

BACKING THE BUDGET ■ DOCUMENT DECLASSIFICATION ■ A COLD WAR MYSTERY

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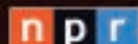
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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

Budget Crisis Redux: Have We Really Learned Anything?

BY J. ANTHONY HOLMES

I watched with fascination the inter-necine battle as Republicans in Congress struggled in November to come up with, in percentage terms, a tiny package of symbolic budget cuts to offset the costs of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. If there had been any doubt that we are now in a new era of U.S. government budget crises, this spectacle eliminated it. For the State Department, the outlook is equally grim. The initial “passback” from OMB of its FY-07 budget request provided virtually nothing new or additive.



Given the budget and election cycles, the FY-07 State budget is Secretary Rice's first, even though she's been in office for 10 months. What she decides to “reclama” and fight for, and what she concedes must be sacrificed at the altar of “budget realities,” will speak volumes about her real priorities. As in the rest of life where one hears “watch what they do, not what they say,” where the money goes is what tells the real story in foreign affairs.

The FY-07 budget will end the five-year run of growing resources for diplomacy and foreign affairs. Given the huge events during this period in Iraq and Afghanistan, the fight against terrorism, to say nothing of the new focus on “transformational diplomacy,” it would be easy to assume that the White House and the Congress had finally

J. Anthony Holmes is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

realized that a well-funded State Department and USAID, and related assistance programs like the Millennium Challenge Account and the PEPFAR anti-AIDS initiative, are small investments in prevention that minimize or even prevent the gargantuan costs later for things like the Iraq war. Can we assume that the department and the White House will do whatever is necessary lest anti-internationalists or budget hawks in Congress, or even OMB, do not realize this? Assume nothing.

The time has come for Sec. Rice to use her relationship with the president.

The State Department has just released the McKinsey & Company update of its 1999 report on “The War for Talent.” The highest marks were given for the commitment the past few years of the department's senior-most management to fighting for and winning the budgetary resources necessary to counter decades of underinvestment in information technology, security for our facilities, and insufficient recruitment. McKinsey's top recommendation for the future is to “institutionalize” this success and to build on it. Yet everything I can pick up in my discussions within the department reveals that just the opposite is happening.

The palpable ethos of the building has become one of scrimping, belt-

tightening, and axing. This is reflected in the timid, minimalist nature of the department's initial budget request. We can expect no new hiring and lots of retrenchment in the name of rationalization. USAID and Commerce are rife with rumors of furloughs and RIFs. Expect an acceleration of the underfunding of the original announced commitments we made with such fanfare to the MCA and PEPFAR. Memories are short and our atavistic tendencies decidedly short-sighted.

Three things make this budget crunch different, however. First, the president and the congressional leadership come from the same party, so the most crucial part of the budget game is played in-house, before it is sent to the Hill. Second, the stakes are higher, because of international events and because the fragile recent progress McKinsey noted is at risk. Exceptional leadership is required, an absolute refusal to take no for an answer and a willingness to use all means available to trump those, within the administration and outside it, who simply don't get it. The State Department and foreign affairs budgets are every bit as important to our national security as our military expenditures. But there's also one more new element in this equation: we have a Secretary of State with unrivaled influence at the White House. The time has come for her to use her relationship with the president. Being just another Cabinet team player will compromise both her own success over the next three years and her legacy. ■



LETTERS

“In-Your-Face” Appointments

One look at the shocking appointments announced in the November issue of *State* magazine sent me back to new AFSA President J. Anthony Holmes' inaugural piece in the September *Journal*, in which he took issue with the recent appointment of three European Bureau deputy assistant secretaries. We Foreign Service professionals are long accustomed to being passed over in favor of campaign contributors and buddies from way back, but that is no reason to forever acquiesce in a practice unique among the diplomatic services of developed, democratic countries. The latest “in your face” political appointments present an opportunity for strenuous and persistent protest, using whatever weapons are at our disposal; including, first and foremost, but not limited to, sympathetic members of Congress.

The current administration proposes to send abroad as senior representatives of the United States a regional chairman of the Bush-Cheney 2004 re-election campaign, a two-term co-chair of the Republican National Committee, two very wealthy and successful businessmen and — the ideal combination of diplomatic qualifications — a chairman of the Mississippi Republican Party who also owns 20 restaurants all over that state. For senior-level policy direction from Washington we are given as

assistant secretary of State for educational and cultural affairs, and principal deputy to Under Secretary Karen Hughes (whose recent travels indicate an urgent need for expert assistance), an “assistant to the president for presidential personnel.” Whatever that title may mean, neither it nor her earlier partisan activities suggest any expertise in education, culture or senior management.

It is true that the practice of rewarding contributors and cronies with ambassadorships, or even using the lure of such positions as bargaining chips in advance, is traditional in administrations of both stripes. But isn't it time to challenge that tradition? The usual arguments for doing so are sufficient and (almost) too obvious to mention, leaving aside the offense to senior Foreign Service officers denied postings for which their careers have prepared them. What are foreign governments to think: that the political appointee's arrival means that Washington does not really consider the host country worth a professional; that the professional's arrival means that he or she won't have the White House's ear; that the Foreign Service isn't capable of producing qualified persons for senior positions? It is axiomatic that some political appointees turn out to be very capable chiefs of mission; so why not DCMs?

AFSA, our professional organization and our union, is best placed to

lead the fight that I believe must be fought to the end. I hope this letter, intended not as a comprehensive treatment of the issue but as a brief introduction, will encourage an exchange of views leading to a concerted campaign for professionalism and expertise in the conduct of American diplomacy.

*Alan D. Berlind
Senior FSO, retired
Bordeaux, France*

Iraq Is More Important

In AFSA State VP Steve Kashkett's “VP Voice” (November), there is a reference to a “great many” Foreign Service employees protesting preferential treatment given for service in Iraq and Afghanistan, while a “handful” of those who have served there say they deserve every possible compensation. What exactly is the difference between “great many” and “handful”? I ask because I never heard people in Iraq say they were going through hell being posted there, nor did I hear the view that we deserve every possible compensation for being there.

Iraq and Afghanistan are referred to in the column as “politically symbolic,” “high profile” and “politically sensitive at the moment.” Is it not possible that another, more appropriate adjective to describe these places would be “important?” At the most operational level, we measure importance by how much time and atten-



tion an issue gets from our political masters — and by that measure, Iraq and Afghanistan are in a class by themselves. Another measure that could be used is the commitment of so many of our military and Foreign Service personnel to the mission and the casualties we have taken.

If we accept that Iraq and Afghanistan are more important by almost any measure, then it seems entirely appropriate that service there is more valuable. Or to put it another way: assuming equal quality in the work, service in Iraq and Afghanistan should count more for promotion than service in lesser posts. Fairness to all would require equal exposure to the risks of service in Afghanistan and Iraq. AFSA should be demanding directed assignments to fill jobs in Iraq and Afghanistan, not complaining that the few who take the risks and perform well are treated with the respect they merit by doing the most important work in the most dangerous places.

*Henry S. Ensher
FSO, Director of Iraq
Political Affairs
McLean, Va.*

No to Staying the Course

“Stay the course” has a nice ring to it. For a country, as for an individual, it connotes resolve and a determination to triumph over whatever obstacles may arise. It is the opposite of weakness and indecision. This positive aura hinges, needless to say, on the soundness of the course chosen. It also helps if there are signposts along the way to confirm that the goal is being achieved.

While it is tempting to do so, this is not the place to examine the missteps and deception involved in the administration’s decision to invade Iraq, topple a brutal and trouble-

some dictator and remake the country into a bastion of democracy. That examination is up to the voters and historians. What is incumbent on us, four years later, is to question the soundness of the choices made. By urging us to stay the course, the administration presumes that current policies are moving the country toward two desirable, mutually reinforcing, goals: 1) a more stable (forget democratic) Iraq, and 2) a more secure U.S.

In reality, this is what the decision to invade and pacify Iraq has gotten us so far:

- Thousands of U.S. troops and Iraqis (mostly civilians) have been killed, wounded or psychologically scarred.

- Iraqi security forces — army and police — have been infiltrated. Progress toward an effective fighting force depends on which U.S. general or administration spokesman you believe.

- Religious freedom and women’s rights are likely to be diminished under the constitution proposed for the Shiite-dominated part of the country.

- Reconstruction has been slowed by widespread corruption in Iraq and the U.S. Well-placed American and Iraqi contractors have reaped windfalls from questionable or illegal contracts.

- The presence of U.S. troops occupying a Muslim country is a potent recruiting tool for al-Qaida and a lightning rod for insurgent violence, and has resulted in a dramatic upsurge in anti-American sentiment throughout the Arab/Muslim world.

- Longstanding allies — whose full cooperation is critical in the fight against terrorism — have well-justified doubts about U.S. leadership.

- With the diversion of attention and resources from Afghanistan to

Iraq, the Taliban has been able to regroup. Since January 2005, U.S., NATO and civilian casualties there have reached an all-time high.

- Our attention and resources have been diverted from the real threats to our security: nuclear terrorism, Iran and North Korea.

- By choosing to finance the \$1 billion-a-week war effort through borrowing rather than taxes, the administration is responsible for an unprecedented increase in the budget deficit. Our kids will pay for it.

For all the above reasons, and by any measure, the U.S. is less secure than we were prior to the invasion. There is considerable evidence that U.S. troops — notwithstanding their unquestioned courage and lofty motives — are an obstacle to a secure and stable Iraq. Let us do everything in our power to replace them with U.N., NATO or other multilateral peacekeepers as soon as possible. If that doesn’t work, we should withdraw anyway. At this stage, we desperately need another course, one that has a chance of success.

*Arthur S. Lezin
FSO, retired
Bend, Ore.*

Diversity and MOH Policy

Director General W. Robert Pearson’s June 2005 *State* magazine column, “Our Diverse Department of State,” really hit home, especially his statement that “Diversity enables us to approach and meet our challenges in new, different and more effective ways.” I’ve dealt with that issue my whole life, both before and during my Foreign Service career.

I am of French-Canadian descent and grew up in Quebec. My father served in the old Royal Canadian Air Force for 20 years. Everything in those days was only in English. My

LETTERS



father had to fight to have us bused to French schools off base. In those days, if one spoke French and an Anglophone entered the room, one switched to English. When my father was transferred to a base in Ontario in the late 1960s, I had no choice but go to an English-speaking high school where I struggled with the language.

In 1982, I moved to San Francisco, thinking no one there would care that I was a French-Canadian with a weird accent. I was right. However, in reality, I only exchanged one type of discrimination for another, for in the mid-1980s, I finally came to terms with my sexuality. That was a difficult process, even in San Francisco, where I was living during the height of the AIDS scourge.

In 1991, I became a U.S. citizen and went to work for the U.S. Department of Justice. Before accepting the job, I told my boss I was gay and asked if that would be an issue. He assured me it would not, and within one year I was promoted to GS-14.

On Sept. 20, 2002, I received my security clearance and joined the Foreign Service two days later. My sexuality was never an issue. My Canadian citizenship, on the other hand, almost cost me my clearance, until I made the difficult decision to renounce it. My parents were devastated, but I felt strongly about working for the Foreign Service and made the sacrifice.

In March 2003, I went to Yemen. In September 2004, my partner, Richard Fitzsimmons, joined me at post. Within two weeks, he was running the commissary and in January 2005 went to work for USAID.

In his article, the DG praises diversity saying, "We want the State

Department to look like America." Let me say that we are a long way from making this happen as far as the gay and lesbian community is concerned. In December 2004, Richard and I were married in Methuen, Mass. But we received no help from HR when I tried to have him added to my orders, even after submitting a copy of our marriage certificate. In July 2005, I contacted AFSA about our predicament. One option discussed was the creation of another class of Eligible Family Member along the lines of "separate but equal," without financial benefits.

In the meantime, Richard came to Rabat, at our expense, this past July as my "domestic" (which was insulting). He has been denied access to the health unit and every time he has applied for a job at post in competition with other spouses, he has been disqualified because, according to the regulations, he is a Member of Household, although legally he is my spouse. He has tried to obtain outside employment with no success. As a result, I have requested curtailment based on financial hardship. Because Rabat has only a 15-percent cost-of-living-adjustment, Richard and I cannot survive on my salary alone, given the lack of financial support from State.

Having experienced discrimination based on ethnicity and sexuality throughout my life, I cannot wait for the day when the Department of State treats all of its employees equally. Too often State hides behind regulations, yet there always seems to be a way around them "for the needs of the Service." I am reminded of the regulations in place in the 1950s prohibiting blacks from sitting at the front of the bus. That did not stop the late Rosa Parks!

There is growing pressure in many states allowing same-sex couples to wed. What then?

Since writing this letter, I have learned that my appeal to curtail was denied by the DG. The basic message was that I should have done my homework about Rabat. The problem with such a response is that, as AFSA has confirmed, there is no even treatment of MOHs from one post to another.

*Christian Charette
Financial Management
Officer
Embassy Rabat*

Marriage in the Old Days

I read with interest Susan Ann Clyde's letter in the October issue regarding women FSOs who married "in the old days." I know of one instance from around 1960 when our consular officer in New Delhi, Anne Meriam (I could be misspelling her last name), married yet was allowed to remain in the Foreign Service. Several of us at the time were happily astonished by the department's "open-mindedness." When the couple married, the husband had just retired as an officer in the Indian Army and intended to become a writer as an accompanying spouse. As I recall, Anne served at one or two more posts before she retired.

*Ralph H. Graner
FSO, retired
Richmond, Va.*

Supporting the World

I found the September article, "Embassy Design: Security vs. Openness," very interesting. Prior to my retirement in 1994, I was an Area Management Officer in the then-Foreign Buildings Operation Office. I thoroughly enjoyed my three-year

LETTERS



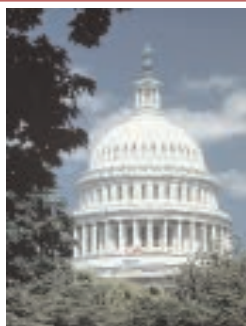
assignment, which afforded me an opportunity to work with architects, engineers, security officers, communicators and interior designers, as well as representatives from other agencies. As an AMO, I led survey teams to different countries in search of an ideal location for a new office building.

A major problem with the NOB construction program had to do with the amount of time required to go from design to construction. I made a suggestion that was similar to what OBO is now doing — using a Standard Embassy Design. The memo I wrote addressed the savings to be had with a standard design, based primarily on construction and furnishing. Prior postings in Haiti and Santo Domingo showed me that this could work: both posts had the same design for the ambassador's residence.

I believe that because I used the example of Holiday Inns, Marriotts and other hotel chains that were able to build the same buildings, with some changes, all over the world, my suggestion didn't make it to the head of FBO. But I am very pleased to note that, although it wasn't accepted at the time, at least the idea is now being followed — albeit fleshed out considerably.

Now that FBO has been reorganized and renamed OBO, I wonder if AMOs are still as important as they were then. My colleagues and I spent a considerable amount of time on issues other than new buildings. Renovating, leasing, buying and selling properties consumed a lot of our time, and GSOs in the field depended a great deal on their AMOs concerning real property issues.

I remember working on a display



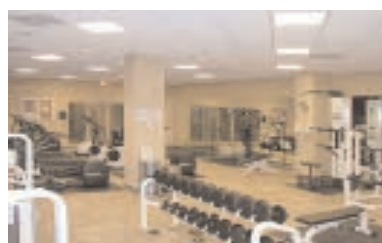
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for FBO, creating a logo to show the office's function. It was the figure of a person holding the world on his shoulders. Above the figure were the words "Area Management" and below were the words: "Supports the World." I hope that the article in the *Journal* was only about one aspect of OBO and that the function of the AMO has not been diminished with the reorganization.

Jerry Lujan

FSO, retired

Saddle Brooke, Ariz. ■

Correction: In the October 2005 article, "Breaking through Diplomacy's Glass Ceiling," a note in Chart 7 inadvertently includes Laos in a list of Asian countries to which a female has never been appointed ambassador. In fact, as the chart shows, four women had served in Laos as chief of mission through 2003. The current ambassador to Laos is Patricia M. Haslach, whose appointment occurred after the chart was assembled.



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CYBERNOTES

Yes, ICANN!

In November, representatives from 174 countries and more than 800 NGOs attended the second World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, organized by the United Nations' International Telecommunications Union (<http://www.itu.int/home>). The ITU, headquartered in Geneva, is a U.N. body through which governments and the private sector coordinate global telecommunication networks and services. The United States is among its 189 member states.

The summit, held Nov. 16-18, was convened to "tackle the problem of the 'digital divide' and harness the potential of information and communication technologies to drive economic and social development." However, these worthy objectives were largely overshadowed by a dispute over the United States' central role in administering the Domain Name System — the structure of network addresses (.com, .org, etc.) that computers use to communicate with one another to find Web pages and route e-mail, among other functions.

Because the Internet originated in the U.S., the Department of Commerce retained authority over these matters worldwide until 1998, when it delegated day-to-day management to Internet Cooperation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a diverse, non-political organization with an international board (www.icann.org/general).

In September the European Union joined Iran, China, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and others in opposing the predominant role of ICANN in managing the Internet.

The E.U. and other governments are pushing for greater United Nations authority over this sphere, arguing that entrusting that responsibility to a single country is potentially dangerous. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan was outspoken in Tunis: "The United States deserves our thanks for having developed the Internet and making it available to the world. ... But I think you also all [should] acknowledge the need for more international participation in discussions of Internet governance

issues" (<http://www.itu.int/wsis/tunis/statements/docs/io-un-opening/1.html>).

"The Europeans are eager to stand up to the Americans, and that I think has been produced by the last five years of U.S. foreign policy. It's not really a cyberlaw problem," asserts Lawrence Lessig, a professor of law at Stanford University and a columnist for *Wired* magazine, in a recent *Foreign Policy* magazine interview (http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3306).

The Institute for Policy Innovation, a Texas-based think-tank, has come to a similar conclusion. "The United Nations and the European Union are pushing for international management because critics are uncomfortable with — and jealous of — what is viewed as American hegemony, when in fact, the U.S. does not control the Internet. It simply oversees it." IPI offers a wide array of background information, radio clips and expert opinion about this topic on its Web site (<http://www.ipi.org/>).

Critics of the proposal also point to the fact that the most vocal opponents of the current arrangement include China, Iran and Saudi Arabia, all of which restrict their citizens' Internet usage to repress nascent democratic movements.

As it happened, the challengers had no way to force the U.S. to give up control, and America was adamant about leaving arrangements in place. David Goss, the U.S. delegation head, made this position clear (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/>

50 Years Ago...

If you spend a lifetime discussing [issues] with people of other countries, you acquire a habit of seeing two sides, which exist in so many questions. This tends to create a sense of balance and measure in forming judgments and, above all, an ingrained suspicion of all one-sided points of view.

— Sir David Kelly, from "The Lost Art of Diplomacy," *FSJ*, January 1956.



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CYBERNOTES



15-477039.html). On the eve of the summit delegates came to an agreement allowing ICANN to retain its role for the time being. As part of the compromise an Internet Governance Forum will be convened in the spring of 2006 to air grievances and further discuss the issue; however, its decisions are non-binding.

The compromise left attendees time to discuss, and pass a resolution aiming to provide Internet connectivity to half of the world's population by 2015. (Just 14 percent of the world's population is currently wired.) A report on the conference's outcome is available at http://www.itu.int/wsis/newsroom/press_releases/wsis/2005/18nov.html. For a summary of foreign press reaction, go to <http://usinfo.state.gov/admin/005/www/110523.html>.

To learn more about the issue from

the U.S. perspective, see an archive of articles on the summit published by the State Department at http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/world_summit_on_information_society/world_summit_archive.html. An interview with Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information Michael Gallagher offers some intriguing hints at how Internet governance may affect your own browsing (<http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Nov/15-837480.html>).

— Daniel Zussman, Editorial Intern

CFR Calls for New Africa Policy

"A policy based on humanitarian concerns alone serves neither U.S. interests nor Africa's," states an Independent Task Force on Africa sponsored by the Council on Foreign

Site of the Month: www.idtheftcenter.org

How can you protect your identity from theft? The answer is available at www.idtheftcenter.org, a Web site included in *Time* magazine's 50 Coolest Web Sites 2005. The recent surge of identity-theft crimes makes this a must-read for consumers looking for tips on how to avoid trouble and what to do if the worst happens (see Victim Guides, under Victim Resources). The page devoted to Internet scams and "phishing" is particularly useful, especially if you receive a lot of spam e-mails. There are tips for businesses as well.

No matter what may have happened to put your identity at risk, the *Identity Theft Resource Center* will have answers for you on what you need to do. Helpful, step by step advice on what to do if your wallet/purse is lost or stolen is given, along with the contact information for credit reporting bureaus and the Social Security Administration. There is also a helpful tutorial explaining what identity theft is and the different ways to avoid it.

This site is run by the Identity Theft Resource Center, a national nonprofit based in San Diego. The center is run by Linda and Jay Foley, who created the ITRC in 1999 after Linda's personal experience with identity theft showed her how little information was available to help identity-theft victims. Today, the ITRC has gained significant recognition for its role in battling identity theft and received the Department of Justice's National Crime Victims Service Award in 2004.

— Caitlin Stuart, Editorial Intern



Relations, whose report was released Dec. 4. The report describes Africa's growing strategic importance in supplying energy resources, preventing increased terrorism and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, and urges the U.S. to "broaden the basis of engagement" there. In particular, the group recommends that the U.S. help to integrate Africa more fully into the global economy so that the benefits of globalization can be utilized. The full report is available at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9302>.

Africa's plight has been the focus of international attention in 2005. In June, the Gleneagles G-8 summit vowed to provide additional resources for Africa's peacekeeping forces, increase support for greater democracy and boost investment in health and education. Leaders agreed to double aid to Africa by 2015. The G-8 finance ministers also canceled the foreign debt of 18 of the world's poorest nations to the tune of \$40 billion, with 14 of those nations in Africa.

But pledging and delivering are two different things. The Bush administration has boosted assistance to Africa, but the increase falls short of both administration claims and Africa's real needs. Though the administration claims to have tripled aid to Africa, in real terms it has only increased by 56 percent, according to Brookings Institute Senior Fellow Susan Rice (<http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/rice/20050627.htm>). The U.S. increased aid to sub-Saharan Africa from \$2.034 billion in FY 2000 to \$3.399 billion in FY 2004.

And, significantly, a majority of the increase has been in emergency assistance, not development aid. The U.S. is providing \$150 million to the African Union peace mission in Darfur, and helped fund the new U.N.

mission in Sudan through our U.N. peacekeeping contribution. Over the next five years, the United States will help train 40,000 African peacekeepers through the Global Peace Operations Initiative/Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/scp/2005/49628.htm>).

One of the areas of increased funding is AIDS relief and prevention. Some 400,000 people, nearly all in Africa, are now supported by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a program targeting 15 "focus countries" where AIDS is prevalent with \$15 billion by 2008. Just three years ago only 50,000 Africans were receiving antiretroviral treatment. The United States has committed \$3.2 billion for FY 2006 to fund PEPFAR. AIDS prevention programs, however, have been largely stymied by the administration's restrictive policy on birth control methods.

The President's Malaria Initiative, announced last June, also focuses on Africa. President Bush pledged \$1.2

billion for malaria prevention and treatment over the next five years, with the goal of reducing malaria deaths by half over the next three years. USAID recently received a \$100 million grant for indoor residual spraying (<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Nov/21-399970.html>).

While efforts to solve short-term problems are notable and necessary, as the CFR Task Force notes, giving Africans the capacity to solve their own problems would be more sustainable. Although President Bush created the Millennium Challenge Account in 2002 with the aim to provide \$5 billion a year in development aid by 2006 (half of which would be for Africa), the program has thus far disbursed very little money. Congress held funding to only \$1.7 billion for FY 2006, a far cry from the president's pledge.

— Caitlin Stuart, Editorial Intern

The Rise of the Blog

Taking the world by storm is the Internet phenomenon known as weblogging, or "blogging." A blog is a Web-based publication consisting of periodic entries which can range from a diary-like saga to a heated discussion on controversial issues. Blogs can be designated a forum, which allows others to post a response, or they can be restricted to the postings of the author. Particularly for those who write on current issues, a blog provides a vehicle to publish rapid responses to an article or event. As of 2005, it is estimated that more than 11 million bloggers have joined the online community in the U.S. to discuss topics from alpha to omega.

Academics, lawyers, teachers and, yes, Foreign Service personnel, create blogs to post uncensored commentaries on world events. Some are witty, some satirical, some blatantly political.

Share A Unique Experience

The editors of *American Diplomacy* are inviting FS members, active and retired, to submit stories of their first overseas assignment — an experience unique to each member of the Foreign Service. A selection of lively First Post accounts are already posted (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat>).

American Diplomacy is a non-profit organization dedicated to publishing thoughtful articles on international issues, supporting efforts to strengthen the American Foreign Service and to promoting understanding of the challenges of diplomatic life abroad.



Because most blogs are created under humorous pseudonyms, their creators have the luxury of being honest about their views.

To launch your own blog, you can sign up at www.blogspot.com, but it's just as fun to read what others have to say if you aren't inclined to start your own. If you would prefer to keep your postings more private, www.livejournal.com is a great resource for an online journal that requires the author to give permission to others for reading privileges.

Blogs could become a useful tool for FSOs to keep in contact with friends and family around the world, or as a method to educate others on current issues, describe the elements of diplomacy or give an inside perspective about embassy life. Remember, they can be completely anonymous to protect your privacy if you wish.

Search for blogs on your topic of interest by using a blog search engine. The most user-friendly is <http://blogsearch.google.com>, which allows you to search by topic within the blogosphere. Many directories are available to aid your search, among them <http://www.blogrankings.com/>, <http://www.blogcatalog.com/> and <http://www.bloggator.com/>.

The number of FS blogs is growing. The Dinoia family keeps a blog from their current post in Reykjavik. Available at www.dinoias.blogspot.com, the blog keeps a record of the family's trials and rewards of life abroad and is a useful tool for others regarding the aspects of raising a family overseas.

For the more conservative viewer, we recommend the *Daily Demarche*, a self-described "blog by members of the State Department Republican Underground-conservative Foreign

It is through the shared experience of failure, of crisis and of risk, as well as of eventual success, that true trans-Atlantic trust can be built and further strengthened. I cannot recall many moments over the last two decades when there was greater trans-Atlantic bonding than at the successful conclusion of the Dayton talks.

— Wolfgang Ischinger,
German Ambassador to
the United States, Nov. 21,
www.upi.com

Service officers serving overseas commenting on foreign policy and global reactions to America" (<http://dailydemarche.blogspot.com/>).

Behind many a diplomat is a so-called trailing spouse. *The Diplomat's Wife*, a blog written from the embassy community in Sarajevo, is a comical exploration of Shannon's adventures while adjusting to a new culture (<http://shannonstamey.blogspot.com/>).

Current FSO Mike is posted in Seoul with his family in tow. His experiences are chronicled at <http://spaces.msn.com/members/worldadventurers/>, beginning with A-100 training. His posts about the APEC Summit in November 2005 are a particular treat.

Here, with thanks to Kelly Midura and www.aafsw.org, is a partial list of other FS blogs:

- *FS Husband* <http://www.livejournal.com/users/fshusband/>
- *The Kolodner Family* <http://www.kolodner.com>
- *Well, Let's Talk About It!*

<http://welleststalkaboutit.blogspot.com/>

- *Tumbleweeds* <http://editfish.blogspot.com/>

www.princeroy.org

- *Prince Roy* <http://www.princeroy.org>

www.aaronmartz.com/

- *Aaron Martz* <http://www.aaronmartz.com/>

www.coupon.blogdrive.com/

- *Coupon: The Movie*

<http://www.missionofjoshie.com/>

- *The Permanent Mission of Joshie*

<http://www.missionofjoshie.com/>

Some of the best blogs are kept by those with no obligation to parrot the statements of State or the president. *The Democracy Arsenal* is dedicated to commentary and sparring on foreign affairs (<http://www.democracyarsenal.org/>). The writers include former speechwriters for ambassadors, Secretaries of State and presidents; some are former members of the State Department policy planning staff; some work for think-tanks. You will notice both a neo-con and a muscular-Wilsonian vein throughout this blog, depending on the author of the post.

New Sisypus, a former FSO and now an attorney in Oregon, writes at on all subjects, foreign and domestic. The site not only raises questions but answers them thoroughly (<http://newsisypus.blogspot.com/>).

WhirledView is the collaborative effort of Patricia Kushlis, Cheryl Rofer, and Patricia Lee Sharpe, all respected international affairs experts. It is a fantastic resource for distinctive op-ed-style world affairs pieces (<http://whirledview.typepad.com/whirledview/>).

Let us know if you have your own blog about life in the Foreign Service, or if you know of a good foreign affairs blog, by e-mailing the *Journal* at journal@afsa.org. ■

— Caitlin Stuart, *Editorial Intern*



SPEAKING OUT

25 Years Later, Time for Dialogue with Iran

BY BRUCE LAINGEN

Twenty-five years ago, just before midnight on Jan. 20, 1981, I stood on the last step of the ramp leading into an Algerian airliner sitting on the tarmac of Tehran's Mehrabad Airport. I was among the last of the 52 American hostages being pushed, shoved and verbally abused by Iranian hostage-takers getting in their last licks. Then the Swiss ambassador, sitting just inside the door of that aircraft, warmly welcomed us as he very carefully recorded our arrival into his government's temporary custody.

Safely on board, the doors of that beautiful airplane closed, and we began our flight to freedom — stopping briefly for refueling in Athens, and then being formally welcomed by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the Algerian foreign minister in the VIP lounge of the airport in Algiers. There, with a formal exchange of documents, Christopher officially took us into American custody and then sent us off in two U.S. Air Force medical evacuation aircraft bound for the USAF hospital at Wiesbaden, West Germany, and three days of the warmest welcome and hospitality we had ever known.

That was only the beginning of our Flight to Freedom. Then came a refueling stop and more warmth from the Irish prime minister and all of his Cabinet at Shannon Airport; two days and three nights as guests of the Corps of Cadets at West Point — their roaring welcome in their mess hall the first night virtually lifting its roof — and then a historic welcome on the South Lawn of the White House by newly-

elected President Ronald Reagan and everyone who was anyone in the city of Washington. The media described our welcome as unprecedented; for the 52 of us, it was unforgettable.

A Day Yet to Dawn

Standing there on top of the ramp of that Algerian airliner, I said to the man who was probably the senior hostage-taker that I looked forward to the day when his country and mine could again have a normal diplomatic relationship. But 25 years later, there still is no such relationship — nor have our two governments, except for rare instances in the context of the ouster of the Taliban regime in Kabul, had a formal exchange of any kind. That is a very long stretch of recent diplomatic history — more time than passed before the United States and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations, and longer than it took Washington to open a liaison office in Beijing. In fact, it is a time span exceeded only by the current breaches in relations with North Korea and Cuba. Even Track II diplomacy — private people-to-people exchanges — between the United States and Iran suffers from stringent visa restrictions.

Traumatic as the emotional fallout of the hostage crisis was for Americans, should it be allowed to make even preliminary moves toward better relations unthinkable a quarter-century later? Admittedly, few single instances of danger involving American citizens abroad ever commanded the national stage so totally as did the hostage crisis in its time. Ever since

then, the image of Iran among most Americans has remained highly negative, aggravated by its identification as a continuing state sponsor of terrorism, by its pursuit of nuclear weapons technology and, more recently, by concern that Iranian influence in Iraq is growing and poses a threat to U.S. objectives in that country.

In addition, particularly on Capitol Hill, opinion has long seen Iran as acting deliberately to frustrate the Israeli-Palestinian peace process by its support for Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas on the West Bank. Recent anti-Israeli speeches by Iran's new president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, have further soured American public perceptions of Tehran.

On the other side, there were fleeting glimmers of Iranian interest in dialogue with the United States during the Clinton administration, including former President Mohammad Khatami's occasional references to a possible "dialogue among civilizations." But the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, continues to denounce America as a "world-devouring imperialist" and a government that has never been prepared to accept the Islamic Revolution. As evidence, the regime cites Washington's consistent refusal to lift its sanctions against Iran and, especially, its hold on frozen Iranian assets alleged by the Iranians to total tens of billions of dollars. There can be no dialogue, Iranian hardliners insist, while sweeping sanctions remain in place. Iran is also highly suspicious of the American military presence in the region, with



forces facing those of Iran on both its eastern and western borders as well as in the Persian Gulf.

Promoting Mutual Interests

Yet that fact, along with both countries' stake in the region's political stability, offers a variety of incentives for cooperation. We share an interest in promoting freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf, particularly vis-a-vis the movement of oil to markets, where our sanctions preclude access by American oil companies to Iran and deny other commercial firms access to Iran's potentially huge market. Both countries have an interest in curbing the movement of narcotics within the region and to the West. And we both desire political stability in Iraq and in Afghanistan, as well as throughout the region. Furthermore, Washington and Tehran, in the most basic and human sense, have shared interests that grow out of the fact that the U.S. is now the second-largest Persian-speaking country in the world.

Yet, as former Representative Lee Hamilton has often put it, the absence of a relationship between Iran and the U.S. complicates our pursuit of those interests and inhibits our relationships with every other country in the region.

To be sure, no one contemplates an imminent resumption of diplomatic ties between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran. That is far off. But for the United States, now deeply engaged strategically in both Iraq and Afghanistan, to have no direct contact with the strategic entity of Iran, which lies directly between those two countries and which is by all measures destined to be the region's pre-eminent power, simply makes no sense. It leaves us with no diplomatic flexibility whatsoever on the ground to deal with the many issues on our agenda.

Consider the question of Iran's nuclear ambitions. For the past five years we have left that issue to the

Russians and a negotiating team from Britain, France and Germany, representing the European Union, confining ourselves to pontificating from the sidelines — even though all concerned know full well that no long-term understanding will be possible without direct American involvement.

The nuclear issue is but one item in any potential dialogue with the Islamic Republic, although arguably the most consequential; a nuclear-weapons-capable Iran already building long-range missiles that could reach Israel would be serious indeed. But there are a host of other issues on the negotiating agendas of both the U.S. and Iran that have festered there for years and that can only be dealt with by dialogue. Claims by Iran that the U.S. is illegally holding assets frozen by President Carter at the start of the hostage period are high on the Iranian agenda; Iran's support of Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and the West Bank is high on ours, as is concern over Iran's long-term objectives in Iraq. Arguably what develops in our military/political efforts in Baghdad will, more than any other single factor, determine our future relationship with Tehran.

Signs of Thawing?

Perhaps that may be changing, with the Bush administration's offer of some bargaining chips of its own; e.g., a readiness to relax sanctions that have precluded Iranian access to Boeing aircraft spare parts and to lift our opposition to Iranian membership in the World Trade Organization. The Iranians dismiss the former proposal as meaningless, given their ability to obtain the parts via the black market through Dubai, but the latter could be a useful bargaining chip over the lengthy period required to give it meaning. Meanwhile, however, on the substance of negotiations on the nuclear issue, the U.S. government continues strenuously to avoid owner-

ship of any kind. The contrast with our position as an active and direct "Group of Six" member in the nuclear discussions with the North Koreans is striking — strategic interests being at stake in both cases.

The agenda for any dialogue between two governments and two peoples so long denied would be long, and enormously difficult. Even getting mutual agreement on where to begin and on what basis asks a degree of mutual understanding that at the moment does not exist. And recalling the hostage issue, the fact that the Algiers Accord on our release explicitly denies the former hostages the right to bring suit against the government of Iran may compel an agenda item on that as well. The Iranian regime, in the person of the all-powerful Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, remains on record as consistently restating that no dialogue with the U.S. is possible without prior concessions that make American participation difficult, if not impossible.

Yet while there is no evidence of willingness on either side to take the risks inherent in reopening dialogue, Condoleezza Rice has made the need for "transformational diplomacy" a signature feature of her approach as Secretary of State. To apply the vision implicit in such rhetoric to the task of improving relations with Iran will require major departures in the public and private postures of Tehran and Washington alike. Alternatively, we could turn to more traditional approaches, such as third-party intermediaries or private emissaries. But however we conduct the diplomacy, let us hope we will not have to wait another 25 years before we get serious about the effort. ■

Bruce Laingen was a Foreign Service officer from 1949 until 1987, serving twice in Iran (1953-1955 and 1979-1981). He is currently the president of the American Academy of Diplomacy.

FOREIGN SERVICE RETIREMENT: EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION



T

YES, VIRGINIA, THERE *IS* LIFE
(AND WORK) AFTER THE
FOREIGN SERVICE.

By STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

hinking back to when my A-100 orientation class convened (21 years ago this month), I don't recall any discussion of retirement. I presume the topic must have come up at least a few times in the midst of the barrage of handouts and litany of speakers. But even if it had been emphasized, I doubt I would have paid much attention. After all, I was young and just beginning my first real career, which I fully expected to last several decades, leaving me plenty of time to plan.

F O C U S

But just 12 years later, I left the Foreign Service for personal reasons in 1997. My dealings with the State Department's Retirement Division were straightforward and painless, in large part because I did not qualify for an annuity either in terms of age or length of service.

As I embarked on the next phase of my life, I remember asking myself the question some of my colleagues (particularly the ones who stayed at State) had posed — some archly, others more seriously — over the years: “Is there life after the Foreign Service?”

I never doubted there was, and unlike some of my other youthful ideals, that belief has only grown stronger with time. Judging from our coverage this month (nearly all of it sent in by AFSA members in

Steven Alan Honley was a Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997, serving in Mexico City, Wellington and Washington, D.C. He has been editor of the Foreign Service Journal since 2001.

response to our call for submissions, I am pleased to note), most FS retirees agree.

The first article in our line-up, by AFSA Retiree Coordinators Bonnie Brown and Norma Reyes, notes that “Old Age Is No Place for Sissies” (p. 20). But it also details the many ways AFSA is working to make the transition to retirement as smooth as possible, both at the individual level and in terms of seeking institutional changes at State and the other foreign affairs agencies to protect retirees' interests and ensure they receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled.

Second (and Third) Careers ...

Many Foreign Service retirees find that attaining “When Actually Employed” status allows them to continue to contribute their skills and expertise in the field of international affairs on a part-time basis. Roger Dankert, a retiree member of the AFSA Governing Board, provides an overview of the subject in “Retirees Find a ‘WAE’ Back to the Department” (p. 23). Carolee Heileman, who works in the Retirement Division, offers some “Practical Advice for Managing WAE Positions” (p. 26) to accompany that piece.

Of course, many retirees find satisfying and even lucrative employment far beyond the federal government. Retired Senior Foreign Service officer David Jones, a frequent contributor to our magazine among many others, has found writing as a post-FS career “A Good Cane” (p. 29). John McDonald and his wife Christel McDonald describe their own post-retirement endeavors in “An NGO to Promote Multi-Track Diplomacy” (p. 33). Millie McCoo explains why she considers herself “Sort of Retired in San Diego” (p. 36). And Robert Raymer offers a distinct, possibly even unique, perspective in “Serving in Panama Over and Over Again” (p. 38).

Colleges and universities have long been a favorite destination for retirees, whether they are interested in teaching, administration or both. Retired career Ambassador Tibor Nagy, now associate vice provost for international affairs at Texas Tech University, introduces us to the subject of “Managing International Programs in Academia” (p. 43). And for those with perhaps less ambitious plans, Robert Fritts offers “Eight Tips to Break into Academia” (p. 46).

Look for the
2005 Tax Guide
in the February 2006
Foreign Service Journal

Read about the latest
federal and state tax
provisions affecting
the Foreign Service in
the February 2006
AFSA News.

Also available online at
www.afsa.org/taxguide.cfm

www.afsa.org/taxguide.cfm

F O C U S

Other Retiree Pursuits

Both on campuses or elsewhere throughout the country, retirees are the backbone of AFSA's Speakers Bureau, which publicizes the importance and the achievements of diplomacy. Communications Director Tom Switzer describes AFSA's key outreach program in "Retirees Build Support for the Foreign Service" (p. 49).

In "Moving to a Senior Living Facility" (p. 52), former ambassador and AFSA president Bill Harrop draws on his own research to explain the importance of examining the many competing companies and overlapping options early, well before a decision must be made.

We hope our coverage will be useful and interesting not only to retirees but to those of you planning your own lives after the Foreign Service.

We conclude this month's focus section with a roundup of shorter commentaries (p. 56) contributed in response to our AFSANET solicitation for members to share their hard-won insights into life and work after the Foreign Service. The thoughtful responses run the gamut from practical tips for colleagues — including those still in the Service — to (mostly) positive reflections on how their perspectives have changed. In fact, we received so many responses that

we will run another compilation next month.

We hope our coverage this month will be useful and interesting, not only to retirees but to those of you planning your own lives after the Foreign Service. ■

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A MEMBER OF
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GROUP

“OLD AGE IS NO PLACE FOR SISSIES”



Although actress Bette Davis had no experience as a federal employee, this quote does express a sentiment felt by many Foreign Service retirees trying to obtain the benefits they are entitled to, be they annuities, Social Security or health coverage. While most retirees do not encounter major problems, others find themselves in situations they had never anticipated, dealing with impenetrable regulations and unresponsive bureaucracies. Fortunately, AFSA is here to help.

For instance, retirees may find themselves blindsided by the reduction of their Social Security benefits because of the Windfall Elimination Provision, a complex benefit formula that almost eludes understanding. Recently, several Foreign Service retirees faced dire financial problems when the department required them to pay back large annuity overpayments on the basis of a rigid and highly legalistic — rather than a common sense — determination that the retirees should have known about long-term annuity miscalculations on the part of State Department personnel.

Some retirees and surviving spouses are shut off from necessary information and assistance because they do not know how to use the Internet or thread their way through the labyrinth of automated phone

WHILE AFSA CANNOT SOLVE ALL RETIREE PROBLEMS, WE PROVIDE HELP IN FOUR MAJOR WAYS.

BY BONNIE BROWN AND NORMA REYES

systems. And even those with access to the Internet glean little useful information there, find it almost impossible to reach the right official to assist with or explain a problem, or get inconsistent responses. And, most recently, retirees are faced with a marketing barrage for the badly-explained Medicare Part D benefit.

While AFSA cannot solve all these problems, we can help in four major ways. First, we provide general advice and assistance. Since 2002, Retiree Counseling and Legislative Coordinator Bonnie Brown has provided this invaluable service to several dozen AFSA retiree members on average per month. She researches and answers questions on a wide range of topics; puts people in touch with appropriate officials from the State Department and other foreign affairs agencies; meets regularly with State and other government officials to advocate on behalf of retirees; and works with the Senior Living Foundation to assist needy retirees — all with a sympathetic ear.

Cutting Through Red Tape

Second, Brown gives AFSA retirees clear explanations of the many densely written annuity and retirement benefits regulations, alerting them to policy changes. Those summaries are available in the AFSA

Retiree Newsletter, AFSANET messages, the *AFSA News* section of the monthly *Foreign Service Journal*, and on the Retiree Web page (<http://www.afsa.org/rtvppage.cfm>). Her *FSJ* columns, for example, have discussed long-term care insurance, the Windfall Elimination Provision and the pension and survivor benefits of former spouses. More recently, AFSA mailed out a newsletter supplement on Medicare D.

Third, Brown works with the AFSA president and retiree vice president to ask for improved State Department retiree services. Two years ago AFSA asked State to develop a retiree Web site, so we were gratified to witness the inauguration of RNet (www.RNet.state.gov/). In responding to members' individual problems, AFSA also asks the department to improve specific Retirement Office and Retirement Accounts Division procedures to keep other retirees from experiencing similar problems. For instance, several members recently reported significant miscalculations in the year-to-date column of their annuity statements. After AFSA informed State of this ongoing problem, it ran a system check and corrected the glitch.

While AFSA is pleased with the improvements recently made in retirement services (as shown by the Special Achievement Award it gave to Retirement Office Chief David Dlouhy in June 2005), we remain a strong and committed advocate for continued improvement in services and staff training and development. For example, AFSA recently asked the Retirement Office not to leave retirees who do not use the Internet behind, urging it to communicate with them in other ways.

Bonnie Brown and Norma Reyes are AFSA's Retiree Coordinators. While serving abroad with her Foreign Service officer husband Ken Brown, Brown worked in human rights, development and consular affairs. As a narcotics affairs officer, Reyes served long tours in Brazil and Colombia and covered several Latin American countries, Southeastern Europe and Central Asia during Washington tours. She retired after 35 years in the federal government before joining AFSA.

AFSA is pleased with the recent progress in State's retirement services, but we remain a strong and committed advocate for further improvement.

Keeping Retirees Informed

Finally, AFSA monitors congressional legislation that could affect retirement benefits, such as premium conversion, the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset, and Social Security reform. Along with David Reuther, AFSA's retiree vice president, Brown keeps members informed about these developments via the publications listed

above. Some of these reports go into considerable depth, as in a recent series on Social Security reform.

Working with Legislative Affairs Director Ken Nakamura, the retiree staff ask members to write their representatives and senators in Congress when appropriate and to participate in the annual "Day on the Hill." Federal retiree benefits appear to have dodged the bullet this past session. However, in an era of severe congressional cost-cutting, AFSA will remain vigilant to protect retirees' hard-earned benefits and ready to respond quickly if the need arises.

AFSA is committed to providing caring, one-on-one assistance to our retiree members and to giving them the information they need to make sound decisions about retirement. Toward that end, we are expanding our outreach to them. Retiree members with e-mail receive regular AFSANET communications from Reuther; they also have access to an expanded, up-to-date Retiree Web page. For example, AFSA is offering a link to the *Consumer Checkbook Guide to FEHB Plans* during the 2006 health benefits open season this year.

We live in a time when most government information (including that about the FEHBP and Medicare D) is provided online. This leaves many retirees and surviving spouses who do not use the Internet without access to much-needed information. As one response to this problem, AFSA has begun mailing additional written information to its retiree members in expanded newsletters and other mailings, and has asked State to do the same.

Expanding AFSA's Membership Base

Retiree Coordinator Norma Reyes actually called on AFSA for assistance both while on active duty and as a

F O C U S

retiree, long before she considered joining the staff in 2005. She appreciates the opportunity to provide her retired colleagues with the same invaluable assistance AFSA gave her, and to strengthen her connection to a career she truly enjoyed.

She also works to increase AFSA's retiree membership, which benefits both parties. Increased retiree membership gives AFSA the means to expand benefits, such as the *Consumer Checkbook* and an easier-to-read *2006 Directory of Retired Members*. It also gives the association more clout with Congress in advocating on issues important to retirees.

Increased membership also allows AFSA to do more outreach to its members on issues of immediate importance, such as the recent supplement on Medicare D. Such a supplement averages about \$1,400 to produce and mail. Just about a third of our membership use the Internet, making periodic mailings necessary.

Out of a universal Foreign Service retiree population of almost 15,000, slightly over a quarter are AFSA mem-

bers. The largest number of retirees, including AFSA members, are concentrated in the Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., region. This past year, AFSA began offering annuitant deduction of membership dues and has launched several recruitment campaigns for new members that promote annuitant deduction. Active-duty Foreign Service personnel are being encouraged to make the transition into annuitant deduction a part of their retirement plans.

AFSA assures retirees that the organization works as hard for them as it does for active-duty members. With the support of Retiree Vice President David Reuther and Retiree Representatives Len Baldyga, Roger Dankert, Larry Lesser and Gil Sheinbaum, prospects are very good for AFSA to serve its retiree members even more effectively and efficiently. Remember, we're just a telephone call or e-mail away, and stand ready to answer questions or mail written materials.

We want to help our retirees flex their muscles to show they are no sissies! ■

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RETIREES FIND A “WAE” BACK TO THE DEPARTMENT

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AS STATE PURSUES TRANSFORMATIONAL DIPLOMACY, WAE EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTS A WIN-WIN, BOTH FOR THE FOREIGN SERVICE AND FOR INDIVIDUAL RETIREEES.

BY ROGER DANKERT

he potential role of “When Actually Employed” rehired Foreign Service annuitants is expanding because of “transformational diplomacy,” but the actual use of WAEs will continue to be limited by the emergency needs of each bureau and the budget available to it. Under a new system now being implemented on the State Department’s Retiree Network (www.RNet.state.gov), both retirees and FS personnel preparing to retire can express interest in WAE employment via a central registry. That registry, in turn, is being incorporated into a central Readiness Reserve database of all employees, both active and retired, who are available to serve overseas, as well as a special Standby Reserve Corps for work with the Office of the Coordinator for Crisis Reconstruction and Stabilization.

This initiative also reflects the State Department’s commitment to building an integrated work-force community that encompasses all employees at every career stage, from entry on duty through post-retirement, according to Director General W. Robert Pearson.

The current authorization for WAE employment has been around for a quarter-century: Section 837 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 allows the department to re-employ annuitants to fill temporary staffing gaps or perform emergency requirements for no more than 1,040

hours per year (half-time). There are about 1,400 WAE names on decentralized rosters maintained by 26 different State Department regional and functional bureaus. However, in terms of Full-Time Equivalent positions, the actual use of WAEs is believed to constitute only a small fraction of State’s total work force.

A few years ago, State officials estimated there was a structural staffing gap of almost 1,200 FTE created by under-hiring and the lack of a float for training and rotational requirements. With the accelerated hiring under the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative of the past few years, much of this gap has been eliminated, but new temporary staffing requirements are emerging, creating additional opportunities for WAE employment.

For example, I have been working about half-time for the past 3½ years as a member and director of the Political-Military Action Team, an office created within the Political-Military Affairs Bureau after the 9/11 terrorist attacks to handle operational liaison requirements with the Department of Defense on a 24/7 basis. There are 15 WAEs on this team, plus military analysts contracted from a private defense firm. There are no career personnel, reflecting the bureau’s determination that WAEs constitute the most efficient method of creating such a team on a timely basis. Also, if needs

change, staffing can be readjusted more easily.

Earlier in my Foreign Service days, I was director of the Office of Asylum Affairs in the Bureau of Diplomacy, Human Rights and Labor; that office was also primarily staffed by a group of 15 WAEs. When the department later decided to change the function and composition of the office, there was no requirement for a reduction-in-force; the WAEs were simply “pink-slipped.”

The Economics of WAE Employment

From the perspective of State budget planners, WAE employment is often economical for the department compared to expanding or hiring from within the career service. Most retirement, health and fringe benefits for WAEs have already been paid by the retirement system, and the employees are only employed when their services are actually required. This absence of overhead costs makes WAEs about 30 percent cheaper, on an hourly basis, than career employees or contractors. Also, the fact that WAEs are paid on a 2,080-hour (52 x 40) workyear basis makes them available during the 20 percent of the workyear that is otherwise lost to holiday leave, annual leave, sick leave and training time for other employees. So, in effect, the WAE employee costs about 50 percent less than an equivalent-grade career employee, when calculated on an hourly basis.

These efficiencies do not pass through to the individual bureaus, which must use operational funds to pay WAEs. (HR has reimbursed individual bureaus for some WAE time related to filling gaps created by the departure of volunteers for Iraq and Afghanistan, but such cases are exceptional.) Because the cost of career positions established for staffing is borne by the central personnel system, WAE employment is definitely a last resort for bureaus. Also, the buildup of experience and continuity

Roger Dankert, a Foreign Service officer from 1970 to 1996, is a retiree member of the AFSA Governing Board. Since retirement, he has worked as a WAE for the Office of the Inspector General and for the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

***There are about
1,400 names on
decentralized WAE
rosters maintained
by 26 different State
Department regional
and functional bureaus.***

that a career service is designed to provide would be undercut if WAEs were overused. It is impossible to calculate how much WAEs are likely to be employed in any given year, as such opportunities depend on emergency needs and funding. If the budget is tightened, as many expect, WAE employment will be reduced.

By statute, the sum of what a WAE employee earns in a year and his or her annuity cannot exceed the salary of the WAE job, or the amount the employee was earning at retirement, whichever is greater. (Note that this figure is not adjusted for inflation.) Some longtime Senior Foreign Service retirees hit this salary cap after just a few weeks when working in jobs at lower pay grades, and are effectively available only for short-term assignments. AFSA originally sought an amendment to the Foreign Service Act of 1980 removing restrictions on WAE employment. However, despite our strong advocacy, this proposal gained no traction. Accordingly, we are now working with State to expand the categories of waivers currently available to the Secretary of State on WAE employment. Both in the 108th Congress and the current one, the Senate’s foreign relations authorization bill contained this provision. It is awaiting further consideration. A temporary income waiver has been available on a very limited basis for certain national security jobs made necessary by the events of 9/11, but the overall cap remains, as does the 1,040-hour annual overall limit.

Where WAEs Work

Most Foreign Service WAEs work in Washington, but some fill temporary staffing gaps overseas or assist posts during crisis situations. State Department records indicate that 1,400 persons are currently registered by 26 different bureaus as available for WAE positions, of which 1,088 are actually employed from time to time. The largest single roster is in the Bureau of Administration, which has 225, the majority employed for the purpose of document declassification and Freedom of Information Act requests. Other large rosters are in the functional Bureaus of Consular Affairs (109 WAEs), Diplomatic Security (90), M/DGHR (46), M/IRM (45) and the Office

of the Inspector General (45). The regional bureaus also have large WAE rosters: AF (67), EAP (81), EUR (112), NEA/SA (74), and WHA (75).

Overseas, WAEs fill vacancies ranging from chargé d'affaires, DCM and consul general positions to slots for management, consular, economic and political officers or section chiefs, particularly during the summer transfer season when staffing tends to be especially thin. Some of these assignments are in hardship and danger pay posts.

Consider retired FSO Michael Metrinko, who wrote an article in the October 2005 edition of the *Foreign Service Journal* (AFSA News section, p. 7) about his experience as a member of a Lithuanian Provincial Reconstruction Team under NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Cheghcheran, the capital of Ghor province in Afghanistan. Responding to widespread misconceptions about the supposedly cushy life of U.S. diplomats, both active-duty and retired, he observes: "I served as an FSO from 1974 to 1996, and since then have been a WAE in Yemen, Iraq and Afghanistan. My present State Department assignment is for a full year to Afghanistan. Trust me when I say I know how my colleagues and I have lived in those places."

As discussed below, there is considerable interest in using WAEs in reconstruction and stabilization, but the development of actual staffing solutions and agreement on providing security for civilian reconstruction components may be some time off. USAID will have a significant role in this area, but it re-employs its annuitants primarily as contractors or on Foreign Service Limited appointments, not as WAEs. USAID currently has only 23 WAEs (generally hired as "expert consultants"), all in Washington, on its rolls. The Foreign Commercial Service put into place the foundations of a program for its annuitants several years ago, but never implemented it. Perhaps due to their small size, the Foreign Agricultural Service and International Broadcasting Bureau do not appear to have WAE programs.

RNet is being used to establish a central registry through which retirees and intending retirees can indicate an interest in post-retirement opportunities.

EP+ for Retirees Debuts

"When Iraq happened, we realized we didn't have full management information on the 1,400 WAEs in the department," notes David Dlouhy, director of the Office of Retirement. To remedy this, and to establish better links with retirees, the department launched RNet, (www.RNet.state.gov), a secure, Internet-based retirement network, in May. RNet is being used to establish a central registry through which retirees and intending retirees can

indicate an interest in post-retirement opportunities.

There is a database already used by the active-duty work force, called **Employee Profile Plus**. An extension of this database, called **EP+ for Retirees**, is designed to allow retirees to describe additional experience, skills and competencies not captured otherwise. Another module, **EP+ for Retiring Employees**, is intended to serve as the transition and bridge between active-duty assignment and retirement employment. Retiring employees may express interest in potential post-retirement employment opportunities, sign up for the new WAE Global Registry, and indicate interest in the Operational Readiness Reserve and the retiree component of the Standby Response Corps.

As of November 2005, almost 400 employees intending to retire had established their EP+ profiles, and 120 fully-retired employees had signed onto the system. Of these, 478 had signed up for the global registry, including 435 who indicated interest in the Operational Readiness Reserve, and 312 who were interested in the Standby Response Corps. For most WAEs, the bureaus will still make the hiring decisions and ensure security clearances are up-to-date, but RNet will provide visibility on the WAEs for the central personnel system and for the Readiness Reserve and SRC.

Transformational Diplomacy

The Secretary of State's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, established in 2004, is designated to lead U.S. efforts to assist countries in recovering from conflict and transitioning to peaceful, democratic and market-oriented economies. S/CRS is current-

Practical Advice for Managing WAE Positions

By Carolee Heileman

In my latest post-Foreign Service incarnation as a retirement specialist, I have learned a fair amount about working as a WAE (“When Actually Employed”) and I would like to pass on some practical advice to others. The following pointers are based on my personal experience, so will be most relevant to retired FS officers who want to work in Washington.

Where do I sign up? Despite creation of the WAE Global Registry in the Office of Retirement, the individual geographic and functional bureaus still maintain the rosters and therefore determine which annuitants will be hired as WAEs. There is no central place where vacancies are listed and competed, so you are dependent on your personal network of contacts to keep you informed.

Practices vary from bureau to bureau, but you should be prepared to provide the Executive Office of your home bureau with your resumé, medical clearance, security clearance, financial disclosure statement and your most recent personnel action. (As you go through the retirement process, be sure to inform the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Office of Medical Services that you intend to continue working so they can annotate your records.) Your employment must be cleared by the Legal Adviser’s Office and approved by the bureau’s front office. You may be able to work in other bureaus through a transfer of labor agreement if your home bureau does not object. However, some bureaus do not condone this practice because of concerns over possible conflicts of interest.

Once you have been approved, a process that can take several weeks, you must be sworn in as a civil servant.

How much will I earn? Your terms of employment will specify the rate at which you will be paid. After pursuing promotions year after year throughout their careers, some annuitants are disappointed to learn that they will be rehired at a lower grade level than when they retired. Again, the practice varies from bureau to bureau, but generally, if you retired as an FS-1, you may be hired

Carolee Heileman retired in 2004 after a 35-year career in the Foreign Service. Her assignments in Rome, Barcelona and Paris were the envy of many of her colleagues, but she says her tours in Bamako, Ankara, Bogota, and even in Washington, were just as interesting and often more exciting. She currently works as a WAE employee in the Office of Retirement (HR/RET) developing online sources of information on retirement issues.

as a GS-13; if you retired as a senior officer you could be hired at either the GS-14 or -15 level. At least one State Department office hires annuitants at the GS-18 level.

Your base salary rate is lower, but your net earnings may actually be higher than they were before you retired because there are fewer deductions, notably none for retirement or TSP contributions. The cost of your health and life insurance coverage is deducted from your annuity payment. You will have income tax withheld from your earnings as well as contributions to Social Security and Medicare.

While we are speaking of your benefits and deductions, you should be aware that you do not earn annual or sick leave when working on a WAE basis. (You’re retired, remember?) You are paid “when actually employed” which, to the consternation of many retirees, means that, except in extraordinary circumstances, you will not be paid for travel time if you are assigned abroad. If you live outside of Washington, you will not be paid to travel here for WAE employment. You are eligible for danger pay, however, and that does not count against your salary-plus-annuity cap.

What are the limits on WAE employment? When working on a WAE basis, you must abide by certain limits on the amount you can earn and the number of hours (1,040 per appointment year) that you can work. The basic principle is that the combined total of your WAE earnings plus your annuity per calendar year cannot exceed the amount of your salary when you retired — a figure that is not adjusted for inflation. (However, your WAE salary and your annuity do both rise due to cost-of-living adjustments, which reduces the gap between that total and your salary upon retirement.) If you go over that amount, your annuity may be suspended.

To confuse matters further, the limit on your salary plus annuity is computed on a calendar-year basis and the limit on the number of hours you can work is calculated according to your appointment year. Your appointment year starts the day you are sworn in as a civil servant and runs 12 months.

However, the good news is that annuitants can request an audit of their earnings from the Retirement Accounts Division, to find out exactly how much they can earn without exceeding the limit. Just send your request via e-mail to RAD2@state.gov.

What happens if I exceed the limit? Will I lose my pension?

*The combined total
of your WAE earnings
plus your annuity per
calendar year cannot
exceed the amount
of your salary when
you retired.*

F O C U S

It is not hard to exceed the salary-plus-annuity cap, particularly because your salary and annuity may both be increased by annual cost-of-living adjustments during the period you are employed — making the amount you can earn a moving target. Some annuitants were hired during the two-year period when the salary-plus-annuity cap was waived for those working on activities related to the war against terror, but that waiver has now expired. However, if your annuity is suspended or if you are asked to make restitution for an overpayment, and you think there are extenuating circumstances, you can appeal for relief from the deputy assistant secretary for global financial services in the Bureau of Resource Management.

I hope that others will benefit from my experience. |

Annuitants can request an audit of their earnings from the Retirement Accounts Division.

strongly encourage all annuitants to visit the HR/RET Web site (www.RNet.state.gov) for more information on issues of interest both to retiring and to retired employees. You may also sign up for a personal account in order to access your monthly annuity statements. HR/RET's Global WAE Registry enables annuitants to sign up for the Operational Readiness Reserve and for the Standby Response Corps.

If you are interested in working as a WAE, my best advice is to seek help from your network, just as they teach you in the

Job Search Seminar at FSI. And I feel morally obligated to remind you to report any post-retirement employment with the federal government to the Office of Retirement.

Best wishes for an active and fulfilling retirement to all of you!



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ly staffing a small Active Response Corps to furnish “first responders” to participate in operations to keep the peace and build stability in foreign countries. This will be supplemented by a Standby Response Corps that will deploy later in support of a focus country’s longer-term transition.

According to Chris Hoh of S/CRS, an Active Response Corps of some 15 full-time positions will be established early in 2006, to be supplemented later that year by a Standby Response Corps with up to 100 members. The ARC may eventually reach 100 staff, and the SRC, 400 staff. There will be a retiree component of the SRC, and it appears there may be a back-fill requirement when active duty employees are called up for SRC deployments.

On a larger scale, S/CRS has commissioned a joint study with the U.S. Joint Forces Command examining whether and how to augment contracted capabilities with a civilian reserve system. S/CRS is also working closely with JFCOM to test multinational coordination for an

integrated civilian-military response to complex crises. Already 39 countries, including Australia, Canada, various NATO members and five E.U. states, are working on this concept at JFCOM headquarters in Norfolk, Va. In Washington, S/CRS is building an interagency team from the department, USAID, OSD, DIA, Army Corps of Engineers, JFCOM and JCS. According to S/CRS briefing material, the U.S. should be prepared to address two or three significant reconstruction and stabilization operations concurrently, and each may require five to 10 years to complete.

Both the department and retirees should be able to benefit from this interest in building an integrated workforce community spanning each employee’s entire career, from entry on duty through post-retirement. As the RNet Web site states, the philosophy behind the network is simple: recognize the lifetime relationship between annuitants and the State Department. The department and our nation’s foreign policy can only be strengthened by this concept. ■

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WRITING AS A POST-FS CAREER: A GOOD CANE

M

y father once told me that “writing is a good cane, but a poor crutch.”

That is, writing can be a useful, interesting, profitable supplement to a solid professional income, but attempting to earn your living that way can leave you seated in that proverbial garret, if not actively starving in it.

For many of us, particularly those in the old retirement system, the FS annuity offers a solid “crutch,” putting us in a position to twirl our “cane” rather jauntily.

The incentive for a post-Foreign Service writing career is that many retired FSOs have already devoted their careers to writing. The downside is that we have spent our careers devoted to writing — for bureaucrats. Nobody — not even another bureaucrat — wants to read bureaucratic writing. Indeed, members of the *Foreign Service Journal* Editorial Board regularly recount episodes in which a potentially fascinating story drawn from Foreign Service life is written in the leaden, memo-to-the-Secretary prose that simply kills all interest.

Nevertheless, writing can provide a legitimate post-Foreign Service career, and there are a number of avenues for its pursuit.

Return to Mother State

This may not be a particularly adventurous career

WRITING FOR THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN ONE GUISE OR ANOTHER IS FAMILIAR AND COMFORTABLE, BUT THERE ARE MANY OTHER AVENUES FOR PUBLICATION.

BY DAVID T. JONES

move, but substantial numbers of When Actually Employed Foreign Service annuitants work within State. It has the advantage of addressing your mortgage and car payments with hourly remuneration. While many retired FSOs are employed in positions close to those they occupied at different stages in their active-duty career (desk officer, conference coordinator, fill-in consular officer, etc.), some are engaged in what are substantially writing/editorial positions.

These include, from my personal experience:

Drafting/editing human rights reports. Written in user-hostile, bill-of-lading prose, the annual country human rights reports emphasize facts and formula. Almost everyone has had experience with the HRRs during an active-duty career — if you were not a drafter in an early overseas tour or a reviewing official at a more senior level, at least you read the report for the country to which you were assigned. There is a prescribed format and scripted prose to transform the embassy’s draft into a final country report. Each year a number of WAEs work on these reports in the fall and winter, researching additional points, drafting supplementary language, editing the texts, and coordinating them with country desk officers and embassies. The drafting/editing process and nonliterary result are close to the Foreign Service stan-

dard, and little intellectual or stylistic adjustment is required for the writing. When in doubt, however, the implicit rule is to make it duller.

Freedom of Information Act declassification and review. The U.S. government has a massive and continuing requirement to review State Department classified material for downgrading and release. Virtually the entire reviewing staff consists of retired FSOs who have the institutional expertise and background to provide appropriate judgment. Indeed, more than occasionally these WAEs encounter telegrams and memos that they drafted at earlier stages in their lives. The reviewers also examine manuscripts by State Department officials (active and retired) to determine that no classified material is being revealed.

Additionally, they review the manuscripts for the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series prepared by the Office of the State Department Historian. There is also a steady stream of requests from academics, reporters, retired State officials and ordinary U.S. (and foreign) citizens seeking material on specific topics: e.g., embassy reporting on the late Lady Diana's activities, the death of JFK or the presence of nuclear weapons in countries A, B or C.

Again, the writing is formula-driven and scripted, but once formats are mastered, it is a straightforward, uneventful style. Accordingly, an ex-FSO will be comfortable with its writing.

Creating History

The winners write the history books, so you can be confident that your spin is "in." The State Department historian's office is the custodian of drafting for the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series of volumes on the U.S. official view of its diplomatic history. You can be sure that potentially embarrassing information is very carefully scrutinized (and debated) prior to any publication. Each volume is supposed to be released 20 years after the events transpired, but they are invariably behind schedule. (If the volume addressing the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus is a year late, who cares — it's history, not guidance for the noon briefing.)

While the historian's office keeps a stable of professional, trained Ph.D. historians beaver away on the

U.S. foreign relations volumes, there are occasional special projects that can engage retired FSOs as contract writers/researchers. Such may be prompted by special "one off" requests from senior State officials or bureaus. For example, the Diplomatic Security Bureau may desire a history of its origins and operations or a senior official may want an assessment of the Clinton administration's Middle East peace process. FSOs working on contract for the historian's office have done such projects. This work is more intellectually challenging and less scripted: one may do archival research, conduct interviews, peruse highly classified materials and generally produce work of serious substance. It may be rewarding, but the reward could be long deferred as the time between drafting and any public release of material can be years.

Commercial Writing

If writing for the State Department in one guise or another is familiar and comfortable, there is also the big,

Breaking Into Print

Newspaper and magazine editors don't wait around for brilliant pieces to fall into their laps. Due to limited time and space to fill before deadline, they usually have a good idea of what they are looking for and where to find it, and slots are often filled by regular columnists, not newcomers. The chances that your op-ed or article will be published are greater if you look into smaller newspapers and magazines, not the *New York Times*.

Establish relationships with the appropriate staff: if you have been interviewed by a journalist in the past, ask them to put you into contact with the appropriate editor. Use your networking skills!

Don't write the Great American Novel. Be concise, simple and direct. Know your audience, know your argument and keep your focus. Make sure you know the style preferred by the publication you are trying to write for. For more tips, take a look at <http://newsroom.depaul.edu/OpEd.pdf>.

If you have written a book, the best way to get published is to do your market research. Determine if there is an audience for your work by defining your target, and identify publishers to contact by browsing bookstores and taking note of the publishers who handle books like yours. Check <http://www.publishing-central.com/articles/20030511-87-ba56.html> for tips. Self-publishing is an increasingly popular low-cost alternative: *iUniverse*, at <http://www.iuniverse.com>, is only one of the better known among many imprints.

The Internet offers extensive resources for writers. Several of the best Web sites are: <http://www.writerswrite.com/>, <http://www.internet-resources.com/writers/> and http://www.google.com/Top/Arts/Writers_Resources/.

— Caitlin Stuart, Editorial Intern

David Jones, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, is a frequent contributor to the Journal.

F O C U S

wide world — essentially, everything else that is written for publication. Thus there are retired FSOs who are novelists, historians, commentators on foreign affairs, short story writers, biographers, poets and journalists. Some are even benighted enough to write about the Department of State between the covers of the *Foreign Service Journal*. These are some facets of writing that appealed to me personally.

Write that book. At one point or another, many FSOs have muttered to themselves, “I could write a book.”

Well, some of us have. Some of us have even gotten that book published (a much more difficult chore if you are not doing an exposé on the crisis of the decade)! But, even if it never reaches the public domain, simply writing such a manuscript has its own satisfactions. And if you

Writing op-eds is the ultimate exercise in intellectual freedom: if you write it — and a paper or magazine publishes it — the words are all yours.

self-publish, your heirs might rescue it from other dusty relics of your estate.

The steady expansion of the *Journal's* annual November roundup of books by Foreign Service-affiliated writers points to the attractiveness of this option.

Journalist/commentator. Many of us have spent a career suppressing our opinions (or restricting them to a carefully couched “comment” at the end of a reporting telegram). Or when we wrote an analytical cable, the design was still for that Great Reader

in the Sky (or at least on the 7th floor) who wanted information provided in certain ways with more fact and less panache. So writing op-eds is the ultimate exercise in intellectual freedom: If you write it — and a paper or magazine publishes it — the words are all yours.

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Here, the trick is finding a literary outlet that matches your expertise. Are you a superb photographer who also loves to travel to exotic spots? Perhaps *National Geographic* has room for your creativity. Do you have a lifelong passion for the 1956 Oldsmobile? The care and feeding of orchids? Creating computer games? The life of Jane Austen? There simply is no end to the potential subject matter or specialty magazines devoted to it. Op-eds and articles are also a lot shorter than a book, and many FSOs are world-class experts not just on countries or regions but on technical issues from arms control to aviation subsidies, global warming and economic assistance. Get to it; write away.

For me, Canada — dishwater-dull to most observers — has proved fascinating. Canada is an alternative America, a counterculture USA in which essentially the same petri-dish mixture of culture, racial-ethnic combinations, free-market democracy and advanced technology is responding to the challenges of the 21st century in unique ways. We have much to learn from one another — if we make the effort. Canadians feel ignored by Americans, so a reasonably knowledgeable Amcit can frequently find a Canadian publication willing to publish something akin to “A View from Washington.”

Newsletters. Some of us write a family-update newsletter. Others may do so for their community association or PTA. But there is also a wide range of professional associations that communicate with their membership. For me (and my wife Terry, also a retired senior FSO) the outlet was the National Council for Advanced Manufacturing. This nonprofit NGO stresses the value of manufacturing for the U.S. economy, urges greater commitment to R&D in hard sciences and engineering, and emphasizes the need for workforce training so 21st-century labor can deal with 21st-century technology. In this regard, we produce a weekly publication drawn from Internet sources (see www.nacfam.org). The downside to a weekly newsletter is that you do it *every* week; about 10 percent of our

*There are retired
FSOs who are novelists,
historians, commentators
on foreign affairs,
short story writers,
biographers, poets
and journalists.*

350-and-still-counting editions were produced while we were “on the road” outside Washington.

Research and editing. Throughout the foreign affairs community, there are authors looking for researchers/editors/proofreaders/factcheckers/indexers, and the like. Our recently retired generation lived through the proverbially cursed “interesting times.” This reality made for sanguinary but potentially interesting history.

If you don’t wish to write the history yourself, colleagues and associates are often grateful if you pitch in. In my own case, Ambassador Maynard “Mike” Glitman devoted the core of his career to the NATO deterrent and Alliance unity as epitomized by the East-West struggle over intermediate-range missiles. During the negotiations with the Soviets, which ultimately culminated in the 1987 INF Treaty eliminating these missiles, I occasionally did the substantive equivalent of holding his coat, providing a degree of technical/substantive editing and drafting support for his leadership of the negotiating team. I performed the literary equivalent of the same role for Mike’s story, *The Last Battle of the Cold War*, which is now in editing and projected for publication in the spring of 2006.

Retirement Course Offering

Over the past several years, the FSI retirement course has included a segment on writing as a facet of a post-Foreign Service career. Hopefully more than fill-time between resumé writing and financial planning, the session offers a range of insights into writing beyond the memorandum of conversation. An eclectic panel (sometimes including me and my wife Terry) features a travel editor/author for the *Washingtonian*, an ambassador-novelist and a “tandem” who is the executive director of a writer’s center. This is a drink-from-a-fire-hose presentation, but at the end of it, putative retirees should have a better insight into the whats and hows of writing.

And perhaps they will also recognize that they can get paid for their pleasure — sometimes. ■

AN NGO TO PROMOTE MULTI-TRACK DIPLOMACY

FOUNDING AN NGO TO PROMOTE A SYSTEMS
APPROACH TO ETHNIC AND REGIONAL PEACE-
BUILDING OFFERS CHALLENGES AND REWARDS.

BY JOHN W. AND CHRISTEL G. McDONALD

February 1987. After 40 years in the Foreign Service it was time to retire, said the government, enforcing the mandatory retirement age. We decided to remain in the Washington, D.C., area.

John's first post-FS foray was into academia: teaching courses at The George Washington University's Law School on multilateral negotiation and conflict resolution (the latter not yet a field in its own right). In addition, he was senior adviser to George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, and taught and lectured at the Foreign Service Institute and the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs on multilateral negotiation and the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

In the fall of 1988, John accepted the position of president of the Iowa Peace Institute, an independent NGO in Grinnell, Iowa. The three-year contract, running from January 1989 to the end of 1991, led to a wonderful opportunity to see the world through the eyes of Midwesterners, and to work in an environment very supportive of teaching and applying the skills of conflict resolution in ethnic and regional conflicts around the world. John was also able to introduce peer mediation in schools, as well as conflict resolution training for teachers statewide. Christel, meanwhile, obtained her M.A. in history from the University of Iowa in 1990.

A New NGO

After returning to Washington in the spring of 1992, John and Dr. Louise Diamond co-founded the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, based on a book they wrote together in 1991, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace* (Kumarian Press, 3rd edition 1996). There was no money, no office — just a good idea to help in a small way to contribute to building social peace in the world. After the paperwork of incorporation (and a payment of \$25) in the District of Columbia, and with the help of friends, office space was found and, thanks to some initial funding from our own pockets, IMTD became a reality. Its mission is to promote a systems approach to ethnic and regional peacebuilding, and to facilitate the transformation of deep-rooted social conflict (www.imtd.org).

In the years that followed, IMTD initiated and facilitated a series of conflict-resolution and conflict-transformation projects in Cyprus, Israel-Palestine, Georgia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Great Lakes region of East Africa, Liberia, Nepal, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Jordan, Libya, India, Pakistan and Kashmir, and with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile. In addition, John is involved in drinking water and sanitation issues, as water and peace are deeply related.

This work entails a lot of long and often uncomfortable travel in cramped airplane seats (no business class here!) and other modes of transportation, but all discomfort pales in the face of the plight of the people IMTD tries to help. Early on, John and his wonderful staff came to the conclusion that “women are the peace-builders in the world,” and yet they often live with less dignity than anybody else. To see the slightest glimmer of hope in their faces is incentive enough for us to continue IMTD’s work.

Ambassador John W. McDonald, president and CEO of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, is a lawyer, diplomat, former international civil servant, development expert and peacebuilder. He spent 20 years of his career in Western Europe and the Middle East and worked for 16 years on United Nations economic and social affairs. Christel G. McDonald, a former European civil servant, is secretary of the IMTD Corporation and its historical researcher.

Examples of Success

IMTD’s most recent success resulted from a proposal John made five years ago to the Indian and Pakistani governments to allow a “People’s Bus” to reunite Kashmiri people from both sides of the Line of Control, allowing them to visit each other. The first buses traveled from Srinagar to Muzzafarabad and back on April 7, 2005. Now, this humanitarian initiative continues to contribute to mutual help between the two countries after the devastating earthquake in the region last October.

The People’s Bus is a perfect example of the work that IMTD does through its multi-track systems approach to peacebuilding. A small NGO, with little funding but with great ideas and out-of-the box thinking, IMTD is able to lay the groundwork, often also referred to as Track Two or citizens’ diplomacy, for Track One (government-to-government) resolution of a conflict.

In some areas of ethnic or regional conflict, IMTD has been able to provide training in conflict resolution skills,

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and the local people have, in turn, been able to create a more stable situation in the area. In several instances, individuals trained in conflict resolution moved into government positions and were able to apply the skills obtained thanks to IMTD training (Cyprus and Liberia, for example). In Zimbabwe, IMTD helped Africa University create the first master's degree program in conflict resolution for African students on their own continent.

John's experience in multilateral diplomacy (Marshall Plan, CENTO, U.N., ILO), gathered over the course of a long Foreign Service career, accounts for IMTD's success. His FS work led to the conviction that consensus-building is the most important ingredient for any negotiation. He also realized that governments alone can no longer solve global problems, and that political and economic peacebuilding must include a systems approach to social building; i.e.: working with people to build a sustainable and peaceful world. The work truly touches the heart!

The Power of Enthusiasm

IMTD is now in its 13th year. Because of the constant shortage of funding, no one on the staff, including John, who is chairman of the board and CEO, receives a salary. Yet applications for internships are overwhelming (70 for seven positions in the last semester). The 175 interns since 1992 — graduate students from around the world — have all carried the concept of multi-track diplomacy back to their countries and communities. They understand that it is the people who ultimately will decide whether a peace agreement will hold or not.

Often these students invite John into their academic settings to lecture and share his experiences in the Foreign Service and with multi-track diplomacy and conflict solving around the world. Other NGOs look for inspiration and partnership in peacebuilding, too, so that John gives an average of about 110 speeches a year, both in the U.S. and abroad. Furthermore, many a thesis in the field of conflict resolution has been written under his guidance. Being surrounded by so many young people and seeing their enthusiasm to do their part in a troubled world keeps John actively involved and optimistic in all aspects of life.

***John's Foreign Service
work led to the
conviction that
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negotiation.***

Is the work rewarding (even without pay)? Yes. Is it easy? No. IMTD continuously struggles to obtain funding for its many projects and new requests for help. The institute's loyal following of over 1,400 members is enthusiastic and dedicated, but their financial support covers only a small part of the overhead costs. Project money comes in haltingly and only after overcoming incredible administrative barriers.

Finally it appears that some U.S. government agencies are actively beginning to concern themselves with the issues of transformation of conflict, but they have yet to fully understand the contribution that a multi-track systems approach can make. Unfortunately, the big foundations have recently become increasingly restrictive in their overseas funding for peace and conflict resolution. The business community could and should play a much bigger role as the development of its markets depends on having peace in the region, but has not yet recognized social peacebuilding as the indispensable tool it is.

An Exciting Chapter

Fortunately, though, conflict resolution is now an established field and is taught at many universities, here and abroad. Moreover, the idea of having a combined degree in law and conflict resolution — long promoted by John — has now taken hold at American University in Washington, D.C.

Christel, a former European civil servant of the Council of Ministers of the European Communities (now E.U.), continues to chair the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide French Group and is president of the D.C. Area Phi Beta Kappa Association. At their condominium home, she and John regularly host the United Nations Association-National Capital Area Task Force for Cultures of Peace and organize the Foreign Policy Association's annual Great Decisions Project.

The chapter of life titled "After Retirement" is exciting. Despite her own busy schedule and many responsibilities, Christel supports John's work wholeheartedly, at home and on the road. Both McDonalds love life and are committed to many more years of global peacebuilding. ■

SORT OF RETIRED IN SAN DIEGO

“Y

ONE RETIREE HAS FOUND THAT SAYING “NO” IS THE HARDEST SKILL TO HONE IN LIFE AFTER THE FOREIGN SERVICE.

BY MILLIE MCCOO

ou’ve flunked retirement!” Vickie Rose, another retired FSO, told me that when I was into the second year of my post-Foreign Service life. But that depends on what one means by retirement. If, for example, one thinks of it as “Still Life with Rocking Chair and Knitting Needles,” then she had a point there. Yes, I *had* left the Foreign Service with the idea that I would no longer perform work in exchange for a salary. Instead I would do what my heart led me to do, on my own time and on my own terms. And that I was doing ... in a way.

At the time Vickie good-humoredly demoted me, I was working in wildlife rehabilitation, tutoring a high school student, spending several hours a week doing non-remunerative media work for a nonprofit group that supports orphans in Baja California, fundraising for a local YMCA, taking classes in veterinary assistance, guitar and jewelry-making, and volunteering at the Humane Society and the San Diego Zoo. No, I wasn’t catching up on my reading as I had planned, nor had I been on a single cruise. But I was having fun! And, once I accomplished those missions with finite deadlines, I cut back on my activities and began practicing the art of saying “no,” which is the hardest skill to hone in retirement. (I’m still learning it, truth

be told.) I still occasionally find myself chasing the clock — but I’m still having fun.

I retired as a public diplomacy officer in 2000, intent on starting the new millennium with a new life. While I loved my career in the Foreign Service, for several years I had found myself longing for a change. I had grown weary of pack-outs and goodbyes. I wanted to settle somewhere, sink in some deep roots and become part of a community. I wanted to focus on other things: to learn to play the guitar and to create art with my hands. I wanted to mentor children and become a political activist. I wanted to devote more time to reading and to writing poetry. And I especially wanted to spend more time working with animals.

So in 1995, after a dream vacation in which I had participated in an Earthwatch project on marine mammal research, I began seriously planning my retirement. At the end of my tour in Kuwait, I returned to Washington and completed my “high three.” I volunteered at the National Zoo, which allowed me to network with scientists involved in animal research throughout the country.

I also had several meetings with my investment broker. Note to younger officers: Thanks to my mother’s persistent needling, when I started serving over-

*While I loved my
career in the Foreign
Service, I had grown
weary of pack-outs
and goodbyes.*

seas, every pay period I set aside the equivalent of what I had paid in Washington for a month's rent, which I then invested in the stock market. Since I was serving in posts in which housing was provided, this practice was painless. I also participated in the Thrift Savings Plan, of course. My portfolio made all the difference in the timing and comfort of my retirement.

At the end of my final three years, I took the Retirement Seminar. I highly recommend that resource to everyone, even those who do not intend to continue in a line of work associated with foreign affairs. The seminar helps one consider various options for retirement. It also taught me how to sell myself as a contributor to scientific endeavors, incorporating the skills I acquired in the Foreign Service, such as team-building and project management.

Finding a New Home

I wasn't sure where I wanted to settle and sink in those roots. I knew it would have to be in a warm climate, but that was it. So I stayed on in Washington for a year after retiring and used the time to identify possible retirement places, consulting a variety of good books and Web sites. I selected six places to visit and spent a week in each, visiting zoos, animal sanctuaries and research institutions and looking at available housing. I also met with friends, friends of friends and retired FSOs to find out about the

quality of life in each place.

My focus was drawn to San Diego because of its proximity to my hometown of Los Angeles, the variety of opportunities to work in animal and environmental fields and the abundant cultural life. The only downside was the cost of housing. San Diego, and Southern California in general, is an expensive housing market. As one realtor put it, "In San Diego, you pay a fortune for a sliver of California with a shack on it."

I moved here and rented a home for a year before making a final determination to stay. Once I decided that San Diego was indeed the place for me, I picked a realtor and found my dream house. The secret to finding the house you want is to ignore the adage "location, location, location," and focus on "I want, I want, I want." In other words, I bought to please myself, not for investment purposes. I looked in neighborhoods that were not on the "A" list, but rather in areas that were well-kept secrets. (Having volunteered for "Meals on Wheels" during my first year, I had discovered lovely neighborhoods on less-traveled roads). And as it turned out, property values in all parts of the city have skyrocketed, so I'm not suffering.

I am happy with my decision. I love living in San Diego, which offers a rich cultural life, a variety of outdoor activities and wonderful weather. I am still working with animals, taking courses, tutoring youngsters, mentoring foreign college students and otherwise volunteering my time for special events. Yes, I admit that I have a long way to go in developing my "Just say no" skills. But I take consolation from the fact that I share this weakness with many other retirees. ■

Millie McCoo was a public diplomacy Foreign Service Officer from 1972 to 2000, serving in Abidjan, Antananarivo, Port-au-Prince, Rabat, Cairo, Kuwait, Washington and Los Angeles. She now resides in San Diego.

SERVING IN PANAMA OVER AND OVER AGAIN

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AN FSO WHO SERVED THREE TIMES IN PANAMA CITY NOW LIVES THERE AND WORKS AS A FOREIGN SERVICE NATIONAL FOR THE PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY.

BY ROBERT RAYMER

nusual as it was, my 29-year passage from U.S. Foreign Service junior officer to Foreign Service National in Panama's Foreign Ministry has been a fascinating journey, particularly after I had spent so many hours and years in country team meetings on the third floor of the U.S. embassy discussing what the government of Panama was doing and how the U.S. should respond.

When Secretary of State Henry Kissinger gave the oath of office to our large 119th Foreign Service class at the State Department, in the summer of 1975, I couldn't have imagined that our careers would fly by so rapidly, or that I would eventually serve three tours of duty in the same country — much less retire there.

"Three Musketeers" from that cohort — Vince Mayer, Chuck Keil and I — headed off to our first tour, where the U.S. was negotiating a new Panama Canal treaty. I remember as though yesterday arriving at Panama City's Tocumen International Airport. Though it was just my first tour, I felt every inch the important diplomat, until the colleague who met me on the tarmac pointed to a man beside an Air Force aircraft who he identified as my first boss, the political section chief — I was a consular-coned rotational junior officer — struggling like a porter with the bag of a U.S. representative, a member of one of

the many congressional delegations that visited Panama during the treaty negotiations.

The chief U.S. negotiator, the venerable Ellsworth Bunker, seemed to us diplomatic grunts monarch-like, with limousines, helicopters and myriad beck-and-call assistants. So when I returned to D.C. two years later and took the shuttle bus from the State Department to the Foreign Service Institute, I was nonplused to see the elderly envoy tucked into a seat next to an entry-level language student — no fanfare at home, just another federal commuter, demonstrating the stark divide between official life and hierarchy overseas and the relative obscurity of a Washington assignment, even for the ambassadorial class.

In August 1977, the U.S. and Panama signed a new Panama Canal treaty and, following a bitter struggle, the U.S. Senate ratified it by a single vote. Though naysayers declared Panamanians incapable of running the Canal properly, almost six years after its end-of-century turnover even U.S. officials acknowledge that the "eighth wonder of the world" operates better than ever and with fewer accidents.

I was gratified to have played a small role in finally setting things right in America's relationship with Panama, but after two years there I was ready to move on to

Auckland. A dozen years later, I was deputy consul general in New Delhi. Having recently been promoted to the rank of FS-1, I itched to head a consular section. So in mid-1989, when a cable asked for volunteers for the consul general position in Panama City, I eagerly threw my hat into the ring — even though I was just one year into my three-year assignment, and ineligible to bid because Delhi was a hardship post. Fortunately for me, the department ignored the rules in its eagerness to get a warm body to fill a less-than-popular job. I still recall colleagues asking incredulously, “Panama? Are you sure?” After all, dictator Manuel Noriega was seriously rattling sabers and the U.S. consular section’s visa operations had been suspended.

Meanwhile, on Dec. 20, 1989, the U.S. invasion, Operation Just Cause, dropped into Panama’s night and not long after, arrested Noriega. Ambassador Deane Hinton picked me to be the first post-dictatorship consul general, and I arrived in Panama City three months later, in March 1990. Those were heady days for the U.S. embassy, and as consul general I dealt with Panamanians at all levels who sought to put efficient, democratic governmental operations in place. That second Panama tour would last just over three years, during which I made life-long friends — and met my Argentine-born, naturalized-Panamanian wife-to-be. As I prepared to depart for my second consul generalship, in San Salvador, in 1993, I remember thinking, “Panama is a place where I could settle down.” However, in the meantime my life and career had to move on.

Finally Settling Down

Eight years later, as I wrapped up my tour as consul general in Argentina, it was time to plan one final Foreign Service assignment. Despite political and economic upheavals at the time, I considered retiring in cosmopolitan Buenos Aires. However, I still had some time-in-class to use up and, despite very tempting alternatives, with my wife’s agreement I bid on Panama yet again. State shared

my enthusiasm for the assignment, and as it had shown by sending me to Buenos Aires, its rules did not prohibit service in a foreign-born spouse’s country of nationality. So in August 2002, I was back in Panama City yet again for a third tour, and second time as consul general there.

In accordance with the treaty, the U.S. Panama Canal Commission had handed over the keys to the locks to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999. The nation finally ran its canal and controlled the extensive infrastructure of the former American Canal Zone. As they built over the last vestiges of the long U.S. presence, workers turned former military bases into housing developments, schools, supermarkets and the regional headquarters of international organizations. Yet, when I drove into Panama City on the new freeway from the airport with my wife and young daughter, it felt like a homecoming — a feeling reinforced when we visited a neighborhood supermarket where three Panamanian acquaintances greeted me by name, over a decade after we had left the country.

A year later, in 2003, I retired from the Foreign Service. With a Panamanian-citizen wife, I quickly obtained Panamanian residency. Others at Embassy Panama City followed that trend, not to mention increasing numbers of baby-boomer retirees from the U.S., Canada and Western Europe.

I joined the country’s most important international law firm, Morgan & Morgan, as a part-time consultant. I also became interested in the local politics that affected my new life and home. I knew people in every part of the Panamanian political spectrum, but it was clear to me that what had historically been the “party of the dictators,” the Revolutionary Democratic Party, was now (ironically) the country’s most democratic and representative political movement.

A Historic Election

The PRD’s presidential candidate in the May 2004 elections, chosen in a party primary, was its secretary general, Martin Torrijos, a son of Omar Torrijos, the military strongman who ran Panama during my first tour there a quarter-century earlier. The U.S.-educated Torrijos convinced me that he and the PRD offered Panama its best chance for economic progress and continued good relations with the U.S. In addition, like most Panamanians, I shared then-U.S. Ambassador Linda Watt’s publicly-expressed disenchantment with President Mireya Moscoso’s antidemocratic actions and apparent indiffer-

Robert Raymer was a Foreign Service officer from 1975 to 2002, serving in Panama (three times), New Zealand, Japan, Mexico, India, El Salvador, Peru, Argentina and Washington, D.C. A founding member and first dean of the Panama Consular Corps, since October 2004 he has been a special assistant to Panamanian First Vice President and Foreign Minister Samuel Lewis Navarro.

ence to widespread corruption (including allegations that her officials had milked Taiwanese generosity for illicit, personal gain in exchange for continued diplomatic recognition of the island). At the same time, many Panamanians were lukewarm to the third alternative, a return of the post-invasion Guillermo Endara presidency.

Rumors were rife, especially in the business community, that despite Washington's obvious (if unspoken) disdain for the ruling Arnulfista Party's bad governance, it hoped for a victory by that party's affable candidate, former Foreign Minister Jose Miguel Aleman, because of suspicion of both Martin Torrijos and his once-anti-American party.

I simply did not buy that, and as a permanent resident with a past and a future in Panama, I wanted to express my opinion somehow in the election campaign. As a courtesy, I told Amb. Watt of my plans and consulted online

guidance from State Department sources, which indicated there were no ethical or legal restrictions that would prevent my doing so as a retiree.

First, I joined "Team Martin" as an informal adviser. Along with the candidates for the first and second vice president positions, Samuel Lewis Navarro and Ruben Arosemena — leader of the Popular Party (formerly the Christian Democrats) — I accompanied Torrijos many a dusty mile, tramping through the country's barrios and listening to the complaints and desires of the voters.

FSN at the Foreign Ministry

Later, I wrote an op-ed piece for Panama's most influential daily newspaper, *La Prensa*, titled "Why Should Martin Torrijos Win?" I declared that "U.S. government representatives cannot publicly announce their favorites to win the national election for diplomatic reasons.

Panama after the Foreign Service

Retirees contemplating a post-Foreign Service life overseas should take a close look at Panama. A three-hour flight from Miami, the "blessed isthmus" is home to a rapidly growing number of American, Canadian and European retirees in search of a comfortable, affordable life abroad.

Wilma recently battered retiree-favorite South Florida with its eighth hurricane in two years. However, Panama is well off the hurricane track and mostly free of other natural disasters as well. "Residential tourism" is booming in this "future Singapore of the Americas." After more than eight decades of propinquity, Panamanians — especially those in the Panama City and Colon areas — tend to view resident expatriates as friends and neighbors, parts of the daily scene as familiar as the sun and ocean views. So Americans who live in Panama feel less like strangers than they might in virtually any of the other overseas retirement destinations they might consider.

Intriguingly exotic, Panama is also invitingly familiar. Cable and satellite TV play U.S. and foreign programs. Panama's balboa is the same U.S. greenback in which federal annuities are paid. So U.S. retirees know their pension spending power will not suffer the unpredictable, flush-today-budget-challenged tomorrow fluctuations of many foreign currencies. U.S. retirees frequently obtain mortgages from Panamanian banks, often at percentages lower than those in American markets, although at variable rates of interest.

Whether in western Chiriqui province's cool highlands — for example, popular retiree haven Boquete — or in cosmopolitan Panama City, Latin America's skyscraper champion, houses and apartments remain bargains by U.S. standards. For about \$300,000 or less, upscale Panama City neighborhoods offer the equivalent of an entire floor, multimillion-dollar Miami Beach bay-

view condominium, often better constructed to boot. Less than \$100,000 could purchase a sturdy, three-bedroom house on an acre lot in a western Panama community, such as Volcan. And Panama exempts new homes from property tax for 20 years.

The cost of living is comparatively low, as well. Domestic help, including home nursing care, is economical indeed. Imported goods are plentiful and reasonably priced, especially in the larger supermarkets and warehouse outlets, such as Price Smart. Domestically-grown fruits and vegetables are cheap and luscious, as are the fresh-off-the-boat fish and shrimp at Panama City's morning market.

A nation without an army, Panama is one of the safest countries for foreign residents in Latin America — and one can even drink the tap water. Medical and dental care is good, with many U.S.-trained practitioners. Most charge considerably lower fees than their U.S. counterparts, and often make house calls as well. Sales tax and customs duties are low, and Panama does not tax savings account interest or foreign source income. And as a mark of respect for age, retirees receive generous discounts on goods, services and transportation, as well as separate lines at most service providers and government offices.

For more information, commercial Web sites, such as panama-info.com and www.panamaguide.com, and "Panama" keyword Internet searches are best bets. Those who already made the move to Panama or who hope to do so comment on their experiences and offer advice in several online groups, including viviendo_en-panama@yahoo.com; panamaforum@yahoo.com and Americans_in_Panama@yahoo.com. Eric Jackson's ThePanamaNews.com, is a widely-read online English-language newspaper.

F O C U S

Nevertheless, they are permitted to have private opinions, and I am convinced that were they able to vote for the next president of Panama most U.S. officials who know Panama and its modern history well, like most Panamanians, would instinctively vote for the PRD candidate, Martin Torrijos. For like the Panamanian electorate, Washington officials know that the PRD, previously denounced as the party of dictators, is now the most inclusive and democratic political party in Panama, thanks to the leadership of Martin Torrijos.”

What was the effect of a former U.S. consul general writing such an opinion piece? My newspaper article certainly did not win the election for the PRD, which was



On the 2004 campaign trail, l - r, Samuel Lewis Navarro, Robert Raymer, Martin Torrijos, Ruben Arosemena.

probably already ahead. But more than a few conservative movers and shakers in Panamanian society took another look at Martin, and not a few remarked that my comments put the lie to the commonly-held opinion many had shared that the government candidate was also the U.S. candidate. (The U.S. embassy correctly pointed out that I did not

speak for the U.S. government — and then said no more.)

Martin Torrijos did win the presidency, and took office in September 2004. He asked me to join his administration as a contract adviser in the Panamanian Foreign Ministry, headed by First Vice President and Foreign Minister Samuel Lewis Navarro. (Since I was not a Senior Foreign Service officer, I did not have to wait a

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year before I could accept foreign government employment.) The naming of a U.S. adviser in the foreign ministry was uncontroversial at first, and a number of commentators congratulated the new administration for its good sense in utilizing talent from various sources. However, in mid-2005, a leftist construction union (more interested in rabble-rousing than the welfare of workers) denounced the “shameful” appointment of a gringo adviser “who dictates Panamanian foreign policy.”

Mutual Benefit

Few others jumped on this bandwagon, however, and Foreign Minister Lewis Navarro supported me energetically and publicly as an important asset to his foreign policy team. Additionally, as one U.S. mission wag commented privately, “I don’t know what the union is complaining about. The Panamanian Foreign Ministry has one gringo adviser. We have 300 Panamanian employees, and they run the embassy.” The union soon moved on to other perceived grievances with which to bash the gov-

ernment. But not long after that episode, while driving I found myself alongside a public demonstration, and a protester thrust a leaflet through my car window that chided the government for its gringo adviser.

Certainly some former U.S. colleagues looked warily at my working for a foreign government after almost 30 years in the Foreign Service. But I pointed out that the U.S. also benefits from my employment as a Ministry of Foreign Affairs adviser, precisely because I can explain U.S. policies and motivations more clearly to my Panamanian colleagues so they can formulate appropriate responses. Moreover, most of the resources and advantage cards are stacked overwhelmingly in favor of U.S. government interlocutors. Panama is not the enemy, after all. It is arguably the U.S.’s firmest friend in our hemisphere, and deserves to have a more level playing field.

Unusual as it was, my 29-year passage from U.S. Foreign Service junior officer to Foreign Service National in Panama’s Foreign Ministry has been interesting and rewarding in ways I never could have foreseen. ■

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MANAGING INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS IN ACADEMIA

W

THE HALLS OF ACADEMIA OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETIRED FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL OF ALL SKILL GROUPS.

BY TIBOR P. NAGY JR.

hen I was considering moving from State to academia after a 32-year U.S. government career, I did what we all do before accepting a new assignment — I contacted someone I trusted who had made the same move to ask how it was going. The reply: “Once you learn the language and culture, it’s a great posting.” Now, starting my third year managing international programs at Texas Tech University, I can second that advice: Academia can be a fantastic follow-on to a State career. It offers tremendous professional and personal satisfaction — but do learn the language and culture.

The halls of academia offer opportunities for retired Foreign Service personnel of all skill groups. While political and economic officers may be particularly attracted to teaching, there are numerous positions suited to officers with management, public affairs, consular, medical, information technology or security experience. Since my own Foreign Service experience was in management, my new position as assistant vice provost for international affairs at Texas Tech University is a great fit.

“Globalization” and “internationalization” are very trendy terms around campuses these days, as American colleges and universities are recognizing the importance of preparing students for a globalized economy and culture, with all their potential for borderless employment

mobility and information exchange. At the same time, academia also appreciates the tremendous technological, economic and geopolitical contributions international students and scholars make to our campuses. Therefore, international expertise, whether content-based or operational, is in great demand.

Most campuses have an international programs office, though its activities may operate under a variety of names and chief executive titles. Thus, my counterparts can be deans, vice presidents, executive directors, etc. (See “Academia 101” below for more specifics.) Directing TTU’s Office of International Affairs is similar to managing a small U.S. mission. With about 35 employees, each year we’re responsible for sending over 600 U.S. students on a variety of study-abroad programs; welcoming about 1,300 international students and scholars from over 100 countries to our campus; administering our university centers in Seville, Spain, and Quedlinburg, Germany; operating our International Center for Arid and Semiarid Land Studies here on campus; and promoting outreach on international issues in regional communities, including presenting programs to over 20,000 K-12 students and bringing distinguished speakers to Lubbock.

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assignments, resolving difficulties related to visas and work permits for visiting students and scholars has become a major part of the workload on our side of the “window.” Such functions are handled by international student/scholar advisers (ideal jobs for retired consular officers). Our staff also includes a management officer, a general services officer, an information systems officer and several office management specialists.

In addition, I teach at least one course on Africa each year, because I feel the need to stir up interest about the continent among our students, and to promote overseas U.S. government careers.

Tibor P. Nagy Jr. was a Foreign Service officer from 1979 to 2003, serving as ambassador to Guinea and Ethiopia, among many other postings. Since retiring from the Service, he has served as associate vice provost for international affairs at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

Academia 101: Understanding the Campus

Those interested in transitioning to academia can pursue several strategies. I maintained contact with TTU (my undergraduate institution) throughout my Foreign Service career. It was close to our U.S. home, so I did class presentations and guest lectures while on leave. This history of involvement was a major factor in being selected for my current job. Serving a tour as a “Diplomat-in-Residence” is also tremendously useful, as it gives an excellent introduction to academia and allows the DIR to get to know (and become known) at all of the institutions of higher learning in the region.

However you get there, you will have to master the basics of campus life. Interestingly, there are a number of parallels with the Foreign Service world. Academia is just as hierarchical and rank-conscious as diplomacy, and there is a professional chasm between “faculty” (teaching and research) and “staff” (support) akin to that between FS generalists and specialists. On larger campuses, many classes are led by graduate-student teaching assistants

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Eight Tips to Break into Academia

By Bob Fritts

Conventional wisdom says that it's virtually impossible for retired Foreign Service officers without Ph.D. degrees to be hired as faculty on U.S. college campuses. Don't believe it. The barriers can be overcome and the lifestyle is attractive.

Here are "Eight Inside Tips" on how to break in.

1. Learn the culture. Academia is a culture; work it as you would foreign contacts. The highest-status cult is composed of Ph.D.-holding "scholars." In general, they disdain real-worlders, who are usually regarded as vocational "practitioners." The divide between the two is similar to Foreign Service vs. Civil Service stereotypes. Accept it.

2. Speak the jargon. "On the tenure track" applies to scholars, while those on a "non-tenure track" are presumed less qualified. "Adjuncts" are non-tenured persons teaching occasional classes or engaged in other academic activities on a part-time basis. They may or may not have a Ph.D. degree. A "senior fellow" (my title) means "non-tenure, non-threat."

3. Study the organization. Traditional academic departments are the most difficult for practitioners to crack; e.g., international relations, economics, political science, etc. Instead, look for organizations with "center," "program," "institute" or the like in their titles. They are usually more open to interdisciplinary expertise and "practitioner" skills.

4. Start small. If you don't have a mentor, get the college catalog, scan it for areas of your competence, make the faculty rounds and chat about common expertise (just as you used to do on courtesy calls abroad). Ask to see the course syllabus. Think how you might fit in. If you're deemed credible, it might lead to a guest lecture, which might lead to something more. Business schools are open to "how-to" presentations on specific countries and regions. For example, you might offer a provocative lecture on "How American Business Defeats Itself in Country/Region X."

Attend campus events such as public lectures and confer-

In seeking a teaching position, revert to the premise of your first Foreign Service post: Get around.

ences. Be tastefully visible with public questions and post-event chit-chat. Volunteer to recruit foreign officials and active or retired colleagues as relevant speakers. Assist with conference management — many colleges are understaffed administratively for special events. (The Foreign Service knows all about that!)

5. Be realistic. There are few full-time non-Ph.D. positions in academia at FSO salary levels, and such plums go to our star colleagues. Those with specific expertise on a current hot spot — e.g., Iraq — can sometimes get a useful jump-start. But beware: adjuncts at the College of William & Mary who teach a basic three-credit course on international relations earn about \$4,000 per semester for preparing 30 lecture hours from scratch. It's only cost-effective if you do a course more than once — as I can attest.

6. Be opportunistic. An expanding field well-suited to Foreign Service skills is "development" — raising money. Every university does it and needs staff who are good at it. Development folk use skills that FSOs mastered early on: how to plan conceptually, identify contacts, use talking points, write memcons ("contact reports" is the fundraising term) and schmooze skillfully. Your maturity will be a major asset in this area as prospective donors, usually older, are more comfortable discussing sensitive financial matters with presumed peers. Thus, ageism is less of an issue. However, you'll need to overcome the FSO's Achilles' heel: a reluctance to ask "The Question" and solicit the gift.

7. Know your consular district. FSOs, including retired ambassadors, are a dime a dozen in the Washington area. But farther from the Beltway, they are rarer. There are thus more opportunities to gain visibility through op-eds in local newspapers, regional National Public Radio outlets, appearances in front of senior learning groups, and talks to local organizations and service clubs. Visibility leads to more public engagements that, in turn, lead to more contacts. Revert to the premise of your first Foreign Service post: Get around.

8. Cast a broad net. Community colleges are a major part of our American system of higher education. Many of their teachers and professors don't have a Ph.D. However, the number and variety of courses related to foreign affairs are often sparse and the pay is lower than in colleges and universities. Nevertheless, teaching at community colleges can be fun and rewarding.

Good luck!

Bob Fritts retired from the Foreign Service in 1991. He was ambassador to Ghana and Rwanda, among other postings. Since leaving State, he's been the senior fellow in foreign policy for the Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va. He doesn't have a Ph.D.

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(universally known as TAs). Professional faculty begin their careers as instructors, then progress through the ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, and finally to professor (think Senior Foreign Service). On most campuses, a Ph.D. degree is required to advance beyond the instructor level.

While no two university structures are identical, the fundamental working unit is the department (e.g., chemistry), several of which make up a college or school (arts and sciences, engineering, etc.), and these collectively make up the university. The entire organization is headed by a president or chancellor (if, for example, there is a school “system” made up of one or more university campuses, plus a medical school or law school). The number-two administrator is usually the provost, who may also carry

Most campuses have an international programs office, though its activities may operate under a variety of names and chief executive titles.

a vice presidential designation. Then, depending on the size of the institution, there are various vice presidents, vice chancellors, vice provosts, and associate vice provosts (my title). Again, the exact organization can vary considerably from campus to campus.

Departments are run by “chairs” and schools/colleges by “deans.” Chairs are usually elected by their faculty, although deans sometimes use force majeure to place someone they want in charge (or remove them). Most faculty openings, deanships and senior administrative positions are filled by a search committee that reviews applicants and presents recommendations to the selecting official. CEO (president/chancellor) vacancies are also filled by a search committee, but the selection is made by the institution’s board of regents/governors.

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Top-level administrative officials, in addition to performing their management functions, also maintain their faculty status and may even teach a class or two (think DCM as the function and FS-1 as the rank). Faculty can leave their administrative positions (chair, dean, provost, even president) and remain on campus in their professorial role to teach or do research.

The mandatory retirement age — if there is one — also varies among institutions, but is usually quite high (70 to 75). Tenure — originally intended to assure academic freedom — is a key issue. The trend is toward fewer tenure-track positions (now averaging about 45 percent — but, again, with a high degree of variation among institutions), although faculty strongly support creating more. Someone on a tenure track can expect to wait about six years before making it.

Challenges and Opportunities

Management in academia often resembles trying to herd cats. Most policies are developed through commit-

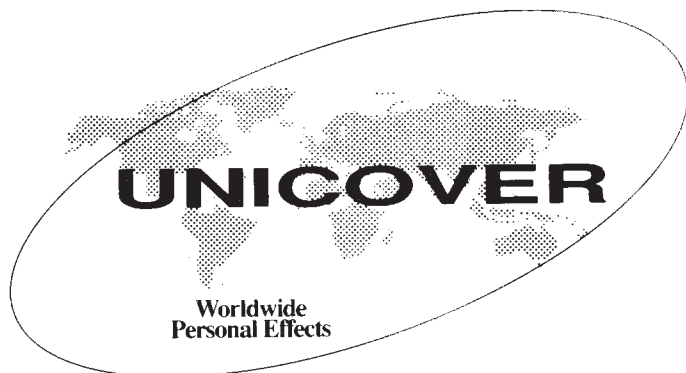
tees or collegial discussions, so someone accustomed to a real-time, command-and-control management style would probably face constant frustration. Fortunately, in my case academic colleagues have been very supportive of someone coming from the “outside” to a relatively high-level position, and have been more than willing to provide guidance and advice.

Given the growing emphasis on globalization and internationalization, Foreign Service skills are welcome and readily transferable to many academic positions. With thousands of campuses spread throughout the U.S., academia can serve as an excellent transition to eventual retirement almost anywhere you might like to settle. The most comprehensive compendium of higher-level academic vacancies is found in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (<http://chronicles.com/jobs/>).

Wherever you end up, in my experience, work in the State Department is just as ideal a preparation for academia as time spent on campus is for the Foreign Service. ■

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RETIREEES BUILD SUPPORT FOR THE FOREIGN SERVICE

FS RETIREEES EXPLAINED THE IMPORTANCE OF U.S. DIPLOMACY TO MORE THAN 27,000 ATTENDEES AT PROGRAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN 2005.

By TOM SWITZER

Retiirees play a key role in AFSA's nationwide outreach programs, which are aimed at creating a domestic constituency for the Foreign Service, resulting in expanded public support for funding for diplomatic readiness. Retirees support outreach by writing articles and op-eds for their local papers or by public speaking. One of our most effective outreach elements is the Speakers Bureau, which in 2005 deployed Foreign Service retirees to explain the importance of U.S. diplomacy to more than 27,000 attendees at over 480 programs in 43 states and Washington, D.C.

AFSA's speaker corps comprises more than 490 retired Foreign Service officers, including 80 former ambassadors, most of them still actively involved in international affairs as teachers, authors, business people and consultants.

Drawing on their expertise, personal experiences and historical perspectives, they offer audiences an opportunity both to explore the complex, often confusing international order that has replaced the Cold War and to reflect on the evolving role of American diplomacy in the face of global terrorism and other challenges. Their audiences range from major world affairs councils and universities to community-service organizations, town meetings, business conventions, high schools and local media.

Retiree speakers receive talking points and issue updates from AFSA, as well as promotional material for AFSA's excellent book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy*. Using this material, speakers typically emphasize the critical role of diplomacy in advancing America's vital security and economic interests around the globe. They encourage audience members to contact their congressional representatives to request increased funding for U.S. diplomatic readiness. Speakers also reach out to talented youth — especially minority-group members — to encourage them to consider Foreign Service careers. (A number of speakers participate in State Department-sponsored recruitment fairs at colleges countrywide.)

Retirees have also played a major role in educating Americans on the vital role performed by U.S. diplomacy in the ongoing struggle against terrorism. Since 9/11 we have deployed more than 650 retiree experts on counterterrorism, Middle Eastern and South Asian issues for speaker and media programs nationwide.

The Speakers Program

As director of communications, I coordinate the national speakers program here at AFSA, with the welcome and able assistance of activist retirees in a number of states, most prominently Florida, Virginia, California,

Maryland, Washington, Texas, and Maine. AFSA speakers are offered free of charge to host groups, who are encouraged to assist with travel and local accommodations where possible. Retiree speakers are free to accept honoraria from host groups if offered. (AFSA pays limited travel and other expenses to facilitate certain higher-priority programs.)

Who can be an AFSA speaker? All Foreign Service retirees from the five foreign affairs agencies are welcome to enlist as participants in AFSA's speakers program. All speakers should be able to address various types of audiences, as well as be willing to travel moderate distances by auto or rail, for which they may sometimes be reimbursed by AFSA. Retirees are strongly encouraged to contact their local high schools, colleges, civic organizations and media, and offer to speak about how the Foreign Service contributes to promoting vital U.S. interests around the world.

How are audiences identified and topics chosen? AFSA collaborates with multiple regional and national organizations that sponsor programs on international issues. These include: The World Affairs Councils of America, the Foreign Policy Association (sponsors of the regional "Great Decisions" lecture series), United Nations Associations, the OASIS Adult Education Program, Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions Clubs of America, as well as universities and think-tanks. In addition, we list available speakers on AFSA's Web site.

AFSA responds to requests for speakers on specific topics by identifying the most suitable retiree speaker from our database who resides near the host group, and arranging contact between the host and speaker, who then work out the logistics of the program.

Tom Switzer is director of communications for AFSA. He was an FSO from 1969 to 1998, serving in Costa Rica, Mexico, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Spain, the U.S. mission in Kosovo and Washington, D.C.



Ambassador Kenton Keith addresses the Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning in Sarasota, Fla.



Ambassador Tom Boyatt leads a press conference at AFSA headquarters.

Good speakers tailor their remarks to their audience based on its members' awareness of foreign affairs. Most audiences seem to prefer clear, easily understandable descriptions of how diplomacy is important to American interests. Photos and maps are useful program tools. Anecdotes from a speaker's own career experiences are well appreciated.

For example, speakers have described how the actions of FS personnel might affect Americans: individually (e.g., consular officers who rescue Americans in trouble overseas); in specific states or regions (e.g., Foreign Commercial Service officers who promote the export and sale of a region's products); and the country generally (e.g., political and public diplomacy experts who protect and explain vital U.S. security interests to foreign counterparts and publics).

Energetic Outreach

Examples abound of retirees' outstanding contributions to AFSA's effort to enhance the understanding of U.S. diplomacy among key opinion leaders in government, business, education, and the media. Among the best are

Amb. Grant Smith, Stephen Buck and David Reuther, who elicited glowing reviews from attendees at Johns Hopkins' prestigious Evergreen Society adult education series in late 2004-2005 for their presentations on U.S. policies in South Asia and the Middle East. They also described the attractions and challenges of careers in the Foreign Service, including considerations of family issues.

Former USIA officer Patricia Kushlis has displayed exceptional creativity in developing outreach programs throughout New Mexico. She has written frequent articles for leading newspapers and become, in effect, the voice of the Foreign Service in the state. She has lectured on foreign affairs at the University of New Mexico and other institutions. And she has also mentored students exploring Foreign Service careers.

In the Houston region, Bill Cunningham has become "Mr. Foreign Service." Especially noteworthy was his

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arrangement of former AFSA president John Limbert's high-impact programs last year at colleges, international trade councils, and media talk shows in the area. He has also placed numerous articles about the Foreign Service in the leading regional paper, *The Houston Chronicle*, and in other media. In Nevada, Guy Farmer has been tireless in providing frequent op-eds explaining the importance of American diplomacy for leading newspapers.

Retirees have also been instrumental in AFSA's Foreign Service Elderhostel Program. In 1996, Ambassador Bill De Pree initiated these valuable seminars that explain the Foreign Service and foreign policy issues to retired professionals nationwide through weeklong and one-day courses. Ward Thompson and many other retirees made significant contributions to the program over the years. Now coordinated by Janice Bay, and in its ninth year of operation, the series is an overwhelming success.

Elderhostel has built understanding and public support for the Foreign Service and U.S. foreign policy and

generated scores of requests around the country for Foreign Service speakers. In 2005 AFSA's Elderhostel programs involved some 850 participants in 14 programs in Washington, D.C., and four other cities. A new and very popular feature of the program last year was the addition of three one-day seminars in Washington, D.C., all focused on Iraq.

Three Goals

All these outreach programs have promoted three important AFSA goals: broadening the Foreign Service constituency through outreach to the public, enhancing public awareness of global affairs and of the key role of the Foreign Service and diplomacy, and activating the AFSA retiree constituency by involving it in significant programs that draw on their backgrounds and skills in telling our story to audiences nationwide.

If you want to be involved with AFSA outreach, please contact me at Switzer@afsa.org or call toll-free: (800) 704-2372, ext. 501. ■

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MOVING TO A SENIOR LIVING FACILITY

T

he idea of selling the house or apartment in favor of a simplified life in a compound designed for elderly people — with access to medical support when needed — seems to come on unexpectedly. My wife and I are 76 and 77, and live in Washington, D.C. Several months ago we invited three couples over for dinner, old friends from our first post in the 1950s. They had difficulty maneuvering our steep front steps, and we suddenly realized it was time to consider a change. We have been researching retirement facilities since that evening, have toured six of them (five in the D.C. area and one in New Jersey), and have committed to make the move.

While I am no expert on this complicated subject, I share what we have learned below. This will be an introductory primer. Each situation is different and each family must do the research and review its own circumstances. But it is important to face up to the fact of aging, and to the unpredictability of aging's consequences.

One decision we reached early on was that moving to a smaller house or apartment, instead of to a retirement complex with health care, did not make sense; this would have led, sooner or later, to a second move.

IN FACING UP TO THE FACT OF AGING AND THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF ITS CONSEQUENCES, THIS IS ONE OF THE CENTRAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER.

BY *BILL HARROP*

When to Make the Move, and Why

There are several basic questions you will want to answer as you begin to weigh this important transition. Is your equity in your home greater than the cost of a smaller apartment? Are current bills for maintenance, repairs, utilities and real estate taxes greater than the specified monthly fees at a retirement facility? Is arranging for nursing care in your home practical and affordable if the need arises, or does it make more sense to move in advance to where the support is? At least we Foreign Service folk have all moved plenty of times. It is never fun, but we do know how.

You may be motivated by a number of considerations, such as the following:

- Your present quarters seem unnecessarily large, costly or difficult to maintain; or may be increasingly trying because of stairs, different levels, yard work, or the expense of heating and cooling.

- You may have a desire to prepare for inevitable health problems — particularly with dementia and Alzheimer's, to which all are subject — in an environment designed to help you cope with them.

- You may be determined to avoid becoming a burden on your children, and to move while still a couple so that the survivor, when that moment comes, is settled in

a familiar location with friends and support, situated to carry on independently.

- You may want to simplify and pare down, to make the tough decisions on weeding out excess furniture and the paraphernalia of decades, so as not to leave that chore to others.
- You may be interested in reducing unnecessary expenses in order to better conserve resources for travel, study and entertainment, or for children's needs.
- You may have realized that, given markedly increased longevity and growing demand, most senior living facilities have a waiting list of two years or more; and that postponing the decision courts being unprepared when a health emergency strikes.

Common Characteristics of Retirement Facilities

There are three basic levels of accommodation. They are:

Independent Living, which means a private apartment or cottage on the premises, from a one-room studio up to three bedrooms, with a study and two baths. You live essentially on your own, but are usually required to take at least one meal per day in the compound's restaurant facilities.

Assisted Living, which means more modest quarters, typically without a kitchen. You have some dependence upon nurses or therapists, and perhaps reduced mobility. You normally take all meals in the compound's dining facilities.

Skilled Nursing, which resembles hospitalization, often requiring round-the-clock attendance. This is normally in a designated wing of the facility, and usually there is a separate ward for dementia/Alzheimer's patients.

Most senior living facilities include all three levels and are termed "continuing care;" some, often linked to a hospital, have only assisted living and skilled nursing options. An attractive feature of the continuing care arrangement is that a couple takes an independent living apartment and then, if one of them suffers from, say, Alzheimer's, and shifts to the dementia corridor, the

other can remain in their apartment and easily visit and take meals with the cared-for spouse.

The initial focus is upon independent living. There is usually a minimum age of 60 or 62. In some cases apartments are sold as condominiums, in others as cooperatives. A few establishments offer separate cottages. Senior living facilities always have apartment floor plans and pricing charts available for review, and you can arrange to visit various models. Typically, there will be 150 to 250 apartments with extensive common recreational, health and sports spaces. The health center, providing many hospital services, is normally a separate wing. Prices vary, of course, among facilities and among the apartments in each, but senior living establishments run from the spartan to the truly luxurious.

There are always one or more dining areas, as well as fitness centers, libraries, hobby workshops and studios, and some sort of auditorium or theater. There is usually a swimming pool, a garage and a game room. Often there are gardening plots, a business center with computers, a hairdresser/barber shop, a bank branch and a convenience shop. All of the retirement facilities we visited provide shuttle service to a Metro station, and scheduled shuttle trips to shopping centers, churches, outings to museums, sporting events, art galleries and concerts. Most facilities program weekly concerts, lectures and movies on site for residents. All places we reviewed permit cats or dogs, although some impose rules about their number and size.

A sense of community seems to grow among the residents of most senior living facilities, and this is encouraged by the architecture and the recreational opportunities provided. For example, there are bridge, chess, gardening, art and book clubs. Residents often publish a weekly newsletter. In one facility, we encountered an amateur theater group. Fans watch football games together on a large-screen television. Resident committees arrange for outings and for cultural events in the facility, and you have the impression that if the quality of the food declines, a committee will spring up to put pressure on the management.

The Financial Equation

There are standard monthly fees that cover utilities, maintenance of grounds and public areas, use of sports and recreation facilities, taxes, security, garage, and so forth. To assure sustainable funding for their restaurant

A former AFSA president, Bill Harrop was an FSO from 1954 to 1993, serving as ambassador to Guinea, Kenya, Seychelles, Zaire and Israel, and as inspector general of the State Department and Foreign Service. He is on the boards of five diplomacy-related organizations.

facilities, most institutions include in their monthly fees either a charge to cover 30 meals or a fixed figure (we saw \$600) to be drawn down for the meals during the month. All establishments vaunt the quality of their cuisine, but it is best to try it out, which you can do. Monthly fees, depending upon the size of the apartment, generally run from under \$2,000 to about \$4,000, with about \$900 in addition for the second resident.

When we added up the bills we had paid at home the past year for electricity, natural gas, water and sewage, painting, roofing repairs, general maintenance, lawn and tree care, firewood, exterminators, driveway repaving and a security contract, these monthly fees looked pretty reasonable — in fact, they would be quite a saving in our case. Individual real estate

There are always one or more dining areas, as well as fitness centers, libraries, hobby workshops and studios, and some sort of auditorium or theater.

taxes may be paid separately by the owner of a condominium apartment, while they are included in the monthly fees in a cooperative system.

Some senior living facilities have continuing health packages whereby monthly fees continue at the same rate, or increase only modestly if a resident's health requires moving to one of the assisted living or skilled nursing accommodations. In these cases, a medical examination is required at the outset to gain

admittance to the facility and to qualify for such a package, which seems usually to be surprisingly economical. By the way, those (unlike us) who had the good sense to take out long-term care insurance will find that a good chunk of their monthly fees may be covered by the insurance.

Demand is now so great, at least in the Washington area, that the more attractive senior living facilities are able to require a substantial refundable deposit, often \$10,000, for the privilege of being added to the waiting list. In one case — a particularly handsome and comfortable facility planned but not yet under construction in Bethesda, which will not be ready for occupancy until early 2008 — the developers are requiring a \$10,000 refundable deposit and a non-refundable \$300 inscription fee to get on the waiting list. It is reportedly oversubscribed already.

Due Diligence: Questions to Ask

You will want to question residents of a facility as to how they like it, and what are the positive and negative aspects. But a warning from experience is in order: human nature is such that people will tend to give their own facility high marks and downplay its problems.

It is not a bad idea to try — and to time — the drive from a facility to locations you will often be visiting. If you have a dog to walk, or if you like to be outdoors, look into adjacent paths and wooded lanes (and confirm that dogs are welcome). Ask about balconies or terraces or screened porches, none of which are as common as they might be in these communities. Higher-end apartments often have (gas) fireplaces.

Check Out the Possibilities Online

You will probably be astonished at how many senior living facilities exist these days, and how many are within three miles of where you live without your being aware of them. This is a growth industry. As usual, the Internet is very helpful.

www.retirementliving.com takes you to the "Retirement Living Information Center," with a wealth of references.

www.retirement-living.com will take you to "Guide to Retirement Living," a tremendous source of information for the mid-Atlantic region (D.C., Va., Md., Del., Pa. and N.J.). They publish magazines you can order online that list by location all retirement facilities and their attributes, and provide advice on consultants who can help you think through your priorities and guide you in realizing them. I assume there are similar Web sites for other regions of the country, but did not take the time to scroll the 25,000-plus hits you find when you google this subject.

www.sunriseseniorliving.com is worth a look. Sunrise Senior Living is the dominant enterprise in the field, either owning or managing some 425 senior living communities in 38 states, Canada, Germany and the U.K. This is a successful and experienced New York Stock Exchange company, with high standards. Their Web site will take you by Zip code to a listing and description of Sunrise facilities (some 30 in the Washington metropolitan area, in varied price ranges, but each probably of high quality in its class).

— Bill Harrop

F O C U S

Are guest rooms or apartments available to rent on the compound in case you have overnight visitors?

Another consideration: a relatively new establishment will have younger, more active residents, and — on a realistic, actuarial note — more men about.

Ceiling heights seem to vary from floor to floor, so you will want to know whether the apartment model you buy will have the same height as the model you visited. On the whole, rooms in retirement living establishments are not spacious, so you will want to measure your furniture, rugs and pictures against the square footage of apartments under consideration.

Find out what extent of alteration and remodeling is permitted: you may want to remove a partition, build in bookcases, add hardwood floors, enlarge a kitchen. In this connection, there is a distinct advantage in looking at a facility that is new and under construction, or being remodeled, as you can then prescribe configuration, colors, window treatment and so forth.

Storage is at a premium. Most senior living facilities

have a storage cubby for each apartment in the basement or garage, usually about 4' by 4' by 8'. Fancier apartments feature walk-in closets, but take a realistic look at how much storage space you will actually have for clothes, books, pots and pans, skis, suitcases, etc. As mentioned earlier, retirement living implies paring down.

It is important to inquire closely about just what expenses are included and not included in monthly fees. For example, if a certain number of meals are included (as they almost certainly will be), to what extent are these transferable to guests, and to what extent can they be held over to the next month if you are away on a trip? What in-apartment maintenance of appliances, electrical or plumbing systems is included, if any? Are any state or local taxes left to be paid separately?

Finally, check what restrictions may exist on your ability to sell or to sublease. Are you required to list through the management of the facility (what are the transaction/commission fees?), or can you retain your own realtor?

Good luck! ■

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LIFE AFTER THE FS: RETIREEES SPEAK UP

D

RETIREES SHARE STORIES AND
ADVICE ABOUT RETIREMENT
FROM THE FOREIGN SERVICE.

Dozens of Foreign Service retirees responded to the AFSANET the Journal sent out asking for insight and information on their experiences with retirement. In fact, the response was so great — and so varied and interesting — that it will be presented in two installments, the first in the pages that follow. Part II will appear in the February 2006 issue of the FSJ.

— Susan B. Maitra, Senior Editor

Retirement: A Setback ... at First

Way back in 1987, at the tender age of 47, I retired from the Foreign Service — involuntarily. I had not succeeded in getting through the up-or-out window set up by the Foreign Service Act of 1980, despite five years in senior-grade positions, glowing evaluations from my supervisors and recommendations for promotion by several selection boards.

To make matters worse, my first marriage drew to a close at exactly the same time. It had been a successful marriage, but it was over.

That made major blows in work and in love — the two vital areas for mental health according to Freud.

I had dinner one evening with an old friend. I told her my sad story with as little self-pity as possible and she

observed, “Gee, Larry, I don’t think I’ve ever known anyone who fell from such a high place to such a low one in so short a time. I’ll be interested in seeing how you handle it.” (Understand, she was an edgy person.) It got me thinking: “Yes, I’ve fallen quite a way, but try this interpretation: it’s not a catastrophe, just a couple of setbacks. No reason not to be optimistic about what’s to come.” I decided that I, too, was interested in seeing how I would handle these unwelcome setbacks in the course of the serial adventure of my life.

Setbacks are inevitable. They test your resilience and resourcefulness. They build character. Now I had to show I was made of good stuff, turning adversity into an opportunity for growth and new self-actualization.

That was many years ago. How have things worked out since then? Very well, after a shaky start. At first I relocated to New York City, where I had grown up, but wasn’t able to parlay my Foreign Service experience or other talents into a second career track. Fortunately, my Foreign Service annuity provided a decent base to ward off penury. It gave me the luxury of being able to pursue work at my own pokey pace and without making level of pay the primary consideration. (That’s the same approach that led to choosing a career in the Foreign Service, wasn’t it?)

F O C U S

A year after retiring I got a chance to work as a WAE for the State Department's Office of the Inspector General. A few years later, I took a temporary position with the Peace Corps. And when the Secretary of State appointed me to the Foreign Service Grievance Board, I jumped at the opportunity, even though it would reduce my income. (I was paid by the hour and there weren't many hours, but it was fascinating work.)

I redirected old skills, becoming a writer of imaginative essays and fiction (instead of drafting reporting cables and memos). Just as importantly, I developed new skills as a certified mediator, applying alternative dispute resolution methods not only to international matters but also to disputes between divorcing couples and in small claims court. And once I didn't have to keep a regular schedule, I indulged myself with golf and tennis on weekdays, when people in the 9-to-5 work force can't play.

Most importantly, I benefited from the love of a good woman. Susan came along at just the right time, to be my validator ("You're not a failure...") and my agent of reality ("... although you sometimes come across as too self-satisfied"). And she brought me closer to our families: the Foreign Service makes it easy to push family relationships away from the center of awareness, and now that I'm retired and married to Susan — and a grandfather — family life is richer.

I stand with Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra: "Grow old with me! The best is yet to be."

*Larry Lesser
Washington, D.C.*



Having Time to Stop and Say Hello

I retired in 2001, worked for an NGO specializing in women's health for a couple of years (in Washington, D.C., and Kathmandu), and then retired again to my home in West Virginia to write. I have finished two articles and submitted one for publication, but have not found the time or the energy yet to start on my book. My FS experience was very relevant for the NGO work, but is not directly related to my writing.

I would strongly recommend the advice provided in the Retirement Seminar — probably the best training program I took in all my years in government — though it should be given to people earlier, say five to

10 years after starting work, and then again about five years prior to retirement.

I moved to Falling Waters, W. Va., where I live in a house that looks out over the Potomac River. I came here because it's beautiful, has four seasons and water sports (I have a kayak), walking (I often walk along the towpath) and skiing is nearby. It's close to family in Washington, D.C. (90 minutes away, if there's no traffic on the D.C. end), yet very rural — and I guess I am addicted to learning new cultures. My neighbors couldn't be more different from my colleagues at USAID, but are just as interesting and wonderful people whom I'm learning to know and love.

I am very active in politics both locally and nationally: voter registration, campaigning, organizing local groups and participating in major political actions. I am an officer of my homeowners' association. I have completed extensive renovations on my home and recently started as a hospice volunteer. I paint, and hope to get a grand piano soon. I still love opera at the Kennedy Center.

Basically I've had a good experience with the Retirement Division, except that I did not get the earnings form for the year I was in Nepal and so had quite a large amount to repay, which was a bit of a pain. I'm signed up for the new RNet service (www.Rnet.gov), which should make things easier.

I have a few words of advice for those approaching retirement. Get to know the real estate problems and pitfalls before you start looking to buy in a new area. I don't really know how to do this, so I didn't do a good job and ended up with a real lemon of a house that required extensive renovation. It all worked out okay, but cost me a couple of hundred thousand dollars I hadn't counted on spending, and probably three years of day-to-day effort as I handled my own contracting — a real nightmare for me.

Also, take the Retirement Seminar as early as you are allowed. Then take it again five years before you retire. Don't be afraid to branch out into something entirely new. I love my life, and many of my retired-FS friends love theirs too. Give yourself two or three years to adjust: retirement is a major change that requires some rewiring and relearning. Pay attention to your physical and mental health. Relax and have fun — you deserve it!

I have come to appreciate the slower pace, especially having time to stop and say hello to someone; time to do both my exercise and meditation each morning; time to

be more considerate of others, take better care of my mother (who is 81) and enjoy the flowers and trees in summer, the snow in winter and the beautiful autumn leaves. I have time each year for a quiet retreat of several weeks or months, time to be helpful to family and friends in their times of need. It is amazing for me to be able to select what I think is important to do today, and then have the luxury to do it. Life couldn't be better!

Kristin K. Loken
Falling Waters, W. Va.



Hometown Newspaper Editor: Coming Full Circle

I returned to my small hometown in North Carolina in 1980 after 26 years with USIA — not to retire but to take another job, as editor of the local newspaper. Nothing can involve one in a community faster and more deeply than being the editor of a local newspaper. It didn't take long to fit back in.

Because I had to meet frequently with local leaders in order to perform my work, it was relatively easy to learn the dynamics of local politics, economic pressures, social structure and cultural dreams. People who are concerned with big community issues gravitate to the local newspaper editor. It was intense, but worth all the extra effort, and I enjoyed the limelight and the satisfying sense of belonging. The *Journal-Patriot* was and is the largest non-daily newspaper in North Carolina, and I thoroughly appreciated the opportunity to contribute to its value.

I retired again and have since spent much time with community service organizations and worthy projects, among them the library board, historic preservation society, art gallery board, hospital development projects, Kiwanis, the genealogical society, school support, church vestry and a local history project.

Growing up in a small Southern town had its benefits for someone in the Foreign Service. Patience is a virtue, and I believe my finest moments at overseas posts had something to do with the fact that I found it easier to listen than did many of my more urban colleagues. On the other hand, my Foreign Service experience no doubt made me a better observer of events and people here when I returned.

I served in Indonesia and Japan, primarily, from

1955 until I retired in 1980. They were good posts, but the one I have now is best.

Dick Underwood
N. Wilkesboro, N.C.



Retirement Is a Transition

Three years before full retirement was possible my wife and I discussed what we wanted to do and where we wanted to live upon retirement. My liberation from the daily work routine began in November 2004, when I was 56, and we moved to Asheville, N.C. We routinely participate in activities as spectators and as volunteers, and in this period I had the good fortune of being a WAE overseas for three weeks.

Retirement is a transition. For those who can live mostly on their pension and savings and enjoy the pace of a small city, a transition to Asheville is easy — even if it begins with a shipment of household effects. The positive attributes of Asheville noted in the retirement publications are true. Furthermore, I am reminded why we left D.C. whenever I get Washington traffic reports via the Internet.

The best gift of liberation is being able to pursue charitable activities. My wife and I volunteer with several organizations on a regular basis. They include the Arboretum, Habitat for Humanity, Appalachian Trail maintenance, and the Guardian Ad Litem Program. These activities provide exercise for the body and the mind, as well as entertainment. We meet active people, many of whom are fellow retirees. As a guardian ad litem, I have been applying new skills that directly benefit a child. The supervisors thank their volunteers for their work, and being away for an extended period to attend to personal matters is not an issue.

We are learning about another interesting part of the country. We observe wildlife and plants during frequent walks on forest trails. The volunteer work and walks provide many opportunities for photography, a hobby I pursued in college.

I initiated the application for WAE work with DS before retiring, but the enrollment process was not completed for several months after. I receive notices about TDY jobs via e-mail and, as mentioned above, spent three weeks as a security engineer in Paris. It was work I had done before, and fortunately my technical and personal skills were more than adequate. Having the prima-



ry and secondary contacts in the office that match assignments with retirees is important. Getting an ID for access to buildings and having a digital passport photograph ready to e-mail has been handy. The security habits for office work were not automatic, as before, and required attention initially. Working a few months each year overseas provides a diversion with minimal burden.

The Retirement Seminar was superb. The classes provided a framework for liberation. The fear of “losing my way” diminished as I thought about how I wanted to fill my time. A couple of months after arrival, when the last few boxes were unpacked, I was ready to pursue the activities mentioned above.

Clarification of personnel matters has become easier with RNet; though there are still wrinkles. The assistance provided via the toll-free numbers is helpful. It may require several transfers to get an answer, but my queries have been resolved within a day if not in the first call.

*Jeffrey Dektor
Asheville, N.C.*

WAE-ting for an Assignment

I was an office management specialist in the Environment, Science & Technology Section (ES&T) in Beijing from 1999 to 2001 and in the Economic Section in Tegucigalpa from 2001 to 2005. I’m one of those who came into the Foreign Service as a second career after retiring (early) from a management position in private industry. I was 59 when I entered the Foreign Service, and thus only had the opportunity for two tours (extending for six months in Tegucigalpa to work until mandatory retirement, at age 65). I retired in April 2005, began the process to become a WAE before I left post, continued pursuing my interest with Washington and finally, after six months, am on WAE status.

I am anxious to go out in the field again, and I am waiting for an assignment. I did not realize it was going to be so difficult and take so long. I have kept in con-

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stant touch with my WAE coordinator (for WHA) and other bureaus and offices to let them know my interest and availability. It has not been very encouraging! I'm not quite ready to be a "stay-at-home retiree," but because an overseas WAE assignment is my first choice, all my other options are on hold. For example, I would like to finish course work toward my B.A. degree (I am a senior at a university), but can't register for classes in the event I do get called for an assignment.

I live in Brentwood, Calif., approximately 45 miles from San Francisco. The Bay area is home for me; it's where I grew up and have family and friends. I am so happy that just before I retired I made the decision to buy a house — a small house in a three-year-old Del Webb active adult community development, a gated community that reminds me of living inside a country club — in spite of the fact it was comparatively expensive. It helped that before I retired I knew people who lived here and was very familiar with the lifestyle. The weather is wonderful, there's a lot to do and a lot of people to do things with (if I want!). I enjoy aerobics, tennis, hiking and walking — all easily accessible in my neighborhood. The negative aspect: now I have to pay for this house, which is another reason I would like to do WAE work!

I couldn't attend any of the Retirement Seminars due to time and cost constraints, but would no doubt have benefited. When I had general questions about retirement, I did not feel there was anyone I could talk to. There was plenty of information on the retirement paperwork process, but when I was confused about something I didn't know whom to contact. If I e-mailed someone, I did not get a reply; when I called, usually no one was there, and my message was never returned. It was frustrating, and it took a lot of time (at post) to constantly follow up with the Retirement Division.

I am, however, impressed by the efficiency with which I receive my annuity and TSP annuity payments. The instructions are straightforward, and when they say a payment is going to be made, it is there — the check is in the mail. I am also impressed with RNet, and the effort being made to ensure that all retirees receive the same information.

*Muriel Luck
Brentwood, Calif.*



Life Is Good!

I fall into the category of being truly retired and living outside the D.C. area. My career in the Foreign Service was from 1970 to 2000, and other government employment made for 35 years of service. Although I am from Wyoming, I chose to retire in Red Lodge, Mont., after visiting an aunt during a few home leaves. It was just too friendly to believe. In fact, the town voted not to have the mail delivered to individual addresses because the Post Office is also a daily stop to visit with people.

I suppose I should start by saying that it is actually impossible to truly retire in a small town — the opportunity for volunteer and civic involvement is huge and varied. Red Lodge is an engaging town with a population of about 2,500 that has a touristy side, with a ski mountain and the Beartooth Pass leading to Yellowstone National Park in its back yard. It is also a working town for local ranchers, farmers, small business enterprises and construction and service-type trades. It is in a beautiful setting, attracting artistic and active outdoor people of all ages.

I looked upon Red Lodge as another posting, and from the outset took time to eat a meal in every restaurant and go into every shop, where I would chat with the staff or owners. I attended City Council meetings, read the newspapers word for word, became certified as an emergency medical technician for Red Lodge Fire and Emergency Medical Service, and participated in speaker evenings at the Friends of the Library and Historical Society. I took Red Cross classes, was appointed by the mayor to work on the Resort Tax Review Committee, helped organize a local women's health conference, served drinks at fundraising events, became a domestic violence advocate and got involved with the Carbon County Democrats as secretary. I worked the Planned Parenthood booth at the State Fair in Billings, went to Helena during the legislative session for Women's Lobbying Day, sterilized instruments at the annual Nip and Tuck (spay/neuter) Clinic, joined a hiking group, played tennis, completed weather spotter training and more.

On a national level, some of my activities led to going with the Red Cross to Florida in the 2004 hurricane season, and responding to a "fire-hire" with

F O C U S

FEMA in 2005 as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

Pretty soon, it was impossible to go anywhere in town without knowing someone. The problem was learning how to say no to some activities when people realized I was retired and available. I tried one paying position as a 911 dispatcher in the sheriff's office, but decided I really liked setting my own priorities each day.

I did not take the Retirement Seminar as I had not intended to go after employment in a formal way. Rather, I just wanted to move to Red Lodge, let life unfold and pitch in any way I could to help the community and fulfill my needs for physical and mental activity. I was looking forward to perpetual home leave without deadlines, and hardly noticed a transition and didn't experience an identity crisis. After a couple of years, though, I found that I missed the *Foreign Service Journal* as a way of keeping up with my former life. My dealings with the Retirement Division were very easy. They handled all the paperwork and my questions

without a hitch, and continue to do so.

Living in this small town and its greater community is not lonely or boring. I truly loved the Foreign Service, but there really is another life out here. And I'm enjoying it thoroughly!

*Wanda Kennicott
Red Lodge, Mont.*



A Cautionary Tale

Four years after "retiring" from the Foreign Service, I'm in the kind of job that I imagined when I walked out of the doors of Main State for the last time. I'm the executive vice-president of the Santa Rosa (Calif.) Chamber of Commerce, working on government relations and economic development. In the middle of some of the best vineyards on the planet, part of my job is to drink great wine and eat gourmet dinners. It's like what we hoped the diplomatic reception circuit would

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be: here in wine country, hosts would be ashamed to serve the cheap wine and dead-fish-on-a-stale-piece-of-bread fare we had become accustomed to.

I admit to having “run away.” I deliberately chose a location far removed, physically and psychologically, from Washington. That has given me the satisfaction of dealing with people on a more personal level. The flip side of the coin is that almost all of the people that I come in daily contact with, even relatively sophisticated and traveled ones, have little or no concept of what my life was like in the State Department.

The lack of understanding by the average person of the Foreign Service is a major hurdle that has to be overcome in finding a new career. There are lots of stereotypes about FSOs (lazy government workers, dilettante cookie-pushers, etc.) After the Plamegate affair, a number of my friends are convinced that I was undercover CIA. They hope that as Mark Felt (Deep Throat) turned up in Santa Rosa, I, too, must have some juicy secret. They seem disappointed when I tell them about the real work of an FSO.

Getting over that lack of knowledge about the work of diplomats is certainly something that the Retirement Seminar didn't begin to cover. We've been told to write up the management experience — employers ask about profit/loss responsibility; we had responsibility for our employees' lives. We're told to stress organizational skills — how do you write about keeping a CODEL on track despite a famous senator's fondness for “ice water?” (OK, I was naïve enough not to know it was vodka.)

So, when I arrived in the Bay area, I had to start from scratch to convince people of my skills. I spent the first few years consulting. That turned out to be a financial disaster, but it built up my resumé. I quickly realized I needed a more conventional job. Job-hunting these days is like cold-calling. You have to have a very strong ego not to take rejection personally — a hundred nos for every yes.

But, there was a happy ending. I love my current work and the life here in California. The moral is that if you want to go this route, be prepared for some bumps and

bruises along the way. And remember, little of what they tell you in the Retirement Seminar about job hunting applies beyond the Beltway.

*Chris Lynch
Santa Rosa, Calif.*

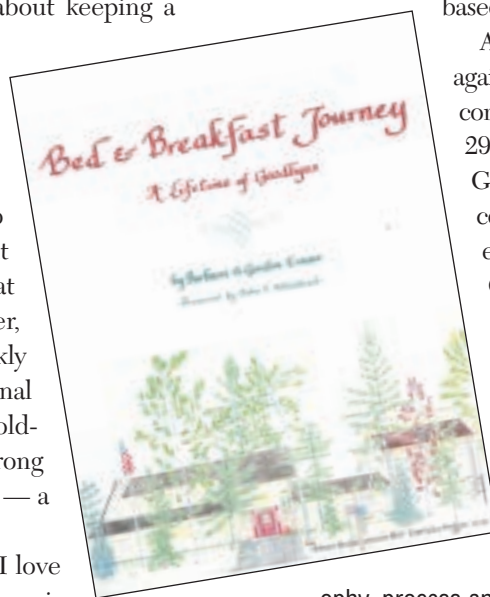


Running a Bed & Breakfast

Upon retiring as director of REDSO/West Africa in September 1982, I was selected as president of International House, near Columbia University in New York City. IHouse is a residential and program center for 750 graduate students from nearly 100 countries studying or interning in over 50 schools or institutions in the U.S. Our board chairmen have included Henry Kissinger, former President Gerald Ford and John C. Whitehead.

The IHouse appointment that just fell out of the sky made the transition out of the Service easy for me and my wife Barbara. In turn, our 25 years in the Service prepared us for my stint as president of IHouse. In fact, the Foreign Service experience probably gave me the nod from the nominating committee. A Fulbright fellowship in Norway, followed by 10 years in South Asia and another decade in West Africa with USAID gave me insights for program activity and interpersonal relations with students from these three continents that were based on real experiences.

After a decade at IHouse, I retired again. In 1993, my wife Barbara and I completed a 5,000-mile journey in our 29-foot boat through three of the Great Lakes, along most of the intra-coastal waterway and back up the eight rivers between Mobile and Chicago. A year later, we opened a six-room bed and breakfast in Interlochen, Mich., next to the Interlochen Center for the Arts.



In *Bed & Breakfast Journey — A Lifetime of Goodbyes* (Village Press, Inc., 2005), Barbara and Gordon Evans explain the philosophy, process and technique of opening and running this type of small enterprise, and relate their career experiences to all six B&B rooms and the library.

F O C U S

Running a B&B is in no way retirement, but we enjoy the Grand Traverse Region thoroughly. A number of my colleagues in the Foreign Service have visited us, including former Ambassadors Jack Matlock and Galen Stone.

Our Between the Lakes Bed & Breakfast rooms reflect our FS experience, featuring such themes as Valhalla (Norway), Treetops (India and Pakistan) and African Adventure (West Africa). Though most of our guests are from the heartland, we've had clients from all over the world. They all seem to like our global perspective.

We've had over 9,000 guest nights, and are still open. As for innkeepers, a solid marriage with both committed to the adventure is the only way to make it fun.

Meanwhile, my dealings with the Retirement Division have been nothing but positive. The *Foreign Service Journal* is an informative delight to read. Participating with the Association for Diplomatic

Studies and Training in both capacities was valuable, and now I moderate two of the Great Decisions classes at Northwestern Michigan College each fall.

I am convinced that Foreign Service officers should be at the helm of most international houses around the world, and would be delighted to assist in any way I could in advocating for this, though we are now located in the remote north woods of Michigan.

Retirement from the Service should be relished, not feared.

Gordon Evans
Interlochen, Mich.



Building the Beach House of Our Dreams

My retirement after 24 years in the Foreign Service, effective Sept. 30, 2004, has been a joy. I had joined USIA in 1980. Following its consolidation with the



The *Foreign Service Journal* is seeking works of fiction of up to 3,000 words for its annual contest. Story lines or characters involving the Foreign Service are preferred, but not required. The top story, as selected by the *Journal's* Editorial Board, will be published in the magazine; the runners-up may also be published as space permits. The writer of each published story will receive an honorarium of \$250, payable upon publication.

All stories must be previously unpublished. Limit one entry per author. Please send via e-mail including your contact information and a short bio. Submissions preferred copied into the body of the e-mail or as a Word attachment.

Please send submissions (or questions) to Mikkela Thompson at thompsonm@afsa.org

Deadline is April 1. No fooling.

Department of State, I worked in the International Information Programs and Human Resources bureaus, with postings in Accra, Belgrade, Rio de Janeiro and La Paz, as well as assignments in Washington.

After retirement, my husband and I focused primarily on building a beach house in Nags Head, N.C., as a second home. But we have also spent time with family, helped my mother move into an assisted living community, watched my nephew graduate with honors from the University of Michigan and hosted various family members at our new home. Our nieces loved the pool!

I took the Job Search Program in August and September 2004 prior to retirement, and found it very helpful as a tool to decompress and transition into this new phase of life. The section on resumé writing was very useful, forcing me to think through what I might like to do next. I'm not particularly interested in looking for a full-time job again, so found the speakers from various nonprofits and other volunteer organizations very interesting in planting some seeds for potential activities other than full-time work.

When we started building our dream beach house, I found it brought out a new kind of creativity in space planning, color coordination and construction budgeting that had not been called on in government work.

As we tweaked the basic plan for the house to add more utility for very little additional square footage, I was delighted to concentrate totally on this project without having the demands of my former job. And the result has been even better than we had hoped for. Our builder entered our house in the Outer Banks Parade of Homes in October, and won two awards: one a Special Feature Award for "overall design and use of space," which was a direct result of our changes to the basic plan, and the other, the prestigious "Judges' Award for Excellence" for the best construction quality in our category (four bedrooms, three-and-one-half baths — considered a "small" house in the area). All the time we took to find and then wait for the availability of this meticulous builder was well worth it.

My advice, particularly to colleagues who are five or more years away from retirement, is to save, save, save your money, as much as possible. Contribute to the TSP to the maximum possible, and to other savings plans or accounts as well. Having the flexibility and peace of mind that come from having your retirement

plan under control makes pretty much everything else possible, no matter what you want to do.

Some people know for sure that they want to continue working. But if there's another project calling your name it is wonderful to have the freedom to concentrate on it without having new workplace demands on your time and attention. This is the second half of your adult life; perhaps it's time to mentally stretch a bit and do something completely unrelated to the tasks of the last 25 or so years. I found it very refreshing and personally rewarding to be so creatively involved in the design and furnishing of our new beach house.

Gloria S.N. Lloyd
Nags Head, N.C.



An Opportunity to Contribute to National Security

I must admit that as I contemplated retirement, I imagined taking on part-time work to maintain my involvement with foreign affairs people and issues. However, my current position, which the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs helped me identify, has turned out to be professionally challenging, personally very satisfying, and of some importance — a combination that has made continued full-time work more than palatable. I very much appreciate the opportunity to continue contributing to our national security.

I work at the U.S. Special Operations Command headquarters in Tampa, Fla. My employer is a privately-owned company (Gemini Industries, Inc.) that has a multifaceted contract with USSOCOM to provide a variety of services and expert personnel. My role is to serve as a liaison between the State Department and the DOD's Center for Special Operations — an integrated intelligence, planning and operations entity — in a position that is separate from and in addition to that of the active-duty Foreign Service political adviser to the commander.

My particular work focuses on counterterrorism strategic and operational planning. My primary contacts back at State are in the Counterterrorism Coordinator's office and in the regional and political-military bureaus. As the lead combatant command for planning, synchronizing and, when directed, executing the U.S. military part of the global war on terrorism, USSOCOM is interested in close coordination with its interagency partners

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in combating terrorism worldwide and seeks to benefit from a range of expertise in foreign affairs. I draw heavily on my previous FS experience in Washington and at all of my posts overseas to help perform that function.

I found the Retirement Seminar and the Job Search Program to be outstanding. The Transition Center really does what it says. I arrived from overseas unsure of my worth to the world outside the FS, uninformed about what the opportunities were, uncertain of recent commercial developments and unschooled in the best techniques of self-marketing. The Center's courses, taught by skilled personnel, along with the two months of paid time to consider and pursue options, helped a great deal on all counts.

My wife and I were underwhelmed by the Retirement Division, but our sense is that under David Dlouhy things have turned around and the division is now pro-active, user-friendly and helpful. RNet is a great development.

A last word of advice: One's most marketable attribute may well be a security clearance, including access to intelligence material, so be sure to keep it current.

Employers do not want to wait while time-consuming background investigations and updates are performed.

*Mort Dworfen
Tampa, Fla.*



Not Fully Retired

I am a WAE and am also employed as director for academic programs at the Washington Internship Institute. As I have two jobs, I guess I'm not fully retired!

I have been a WAE in the Bureau of Political and Military Affairs for almost two years, working with the 24/7 "PM Action Team." This group is mostly WAEs, and it was easy to get in once I proved my experience in PM work. That led to my getting my security clearance renewed. The work is very satisfying and always interesting, always changing because we are, to some extent, on the front line, acting as the key liaison between State and the Department of Defense. In that sense it is dif-

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ferent from most WAE work.

I have been at the internship program for nine years. It is very satisfying and links well with my former career and the WAE work. It also links with my own past as a professor before I joined State. Many of my former students in the internship program say it was the key link in opening doors to professional careers, especially in international affairs. Several now work for State, CIA, DIA, etc. Unfortunately, it is a field that is difficult to get into if you don't have a Ph.D.

My advice is to begin preparing for your transition out of the Foreign Service at least a year in advance. Be realistic and take your time: start slowly and work your way into the new situation. The retirement program was useful and the Retirement Division is helpful most of the time.

Gene Schmiel
Washington, D.C.



Life in Small-Town America

When we retired in 1997, my wife Sandy and I wanted to stay reasonably close to Washington, D.C. Our grown children are nearby. We enjoy the city and old friends in the area. At the same time, after 32 years of life abroad and in the Northern Virginia suburbs, we longed to try life in small-town America. The answer for us was Winchester, Va., a picturesque town of around 23,000 located at the head of the Shenandoah Valley about 75 miles west of Washington, D.C.

The key to Winchester for us was our love of history and of community involvement. The city's early-18th-century origins, its role as a training ground for the young George Washington and its bloody trial-by-fire during the Civil War all rekindled my undergraduate interest in American studies. As for community, we found the city just large enough to support all sorts of cultural and social activity, but small enough to need new hands and new ideas.

Winchester is conservative, no doubt about that. However, its long tradition as a regional center and crossroads help make it relatively open to newcomers. We've worked on downtown revitalization — Sandy helped to

**“Grow old along
with me! The best
is yet to be.”**

— **Robert Browning**

start a downtown farmers' market, and I organized a nonprofit film society — as well as becoming active in the local Unitarian-Universalist church, the local historical society and social action efforts such as the city's Coalition for Racial Unity. Service on Winchester's Board of Architectural Review also makes me appreciate the delicate balance between historic

preservation and homeowner concerns. Who says that a diplomatic career ends with retirement?

In fact, small American cities are not “small” in the way they once were. There is the Internet, where I can read the *New York Times* every morning — not to mention the papers from Brazil, my last overseas post. Also, like many regional centers, Winchester has benefited from the dispersal of facilities that were once only available to larger communities. The city's new medical center is one of the largest in this tri-state region. Shenandoah University has both an excellent music conservatory — eat your heart out, Kennedy Center! — and good adult educational opportunities. Such institutions bring a new cosmopolitan touch to life in the northern Valley: for example, we've kept up our Portuguese with Brazilian neighbors, enjoy excellent professional and community theater and participate in frequent foreign policy discussions at the university.

So in sum, set in the rural beauty of the Valley but with Washington only 90 minutes away, Winchester has become a fine adopted home “on the other side of the mountain,” as the natives here say.

Mark Lore
Winchester, W.Va.



Is There Life After Retirement?

You bet there is! But each person has a different concept of what such a “life” should be for him or her.

Many Foreign Service people decide they would like to continue some sort of involvement with world affairs, either through a job, volunteer work or travel. Others prefer a return to their roots, or perhaps just avoiding world affairs while they tend to their roses ... or grandkids. Whatever you choose, there are lots of possibilities out there — just organize yourself, with the help of the

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State Department's Job Search Program. But do not expect that program to find the right job for you — or *any* job. You've got to do that yourself using, your communication skills and networking.

My own experience has included jobs and volunteering as well as travel. In my first days of retirement, I sent out hundreds of letters to a variety of companies and organizations. I received several nibbles, but then someone tipped me off about a new scholarship/fellowship program for Americans to study abroad that was going to be run out of the Pentagon (using funds that were cut in 1991 from the Department of Defense budget). I called up that office and was immediately hired because no one of the 10 to 12 people working there had any real international experience. That lasted three years, until we got the first recipients (about 500) selected and on their way.

One of the letters I sent out early on produced my next job: improving election procedures in Asian countries. Then EUR, one of three bureaus (the others were AF and EAP) to which I had written about my availabili-

ty, sent me as a WAE to Luxembourg for three months where there was a persistent staffing gap. That was followed a half-year later with another two-month stint there. And about that time I was asked to join a new understaffed office working on Southeastern Europe cooperation, which I did for over three years. Wandering around EUR periodically, I then landed a WAE slot on NATO affairs.

In my spare time, the AFSA Speakers' Bureau began to use me to speak on a variety of topics, some to schools, civic organizations and other groups. That was a very rewarding turn of events, especially as over the years in the Foreign Service I had done hundreds of speaking engagements in various parts of the world. AFSA gets hundreds of requests from around the country every year for speakers. And that, too, is part of networking.

In 1999 AFSA put me in touch with a group in Northern Virginia that was looking to add a one-hour-per-week session on world affairs. We are now into our 16th eight-week series, and I have managed to provide

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many distinguished speakers: diplomats from other countries, Foreign Service people, journalists, scholars, international organization representatives, etc.

My wife and I love to travel. Although as a nurse she has done a lot of international travel accompanying handicapped people or Europeans who become seriously sick or injured in the Western Hemisphere, we continued our own travel program, enhanced in 1996 when I was asked to be a lecturer on a cruise ship for the first time. I have since lectured on over 20 cruises and three air tours. These are not easy to come by, but for a start simply contact the directors of entertainment of the various cruise lines.

Yes, a few of those opportunities *seem* to have fallen into my lap — but all because I was out there looking,

***This is the second half of
your adult life; perhaps it's
time to mentally stretch a bit
and do something completely
unrelated to the tasks of the
last 25 or so years.***

— *Gloria S.N. Lloyd*

writing letters, passing out my calling cards and talking with people I knew.

I repeat — do not expect anything to magically appear unless you are already out there doing something about your future. Remember the old adage, for those of you sharing a marriage or a relationship, about being “married for love but not for lunch.”

In our major cities there are a great deal of interesting — and often non-costly — things to

keep one occupied, and some of them may lead to work (paid or unpaid) based on your background and interests. Just do not get dismayed. Get your pals to help. And keep off that couch!

Gil Sheinbaum
Vienna, Va. ■

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THE DOMINO EFFECT OF IMPROPER DECLASSIFICATION

A RETIRED FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER CONFRONTS FALSE ALLEGATIONS THAT HE WAS A CENTRAL FIGURE IN U.S. ASSISTANCE TO OPERATION CONDOR WHILE SERVING IN LATIN AMERICA DURING THE 1970s.

BY JAMES J. BLYSTONE

Years before I joined the Foreign Service, standing watch as a Marine guard in Buenos Aires in the early 1960s showed me the career path I wished to follow and the part of the world I wanted to concentrate on. In the past year, however, my Latin American assignments have come back to haunt me with a vengeance.

Two events in rapid succession shocked me out of a blissful retirement. First, in April 2005, I received an e-mail from the State Department Legal Adviser's office forwarding a summons from the Argentine Justice Ministry. The document called me to make a sworn statement answering seven questions having to do with the penetration of left-wing guerrilla organizations by Argentine security forces in the 1970s. The order, originated by an Argentine judge in September 2002, had been transmitted to the U.S. Justice

James J. Blystone retired from the Foreign Service in 1994 after 28 years of service as a security and administrative officer in posts including Santiago, Buenos Aires, Rome, Cairo and Riyadh, where he served as administrative counselor and acting DCM. His Washington assignments included a tour as deputy executive director for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Since retiring from the Service, he has been held various positions both overseas and in Washington as a WAE annuitant.

Department and then was kicked around for nearly three years between Justice and State before being passed to me — without any guidance or annotation as to how (or whether) I should respond to the summons. I replied that I did not wish to answer the questions, and the department assured me it would pass my reply back to the Argentine government.

Several months later, in August 2005, I became aware of the publication in the United States of a book, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*, by Professor J. Patrice McSherry of Long Island University. The thesis of this book is that the U.S. government secretly condoned and assisted the implementation of Operation Condor, a covert Latin American military network created during the Cold War to facilitate the seizure and murder of political opponents across state borders. McSherry identifies me as a linchpin in the alleged U.S. liaison with this shadowy multinational entity.

As best as I can tell, my name first came to the attention of both the Argentine judge and McSherry as a result of a 2002 decision by the State Department to declassify and release under the Freedom of Information Act thousands of documents concerning exchanges between Embassy Buenos Aires and the department during the 1970s. These communications dealt with the conduct of Argentine security services in combating two left-wing guerrilla organizations, the ERP and the Montoneros, during the period commonly known as “the dirty war.” They included reports I

had submitted from 1978 to 1980 in my capacity as the regional security officer based in Buenos Aires. Inexplicably, these papers were released without redacting (blacking out) the names of the drafting officers.

When the documents were first released, the *Washington Post* excerpted and published some of them in September 2002. Alarmed, I called the office of Under Secretary for Management Grant Green and spoke with a special assistant to protest the release of declassified documents that contained my name. I asked the department to consider what practical steps it should take to ensure there would be no ramifications against officers who had faithfully drafted classified reports. But I received no reply.

As of this date, I have not responded to the Argentine inquiry. The only practical effect, I suppose, is that I should not plan on taking a vacation there any time soon! But now the appearance of the book has me concerned as to what other “domino effects” I should expect from the department’s decision to release official reports identifying me as the drafter. Already my name has been sullied as a direct consequence of the release, and I feel abandoned by a department that cavalierly passes me an inquiry from the judiciary of a foreign country concerning my faithful and official service as a U.S. Foreign Service officer, then leaves me high and dry.

A Bill of Particulars

Prof. McSherry’s main charges against me can be summarized as follows:

- A Chilean named Juan Munoz Alarcon, a defector from the secret police agency known as DINA, in testimony given in 1977 to a church vicariate in Santiago shortly before being murdered, reportedly identified me as “very important” to Operation

***I feel aggrieved that
State casually passed
along a judicial inquiry
based on information I
had compiled in the
course of my official
functions.***

Condor in Chile.

- A source in Argentine Army intelligence allegedly informed me in advance that several Argentines were about to be abducted in Lima in June 1980 and then transported to Argentina for interrogation and eventual liquidation. Among them was a Mother of the Plaza de Mayo named Noemi Gianetti de Molfino who was in Lima working with a Peruvian human rights group. Mrs. de Molfino had previously given testimony to a United Nations body concerning the disappearance of her son and daughter-in-law. A month later, Mrs. de Molfino’s body was found in Madrid.

- In this same conversation, I allegedly briefed my source on the political situation in Bolivia prior to the 1979 coup overthrowing the government, clandestinely planned and carried by out by undercover Argentine agents as an Operation Condor action in cooperation with a notorious Bolivian drug kingpin. From this McSherry concludes that I was involved in the coup plot.

- Furthermore, this source also allegedly briefed me on his impending trip to Central America on behalf of Operation Condor. McSherry

asserts that my source may have been an army officer named Col. Jorge Osvaldo Ribeiro Rawson, a high-ranking Argentine military intelligence officer, who she says was involved in the coup in Bolivia and later commanded Argentine covert forces in Central America.

- In another conversation, I supposedly “jokingly asked” my source for details concerning two Montoneros who had disappeared on a trip from Mexico to Rio, whereupon the source proceeded to tell me how they had been seized at the Rio airport and taken to a secret army jail in Campo de Mayo in Argentina.

McSherry claims that these conversations add further evidence to the testimony provided earlier by the Chilean defector that I was a central figure in a presumed U.S. relationship with Operation Condor. She acknowledges having been told by several State Department people she consulted that I did nothing outside of my official duties. Yet she rejects this defense and concludes that I consorted with Operation Condor either as an “intelligence liaison officer or simply someone trusted by the Condor apparatus.” Beyond that, she faults me for not taking any action when given advance warning of an impending murder, which she concludes is crossing the line into complicity, and for allegedly not having expressed any objection, which is tantamount to “providing a green light.”

Embassy Security 101

At this juncture, I need to clarify the role of an embassy security officer and detail what I did in Chile and Argentina as a State Department employee who had no relationship with any of the intelligence services of the United States. My principal functions were to provide security for the ambassador and mission personnel, ensure the security of the embassy compound, protect classified docu-

ments and investigate any improper behavior on the part of embassy personnel. An inherent part of the job was to develop relationships with the security services of the host country in order to collect intelligence on any potential threats to the embassy or its personnel.

During the time that I was in Argentina (1978-1980), in the course of carrying out these functions, I stumbled onto the fact that the Argentine security services were carrying out some operations in neighboring countries. But I do not recall ever hearing the term "Operation Condor" used, either there or in Santiago, by any of my contacts or embassy colleagues. I also did not know the extent of Argentine or Chilean military networking, either with each other or with the security services of other Latin American countries. Nor was I aware of any U.S. role in relationship to that cooperation.

With the exception of the claims concerning my role in Chile, Prof. McSherry's claims are all based on two memoranda of conversation I drafted while in Buenos Aires that were subsequently released to the public under FOIA. From these she has concocted the theory that I was a central figure in a multinational enterprise called Operation Condor. I turn now to responding to each of her particulars:

- During my tour in Santiago, which preceded that of Buenos Aires, I had limited contact with Chilean intelligence officials. In fact, I met with DINA just twice: once, to see what information the agency had in its files on followers of the Allende government who had requested to be paroled into the United States on political grounds; and the second time, to coordinate security arrangements for the Organization of American States conference held in Santiago in 1976. I never met Juan

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Munoz Alarcon nor have any idea how he learned of my name or why he accused me of having a connection to a multinational operation of which I had no knowledge. Without access to the testimony he gave to the vicariate, I do not know whether he even made those comments, or whether they are fanciful embroidery added by Prof. McSherry.

• Regarding the disappearance of Mrs. de Molfino in Lima on June 14, 1980, I had asked my contact on previous occasions why the government had found it necessary to permanently “disappear” exiles it had captured aboard. His answer was that many of them had already been captured once before and placed into jail or prison, only to be released by civilian governments. (I did not necessarily take this explanation at face value.) In the Molfino case, I reported the information I received concerning her impending abduction on June 19, 1980, in a memo to U.S. Ambassador Raul Castro. The issue of whether Washington should have intervened actively in this Argentine action was a policy matter above my pay grade to decide.

• In any case, I never obtained any further information as to Mrs. de Molfino's fate. But it is inconceivable to me that the Argentine security forces would have murdered her there and then gone through all the trouble of dumping her body in Madrid when they could have easily disposed of it in their own country, as happened in so many other cases. I can only assume that she was brought back to Argentina and then, instead of killing her, for some reason she was released and permitted to travel to Spain. While this did not happen often, there are other cases in which it was determined after interrogation that the victim was not directly or actively connected to a subversive organization and was let go, on the promise he or she would go into exile

abroad and stay quiet — or in some cases in return for being pressured to carry out intelligence missions on behalf of Argentina abroad. In this particular case, McSherry reports that Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzon opened an inquiry into her death in Madrid, so perhaps there are more details available in the public record concerning this matter.

• Regarding the allegation that I was involved in a coup in Bolivia, I traveled to La Paz to arrange security for Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who was attending an OAS conference held in that capital city. The coup plotters politely waited until Secretary Vance left town before they proceeded. I had no knowledge nor did the embassy of the impending action until after the fact. So when my Argentine source asked me about the political situation in Bolivia prior to the coup, I had no idea that he was attempting to learn whether the U.S. was aware of Argentina's involvement in the plot. Now, having learned of Argentina's involvement from McSherry's book (if this information is accurate), I understand why he asked the question.

• Without revealing my source's identity (though I can say his name was not "Ribeiro," as McSherry claims), I can confirm that he was a civilian contract employee of the Argentine Army, not an Army officer. He was a source for the embassy's security office long before I was assigned to Buenos Aires. I took pains to cultivate a social relationship with him and got to know him, both as a contact and a personal friend. On those occasions when he revealed some intimate detail concerning Argentine "dirty war" operations, it was often in a casual moment while we were discussing other matters more central to my function concerning the security of embassy personnel in Buenos Aires. I do not believe he was under instruction to reveal these

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details to me. It was more a function of our personal relationship. I would even venture to say he crossed the line and told me some of these stories because he was personally troubled by the excesses being committed by the Argentine forces in the course of their war against subversive organizations. As for his planned mission to Central America to gather intelligence there, he never suggested to me that it was in connection with Operation Condor or anything similar.

- Regarding my query concerning the two Montoneros who were seized in Rio, Prof. McSherry reports accurately that I approached this in a casual, seemingly indifferent manner. However, this was to put my contact at ease in order to maximize the chances he would respond to the question. I agree this was no joking matter, and I should not have described it that way.

The ERP and the Montoneros, the two militant organizations engaged in a struggle to overthrow Argentina's military government by force, engaged in violent attacks against the military and police and their families. These were not Mahatma Gandhi-like groups, but an armed insurgency against the government that did not represent the ideals of liberal democracy. If they had ever succeeded in seizing power, they would have installed a dictatorship, most likely on the model of Castro's Cuba, possibly even bringing Argentina within the orbit of the Soviet Union.

It goes without saying that both groups were hostile to the United States and to American interests in Argentina. So there was no reason why the United States would want to see these people come to power. Yet while the U.S. respected the right of the Argentine government to defend itself from this rebellion, it was also shocked by the extrajudicial and even criminal methods used by the military to deal with this insurgency.

***My own discussions with
my Argentine military
intelligence contact
focused on the potential
threat against U.S.
personnel from radical
insurgents.***

The U.S. had an interest in reducing the human rights violations committed by Argentine forces during this armed struggle. The large number of messages that were released under FOIA reveal that almost every office in Embassy Buenos Aires was involved in reporting on the human rights violations taking place, making representations to the Argentine government to conduct itself in a more civilized and humane manner, and making inquiries as to the welfare of specific prisoners of special interest to the United States. The Argentine military did not appreciate these efforts, of course, and resented the fact that they did not have the full support of the United States in what they had convinced themselves was an epochal battle of Western civilization against international communism.

Defusing Tensions

My own discussions with my Argentine military intelligence contact focused on the potential threat against American personnel from radical Argentine insurgents. I determined early on that this threat was minimal, and that continued to be my assessment until the end of my tour. However, I discovered that there was

a latent threat against our personnel from the Argentine security forces.

On one occasion, my military contact informed me of an impending action to arrest all of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo on the grounds that they constituted a subversive threat and that many of them were aware of the locations where armed guerrillas were in hiding. I told my source that this was a mistake that could only bring further harm to Argentina's already sinking reputation abroad, but he said there was nothing that could be done to reverse this decision. When I reported this to Amb. Castro, he immediately telephoned Argentine Army chief of staff General Viola to protest this harebrained scheme, and the action was called off. Of course, this did not win us any friends with my source's superiors in Army military intelligence.

At another point, my source revealed to me that Argentine Army intelligence was interested in bringing the embassy's human rights officer (and later president of AFSA), F.A. "Tex" Harris, in for questioning about his contacts with the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and other human rights organizations — even abducting him if necessary. I succeeded in neutralizing this threat by having my contact engage instead in an informal conversation with Tex as to the rationale of United States human rights policy. During that exchange, he explained why it would have been foolish and counterproductive for the Argentine military to attempt to interfere with the embassy's contacts with human rights groups.

The embassy's extensive contacts with Argentine trade unions were also viewed with suspicion and hostility by the army's intelligence service. Together with the AFL-CIO, the embassy labor attaché was cultivating the Peronist labor leadership and bringing about a rapprochement between it and the democratic international

trade union movement headquartered in Europe, which was railing against the Argentine military dictatorship in international fora. The AFL-CIO office in Buenos Aires, known as AIFLD, was surreptitiously broken into several times by Argentine security forces, and the AIFLD representative in Argentina was placed under surveillance and even threatened.

At the same time, the embassy labor attaché was summoned one day through a ruse to federal police headquarters for a “friendly chat” with the army colonel in charge. As soon as I learned of this, I paid a call on the colonel and warned him he was playing with fire — Argentina was in danger of having its exports to the United States dumped in the New York harbor by the American labor movement. I made some arrangements to defuse the tension and the threat against the AFL-CIO

representative receded.

One-Way Loyalty?

I served in Argentina during a very difficult and challenging period. I realize there is lingering controversy surrounding whether the embassy and the Department of State should have done more to intervene in this internal war in Argentina. But this does not give Prof. McSherry the right to let her imagination to run wild and spin theories that are not substantiated by the evidence she has accumulated. In my particular case, I feel aggrieved by her false conjectures about my performance, especially because she could have consulted me before going ahead with her book.

I also feel aggrieved that State casually passed along a judicial inquiry based on information I had compiled in the course of my official functions — an inquiry which would

not have been initiated in the first place if my reports had not been made public without any care as to protecting the identity of the drafting officer — and then failed to provide any advice or support to one of its loyal employees who had been placed in a compromising situation and possibly even subject to sanctions by a foreign court as a result of its actions. I have been loyal to the department, but the department has not been loyal to me.

I do not know how many other Foreign Service officers may have been placed in similarly compromising situations in the past as a result of similar circumstances, but I believe the department should play a more positive role in such cases than it has so far. I also believe that AFSA, our union and professional association, should play a supportive role in seeing to it that this issue is raised in the department. ■



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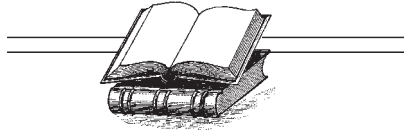
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BOOKS

The Price of Realpolitik

A Not-So-Distant Horror: Mass Violence in East Timor
Joseph Nevins, Cornell University Press, 2005, \$18.95, paperback, 273 pages.

REVIEWED BY
EDMUND MCWILLIAMS

Rarely do contemporary histories address foreign policy from the perspective of human rights and justice. Even rarer is a book like Joseph Nevins' *A Not-So-Distant Horror: Mass Violence in East Timor*, which compellingly makes the case that the failure to give such concerns adequate weight in Washington's policy formulation has led to ruinous results. The quarter-century-long tragedy that befell the people of East Timor following the Indonesian invasion and occupation of that small country in 1975, and the barbarous violence they endured at the hands of the Indonesian military and its militias following their vote for freedom in 1999, have been well documented. Where Nevins' riveting and often personal narrative of that history breaks new ground is in its meticulous, analytical review of the miscalculations of the major powers that facilitated the Indonesian military's rape of East Timor from 1975 to 1999 and its near-strangling of that new nation at the moment of its birth.

Most revealing and most damning

is Nevins' exposure of the deliberate policy choices made by officials in Washington, Tokyo, Canberra and London that failed even as *realpolitik*. Those decisions, which entailed ignoring Indonesian military brutality and sacrificing Timorese fundamental rights and well-being, were intended to promote economic and geopolitical ties with Jakarta. In fact, the policies of Washington and its allies exacerbated and made inevitable an ultimate confrontation with Jakarta that deeply scarred those key relationships.

U.S. provision of air-to-ground aircraft (OV-10 Broncos) and small arms and ammunition from 1976 to 1978 replenished the Indonesian military's armory, enabling it to consummate its post-invasion assault on the Timorese resistance and civilian population. (Around the same time, it also used those planes against villages in West Papua, which Indonesia had seized in 1969.)

Some have sought to rationalize U.S. support for the brutal, rightist Soeharto military regime by placing that policy in the context of the Cold War. However, continued U.S. backing for that regime — in particular, continuing support for Jakarta's occupation of East Timor — after the collapse of the Soviet Union reveals U.S. policy as oblivious and bankrupt. Consider former Ambassador J. Stapleton Roy's explanation, cited in Nevins' book, for the timid U.S. response to the post-electoral bloodshed: "Indonesia matters and East Timor doesn't."

Nevins documents with equal precision the refusal of the U.S. and

other international powers to insist on Indonesian accountability for the crimes against humanity that victimized not only the people of East Timor but also the international community and its U.N. mission in East Timor. What remains unexplained in this otherwise excellent account is the failure of the U.S. and other international powers to demand that the Indonesian military behave responsibly in the period leading up to the Aug. 30, 1999, vote. Insisting that the Indonesian government provide security in East Timor, as it had pledged to do in its May 5, 1999, agreement with the United Nations, was an obvious and low-cost option.

Our failure to demand the disarming and disbanding of Indonesian militias not only set in motion the slaughter, but also assured disruption of the very bilateral relationship upon which U.S. policy-makers like Ambassador Roy put such priority. Further, it reinforced the near-total impunity that the Indonesian military continues to enjoy there (as shown by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent announcement of the restoration of Jakarta's eligibility for bilateral military aid), notwithstanding its notorious history of human rights abuses, anti-democratic conniving and continuing corruption. Once again, U.S. policy-makers, in their reluctance to confront the Indonesian government, or at least its military, seriously undermine their stated desire to encourage the emergence of a stable and democratic Indonesia.

This book should be read by all



those concerned that Washington's eager embrace and empowerment of rogue militaries in the so-called "war on terror" — as we did during the Cold War — will again strengthen regimes characterized by their corruption and hostility to democracy and human rights.

Edmund McWilliams entered the Foreign Service in 1975, serving in Vientiane, Bangkok, Moscow, Kabul, Islamabad, Managua, Bishkek, Dushanbe, Jakarta (where he was political counselor from 1996 to 1999) and Washington, D.C. He opened the posts in Bishkek and Dushanbe and was the first chief of mission in each. In 1998, he received AFSA's Christian Herter Award for creative dissent by a senior FSO. Since retiring as a Senior Foreign Service officer in 2001, he has worked with various U.S. and foreign human rights NGOs as a volunteer.

Made in the USA

Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe

Victoria de Grazia, Belknap Press, 2005, \$29.95, hardcover, 586 pages.

REVIEWED BY CHRISTOPHER TEAL

Aspirations to cultural hegemony have been one of the constant accusations leveled against the United States during its rise to superpower status over the past century, as the pervasiveness of American popular culture has fueled changing trends in art, music and fashion around the world. In addition, the U.S. corporations behind those products made inroads into the farthest reaches of the globe, and brought with them the mass-mar-

keting, mass-consumption mind-set of 20th-century America. This exportation of "Babbitry," Victoria de Grazia argues in her latest book — *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* — had just as big an impact around the world as the military or diplomatic prowess of the world's only remaining superpower.

No one can underestimate the influence that American mass media (and American corporate power) have around the world.

As early as the 1920s, European critics were disparaging the "Hollywood Invasion," but people came out in droves to see American films in their theaters. Scores of other American products (from detergent and razors to supermarkets and restaurants) soon followed in this path. As de Grazia points out, these U.S. models, with their associated marketing and name-branding, created strong impressions in countries throughout the old Continent that were catching up economically to the American standard. Exportation of the American consumer culture empowered individuals in Europe, offering choice (democracy), competition (liberalism) and independence (liberty). These standard-bearers of the "American Way" acted as a revolutionary force overseas, altering the lives of European consumers and directly refuting the Soviet model of communism.

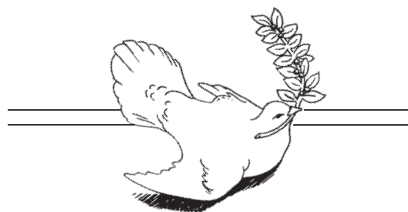
The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 seemed to mark the triumph of this irresistible force. Ironically, just as many in Europe had flocked toward this new way of consumption, U.S. materialism also sowed seeds of discontent in other parts of the world, which were then fortified by the marketing machinery. The fear of a loss of identity and tradition created violent

rejection of U.S. power and intentions, just as it had in parts of Europe during the first half of the century. Alienation and globalization became synonymous with the excesses of Americans' unbridled greed. Similar disconnects help account for the failure of our public diplomacy following the 9/11 attacks: Our campaign to combat "Islamic extremism" was dismissed as little more than a hollow, self-serving product in slick packaging.

Though intellectually ambitious, *Irresistible Empire* at times falls well short of the mark in execution. Some of de Grazia's chapters are simply long, turgid histories of various capitalist ventures, or overextended analyses of the activities of groups such as the Rotary Club in Europe. The core of her argument — that innovations (both in terms of products and their marketing) created greater change than the might of the 1st Infantry — seems stretched to the point of breaking.

De Grazia is a historian at Columbia University, and her book seems better suited for one of her graduate-level classes than to mass audiences. She does, however, offer a useful (if counterintuitive) perspective about the nature of the current U.S. ascendancy, one that ties in the importance of trade and commerce and the unique American perspective celebrating these pursuits. While that perspective is only part of the picture, it's a part that has been too often caricatured or obscured until now. ■

Christopher Teal, an FSO since 1999, is currently a desk officer in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and a member of the Journal's Editorial Board. The opinions expressed here are his own.



IN MEMORY

Frances Ellen Coughlin, 84, a retired FSO, died March 26, 2005.

A graduate of San Diego State College, with honors in Latin American Studies, Ms. Coughlin earned an M.A. in history from Claremont College in 1946. She went on to complete postgraduate work in foreign language studies at Stanford University in 1952.

In 1944, Ms. Coughlin joined the Women Air Force Service Pilots (the "WASPs"), a wing of the Air Force that took on non-combat flying duties such as ferrying aircraft around, to free up the male pilots. She was trained to fly a variety of aircraft, and maintained an interest in and enjoyment of flying throughout her subsequent career in Europe and South America. In 1947-48, she used her aviation training and ability to speak Portuguese to become an instructor for the Brazilian Air Force.

Ms. Coughlin joined the Foreign Service in 1952, and was posted to Buenos Aires as a cultural affairs assistant. Subsequent postings included Rome, Florence, Santiago, Lima and Madrid. After 28 years in the Service, she retired to La Jolla,

Calif. She spent her retirement traveling the world and visiting the many friends she made throughout her career.

Ms. Coughlin is survived by her sister Barbara, brother-in-law Bob, and her nieces and nephews: Tim, Steve, Keith and Karen.



Dr. Philip Dur, 91, a retired FSO and professor emeritus of political science at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, died Oct. 5 at his home in Lafayette, La., of congestive heart failure.

Born in St. Louis, Mo., Dr. Dur earned his bachelor's degree (summa cum laude) and his doctorate in history from Harvard University. He was commissioned as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Navy and, after Japanese language training, participated in the interception, decryption and translation of Japanese naval communications during World War II.

Dr. Dur entered the Foreign Service in 1947, and served in diplomatic and consular posts in France, Germany, Panama, Japan and at the

Department of State in Washington, D.C. In addition to Japanese, Dr. Dur was fluent in French, German and Spanish.

He retired from the Foreign Service in 1965, and accepted an appointment at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette as the Jefferson Caffery Honor Professor of Political Science. He is best remembered by former students for his offerings in diplomatic history and the conduct of diplomacy. During his tenure at ULL and following his retirement, Dr. Dur published many articles in learned journals on the distinguished career of Ambassador Caffery, whom he met and befriended in 1948 while both were posted to France.

He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, a Rotarian and a member of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana.

Dr. Dur's wife, Maria Elena Delgado of Camaguey, Cuba, preceded him in death in 1993.

Survivors include his children, Elena (Mrs. Philip A. Morris) of Henniker, N.H.; retired Rear Admiral Philip A. Dur, USN, of Pascagoula, Miss.; Stansbury S. Dur of Houston,

IN MEMORY



Texas; Carmen (Mrs. Norman B. Conley Jr.) of Lancaster, Ohio; Jacqueline Dur Sheppard, also of Lancaster; and John J. Dur of Henniker, N.H. He is also survived by 18 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.



Patricia Crane Harrison, 71, a retired FSO with USAID, died Nov. 9 at home with her family in Vineyard Haven, Mass., after a four-month battle with cancer. She was the owner and chef of Vineyard Haute Cuisine, a catering business she started in 1995.

Born in 1934, Mrs. Harrison grew up in Waban, a village in Newton, Mass. She graduated from Mills College in Oakland, Calif., and did graduate work in French studies at the University of Paris and in cultural anthropology at American University in Washington, D.C.

She began her career with the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1960 in Laos during a civil war. She married USAID official Jacob L. Crane III in 1962, gave birth to two daughters, Lisa and Nicole, and relished her life in the Foreign Service in Senegal, Afghanistan, Jordan, Nepal and Zaire, until Jake's death in 1980. In those years, she became an accomplished high-Himalaya trekker, an avid and adventurous cook and a seasoned sailor, cruising in the Mediterranean, Adriatic and Aegean Seas, and across the Atlantic to the Caribbean aboard a 36-foot ketch with her husband and daughters.

After serving in Haiti from 1981 to 1983, Mrs. Harrison returned to work at USAID headquarters in Washington. She retired from government service in 1988, and moved to her home in Vineyard Haven. She married author, Tufts professor and former

USAID official Lawrence Harrison in 1990, the year in which she opened Harrison's Restaurant on the wharf at Oak Bluffs, Mass. In the fall of 1993, she started an intensive course at the Cordon Bleu School of Cuisine in Ottawa, Ontario. In the summer of 1994, she apprenticed at Lydia Shire's Pignoli Restaurant in Boston, and then completed her Cordon Bleu studies with honors in London. She started Vineyard Haute Cuisine the following spring.

Over the past 11 years, Mrs. Harrison catered some 75 weddings and innumerable cocktail and dinner parties. She earned a reputation as a chef who produced the highest-quality food, beautifully presented by a staff committed to gracious service. Her files are filled with effusive letters from grateful brides.

She will be remembered for the amazing crab cakes she served every year at the Taste of the Vineyard, wearing her signature floppy red chef's hat. But it was the style and beauty that graced everything she did for which she will be best remembered by her friends, family, staff, brides and numerous clients.

Mrs. Harrison loved golf — she had a hole-in-one in 2001 — and duplicate bridge. She continued to be a world traveler, and particularly enjoyed driving trips to the West Coast and Canada with her husband and their dogs.

Besides her husband Larry, Mrs. Harrison leaves daughters Lisa and Nicole; stepdaughters Julia, Beth and Amy; sister Karen and brother Chuck; and 11 grandchildren.



Jack H. Shellenberger, 77, a retired senior FSO with USIA, died Oct. 25 at his home in Great Falls, Va. Mr. Shellenberger's distinguished

diplomatic career from 1955 until 1991 included tours as counselor of public affairs at U.S. embassies in Lagos, Tehran, Ottawa and Tokyo. As a junior officer, he served as director of the American cultural center in Nagoya, as a branch public affairs officer in Moulmein and as an information officer and counselor at the U.S. mission to the European communities in Brussels.

At the Voice of America, Mr. Shellenberger served first as a regional editor for Europe in the Worldwide English Division from 1962 to 1964. There, he edited a news and current affairs broadcast, "Report to Europe." He returned to the Voice a decade later as chief of policy and was promoted to director of programs at the international network the same year, 1974. He directed all of the Voice's programming during the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and the final months of the Watergate crisis.

A scholar and writer, Mr. Shellenberger earned a master's degree in international public policy at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Bologna, Italy, where he studied from 1964 to 1965. He was appointed dean at the School of Area Studies at the Foreign Service Institute in 1988.

In 1977, Mr. Shellenberger was assigned as counselor and country public affairs officer in Tehran, where he served until July 1979, a few months after the fall of the shah. A month later, he was assigned as public affairs officer in Ottawa, where he served for four years. During those years, he was the USIA White House liaison and coordinator for the Ottawa, Versailles and Williamsburg G-7 economic summit meetings.

In 1983, Mr. Shellenberger was assigned to Japan. After 10 months of

IN MEMORY



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Japanese language study at FSI in Yokohama, he became counselor for public affairs and director of the USIS section in Tokyo.

Following his retirement in 1993, Mr. Shellenberger became director of the Japan-America Student Conference, located at DACOR in Washington, D.C. He held that post for 10 years, during which hundreds of Japanese and American students participated in summertime academic exchanges aimed at increasing understanding between the younger generations of both countries.

Toward the end of his career, Mr. Shellenberger was described by a senior agency official as “a consummate professional who can do it all.” The official wrote: “He has handled the myriad details of presidential visits with alacrity, and has a relaxed yet firm and disciplined manner that almost masks the magnitude of this effort and achievement.”

Born in Amsterdam, N.Y., in 1927, Mr. Shellenberger spent his youth in Yonkers, N.Y., and Los Angeles. He graduated from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., in 1952. He received the President’s Meritorious Service Award in 1984. He and the USIA Japan staff received USIA’s Superior Honor Award for their role in the Tokyo Economic Summit of 1986.

His marriage to Jill Shellenberger ended in divorce.

Mr. Shellenberger is survived by his wife, Soodabeh Azar Shellenberger of Great Falls; two daughters from his first marriage, Katie Schwieger of Purcellville, Va., and Karen Oliver of Capistrano Beach, Calif.; a stepson, Karan Lofti of Washington, D.C.; a stepdaughter, Sara Berenji of Indianapolis, Ind.; a brother, Rolfe Shellenberger of Palm Desert, Calif.; and six grandchildren.

Arthur W. Tunnell Jr., 89, a retired FSO with USAID, died Sept. 5 in Ft. Myers, Fla.

Mr. Tunnell was born in Southampton, N.Y., and graduated in 1937 with a bachelor’s degree from Drexel Institute of Technology (now Drexel University) in Philadelphia, where he studied accounting. He became a certified public accountant, and was a longtime member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants.

During World War II, Mr. Tunnell served in the U.S. Navy as a lieutenant (second class) in the Pacific, and was honorably discharged in 1946. After practicing accounting in New York with Peat Marwick, Mr. Tunnell worked for Standard Vacuum Oil Company (now Mobil Oil Co.) in Sungel Gerong, Sumatra, Indonesia, for 10 years.

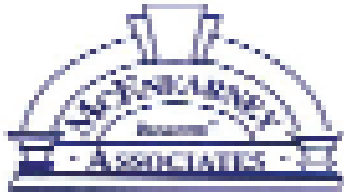
Mr. Tunnell joined the Foreign Service in 1958, and served as comptroller for USAID in Taiwan, Ethiopia, Sudan, Nigeria, Turkey and Nepal. He retired to Ft. Myers in 1975.

Mr. Tunnell’s wife of more than 50 years, Amelia Hamilton Cornell Tunnell, from Charleston, S.C., predeceased him in 1993. He is survived by his son, Arthur W. Tunnell III; his daughters, Louise Torri and Margaret O. Tunnell; his sisters, Julia L. Tunnell and Adelaide E. Tunnell; and three grandchildren.

The family suggests contributions in Mr. Tunnell’s memory be made to the Salvation Army (for “Katrina Relief Effort”), P.O. Box 4857, Jackson MS 39296-4857, or online at www.salvationarmysouth.org. ■

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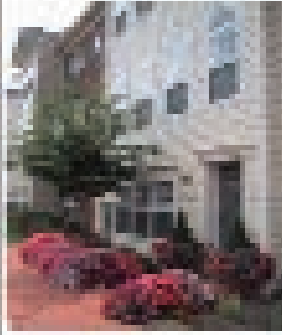
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REFLECTIONS

The Mystery of the Hidden Files

BY KIMBERLY KRHOUNEK

Rarely does a Foreign Service officer come across a genuine Cold War mystery. But one damp, cold day in December 2004, my colleagues and I stumbled across a decades-old secret, hidden within the embassy itself.

It all began when the political-economic section of Embassy Prague took on the task of cleaning out and reorganizing our five bulging office safes. Shortly after Christmas, while all was quiet on the Washington front, several of us dressed in our oldest jeans and took on the herculean task.

Once we got into the swing of things, the fun of discovery began. My personal favorites were the biographic files, with pages of newspaper clippings and memos of secret meetings with dissidents. These were a treasure trove of memorabilia for the hard-core Cold Warrior, with dozens of files on long-dead Communist leaders, each of which seemed to come with an obligatory 5"x7" black-and-white photo of a jowly, serious, middle-aged functionary with thick, dark eyeglasses. We salvaged the photos and later had an excellent

Kimberly Krhounek is a political officer who joined the Foreign Service in 1994. She has served in Haiti, Prague (where she is currently on her second tour), the Sinai Desert, the U.S. mission to the United Nations and Washington. The stamp is courtesy of the AAFSW Bookfair "Stamp Corner."

game of "To Tell the Truth" with our FSN employees, who took great relish in identifying the photos of our communist-era gallery, pointing out those who ended as crooks, died in prison or were airbrushed out of history.

Our files provided a fascinating worm's-eye view of the amazing transformation of the former Warsaw Pact countries. Imagine, if you will, a file on one of the Czech Republic's citizens, Vaclav Havel, that began, "Vaclav Havel, an unemployed playwright..." and ended with "President of the Czech Republic" (a country that did not exist prior to 1993).

We finally came to the bottom drawer of our last safe, and to our surprise, it revealed a stack of decades-old legal documents written in Czech. There was no letter or memo in the files explaining what they were, or how they ended up in our safe. Puzzled, we launched our own investigation.

A historian at the Czech National Archives later confirmed that we were in possession of some 283 original court case files from the 1940s and 1950s from the Olomouc region in the eastern part of the Czech Republic. The files were marked with a red "P" for "political" and dealt with cases of political persecution relating to illegal border crossings, opposition to collectivization of land, and punishments for those who made derogatory statements against the communist regime or listened to "Voice of America."

The Czech archivists were stunned and thrilled by the discovery of our documents. In 1971 the Justice Ministry had ordered the destruction of all political case files from the 1940s and 1950s, so it appears that our small cache is one of the few to have escaped the purge. We can only assume that some brave Czech took the considerable risk of bringing the files to the embassy for safekeeping. We are proud to say that we fulfilled our task, although we kept them so safely that their very existence had passed out of our collective memory.

In June 2005, following approval by the department and amid much press fanfare, Ambassador William Cabaniss hand-delivered our formerly hidden treasures to the eager staff at the Czech National Archives. Not only do they provide a fascinating insight into a period of lost history, but some have relevance even today for families seeking restitution for communist-era abuses.

Still, how these documents got to the embassy remains a mystery. No Czechs have come forward since the press announcement to claim the credit for saving the files from destruction; perhaps they are long since dead or emigrated. Our hope is that one of our embassy predecessors will remember this incident and can describe the day a mysterious donor arrived on our doorstep. Only then can we close the book on the "Mystery of the Hidden Files." ■

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