVID-19 pandemic with interest. It seems that throughout the world, at all posts, everyone was consistent in their effort to repatriate Americans back home—if it were possible, we should all get one big group Eagle Award.

However, one thing I've noticed that is markedly missing in almost all State Department communication, and in the *Journal*, is appreciation and/or stories about those of us who stayed behind, those of us who didn't take authorized departure but remained at post.

We are the warriors ensuring that the embassies continue to run and that there is an American presence (and American Citizen Services) in far-flung locations, even during this pandemic.

We forfeited being in the United States and near our loved ones, instead serving our country on the front lines, often in countries with raging COVID-

19, draconian lockdowns and terrible health care situations.

It is nice to acknowledge all the hard work that was done in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it would also be nice to allow a tip of the hat for what happens after everyone is evacuated.

Thanks to AFSA and the *FSJ* for all you do.

Ubah Khasimuddin
Office Management Specialist
U.S. Embassy New Delhi

Responding to Lessons from Silicon Valley

Andrew Moore's June Speaking Out, "Lessons from Silicon Valley: Practical Suggestions for a Modern Workplace," was timely and exactly what the State Department needs to hear at this time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the department to deploy technological and policy changes to cope with unprecedented global challenges. Technological changes that had been in development were deployed rapidly with positive results.

Sensible policy changes like teacher language score evaluations at FSI and interview waivers for H2A applicants demonstrate that it is time to review why certain policies are in place. If they can be changed in the face of crisis, are they necessary at normal times, or are they in place because "we've always done it this way"?

As an entry-level officer with a background in tech, I hope the department makes the changes

Mr. Moore suggests and adopts many additional technologies and policies to modernize. Let the challenges created by COVID-19 be a catalyst for positive change.

Daniel Walsh
FSO
Auckland, New Zealand

An Art Based on Science

Andrew Moore's June Speaking Out on lessons from Silicon Valley is a refreshing call for a Foreign Service life in which diplomats spend most of their time serving America, rather than navigating bureaucratic mazes to manage their service. Many diplomats likely saw themselves in his all-too-relatable war story of a nine-month saga to get a \$50 reimbursement.

Yet, while I'm sure most in the State Department agree that we should "modernize diplomacy" and "make it the first tool of foreign policy," some would unfortunately be quick to explain why each specific innovation Moore proposes for doing so (e.g., the use of advanced analytics in decision memos) "could never be done here."

Those in State's ranks who cling to "the way things have always been" often justify their reticence to innovation by saying "diplomacy is an art, not a sci-

ence" and pointing to a past golden age of diplomacy (that never really existed) to which we should instead return.

However, this hagiography ignores the history of reform at State. Far from artists remaking the world, past efforts to bolster diplomacy





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have gone hand in hand with a push to make it more rational, specialized and professional.

Consider, for example, Wilbur Carr, the father of the Foreign Service. Working in the Progressive Era to end State's unfortunate distinction as the last bastion of the spoils system (see Fareed Zakaria's *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*), Carr largely authored the Foreign Service Act of 1924 (known as the Rogers Act). The legislation fused the diplomatic and consular services, and created the first merit-based hiring and promotion requirements in the department's history.

These changes brought in new FSOs who (among other fields) understood the then-burgeoning science of public administration, replacing old patronage hires who did little more than push paper.

Later, the Foreign Service Act of 1946 created a corps of reservists, diplomats based primarily in Washington who could be called to overseas service if needed. In post-WWII practice, however, most employees remained stateside, and later became the expert Civil Service foreign affairs officers we know today.

This provision recognized the distinct duties for diplomats serving overseas and at home—information collection and representation vs. policy analysis—and further specialized the diplomatic corps to take advantage of the unique skill sets of each.

These and other reforms, opposed by many traditionalists at the time, were premised on the belief that diplomacy should increasingly professionalize itself and benefit from the advances of the day.

Today, that means recognizing that cutting-edge information sciences are a complement, not a substitute, for

bread-and-butter language and area expertise.

As major transnational threats like artificial intelligence, pandemic disease and climate security continue to dominate the international political landscape, diplomacy will also need to become more of a specialist craft, embracing subject-matter expertise.

Today, as in days past, the art of diplomacy is to embrace the science. ■

Ryan Dukeman

*Ph.D. student, Princeton University
& former State Department
Center for Analytics consultant
Princeton, N.J.*



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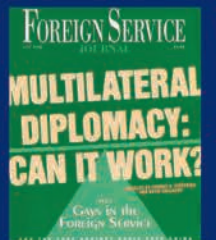
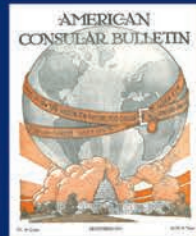
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State Struggles to Promote Diversity

In June 17 testimony, “Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Barriers to Workforce Diversity,” the Government Accountability Office presented State Department data from Fiscal Year 2002 to FY2018 showing that promotion rates for ethnic and racial minorities are considerably lower than for whites.

The testimony, delivered by GAO Director of International Affairs and Trade Jason Bair to the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight, was based on the comprehensive report it had issued in January (GAO-20-237).

At the end of 2018, State had 22,806 full-time, permanent career employees, an increase of nearly 40 percent over 2002, GAO found. The number of full-time employees in the Civil Service rose by nearly 40 percent, from 6,831 in 2002 to 9,546 in 2018. The number of full-time employees in the Foreign Service rose 36 percent from 9,739 in 2002 to 13,260 in 2018.

The overall proportion of racial or ethnic minorities in the State Department’s full-time career workforce grew from 28 to 32 percent from 2002 to 2018. In the Foreign Service, that number increased from 17 to 24 percent, and in the Civil Service, it fell from 44 to 43 percent.

The proportion of African Americans in the Foreign Service increased from 6 to 7 percent during that period, while the percentage of African Americans in the Civil Service decreased from 34 to 26 percent.

According to the United States Census Bureau, 13.4 percent of Americans were Black as of July 2019.

GAO found that all minorities made up 30 percent of Foreign Service employees at the FS-6 rank and lower,

but dropped to 14 percent of the Senior Foreign Service.

As of early June, only three of the State Department’s 189 ambassadors were Black American career diplomats, and only four were Hispanic.

GAO also found that the overall proportion of female full-time career employees at State decreased slightly, from 44 to 43 percent, between 2002 and 2018. While the proportion of women in the Foreign Service increased from 33 to 35 percent during that period, it fell from 61 to 54 percent in the Civil Service.

The proportion of women became even smaller at the higher ranks of the Foreign Service, according to the 2018 numbers, GAO reported. Women made up 68 percent of the workforce at FS-6

or lower ranks, but just 32 percent of the Senior Foreign Service.

“Although State has implemented several plans, activities and initiatives to improve diversity and representation throughout the ranks of its workforce,” GAO concludes, “longstanding diversity issues—for example, underrepresentation of racial or ethnic minorities and women in the senior ranks—persist at the agency.

“Until State takes steps to explore such issues, it could be missing opportunities to investigate, identify and remove barriers that impede members of some demographic groups from realizing their full potential.”

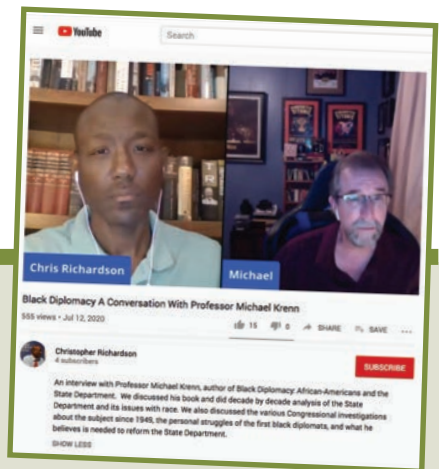
Site of the Month

Black Diplomacy: Chris Richardson Interviews Prof. Michael Krenn (YouTube)

In this YouTube video, former Foreign Service Officer Chris Richardson interviews Professor Michael Krenn about race relations in the State Department.

Prof. Krenn, the author of *Black Diplomacy: African Americans and the State Department, 1945-1969* (M.E. Sharpe, 1999), teaches history at Appalachian State University. The book discusses integration of the State Department after 1945, as well as the appointments of Black ambassadors to African and other developing nations.

In the interview, Richardson and Krenn conduct a decade-by-decade analysis of State and its issues with race. The two also review various congressional investigations about race



in the department since 1949, the struggles of the first Black diplomats and what Krenn believes is needed to reform State.

Chris Richardson—whose op-ed, “The State Department Was Designed to Keep African Americans Out,” appeared in the June 23 *New York Times*—is currently the general counsel and chief operating officer for BDV Solutions, an immigration consulting firm.

Watch the video at <https://bit.ly/black-diplomacy>.

Harassment at Border Crossings

In the wake of discussions sparked by the blog posts from former State Department Consular Fellow Tianna Spears, the American Academy of Diplomacy sent a letter on July 13 to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo regarding harassment of minority diplomats at U.S. border crossings. The letter was signed by Ambassadors (ret.) Thomas Pickering, AAD chairman, and Ronald Neumann, AAD president. Excerpts from the letter follow.

“We are writing to address one acute issue: the deeply troubling pattern in the mistreatment of Black, Hispanic and other minority officers crossing U.S. border/entry points. By their own testimony, many State Department officers have endured regular and persistent discrimination and harassment by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officers.

“Problems include CBP officers not accepting standard diplomatic documents; placing Black and Hispanic officers in secondary examination without cause; and repeated hostile questioning and delays. This is made even more glaring when they travel with Caucasian colleagues who pass through with the same documentation. ...

“Mistreatment of State Department personnel by U.S. CBP is not new. We have learned that such incidents have often disrupted the official travel of Black, Hispanic and other officers. While in the past, some incidents came to the attention of Department leadership, the continued reports, including from our most senior members, suggest that such mistreatment lives on and too often goes unaddressed.

“We hope you concur that any perception of tacit acceptance of such practices or indifference to the reports by Department officials or other Federal officials is unacceptable and warrants action.

Contemporary Quote

Right now, there are two fellowship programs that hire people of color and give them positions within the Foreign Service. I'd say that the State Department needs to increase fellowship programs like this. They need to increase hiring of people of color, promoting entry-level officers and mid-level officers so that they actually have the opportunity, sit at the table and make decisions within these rooms and within the embassies and consulates. So the entire State Department has to look within and see what they can do to make the culture safer, healthier for people of color that come in and give their lives and their careers and their families to its mission.

—Former Foreign Service Consular Fellow Tianna Spears, when asked how the State Department could reimagine recruitment and bolster retention of diverse staff and diplomats in a July 13 interview with PRI's "The World."

“We would like to suggest some steps to address and hopefully halt the mistreatment of Black and other minority staff, indeed all State Department staff, by law enforcement at border entry posts:

- A Department-wide review, ordered by you, regarding the specific incidents reported by officers and consideration of measures that can be taken within State both to intervene immediately in such cases and ensure equal treatment at the border of all staff in Mexico and worldwide;

- A review of the issue at a senior level with the Department of Homeland Security, specifically the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, to ensure such practices cease; and

- Make clear to all Department employees that you regard such mistreatment as unacceptable, that you expect reported cases to be addressed overseas and domestically, as appropriate, and that you will follow up regularly with the Director General and relevant senior officials at State and other agencies.

“The American Academy of Diplomacy strongly supports a diverse, inclusive, well-resourced and high-impact State

Department. Further progress toward this objective will require sustained effort at the most senior levels to ensure that all Department officers get the respect and dignity from U.S. law enforcement officials, which every American is entitled to at the border and international entry points, especially while on official duty.”

Top State Official Resigns Over Trump Response to Racial Issues

The State Department's highest-level Black official, and the only Black assistant secretary of State, resigned on June 18 over President Donald Trump's handling of racial tensions.

Mary Elizabeth Taylor was the first Black woman to hold the position of assistant secretary of State for legislative affairs. At age 30, she was also the youngest. A Republican political appointee, she previously served as an aide to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

“Moments of upheaval can change you, shift the trajectory of your life, and mold your character. The President's comments and actions surrounding racial injustice

and Black Americans cut sharply against my core values and convictions,” Taylor wrote in her resignation letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. “I must follow the dictates of my conscience and resign as Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs.”



STATE DEPARTMENT

Mary Elizabeth Taylor

COVID-19 Challenges Continue for Foreign Service

As COVID-19 cases increased dramatically in the United States in June and July, the Foreign Service sought to adjust to numerous challenges brought on by the pandemic.

One of the foremost issues on Foreign Service families’ minds was whether their children would be able to attend school in person this fall, and how that would affect parents’ ability to work.

In the Washington, D.C., area, for example, Arlington Public Schools Superintendent Francisco Duran proposed a virtual-only start to the school year, with the goal of beginning in-school instruction for some students in the Virginia district in October.

The District of Columbia on July 30 announced an all-virtual start to the school year through at least Nov. 6.

Overseas, many parents also faced difficult school choices, depending on the severity of the pandemic in their host countries. On the popular Facebook group Trailing Houses, some parents shared homeschooling resources to supplement virtual education.

In the foreign affairs agencies, many members of the Foreign Service still did not know when they would be permitted

to travel to their onward assignments, another factor in school attendance.

Some FSOs who were allowed to travel to new posts found the experience bewildering. Some countries required new arrivals to quarantine for up to 14 days, forcing FSOs to perform the embassy check-in process virtually. And for some, the usual excitement of arriving at a new post was tempered by not being able to meet embassy colleagues in person or explore the city.

Many who have been on global authorized departure were unsure when they would be allowed to return to their posts, or whether they should curtail. And many who have stayed at post wondered if it was safe to take a vacation and what to do with their accrued R&R leave.

While COVID-19 cases dropped dramatically in some countries in Europe and Asia, other parts of the world—such as the Middle East and the Americas—became hotspots.

More than 500 FSOs signed a July 27 letter to Under Secretary of Management Brian Bulatao, asking the State Department to delay its move to the second phase of its reopening plan. In Phase 2, up to 80 percent of staff members would return to the office.

The letter asked the under secretary to “provide definitive guidance to *all* bureaus and overseas [m]issions directing them to allow all telework-ready employees to continue to telework full-time, without retribution, until all local school districts have discontinued virtual options and public transportation is available and safe.”

AFSA also sent a July 27 letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about the issue, and in a July 29 statement to its members, said: “AFSA believes that the criteria set out by the department—data, conditions on the ground in specific locations, and

employee safety—have not been met. ... [F]ive of the seven indicators on the Diplomacy Strong dashboard show clearly that the Washington metro area should not be moving to this next stage.”

Packing the USAGM

On June 4, days after the *FSJ* reported on unprecedented White House attacks on the Voice of America, the Senate confirmed documentary filmmaker Michael Pack as chief executive officer of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

USAGM encompasses VOA, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (Television and Radio Martí), Radio Free Asia and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks.

Pack’s June 2018 nomination was so controversial that it took more than a year to pass through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and still had not reached the Senate floor at the end of May 2020. But after heavy administration pressure, Pack was confirmed even though he remains under investigation by the District of Columbia attorney general for allegedly channeling money from a non-profit group he oversees to his for-profit film production company.

Shortly after he was appointed, VOA Director Amanda Bennett and Deputy Director Sandy Sugawara, both civil servants, resigned on June 15. Two days later, on his first official day in office, Pack fired two more network heads: Bay Fang, president of Radio Free Asia, and Emilio Vazquez, acting director of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting.

Next, Libby Liu—a George H.W. Bush appointee and former head of RFA now directing a special program, the Open Technology Fund, aimed at developing digital tools to penetrate the so-called

Protecting FSOs Abroad

This year is a stark reminder of how we must do everything we can to support the safety of our Foreign Service officers working abroad at 260-plus installations.

—Rep. Hal Rogers (R-Ky.) at the State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs (SFOPS) Full Appropriations Committee Markup, July 9.

Diplomacy's Bedrock

I am very, very appreciative of your dedication to ... protecting our career personnel at the State Department and USAID and international institutions, these people who are the bedrock of our nation's diplomatic efforts.

—Rep. David Price (D-N.C.) to Appropriations Chairwoman Rep. Nita Lowey at the SFOPS Full Appropriations Committee Markup, July 9.

State's Role During Pandemic

The State Department has an incredibly important role in building diplomatic support for pandemic readiness



and can play a role also in coordinating broader overseas U.S. engagement.

—Chairman Sen. Jim Risch (R-Idaho) at the Senate Foreign Relations Hearing, "COVID-19 and U.S. International Pandemic Preparedness, Prevention, and Response: Additional Perspectives," June 30.

Diversity at State

People who bring diversity to the State Department will help us more than oth-

ers because we'll have a Foreign Service that reflects America, but it will also undercut the propaganda of our enemies, who say that America is a place of discrimination and caste. And obviously, nothing defeats that argument more than people at a high level in our State Department serving abroad in illustrating the opposite.

—Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.) at the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Hearing, "Diversity and Diplomacy: Why an Inclusive State Department Would Strengthen U.S. Foreign Policy," June 17.

Great Chinese Firewall—was sacked before she could resign.

Pack also dismissed RFE/RL President Jamie Fly and MBN President Alberto Fernandez, both staunch Republicans appointed by Trump, and both esteemed throughout USAGM.

Pack froze all spending and replaced all members of the organizations' bipartisan governing boards—which included seasoned, knowledgeable individuals like Ambassadors (ret.) Ryan Crocker and Karen Kornbluh—with himself and five other individuals.

Among them are Rachel Semmel, who has used her position as spokesperson for the Office of Management and Budget to provide caustic responses to questions about Trump's disputed decision to withhold military aid from Ukraine; Bethany Kozma, who has brought her anti-abortion-rights activism to USAID; and Jona-

than Alexandre, senior counsel for Liberty Counsel, an organization dedicated to "religious freedom" that once threatened legal action against a Jacksonville, Florida, library for holding a Harry Potter event, on the grounds that this constituted promotion of witchcraft.



Even as heads were rolling, Pack sent an email to USAGM employees assuring them: "I am fully committed to honoring VOA's charter, the missions of the grantees and the independence of our heroic journalists around the world."

But the message concluded on a chillier note, as Pack announced his intention "to examine some of the prob-

lems that have surfaced in the media" and warning that, while he hoped to "confer extensively with you—the talented and dedicated men and women of USAGM ... current circumstances will limit the kind of outreach and contact we have for a while longer."

USAGM then issued a press release, quoted by Martha Bayles in *The American Interest*. "Pack's message was met with an overwhelmingly positive response by staff and grantees, who personally reached out and candidly congratulated him," the release stated in part.

As Bayles trenchantly observes, "It is remarkable how closely this resembles an official Chinese Communist Party communiqué, translated into stilted, unnatural English by a person with absolutely no ear for the way people actually talk."

Meanwhile, Pack has refused calls to sign off on J-1 visa extensions

Radio Is Alive and Well

Radio informs, interprets, teaches, persuades and entertains, all for a penny's worth of battery electricity a day. It hurdles the barriers of censorship and illiteracy. Many in the world are illiterate, but few are deaf.

There are about 850 million radio sets in the world today. One out of three can pick up short wave. If the present trend continues, over one billion radio sets will be in use by 1980, perhaps 300 million of them capable of receiving short wave.

All major and many small nations broadcast internationally.

The total air time of all American broadcasters (government and private) transmitting to foreign audiences—2,240 hours a week—exceeds that of all other nations. This astounding total includes the output of American radio stations like Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and RIAS, which program exclusively for audiences in Eastern Europe and the USSR, and also the world-wide American Forces Radio Network, which broadcasts only in English.

The Voice of America, a part of the United States Information Agency and the official radio of the United



States Government, is the largest and most comprehensive of the various American broadcasters. It airs 830 hours a week in 35 languages—well behind Radio Moscow, Radio Peking and even the national radio of the United Arab Republic.

Radio Moscow and its sister station, “Radio Peace and Progress,” must be viewed as the single biggest world broadcaster with 1,920 hours a week going out in 82 languages. Radio Peking follows with nearly 1,500 hours in 38 languages, and UAR Radio has 1,040 hours in 29 languages.

With all this international broadcasting going on, it is easy to see that the airwaves are jammed and the competition for the limited number of available frequencies is fierce. In fact, the most striking recent development in international broadcasting—regular satellite radio transmissions are still in the future—has been the rapid increase in the number and power of both medium and short wave transmitters in the world.

—FSIO Richard G. Cushing, excerpted from his article of the same title in the September 1970 FSJ.

for foreign nationals working for VOA in Washington. Not only would this deprive the agency of a wealth of talent and expertise, but it may leave scores of professionals who have dedicated their lives to furthering American ideals with no choice but to return to the very regimes on which they have been reporting.

Writing in June in *The Atlantic*, Anne Applebaum observes: “In a world where airwaves are flooded with authoritarian disinformation, the effectiveness of American messaging depends on the perceived credibility and independence of the messengers. Anything that resembles ‘Trump TV’ or even just old-fashioned propaganda will have neither. America’s interna-

tional broadcasters are an important part of the face we present to the world. Thanks to congressional negligence, presidential malice and general indifference, that face has just gotten uglier.”

Pompeo Unveils Unalienable Rights Report

Arguing against a “proliferation” of human rights and claiming that “more rights does not necessarily mean more justice,” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo unveiled a draft report of recommendations from his Commission on Unalienable Rights on July 16 in Philadelphia.

“It’s important for every American, and

for every American diplomat, to recognize how our founders understood unalienable rights,” Secretary Pompeo said in a speech at the National Constitution Center there. “Foremost among these rights are property rights and religious liberty.”

Secretary Pompeo created the advisory commission in July 2019 to provide “advice on human rights grounded in our nation’s founding principles and the principles of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” according to the State Department website. It was greeted with skepticism from parts of the human rights community from the outset.

Release of the report initiated a two-week public comment period.

The commission's report included a prefatory note highlighting the recent racial upheaval in America, and the stark need to improve on human rights in the United States.

"As the Commission's work on this Report was nearing its completion, social convulsions shook the United States, testifying to the nation's unfinished work in overcoming the evil effects of its long history of racial injustice," the note reads.

"The many questions roiling the nation about police brutality, civic unrest and America's commitment to human rights at home make all the more urgent a point we had already stressed in the Introduction and elsewhere in this Report: The credibility of U.S. advocacy for human rights abroad depends on the nation's vigilance in assuring that all its own citizens enjoy fundamental human rights. With the eyes of the world upon her, America must show the same honest self-examination and efforts at improvement that she expects of others. America's dedication to unalienable rights—the rights all human beings share—demands no less."

A coalition of four groups sued Secretary Pompeo on March 6 for allegedly unlawfully creating the commission in violation of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. And human rights groups have criticized the commission for considering LGBT+ rights and women's reproductive rights (including abortion) to be among those they see as outside of "natural," unalienable rights.

In his speech in Philadelphia, Secretary Pompeo denounced "rioters pulling down statues [who] see nothing wrong with desecrating monuments to those who fought for our unalienable rights," and disparaged *The New York Times'* 1619 Project about the history of slavery in the United States.

The *Times* "wants you to believe that our country was founded for human bondage," he said. "They want you to believe that America's institutions continue to reflect the country's acceptance of slavery at our founding. They want you to believe that Marxist ideology that America is only the oppressors and the oppressed. The Chinese Communist Party must be gleeful when they see *The New York Times* spout this ideology."

On July 20, a group of more than 30 religious leaders (including Catholic, evangelical, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Buddhist leaders) released a statement in response to the commission report, stating in part: "We know from Secretary Pompeo's repeated comments ... that he will seek to use the Commission's report to justify marginalizing certain rights, thus diminishing human rights advocacy and stifling demands for accountability for those whose rights have been violated. ...

"Such politicization of human rights—and of freedom of religion in particular—is dangerous, particularly now when the forces of authoritarianism are on the rise globally. ...

"We urge members of the commission to consider the risks of complicity in such an effort and use this comment period to ensure that the final version of the commission's report firmly upholds the universality and indivisibility of rights as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

The July 22 *New York Times* reports that in February 2018 Robert Wood Johnson IV, President Trump's ambassador to the Court of St. James's, unsuccessfully pressured U.K. officials to steer the British Open golf tournament to the Trump Turnberry resort in Scotland.



AFSPA
afspa.org

Episcopal Church Schools of Virginia
www.episcopalschoolsva.org

Clements Worldwide
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Federal Employee Protection Systems
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Georgetown University, Walsh School of Foreign Service, ISD
casestudies.isd.georgetown.edu

Property Specialists, Inc.
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He did so despite the advice of his deputy chief of mission, Foreign Service Officer Lewis A. Lukens, that such a request would constitute an unethical use of the presidency for private gain. A few months after Lukens notified the State Department of the incident, Amb. Johnson ousted Lukens, seven months before his tour was to end, effectively torpedoing his diplomatic career.

Among other things, Johnson was reportedly furious that at two British universities his DCM had given a speech in which he shared a positive anecdote about President Barack Obama's 2013 visit to Senegal, where Lukens was the ambassador at the time, according to a December 2019 *GQ* article by Julia Ioffe, "Trump Is Waging War on America's Diplomats."

The *Times* article also noted complaints that the ambassador compliments the appearances of female embassy employees during staff meetings. CNN reported July 22 that Johnson made racist generalizations about Black men.

At least some of the complaints about Johnson's management style were raised with the department's Office of the Inspector General last fall, when a team of investigators began a routine review of diplomatic operations in London.

Their findings were submitted in February, and the complaints about Johnson are expected to be included, according to one of the investigators. It is not clear why the review has not been made public, but it has been designated classified, which is unusual.

On Aug. 5, Lukens spoke about the incident on "The Rachel Maddow Show," confirming that he had advised Amb. Johnson twice that pushing the British government to use Trump's golf course was "unethical, probably illegal," but that the ambassador went ahead anyway.

Neither the State Department nor the embassy has addressed the accusations directly, but the department said Mr. Johnson had led the embassy "honorably and professionally." It issued a statement declaring, "We stand by Ambassador Johnson and look forward to him continuing to ensure our special relationship with the U.K. is strong."

A Discouraging "New Era"

In a case that has stoked tensions between Ankara and Washington since 2017, a Turkish court sentenced Metin Topuz, an employee of Consulate General Istanbul who had spent 20 years working for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, to nearly nine years in prison on June 11.

A post on the Twitter account of U.S. Embassy Ankara noted that U.S. officials have "observed every hearing in the trial of Metin Topuz in Istanbul, and we are deeply disappointed in today's decision."

The sentence was handed down just three days after a phone call between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Donald Trump. Erdogan later said during a television interview that "a new era" could begin in Turkey's relationship with the United States.

Turkish authorities had arrested the 20-year veteran of the consulate in September 2017 and charged him with membership in a terrorist organization, among other counts.

The arrest set off a tit-for-tat spat between the United States and Turkey, which included reciprocal travel restrictions. In March 2020, Turkish prosecutors reduced the charges, dropping accusations of espionage and attempting to overthrow the government.

Topuz was convicted of aiding a movement led by Fethullah Gulen, an exiled

Turkish cleric whom Turkish officials accuse of orchestrating a failed coup against Erdogan's government in 2016. Gulen, who lives in Pennsylvania, has denied backing the coup attempt.

We first reported on Mr. Topuz's plight in our December 2018 issue, which focused on Locally Employed staff, in an article titled "When Doing Your Job Lands You in Jail."

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called the accusations against Topuz "baseless," stating that the charges "misrepresent both the scope and nature of the important work undertaken by our local staff on behalf of the U.S. government and in the promotion of our bilateral relationship."

"This conviction undermines confidence in Turkey's institutions and the critical trust at the foundation of Turkish-American relations," Pompeo declared. "We reiterate our call on the Turkish government to resolve his case in a just manner."

On June 15, Ambassador Eric Rubin, president of the American Foreign Service Association, issued the following statement: "I share Secretary Pompeo's concern over the conviction of U.S. Consulate General Istanbul Locally Employed staff member Metin Topuz. AFSA joins the entire Foreign Service community in hoping that this conviction will be overturned quickly.

"AFSA stands in support of our tens of thousands of Locally Employed staff members, without whom the daily business of American diplomacy would be impossible," Rubin continued. "Their contributions are myriad, and they make our foreign policy and global engagement stronger and more successful." ■

This edition of Talking Points was compiled by Cameron Woodworth and Steven Alan Honley.

Why “27 Years and Out” Should Be Retired

BY TED CRAIG

This September I will retire from the U.S. Foreign Service. Not for lack of energy and commitment, as I sit squarely in my mid-50s and am in good health. Nor for lack of capability, if my last employee evaluation report in a senior overseas leadership position is to be credited. And not for any constraints on my readiness to serve.

Along with scores of other capable colleagues every year, I am moving on because of the Service’s long-standing requirement that we retire after 27 years unless selected to the Senior Foreign Service. It is the deal we signed up for, so those of us who don’t cross the threshold must accept the outcome. Whether this deal still makes sense for the Foreign Service is another question.

The 27-year threshold is the relic of an age of one-career couples and unsuited to the professional constraints faced today by single parents, dual-career partners, or just about anyone with a substantial life challenge. It is draining away experienced and skilled officers at a time of unprecedented challenge to our interests and ideals overseas, and it may play a role in limiting diversity in our senior ranks.

The 27-year “Time in Service” (TIS) limit in the Foreign Service mirrors the U.S. military, where officers have that

The 27-year rule is draining away experienced and skilled officers at a time of unprecedented challenge to our interests and ideals overseas, and it may play a role in limiting diversity in our senior ranks.

number of years to make flag rank—the one-star ranks of brigadier general for the Army, Air Force and Marine Corps, and rear admiral for the Navy—or face mandatory retirement. And some of the justifications for the system are similar for both the military and the diplomatic corps.

First, the limitation ensures “pass-through” in the ranks, opening opportunities for the next generation of officers to move through the system as longer-serving officers are retired. Like most bureaucracies, we have a pyramid-shaped organization at the State Department. We need more mid-level diplomats than we do ambassadors and deputy assistant secretaries. There is not room for everyone to be selected for the Senior Foreign Service, and using upward progression as an incentive for superior performance is beneficial.

A second argument for the TIS limit, unspoken in polite company, is that it rids the system of underperforming bureaucratic deadwood. This argument is less convincing. Like the military, the Foreign Service uses up-or-out all along the way, thinning the ranks at each step in promotion; anyone making our Ser-

vice’s most senior “pre-flag” rank (FS-1, the protocol equivalent of a colonel) has been pushed forward by at least three promotion boards and should be a strong officer.

While we still occasionally see underperformers marking time at the FS-1 rank, the reality is that most of those pushed out of the Service are still capable of strong contributions and valuable mentoring. Many will have been recommended for elevation to the Senior Foreign Service by the annual selection panels, falling short because of limited allotted slots for new senior officers.

Why 27 Is Not Working

The arbitrary 27-year TIS limit, instituted almost 75 years ago, is a throw-back to a time when Foreign Service officers were male, and uncompensated wives were expected to promote their husbands’ careers by organizing and hosting dinner parties. Men could be expected to make assignment choices based solely on advancing their career path toward promotion to flag rank, even though it meant expecting their wives to shoulder family responsibilities in addition to representational duties.



Ted Craig has been a member of the Foreign Service since 1991, serving overseas most recently in Islamabad.

Two modest changes could substantially ease the costs to our diplomatic readiness and to our officers and their families.

In the modern American family, with couples juggling two careers, single parents struggling with childcare options and everyone facing eldercare dilemmas, the direct career path to flag rank may be elusive as officers balance work and home responsibilities. FSOs have always faced tough choices to maintain an overseas career, it is true, but societal change in recent decades has amplified those challenges.

As enlightened as our agency may have become about work-life balance, the reality is that the career clock still offers just 27 years—and those with the flexibility to take the killer job will have a leg up. Those who take a “lateral” assignment to be near a parent, to go to a post that can meet the special needs of a child or to favor the career opportunity of a partner may well run out of time. The challenge may be even more pronounced in coming years as the department has again reduced the number of positions overseas in the wake of Iraq and Afghanistan drawdowns.

Another troubling aspect of the 27-year rule is its unfairness given sometimes wildly divergent opportunities to demonstrate readiness for senior-level duties. From 2000 to 2010 there were huge percentage differences in promotion rates among the five areas of endeavor into which FSOs are divided: consular, economic, management, political and public diplomacy officers. FSOs in some areas stood a much better chance of moving into FS-1 positions early and demonstrating senior-level leadership over a span of several years.

Selection boards are faced with a difficult job in discerning among a pool of capable, high-performing candidates, few of whom may have obvious blemishes. As such, they have almost no choice but to consider as stronger the candidate who has served exceptionally in a series of senior FS-1 or senior-stretch positions as compared to the candidate with a shorter résumé. This is the reality that may cut down any number of great candidates who take their time getting to FS-1 and then mix in at-grade but family-friendly jobs out of personal necessity.

Finally, while we are inarguably a more representative diplomatic service today than we were in the 1950s, that diversity falls off precipitously in the senior ranks. It is worth considering whether the 27-year limit plays a role in that outcome. In recent reflections on the role of race and gender at the Department of State, some current and former officers have pointed to the assignment process as a barrier to advancement, arguing that they were passed over repeatedly for promotable jobs for which they were qualified.

Given that assignments are likely to remain heavily influenced by the subjective views of section heads, office directors and various front offices, along with the “corridor,” there is no certain way to eliminate this potential bias. Relaxing the TIS limit—and possibly extending “Time in Class” limits at earlier grades—is one possible way to mitigate the harm and improve the chances that every employee will have several realistic shots at advancement.

In short, the result of the current TIS threshold is that the Department of State, an institution built around human capital, is losing quality officers too early. This is a loss to our foreign policy. More, at a time when foreign audiences are questioning the inclusiveness and fairness of American institutions, the rule may be perpetuating an outdated profile among our senior ranks.

A Few Small Repairs

Given that our Service, like the military, probably still requires a time-limited mechanism to select its senior ranks and ensure pass-through within the system, radical changes to Senior Foreign Service selection might be ill-advised. Two modest changes, however, could substantially ease the costs to our diplomatic readiness and to our officers and their families.

First, extend the 27-year TIS threshold to 30 years in recognition of the reality that equally effective officers in today’s Service will take different paths to FS-1—whether owing to divergent skill-code promotion rates, timeouts brought on by family crises or the vagaries of luck in landing (or not being able to take) that magically mentored job that opens opportunities. This is a change the Department of State can make without a change in law.

Second, adopt a five-year noncareer appointment option for officers failing to cross the senior threshold. This appointment would allow those choosing not to retire to work for five additional years, full time, bidding for jobs at their retirement rank. These appointees should face automatic retirement if they cannot find a job in the regular bid cycle (they either fill a need or they don’t).

Such a five-year window would allow officers to contribute their experience

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.



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and skills to U.S. diplomacy as and where needed, without having to be shoehorned into the 50-percent time of the current “retired annuitant” opportunities (it would also mirror an approach the military takes in giving officers more years to adjust to their final rank and retirement status).

Embassies and bureaus still want full-time senior professionals, officers who can be there every day to contribute their knowledge: leading interagency processes, responding to urgent requests, running multimillion-dollar programs, and mentoring newer officers and specialists to strengthen the future generations of our diplomatic corps. An optional, needs-based five-year appointment after the final senior threshold review would allow skilled and in-demand officers to meet those needs.

It is time to reconsider a Time-in-Service number that is past its usefulness, is not legislated, and is detrimental both to officers and to the Service itself. The State Department borrowed it from the military, a different institution with distinctly better employment preferences available to its retirees.

Let's address the needs of the future now, with our most critical resource: our people. Let's retire the 27-year threshold. ■

MOVING?



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Inclusion Helps Drive Diversity

State's new initiatives create space for difficult conversations and incorporate accountability.

BY MIREMBE NANTONGO

It is said that diversity is being invited to a party, inclusion is being asked to dance. Without inclusion, in other words, the full power of an institution's diversity remains untapped.

Diversity has long been recognized as not just a laudable goal, but an institutional imperative. Diversity is about *people* and often involves discussions of data, while inclusion is about *culture* and concerns the way we behave. Data are important to our diversity efforts, and the State Department maintains a robust diversity data collection framework that serves as a progress indicator

and enables barrier analysis. We are also increasing data transparency and encouraging workforce discussions around the data.

At the same time, we are encouraging a newer and much broader conversation, across the institution, that goes beyond the data: a conversation on inclusion. The numbers are important, yes, but there is a story—and an entire culture—behind the numbers, and it is time to focus on that. In the wake of the brutal killing of George Floyd, the department has seen exponential growth in interest in creating space for difficult conversations on inclusion and on how our Black and other minority colleagues have faced challenges in both personal and professional fora. In response, State Department leadership has reaffirmed its commitment to shifting our culture to speak up against discrimination and ensure it has no place in our ranks. The diversity and inclusion unit alongside partners in the State Department's Office of Civil Rights are helping to facilitate robust dialogue to change our institutional culture and to identify concrete steps for those interested in being allies on these issues.

Under Secretary for Management Brian Bulatao put it clearly when he launched a task force for the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (DISP) in January 2020: Diversity and inclusion must go together—you cannot have one without the other.

Workplace inclusion at the State Department concerns our culture, how we behave. This can mean everything from whether we use standardized questions for interviews and the channels we establish for open conversations between leadership and staff, to the way we treat each other on a daily basis. An inclusive organizational culture sustains the supportive and respectful



Mirembé Nantongo is a deputy assistant secretary of State in the Bureau of Global Talent Management. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister Counselor, she served most recently as deputy chief of mission at U.S. Embassy Nairobi. She joined the Foreign Service in 1995 and has also served as director of the Office of Southern African Affairs and, before that, as director of the Mid-Level Division in the Human Resources Bureau's Office of Career Development and Assignment. Other assignments include associate dean in the School of Professional and Area Studies at the Foreign Service Institute, deputy chief of mission at U.S. Embassy Doha and embassy spokesperson at U.S. Embassy Baghdad. Overseas, she has also served in Bangladesh, Colombia, Oman and Senegal. She is retiring this fall to spend time with her aging mother in the Netherlands.



ALEXANDRA BOWMAN

environment in which everyone can reach their full potential. Inclusion helps drive diversity by attracting the most qualified applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds and then retaining them and maximizing their performance.

Time and time again, research has shown that diverse and inclusive teams are more innovative and cohesive, make better decisions, and provide a competitive edge in recruitment and retention. At the State Department, this means that a diverse workforce and inclusive culture equip us to better advance U.S. foreign policy interests and deliver results for the American people. Embracing and empowering talent from across all walks of life brings creativity to the workplace and strengthens our ability to confront the array of increasingly complex international challenges we are entrusted to solve. Diversity and inclusion, together, are essential to achieving unity in our workforce in furtherance of our *mission* and supporting our State Department ethos.

It is said that diversity is being invited to a party, inclusion is being asked to dance.

The 2020-2022 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

Shifting the organizational culture of America's oldest, most geographically dispersed Cabinet agency is no easy task. It requires a clear road map and buy-in from all corners of the institution. Recognizing that diversity and inclusion are indispensable to successfully carrying out our mission at home and overseas, senior leaders throughout State have committed to shaping its future through the 2020 DISP, which will be published later this

Personal Reflections on This Moment at State

As I retire after a 25-year career, I realize that close to half my life has been spent as a State Department employee. Starting as a Locally Employed staff member in the General Services Office at U.S. Embassy Kampala, I spent the next six years as an Eligible Family Member before joining the State Department as a Foreign Service officer in 1995. I have served and lived in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Washington, D.C. Although coned as a political officer, I have worked in all five Foreign Service cones, served twice as a deputy chief of mission and, finally, as a deputy assistant secretary.

Both my sons (now 19 and 28) were born under the Foreign Service umbrella and spent their childhoods in international schools overseas. Influenced by top-notch Embassy Marine Security Guards at our various assignments, both are now U.S. Marines themselves—one on active duty and the other recently graduated from college. It is a source of great pride to me that all three of us have taken the oath of office, with its solemn commitment to the Constitution and to public service. It has been a truly fabulous career, and I have enjoyed or learned from every moment.

A child of African and European parents, I was born in Africa and grew up biculturally between Africa and Europe, at home and yet not fully belonging in either place. I came to the



Deputy Chief of Mission Mirembe Nantongo greets guests at the July 4 reception in Doha, Qatar, in 2010.

U.S. EMBASSY DOHA/PAPPU DAKIN

United States as an immigrant in 1987 and was naturalized in 1991 before formally joining the Foreign Service in 1995. After rather awkwardly straddling my parents' two very homogenous cultures all my life, I reveled in the vibrant heterogeneity of the United States, where any fellow citizen might have any cultural heritage and any appearance, name or accent.

My youth in Africa was framed by an unapologetically patriarchal society, over which the ghost of colonialism still hovers; but I learned early on that the Black American experience, and the legacy of slavery, represented a dreadfully distinct and painful universe about which I understood little. Thirty years as an American citizen, much self-education and living and working alongside Black friends and colleagues has made me better informed, both intellectually and emotionally, but I know there is still much to learn and understand.

The brutal killing of George Floyd has horrified us all, and the accompany-



Deputy Chief of Mission Nantongo, at center, and Cultural Affairs Officer Erica Chiusano, third from right, with a group of International Visitor Leadership Program alumni in Doha in 2011.

U.S. EMBASSY DOHA/SUNNY THOLATH



COURTESY OF MIREMBE NANTONGO

DCM Mirembe Nantongo, center, with the U.S. Embassy Nairobi Marine Security Guard detachment at the Marine Ball in November 2017. (Inset) DCM Nantongo with her sons, Dominic (at left) and Sebastian, when they visited her in Kenya in June 2018.



COURTESY OF MIREMBE NANTONGO

ing national upheaval and introspection have been vividly reflected within the State Department. In an institution known for its staid, traditional professionalism, open conversations around issues affecting diversity and inclusion are still a new phenomenon, but they are blossoming rapidly. Leaders and colleagues are participating in difficult discussions across the institution on race and racism, privilege, unconscious bias, microaggressions and allyship.

These exchanges are opening the eyes of many of our colleagues to the indignities, disrespect and marginalization suffered routinely by Black colleagues and persons of color both inside and outside the workplace. Colleagues are understanding that while rules and policies are important, individual action and commitment are just as important for shifting our culture. The days of standing by are over. From hour to hour, from minute to minute, is every one of us walking the walk, opening our hearts, and recognizing and interrupting bias where we encounter it? Do we understand privilege, and are we everyday active partners in making our national values of justice and equality a lived experience for all?

Change is hard, and shifting a culture happens one person at a time, one action at a time, until a tipping point is reached. As I retire, I am heartened and inspired by my colleagues' determined energy around the issue and our collective hunger for change. I know we will get there.

—Mirembe L. Nantongo

year. Grounded in clear, actionable milestones and performance indicators, the plan aims to focus the department's efforts, ensure accountability, and measure outcomes to inform future initiatives.

The State Department's commitment to diversity and inclusion is not new; the 2020 DISP is the third of its kind. However, an important lesson from the previous DISP was that we must act collectively to achieve our diversity and inclusion goals. As a result, the 2020 DISP, for the first time, incorporates feedback from a department-wide task force of more than 40 bureau representatives and all employee groups, and it offers a cohesive and practical vision to guide our efforts with built-in accountability measures.

Drawing on the wealth of ideas and innovative solutions proposed by the DISP task force and our many employee groups, the department aims to achieve a fully integrated, "gold-level"

diversity and inclusion framework, as measured by the Office of Personnel Management's "Diversity and Inclusion Framework Matrix" for federal agencies. In aiming for gold, and while retaining focus on the traditional OPM-defined minority categories, we are requiring leaders to consciously maximize organizational performance through inclusive practices; we are dedicating resources to advance diversity and inclusion; and we are acting collectively. These goals frame the three key objectives of the 2020 DISP, which incorporates critical themes, milestones and action in the three areas that fundamentally drive diversity and inclusion: recruitment, retention and employee advancement.

The Bureau of Global Talent Management and the Office of Civil Rights will review the plan annually to assess progress, and a full update is scheduled for 2022. We are putting in place a two-year plan rather than the typical four-year plan to better mesh with the department's 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan's timeline. This will ensure that our diversity and inclusion goals are formally embedded in the department's JSP process so that bureaus and missions have alignment and consistency in how operating units execute lines of effort. The DISP will then be updated in alignment and integration with the upcoming 2022-2026 JSP process.

Within the DISP, we have outlined milestones and performance indicators that we will reassess at the end of the year. Our goal is to hold each other accountable for the implementation of the DISP, which is why we will rely on our partnerships with bureau diversity councils, employee affinity groups and senior leadership.

The numbers are important, yes, but there is a story—and an entire culture—behind the numbers, and it is time to focus on that.

A Workforce That “Looks Like America”

The State Department is the face of America overseas, and it has a unique mandate to fully represent the country and people we serve. An important piece of that puzzle is ensuring that the department recruits, retains and develops a diverse and high-performing workforce. It begins with providing fairness, transparency and opportunity to all applicants and employees throughout the talent life cycle and then ensuring the diversity that strengthens us is reflected in our senior ranks.

The department emphasizes the search for diverse talent through its national talent acquisition platform, which places recruiters around the country to seek competitive candidates from all backgrounds. Recruiters identify candidates on university campuses, in professional association gatherings and by engaging with communities underrepresented at the department. They cultivate internship, fellowship and career candidates at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities, among other places.

They recruit skilled professionals through alumni networks, trade organizations and targeted career fairs. They also meet candidates where they are, online. The State Department has long had an online presence and has stepped up its virtual recruitment activities dramatically since March with the cancellation of most in-person events.

Thousands of Americans pursue a career in diplomacy each year, and the State Department has several programs designed specifically to make a foreign affairs career accessible to competitive individuals from historically underrepresented groups. The Pickering and Rangel Fellowships, the U.S. Foreign Service Internship Program and the Foreign Affairs Information Technology Fellowship are all important programs that directly and successfully support the recruitment of diverse talent.

Focus on Retention

To stand the test of time and translate into a Senior Foreign Service that looks more like America, however, effective strategic recruitment must be accompanied by internal cultural shifts.

An inclusive work environment that ensures employees feel respected, valued, heard and empowered is crucial to retaining and developing talent to rise through the ranks. Recognizing that the department has work to do in this regard, Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Global Talent Carol Perez is committed to making this happen.

Underscoring the importance of fostering a culture of inclusion at the department, DG Perez has introduced new workplace flexibilities within her authority, advocated for new ones to Congress and enhanced existing programs to maximize the performance, career development and professional satisfaction of employees. These initiatives include an extended Leave Without Pay pilot program, additional lactation rooms and flexible lunch schedules. Recently, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the workforce has become familiar with telework. It will be interesting to see how many telework-eligible employees continue to make use of this option once the pandemic abates.

Understanding and mitigating unconscious bias are other essential elements in strengthening diversity and inclusion at all levels of the State Department. Science tells us that unconscious bias is a natural and necessary response to processing the millions of bits of information we are all exposed to at any given moment. But this unconscious process can introduce inequities into activities such as recruitment, interviewing, performance recognition or task assignment. Often, we are unaware that bias is affecting our decision-making at all. Yet unconscious bias can have a major impact on an employee’s career—from hiring to career progression and promotion—as well as on how teams and, therefore, our workforce are constituted.

State takes unconscious bias seriously and has taken several major steps to raise employees’ awareness of bias and mitigate its effects on departmentwide procedures. Institutional actions to tackle unconscious bias, whether in recruitment, hiring, performance evaluation or task allocation, are incorporated throughout the 2020 DISP. But understanding and mitigating one’s own biases is also a personal responsibility. Fortunately, employees do not have to do it alone—in 2019, the Foreign Service Institute launched a new course on “Mitigating Unconscious Bias” (PT-144), available both in classroom and online versions to our global workforce. FSI reports that as of early August, 11,500 employees have taken the course in person or online since October 2019.

The Bureau of Global Talent Management and Office of Civil Rights’ joint initiative called Open Conversations is another burgeoning effort. Allowing safe, candid, constructive and voluntary conversations on issues that affect inclusion, these facilitated

sessions can be hosted by bureaus, offices or employee groups. Most recently, dozens of Open Conversations across the department have covered the sensitive topic of race and the professional and personal experiences of Black employees and persons of color. Topics covered previously in Open Conversations include “Employment Labels at State,” “I Want to Speak to a Real American” and “Managing Generational Differences.”

Everyone Has a Role to Play

Diversity and inclusion enhance the performance and effectiveness of organizations. The State Department can reap the proven benefits of diversity and inclusion by maximizing employee and team performance through inclusive practices. Imagine this—tackling global challenges and advancing U.S. interests with stronger institutional cohesiveness, more nuanced decision-making and innovative approaches to diplomacy. Embracing diversity and practicing inclusion is a collective responsibility for each and every member of the State Department family—from the newest intern and line manager to chiefs

Grounded in clear, actionable milestones and performance indicators, the 2020 DISP aims to focus the department’s efforts, ensure accountability, and measure outcomes to inform future initiatives.

of mission overseas and the department’s senior leadership. This not only enhances our performance, but it also reflects the best of our diverse workforce.

Change is made possible only by the actions we each choose to take at work every day. Inclusion is the key to unlocking the power of diversity. Let’s turn the key together, one decision and one action at a time. ■

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Creating a Culture of Inclusion at State

To establish diversity at State, it is essential to make inclusion count—in every promotion, job prospect and assignment.

BY GINA ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY



Ambassador Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley retired in 2018 following 32 years in the Foreign Service. Throughout her career, she has been a steadfast proponent of achieving excellence through diversity in organizations and breaking down barriers

for women and minorities. She focused on counterterrorism and cybersecurity while serving as deputy coordinator for counterterrorism (2008-2012) and as a political adviser to U.S. Cyber Command in 2016. She was the first woman to lead a diplomatic mission in Saudi Arabia as consul general in Jeddah (2002-2005), where she actively supported gender equality. She was the longest-serving U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Malta (2012-2016) and also served in the White House (1998-2000), the Department of Defense (2001-2002) and on Capitol Hill (1997).

The author based this article on her June 17 testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

It is imperative to develop a truly diverse workforce so that the Department of State will be able to devise and carry out the most effective foreign policies for our nation. That's why we joined the Foreign Service. That's why we competed for the Civil Service. But if we're honest, we know the department has lost too many of us because of bias, quiet discrimination and indifference.

At the Beginning

The January Government Accountability Office report on diversity failures at State doesn't try to explain causality, but the numbers speak for themselves. Our problems begin at the beginning, with recruitment. Our rigorous testing process brings in smart, educated and intelligent FSOs, but it has also welcomed racists, sexists and those indifferent to both. And this moment in America has shown us just how dangerous a culture of indifference can be.

A solid start to changing that culture is to require the Board of Examiners, the gatekeepers, to be significantly diverse. A friend of mine was recently pulled from being an assessor to take a more prestigious job, which left the assessment team with no African Americans. That lack of diversity among gatekeepers can have a huge impact on whether a minority candidate is judged ready to represent America. Success could rest on whether a candidate was asked to speak about Kurt Vonnegut or Ibram X. Kendi.

Once you're in, the skills the State Department values are clear. We are judged on our success in leadership, management and substantive knowledge. Rated highly on these in the Foreign



Service, you'll glide smoothly to promotion. Fail to meet the standards, and you will be low ranked and eventually removed.

Make Diversity and Inclusion Count

State Department leadership says diversity and inclusion are important, but we know that no one is judged on their ability to help underrepresented officers improve their performance or secure important assignments. No one gets promoted because they burnished the quality of decision-making by expanding the diversity of viewpoints and backgrounds brought to the table. And no one is held back because their bureau, embassy, office or section lacks inclusiveness.

As the GAO report made clear, you can walk into meetings at State daily and know instantly that everyone who should be there isn't. The homogeneity of race and gender around the table is the lived experience of those GAO charts. And the evidence is so stark that everyone notices, those who are underrepresented and those who are not. We have solvable problems. Where the department needs help is in holding itself accountable. Without accountability for those who select, assign and promote employees, it will continue to be easy and acceptable to overlook, leave out and avoid hiring both women and minority officers.

To finally get this right in the Foreign and Civil Service, every promotion, every job prospect and every assignment must depend, in part, on the employee's ability to ensure inclusion and development of underrepresented talent. Just as I knew my ability to communicate in Arabic would help my supervisor advocate for my next promotion, today's diplomats must know that their mentoring of underrepresented officers, for example, will strengthen their case for promotion. If you want the workforce to care, make it clear that embracing inclusion counts.

Fixing Responsibility

Unfortunately, shaping the department's diversity and inclusion performance sits in too many places, including the Director

General's office and individual bureaus. An empowered Director General could make a difference. But responsibility for increasing diversity is so diffuse that everyone gets to throw up their hands and say, "Not me!" No one senior official has the responsibility or authority to focus on this foundational issue. Or to hold others to account.

We know the department programs that are supposed to help level the playing field for underrepresented minorities, and we also know they often falter under the burden of being "affirmative action" programs. When I joined the Foreign Service, my A-100 class of 52 had two Black people and 13 women. I remember attending a happy hour as a new FSO and overhearing a group of guys derisively speculating on which woman had used the Mustang program to get in because they "couldn't pass the test." The Mustang program, a process whereby experienced and qualified Civil Servants transfer into the Foreign Service as specialists, is a great program that benefits State by bringing experienced officers into the Service. But the stain of "special program," unfair as it is, harms our colleagues and deprives us of badly needed expertise.

No one wants to undermine the professional Foreign Service by eliminating a healthy ladder to senior positions for any FSO, but there is no incentive for departmentwide, bureauwide or individual efforts to improve representation. Favorites are paid. Favorites are rewarded. The process is opaque. The saying in the Civil Service is "women get the training; men get the jobs."

Hurdles for experienced and capable Civil Service employees to transfer to the Foreign Service are unnecessarily high, as well. This is important because the Civil Service has traditionally been more diverse than the Foreign Service. Strong candidates with experience in foreign affairs and already working at State who are interested in the Foreign Service could help build diversity. They can be quickly put to work because they come with security clearances and experience in the department.

The Individual vs. the Building

Many individual officers place inclusion as a priority. Fortunate ones, like me, benefit from these officers. I was lucky that they saw something in me that pushed them to sponsor me for jobs and promotions. But “the building” often works against such efforts.

When I interviewed to be a deputy chief of mission for a Black woman ambassador, I was thrilled. There are always so few, and she was dynamic! I was certain that my great interview would get me the job. But she told me she didn’t feel safe having an all-Black front office; she felt compelled to select a white male to protect herself. I thanked her for her honesty; I meant it, but when I got home, I cried. I felt betrayed by a culture that crushed the courage of even those who knew how important such courage was.

There is an unspoken presumption in the department, that all white officers took the written exam and are therefore worthy of being an FSO, and that all Black and Hispanic officers likely did not. It is a damaging assumption that burdens Pickering and Rangel Fellows, who belong to the only category of fellows who must take the written exam. They, who are often the cream of the crop, have been damaged by the ignorant bias of their peers and the indifference of department leadership to correcting the record.

We all know studies have shown that increasing diversity of all kinds among national security professionals improves policy outcomes. I and my success weren’t unique. I wasn’t special. But too many like me haven’t had the same support. The department must finally institutionalize and expand the successful efforts of individuals, because the department can get this right. The talent is there, the ability is there, and the time is now.

Getting On with It

We have the opportunity—when all of America is saying enough! Let’s get on with this!—to make employees at all levels know they must set aside their individual biases for the good of the organization. And if they can’t, they will not prosper at State. There is no reason to have this discussion again. We are America. We can do this.

Every State Department employee should be asking when the following recommendations will be implemented for the good of the Foreign Service:

1. Intake. Ensure that of the four assessors examining new candidates, at least two come from underrepresented communities. As incentive to serve with the Board of Examiners, add one additional year for time in class for every two years spent as an examiner.

2. Promotion Precepts. Add “advancing inclusion” to the

core precepts that are used by selection boards for recommending Foreign Service employees for promotion to the next grade and the senior ranks. I propose that promotions be based on leadership, management, intellectual and communications skills, substantive knowledge, advancing inclusion and interpersonal skills.

3. Centralized Accountability. Move the position of chief diversity officer to the Deputy Secretary’s office as a direct report, and empower that individual with authority and staff to collect and share data on diversity in assignments and promotions and to add verbiage to the EERs of officers with authority to make assignments. Ensure that that individual can partner with the Director General and bureaus to lay out benchmarks and goalposts to guarantee accountability.

4. Diversity Data by Bureau and Grade. Require an annual review and report-out of progress in increasing diversity by bureau and by grade. The review responsibility would lie with the chief diversity officer, supported by bureau front offices. The report would come from the Secretary of State.

5. Assignment Vetting. Require bureau front offices to vet their shortlists for chief of mission and deputy assistant secretary positions against equal employment opportunity case logs. The State Department Office of Civil Rights would provide the needed information, which must be taken into account somewhere in the assignment process. Currently, this does not happen, and problem officers can continue to expand the impact of their biases.

6. Conversion. Reform the mid-career conversion program to allow talented civil servants to more easily use their expertise as members of the Foreign Service.

7. Clarity and Accuracy. Ensure that the department increases accurate understanding of how all of the fellowship programs work. Providing accurate information about Pickering and Rangel Fellows, alone, should improve their standing in the department.

8. Recognition. Change the name of the “Equal Employment Opportunity Award” to the “Diversity and Inclusion Award.” This annual award recognizes outstanding accomplishments by a Foreign Service or Civil Service employee in furthering the goals of the department’s equal employment opportunity program. The name change is important because “equal employment opportunity” is a legal construct that is intended to prevent overt discrimination, but it does not get at the affirmative actions necessary to truly support minority officers in rising through the ranks. That informal mentorship, guidance and support is the difference between a successful career and one that stalls for lack of being truly included among those valued and expected to succeed. ■

Living Up to the American Idea

Besides the moral imperative, there are compelling reasons to have a Foreign Service that looks like America. Here are some suggestions for how to get there.

BY PETER F. ROMERO

In these unprecedented times, we ask ourselves how we went from a beacon of freedom and justice in the world to the faintest glow of an ember. We wax nostalgically about the glory days of U.S. diplomacy, when we were the “Indispensable Power,” and then sink into near despair about what we see today. We may think about how to get back to the kind of political consensus and unity of purpose that defined our policies for the 50 years following World War II. With so many daunting challenges, where do we even begin?

A first step is to accept responsibility for where we now find ourselves. For a long time, we Americans have seen, but not read, the writing on the wall. Whole swaths of our fellow citizens have been systematically excluded and left behind. The pervasive politics of victimization, zero-sum thinking and resentment complicates a comeback. As I see it, we have two choices. We can either recommit to our diversity and inclusiveness as a nation, the “American Idea”; or we can avert our eyes and hope that somehow the country will snap back to its senses.



Peter F. Romero, a retired FSO and former ambassador, is co-host/producer of the podcast “American Diplomat.” He adapted this article testimony he delivered to the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the House Foreign

Affairs Committee on June 17. The author can be reached at amdipstories.org; leave a message.

But whichever way this goes, let’s remember: We are a piece of every part of the world. Every foreign leader knows that multitudes of their brethren call the United States home. It is not only guns and dollars that brought us to past heights. It is the American Idea.

A Stark Reality

I was always delighted, when walking into the office of a new contact, that I was regularly mistaken for my Foreign Service National assistant and the FSN for me because of his fair complexion. This American Idea not only inspires but has provided me and others with the ability to walk into a foreign authoritarian’s office and demand the release of unjustly imprisoned Americans or people tortured simply for exercising their rights.

But after more than 40 years of efforts, when it comes to racial, ethnic and gender inclusion throughout the ranks of the Foreign Service, we, as part of the State Department, have not succeeded in making the Service representative of who we are as a nation. The reality is stark. The January GAO report paints a dismal picture, with thinning numbers of diversity officers starting at the mid ranks and just three Black and four Hispanic career chiefs of mission worldwide. In some cases (read Hispanics) the wheels have been thrown into reverse. There are now fewer Hispanic officers in the Foreign Service than when I entered in 1977.

Bias, discrimination and a callousness toward staff continue to plague the State Department. This represents leadership shortcomings in supervisory ranks. Regrettably, the appointment of Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell,

For ground truth, we need to hear from those on active duty. The new approaches will come from them, not from us gray hairs.

Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Rodham Clinton have not had the deep and sustained influence on diversity and inclusion that many had expected. We can either continue to wait for that elusive “Secretary Godot,” or we can kick-start a recommitment to diversity and inclusion now.

Beyond the moral imperative of having a Foreign Service that looks like America, there are several compelling comparative advantages to reaching this goal. It would give us greater cultural and linguistic competencies, and arm us with deeper empathy and understanding—critical tools to influence friend and foe alike. In addition, it would generate more informed decision-making, and gain greater public support for the men and women who daily hazard political and physical threats to keep us safe and advance our interests.

We should start by getting our own house in order. That means a recommitment to the principle of inclusion in our Foreign Service.

Getting There: Practical Proposals

Here are a few suggestions for getting there.

- Create a “Certificate of Leadership Competency.” This certificate evaluating an officer’s performance on diversity and inclusion would be a requirement for entry into the Senior Foreign Service. Since we will require this of all career officers, a non-State panel of retired senior FSOs and past political appointees should examine the leadership “fitness” of nominated political appointees and report these findings to the Senate.
- Integrate current equal employment opportunity promotion precepts (now just a box to check) into the leadership principles.
- Make mid-level officers accountable for developing *all* those supervised. Beyond leadership training, supervisors, in conjunction with their rating and reviewing officers, should be required to set specific diversity and inclusion goals for themselves, and be evaluated yearly on how well they were achieved.
- Create a diversity and inclusion “scorecard” that measures

the success of supervisors in the recruitment, retention, promotion and professional development of those they manage. Bonus pay could be given to those with high rankings.

- Require rating and reviewing officers of the rated supervisor to reach out to all (or at least a good representative sampling) of her/his employees (via 360-degree assessments, employee satisfaction responses) in evaluating performance and counseling the supervisor, as needed.
- Raise inclusive and effective leadership to the highest level of core competency for supervising officers; make it an absolute requirement in the precepts for promotion (at FS-2 and above).
- Expand the role of representatives of more than a dozen employee affinity groups in formulating promotion precepts, volunteering for the panels and as a sounding board for future initiatives on diversity and inclusion, particularly in and into the senior ranks.
- Select out those officers who show an abusive pattern toward staff, regardless of any other personal qualities, influence or achievements.
- Develop and implement a system of exit surveys to determine why officers resign. Too many racial, ethnic minorities and women have resigned in the early and mid-ranks. There has not been even a minimum of follow-up to determine the reasons, let alone identify systemic patterns to address.

Listen to the Active-Duty Ranks

With respect to this last recommendation, a consistent complaint from our non-white officers is that their suggestions for new policy initiatives, tweaks to those that exist, or reforms to procedures are often met with silence or demeaning responses from supervisors: “You’re an FS-3. You need to just listen.” Such dismissiveness is fairly common at State; it certainly was when I was going up through the ranks.

Yes, millennials are impatient and cite the private sector as more welcoming to new ideas. They want to make a difference, now. This spirit should be nurtured, not shot down. Every challenge that our country now faces begs for new approaches and novel ways of dealing with it. There are several groups of ex-FSOs (in the American Academy of Diplomacy, AFSA and the Harvard Kennedy School, among others) that are currently engaged on the issues of diversity and inclusion and how our Service can most effectively meet the challenges of an uncertain future. But for ground truth, we need to hear from those on active duty. The new approaches will come from them, not from us gray hairs.

Morale is at a low ebb in the department. One sees more slouch than swagger. Let’s turn this around. ■

Diversity at State

A Dream Deferred and a Collective Responsibility

Two fellowship programs are heralded for bringing people of color into the Foreign Service, but the new employees' advancement is inhibited by institutional barriers.

BY ANA ESCROGIMA, LIA MILLER AND CHRISTINA TILGHMAN

Harlem

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?
—Langston Hughes

In the aftermath of nationwide protests following the death of George Floyd, the story of discrimination against one of our colleagues—Tianna Spears—horrified us all. Ms. Spears' account of her treatment at the U.S.-Mexico border, and how she coped for two years, has led many at the State Department to ask how this could be so. By laying bare the lived realities of institutionalized racism and bias at the department that far too many officers experience, but do not discuss outside certain circles, Tianna's story broke a cultural taboo, sparking an outpouring of concern for officers who have undergone similar experiences.

We should all be concerned about a State Department living in two worlds: with one set of officers who must cope with such experiences while navigating their careers, and another set who are unaware of or indifferent to such hardships. Our hope is that this moment in American history will inspire an honest conversation about what it means—and what it will take—to truly value and support diversity in our organization.

The national reckoning has catapulted one of State's newest employee affinity groups, the Pickering and Rangel Fellows Association, to the forefront of advocacy on this issue. Founded in 2010, PRFA encompasses the more than 770 alumni who have joined the Foreign Service through the Thomas R. Pickering

Ana Escrogima was the Pickering and Rangel Fellows Association president in 2010. Lia Miller was PRFA president in 2015. Christina Tilghman is currently PRFA president. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not represent those of the Department of State or the U.S. government.



A 17-year veteran of the Foreign Service, **Ana Escrogima** is the incoming principal officer at U.S. Consulate General Montreal. She served previously as the office director for regional and multilateral affairs in the Near Eastern Affairs Bureau. She served overseas as deputy chief of mission in the Yemen

Affairs Unit in Saudi Arabia, established in 2015 after the closure the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a. A former Rusk Fellow at Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, she has served in Algeria, Iraq and Syria. In Washington, D.C., she was the special assistant to former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, with responsibility for Middle East issues. She served as a Diplomat-in-Residence for the New York Metro area, where she focused on reaching diverse audiences with the department's recruitment pitch and taught a course on U.S. diplomacy. She graduated from Brown University as a Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow and holds an M.A. from Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs.



Lia Miller, a career Foreign Service officer, joined the U.S. Department of State in 2003. She currently leads the Public Affairs Office at U.S. Embassy Yerevan. She has also served in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, the Operations Center, the Bureau of Global Public Affairs, the Office of

Middle East Transitions, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and in Bolivia, Tunisia, Nicaragua and Oman. She is a 2001 Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellow, a 2014 Kathryn W. Davis Public Diplomacy Fellow, a 2015 International Career Advancement Program Fellow and a 2016 Excellence in Government Fellow. She was named a 2018 Regional Foreign Policy Expert by the Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security organization, and was named a 2018 Black American National Security and Foreign Policy Next Generation Leader by the Diversity in National Security Network and New America.



Christina Tilghman joined the Department of State as a Foreign Service officer in 2010. Currently, she serves as the senior public diplomacy adviser for the Global Health Diplomacy Office under the Secretary's Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy. Her previous overseas

assignments include Canada and South Africa; Washington, D.C., assignments include the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, Bureau of International Information Programs, National Security Council and Bureau of African Affairs. She graduated from Hampton University and holds a master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Maryland, College Park. She is a 2006 Thomas R. Pickering Undergraduate Foreign Affairs Fellow, a 2018 International Career Advancement Program Fellow, Public Diplomacy Council Associate Board Member and a Council on Foreign Relations term member.

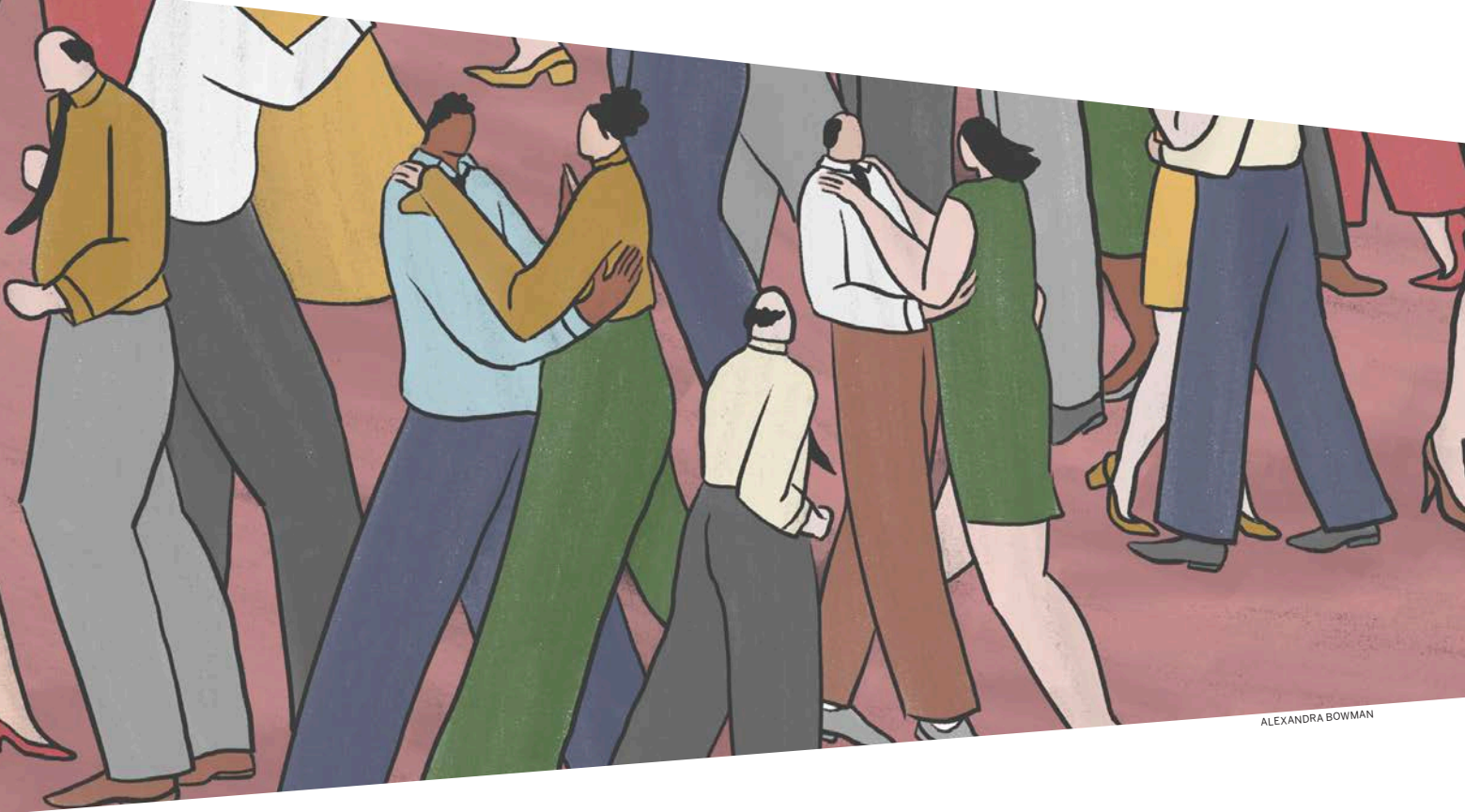
There is a tendency in department culture to dispense automatic judgment based on inaccurate information, societal stereotypes and misconceptions.

Foreign Affairs Fellowship program, established in 1992, and the Charles B. Rangel Fellowship program, launched in 2002. Once they complete the fellowship requirements, including graduate school and domestic and overseas internships, the fellows transition into alumni status and enter the Foreign Service through A-100. Department leadership, Congress and the American public all praise these programs' success in recruiting talented, diverse candidates to join State.

At the same time, however, a concomitant shift of department culture to value and develop the basic competencies all employees need to thrive and progress in a multiracial environment has never taken place. In the Foreign Service, the burden of proving competency falls on the individual junior officers coming up the ranks, but the additional labor of navigating diversity at State should not fall on their shoulders alone. Over the years, the department has taken steps to expand the fellowships exponentially, but new fellows will succeed only if the department decides that ensuring their long-term career success—and the project of normalizing diversity at the State Department—is everyone's responsibility.

Confronting Misperceptions

Until now, PRFA focused primarily on networking opportunities, professional development events and support for incoming fellows. At the same time, the association has always been an informal echo chamber for frustrations alumni feel about the challenges they experience in the Foreign Service—in particular, the widely held but wholly uninformed perception that the process for candidate selection “lowers the bar” to facilitate the entry of otherwise unqualified individuals of color. Fellows are routinely asked whether they are required to take and pass the Foreign Service Written Exam and the Foreign Service Oral Exam; yes, they are—and that is after they pass a highly selective application and interview screening process that mirrors the Foreign Service officer's exam.



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Another common misperception is that all fellows are people of color. In fact, the diversity sought by the fellowships encompasses geographic location in the United States, gender and economic hardship, as well as racial and ethnic background. Moreover, not all ethnic and racial minorities in the Foreign Service were recruited through the Pickering or Rangel programs (Tianna Spears, for example, was a consular fellow). Unfortunately, due to the misinformation regarding some of the fellowships, recipients often feel compelled to downplay their background as fellows when it should be a point of pride. In fact, some minorities in the Foreign Service feel compelled to share that they are *not* Pickering or Rangel Fellows.

This stigma does not exist for other preferential hiring programs, such as the Presidential Management Fellowship, the Boren Fellowship and Veteran's Preference. It is less likely for alumni of those programs to encounter negative assumptions about their qualifications to enter the State Department. So, why is there a negative assumption associated with Pickering and Rangel alumni? The persistent pathology concerning these fellowships—and diversity, more broadly—affects how fellows are seen by their peers and supervisors, and often negatively affects their career progression and retention.

We welcome 7th-floor interest in increasing the size of the Pickering and Rangel Fellowship programs as recognition of the talented individuals they bring to the State Department and their significant policy contributions, and the diverse perspectives and experiences the programs bring to our organization. But as members of earlier fellowship cohorts who have witnessed the program's expansion and retention issues since 2000, we believe that any future expansion should be accompanied by a concerted effort to address grave structural problems within the department—in

particular, the department's inability to retain at the senior levels the very talent it works so hard to recruit at entry level.

Taking On Prevailing Cultural Norms

Tianna Spears' departure left many colleagues asking why those who have suffered traumatic experiences like hers do not speak up. We all know there are many positive and admirable elements in Foreign Service culture, such as *esprit de corps*, the ability to rally together to face a common challenge and a commitment to judging all on the basis of merit. Unfortunately, there is also a dark side to Foreign Service culture, which contributed to Tianna's silence and that of others who endure hardship and abuse in isolation, and ultimately decide to depart.

Despite ongoing improvements in State's leadership and training continuum for managers, there is still scant training available to prepare managers, or fellows, for how to communicate with American colleagues across cultures. Nor does the department systematically explain the fellowships and their purpose to its internal audience. Problems with the quality of management across the department compound the challenges for fellows of color. There is a tendency in department culture to dispense automatic judgment based on inaccurate information, societal stereotypes and misconceptions.

Moreover, a culture of risk aversion buttresses the prevailing norm of "enduring" toxic bosses or work environments until they move on to greener pastures and being careful not to "rock the boat" or "make waves" to protect one's "corridor reputation." The implication that victims of discrimination are responsible for their situations and the insufficient numbers of diverse officers at individual posts also help to perpetuate the status quo.

Given the level of investment in Pickering and Rangel Fellowships, it seems quite strange that the department does so little to protect its investment by retaining the talent it has worked so hard to attract.

These challenges isolate many minority officers. Many who ultimately decide to leave the State Department feel they are dealing with these hardships alone, on top of navigating a challenging career. Fixing these issues goes well beyond increasing the number of entry-level fellows. The Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan takes a step in the right direction, but its execution must be informed by addressing some of the cultural challenges we have outlined here.

Retention: The Elephant in the Room

The State Department is an amazing place to work for many reasons. As such, it will never have to worry about finding qualified candidates who want to join its prestigious ranks. Yet there is still very limited understanding in broader American society of what the department is and what a career with State might look like. This is one of the primary reasons the Pickering and Rangel Fellowship programs were created: to expose Americans who might not otherwise contemplate a career in foreign affairs to the Department of State.

Given the level of investment in these programs, it seems quite strange that the department does so little to protect its investment by retaining the talent it has worked so hard to attract. While diverse officers do receive informal mentoring, there is no mechanism by which the department captures and understands their experiences and addresses them through training or other support for program alumni. In this gap, PRFA peer networking has helped foster resilience among officers facing discrimination that they believe cannot be talked about in the open. But the efforts of an affinity group cannot possibly be expected to make up for State's institutional failures.

The PRFA cannot be a stand-in for the lack of diverse officers in senior leadership roles who might otherwise serve as

mentors and sponsors for diverse officers navigating the intersection of discrimination and an already-opaque assignments process. Nor can PRFA establish departmentwide training to strengthen all employees' abilities to work fairly and effectively in a multiracial professional environment.

Employees of color cannot gain a firm foothold and advance successfully in an organization that does not fully recognize them or their contributions. We must be honest and take a hard look at the organization we serve. The department has failed its employees of color by not fully embracing and institutionalizing diversity and inclusion. During this watershed moment, PRFA continues to address systemic racial disparities within the department and looks forward to working with department leadership and other employee affinity groups to address these concerns.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Despite these shortcomings, there is space to remain hopeful. We see positive strides from our leadership. On June 8, Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun met with three employee affinity groups representing Black Americans and employees of color. In this meeting PRFA shared a list of recommendations to cultivate an inclusive workplace, focused on three themes:

- Create accountability mechanisms to curtail toxic and discriminatory behavior.
- Improve retention by institutionalizing a support system within the Global Talent Management Bureau and counseling services through the Office of Continuity Services to support employees of color.
- Promote diverse officers' career development to build a pipeline for mid-level officers to reach the senior ranks.

The Deputy Secretary affirmed his commitment to address persistent disparities within the department, including regular engagement and partnership with these organizations and other affinity groups. This dialogue was a crucial step in a journey that will involve many more steps. The department must take significant steps to shift its organizational culture and genuinely embrace diversity and inclusion. This will require adequate staffing and funding resource allocation.

Yet it is not solely the State Department's responsibility or that of the affinity groups to foster a diverse, inclusive workplace. Our white colleagues also have a major role in this effort, for allyship is critical to ensure employees of color are treated equitably, with dignity and respect. Consider this your call to action. Small changes in behaviors and perspectives

across the department will translate into systemic change.

Here are some basic questions we can all be asking ourselves: How am I supporting my colleagues of color? If I am in a leadership position or one of influence, am I vocally supporting their work and suggesting their name(s) for career-enhancing opportunities? In meetings, do I ensure employees of color are present at the table and contribute, and do I value their input? When an employee of color engages in a meeting, do I aim to amplify their ideas and give credit to that person? Do I call out toxic or discriminatory behavior in the workplace? Have I taken time to learn about systemic racism to gain a greater understanding of how it affects our colleagues of color? Does my team reflect racial/ethnic diversity? Am I hiring racially and ethnically diverse candidates? Are employees of color working on priority and substantive policy issues, like white colleagues on my team?

These questions will help to unpack the biases and perceptions that can lead to a devaluation of employees of color and their contributions. The shared experiences of employees of

PRFA peer networking has helped foster resilience among officers facing discrimination. But the efforts of an affinity group cannot possibly be expected to make up for State’s institutional failures.

color—including enduring toxic behaviors in the workplace, such as being second-guessed, undermined, harassed and deemed unqualified—indicates there is a widespread problem of discriminatory behaviors and perceptions within the State Department. Only action will combat systemic racial disparities. How will you help turn the tide and achieve our organization’s dream of diversity and inclusion? ■



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The Making of a Real American Diplomat

A member of the Senior Foreign Service who immigrated to the United States as a child reflects on her journey.

BY JULIE CHUNG

“I want to talk to a *real* American.” Here we go again, I thought. I firmly repeated why the visa applicant was ineligible to visit the United States and that I really was a real American.

Such interactions must have happened hundreds of times during my first tour in Guangzhou. It’s something I’ve often been asked and I’ve asked of myself: Am I a real American? Am I a real American dip-



Julie Chung currently serves as principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. She was previously the director for the Japan Desk and acting deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. A

career member of the Senior Foreign Service, with the rank of Minister Counselor, she has served as deputy chief of mission in Cambodia and economic counselor in Thailand. Other overseas assignments include Baghdad, Bogotá, Guangzhou, Tokyo and Hanoi. While working in the Office of Korean Affairs in Washington, D.C., she frequently traveled to North Korea to implement the U.S.–North Korea Agreed Framework. From Huntington Beach, California, she joined the Foreign Service in 1996 in the first cohort of the Thomas R. Pickering Fellowship program.

lomat? Many colleagues have shared similar stories about being asked that question and then fumbling over how to respond.

Of course, in addition to being asked whether I am a “real American,” I often get the other popular question, “Where are you *really* from?” For many years, when my answer of California did not seem to suffice, I would go into my family history. I was annoyed by this interrogation, as I couldn’t imagine my white colleagues having to explain that they or their ancestors were really from Ireland or England.

So I would explain “where I was from” to colleagues, to foreign counterparts, to the guy at the grocery store and on customs forms: I was born in Seoul, Korea.



I recall tears falling like pattering raindrops on my leather jacket as I boarded an airplane for the first time at the age of 5; I was immigrating with my parents and sister to the United States. I really did not understand why I was leaving my friends and home, and my ears popped endlessly on the flight until I got a handful of brightly colored candy to suck on.

My dad landed a \$4.25 hourly wage job on the drafting floor of an engineering company, and my mom worked the night shift as a dishwasher at an Italian restaurant. Twenty-two years later,

ALEXANDRA BOWMAN

my dad had climbed the ranks to become the CEO and president of that company, designing a heating system to prevent O-rings from freezing on space shuttles, which had been the cause of the Challenger tragedy. His invention allowed NASA to restart manned space missions, and he went on to develop the nerve system for the robotic arm of the Mars Rover. My mom became a senior librarian, community volunteer and active church deacon. Does this make us real Americans?

For our first Thanksgiving in America, my mom had done her research and cooked a beautiful turkey. The photo of us at the table prominently features the turkey alongside a plate of unpeeled oranges and broccoli, as we had not yet learned about all the other traditional holiday accoutrements that went with the feast. But by God, that was a beautiful turkey and my mom was so proud. We thought we could be real Americans, and this was the American dream.

School presented a different story. As a young kid trying to learn English, I remember taking a public bus to school where I was bullied and tripped on the playground. My first-grade teacher lent me extra books from the library to quickly expand my vocabulary. Classmates would taunt me by stretching the ends of their eyes into slits and yelling, "Chun King Chicken! Chun King Chicken! Kung fu chicken!" Chun King Chicken was a popular Chinese canned food at the time. Boy I hated that brand, and hoped never to eat that horrendous food from a can.

And I never felt more un-American than the times when someone yelled, "Go back to China!" Sometimes it came from an angry kid, other times an adult speeding by our car flipping the bird because we were driving too slowly. I would slouch down in my seat and think, But we're not from China! I've continued to hear that taunt well through my adulthood.

In sixth grade, I thought the best way to be American was to run for student council president on an earnest campaign

to bring fairness in the grading system and more after-school activities. My opponent promised chocolate milk in all the water fountains and won by a landslide, although he never did deliver on that promise. I gave the commencement speech at my middle school graduation, speaking of the American dream and conveying my parents' endless optimism in the opportunities that the United States could give us.



When I joined the Foreign Service with the very first cohort of the Pickering Fellowship (originally called the Woodrow Wilson Foreign Affairs Fellowship), my parents were immensely proud. During my internship abroad at the U.S. embassy in Bonn, I had a kind supervisor who was the economic counselor, but I never once met the ambassador (Richard Holbrooke) or deputy chief of mission (no idea who that was) all summer.

One day I had forgotten my badge. Trying to enter the housing compound, I was told that Filipino maids went around the back. And in one encounter that particularly shook me, a white male officer told me: "It's because of people like you that I can't get promoted." He dressed up as Uncle Sam during the embassy's Fourth of July picnic, so I felt that, essentially, Uncle Sam had just told me I did not belong, and I wondered if what he said were true. I did not want to rock the boat, and I certainly wanted to be a "real American." So I decided I needed to work twice as hard as others to prove myself.

During my work on the Korea Desk, I took several trips to the DPRK where North Korean officials eyed me from across the table and asked me, in Korean, if I were really an American. I wondered if they knew that my grandfather was separated from his wife and three children during the mayhem of the Korean War and was never to be seen again after the DMZ border



The Chung family, including Julie (at right), celebrate their first Thanksgiving meal in the United States.

I gave the commencement speech at my middle school graduation, speaking of the American dream and conveying my parents' endless optimism in the opportunities that the United States could give us.

closed. And as the granddaughter of that man, I was now an American diplomat representing the “imperialist enemy” they had been riled up about for decades. Over bad Korean soju liquor and karaoke singing, the North Korean officials would vent about how they felt about “those Americans.”

For years, I hid the fact that I was a Pickering Fellow and did not list it on my résumé to avoid being prejudged about how I entered the Foreign Service. Sometimes there was office chatter about how “those fellows” were exploiting the system, and I would not offer up that I was one of them. It wasn’t until I was promoted to Minister Counselor that I had the confidence to talk about the fellowship more openly and explain how we had to surpass higher requirements than normal Foreign Service applicants.

There were times in my career when I really didn’t think I belonged. Just a few years ago, a senior government official addressed me as a “little lady” and asked whether I was “taking good care of my ambassador,” even though I was there in my own right as a senior officer at a Cabinet meeting. I wondered if he would have addressed a tall white male of my same rank in that way.

Throughout my career, I found myself subconsciously counting the number of women and minorities in every meeting I attended. I have no idea why I did this—it just came naturally. But it also chipped away at my confidence as I questioned how I could belong if there were not many other people who looked like me.

Many years ago, on my arrival at post a peer at the same grade insisted I was “junior” to him and took over the juicy and supervisory portions of my portfolio, de facto taking over my position in an office where I was the only person of color. My supervisor shrugged it off, and I was afraid to raise my concerns with anyone higher up. Human Resources told me it would be useless to grieve and that it would ruin my corridor reputation. Again, I didn’t want to rock the boat. I decided to swallow the disappointment and chalk it up to a learning experience of what not to do in the Foreign Service.



Now, as we hear stories about bullying and microaggressions, and fears of retaliation that prevent officers from speaking up, I admit I wish I had done more to stand up for myself, and I want to do more to help change our culture and create safe spaces to speak up. We all have a role to play in this. I’ve been lucky to meet wonderful mentors, one of whom told me: “You came to play in the game, not sit on the bench.” I took those words to heart in later assignments and was encouraged by my parents, who told me never to view myself as a victim.

Two things that have helped me stay resilient: First, my Christian faith, the prism through which I live and work. The values of my work are firmly rooted in the values of my faith and family, and despair is not an option. Second, my love of this institution. Despite all our imperfections and mistakes



The author, second from right, at her swearing-in as a U.S. Foreign Service officer in 1996 at the State Department, with proud parents and sister, Connie Kim.

and missteps, the institution of diplomacy and our State Department have endured because of our capacity to be faithful to our oath and reaffirm our sense of purpose to serve our country. I remind myself of that every day, especially on the challenging ones.

Whenever I'm asked now where I'm really from, or if I'm a real American, I no longer get offended. I relish telling my immigrant story, both to foreigners and Americans. My story, and all the stories of my colleagues, make up the diverse fabric of this institution. That diversity doesn't just make us feel good, or ensure we reflect a "real" America; it also helps us solve problems and negotiate better, and bring different ideas to the table because of our varied experiences.

While a public diplomacy officer in Vietnam, I often relayed my immigrant story to young Vietnamese audiences. They related to themes of working hard, persevering, starting from scratch—my story, and many stories like mine, are what constitute America. So am I a real American, they would ask? You bet I am, I'd say. I'm a real American diplomat. ■

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It's Not Just About Intake

A New Approach to Advancing Diversity

After 30 years, another round of the same measures will not do. It's time to define the problems and seek new solutions.

BY PATRICE JOHNSON

Year after year, for more than 30 years, the State Department has rationalized increasing entrance rates of racial and ethnic minorities and women as the appropriate “flow through” mechanism whenever the issue of minority representation at the Senior Foreign Service level is raised. With historically low percentages of minorities in senior positions today, we see the inadequacy of this approach.



Patrice Johnson has served as a Foreign Service officer for 14 years and is currently on sabbatical. Her previous position was as executive director for the Office of Foreign Missions. Prior to that, she served in various operations roles in Washington, D.C., as well as in consular and political roles abroad in El Salvador, Colombia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Spain. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not represent those of the Department of State or the U.S. government.

Back in 1988, in analyzing State's 1987 affirmative action plan, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission had indicated that the underrepresentation of minorities and women at middle and senior ranks of the Foreign Service was a major problem “which could not be directly resolved through entry level hiring of minorities and women, but rather through the internal movement or promotion of the individuals already employed” (as cited in the General Accounting Office's June 1989 report, “State Department: Minorities and Women Are Underrepresented in the Foreign Service”).

Clearly, subsequent decades of focused recruitment and hiring efforts of racial and ethnic minorities and women have still not aligned the Foreign Service to reflect our diverse population, as required by the Foreign Service Act of 1980. That rationale and process are flawed. Starting from today, it would take 10 full years of consistent intake of minorities and women in the proportion in which they are represented in the population for their representation in the State Department to be at parity. And that level can only be reached if Congress authorizes hiring surges at

the same levels as during the terms of former Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Hillary Rodham Clinton.

But the fact is, bringing in large numbers of diverse officers will not transform the Foreign Service. For that we must look deep into the factors that discourage retention of minorities and women. Coddling bad management, perpetuating a broken bidding process and valuing self-promotion over neutral analysis in the evaluation process have all led to a flawed Foreign Service, one that does not look like America. If State is to do better, it must have an honest conversation about these factors.

Bad Managers

At the heart of many State Department problems is bad management and, in particular, a permissive attitude toward bad managers. The human psyche rarely permits behavior and attitudes stemming from one's own social group to subside. Thus tribalism will crush equity and inclusive treatment of underrepresented groups if the culture itself is led by the majority.

When the first line of defense for this country does not feel supported, valued and empowered, it is a national security concern. Therefore, it is critical that the State Department protect such groups from the tyranny of emboldened individuals who seek to extinguish the respect, empowerment and progression of officers. By remaining quiet, our leadership is complicit.

Like many minority colleagues, I have experienced managers harassing subordinates to crush dissent without any accountability for their actions. These inherently biased leaders, hand-picked and enabled by their chain of command, are a sickness within the organization. They and their enablers use their power to weaponize the corridor reputation and the employee evaluation review process to suppress officers into silence. Those who do speak up are met by tone-deaf senior leaders. In rare cases, these senior leaders reward the loyalty of officers for "sticking through it quietly," and offer "nicer" onward assignments instead of reporting to the Office of Employee Relations for punitive actions to disincentivize the perverse practice.

While the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of Civil Rights are equipped with tools to support equality in the workplace, the impact of such processes is not to reduce discriminatory behavior but rather to resolve a particular issue. If no responsibility is assumed and punitive efforts are not made, bad managers are free to continue their reckless behavior.

Bidding: It's Who You Know

Bidding is another area where I see that the State Department prefers order and past practice to an honest assessment of the process and where it goes wrong. The department tells us we are "generalists," yet the Career Development and Assignments division has never controlled the bidding process to ensure we all meet our promotion requirements once we reach mid-level. We are asked to dance around 360s, résumés and employee profiles in search of that golden handshake. Yet by following this process, minorities and women frequently encounter closed doors.

The bidding process is supposedly transparent and fair. However, it is not exactly based on merit. Instead, assignment selection is based on who you know and when you met them. Bureau chiefs want their friends. And the only way to break into a bureau

where no one knows who you are is by having specialized knowledge. Hiring managers rarely offer an assignment to someone from another skill set who does not already have the experi-

The fact is, bringing in large numbers of diverse officers will not transform the Foreign Service.

ence. So why are we called generalists?

Calls to reform the bidding process have been heard for decades. Except for consular-coned officers, there is a practical career disparity—meaning everyone's experiences vary greatly—between the various generalist career tracks and how bureaus control and manage hiring. This disparity could be mitigated by centralizing the bidding process to CDA, so that both officers and advisers can truly manage career growth and assignment mobility. Because bureaus refuse to relinquish power and positions, we are forced to specialize our skill set to appropriately align our careers with the real needs of the Service. But even if we simply began specializing, the bidding process still needs to change, because the employee experience is a measure of inclusion, and those who do not have a strong network—mainly minorities, women and third-tour officers—are disproportionately disadvantaged.

While I see advantages in centralizing bidding, I believe a great option would be to launch a matching algorithm that considers all the experience, interests and remaining professional requirements of the officer in relation to positions within various bureaus. Hiring managers would then receive a short list produced by the algorithm and be required to interview everyone on that list. Such a process and system would greatly improve the experience, merit and transparency of the bidding process.

At the heart of many State Department problems is bad management and, in particular, a permissive attitude toward bad managers.

Employee Evaluation and Self-Promotion

The Foreign Service employee evaluation is an annual exercise of “walking on water,” which benefits white men because their culture of entitlement and privilege facilitates self-promotion, while minorities and women are less likely to self-advocate. Inflexibility in the process is designed to maintain the status quo and not consider gender and cultural differences when evaluating performance. The department’s desire to sustain what has existed for decades will never progressively move the organization’s culture toward supporting all groups.

To contribute fully, minorities and women must see a proportional flow of mobility within the ranks, starting with tenure. According to an official I spoke with recently, there is ample and strong statistical evidence that demonstrates minorities and women in every category are given tenure at much lower rates compared to white men. Why is it that minorities and women achieve tenure at much lower rates compared to white men? Where, exactly, in the tenure review process are minorities and women experiencing greater difficulty?

In general, self-promotion is extremely important for career advancement, whether within the department or externally. The ability to promote oneself skillfully is a learned talent, and I do not call for disincentivizing the behavior. I also do not believe anonymizing the evaluation process will greatly overcome the gender and cultural differences in the tone and custom of how underrepresented groups promote themselves. I do, however, advocate developing a completely new evaluation process and system. The current process was established in the 1980s, and its design is antiquated.

The evaluation process is designed to look at past contributions to determine future success and readiness for promotion. But research shows people are inconsistent in rating other people’s skills, while they are not so inconsistent in rating their own actions. If promotion is based on identifying the future

capacity of officers to lead, inspire and innovate, then the entire evaluation system needs to reflect that.

Based on the “core precepts,” officers’ evaluations should not focus on knowledge, skills and proficiencies, but rather look to the future and potential of each officer. The evaluations should address questions such as these: Did the rated employee have a chance to develop skills useful for advancement, and use their strengths and talents in the assignment to drive the mission forward? How did the rated employee demonstrate capacity for leadership?

In addition, the rating and reviewing officials themselves must be evaluated on how they develop and mentor the officers they supervise. The evaluation for their sections should address questions such as these: How did the rating and reviewing officials facilitate growth and development of the rated employee? What substantive and/or institutional knowledge have the rating and reviewing officials contributed to the development of the rated employee?

Managers would need to be trained on how to develop employees and properly assess the leadership and leadership potential of those they supervise. The subtle shift here is in asking what did the supervisor do with their team, not what did the manager think of the employee. While this requires a cultural shift, doing so increases the effectiveness and value of the performance management structure for all, and truly places managers in a position to lead, coach and inspire their staff. That’s what leadership is all about, right?

Where Are the Barriers?

Issues relating to promotion and diversity within the State Department were reviewed in 2019 by the Government Accountability Office. The resulting January GAO report, “Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity,” highlights the statistical relationships between promotion and minority and gender status and the extent to which the department has identified any barriers to diversity in its workforce. The report documented that the odds of promotion from FS-4 to FS-3 were 12.8 percent lower for minorities than whites. The department commented on GAO’s report, stating that the high Pickering and Rangel attrition rates at FS-4 “skew” the promotion statistics to show a lower promotion rate for minorities entering the FS-3 rank.

How could minority fellows statistically distort the promotion rates from FS-4 to FS-3 if roughly 60 Pickering and Rangel Fellows, who are not all minorities but include white men and women as well, enter A-100 each year? If we look at the attrition

If promotion is based on identifying the future capacity of officers to lead, inspire and innovate, then the entire evaluation system needs to reflect that.

rate for fellows it is close to 10 percent, while the rate for the entire Foreign Service fluctuates between 2 and 3 percent annually. Although the rate may be three times higher for fellows than non-fellows, do not focus your attention here. Because the total number of fellows is small, exactly two fellows need to leave each year for the fellows' attrition rate to be greater than the Service's attrition rate.

But for the department's response to be correct—namely that the fellows' attrition rate has caused the noise in promotion rates—the number of departed minority fellows would need to be disproportionately higher than the number of departed non-fellow minorities. At a 10 percent attrition rate, six fellows leave a year. In comparison, near the 2 percent attrition rate, exactly 183 officers left the Foreign Service in 2019, of which 43 were minorities (see the EEOC Fiscal Year 2019 Foreign Service Management Directive 715 Work Force Tables). The baseline numbers prove that the department's assertion is incorrect. As a matter of fact, GAO modeled its data on the total number of employees in the Foreign Service, thus accounting for all generalist and specialist minorities and women.

The department's response completely obfuscated a possible real issue—namely, that promotion to FS-3 constitutes a barrier for minorities. The department must take a hard look at the internal factors that truly affect minorities and women in the workforce, and must provide more data and be transparent in communicating correlation anomalies and advancement barriers.

By omission, the department has thrown a wrench in the wheel of efforts to sustain diversity gains. After decades without tangible evidence that minorities and women officers in the Service collectively enjoy empowerment and progression, now is the time to officially declare retention a problem and actively address the inadequacies within the culture that do not encourage us to stay. ■

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Diversity in the Foreign Service

From the FSJ Archive



Diversity—Not Just a Cause for the Underrepresented

Individuals who question how they fit into a diverse workplace should remember that the value of diversity is not in an individual's race, gender or ethnicity; it is in the experiences and insights that those attributes often bring. Diversity may refer to innate characteristics, but it can also be acquired. All of us bring unique life experiences to our work, and employees who focus on their lack of physical manifestations of diversity will miss valuable opportunities to contribute to a diverse team.

I appreciate that my current office leadership prioritized recruiting a diverse team. When we gather for staff meetings, we have a mix of backgrounds, races, genders and ethnicities. With fewer people at the table like me, I feel like my opinion has more value. Conversations include a rich variety of perspectives.

When I share my thoughts, I must reflect and provide support for my positions. This doesn't just provide our team with a broader range of ideas; it forces individuals to ensure their proposals are well thought out before they bring them to the group. In other words, I have to think harder and communicate better in a diverse environment. Diversity makes me a better officer and diplomat.

—Jay Porter, September 2018



Ebenezer Bassett: The Legacy of America's First African-American Diplomat

Just days after the Battle of Gettysburg, Bassett and other black leaders organized a recruiting drive for black soldiers. Bassett had the honor of being the second speaker of the night, making his speech immediately

preceding [Frederick] Douglass. The following excerpt explains why he, too, was considered such an effective orator:

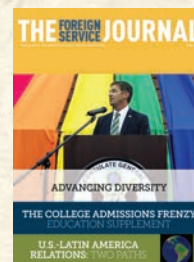
“Men of color, to arms! Now or never! This is our golden moment. The government of the United States calls for every able-bodied colored man to enter the army for three years of service and join in fighting the battles of liberty and the Union. A new era is open to us. For generations we have suffered under the horrors

of slavery, outrage and wrong; our manhood has been denied, our citizenship blotted out, our souls seared and burned, our spirits cowed and crushed, and the hopes of the future of our race involved in doubts and darkness.

“But how the whole aspect of our relations to the white race is changed! Now, therefore, is the most precious moment. Let us rush to arms! Fail now, and our race is doomed on this soul of our birth.”

That activism proved crucial years later when General Ulysses Grant won the White House in 1868. The new president was eager to reward leaders in the black community like Bassett who had helped preserve the Union.

—Chris Teal, June 2018



Diversity in Diplomacy: The Mentoring Dimension

The different perspectives that come from embracing diversity can give the United States a kind of asymmetric advantage—the challenge is to leverage that advantage.

It is no secret that the Foreign Service needs more diversity. According to the 2014

promotion statistics, gender and racial disparity persists in promotions and the gaps widen at the Senior Foreign Service level. ...

We believe that a robust mentorship program is vital to achieving and sustaining greater diversity in the Foreign Service. The State Department's advancements in recruiting minorities and ensuring equity across the diversity spectrum should be expanded to sustain diversity into the senior ranks.

—Jennifer Zimdahl Galt and Thao Anh Tran, June 2015



Hispanic Representation at USAID: Why So Low for So Long?

Periodically, I am asked to speak to Hispanic and minority students aspiring to enter the Foreign Service or the U.S. Agency for International Development. I can hardly resist the chance to tell my own life story and describe the places where USAID has

sent me. The Foreign Service is a great career, I tell them, and I encourage them to consider taking the plunge.

One reason I'm tapped to give these speeches is that I'm a 25-year veteran of the Foreign Service, and also a member of an endangered species: mid-level Hispanic FSOs. My agency is sincerely trying to recruit a more diverse workforce, but has consistently failed in terms of Hispanic representation since the late 1970s, when data on ethnicity began to be collected.

A great deal of energy has gone into better recruitment, and those efforts should continue and be expanded. ...

But that needs to be accompanied by a broader effort—not only on behalf of Hispanics, but to benefit everyone at USAID—to cultivate a diverse Senior Management Group cadre. ... If a qualified Hispanic (or other minority) has applied for an SMG position, there must be a compelling reason not to select that candidate. "I like this person more" is just not acceptable.

—José Garzón, March 2014



TLG: Expanding Opportunities at State

In 1973 William B. Davis and Robert Dumas, African-American employees of the U.S. Information Agency, became interested in identifying career paths for the advancement of African-American employees of USA, State and other foreign affairs agencies.

The duo organized meetings over lunch with likeminded African-American officers on the first Thursday of each month, inspiring Davis to dub the organization the "Thursday Luncheon Group."

TLG, as the group is usually referred to, quickly began to focus on outreach to senior State Department officials, with the goal of advancing long-term personnel and management goals. ...

Today, the informal mentoring program Davis and Dumas launched four decades ago has grown into a robust organization, comprising more than 300 active-duty Foreign Service officers and Civil Service employees, associate members and retired employees of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. It is also the oldest of the 12 State Department employee affinity groups recognized by the Office of Civil Rights.

—Stacy D. Williams, May 2013

The Issue of Race, Ethnicity

Neither blacks nor other minorities made much headway in the Service until the U.S. civil rights movement swept the country in the mid-1960s. When that decade opened, only 17 of 3,732 FSOs were black. ...

The year 1964 was a turning point for blacks in the Foreign Service, culminating in the passage of the Civil Rights Act



and a revised Foreign Service Act. A flurry of programs to recruit minorities into the Foreign Service would follow.

President Jimmy Carter, backed by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, was credited with increasing the number of black political appointees as ambassadors between 1977 and 1981. ...

During this period, [Terrence] Todman himself was named ambassador to Spain. Carter's appointment of Andrew Young as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, the first time a black had been named to such a high-profile policymaking level in U.S. government, became an important milestone for minorities as well. During the Reagan administration, 11 black career diplomats were named as ambassadors. Fewer black ambassadors were appointed in the Bush administration, although black appointees fared better during Clinton's first four years.

—Francine Moddero, November 1996



The Case for Racial Diversity in the Foreign Service

Diversity in America's diplomatic service received its first official endorsement in the 1960s. Concerned with America's image abroad, when the Soviet Union was competing with the United States in the Third World, President John Kennedy and Secretary of State Dean Rusk decided to increase the number of blacks in America's diplomatic corps. ...

But there are stronger reasons than cosmetic for promoting diversity in America's diplomatic corps. ...

Professionals of the foreign affairs community often complain that the Foreign Service and the State Department—unlike the agencies of Defense and Agriculture—do not have powerful constituencies in American society and in Congress. This handicap, which becomes especially painful when Congress takes up the foreign affairs budget, exists partially because many Americans, including some members of Congress, view the Foreign Service as elitist and irrelevant to the interests of the common person.

This unflattering impression of the Foreign Service would change and the State Department would find it easier to earn badly needed congressional support if the Foreign Service reflected the diverse communities throughout the country and made fuller use of all members of the American family.

—Kenneth Longmyer, May 1996



Building a Representative Foreign Service

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 reorganized the Foreign Service, emphasizing that the Foreign Service should be representative of the American people. Specifically, the legislation aimed at strengthening the Foreign Service by promoting policies and procedures—including affirmative action—that would encourage entry and advancement in the Foreign Service by people from all segments of American society, as well as promoting fair and equitable treatment for all without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age or handicap.

The Senior Foreign Service may be the last bastion of discrimination in the Foreign Service. I respect and admire those who have worked their way to the top and survived the rigorous training and hardships. However, I am discouraged by inequality in a system that appears to stack the deck in favor of a select few. ...

Congress can and will pass legislation and hold oversight hearings, but it is up to the officials at the State Department to carry out policies of equal opportunity and equal representation. Reports and studies can identify the problems, but the solutions can come only from action.

—Congressman Gerry Sikorski (DFL Party, Minn.), July 1990



The Status of Women

I believe the real test of equality is the extent to which a woman is expected to carry her full share of the workload and is actively supported in doing so. I wonder how many other women have had written into their efficiency report that Ms. Jones is a capable officer, but unfortunately the work she was assigned to do did not justify a recommendation for promotion. Whose failure was that?

If a supervisor really wants to get the most out of a woman assigned to the mission—and I suspect some secretly see themselves as martyrs doomed to carry an extra burden for the sake of women’s lib—perhaps he should ask himself a few soul-searching questions:

Do you assign a woman officer the same workload, both in substance and volume, that you would assign a male officer of the same grade and experience?

Do you find yourself looking around for jobs “suitable for women”?

Do you try to “help her out” by taking over the more challenging assignments, rather than letting her take what comes? ...

The questions above are not hypothetical. They derive from actual situations in which I have found myself on one occasion or another. I believe the real loser, in the last analysis, was the United States Government, which was not getting the full benefit of the talents it was paying for.

—Ms. Jones, January 1978



Beyond the Call of Duty

It isn’t often that we get an opportunity to submit a performance rating on the Secretary of State. But there was a quality about Secretary Rusk’s recent testimony on civil rights [legislation that became the Civil Rights Act of 1964] before the Senate Committee on Commerce which came through clearly in the television reportage and which we thought it well to impart to our readers, especially those overseas, who were not within camera range.

It was certainly within the scope of the Secretary’s responsibilities to point out that the failure of the United States to live up in practice to what it preaches in its Constitution and Declaration of Independence is exploited by the communists in their attempts to belittle the U. S. claim to leadership of the Free World. It was also most appropriate for the Secretary to reveal how difficult it is to carry on correct diplomatic relations with representatives of other countries whose color subjects them to the kind of discrimination and injury to their personal dignity which some people in this country still practice toward more than ten percent of the United States citizenry. ...

Then, quite deliberately, he committed the Department and the Foreign Service in the following passage: “So, let me stress again, the interest of the Department of State in this bill reaches far beyond obtaining decent treatment for non-white diplomats and visitors. We are directly and comprehensively concerned with obtaining decent treatment for all human beings, including American citizens.” ...

This attitude goes to the heart of the problem. Despite the decisions of the courts, the decrees of the Executive Branch, and even eventual laws by Congress, the only permanent solution to this issue lies in the attitude of the individual to his fellow man. All of us in the Service who deal constantly and intimately with people of all races and colors might well think of these things.

—Editorial, October 1963



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U.N. Relevance Depends on U.S. Leadership

A career FSO and veteran United Nations official reflects on this unique institution and its value today.

BY JEFFREY FELTMAN



Jeffrey Feltman is the John C. Whitehead Visiting Fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution. He served as United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs from 2012 to 2018. Before retiring from the State Department with the rank of Career

Minister in 2012, he was the assistant secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs (2009-2012). He served as U.S. ambassador to Lebanon (2004-2008) and had postings in Baghdad, Erbil, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Tunis, Amman, Budapest and Port-au-Prince.

“**Y**ou are like the Secretary of State for the United Nations,” United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon remarked in July 2012 when swearing me in as United Nations

Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. A flattering pretension, yes, but I had no expectations given relative authorities, funding and staffing levels that my ex-boss Hillary Rodham Clinton or Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov would suddenly embrace me as a peer.

As head of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (or DPA, now the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs), I oversaw the organization’s global political work, all focused on preventing and resolving conflict. DPA provides

One early epiphany was recognizing that Turtle Bay obsesses about Foggy Bottom, while Foggy Bottom neglects Turtle Bay.

support and instructions to U.N. special envoys and representatives who head political missions, and my role included leadership responsibilities in the areas of U.N. electoral assistance, counterterrorism and even residual decolonization. Because DPA provides the administrative and documentary support to the Security Council, I had a ringside seat to council deliberations, often (in the Secretary-General's absence) as the only non-voting person at its horseshoe table. Yet my entire New York staff, with its global responsibilities, would have filled only a medium-sized American embassy.

In addition to the resource discrepancies, the role of Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs differs from a foreign minister in its function: International civil servants are expected to represent the values and ideals of the United Nations Charter, not serve as advocates for national positions. Now 75 years old and showing its age, the United Nations was the centerpiece of a series of organizations, alliances and partnerships established under U.S. leadership in the aftermath of World War II that would play a vital role in maintaining peace and progress in the postwar world.

While it is natural to question the relevance of the organization in the greatly changed world of today, I come down on the side that the U.N. can remain relevant and a force multiplier for U.S. interests in global peace, development and human rights—as long as strong U.S. leadership remains in the organization. At the same time, for reasons ranging from changed global power dynamics to U.S. arrears in its dues, Washington cannot assume the same automatic deference inside the U.N. system that it enjoyed for years. The United States needs to compete inside the U.N. for what matters to us, lest we hand over vacuums for the Chinese and Russians to gleefully fill, at the expense of our interests.

Obsession and Neglect

What I learned when I began working at the U.N. was that, within its Secretariat, the speculation about Washington is incessant.



Jeffrey Feltman with his wife, Mary Draper, and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton following his swearing in as assistant secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs in 2009.



The author briefing the U.N.

One early epiphany was recognizing that Turtle Bay obsesses about Foggy Bottom, while Foggy Bottom neglects Turtle Bay. During my nearly six-year tenure as the highest-ranking U.S. citizen in the Secretariat, my colleagues—peers, subordinates and superiors alike—would invariably ponder “What does Washington think?” on every conceivable issue. Except perhaps in the State Department’s Bureau of International Organization Affairs, I am not aware of any parallel in Washington.

The point of the question was not to signal that the U.N. Secretary-General or professional staff should automatically march in step with the American position. Rather, knowing the American position or likely U.S. reaction was an essential part of evaluating what the U.N. might do in any situation. Depending on the subject, professional staff would also evaluate the positions of other capitals. Discussions on peacekeeping in Francophone Africa included considerable attention to Paris’ perspectives and interests. One could not plan U.N. operations in Somalia without considering the roles of Somalia’s neighbors, as well as Turkey, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. But only Washington’s policies came up in every meeting on peace and security matters. This gives the United States astonishing influence without even trying to exercise it.

An American Foreign Service officer assigned to an embassy in a country on the far periphery of Washington's consciousness might see an analogous situation in the locals' sincere, if misguided, belief that U.S. policymakers had a razor-sharp, constant focus on them. But the U.N. was different: the ubiquitous interest in what Washington thinks derived from pragmatic consideration of options rather than exotic conspiracy theories. And instead of calling on the Washington-obsessed locals as a U.S. Foreign Service officer assigned to an embassy abroad would do, I was an insider, seated at the table as one of the U.N. officials discussing U.S. policies. This often felt like an out-of-body experience, as I listened to myself impartially explaining Washington policies rather than promoting and defending them as I had for nearly three decades of proud service as an FSO.

Neither the Obama nor the Trump administration ever put me in a position where my oath of office to the United Nations was tested. I might have been the U.N.'s equivalent of a "political appointee," a noncareer senior official, but Washington never issued political instructions to me. Soon after assuming her duties as U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N., Nikki Haley made a point of telling me directly that she understood that I worked for the U.N., not for her, and asked me to report back if anyone on her staff ever treated me otherwise. Staff at the United States Mission to the United Nations (USUN) would deliver *démarches* and non-papers in support of U.S. positions, but these were neither presented nor accepted as instructions.

Of course, as one of the five permanent members of the Security Council (the P5) and as the U.N.'s largest contributor both of assessed (mandatory) contributions and voluntary funding (in dollar terms), the United States hardly needs to rely surreptitiously on a U.S. national in an Under-Secretary-General slot to have influence or gain understanding of U.N. Secretariat thinking. The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations can simply call the Secretary-General on the phone. Occasionally, the American respect for my U.N. status seemed to cross the line into curious indifference. When I returned from Pyongyang in December 2017—after the first U.N. political visit to North Korea in six years—at a time when war seemed imminent, many ambassadors to the U.N. came to see me for briefings, a standard part of the job. USUN never bothered (although Ambassador Haley did attend my consultations with the Security Council).

At least I never had to worry about implicit or explicit Washington orders. Not all U.N. member states resist the temptation of using their nationals in U.N. positions to advocate for their interests or report back to capitals, despite their nationals' oaths of office as impartial international civil servants.

To the extent that Washington wants an informed Secretary-General, having an American "translator" by his side makes sense over the longer term.

An Interpreter of Washington

So, if Washington has an admirable "hands-off" policy once U.S. citizens are named to high-level U.N. posts, why did the George W. Bush administration decide to lobby Ban Ki-moon to appoint a U.S. citizen to head DPA? Lynn Pascoe, my immediate predecessor, was the first U.S. citizen to head DPA in 2007; Rosemary DiCarlo, my successor, is the third.

Previously, American nationals typically headed the U.N.'s Department of Management, to maintain eagle-eyed scrutiny over the organization's budget. But in time Washington concluded that the Under-Secretary-General for Management inside the Secretariat had less sway on budget issues than an active member state working through the budget committees that are part of the General Assembly structures. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on the other hand, is the chief foreign policy adviser to the Secretary-General and is present in many, if not most, of the Secretary-General's meetings on international peace and security issues, while the head of the Department of Management is not. That individual frequently travels with the Secretary-General and (at least under Ban Ki-moon) would be patched into the Secretary-General's calls with foreign leaders.

Thus, an American in that position can provide useful service for the Secretary-General in terms of interpreting or translating Washington policies and predicting likely Washington responses. Depending on the issue, this may or may not serve Washington's immediate interest directly. But it certainly serves the Secretary-General's interest in understanding the views of the U.N.'s most powerful member state. To the extent that Washington wants an informed Secretary-General, having an American "translator" by his side makes sense over the longer term.

A good example of the utility of this "translator" function occurred early in my tenure, when the Iranians invited Ban Ki-moon for a state visit to give the keynote address at the August 2012 Non-Aligned Movement summit in Tehran. Susan Rice, then U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, and

All of us who have toiled in Turtle Bay can identify parts of the U.N. that seem dysfunctional or irrelevant (although we may disagree exactly on which parts those are).

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton applied tandem pressure on Ban to say no. Given Iran's defiance of Security Council resolutions and the incendiary remarks by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad calling for the destruction of Israel, they argued, a state visit by the U.N. Secretary-General would reward outrageously bad behavior and undermine the importance of U.N. principles and resolutions. The problem for Ban was that a majority of U.N. member states would participate in the summit and expect him there, a fact he weighed against the unyielding U.S. opposition and his own revulsion over Khamenei's anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic rhetoric.

"Translating" U.S. objections into a U.N. context, I proposed that to offset the risk that a trip exclusively focused on Tehran would appear to bless Iranian behavior contrary to U.N. norms, Ban wedge the Tehran stop between visits to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, where he would surely get (and indeed got) earfuls of complaints about Iran's regional meddling. My understanding of U.S. motivations helped Ban find a way to mitigate U.S. concerns, as the additional destinations altered the public image of the trip. One of the most unexpected moments of my entire professional career occurred in Tehran, when I ended up as Ban's "plus one" in a restricted meeting with Khamenei. The Supreme Leader's hours-long rant against the United States persuaded me that whatever gaps in knowledge we in Washington may have had regarding Iran, they paled in comparison to the chasms of ignorance Khamenei displayed regarding the United States.

Transition and Trepidation

With António Guterres taking the oath of office as Ban's successor as U.N. Secretary-General just three weeks before Donald Trump was sworn in as U.S. president, the question "What does Washington think?" assumed a more urgent tone in Turtle Bay circles. Would the U.N. inadvertently cross an ill-defined American red line, provoking President Trump to withdraw U.S.

support from, and membership in, the body? Leadership transitions are never easy, and Guterres took office when the sense of an existential threat to the U.N. was palpable among staff and member states alike. An articulate and persuasive communicator in multiple languages, Guterres had received the blessing of U.N. member states in October 2016, at which point a different outcome in the U.S. elections seemed likely.

Perhaps naturally suspicious and prone to micromanagement already, Guterres took no chances of a misstep with the unexpected new administration. He quickly centralized as much control as he could of the unwieldy U.N. structures (while claiming, and perhaps even believing, he was empowering staff). What senior leaders and mid-level managers could routinely decide on their own under Ban Ki-moon soon became subject to second-guessing and, ultimately, clearance by the Secretariat's 38th floor, occupied by the offices of Guterres and his inner circle. Career professionals soon got the message that his staff considered them and their ideas untrustworthy, as potential creators of problems between Guterres and member states and especially with a now unpredictable U.S. government. A Portuguese diplomat once remarked to me that, to understand Guterres, one needed to study his political career in Lisbon: As prime minister (1995-2002) in a minority government, he constantly sought allies, built coalitions and avoided making enemies. Above all, he wanted to avoid making an enemy of Donald Trump.

To his credit, Guterres used his considerable political skills to form a symbiotic partnership with Nikki Haley over the issue of U.N. reform. Haley could burnish her foreign policy credentials and report to her boss that the U.N. was improving under his direction; Guterres could fiddle with the U.N.'s bureaucratic machinery (telling other member states that reform was essential to continued U.S. support) in ways that suited his 38th-floor hyper control while preserving a relationship with Washington. The list grows of U.N. entities and international agreements abandoned by the Trump administration, and the United States is now behind in its assessed contributions by more than \$1 billion, single-handedly creating a financial crisis in the U.N. But the U.S. (so far) remains inside the United Nations. Not unreasonably, Guterres probably considers that his top accomplishment.

1918 vs. 1945 ... and Today

But what should the United States think about its U.N. membership at this point? The relationship between Washington and the United Nations has always been somewhat uneasy, as it rests on American willingness to constrain some of its

power in the name of global cooperation that it cannot always control. The “democratic” parts of the U.N. structures—the General Assembly, most notably—will always attract attention (and, often, scorn) when the United States “loses” a vote, even though they are nonbinding. There is an obsession in the member state bodies with Israeli unilateral actions toward the Palestinians, while the Chinese mostly get a pass regarding the Uighurs.

The Security Council, which alone has the authority to pass binding resolutions, is currently paralyzed on critical issues, and its frozen composition differs shamefully from current political, demographic, military and economic dynamics. Traditional peacekeeping seems ill-suited for today’s conflicts, with civil wars fusing with transnational terrorism and a resurgence of proxy wars. With China’s rise and Russian assertiveness, the United States cannot expect the same deference to its leadership in the U.N. that Washington enjoyed in the immediate post-Cold War period. With leaders and citizens looking inward, COVID-19 and the accompanying economic crisis have amplified the sense that the U.N. itself and multilateralism more generally are in crisis.

Yet only a few years ago, multilateralism and the United Nations showed powerful signs of innovation and relevance: take, for instance, the unprecedented, Security Council–approved mission (2013-2014) to remove the bulk of Syria’s chemical weapons and precursors; the four-country U.N. emergency Ebola mission (2014-2015); the approval of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (2015); the agreement on financing for development goals and mechanisms (2015); the Paris Agreement on climate (2015); and the tripartite U.N. Mission in Colombia overseeing the disarmament of the FARC rebel group (2016-2017). This is not ancient history. These achievements demonstrate that the United Nations and the multilateral system can address collective challenges and act as force multipliers for U.S. interests.

Behind these initiatives was strong U.S. leadership. Even now, despite the disdain the Trump administration too often demonstrates for multilateralism, no other country comes close to the influence the United States has inside the world body. In addition, for all its creakiness after 75 years, the United Nations remains a generally accepted vehicle for burden-sharing and cost distribution for shared problems that would be hard to replicate in today’s polarized world. (Imagine trying to get the U.N. Charter drafted today.)

Today, every country is affected by the coronavirus, and the International Monetary Fund predicts that 170 countries will be significantly poorer at the end of 2020 than they were in January. Many countries are now coming to terms with systemic racism.



COURTESY OF JEFFREY FELTMAN

The author, at left, with U.N. Special Representative for the Secretary-General Ghassan Salameh in Tripoli in March 2018.

Inequality between countries and within countries is growing. These overlapping crises are creating disruptions on a global scale that should spark action. Yet in the United States, the signs are not encouraging so far. We seem to be following a model mimicking the post-World War I abdication of responsibility rather than demonstrating 1945-style leadership and creativity.

Some lessons of the postwar period can guide us today. After 1945 the United States fostered a series of overlapping institutions, alliances and partnerships, with varying memberships and objectives, all formed by member state governments. Today, a layered approach would need to include business and civil society representatives able to grapple with questions, say, of political oversight over technological advances or methods to de-escalate potential cyberwar. Starting such discussions in the United Nations would be frustrating and futile, given global polarization and the U.N.’s exclusively governmental membership. But once a broad consensus of governments, industry and civil society groups has agreed on acceptable standards of behavior, the U.N. is the only body that can endorse global applicability. We just need to keep our expectations realistic about when and how to use the United Nations.

All of us who have toiled in Turtle Bay can identify parts of the U.N. that seem dysfunctional or irrelevant (although we may disagree exactly on which parts those are). I often teased my DPA staff that the organization made me realize just how nimble and flexible the State Department was—not words I used to describe State while serving there. Also compared to State, itself not always the most empathetic employer, the U.N. treats its own career staff abysmally, neglecting career development and too often ignoring staff welfare. In August 2019, when three

Once a broad consensus of governments, industry and civil society groups has agreed on acceptable standards of behavior, the U.N. is the only body that can endorse global applicability.

U.N. civilian staff members were murdered in Benghazi, Libya, the Secretary-General swiftly issued public condemnation; but neither he nor his office ever called the U.N.'s mission in Libya to express condolences and offer support. U.N. professionals advocating respect for human rights are currently viewed as particularly suspect, since human rights advocacy can create tensions with U.N. member states. (So far, however, the organization still

manages to recruit astonishingly talented and motivated individuals from all over the world, and Guterres deserves credit for significant progress in promoting gender parity at all levels.)

These are not new problems, although 38th-floor disdain for career professionals, combined with the financial crisis provoked by U.S. arrears, has sunk U.N. staff morale to new lows. But if genuine, comprehensive reform often seems out of reach, the organization's replacement or abolition seems worse.

More than any other country, the United States shaped the development of the U.N. system and brought about the current operating system of normative values in the Turtle Bay machinery. Walking away from where we have, essentially, a home-field advantage in an increasingly competitive world seems shortsighted and foolish: how delighted China and Russia must be when we abandon the playing field and create vacuums they can fill. But U.N. relevance and value as a force multiplier for our interests and values rest on the United States exercising leadership that simultaneously manages to be thoughtful, forceful and respectful. ■

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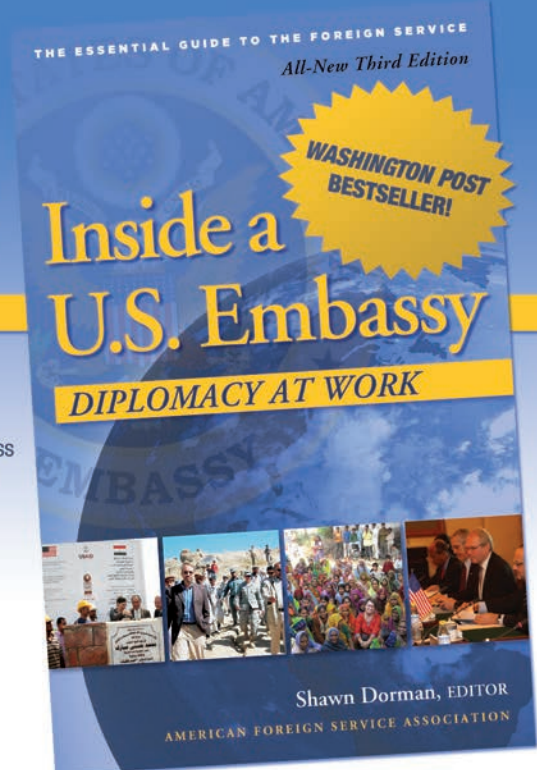
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Ralph J. Bunche, U.N. Architect



Ralph J. Bunche in 1950 when he received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his work as acting United Nations mediator in Palestine.

UNITED NATIONS

The first Black Nobel laureate made unique contributions to the establishment of the United Nations long before the peacekeeping achievements for which he is better known.

BY JAMES DANDRIDGE



A retired Senior Foreign Service officer and U.S. Army pioneer special operations officer, James T.L. Dandridge II is vice chairman of the board of directors of the Diplomacy Center Foundation for the establishment of the National Museum of

American Diplomacy. Now vice president of the DACOR board of governors and trustees, he served as chair of the board of directors for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training from 2005 to 2015. He is also the 2008 recipient of The Director General's Cup for the Foreign Service for his promotion of the Foreign Service, both as a U.S. diplomat and in retirement. He retired from the U.S. Foreign Service with the rank of Minister Counselor in July 1997.

“Ralph Bunche was too busy making history to record it,” Foreign Service Officer Lawrence “Larry” Finkelstein, who worked closely with Bunche at the State Department and the

United Nations, once stated. Bunche successfully completed negotiations of the first peace treaty between Israel and its four Arab neighbors, the Rhodes Treaty Negotiations, in 1949. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for this momentous achievement in 1950, the first Black laureate, and had a long and distinguished career as a United Nations diplomat.

Less known are Bunche’s enormous contributions prior to attaining world renown, contributions that were critical to the founding of the United Nations. Fortunately, Bunche’s attention to detail and his excellent drafting skills, as recovered and published by his close associates, make it possible to capture these contributions.

One of the major challenges of the post-World War I and post-World War II eras was colonialism—namely, the status of territories fought over in both wars. Bunche grappled with

One has only to reflect on Bunche's early academic prowess at every level to see how later principles of humanism, freedom and conflict resolution took strong hold in his thinking.

this issue from his early academic pursuits through his work at, successively, the Office of Strategic Services (1941-1944) as head of the Africa Section of the Research and Analysis Branch, the Department of State (1944-1946) as an adviser on colonial matters and the United Nations (1946-1954) as director of the Trusteeship Division.

While transitioning from the OSS through State to the United Nations, Bunche was also a tenured political science professor at Howard University (a position he relinquished in 1950). I was a freshman at Howard University in 1949. With our class, Bunche presided over the establishment of the first chapter of Phi Beta Kappa at Howard University, and we proudly strutted across the campus sharing the success of our professor's accomplishments.

As a Bunche "junkie," I have also been fortunate to have known many of those who worked closely with Bunche at various stages: Benjamin Rivlin, Bunche's Office of Strategic Services assistant; Lawrence Finkelstein, Bunche's assistant at State, who accompanied him to the 1945 San Francisco Conference to draft the U.N. Charter and served as his assistant when Bunche assumed directorship of the U.N. Trusteeship Division in 1946; and Sir Brian Urquhart, Bunche's U.N. colleague, friend and successor U.N. Under-Secretary-General.

With their help, a review of this earlier 1941-1946 period in his career illuminates the unique contributions Ralph Bunche made to the United Nations long before the peacekeeping achievements for which he is better known. These contributions center on Bunche's deep familiarity with the colonial aspects of the post-World War I peace agreements and his development of the basic principle of self-determination as the standard by which to judge a system of government.

Academic Underpinnings and Historical Context

One has only to reflect on Bunche's early academic prowess at every level to see how later principles of humanism, freedom and conflict resolution took strong hold in his thinking. Born in

1904 in Detroit, he was raised by his maternal grandmother, Lucy Taylor Johnson, who moved the family to Los Angeles in 1919. He graduated with honors from 30th Street Intermediate School, where his grandmother insisted that he be given academic courses to prepare him for college. He then graduated first in his class and valedictorian from Jefferson High School, but he was not accorded a listing in recognized honor societies because of his race.

Bunche entered the southern branch of the University of California (later to become UCLA) and graduated summa cum laude as class valedictorian in 1927. In his commencement address, Bunche referenced the Great War (as World War I was then known), that "supreme catastrophe" that "seared deeply into the heart of humanity the burning realization that the world is in distress." And he implored fellow students to become "socially valuable individuals" by developing their personalities—reason, self-consciousness and self-activity—to the fullest and adding a fourth dimension: "bigness," which he defined as the soulfulness, spirituality, imagination, altruism and vision enabling one to understand and love one's fellow man.

Ralph Bunche's views were shaped by international events as he was growing up. World War I began in 1914 when he was 10 years old. The Great War pitted Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire against Britain, France, Russia and, ultimately, the United States, Italy and Japan. The war lasted for four years, 1914 to 1918, and the peace settlement took another five years—from the 1918 Treaty of Versailles through to the 1923 Treaty at Lausanne, where peace was finally reestablished. During the subsequent 1924-1930 period, the League of Nations, established in 1919 under Part I of the Treaty of Versailles and based in part on President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points," became operational, and programs and practices emerged to govern international conduct.

Besides calling for establishment of an international organization to enforce the peace, Wilson's "Fourteen Points" dealt with the disposition of colonial claims, a large and critical aspect of the war. Point V, which went some way toward establishing the principle of self-determination, called for: "A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined." (This was a most interesting position taken by a president who resegregated the federal capital city, but that is another matter.)

In the charter of the League of Nations, Wilson's Point V was

translated into a system in which direct colonial control was supplanted by “mandates” to “tutor” former colonial territories inhabited by “peoples not yet able to stand by themselves.” Thus, Article 22 of the League’s charter states: “To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.

“The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.”

Against this background, Ralph Bunche, now 20 years old, undertook the study of political and social science, international relations and Africa. After graduating from UCLA in 1927, he was off to Harvard, where he received an M.A. in political science in 1928. He then wrote to William E.B. Dubois at Howard University, requesting help in finding an opportunity to perform social service for “his people” before continuing doctoral studies at Harvard. He was appointed an instructor and assistant professor at Howard in 1928 and established Howard University’s Political Science Department that year, serving as its chairman until 1944.

Bunche was awarded the Osias Goodwin Fellowship at Harvard to pursue his doctorate in government and international relations, which he completed in 1934. The first Black man to earn a political science doctorate from an American university, he was awarded the Toppan Prize for outstanding research in social studies.

Studying Colonialism in Africa

Bunche’s Ph.D. dissertation, “French Administration in Togoland and Dahomey,” was a comparative analysis of how colonized people fared under direct French colonialism (Dahomey) and under the League of Nations’ mandate system (Togoland, a German colony from 1884, was split in half under the Treaty of Versailles, with half becoming a French mandate and half a British mandate). Bunche developed a comparative research design to test whether the military, educational and native policies were

To understand the principle of self-determination is to understand Ralph Bunche’s later work as chief of the United Nations Trusteeship Division.

better in one system than the other, and he traveled to Europe and Africa to conduct research and gather data on French administration in the two settings.

Bunche pored over data in colonial archives in Paris and London but also collected data on the ground in Africa. He argued that the most valid data were the native populations’ own perceptions of their welfare under the two systems. As he wrote in his thesis, he found no significant difference between the two systems: “To the Togolese, the French in Togo are merely some more colonial administrators with a new and strange language and a knack for collecting taxes. In truth, this new status means little to them now and will continue so for many years.”

Bunche’s views, vividly reflected in his thesis, were remarkably like the anticolonial sentiments of the times. In *A World View of Race*, a monograph written in 1936 to amplify the conclusions of his doctoral research, Bunche observes: “Approximately one-third of the human race is directly subject to imperialist domination. ... The so-called backward peoples would hold no attraction for the advanced peoples if they possessed no human or material resources which are needed by the industrial nations.” As the colonial regimes he investigated closely demonstrate, he argues, the many completely unscientific theories of racial superiority and inferiority are employed to maintain a social and economic structure in which privilege and wealth is enjoyed by the few.

As Larry Finkelstein has noted, Bunche argues that race did not explain imperialism, but had rather been “a convenient device for the imperialist.” Bunche believed that greed was the predominant motive of imperialism, and that colonialism and imperialism were pure manifestations of racism. He was acutely aware of this deep down: It was borne out personally to him as a Negro (a label that he proudly bore) and a direct target of racism, among other instances, when Secretary of State Cordell Hull had to intervene to unblock permission for Bunche to visit South Africa on scholarly business—permission that had, until then, been denied him.

No decision was formally made to authorize the U.S. delegation to introduce the document Bunche had so diligently drafted en route to San Francisco.

Bunche's conclusion that the real goals of colonialism were economic in motivation and had nothing to do with "people not yet able to stand by themselves" (as per League of Nations Article 22) strengthened his belief that self-determination was the only legitimate standard for government of the colonial African countries. In his view, colonialism could never meet that standard unless the people of a colony, themselves, chose a colonial regime as an act of "self-determination."

As Bunche said in a 1942 talk at the Institute of Pacific Relations conference in Mont-Tremblant, Quebec: "Schemes of international organizations ... these are all means and not ends. ... The real objective must always be the good life for all of the people ... peace, bread, a house, adequate clothing, education, good health,

and above all, the right to walk with dignity on the world's great boulevards."

To understand the principle of self-determination is to understand Ralph Bunche's later work as chief of the United Nations Trusteeship Division. There, he would oversee the establishment of the U.N. Trusteeship Council and guide the work of the Fourth Committee, which was responsible for decolonization matters.

At the State Department

There was one more important step in Ralph Bunche's journey to the United Nations. In 1945, he joined the State Department as associate chief of the Division of Dependent Area Affairs, appointed in a professional position to advise and participate with the U.S. delegation in the design of the trusteeship mandates within the U.N. Charter. This was precisely where Bunche's preparation and expertise lay, as Larry Finkelstein has said so eloquently. But as a junior officer dealing with decisions about post-World War II territories and colonial mandates that had already been made, he had two arms and a leg tied from the start.

The British had been adamant about this issue, so there were firm "understandings" on their role. And there was intermittent warfare going on with the War Office (Department of the Army) and Department of Navy on what to do with the post-World War

II South Pacific territories, on which there would be absolutely no movement for the sake of preserving forward military bases. So, in a few words, not only did he not have a blank check, he had no blank slate on which to write.

Though serving in a relatively junior position, he nonetheless had an unusual opportunity as a young diplomat to play a part in stirring events. During Bunche's first months at State, his immediate supervisor, Benjamin Gerig, attended most of the policymaking meetings. But Bunche served as "assignment secretary" with the American delegation to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944, where a draft of the United Nations Charter was agreed on.

This insider experience served Bunche well for later positions of responsibility undertaking more challenging roles in the absence of his overtaken supervisor, Gerig. Here Bunche's competence began making its mark, starting with the negotiations between the State and Interior Departments, on the one hand, and



Ralph J. Bunche of the U.N. Secretariat (at right) and Benjamin Gerig of the United States (at left) discuss a point at a meeting of a subcommittee of the United Nations' Fourth Committee (the Special Political and Decolonization Committee of the U.N. General Assembly), on Dec. 4, 1946, in Lake Success, New York. Both were members of the Fourth Committee.

the War and Navy Departments, on the other, over whether the United States would make a trusteeship proposal at the San Francisco Conference.

By the time that Bunche took his job at State, official U.S. policy was that trusteeships should be designed to deal with colonial territories that had been under League of Nations mandate, as well as those taken from Axis powers in the war. The American plan did allow for a small, albeit not very effective, proviso for extension of the trusteeship system to other territories placed under it voluntarily by the powers administering them. But many “non-self-governing” territories remained in the hands of colonial powers.

Bunche slowly became more involved in high-level decisions. He was listed among the State Department officials who participated in the ad hoc group dedicated to the International Committee on Dependent Area Aspects of International Organization to deal with Cabinet-level disagreement. And he was one of a small group sent to the April-June 1945 San Francisco UNCTO Conference to negotiate and coordinate a proposal. According to Larry Finkelstein, Bunche basically wrote the draft single-handedly on the train to San Francisco. In the end, it was not Ralph Bunche but rather his boss Benjamin Gerig who was credited with creating the arrangements for non-self-governing territories.

An Architect of the United Nations

Of course, the story does not end here, in that no decision was formally made to authorize the U.S. delegation to introduce the document Bunche had so diligently drafted en route to San Francisco. The British provided an opening, and the Australians took the initiative to save the day. The U.N. Charter’s Chapter XI is titled “Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories.” This chapter, which deals with colonial territories not included in the trusteeship system, is based on a weak draft on trusteeship made by the British delegation, designed to counter the stronger American draft. The draft used language from Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant.

The Australians had been working on colonial issues during the war, and their views were closer to those of the Bunche draft. Bunche took advantage of the opportunity and informally passed a copy of the draft U.S. declaration to his Australian counterpart. The Australians drew on it and introduced an amendment to the British proposal, which became Article 73 of the charter, directing colonial administrations to, among other things, “develop self-government” and “take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples.” As Larry Finkelstein has

The precedents set by Bunche in the design and functioning of the United Nations trusteeship system ... decisively advanced the process of decolonization around the world.

said, “If Bunche cannot claim paternity, he at least attended at the *accouchment*.”

A second opportunity for U.S. contribution to a strong United Nations presented itself on Labor Day weekend in 1945 when the new Secretary of State, James Byrnes, was at sea en route to the first Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in London. He needed information on how to deal with the Italian territories after the end of the war. Bunche quickly rounded up Larry Finkelstein and Thomas F. Power. Under Bunche’s direction, a plan was drawn up, but the Council of Foreign Ministers had already precooked a policy position. Some years later, the Philippine delegation successfully introduced a plan that was amazingly like the earlier American delegation’s proposal.

There is little doubt that the precedents set by Bunche in the design and functioning of the United Nations trusteeship system, with objectives that included eventual independence, decisively advanced the process of decolonization around the world.

As a government officer dealing with colonialism and mandate matters during World War II, Ralph Bunche established a reputation that paved the way for his recruitment into the United Nations after the war. The service that would win him world renown, as mediator in Palestine and as United Nations peacemaker extraordinaire, resulted from his appointment to the U.N. Secretariat in the spring of 1946 as head of the Trusteeship Division. The State Department circle was completed with the assignment of Larry Finkelstein to that same U.N. division with Bunche, and the assignment some years later of another young State Department diplomat, Ambassador Terence A. Todman.

Ralph J. Bunche skillfully moved from the challenge of the epoch, trusteeship, to the threat of the period, conflict resolution—making the transition from the post-World War I territorial issues to the post-World War II peacekeeping contributions. He is rightfully accorded the signature recognition of an accomplished United Nations architect. ■

BRINGING ORDER OUT OF CRISIS

Behind the Scenes of a Task Force

Seen through the lens of perhaps the greatest crisis response effort ever—the 2020 Repatriation Task Force—this look into how the State Department organizes emergency responses is an eye-opener.

BY CHRIS MEADE, HOLLY ADAMSON, MERLYN SCHULTZ AND FANY COLON DE HAYES

Like everyone else in the world, we in the State Department Operations Center’s Office of Crisis Management and Strategy are asking ourselves: “What’s next, 2020?”

Since Dec. 31, 2019, CMS has established, managed and contributed our diverse professional expertise to four 24/7 task forces: the first one to respond to violence in the Middle East and the next three to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. These task forces harnessed State’s collective expertise to ensure an efficient and successful response.

As of June 5, more than 102,000 Americans had been repatriated with State Department assistance on more than 1,100 flights

from more than 139 countries. Even considering our massive evacuation conducted in World War II, this State Department-led, whole-of-government effort was unprecedented. For many Americans, it was their first exposure to the State Department, and we’re proud that so many citizens were able to see the tireless energy, commitment and courage of the countless diplomats across the world who worked to get them home. It was an opportunity for State employees to view the department differently, too, by working directly with a task force and seeing firsthand the global effort that ensured the full U.S. government rose to a historic challenge.

This article pulls back the curtain on CMS’ role managing crises through the prism of this extraordinary year. For CMS,



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Merlyn Schultz is a watch officer in the State Department Operations Center. She joined the Foreign Service in 2011 and has served in Mexico, Cameroon and Costa Rica.



Holly Adamson is a crisis management officer with CMS. She joined the Foreign Service in 2009 and switched to Civil Service in 2019. She has served in Conakry, Tel Aviv, Bangui, on the Line and with the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources.



Major Fany Colon de Hayes is a crisis management officer with CMS. She joined the U.S. Air Force in 1997 and currently serves as a Political and Strategic Fellow. She has served in Cuba, Colombia, Germany, Portugal and Qatar.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Repatriation Task Force created this infographic for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s presentation at the April 8 White House Coronavirus press briefing. As it shows, between Jan. 29 and April 8 the task force brought more than 50,000 Americans home from more than 90 countries around the world in an unprecedented effort that involved more than 480 flights.

the real story is how we’re able to bring together hundreds of officers—representing more than 130 posts and 30 bureaus and offices—to overcome unexpected technological, logistical and diplomatic obstacles to ensure a strong department response and bring Americans home.

This is a story of thousands of partners, operating around the clock in every time zone in dozens of locations, with information moving at light speed.

When CMS Calls: Activating the Task Force

The story began in 1976 in a windowless office on the State Department’s 7th floor. Established as an office within the Operations Center, CMS had three officers who transcribed conversations of senior principals discussing how to manage emergent crises. Since then, CMS has grown while taking on new responsibilities in response to crises like the 1998 embassy bombings in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, 9/11 and Benghazi. Today’s 20-person office is nearly equally split between Foreign Service officers and civil servants.

Strategically located down the hall from the Secretary of State on the 7th floor of the Harry S Truman building, CMS works at the intersection of policy and operations to develop contingency plans ahead of a crisis and mobilize a response if one is needed. Working with the Watch (our 24/7 counterparts in the Operations Center), we alert senior principals in real time to breaking news events.

CMS is perhaps best known for establishing and coordinating the department’s task forces, which are activated when a crisis exceeds the ability of an individual post or a bureau to respond.

This is a story of thousands of partners, operating around the clock in every time zone in dozens of locations, with information moving at light speed.

With the support of the director of the Operations Center and in conjunction with the lead bureau affected by the crisis, CMS then recommends to the executive secretary that a task force is needed to respond effectively. CMS has already done the legwork to make sure that a task force will be operational within 60 minutes of a decision. Once approved, CMS activates subject-matter experts from the department and the interagency to work together, side by side, for a rapid, synchronized and comprehensive response.

That task force then serves as the department’s central coordination and information hub, synthesizing situational and operational developments to solve problems, alert and brief senior-level decision-makers and deploy resources in real time.

2020 in Perspective

By all accounts, 2020 has been an exceptional year. We typically activate between one and five task forces a year. But well before this year was half over, we had already stood up four back-to-back task forces—the last one under unprecedented circumstances.



The Wuhan Task Force in action in early February. Clockwise from left to right: Alex Dunoye, Vietnam desk officer; Roger Burton, Crisis Action Team Director, Department of Homeland Security National Operations Center; Sarah Nelson, Consular Section Chief, Consulate General Wuhan; Pamela Kuemmerle, Crisis Management Officer, State Department Operations Center, Office of Crisis Management and Strategy; Holly Adamson, Crisis Management; Rachel Okunubi, Watch Officer, State Department Operations Center; Lindsey Spector, EAP/PD; Michael Cullinan, Watch Officer, State Ops; Valentina Hart, Program Officer, DMD/OM/PM; Stephanie Smit, Branch Chief, Consular Affairs' Office of Citizen Services/Children's Issues; Nick Fietzer, Country Officer, CA Office of Citizen Services; and Rob Romanowski, Consular Officer, CA Office of Citizen Services.

On December 31, 2019, we stood up the Middle East Task Force in response to attacks against U.S. Embassy Baghdad and escalating Iranian aggression that threatened regional stability. Less than a day after that task force moved to on-call status on Jan. 23, we partnered with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs for the Wuhan Evacuation Task Force to evacuate our staff at U.S. Consulate General Wuhan and Americans trapped in China after the city was unexpectedly locked down to contain the novel coronavirus.

Within just days of standing down that second task force, we formed the Diamond Princess Evacuation Task Force to evacuate Americans from a cruise ship off the port of Yokohama, Japan. That, too, was a clearly focused mission with specific, measurable objectives.

Then came the biggest, most challenging task force of them all: the Repatriation Task Force. On March 19, with the worldwide spread of COVID-19 escalating and its acknowledgment as a pandemic by the World Health Organization, the Bureau of Consular Affairs and CMS jointly launched the Repatriation Task Force to facilitate the return of thousands of Americans stranded overseas across the world as a result of the widespread shutdown of commercial flights. As of June 24, this task force was in on-call status.

In 44 years of experience responding to crises throughout the world—including 125 evacuations during the last 10 years—the State Department's CMS had never faced a scenario where the same threat simultaneously affected our colleagues overseas as well as those charged with responding to it in Washington, D.C. That threat uniquely affected establishment of the Repatriation Task Force itself. To set it up, we had to transform the traditional model of a task force—namely, dozens of officers from different bureaus seated side by side to respond nimbly to ever-emerging

issues—into something completely new overnight: a complex “virtual task force.”

With more than 400 officers serving as part of the Repatriation Task Force, and tens of thousands of Americans across the world depending on us, we had to stand up and set into motion a virtual task force for the department without missing a beat. It required embracing some new tools quickly, such as information-sharing collaborative technologies and teleconferences, while rapidly creating new techniques to extend our ability to work together in real time from dispersed or far-flung environments.

Meeting Pandemic Challenges

At the heart of every task force, however, are the tools that each Operations Center officer brings to their job every day: the ability to work quickly, the willingness to adapt to new challenges effortlessly, and the tenacity to tackle some of the most difficult problems. We were able to pivot quickly, amid one of the highest-profile and most complex operational responses that State has ever executed, to implement previously untested tools and technologies while ensuring our vital work continued without interruption.

The effort was not unlike building an airplane in mid-flight. Though most volunteers worked from home, the task force was able to provide the same uninterrupted service and high-quality reporting CMS efforts are known for. CMS developed an on-demand training curriculum to efficiently prepare the more than 400 volunteers who helped the Repatriation Task Force to accomplish its mission.

CMS also created an operational planning team, consisting of the department's lead operational and logistics planners and regional and functional bureau representatives, to review requirements, expedite the identification of potential

Tips for Serving on a Task Force

- 1** *Stay calm and expect the unexpected.* Rephrasing Forrest Gump: “Task forces are like a box of chocolates—you never know what you’re going to get.”
- 2** *Do not use the word “quiet” when describing the task force’s operational tempo.* Vocalizing this observation during a task force might result in an unwelcome immediate uptick in activity.
- 3** *Sleep when you can.* Task forces can be taxing on your body; working 24/7 for months on end with 8- to 12-hour shifts takes a toll.
- 4** *The legendary “trough” is hard to resist despite your best intentions to maintain a nutritious diet.* You’ll find a spread of donuts, pizza, baked goods and refined sugars brought in by co-workers. Make sure you know when items were brought in to weed out expired treats!
- 5** *You will rise to the occasion!* It will be challenging; however, the reward will be one that you will always remember. A task force is an opportunity to live through history and carry out the Department of State’s core mission to protect and assist American citizens overseas.

—CM, HA, MS, FCdH

air assets and streamline the request for and approval of U.S. government funds to carry out repatriation missions. This new process—robust, replicable and transparent—reduced the approval time from days to a few short hours or even minutes, enabling multiple missions to be planned and executed in rapid succession.

COVID-19 also required outstanding and sustained inter-agency coordination, including collaboration with domestic agencies across multidimensional problems, some of whom are not State’s usual partners. Working with the Federal Aviation Administration, Transportation Security Administration and Customs and Border Protection, we facilitated more than 1,000 flights landing in the United States, while the Department of Health and Human Services and Federal Emergency Management Agency coordinated with state governors and local emergency management offices to receive evacuees. The Department of Defense hosted more than 800 evacuees from Wuhan and the *Diamond Princess*, in close collaboration

In 44 years of experience responding to crises, the State Department’s CMS had never faced a scenario where the same threat simultaneously affected our colleagues overseas as well as those charged with responding to it in Washington, D.C.

with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Insight into the complexity and unique challenges of the repatriation mission can be gained from considering what’s involved in flight clearances. During a Wuhan evacuation, hundreds of Americans were set to depart on our evacuation flight. After suddenly learning that a bureaucratic snafu—somewhere between Washington, Beijing and Wuhan—was about to derail the flight, with a customs approval spiraling into a flight clearance issue amid the cacophony of babies crying and officials arguing at increasing volume, the task force room grew anxious, and animated. As the minutes ticked down, our tarmac slot, with a plane full of Americans that needed to take off, was due to expire; the Washington Task Force then leapt into action. We rapidly identified senior government officials in China and D.C., initiated contingency and escalation scenarios, and began putting a new plan—and calls at the highest level—into motion.

In the end, the situation was luckily sorted on the ground after intervention from U.S. Embassy Beijing. For us in Washington, clustered on the 7th floor and in teleconferences in operations centers and points across the city, it was a moment of high tension and drama that demonstrated how vital it was to have medical, logistical, diplomatic and operational experts seated side by side, when minutes matter and outcomes are on the line. The Repatriation Task Force marshaled and coordinated this effort, continually synchronizing with interagency partners, governments, medical professionals and others to ensure a seamless, whole-of-government response in real time. Many task forces aren’t quite this pressurized—but, increasingly, many are, with moments made difficult by virtue of multidimensional or multi-geographic complexity that demand cohesion and performance from the department and the interagency.

Given the global scope of the operation, CMS had to rapidly establish a worldwide process to collect and synthesize data.

Big Problems, Big Data and More

As COVID-19 spread, conditions changed quickly across the globe—new restrictions and closures were imposed by national governments, airports suspended operations and borders were tightened. The data multiplied fast, as did demands for that information by senior leadership, the interagency and posts worldwide. Effectively mobilizing resources—not to mention getting people to the right place at the right time, or just in time—hinged on the department’s ability to see the world swiftly, accurately and comprehensively.

Given the global scope of the operation, CMS had to rapidly establish a worldwide process to collect and synthesize data. To do this, we collaborated with the Under Secretary for Management’s Office of Management Strategy and Solutions (M/SS) to create the COVID-19 Data Analytics Team (CDAT), which would serve as the department’s central hub for all coronavirus-related data. CMS and CDAT worked closely to help decision-makers understand where progress was made and determine where resources should be deployed next.

This common operating picture ensured we could coordinate flight missions on a short timeline to meet demand. With thousands stuck overseas, some with serious health conditions, striking a balance among posts with extraordinarily high demand and our responsibility to smaller posts was tough. Despite the challenges from reduced staffing and suspended operations, embassies and consulates worked tirelessly with the task force to ensure all Americans who needed repatriation assistance were helped.

On a daily basis, the Repatriation Task Force managed the equivalent of diplomatic gymnastics—gaining flight clearances and maneuvering through locked-down borders, coordinating transport out of remote locations, and keeping track of fluid travel restrictions—in lockstep coordination with officers from around the world.

Identifying and relieving bottlenecks in the process of getting Americans home was a constant challenge, especially in the beginning. On one particular task force shift, department logisticians requested help from U.S. commercial airlines for flights from Peru, which closed its borders with little notice. Thousands of Americans saw their return flights canceled and sought repatria-

tion while thousands more Peruvians in the United States wished to return. Meanwhile, private citizens from both countries, along with multiple authorities within the U.S. and Peruvian governments, overwhelmed commercial airlines with requests for information. The task force sought high-level department intervention to harmonize efforts toward a common solution.

Better Prepared to Face Future Challenges

Task forces serve as incubators of best practices and better prepare the State Department for future crises. For instance, from the response to H1N1 and Ebola in 2014, we learned that a pandemic response is often a long-term endeavor that requires a focused engagement that cannot be managed by people still performing their original day jobs; it must extend beyond the operational scope of a task force. In 2020 we acted on those lessons, quickly recognizing that our international response to the coronavirus would need a full-scale coordinated diplomatic, consular, scientific and political response and recovery. CMS proposed and established the Coronavirus Global Response Coordination Unit as a standalone office responsible for the department’s long-term policy and COVID-19 coordination efforts.

As State’s institutional repository of crisis practices, CMS, partnering with M/SS, has already begun convening stakeholders across the building, our embassies and consulates, and the interagency to identify which innovations, systems and approaches pioneered during the COVID-19 response can be carried into the future.

Task forces also build expertise and relationships. Before 2020, many diplomats may never have directly confronted or responded to a crisis in their respective countries, nor had so much of Washington ever collaborated so widely and extensively at the same time. As the department’s crisis management experts, we’ve witnessed the transformative impact of that. Now, more than ever before, new muscle memory has been formed, shared and spread globally across dozens of bureaus, offices and posts. The relationships built, tested and reinforced over the past several months within the department, through the interagency, across Capitol Hill and among hundreds of partners and governments, will benefit the American people for generations.

Those of us in CMS know the department learns invaluable lessons from each crisis we face. We emerge stronger, better prepared and more ready. Responding to the inevitable crises that will emerge over the next year and decade will require not only everything we’ve learned so far, but more. We know our work over the last year, and the 44 years before it, has helped ensure that the department can meet the challenges of tomorrow. We can all be proud of that. ■

AFSA Hosts Town Hall Series on COVID-19, Diversity

With the goal of addressing member concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and diversity issues, AFSA held a series of five virtual town hall meetings in late June and early July. Following are excerpts of AFSA President Eric Rubin's remarks during the meetings.

I wanted to reach out to you today to let you know that AFSA is with you as you are dealing with so much uncertainty and so many unsettling developments in your Foreign Service lives at this moment.

Our nation is in an unprecedented situation. The COVID-19 global pandemic has disrupted all our lives, both personally and professionally.

And now, we bear witness to the understandable sadness and rage over yet more unnecessary deaths of African Americans—George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and so many others.

As American diplomats, it is our job to explain America to the world. We have always pointed to our story as being worthy of emulation. But in these times, we have been forcefully reminded that we still have a long way to go as a nation.

Where AFSA Stands on Racism and Discrimination

We have heard from many within the Foreign Service

We have recommended to State management that “inclusion promotion” be part of the Employee Evaluation Report core precepts, which will be renegotiated with AFSA in 2021.

—AFSA President Eric Rubin

community about their own experiences with discrimination and systemic racism, both within and outside of our agencies.

AFSA's history on these issues is checkered. However, we have done much better in recent years to advocate for the Foreign Service Act's mandate for “entry into and advancement in the Foreign Service by persons from all segments of American society.”

Today AFSA is strongly devoted to equality and diversity in all aspects. We push the management of all foreign affairs agencies to do more and to do better.

We have worked to address unconscious bias and will continue to raise the issue, especially when it comes to bidding. We have strong and long-standing relationships with minority employee affinity groups.

We have recommended to State management that “inclusion promotion” be part of the Employee Evaluation Report core precepts, which will be renegotiated with AFSA in 2021.

I am proud of this work and we will make sure AFSA helps push our agencies toward a more representative Foreign Service, especially at the senior levels.

We are concerned about what we are hearing of resignations of Foreign Service members who did not think it was worth staying in.

If you are discouraged, please reach out to us. If you feel that you have been treated unfairly, please let us know. We don't want Foreign Service talent to walk out the door if we can do something to stop it.

AFSA's Current Priorities: COVID-related Concerns

More than 1,800 of you responded to AFSA's recent survey on agency and post action regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we have heard from members directly in our structured conversations and in emails you have sent to us on issues related to the pandemic.

Your concerns in the survey focused overwhelmingly on

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CALENDAR

Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please check www.afsa.org for the most up-to-date information. All events are subject to cancellation and/or rescheduling.

September 7
Labor Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

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

September 18:
CANCELED
Fifth Annual
Foreign Service Night
at Nationals Park

September 22
1-2 p.m.
Virtual Panel
“Foreign Service
on the Front Lines:
Bringing Americans Home”
Co-hosted with National
Museum of American
Diplomacy

October 14
4-6 p.m.
Tentative: Annual AFSA
Awards Ceremony

October 19
Columbus Day:
AFSA Offices Closed

October 21
12-2 p.m.
AFSA Governing
Board Meeting



Diversity and Inclusion: The Time to Act Is Now

The murder of George Floyd and the many other disturbing examples of police violence against people of color have awakened a renewed desire in our country to address the continuing legacy of racial and social injustice.

This tragic event has also provided new impetus for looking at the issues of racial bias, diversity and inclusion in the department with an eye toward concrete action. The result we all want is a department that truly reflects the rich diversity of America, where no one feels left out or less than valued.

Possible Ideas...

AFSA is closely following the ideas that people are bringing forward on what can be done to promote diversity at State.

Recent congressional testimony by two former ambassadors, as well as initiatives from the employee affinity groups Blacks in Government, Pickering and Rangel Fellows Association, and Thursday Lunch Group have set forth several proposals worthy of discussion and consideration.

- Mandate the inclusion of, or at least more thoroughly utilize, the representatives of the 14 employee affinity groups (EAGs) in formulating promotion precepts, and use these groups as a sounding board for future initiatives on diversity and inclusion of minorities

and women, particularly in and into the senior ranks.

- Include more minorities on the assessment boards and promotion panels.

- Add “advancing diversity inclusion” to the highest level of core competencies for supervising officers, and make it an absolute requirement for promotion (at FS-2 and above).

- Require the department to ensure accurate understanding of how all the fellowships work, especially Pickering and Rangel Fellowships, which should improve the standing of the fellows in the department.

- Formalize a leadership program for FS-3 employees of color, administered by FSI, to provide career guidance and hone their managerial and supervisory skills. Doing so might create a stronger pipeline of officers who are prepared for future chief of mission and DCM positions.

... That Need Careful Vetting

AFSA is working with the Bureau of Global Talent Management, EAGs, Congress and other stakeholders to make sure these and other ideas are carefully vetted, including for any negative unintended consequences.

One idea that has gained some traction in Congress is to establish a mid-level entry program at the FS-3 to FS-1 levels for members of minority communities. While the good

intention is to rectify the clear retention problems that the department has with African-American FSOs, in particular, having that new intake would likely create even more of a bulge at the mid-level than is currently the case.

What might make more sense is to expand the Pickering and Rangel Fellows programs, which have proven themselves over the course of time.

Another way to attract underrepresented communities to the Foreign Service might be to have paid summer internships generally for college and graduate students at our embassies abroad and at Main State. Right now, these internships are unpaid and, as such, tend to cater to students who do not have to earn money during the summer.

AFSA Initiatives

Aside from assessing the creative ideas that are out there at present, AFSA has taken the following initiatives:

Racial bias survey.

In mid-July we sent out a survey to all our members asking them to let us know if they had been the subject of racial (or other) discrimination. The *Journal* will report on the survey in October.

Gender and Race/Ethnicity-Neutral EERs. For some time, AFSA has argued in favor of Employee Evaluation Reports that are not identifiable by name or

gender to lessen the chance for unintended bias. We know that this can work because the pilot MSI awards process now uses this format.

Core Precepts and Procedural Precepts. The Core Precepts are reviewed every three years and are familiar to those who have gone through the employee evaluation review (EER) process. The Procedural Precepts govern the work of the Foreign Service selection boards and are negotiated annually with AFSA. We will push for strong diversity and inclusion indicators in both precepts.

Revamping the exit interview process. For too long the exit interview was not taken seriously—either by the department or by employees—and the questions themselves were too broad to yield any significant data.

At AFSA's urging, the department revamped the process in April to include more specific questions that could shed light on, for example, why mid-level FSOs of color appear to be leaving the Foreign Service (see 20 STATE 40554).

We expect to see the first results of this department-level data quarterly beginning in the fourth quarter of 2020.

Supporting Pickering and Rangel Fellows. We have advocated greater flexibility on the part of the department to provide for the needs of Pickering and Rangel Fellows.

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The (GAO) Report Is In on Diversity at USAID

On June 23, the Government Accountability Office published its report on USAID and diversity.

With the (not) catchy title, “USAID: Mixed Progress in Increasing Diversity, and Actions Needed to Consistently Meet EEO Requirements,” the 160-page report looks at USAID’s diversity numbers over the years, and calls out the agency on the historical and real challenges facing its Office of Civil Rights and Diversity.

The report is a good read, and I encourage all to take a look. I want to share some reactions to it and point to a few relatively fast actions the agency might take.

A word on the scope. The report looked at USAID’s permanent workforce in Fiscal Years 2002 through 2018 by racial or ethnic group and by gender. Data and analysis include differences between promotion outcomes and the extent to which USAID has identified workforce diversity issues and addressed them.

The report does a nice job of separately analyzing the Foreign Service (1,689 employees) and Civil Service (1,313 employees).

Formal findings focus primarily on the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity. OCRD is the agency’s locus for awareness and guidance on equal employment opportunity, diversity, inclusion and reasonable accommodations.

The report points to the

historic staffing shortages in that office, noting: “Vacancy rates in most OCRD divisions were 50 percent or higher in November 2019 and, despite attempts to hire more staff, remained at 30 to 50 percent as of April 2020.”

It further notes that “a lack of senior USAID leadership attention to diversity” is one contributor to these staffing shortages. In sum: “Without the capacity to perform self-analysis, USAID is unable to proactively identify and address barriers to diversity in its workforce.”

To its credit, USAID agreed with the findings, and is allocating additional resources to OCRD. On a personal note, in my time as AFSA VP, I have worked with the outstanding OCRD leadership team and staff and am hopeful we will see a true OCRD renaissance.

Data analysis reveals some interesting findings on diversity, particularly in the FS:

- From FY2002 to FY2018, the proportion of racial or ethnic minorities among USAID’s full-time, permanent, career employees increased from 33 to 37 percent. Breaking it out, this proportion in the CS decreased slightly, from 49 to 48 percent; the proportion in the FS increased from 18 to 27 percent.

- During the same period, the proportion of women at USAID increased from 51 to

54 percent, higher than in the federal workforce overall. Specifically, the proportion in the CS decreased from 66 percent to 61 percent, while the proportion in the FS increased from 38 percent to 49 percent.

- The proportion of African Americans and Asian Americans was higher at USAID in FY2018 than in the federal workforce in FY2017, but the proportion of Hispanic Americans was lower at USAID than in the federal workforce for those years.

On promotion analysis, it gets a bit complicated. The report conducts both a descriptive analysis and an adjusted analysis (that accounted for individual and occupational factors other than racial or ethnic minority status and gender that could influence promotion).

- For USAID’s Foreign Service, the rate of promotion was generally lower for racial or ethnic minorities than for whites. The adjusted analysis also found differences between the promotion rates for racial or ethnic minorities and those for whites that were statistically significant for promotions from Class 3 to Class 2 but not statistically significant for promotions from Class 4 to 3, from Class 2 to 1, or from Class 1 to the executive rank.

From FY2013 through 2017, promotion rates for white FS employees exceeded those for racial or

ethnic minority employees for promotions from Class 4 and higher ranks for 11 of the 20 possible year-rank combinations. In that same period, men were promoted at higher rates than women from Class 4 and higher ranks for 12 of the 20 possible year-rank combinations.

- Analyses of USAID data on promotions in FY2002 through FY2017 also found differences between promotion outcomes for women relative to men, but these differences were generally not statistically significant.

There are some shortcomings to the report. It does not explore the causes behind promotion differences or diversity stats. Nor does it analyze the demographics of the agency’s more than 1,000 personal service contractors or more than 1,600 institutional support contractor or Foreign Service Limited colleagues.

Further, the report does not analyze the numbers and percentages of employees with disabilities.

In addition, due to a lack of data, the report has no analysis related to sexual orientation.

There is no examination of compensation, although we know that within the FS and General Service structures there are disparities among the steps, even if employees are at the same rank.

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You Can't Really Ever Go Back, Only Forward...

Last November, I wrote about the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Commercial Service. This important milestone, however, is really about the modern U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service that we know today.

Our roots actually stretch back to the early 1900s. Trade specialists at U.S. Export Assistance Centers and our forebears at embassies and consulates overseas have been helping U.S. companies compete and win in foreign markets for more than 100 years.

In July, however, a bill to abolish the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service was introduced in the House of Representatives. The aim of the legislation is to move both the foreign and domestic parts of US&FCS from the Commerce Department to the State Department.

The legislation's unambiguous language "to abolish" was surprising; but that is, in effect, exactly what would happen if US&FCS were absorbed by the Bureau of Economic Affairs, which seems to be the thinking. That bureau, itself, is nearly six times the size of US&FCS.

Any merger, no matter how balanced or seemingly logical, is difficult. Unanticipated problems always come up, and opportunity costs are a real thing. These and other issues need to be thought through carefully and deliberately.

There's not enough space here to offer a comprehensive review of this proposed merger, but I think it's important to highlight why US&FCS and its forerunners have been rooted in the Commerce Department and not the State Department.

For the past 40 years, US&FCS has had a tightly focused mission. We help U.S. companies (especially small- and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs) export to foreign markets, and we work to attract job-creating foreign direct investment into the United States.

Our Foreign Commercial Service officers and locally employed staff abroad help thousands of companies each year gain access to new markets for their products and services. With offices in more than 75 countries, we cover territory that accounts for 95 percent of global GDP and 97 percent of all export markets for U.S. goods.

In the past three years, US&FCS has assisted more than 77,000 U.S. exporters (more than 90 percent of them SMEs), facilitated \$296 billion in U.S. exports and inward foreign direct investment, supported 1.3 million American jobs and returned more than \$300 to the U.S. economy for every \$1 appropriated to the agency.

Thanks to a metrics-driven culture, these numbers are verified and

Abolishing US&FCS and moving its functions to the State Department would push U.S. businesses into an agency traditionally focused on foreign policy and not necessarily trade.

submitted to the Office of Management and Budget on an annual basis. The figures more than justify our mission and truly represent outsized value for the American taxpayer.

One real danger of a merger would be confusion in the business community. Abolishing US&FCS and moving its functions to the State Department would push U.S. businesses into an agency traditionally focused on foreign policy and not necessarily trade.

The fact that the vast majority of the more than 1,500 economic-coned officers are not serving in economic positions overseas seems to demonstrate that trade is not a core priority of the State Department. The business community knows US&FCS well, and it knows the value the Commercial Service provides.

In fact, the number-one complaint we hear from the business community and even our chiefs of mission abroad is that there aren't enough Foreign Commercial Service officers. They want more! Not fewer.

The functions of a State Department economic officer and Commerce Department commercial officer are different but complementary. We often work together, but tackle problems from different angles.

At a very basic level, commercial officers will get a company into a market, kick down barriers and help establish partnerships on the ground. Economic officers will work the longer view of economic liberalization in those markets and push for high-level policy changes. It's a relationship that works on different levels but works well.

So, what will the future of trade promotion look like, notwithstanding this proposed legislation? That's a great question, and I think it's a conversation worth having. There's always room for improvement.

But whichever direction we go in, let's be sure to think it through. Above all, let's make sure our main stakeholder, the U.S. business community, is part of the conversation. ■

AFSA Congratulates Kennan Award Winners

Each year, AFSA is proud to present the George Kennan Writing Award to Foreign Service graduates of the National War College whose research projects and writing have demonstrated excellence throughout the year.

This year, the Kennan Writing Award was presented in a virtual ceremony on June 5 to two Foreign Service officers, Nancy Leou and Debra Mosel, both from the college's class of 2020.

Nancy Leou currently serves as deputy director of the Office of Korean Affairs in the State Department. Prior to her time at the National War College, she served as political and economic section chief at U.S. Consulate General Shanghai and as the director for China and Asian economic affairs at the National Security Council.

Leou has served at U.S. Embassy Beijing and the U.S. consulates in Hong Kong and Ho Chi Minh City. Her domestic assignments include South Korea unit chief in the Office of Korean Affairs, special assistant to the under secretary for political affairs and staff assistant to the assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

She received her bachelor's degree in history and Asian studies from the University of California, Berkeley. She holds master's degrees from Georgetown University (international relations) and

the National War College (national security studies). She and her husband, Ethan, have two children.

Nancy Leou's thesis, "Promoting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific Region Through a Strong U.S.-India Partnership," argues that China's expansionist policies are harmful to both the United States and India.

"My year at the National War College was wonderful," Leou says. "I am so appreciative of the opportunity I had to study with some of the leading strategic thinkers on national security. As an FSO and an AFSA member, it was especially meaningful to receive the Kennan Writing Award."

Debra Mosel is a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development. Her next assignment is as deputy mission director for Sri Lanka and Maldives. She has also served as director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Operations in the Middle East Bureau and as director of the USAID program offices in Zambia, Namibia and Romania.

Before joining the Foreign Service in 2000, Mosel worked as a personal services contractor for USAID in the Caucasus and Washington, D.C. Earlier, she was a Peace Corps volunteer in the Czech Republic and worked in the private sector in California.



Nancy Leou



Debra Mosel

The award is named for George F. Kennan, who was the first Deputy Commandant of the National War College, where he wrote his famous 1947 article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." AFSA is proud to recognize the important skill of excellent writing, in the tradition of Mr. Kennan.

Originally from Louisville, Kentucky, Debra earned her bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of Delaware and her MBA from the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Her National War College thesis, "Decreasing Migration from Central America to the United States through Addressing Violence against Women and Children," establishes violence against women and children as a key factor driving immigration.

In the paper, she argues that restarting bilateral assistance to countries in need, creating ways to measure protection from violence and establishing a new body of international law would

ultimately lead to a reduction in illegal migration.

Congratulations to Nancy and Debra! They join the 15 previous awardees recognized since the inception of the Kennan Award in 2004. They each also receive a \$1,000 award.

The award is named for George F. Kennan, who was the first Deputy Commandant of the National War College, where he wrote his famous 1947 article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." AFSA is proud to recognize the important skill of excellent writing, in the tradition of Mr. Kennan.

To learn more about the Kennan Award and other AFSA awards, visit afsa.org/awards. ■

FSJ Wins Two TRENDY Awards for Publishing Excellence

At the July 8 Association TRENDS 41st annual “Salute to Association Excellence,” *The Foreign Service Journal* received two TRENDY awards for publishing excellence.

The *FSJ* earned a Silver in the “Commemoration/Tribute” category for the November 2019 edition’s focus on the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The issue featured firsthand accounts by nearly 50 members of the Foreign Service community about the sweeping changes brought about by the fall of the Berlin Wall, as well as longer articles by AFSA President Ambassador Eric Rubin, Ambassador (ret.)

J.D. Bindenagel and retired FSO Louis Sell. Almost all of the authors were involved directly in the events.

The *FSJ* also earned a Bronze in the “Monthly Professional Society” category for its May 2019 issue, which looked at the Foreign Service as a career, and discussed the challenges and lessons that come with this complicated, difficult and exciting life of public service.

The issue featured an interview with William Burns and several articles on the topic, including “Role Models—Lessons for Today from AFSA’s Past” by Harry Kopp; “Serving in Tandem for State” by Kathryn Fitrell and



The May 2019 *FSJ*.

Kanishka Gangopadhyay; “Treating PTSD” by James Eusanio; “My Parkinson’s Story—Managing Medical Challenges in the FS” by Paul Rohrligh; “Dual Identity and Diplomacy” by Sandya Das; “From Generation to Generation” by Alexis Ludwig; and “If You Mess Up, Fess Up” by



The November 2019 *FSJ*.

Jonathan Rickert.

The annual Association TRENDS event is ordinarily attended by more than 500 association professionals to honor stars within the association community. This year, due to the pandemic, the ceremony was held virtually. ■

How LWOP Affects Your AFSA Membership

Since the State Department changed regulations on taking leave without pay (LWOP), AFSA has seen an increased number of employees taking advantage of this option.

AFSA has advocated for making LWOP easily available to employees, but we want to make sure that all members understand what LWOP means for their AFSA membership.

When your LWOP begins, your AFSA membership will end almost immediately if you have selected the payroll dues deduction option, something that more than

90 percent of members do. This means that all AFSA membership benefits will end as well—including the daily media digest, *The Foreign Service Journal* and access to labor management lawyers and counselors.

When you alert AFSA that you are going on LWOP, we will offer the option of temporarily switching to annual payments via credit card or check. This will ensure that a person on LWOP will remain an AFSA member in good standing. Once returning from LWOP, switching back to payroll deductions

is easy, and membership will continue without interruption.

Why is this important? There are many reasons, including that only members in good standing may participate in AFSA Governing Board elections as either candidates or voters. But most importantly, it ensures that a member will always have access to our labor management staff for advice and counseling.

Some years ago, the AFSA Governing Board clarified rules on AFSA labor management assistance to make it clear that only

individuals who have been AFSA members for the previous six months are able to request such assistance.

An interruption in membership during LWOP might therefore make it challenging for a member who rejoins the rolls following LWOP to seek labor management assistance until six months after his or her return.

If you are considering the LWOP option, please contact AFSA at member@afsa.org to let us know and request assistance in switching to annual payments during your absence. ■

AFSA Seeks Your Help with Outreach Efforts

The Foreign Service plays a critical role in our national security. AFSA's 2020 public outreach campaign aims to reach new audiences with this message to broaden the domestic constituency for the Foreign Service.

The theme of the campaign, the Foreign Service as our "First Line of Defense," should resonate with many Americans in these uncertain times.

On Sept. 22 we will co-host a virtual panel, "Foreign Service on the Front Lines: Bringing Americans Home," with the National Museum of American Diplomacy. The panel will feature Foreign Service members who worked on the front lines to evacuate Americans during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. The panel will demonstrate the work and commitment of members of the Foreign Service during a crisis of unprecedented magnitude.

The Sept. 22 panel will be hosted on NMAD's Diplomacy Classroom platform for digital programs beginning at 1 p.m. EST. With this program, we hope to reach new, younger audiences from universities and community colleges who are not familiar with the work of the Foreign Service. AFSA will provide information on how to join the panel in early September.

This virtual event marks the official start of our pub-

lic outreach efforts. But we still have plenty of work to do in advance of this public launch. We want to make sure that you, our members and messengers, are engaged with this campaign and have all the tools you need to be successful.

As we stated in the July/August issue of the *Journal*, we had to delay the official launch of the campaign because of the new realities

of the pandemic. But we did not stop telling the story of the Foreign Service's role in protecting Americans.

AFSA has been working diligently to gather and share the stories of the Foreign Service response to the spread of coronavirus around the world. Read the pandemic diplomacy stories in the July/August issue of the *Journal*; listen to the American Diplomat podcast "Get Me Out of Here!" at bit.ly/get-me-out-of-here. And visit afsa.org/videos to watch our new short video on the COVID response.

We also have been gathering stories of the various and complex ways that the Foreign Service protects Americans. To that end, we have collaborated on a podcast about the critical

We need your help, especially our retired members in your home communities, to achieve our goal of reaching new audiences across the United States.

role of the Foreign Service in cybersecurity, available at amdipstories.org.

We have also fleshed out our materials, collected examples of the Foreign Service as the first line of

you can get involved. If you haven't yet signed up, please do so by contacting Nadja Ruzica at ruzica@afsa.org. We will go over the key objectives of this campaign and walk you through all the available tools, including the virtual platforms we will use.

We need your help, especially our retired members in your home communities, to achieve our goal of reaching new audiences across the United States and to ensure broader support for the Foreign Service. This is always a worthy endeavor, but it is especially important in the current climate. ■

defense, tested our messaging and collaborated with partners on ways to reach new audiences.

Our membership activation webinar describes the campaign and details how

U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE The First Line of Defense

Things you can do:

- Join the roster of messengers by contacting Nadja Ruzica at ruzica@afsa.org.
- Familiarize yourself with the materials on our member page at afsa.org/first-line-defense.
- Reach out to your local community college and other community organizations to explore virtual opportunities to share AFSA's message.
- Follow AFSA on social media and share the tweets and posts with your community, friends and family.

This Is Not Your Father's DACOR

BY JOHN BRADSHAW

John Bradshaw, a former Foreign Service officer, is executive director of DACOR. He earlier worked as a think tank executive and Capitol Hill staffer.

Many *Foreign Service Journal* readers have heard of DACOR, but some may have an outdated view of the organization and may not be aware of all the changes at DACOR in recent years.

Myth: DACOR is an organization only for retired Foreign Service officers.

Fact: All foreign affairs professionals, retired and active-duty, are welcome as DACOR members.

It is true that DACOR was founded in 1952 as “Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired” and was open only to retired FSOs. But since 2012, we have used only the acronym DACOR and have opened membership to anyone who has had significant experience in foreign affairs and can be considered a “foreign affairs professional.”

DACOR now has many members who are still working, including active Civil Service and Foreign Service colleagues. DACOR has also welcomed academics, journalists, NGO professionals and returned Peace Corps volunteers, as well as people with international military and business backgrounds.

DACOR fosters community, learning and service

among those who have dedicated their career to the foreign affairs of the United States through the Foreign Service and other international engagement.

DACOR's sister organization, the DACOR Bacon House Foundation, promotes public understanding of international affairs and diplomacy through scholarships, lectures and conferences.

The foundation is also dedicated to preserving the historic DACOR Bacon House, an architectural treasure two blocks from the White House that will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2025. The house has a rich history as a center of America's diplomatic heritage and a hub for two centuries of Washington's social and cultural life.

DACOR members get to enjoy this historic house during a large variety of programs and activities. Many organizations in the district offer programs and lectures on foreign affairs, but none of them have the Bacon House as their setting.

At Bacon House you can sit in the South Drawing Room listening to a speaker, knowing you are sitting in the same room where Chief Justice John Marshall, a resident in the House from 1831 to 1832, regularly convened the Supreme Court justices to discuss cases.

Or you can sit in the North Drawing Room where Arthur



The DACOR Bacon House in Washington, D.C.

COURTESY OF DACOR

Rubenstein gave private recitals for his friend, Virginia Bacon, who would bequeath the house to DACOR.

Members can host private events, such as weddings, birthdays and retirement celebrations, in the house and its beautiful garden.

One of the best things about being a DACOR member is the opportunity to share in the camaraderie of people who have a common affinity for international affairs. At lunches, dinners and other events, new and old members are eager to participate in discussions of international affairs, travel and the experience of living outside the United States.

This common bond of internationalism, which includes some members with foreign affairs experience who have not worked abroad, is what makes DACOR the home of the foreign affairs family.

Even if you don't live in Washington, D.C., DACOR has much to offer. Our nonresi-

dent members can enjoy the reciprocal club arrangements we have with 10 clubs in the United States and 12 more clubs around the world. We also have guest rooms in Bacon House that members can use whenever they are in D.C.

In response to the pandemic, we have developed virtual programming, featuring speakers on a variety of international and cultural subjects.

If you or someone you know might be interested in DACOR, please visit our website at dacorbacon.org, and contact us so we can have you come look at the house or join one of our events that are open to prospective members.

Please help DACOR continue to build our membership and shed our previous reputation for being exclusively for retired FSOs. We are making DACOR a more inclusive, more diverse and yes, less stuffy place. Join us, and bring your friends! ■

USAID VP
Continued from p. 69

The good news is that these areas and related data could be reviewed by the agency as part of its own effort to advance diversity.

Finally, though not in the scope, perhaps the greatest shortcoming is that the report does not touch on inclusion, a critical element to USAID's institutional strength.

Rebuilding OCRD, changing agency culture and addressing unconscious (not to mention conscious) bias will take leadership, commit-

ment and dedicated focus; let's hope we are heading in the right direction.

Meanwhile, USAID can take some relatively easy steps to help advance diversity. The agency has already acknowledged the report's findings and is engaging with employees; this is great.

USAID could make publicly available a broader range of data and analysis on diversity. We are a leader in programmatic data transparency; now let's be a leader in diversity data transparency.

The agency could raise awareness by publishing and

updating Senior Leadership Group diversity statistics, exploring possible barriers during the application process (in particular, 360 feedback), and ensuring equitable and measured treatment during the large and small group selection process.

Human Capital and Talent Management and OCRD, with senior leadership, could host regular webinars and sessions to present data, analyze data and proposals, and hold open discussions about diversity, including crowdsourcing ideas on how

we can collectively advance shared goals.

There are so many opportunities at this unique moment to make real progress on diversity and inclusion. We must all ask ourselves if we are following the tenet of USAID's leadership philosophy to hold ourselves, colleagues and teams accountable for what we say we will do.

The report is available at www.gao.gov/products/GAO-20-477. ■

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AFSA Lauds Supreme Court Decision on Workplace Discrimination

AFSA welcomes the Supreme Court’s June 15 decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia*, declaring that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects gay and transgender employees from workplace discrimination.

AFSA believes in equal civil rights for all Americans, and this brings us a step closer to that goal.

Our diplomatic corps should be representative of the melting pot that is our nation, and that is impossible without the contributions of LGBT+ members of the Foreign Service.

Until the June 15 decision, those colleagues had been uniformly protected only by Executive Orders 13087 and 13672. Their workplace pro-

tections are now enshrined in law. This is major progress.

While our history on this is not perfect, AFSA is proud to be a longtime supporter of LGBT+ rights in the Foreign Service. As an association, we have long-standing ties with glifaa, the largest LGBT+ employee affinity group for the foreign affairs agencies. In 2014, AFSA General Coun-



sel Sharon Papp received glifaa’s Equality Award in recognition of her, and AFSA’s, strong allyship.

We celebrate this landmark victory with our LGBT+ members and colleagues. ■

AFSA Welcomes New Members of the U.S. Foreign Service

With the ongoing pandemic necessitating social distancing, AFSA welcomed the newest members of the U.S. Foreign Service virtually in June and July.

On June 12, AFSA sent a welcome letter featuring links to videos describing membership benefits to 72 members of the 202nd A-100 class and to 85 members of

the 156th specialist class. The first-ever joint generalist-specialist orientation class was onboarded virtually by the State Department.

“Normally, we would be hosting you for lunch at our headquarters building, just across the street from Main State, where we can share the work we do and you can have the opportunity to meet

and talk to other Foreign Service members,” AFSA State Vice President Tom Yazdgerdi told the new Foreign Service members by video.

“Given these extraordinary circumstances, we are glad to have the opportunity to introduce AFSA virtually. We are so happy to see you on board, and I want you to know how hard AFSA pushed for

this virtual onboarding,” he continued.

On July 8, AFSA also welcomed the 24 members of the C3 USAID class via video.

“We often speak of ourselves as not just members of the Foreign Service but as stewards of it—responsible for the strength of the institution,” AFSA President Eric Rubin told the USAID class.

“I like to think that each generation of Foreign Service members brings a different set of skills and a new vision to make the Foreign Service stronger. I am certain that your group is no exception. Already you are breaking new ground in being onboarded virtually,” he said.

AFSA President Eric Rubin hosted an online meeting about dissent in the Foreign Service (a topic he has often presented to incoming classes in the past) with about 20 members of the new FSO class. We look forward to offering more online discussion sessions with incoming Foreign Service members.

Ordinarily, AFSA invites incoming classes to its headquarters for a welcoming lunch, and plans to resume those lunches when conditions allow. ■



STATE DEPARTMENT

Members of a joint generalist and specialist orientation class were onboarded virtually into the Foreign Service on June 12.

Seminar: How the SECURE and CARES Acts Affect Retirement

AFSA invited noted federal benefits expert Edward A. Zurndorfer to give a presentation over Zoom, “How the SECURE Act and the CARES Act Are Affecting the TSP, Other Qualified Retirement Plans and IRAs,” on June 23.

AFSA members can view the two-hour video of the event at afsa.org/ video.

Zurndorfer told participants that the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act of 2020 changes the most popular retirement plans used in the United States and is the first major retirement-related legislation enacted since the 2006 Pension Protection Act.

Among other things, the SECURE Act raises the age for starting required minimum distributions to 72 for all accounts subject to RMDs. People born before July 1, 1949, however, still have an RMD beginning age of 70.5, he said.

Under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act—passed by Congress in March—people who are subject to mandatory RMDs from their qualified retirement accounts do not have to take their required RMDs in 2020, he said.

Individuals, he added, are also allowed to take distributions of up to \$100,000 in



Edward Zurndorfer speaks at a September 2019 event at AFSA headquarters.

2020 from qualified retirement accounts without having to pay a 10 percent penalty on early distribution, if the distribution is related to adverse financial consequences resulting from contracting COVID-19 or related factors.

Zurndorfer, a noted federal benefits expert who has been a regular speaker at AFSA, is a certified financial planner, a chartered financial consultant, a chartered life underwriter, a certified employee benefits specialist and the owner of EZ Accounting and Financial Services—an accounting, tax preparation and financial planning firm.

He is a seminar speaker at federal employee retirement seminars throughout the country and has written for numerous publications on federal retirement topics.

AFSA presented the program in response to the many inquiries we have received on these acts and their ramifications for retirement planning. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, June 17, 2020

Grievance Board: The board voted to appoint a person to serve in the Foreign Service annuitant position on the Foreign Services Grievance Board. The appointment is subject to ratification by the Secretary of State.

New USAID Rep: The board accepted Lorraine Sherman’s resignation as USAID AFSA board representative, effective June 30, pending her assignment overseas. The board appointed Trevor Hublin as successor to serve the remainder of Ms. Sherman’s term as the USAID AFSA Board Representative, effective July 1.

Awards and Plaques: The board identified awardees for the 2020 AFSA Achievement and Contributions award and a one-time AFSA Special Achievement award. The board also authorized inscribing the names of 17 people on the AFSA Memorial Plaques at Main State when funding becomes available.

Legal Defense Fund: The board approved payment of \$1,182 in legal fees for AFSA members who filed an equal pay complaint against USAID with the agency’s Office of Civil Rights and Diversity.

Committee on Elections: The board approved three members—Morton Dworken (reappointment), Marcia Friedman and Rodney LeGrand—to serve on the AFSA Committee on Elections. ■



AFSA Governing Board Meeting, July 15, 2020

AFSA 2020 Awards: The board approved four dissent and four performance award winners.

Legal Defense Fund: The board approved payment of \$1,500 for a retainer paid to an AFSA member’s attorneys related to the impeachment proceedings; disbursement of \$3,645 to attorneys representing AFSA members at USAID in an EEOC proceeding; and disbursement of \$3,570 to a member as part of impeachment and U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York legal proceedings. ■

AFSA Town Halls
Continued from p. 67

the challenges of the upcoming transfer season, the health and safety of the workforce, and questions surrounding the status of Authorized or Ordered Departure.

We know that you are worried about possible family separation, health issues when transiting, home leave and R&R, international schooling and allowances.

We have brought your questions to the awareness of agency management in our regular meetings with them. We have pushed for them to adopt policies with maximum flexibility.

Thank you for sending your questions—they help. Raising these issues, backed by real stories and actual comments from our members, was how we convinced management to add administrative leave for those who had to care for family members while on AD.

It's also how we got EER deadline extensions, and how we persuaded management that virtual onboarding of new Foreign Service entrants was not only possible, but the responsible thing to do.

Right now, we are receiving many questions from you about how the Diplomacy Strong—phased approach will work on a practical basis in the summer transfer season.

Another issue many of you are worried about is international schooling and, specifically, the department's payment of tuition deposits when Foreign Service members and dependents cannot yet be in-country for health and safety reasons. We have engaged with the department, but we are encountering resistance. We will continue to push.

Non-Pandemic Concerns

On FS positions, AFSA reminds the management of all our constituent agencies

at every opportunity that Foreign Service positions should be filled by Foreign Service members. The erosion of FS positions is a constant battle in all our agencies.

On assignment restrictions, our State Labor Management office has written to the State Department seeking data surrounding the apparent increase in assignment restrictions affecting employees over the past three years.

We have shared the concerns of our colleagues in the Asian American Foreign Affairs Association about the disproportionate impact on their members and others.

AFSA believes there is room for improvement in terms of transparency and fairness in arriving at decisions that restrict an employee from certain assignments.

AFSA has also raised

your concerns with Diplomatic Security management about security clearance wait times and the backlog in adjudicating discipline cases. We have made progress on the disciplinary cases, and we will keep raising concerns over security clearance times.

In addition to these operational concerns, we are also attempting to keep intact as much of our other work as we can.

For the foreseeable future, we will continue to bring you programs of interest via virtual platforms and to offer you ways to connect with us virtually.

Please know that AFSA is here for you. We are doing our best to continue the full span of our operations—minus our in-person happy hours, but we're considering some virtual alternatives to them! Please let us know how we are doing and what we could do better. ■

NEWS BRIEF

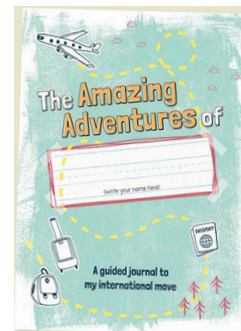
FSI RELEASES NEW GUIDED JOURNAL FOR FS CHILDREN

The Transition Center at the Foreign Service Institute has released a guided journal for elementary school-aged children of foreign affairs families moving overseas.

The *Amazing Adventures of (Me): A Guided Journal to My International Move* is a fun new tool for helping your kids start their transition.

The activities-filled pages of this free publication facilitate discussion as children process and prepare for an upcoming international move. An accompanying parent companion guide provides context to help formulate discussion and understanding of the child's emotional journey. Through the guide, children can explore the various stages of an international move and discover how they are feeling about the upcoming transition.

Download this new Transition Center resource at <https://fsitraining.state.gov/Home/Index/7605>. ■



Tomoko Morinaga Joins AFSA as Membership Operations Coordinator

Tomoko Morinaga, AFSA's new membership operations coordinator, was born and raised in Tokyo, not too far from the U.S. embassy there.

When she was 13 years old, Tomoko and her mother visited her mother's childhood friend in Southern California. Although she could not communicate in English, her week in California changed her vision for the future. Tomoko decided to travel to the United States to study.

She enrolled in Elmira College in New York as an exchange student and decided to stay to earn a bachelor's degree in communications. She then pursued a graduate degree in communications at Cornell University and moved to Washington, D.C., to earn an MBA in international business at American University.

Tomoko worked for the Bank of Tokyo–Mitsubishi as a research analyst. In that job, she enjoyed going



Tomoko Morinaga

to congressional hearings and writing reports. She worked for 16 years for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where she managed membership information, payments and data analytics, as well as vendors. She looks forward to assisting AFSA members.


Tomoko enjoys swimming, walking, yoga, jazz and classical music. She is a life member of the Cornell University Council and is involved with several Cornell alumni groups. She is also a board member of American University's Asian Pacific Islanders Alumni Network. She lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland. ■

State VP
Continued from p. 68

As the main contributor to diversity in the department, these programs are too important to be potentially derailed by these unprec- edented times.

Please let us know at member@afsa.org what you think should be done to promote diversity and inclusion in our Service. ■


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■ **Jose G. Armilla Jr.**, 81, a retired Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency, died unexpectedly of a heart attack on April 8, 2016, in Vienna, Va.

Born in Cebu City in the Philippines in 1934, Mr. Armilla was raised in a large, close-knit Catholic family during World War II. He excelled academically, graduating in 1951 at age 16 as valedictorian from the Malayan Academy in Cebu City.

After a year at the University of the Philippines, he won an academic scholarship to the University of Oregon. There he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 1955, and then began graduate studies at the University of Michigan's Rackham Graduate School of Psychology.

In 1960 Mr. Armilla received his Ph.D. in social psychology and began his academic career as assistant professor of psychology and department chairman at Inter-American University of Puerto Rico. There he met his wife, Ruth Daniel of Charlotte Amalie in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. The couple wed in October 1961 and would share a lifelong affinity for their island heritage.

In 1962 the Armillas moved to Greenville, Pa., where he was department chair and associate professor of psychology at Thiel College. Three years later he made a career pivot to research, moving to Alexandria, Va., and a position as senior scientist at The George Washington University's Human Resources Research Office.

Mr. Armilla's work for that office in Bangkok in 1968, where he was attached to the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency, led to subsequent work as a consultant for rural attitude surveys as part of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program in Vietnam.

After returning to the United States in 1970, Mr. Armilla, now a naturalized U.S. citizen, joined the Foreign Service

with the U.S. Information Agency. His 25-year career with USIA focused on public opinion research, with extensive travels in East Asia and overseas postings to Vietnam and Chile.

After three years as a social science analyst in USIA's Office of Research, Mr. Armilla and his family were posted to Saigon in 1973. There he had many roles: USIA policy and research officer, U.S. embassy expert on Cao Dai, Vien Hoa Dao Buddhist and Catholic churches in South Vietnam, and chief embassy liaison to the Chinese business community in Cholon.

Family members recall that he most enjoyed serving as embassy spokesperson for U.S. policy to Vietnamese elites, among whom he developed close friendships that he maintained even after leaving the country.

In 1974 Mr. Armilla was transferred to Chile as U.S. Embassy Santiago's principal officer in southern Chile, based in Concepción. There he served as branch public affairs officer and director of the Instituto Chileno-Norteamericano.

Mr. Armilla returned with his family to Washington, D.C., in 1976 and served for the rest of his career as the senior analyst for Southeast Asia in the USIA's Office of Research, with temporary duty and travel to Japan, South Korea and the Philippines.

He negotiated and managed contractual agreements with market research executives in Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand and the Philippines to conduct USIA-commissioned public opinion polling in those countries.

In the Philippines he worked closely with respected local polling organizations and, during the Philippine-U.S. bases negotiations, was a consultant for two U.S. ambassadors. He retired in 1994.

Mr. Armilla was active in retirement.

A student of Feng Shui since 1980, he published his first book, *Negotiate with Feng-Shui*, in 2001. He was a frequent contributor to *The Foreign Service Journal* and wrote for NPR's Story Corps and other professional publications.

In 2002, he testified at a policy briefing for the Virginia General Assembly's House of Delegates on Filipino-American political participation in America. He maintained ties with the Thai and Philippine embassies in D.C., as well as with the Filipino and Vietnamese communities, and participated in Toastmasters International.

He was a member of the American Foreign Service Association and the American Psychological Association. He also served on the board of directors of PRS, Inc., a mental health nonprofit, and the National Alliance for Mental Illness, where he was active with the local and lobbying groups.

Family members and friends recall Mr. Armilla's humility and his devotion to his family. They recall Mrs. Armilla's gourmet cooking, her interior design talent and her lifelong dedication to civic responsibilities.

They remember especially the couple's enjoyment of travel and time with their son, who suffered a severe and persisting mental disability in his early 20s, and with their grandsons.

Mr. Armilla's wife of 55 years, Ruth, died in November 2016, following a two-year battle with cancer.

Mr. and Mrs. Armilla are survived by their daughter, Arlene (and husband Pat) Campbell of Charlottesville, Va.; their son, Alex, of Annandale, Va.; two grandsons; his sister, Carmen, and niece, Rachel, and nephew, Shane, of California; and relatives in Cebu and St. Thomas.

Memorial contributions may be made in Jose Armilla's memory to NAMI-Reston, VA chapter; and in Ruth C. Armilla's memory to Cancer Research Institute, Inc.

■ **Jane Ellen Becker**, 69, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on April 6 of cardiac failure in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Becker was born in Milwaukee, Wis., and spent her childhood in Wauwatosa, a Milwaukee suburb. She was valedictorian of her high school class and went on to graduate with highest honors from Michigan State University with a dual major in biology and Latin American studies. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

In 1972 Ms. Becker joined the Foreign Service. Her 29-year career included overseas postings in Lisbon, Moscow, Geneva and Vienna, as well as assignments in Washington, D.C.

Her first overseas post was Lisbon; during her tour, the 1974 Carnation Revolution occurred. Later, in the early 1980s during the height of the Cold War, she served in Moscow as a general services officer.

Her final overseas post was as ambassador to the international organizations in Vienna in the early 1990s.

Ambassador Becker's domestic assignments included the State Department Operations Center as senior watch officer, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement as principal deputy assistant secretary, and both the Foreign Service Institute and the National War College where she taught relevant topics based on career experiences.

In 2001 Amb. Becker retired from the Foreign Service. In retirement, she worked with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement.

Ms. Becker loved to travel but was also the ultimate travel guide. People who visited her in Washington or overseas would always be in for an incredible tour, friends and relatives recall. She would show them not only the typical sites but also places virtually no one knew about.

Ms. Becker is survived by her brother, Robert, and extended family.

■ **Pierce Kendall Bullen**, 85, a retired Foreign Service officer, died peacefully, surrounded by his family, on May 4 in the Springmoor Life Care Retirement Community in Raleigh, N.C.

Mr. Bullen was born in 1935 to Ripley and Adelaide Bullen. After attending Phillips Academy (Andover), he earned his bachelor's, with high honors, and master's in political science at the University of Florida. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He later studied in Switzerland and took the advanced economic course in the State Department.

After joining the Foreign Service in 1958, Mr. Bullen served in Beirut at the Foreign Service Institute; Dhahran; Cairo; Rabat; Ouagadougou, where he was deputy chief of mission; Caracas, where he was also the school board president of an American school; and Madrid. In Caracas and Madrid, he served as economic counselor.

In Washington, D.C., Mr. Bullen served as director of Arab-language broadcasts at the Voice of America; a member of two bilateral negotiations on natural gas imports (Mexico and France); U.S. representative to the international meetings on issues of energy-consuming countries; and lead economics professor at the National War College (Fort McNair), where he also taught international relations and U.S. political and governmental systems. Through the NWC, he especially enjoyed accompanying a group of students to Eastern Europe each year.

After a 37-year diplomatic career, Mr. Bullen retired in 1995. He went on to teach economics at Georgetown University's Continuing Education Department, run his real estate business and travel. Other interests included current events, music, bridge and reading about all aspects of the world.

He was known for his calm, reasoned

approach to his work, his extensive knowledge, his ability to explain complex economic concepts, and his dry wit.

Mr. Bullen is survived by his wife of 65 years, Helene; children Grace, Peter, Philip and Kendall, and their spouses; and grandchildren Sara, Eliana, Zachary, Fionnuala and Elyse. He was predeceased by his brother and sister-in-law, Dana and Joyce Bullen.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Senior Living Foundation, or to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

■ **Tamar Alicia Donovan**, 54, wife of Diplomatic Security Special Agent Andriy Koropecykj, died on March 1 from injuries sustained in a vehicle accident in eastern France.

Ms. Donovan was born in Baltimore, Md., on July 26, 1965, the youngest daughter of Murtha V. Donovan Jr. and Olga V. Donovan. She was the youngest sister of Leah Rose Donovan and Murtha "Trip" V. Donovan III.

In her childhood, she moved with her family to the Heidelberg/Waldorf area of Germany, where her father was an engineer for IBM. From this experience, Ms. Donovan developed a lifelong passion for international travel and cultural exploration.

On returning to the United States, Ms. Donovan spent her youth in Maryland, and was selected for the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth Program. In 1982 she graduated one year early from Archbishop Keough High School.

She began her undergraduate studies at the University of Dallas and, in 1986, graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the Johns Hopkins University with a bachelor's degree in classics.

Ms. Donovan then attended Indiana University where she focused on Hungar-

ian, Georgian and Russian languages and cultures in the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies. In 2005 her systematic approach to such disciplines resulted in a master's degree in library and information science from the University of Maryland. During that time, she worked as a librarian at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory.

On Jan. 21, 1989, she married Andriy Koropecyk of Baltimore. In 1991 he joined the Diplomatic Security Service with the State Department. The couple served in Kyiv, Ankara, Vladivostok, Tashkent, Cairo, Moscow and Paris. Their three sons were born overseas: Damian (1994), Darius (2000) and Victor (2005).

Abroad, Ms. Donovan first worked as a consular associate. With her skills in library science and information architecture, she worked remotely on records management projects starting in 2005, including the World Trade Center Memorial.

When based in the United States, she worked on similar projects at varied organizations, including the National Archives, and returned to the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth to design and implement a records and archiving system.

With a passion for writing and literary skill, she published numerous works, many of them influenced by her experience abroad. This included fiction and nonfiction writing in the *Baltimore Sun*, *Happy*, *The Foreign Service Journal*, the blog "Tales from a Small Planet" and the anthology *Freedom's Just Another Word*.

Ms. Donovan also wrote, edited and published newsletters for the embassy communities in Kyiv and Cairo. In Moscow, she researched, compiled and published an official history of the diplomatic mission's place in the bilateral relationship of the United States and Russia.

She had enormous compassion and participated in numerous charitable

activities. She visited nearly 60 countries and always worked to convey her cultural experience to others, especially sharing that with her husband and passing it on to their sons. Her priorities were those of a loving mother and wife.

Ms. Donovan is survived by her husband, Andriy Koropecyk; children Damian, Darius and Victor; sister Leah; and brother Trip.

■ **Robert Bruce "Bob" Houston Jr.**, 96, a retired Foreign Service officer, died at the Westminster at Lake Ridge retirement community in Lake Ridge, Va., on May 4.

Mr. Houston was born on July 29, 1923, to Robert Bruce Houston Sr. and Kate Nelson in Kansas City, Mo. In high school, he won a scholarship to Harvard University, where he went on to earn a bachelor's degree in physics, *summa cum laude*, in May 1943 at the age of 19.

After graduation, during World War II, he worked as a radio engineer on the LORAN navigation system at the Naval Research Laboratory in Anacostia, D.C.

In 1945 Mr. Houston joined the Foreign Service. He served as deputy chief of mission in Bulgaria (his second posting there) and in Finland, and was science counselor in the USSR.

Although his first post was the Gold Coast (now Ghana), he specialized in European affairs, serving also in Germany, Austria, Scotland and Poland.

Mr. Houston spoke French, Russian, Finnish, Bulgarian, Polish and German. In 1962 he earned a master's degree in government and a certificate in Eastern European studies from Indiana University.

After 37 years in the Foreign Service, Mr. Houston retired in 1982.

In retirement, he worked for several years in declassification reviews. His hobbies included improving his computer skills and genealogy, and his special fond-

ness was for chocolate cake and ice cream.

Mr. Houston was predeceased by his wife of 68 years, Ellen Rae "Suzy" Houston. He is survived by his children, retired FSO Robert Bruce Houston III of Centerville, Va., Pamela Turner Houston of Arlington, Va., and Martha Carroll of Salt Lake City, Utah; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

■ **John Anthony Matel**, 65, a retired Foreign Service officer, died unexpectedly on June 22.

Mr. Matel was born in Milwaukee, Wis., in 1955. He attended the Universities of Wisconsin and Minnesota and earned a master's degree in history and an MBA.

In 1984 he joined the U.S. Information Agency as a public diplomacy officer, and served in Brazil, Norway, Poland, Iraq and Washington, D.C.

His proudest work included helping Iraqis rebuild their communities after the ousting of al-Qaida in Anbar Province, and sending more than 30,000 Brazilian students to study STEM fields in top American universities.

Mr. Matel was also president of the Fulbright Commission in Brazil, senior international adviser at the Smithsonian Institution, and a State Department fellow at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

After 32 years of service, he retired in 2016 and pursued his passion for forestry and conservation. In 2005 he had purchased his first forest land in Brunswick County, Va. As a landowner, certified tree farmer and naturalist, he actively managed nearly 500 acres of Virginia forest for timber, wildlife and water quality.

Mr. Matel served on the boards of the Virginia Tree Farm Foundation and the Forest History Society, and promoted southern pine ecology and working landscapes. He led by example, and worked to

restore longleaf and shortleaf pine ecosystems on dedicated parcels of his land.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 38 years, Christine M. Johnson, of Vienna, Va.; his daughter, Mariza Matel (and her husband, Brendan Williams) of Ellicott City, Md.; his sons, Alex and Espen Matel, of Vienna, Va.; and his sister, Christine Matel Milewski (and her husband, Greg Milewski) of Oak Creek, Wis.

■ **Sue Ford Patrick**, 73, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, died on July 6 in Pompano Beach, Fla., after a brief struggle with pancreatic cancer.

Born on Nov. 9, 1946, in Montgomery, Ala., Ms. Patrick was the eldest of three children born to Oscar and Mildred Ford. In Montgomery, she attended Chisholm Elementary, St. John the Baptist Elementary and St. Jude College Preparatory School before transferring to Madonna Academy, a private Marianist high school in Hollywood, Fla. In 1963 she graduated from Madonna Academy as valedictorian.

In 1967 Ms. Patrick graduated from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland with a bachelor's degree in history. After pursuing graduate studies in U.S. diplomatic history at the University of Virginia, she joined the Foreign Service in 1972.

During a 32-year diplomatic career, Ms. Patrick was posted overseas to Thailand, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Haiti and South Africa, in addition to assignments in Washington, D.C. She spoke Thai, Swahili, French and Afrikaans.

In addition to her earlier graduate studies at the University of Virginia, she later received a master's degree in African studies from Boston University and a master's degree in national security studies from the National War College.

In the years preceding the Rwandan genocide, Ms. Patrick served as deputy chief of mission in Kigali, Rwanda, where

she sought to make peace between the warring Hutu and Tutsi factions.

In Johannesburg, South Africa, she was the first woman to serve as the U.S. consul general. At the Pentagon, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, her efforts played a key role in shepherding former Warsaw Pact countries into the orbit of NATO and Western democracy.

Then, as diplomat-in-residence at Morehouse and Spelman colleges in Atlanta, she led the State Department's efforts to recruit talented college graduates to join the Foreign Service while teaching a course in U.S. diplomacy.

After she retired, Ms. Patrick undertook an assignment as adviser to help negotiate a peace agreement between the government of Senegal and warring factions in its Casamance region.

She was recognized by the State Department with several Superior Honor Awards. She was a member of the Phi Beta Delta honor society of international scholars, a member of the International Honor Society in history, and recognized as a distinguished alumna of her alma mater, College of Notre Dame of Maryland.

In 2019 she was recognized by the Chaminade-Madonna College Preparatory School with the Founder's Award, given to those who embody the school's motto, "Toward a Better World."

In retirement, Ms. Patrick turned her focus to her local community of Pompano Beach. She founded the Palm Aire Student Enrichment Group, a group of 40 volunteers who tutor children weekly to help them reach grade-level proficiency. A member of the city commission's Educational Advisory Committee, she provided counsel on public education matters and monitored the actions of the Broward County School Board on behalf of city residents.

She is survived by her husband, Henderson; two children, Lauren Patrick and Ibrahima Patrick; her mother, Mildred Ford Carter; aunts Dorothy Sue Peterson (George) and Ruby Kitchen; uncles Ned Hunter, Forest Hunter and Moses Hunter Jr.; cousins Christine Sampson, Barry Johnson, Johnny Frank Kitchen, Renard Kitchen, Travia Cooper and other relatives and friends from across the globe.

■ **George E. Scholz**, 68, a retired Foreign Service officer, died peacefully on Sept. 16, 2019, at his home in Tucson, Ariz., from gastric cancer.

Mr. Scholz was born in Chicago, the first child and only son of Daniel and Alice. The family lived in the city before moving to Orland Park, Ill., where Mr. Scholz graduated from Carl Sandburg High School.

He went on to receive a bachelor's degree in political science from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wis., and then joined the Peace Corps as a volunteer teaching English in Morocco from 1973 to 1976.

Mr. Scholz earned a master's degree in teaching English as a Second Language from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Ill., where he met his wife of 42 years, Celeste. They taught abroad in Algeria, Portugal, China and Saudi Arabia before Mr. Scholz joined the U.S. Information Service as a regional English language officer (RELO) in 1990.

Mr. Scholz served as a RELO in Indonesia (1992-1996, 2008-2011), Malaysia (1996-2000), South Africa (2000-2004), Egypt (2004-2008) and South Korea (2011-2012) before retiring.

Mr. Scholz's ability to build bridges was demonstrated in two projects: the creation of materials for the Officer Training Program for the Indonesian National Security Police Training Center, and the establish-

ment of the Al-Azhar English Language Resource Center in Cairo.

In retirement, Mr. Scholz continued to support RELOs in the field and took on short-term projects in Panama, Israel and Eritrea. He also traveled for leisure, which included visiting Mongolia, a lifelong goal of his.

He is survived by his wife, Celeste; his daughters, Kristina (and her husband, J.R. Dodge) and Liz (and her husband, Mike Mommsen); sisters, Georgianne and April (and her partner, Christine DeCosmo); and in-laws, nieces and nephews, cousins and friends worldwide.

■ **Blaine Carlson Tueller**, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on June 7 in Lehi, Utah.

Mr. Tueller was born on June 1, 1930, in Logan, Utah, the first child of Elva Geneva Carlson and Lamont Edwin Tueller. The family moved to Cedar City, Utah, in 1932. Other than his junior year of education at Logan High School, he attended public schools in Cedar City. He met his future wife, Jean Marie Heywood, in the ninth grade.

After serving as a missionary in the Netherlands from 1950 to 1953, he enlisted for two years in the U.S. Army and was assigned to Fort Meade, Md. After discharge, he earned his bachelor's degree in history and political science, with summa cum laude honors, at Utah State University.

In 1957 Mr. Tueller joined the U.S. Foreign Service. His first posting was Ireland, followed by an assignment in Austria. He subsequently served in Morocco, Venezuela, Panama, the Philippines and Spain. He retired in 1986 as a member of the Senior Foreign Service with more than 30 years of government service.

In retirement, Mr. Tueller worked for many years for the Church of Jesus Christ

of Latter-day Saints as a special representative for international issues. Between 1993 and 1996, as mission president in the Greece Athens Mission, he helped congregations and church members in Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt and Albania.

He read novels, histories, the daily newspaper and magazines. Wherever he lived, he knew where the library was. He was also a tenor in choirs, and for his 80th birthday, he sang with the famed Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

His wife, Jean Marie, preceded him in death on Aug. 14, 2019.

Mr. Tueller is survived by his sister, Diane Tueller Bickmore; his brothers, Bennion Lamont Tueller and Rodney Edwin Tueller; his children, Jan Tueller Lowman, Anna Tueller Stone, Matthew Heywood Tueller, Marie Tueller Emmett, Diane Tueller Pritchett, Martha Tueller Barrett, Elisabeth Tueller Dearden, James Blaine Tueller, Rachel Tueller and Jeanne Tueller Krumperman; 30 grandchildren; and 20 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Blaine Carlson and Jean Marie Heywood Tueller Scholarship at Utah Valley University.

■ **Martin Wenick**, 80, a retired Foreign Service officer, died on May 7 at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C., due to complications from COVID-19.

Born in 1939 in Jersey City, N.J., Mr. Wenick grew up in Caldwell, N.J., and graduated from Grover Cleveland High School in 1957. He then attended Brown University, majoring in history.

In the summer of 1960, Mr. Wenick received a partial Carnegie Mellon grant for a summer Russian language study program that included four weeks in Moscow. He was there during the trial

of Francis Gary Powers, the pilot of a downed U-2 spy plane, and the experience kindled his interest in further study of the Soviet Union.

Graduating from Brown in 1961, Mr. Wenick joined the Foreign Service the following year. He served overseas in Kabul, Prague (two tours), Moscow and Rome.

Assigned to Washington from 1978 to 1980, he met Alice Tetelman in 1979, when she was working as chief of staff for a New York congressman; they married a year later.

Mr. Wenick's diplomatic career included a teaching stint at the National War College and service as deputy chief of mission in Prague, director of the Office of Northern European Affairs, director of the Office of Eastern European and Yugoslav Affairs and deputy assistant secretary of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research for Coordination. He retired from the State Department in 1989.

From 1989 to 1992, Mr. Wenick served as executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry before joining HIAS, an international Jewish nonprofit agency that assists refugees. He was executive director there until 1998.

In his later years, Mr. Wenick and his wife lived in the Washington, D.C., area and rented out vacation homes in Italy, a home-based business driven by their passion for travel.

Colleagues and friends recall Mr. Wenick's work on behalf of Jewish refuseniks in the Soviet Union, who were barred from emigrating, and his work with dissidents in Prague. Many remember his dry wit and warmth, his genuineness and kind spirit, and his care and concern for others.

Mr. Wenick is survived by his wife of 40 years, Alice. ■

Witness to the Descent

From Sadat to Saddam: The Decline of American Diplomacy in the Middle East

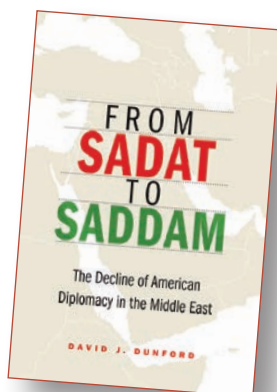
David J. Dunford, Potomac Books, 2019,
\$29.95/hardcover, \$29.95/e-book,
248 pages.

REVIEWED BY HARRY KOPP

There is no shortage of material on the decline of American diplomacy—Bill Burns' memoir *The Back Channel* and Ronan Farrow's *War on Peace* come to mind—but David Dunford's bottom-up perspective is unique. "I want to give the reader a sense of what the decline in diplomatic performance looked like to a practitioner," he writes in the introduction to *From Sadat to Saddam*. His memoir covers 25 years of service in the Middle East, during which the United States spent heavily in blood and treasure, only to end up strategically weaker, with fewer allies and less influence.

Dunford's career was one to which any Foreign Service officer might aspire. He started at the bottom and rose in 14 years to the senior ranks, where this memoir begins. He had challenging assignments in fascinating places with exceptional colleagues, and he retired as a chief of mission. Not quite a superstar and never a dissenter, he persevered and performed with excellence, but also with rising levels of frustration and dismay.

Every story of decline must look back to a better time, before the rot set in. In Dunford's telling, the "golden age of professionalism in the State Department" was 1984 to 1986, when he was director of the Office of Egyptian Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. At the time, career Foreign Service officers with deep experience in the region held



all the key positions in the bureau. Assistant Secretary Richard Murphy had been chief of mission in Syria and

Saudi Arabia. His principal deputy, Arnie Raphel, had served in Tehran and Islamabad. Dunford's immediate boss, Deputy Assistant Secretary Bob Pelletreau, had been chief of mission in Bahrain and deputy chief of mission in Damascus.

Diplomats, for all their skill and subtlety, are often at the mercy of events, and even this all-star team struggled to shape U.S.-Egypt relations. The good news was that on their watch nothing bad happened: Egyptian politics stabilized under President Hosni Mubarak, and the peace treaty with Israel, signed by Mubarak's predecessor, the assassinated president Anwar Sadat, remained in place. "There wasn't much else the Reagan administration could brag about," Dunford writes. Despite enormous financial leverage, the United States failed to induce Mubarak to adopt the economic reforms the country desperately needed.

These years were the high point. The long decline in Dunford's account begins with a surprising protagonist: James A. Baker, Secretary of State from 1989 to 1992, in the administration of President George H.W. Bush. Dunford faults Baker for operating with a small, closed circle of aides, largely cutting out or ignoring the State Department's bureaus and embassies; for failing to provide guidance for the protection of American civilians during the 1990-1991 war with Iraq; and for pursuing, against embassy advice, financial demands that provoked resent-

ment in Saudi Arabia and fueled the rise of al-Qaida.

"Baker thought that regional bureaus showed too much initiative," he writes, "and was particularly concerned about NEA's reputation as having too many Arabists and being insufficiently supportive of Israel." Baker replaced the entire NEA front office, and "in my opinion, the bureau never really recovered."

Washington hands say that where you stand is where you sit. During Baker's term as Secretary, Dunford sat in the U.S. embassy in Riyadh, as deputy to the whip-smart and exuberantly opinionated Ambassador Charles (Chas) Freeman Jr. They believed, in Dunford's telling, that unless Israel was directly involved, Washington was indifferent to events in the Middle East. Even as Iraq massed troops along the Kuwait border in July 1990, U.S. policy remained on autopilot. The embassy in Riyadh, like Ambassador April Glaspie's embassy in Baghdad, was without instructions.

During operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (August 1990 to February 1991), the U.S.-led military campaign that expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait, Dunford's main concern was protection of American civilians in the region. He sought guidance from Washington but received none. "The lack of useful guidance reflected disagreement in Washington about the nature of the threat and indifference to the issue by Baker's inner circle, along with a refusal to delegate the response to a now toothless NEA Bureau." The embassy, with support from U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), managed on its own.

Ambassador Freeman urged Washington to clarify American war aims: What outcome were we looking for? His own ideas were not welcomed. Because we were never clear about

what we wanted, “no political solution emerged from the end of the war ... and, consequently, the war continued and arguably continues to this day.”

After the war, Dunford on instruction presented the Saudi government with an invoice for \$16.3 billion, payable to the United States for services rendered. (Kuwait was billed a similar amount.) When the embassy argued against the policy, Baker “accused Chas of ‘clientitis’ [a focus more on good relations than U.S. interests].” A resentful Kingdom made the payment, but “the seeds for the rise of bin Laden and al-Qaeda were planted and we eventually found ourselves in wars that cost us trillions of dollars.”

These are startling accusations. Bill Burns, who served in Baker’s policy planning office, had quite a different view of Baker’s stewardship. Burns in his memoir acknowledged that Baker’s reliance on a small staff caused “predictable grumbling,” but over time, “career professionals were drawn in and exhilarated by Baker’s clout and success, which put State at the center of American diplomacy.” The war aims of Desert Storm, according to Burns, were the removal of Iraq from Kuwait and the restoration of Kuwait’s legitimate government, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The seeds for the rise of al-Qaida were planted not in 1991 but in 1979, the year of the Iranian revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by ultra-conservative Islamists.

Dunford went on from Riyadh to serve, relatively uneventfully, as ambassador to Oman, his last post. He retired in 1995, but the State Department kept bringing him back. He returned to duty in 1997 to lead a multilateral team in an unsuccessful effort to build support

for a Middle East–North Africa regional development bank, and again in 2003 to take charge of restructuring the Iraqi foreign ministry after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

In Iraq, Dunford had to deal with State-Defense rivalries and chaotic, politicized decision-making, amid widespread, uncontained looting and rapidly rising levels of violence. He managed to organize a “steering committee” of Iraqis prepared to work with the United States to build a post-Saddam foreign ministry; by 2004, insurgents had murdered three of its six members. (Dunford and one of the survivors, Hussein Ghasan Muhsin, are co-authors of *Talking to Strangers: The Struggle to Rebuild Iraq’s Foreign Ministry*.) When Dunford finished his assignment and came home, no one from State or Defense bothered to debrief him.

From Sadat to Saddam is marred by an excess of detail. The strictly chronological narrative moves, from one paragraph to the next, between events that shape history, events that shape a career and events that shape a weekend. A tighter focus would have helped.

The final chapter, however, is a strong essay on the importance of diplomacy. Here, Dunford and Bill Burns agree: Burns calls diplomacy “America’s tool of first resort”; Dunford calls it “the first tool out of the toolbox.” Both of these descriptions are now merely aspirational. Until the Department of State, its Foreign Service and its Civil Service, recover from the ruinations lately visited upon them, the aspiration will remain unfulfilled.

Former Foreign Service Officer Harry Kopp is a frequent contributor to The Foreign Service Journal and a member of its editorial board.

Around the Continent in 80 Years

US Policy Toward Africa: Eight Decades of Realpolitik (An ADST-DACOR Diplomats and Diplomacy Book)

Herman J. Cohen, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2020, \$95/hardcover, \$35/paperback, \$35/e-book, 280 pages.

REVIEWED BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

The author of *US Policy Toward Africa: Eight Decades of Realpolitik*, Ambassador Herman J. Cohen (universally known as Hank), needs no introduction for most *Foreign Service Journal* readers. Suffice to say, as someone who spent virtually his entire 38-year Foreign Service career either serving in Africa or helping to direct our relations with the continent, Amb. Cohen is an Africa hand par excellence.

Neither an academic study nor a memoir, the book reflects both the author’s command of the documentary record and decades of on-the-ground experience. Setting the tone are a brief preface, in which Cohen explains why he decided to specialize in U.S.-Africa relations almost as soon as he joined the Foreign Service in 1955, and the first chapter, “The United States and Africa: A Historical Perspective.”

The author then employs a chronological approach, but with a twist: Each chapter, starting in 1941 as Franklin Delano Roosevelt begins his third term, assesses a U.S. president’s record in dealing with Africa. This approach works well, with a couple of caveats. Developments in certain countries are harder to follow because they are spread out over several chapters. And many countries and issues don’t come up at all, due to the focus on major events and leaders.

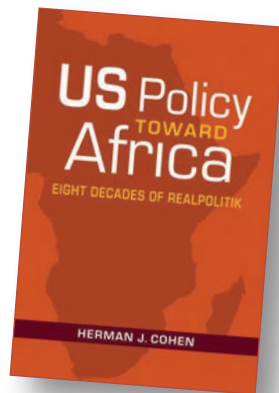
Cohen does a masterful job of briskly summing up each administration's record regarding Africa and placing it in a larger context. In the 1940s and 1950s, before most African nations attained their independence, FDR, Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower mainly dealt with the European powers that had retained their colonies following World War II.

During the 1960s, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson cultivated relationships with the emerging nations themselves, against the backdrop of the Cold War. One useful service Cohen renders here is to push back against the assumption that Washington always backed African leaders simply for being anticommunist, regardless of their human rights and governance records.

That global contest would, however, overshadow the decisions Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan made regarding relations with the continent in the 1970s and 1980s. Then George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton managed the transition to more country-specific, fraternal dealings with African capitals, while George W. Bush and Barack Obama adapted that approach to the post-9/11 era.

Cohen also examines Donald Trump's record vis-à-vis Africa, but because he finished writing the book in early 2019, that chapter is too thin to draw any meaningful conclusions. (Still, I was surprised to see no allusion to Trump's racially charged utterances about Africa.) The book then concludes with a set of "Reflections on Successes and Failures."

The only chapter I found disappointing is the one on Bill Clinton, which is



unique for beginning and ending with a scathing verdict on his performance. As it happens, the first two of my three years as Cameroon desk officer (1991-1994) overlapped with the final two years of Cohen's tenure as assistant secretary for African affairs (1989-1993), so I hope I may be forgiven for chal-

lenging his assessment.

He is, of course, correct that the Clinton administration botched its response to deteriorating conditions in Somalia and Rwanda. But on the other side of the ledger, he omits all mention of a central plank of U.S. policy during the 1990s: the promotion of democratization in the developing world. Astonishingly, the book's index contains not a single reference to democracy, democratization, elections or human rights. It does not seem fair to withhold credit where it is due.

Overall, however, *US Policy Toward Africa* is a valuable addition to the literature, with much to offer both seasoned Africa hands and general readers. ■

Steven Alan Honley, a State Department Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997, worked in the Bureau of Central African Affairs from 1991 to 1994. He went on to serve as editor-in-chief of The Foreign Service Journal from 2001 to 2014, and is the author of Future Forward: FSI at 70 — A History of the Foreign Service Institute (Arlington Hall Press, 2017).

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History of a Handshake: Ground-Level Public Diplomacy in Belarus

BY GEORGE KROL

Some readers may recognize the photo of an American and a Soviet soldier embracing after meeting in April 1945 at the Elbe River in Germany. They represented the historic coming together of American and Soviet armies that culminated in Germany's surrender weeks later.

In 2005, as U.S. ambassador to the former Soviet republic of Belarus, I was looking for ways to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, a war that left its tragic mark on practically every family in Belarus. I also wanted to improve America's image among Belarusians in the midst of a hostile state media environment. Perusing a local newspaper, I found tucked away in the back pages a small item about the famous photograph, noting that the Soviet soldier, Alexander Silvashko, lived in a remote village in Belarus. I immediately determined to meet him.



With the quiet help of the Belarusian veterans' association, my intrepid Belarusian assistant was able to contact Mr. Silvashko and set up a visit. My driver then took us—the U.S. defense attaché,

Many times Silvashko said if only the comradeship ... had endured, what a different and better world it might have been.

the Belarusian assistant and me—hours down tiny dirt roads to reach the little village of Morach and Silvashko's modest apartment.

Mr. Silvashko warmly welcomed us. He lived alone. His wife had died a few years before, and he had long retired as director of the village school where he also taught history. Over tea, Silvashko vividly recalled his meeting with the American soldier in the photo, Lieutenant Bill Robertson.



As the U.S. Army advanced through Germany from the West, Silvashko recounted, Robertson's commander had tasked his unit to find the Soviet armies then moving in from the East. Hoping to be the first American to meet the Soviets, Robertson defied orders and drove beyond his authorized perimeter to reach a bridge spanning the Elbe River in the town of Torgau. Silvashko, a lieutenant in the Soviet army, had

also reached the bridge on the Elbe's eastern side. He saw a group of soldiers in strange uniforms on the other bank waving a white sheet painted with red stripes and a blue smudge.

Never having seen an American flag or American soldiers, he thought the group could be Germans attempting to entice his unit across the half-destroyed bridge into an ambush. Silvashko ordered his men to lob a couple shells at the group, scattering them.

After a few minutes, one of the group, Robertson, returned to the bridge unarmed and, with hand signals, urged Silvashko to come across and meet him halfway. Silvashko did so, climbing across the fractured beams until he reached Robertson. Although neither could understand the other's language, through gestures each finally made out who the other was. The Allies had finally united!

Robertson then invited Silvashko to come with him to American headquarters. When Silvashko, along with his two superior officers, arrived, the Americans feted them with food, drink and exchanges of insignia and wrist watches. It was then that a photographer snapped the famous photo.

The next morning, the Soviets returned to their lines where the two senior officers were promptly arrested,



George Krol retired to Middletown, Rhode Island, in 2018 after 36 years in the Foreign Service, during which he served in Poland, India, Russia and Ukraine, and as ambassador to Belarus, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Domestically, he held positions of, inter alia, deputy assistant secretary of State for Central Asia and director of the Office of Russian Affairs. Ambassador

Krol teaches an elective course on the former Soviet world as an adjunct professor at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, lectures locally on foreign policy topics and is an associate of Harvard University's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies.

sent home and stripped of their party membership. (They were no doubt lucky that was the extent of their punishment.)

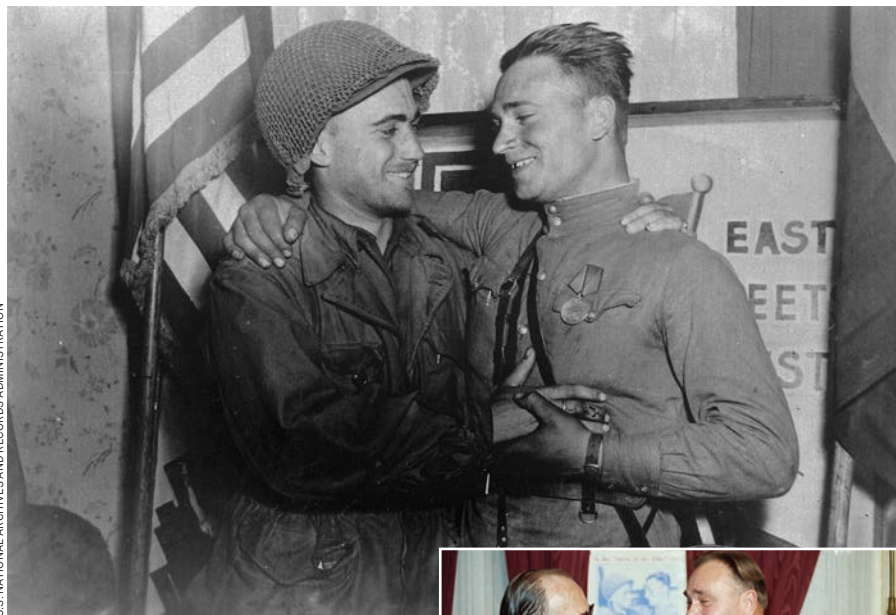
Silvashko said he was too young and stupid to be punished; and besides, his unit was moving on to engage the Germans in more bloody fighting in Czechoslovakia. Robertson, too, was arrested for disobeying orders, but he was quickly released under General Dwight Eisenhower's personal order.

After the war, Silvashko returned to his native Ukraine to find his family and his village wiped out. Army comrades from Belarus encouraged him to settle there in the small village of Morach where he would spend the rest of his life. Robertson went on to study medicine and became a noted neurosurgeon in Los Angeles.

Silvashko and Robertson did not see each other again until 1975, when détente between the United States and the Soviet Union brought them back together in Moscow to commemorate the 30th anniversary of their meeting on the Elbe. Silvashko showed us a photo album of a subsequent time when Robertson, and other Americans who were at Torgau, visited Silvashko in Morach together with their spouses.



Shortly after our visit, the embassy public affairs section sent a team down to Morach to film an interview with Alexander Silvashko. It would become the centerpiece of a film the section produced titled "The History of a Handshake." We were able to unveil the film to the Belarusian public in time for the Victory Day commemorations (the Russian language version can still be viewed online). Public reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Even the Belarusian government, with which we were not on the



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Above: Lieutenant Bill Robertson (at left) and Lieutenant Alexander Silvashko, Germany, 1945. Right: Robertson and Silvashko meet after 30 years in Moscow in 1975.



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best of terms, indicated tacit approval.

Watching the film brought tears to the eyes of many viewers. It still brings tears to mine. In subsequent ambassadorships, I gave copies of the film to my Belarusian, local and even Russian counterparts, some of whom told me how they and their staffs wept while viewing it.

A few months after we made the film, we invited Silvashko to the Belarusian capital of Minsk to retell his personal tale to a group of visiting West Point cadets along with their Belarusian counterparts. He overwhelmed them. To top it off, the Belarusian Defense Ministry gave Silvashko, who up till then had lived largely in obscurity, full military honors when he laid flowers at Minsk's Victory Monument. The Defense Ministry later told our defense attaché how much our embassy's respect and attention to this simple veteran had impressed them.

Although Bill Robertson died in 1999, Alexander Silvashko never forgot his friend. And I will never forget Mr. Silvashko. He survived a brutal war and a harsh postwar life. Many times he said that if only the comradeship American and Soviet GIs enjoyed during those fleeting days in 1945 had endured, what a different and better world it might have been.

Alexander Silvashko died a few years ago. May he rest in peace along with his friend Bill Robertson. As we mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, the story of Silvashko and Robertson's historic meeting on the bridge at Torgau should inspire us. We should also draw inspiration from Embassy Minsk's public affairs effort to bridge diplomatic divisions through shared memory. ■



The town of Annecy, France, is situated on crystal-clear Lake Annecy, about 35 kilometers south of Geneva. The town is sometimes called the “Venice of the Alps” for the canals that run through its old section. The area is naturally picturesque, and usually (when there’s not a global pandemic) loaded with tourists. Art and sculpture are everywhere, such as the six kaleidoscopic spheres created by artist Elsa Tomkowiak that bob on Lake Annecy. Inflatable and 15 feet in diameter, the floating rainbow-colored installation presents a stunning view, drawing visitors’ eye to the panorama of the lake as they stroll along Albigny Promenade. ■

Brian Aggeler and his wife, Angela, are a tandem couple on their first assignments to separate posts, he as deputy chief of mission in Paris and she as deputy chief of mission in Islamabad. Brian took this picture with his iPhone in July, on one of their last trips before Angela left for Pakistan.

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