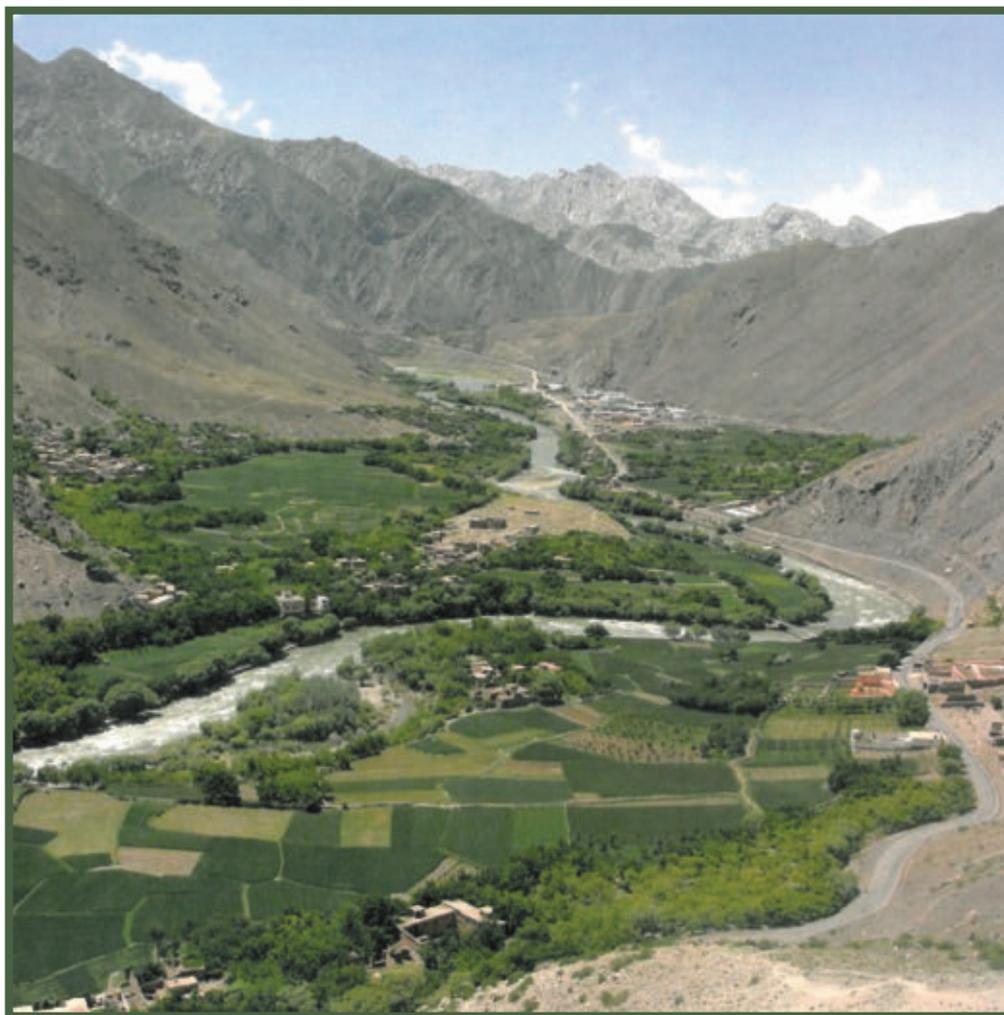


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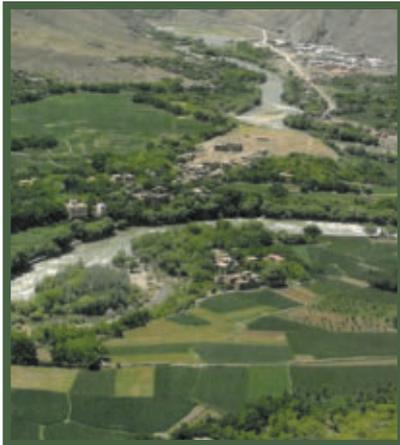
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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

Time for the Foreign Service Reserve Corps

BY SUSAN R. JOHNSON

After decades of discussion and little action, it is high time for the Department of State and our other civilian foreign affairs agencies to establish a Foreign Service “ready reserve” composed of qualified retirees — and possibly former Foreign Service personnel with 10 years or more of experience. We simply can no longer afford to deprive ourselves of skills and experience readily available to us.



AFSA has long advocated a centrally managed and operated program to use our retirees to fill temporary staffing gaps for two reasons. First, such a system would be more transparent and less susceptible to cronyism than the current When Actually Employed system, which each State bureau runs on its own. A unified program would also cut administrative costs by centralizing, computerizing and streamlining the hiring process.

We should give this program a name that describes its function and purpose precisely and accurately: the Foreign Service Reserve Corps. The current “When Actually Employed” designation is a largely incomprehensible bureaucratic term. Few outside the Department of State have a clue what “WAE” means, and fewer still are

inspired by it.

The WAE issue has come up in the context of the staffing gaps at the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development that I have addressed in previous columns.

A recent briefing on the scope of the mid-level staffing gap at State and the tools available to manage it — as well as some of the responses to my Nov. 23 message to members about the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, in which I recommended using retirees to address the mid-level experience gap — inspires me to return to the issue.

I have heard from many retirees who have served repeatedly on WAE assignments overseas and are now being dropped from the rolls for cost reasons, and from others who have signed up but never been called. There is a broad perception that the way the WAE program is set up and managed distributes opportunities to those best known to bureau executive directors and post management officers.

As one retired FSO noted in a thoughtful memo, a Foreign Service Ready Reserve corps could fill vacant positions on a short- or longer-term temporary basis, or meet sudden unanticipated needs. It could provide able and experienced workers at a fraction of the cost of alternative ap-

proaches. There would be no need to fund retirement and health insurance costs; moreover, retirees can be paid less than they were making at retirement — so long as they do not forgo their annuity — when called to active duty.

A small unit in the Bureau of Human Resources — perhaps called the Human Resources Ready Reserve Office — could be set up to administer the program. This unit would maintain a skills bank with a computerized profile of all retirees who register for the program and handle the necessary paperwork. It would cover the payroll costs of reserve personnel through a Working Capital Fund that could bill each bureau for the funds expended on its behalf. The office could also work with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Office of Medical Services to simplify processes for keeping security and medical clearances up to date.

All branches of our military maintain reserve or National Guard components, as outlined in Title 10, Subtitle E. Their purpose is clearly spelled out in the legislation: “to provide trained units and qualified persons available for active duty at such time as national security may require.” Our civilian foreign affairs agencies need a similar reserve capacity, and now is the time to make it happen. ■

Susan R. Johnson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

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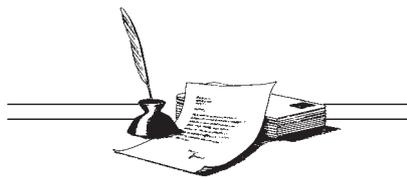
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Shawn Dorman, EDITOR

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LETTERS

China Service

I was pleased to see Hannah Gorman's excellent FS Heritage profile of John Service ("John S. Service: A Cold War Lightning Rod") in the November *FSJ*, and look forward to reading her prize-winning dissertation, "The Dissent Papers," when it is in book form. Allow me, however, to offer some additional details regarding one sentence in her piece: "When the American Foreign Service Association honored him at a 1973 luncheon, he chose to speak ... on political reporting. ..." This description could give the impression that the event paid tribute only to Service.

In fact, AFSA President Bill Harrop's invitation letter makes clear that the event's purpose was broader: "At a luncheon on the Department of State's 8th floor at noon on Jan. 30, 1973, the American Foreign Service Association will honor those Foreign Service officers in China during the early 1940s who demonstrated their professionalism and integrity by reporting events as they saw them." And the noted historian Barbara Tuchman began her luncheon address by saying, "We have gathered to honor a group of Foreign Service officers — represented in the person of Jack Service — whom history has recognized as having been right."

It seems fitting to list those officers, here, though even Tuchman's listing was incomplete: Clarence Gauss, George Atcheson, John Davies, Edward Rice, Arthur Ringwalt, Philip

Sprouse, Edmund Clubb and John Carter Vincent. The classic account of this tragic episode in our history remains E.J. Kahn's *The China Hands: America's Foreign Service Officers and What Befell Them*.

Bob Rackmales
FSO, retired
Northport, Maine

An Admirable Mission

Thanks to Krishna Das for bringing our attention to the Department of State's mission statement (November Letters). We should all be very proud to be associated with such a noble and inspiring document. Now, what are the chances that our newly elected U.S. Congress will adopt a similar approach to how we should treat everyone living within our own borders?

Bill Burke
FSO, retired
Williamsburg, Va.

Simplify Interagency Hiring

I wanted to write to you briefly to say I greatly appreciated Susan Johnson's President's Views column ("Address Mid-Level Hiring to Strengthen Our Institutions") in the October *FSJ*. It is exciting finally to see AFSA, and the foreign affairs agencies, not have a knee-jerk reaction to mid-level hiring. I agree that we shouldn't open the floodgates, but a short-term hiring project targeting individuals with the needed management and foreign af-

fairs experience could alleviate some of the shortages identified and exacerbated with the drain caused by the Critical Priority Country posts.

Currently, there are thousands of cleared, experienced Foreign Service generalists and specialists working at posts throughout the world for a variety of agencies. Why not tap into this well of experience and skill to meet the demands of today's foreign affairs? Red tape and financial hurdles keep some individuals who could become highly valuable assets to State and other agencies from even considering leaving their current positions.

I'll give you a personal example. As part of a Foreign Service interagency tandem couple (USAID and State) with 10 years of government experience, including overseas service as a regional specialist, I probably understand and accept the realities of the FS lifestyle better than 95 percent of the new hires starting A-100. And there are plenty of other individuals like me out there. Yet for us to go to work for State in the Foreign Service, we'd essentially have to start over.

Just to take the State Department Foreign Service exam as a current non-State FSO overseas, I have to hope that my current post hosts the exam, and then pay for a transcontinental flight back to the United States for the oral exam. It is neither efficient nor effective to make some of the most experienced candidates jump through so



many hoops just to get their foot in the door.

I'm sure there are many people at State and other departments who would like to try working for one of the other foreign affairs agencies. They, too, would be welcomed with open arms, but are blocked by the same logistical and financial disincentives.

Any improvement, even temporary; that AFSA can achieve by developing an interagency hiring program will benefit not only the to-be-hired individuals, but all Foreign Service members and our country's foreign affairs agencies' work as a whole.

*Steve Bennett
FSO, USAID
Embassy Dakar*

Training MED

Reading the September article on the Office of Medical Services ("To Your Health," by Shawn Zeller) was both enlightening and disheartening. While the State Department has scores of competent doctors, nurse practitioners and physicians' assistants working all over the world, the article fails to mention that there are also State Department health professionals who lack the knowledge or experience to diagnose and treat certain diseases or recognize when a person needs to be medically evacuated.

Health care for all Foreign Service personnel — both generalists and specialists — serving overseas is important, but particularly so in Third World countries where the quality of local doctors, hospitals and testing is substandard. We rely on our embassy health care professionals to be proactive. Yet I've seen too many real-life cases overseas where medical practitioners take a "wait and see" approach.

Let me cite a few cases I know

about. (Though I acknowledge I don't have medical expertise, I am still comfortable saying that these cases were not handled professionally.) For example, a burst appendix became septic while the Regional Medical Officer would not medevac the patient before London saw the lab work (and immediately acted). The patient was near death, lost 40 pounds, and had to spend six weeks recovering in London, away from his family.

Other examples: a lump found under an arm did not lead to immediate medevac and ultimately resulted in a radical mastectomy. A young boy was treated for anemia for eight months but not tested for the leukemia that he actually had. A man was sick for four months, lost 30 pounds, and was finally medevaced, too weak to stand, and diagnosed with colon cancer.

Another man with falciparum malaria, the most deadly type, was drowning in his own fluid, but the health practitioner would not medevac him "unless he got worse." This last case was my spouse. I had to contact the ambassador, who had been told he was doing okay, and get authorization for a medevac. My husband spent three days in London in the intensive care unit before stabilizing.

This traumatic experience was further exacerbated by MED's refusal to take responsibility. When I wrote a letter reporting the incompetence and malpractice that nearly took my husband's life, I received a very condescending reply stating that the practitioner did everything right, and blaming my spouse, the locally employed nurse, the air ambulance service and the local doctors for the situation.

I am disturbed that MED apparently cannot admit error, and take corrective action. Why do medical per-

sonnel overseas wait for some cases to reach a critical stage before doing anything? Is it State Department policy to do so? If so, this policy is detrimental to personnel serving in difficult postings with little or no health care. Or is the department simply not training health care personnel to work in difficult environments?

The State Department has many competing needs, but providing the best health care possible to employees should be among its first priorities. Quality health care is priceless, yet over and over the subject of money comes up: Outside testing will cost at least \$500. Certain malaria pills are very expensive. This medevac costs \$100,000. So what? Are we putting a price tag on human lives? If so, then all of us are at high risk of losing our lives while serving overseas.

We are always told how important our work is and how valued we are. But tragic real-life cases tell a different story. For the department, taking care of its people should mean giving them the highest-quality care in a timely manner, particularly when they are serving in difficult environments where medical facilities are deficient or nonexistent. Such a policy would reduce overall medical costs and minimize the number of positions left vacant due to illness that could have been prevented.

The September article paints a rosy picture, but does not show that there are deficits in the knowledge of department health professionals. State must train its medical personnel so that they can save lives, or at least instruct them to recognize when they can't provide adequate help and when it is time to proceed to an evacuation. They should not be taking risks with other people's lives, and there should be no

LETTERS



policies preventing them from taking decisive action when it comes to a sick employee in a difficult posting.

*Michelle Donnelly
Office Management
Specialist
Embassy Nouakchott*

Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Part of Georgia

In his November article, "From Mount Elbrus to Ararat," James Angell refers to "the 'independent republics' of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan in the Russian Federation."

Abkhazia and South Ossetia are not in the Russian Federation — they are regions of Georgia occupied by Russia, which formally recognizes their inde-

pendence. Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan are republics in the Russian Federation, all with separatist tendencies.

*Jonathan Kulick
Adviser
Office of the State
Minister of Georgia
for Reintegration*

Editor's Note: We have corrected that passage in the online version to read:

"Today it is home to a collection of powder kegs: the 'independent republics' of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in Georgia; Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan in the Russian Federation, bordering Georgia to the north; and Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey, with

ongoing, bitter enmities among them, along Georgia's southern border." n

CORRECTIONS

In the listing for Susan Clough Wyatt's memoir, *Arabian Nights and Daze: Living Yemen with the Foreign Service*, in the November issue (p. 27), Wyatt's former husband's name is misspelled. He is David William McClintock.

In the same issue, Patricia Sharpe's two volumes of poetry, *Indus Suite* and *Coming and Going Love Poems*, were mistakenly described as "handbound" (p. 45). Though on textured stock and with unusual artistic touches, the books are not in any sense "handmade." They are published by Finishing Line Press of Georgetown, Ky., and available through Amazon.

We regret the errors.

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CYBERNOTES

Taking Stock of Middle East Policy

On Oct. 21-22 the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations (www.ncusar.org) held its annual policymakers conference, “U.S.-Arab Relations: Going Where?” Among the participants was veteran diplomat Chas Freeman, who gave a rousing address to open the conference, in which he criticized U.S. military interventions in the Middle East and Washington’s approach to Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

“For Israel, the so-called ‘peace process’ provides cover for more land grabs,” Freeman said. “For the Palestinian Authority, it earns international aid to make up for the lack of legitimacy at home. For the United States, it gives the illusion of activism on behalf of peace while avoiding the politically costly decisions necessary actually to produce it.”

Michael Corbin, deputy assistant secretary of State for Iraq, offered an upbeat assessment of that troubled country’s progress toward becoming a fully functioning independent state. “When I look at where we were in 2006 and I look at where we are in 2010, I have to say that we are in a process where Iraqis have abandoned civil war, where they’re seeking to balance relations with their neighbors, where they’ve chosen politics [rather than violence].”

We would like a nonviolent, peaceful revolution, [by which] I mean a great change for the better. I don’t quite know how [the authorities] will interpret the word. ... My attitude is, do as much as I can while I’m free. And if I’m arrested I’ll still do as much as I can.

— Burmese democracy campaigner Aung San Suu Kyi, from a Nov. 15 interview by BBC News World Affairs Editor John Simpson following her release from house arrest in Rangoon; www.bbc.co.uk/news/

In a panel on U.S.-Iran relations, Flynt Leverett, director of the Iran Project at the New America Foundation (www.newamerica.net), described the rise of Iranian power in the region as not only an “inevitable” product of strategic mistakes the U.S. made by invading Afghanistan and Iraq, but also a result of Iran’s ability to pick the winners: groups like Hamas and Hezbollah that “represent unavoidable constituencies with legitimate grievances.”

— *Mohammad Alhinmawi*,
Editorial Intern

China Watch, One Decade On

Highlights from the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission’s latest annual report, issued on Nov. 17, include the following allegations:

Beijing continues to pursue an “indigenous innovation” policy to promote favored industries and limit imports, using such tactics as currency manipulation, strategic purchases of U.S. Treasury securities and curbs on exports of rare earth elements (crucial for telecommunications).

China’s growing air and missile power, which benefits from improving commercial aviation manufacturing capabilities, is enhancing the country’s capability to strike U.S. bases and allies throughout Asia. Meanwhile, malicious computer activity emanating from the People’s Republic of China is becoming increasingly sophisticated and dangerous.

For instance, the Pentagon recently confirmed that state-owned China Telecom hijacked message traffic intended for Secretary of Defense Robert Gates’ office, and other U.S. government, military and corporate sites, during an 18-minute period on April 8, 2010.

The 316-page report also warns that Beijing’s revised state secrets laws may conflict with U.S. disclosure requirements and put U.S. investments in



Chinese firms at risk. On a more positive note, the USCC observes that China is promoting “green energy” in order to increase its economic security, prevent environmental degradation and develop a globally competitive green energy industry.

Congress established the USCC one decade ago, on Oct. 30, 2000, to monitor and report on the national security implications of bilateral trade and the overall economic relationship between the United States and the People’s Republic of China.

The bipartisan body has 12 members, three each appointed by the House and Senate majority and minority leaders, following consultation with the chair and ranking minority members of each house’s armed forces and finance committees. (There are no members from the executive branch.)

To read the full report, visit www.uscc.gov.

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor

Very Little Rotten in the State of Denmark

The results are in. The most corrupt country in the world, according to the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index, is Somalia.

Each year the CPI, a report compiled by the respected nongovernmental organization Transparency International, offers an overview of global corruption, country by country (www.transparency.org).

The group bases its findings on two primary resources: individual country data and expert analysis from independent sources like the World Bank and Freedom House, and evaluations by local business leaders in each country. Scoring is on a 10-point scale, with 10 representing little or no corruption.

With a score of 9.3, Denmark, New

Zealand and Singapore are tied for the top spot of least-corrupt country in the world.

Also noteworthy is the inclusion of Barbados in 17th place (tied with Japan) and Qatar in 19th; the two countries are the best performers in the Caribbean and Middle East regions, respectively.

On a more pessimistic note, Transparency International reports that “three quarters of the 178 countries in the index score below five, [indicating] a serious corruption problem.” Despite America’s nationbuilding efforts, Iraq and Afghanistan are considered among the most corrupt countries in the world, at 175th and 176th place, respectively.

For the first time ever, the United

States did not rank among the 20 least-corrupt nations; having fallen from 19th place in 2009 to 22nd, the U.S. is one of only seven countries whose standing worsened. Russia also dropped in the rankings, from 146th last year to a dismal 154th this year, despite President Dmitry Medvedev’s vociferous attacks on what he termed Russia’s ‘most serious disease.’

— Mohammad Alhinnawi,
Editorial Intern

Deepening Ties to New Delhi

Though it took place under the cloud of the U.S. midterm elections, President Barack Obama’s Nov. 6-9 visit marked a qualitative strengthening of the U.S.-India relationship. India was the first stop on a 10-day Asian so-

Site of the Month: www.thehungersite.com

Looking for a New Year’s resolution you can actually keep all year long, one that makes a small but real difference in the world every day? Then bookmark *The Hunger Site.com*, which focuses the power of the Internet on a specific humanitarian need: the eradication of world hunger.

Since its launch in June 1999, the site has established itself as a leader in online activism, helping to feed the world’s hungry as part of the *Greater Good Network* (www.greatergoodnetwork.com). On average, over 220,000 individuals from around the world visit the site each day to click on the yellow “Click Here to Give — It’s Free” button. (Though you can only donate once a day from any single computer, you can access the site from home and work to double your contribution if you wish.)

To date, some 300 million visitors have given more than 746 million cups of staple food, paid for by site sponsors and distributed to those in need by *Mercy Corps* (www.mercycorps.org); *Feeding America* (www.feedingharvest.org), formerly *America’s Second Harvest*; and *Millennium Promise* (www.millenniumpromise.org). As the site notes, 100 percent of sponsor advertising fees goes to the site’s charitable partners to aid hungry people all over the world, including the United States.

As a bonus, *The Hunger Site* acts as a portal to five sister sites, each of which generates donations to fight breast cancer, promote child health and literacy, protect rainforests or support animal rescue initiatives. (Icons for all six sites are prominently displayed at the top of each homepage.)

Visitors can help even more by shopping for items displayed in the online store at each site. These all offer a wide array of fair-trade, handcrafted items from around the world.

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor



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50 Years Ago...



As the foreign news trickled in during December from Laos, Ecuador, Cuba and the Congo, showing the members of the Foreign Service under fire, it became abundantly clear that today's diplomats are indeed in the front lines. To the thousands of young people taking the written examinations, the news reports must have underlined again that a career in the Foreign Service offers an adventurous and challenging life, not to be assessed in the too-usual pattern of income, security and things acquired.

— Gwen Barrows, "Washington Letter," *FSJ*, January 1961.

jour that took the president to Indonesia, South Korea and Japan.

Starting in Mumbai, where Pres. Obama reiterated Washington's commitment to cooperation to stop the kind of terrorist attack that took place there two years earlier, and moving on to New Delhi, the presidential visit was intended to demonstrate that the strategic relationship — in the words of a Foreign Policy Initiative analyst, "one of the great bipartisan U.S. foreign policy success stories of the past decade" — had not stalled.

On the contrary, the Obama administration aims to take the U.S.-India relationship, which the president calls "one of the defining relationships" of the 21st century, to a new level. As the president pointed out, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had been his first foreign guest, and the three-day stay in India was the longest of his own foreign visits to date.

Announcement of some 18 joint initiatives in economic, scientific, political, educational, energy and security areas conveyed the breadth of the relationship and its benefits for both countries and the world.

The jampacked itinerary included interactions with businesspeople, technologists and agricultural scientists, as well as government officials. In addition to Assistant Secretary of State for

South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake and Special Assistant to the President for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights Samantha Power, the Obama entourage included Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, White House Chief Technical Officer Aneesh Chopra and several hundred corporate CEOs.

A high point was Pres. Obama's address to the Indian Parliament, where he described "the future that the United States seeks in an interconnected world," and explained why he believes that India is indispensable to this vision. He sought, he said, a "truly global partnership — not just in one or two areas and not just for our mutual benefit, but for the benefit of the world."

Part of that vision, Pres. Obama said, is "a reformed United Nations Security Council with India as a permanent member."

While the Security Council endorsement staked out a long-term vision for the relationship, material building blocks were put in place — and obstacles removed — to strengthen ties in the near term. Most significantly, perhaps, Pres. Obama announced that the Commerce Department will lift decades-old sanctions on two of



India's state-owned military and research firms, the Indian Space and Research Organization (India's NASA) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation, opening the door for trade in dual-use and strategically sensitive materials and technologies.

Also significant was the announcement of Washington's intention to support India's membership in four multilateral export control regimes: the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Australia Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Wassenaar Arrangement. In addition, a memorandum of understanding was signed providing for cooperation on India's Global Center for Nuclear Energy Partnership, which New Delhi had announced during the April 2010 Global Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C.

These measures serve to solidify the Obama administration's commitment to the landmark U.S.-India Civilian Nuclear Agreement concluded by the Bush administration. So far, U.S. industry's participation in the nuclear power boom gathering momentum in India has been stymied by the Indian parliament's adoption of highly restrictive liability legislation. This demonstration of Washington's sincerity may help facilitate some rethinking by Indian lawmakers.

Pres. Obama and Prime Minister Singh also announced a major new initiative in agricultural development called "A Partnership for an Evergreen Revolution" — a sequel to India's "Green Revolution" of the 1960s that was critically assisted by the U.S.

Expansion of economic ties was a major focus of the visit. In New Delhi, the president addressed a U.S.-India business conference where the CEOs of Boeing and General Electric, among others, announced roughly \$15 billion

in commercial sales to India that had been negotiated in advance and would support some 57,000 American jobs. Obama pointedly distanced himself from the rallying cry in some parts of the U.S. against "outsourcing," and sought to underscore the mutual economic potential of the relationship.

Though not particularly in the spotlight during this visit, security cooperation is another dynamic element of the Indo-U.S. relationship. The U.S. military conducts more joint exercises with India than with any other country and, since 2008, American business has concluded some \$4 billion in military sales to the country. Consultations with India on developments in Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Far East and other international issues are ongoing.

Notwithstanding some commentators' view that Washington's pursuit of India is to counter China, the evidence suggests that the policy is more sophisticated. The Obama administration appears to grasp the reality that zero-sum calculations have little place in a multipolar world.

For detailed information on the visit, see the Singh-Obama Joint Statement (www.whitehouse.gov) and the "trip readout" by USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah and Assistant Secretary Blake (www.state.gov). For background on the India-U.S. relationship, see the "U.S.-India Partnership Fact Sheets" (www.whitehouse.gov). The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (www.carnegieendowment.org), the Center for Strategic and International Studies' South Asia Program (www.csis.org) and the Brookings Institution (www.brookings.edu) offer background and commentary on current developments. ■

— Susan Brady Maitra,
Senior Editor



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SPEAKING OUT

Welcoming the Disabled to the Foreign Service

BY MICHAEL BRICKER

I was delighted to learn that the State Department would begin to actively recruit disabled employees to implement Executive Order 13548, President Barack Obama's July 2010 directive calling for an additional 100,000 individuals with disabilities to be employed by the federal government. The order gives specific performance targets and deadlines for each federal agency to meet.

That development prompted me to consider what advice I would give a disabled applicant, based on my nearly 21 years in the Foreign Service as a hearing-impaired individual.

First, I would tell my potential colleagues that throughout my adult life, whether I was working on Wall Street or attending university, I have succeeded by pushing myself harder than my non-disabled colleagues. If they worked 10 hours, I worked 12. I lived — and to some extent still do — by Avis Rent-A-Car's motto: "We're number two, so we try harder." Granted, a psychologist might say that seeing yourself as second-best is not the healthiest mindset, but it has enabled me to compete on an extremely uneven playing field. And the same is true for any disabled applicant.

My journey as one of the first hearing-impaired members of the Foreign Service began in August 1990, when I reported for an accelerated Polish-language course for my assignment to

A disability places you at a disadvantage within a system that is not equipped (or inclined) to level the playing field, such as the Foreign Service.



Warsaw. It was not particularly hot that day, but I still remember perspiring profusely from nerves. Could I keep up with the rest of the class? Should I explain to the teacher that wearing a hearing aid does not "cure" deafness? (As actor Art Carney of "Honeymooners" fame, who was hearing-impaired, once commented, "All hearing aids do is make deafness louder.") While such devices amplify the voice of the person who is speaking to you, they also amplify the sounds of the truck going by, the printer spitting out pages, and the people in the hallway talking and listening to music.

Moreover, when someone uses a hearing aid it takes time for the brain to acclimate to the new sounds and, more importantly, interpret them. Amplification is always paired with distortion — try turning your TV volume up all the way to see what I mean. It makes everything loud but not clear,

even when one wears the most powerful hearing aid available, as I do.

After a week of struggling and asking the Polish teacher to repeat these new sounds over and over again, I accepted the fact that I was being unfair to the other students. I went to the director of the program and requested one-on-one instruction so I could obtain at least a basic understanding of the language. He appeared very understanding and assured me that he would work something out.

When I arrived at FSI the following Monday, I was shown to a windowless office/storage room, handed a book titled something like *Teach Yourself Polish*, and left alone to practice pronouncing these very foreign sounds. I somehow survived those five weeks and received a 0/0 in Polish — the first official entry in my official performance folder. My main concern was whether this treatment was an omen of my future in the Foreign Service.

Reasonable Accommodations

At that time, the State Department had just one employee tasked with providing "reasonable accommodations" for disabled employees. What made this office special was the man who ran it, whose sensitivity was only matched by his proactive approach. He would sometimes call to tell me that he had found a new device that might help me and wanted me to try it. He truly knew



what the concept “reasonable accommodation” meant. His office was later taken over by the Human Resources Bureau — which placed it with the same unit in charge of child care services. That seemed to indicate the low priority State placed on its function.

More than once, it’s taken more than a year to get a telephone amplifier. Even at my present assignment, I waited more than a month to receive one. I wonder how a newly hired disabled employee would carry out a first assignment without being able to communicate on the telephone for a month — let alone repair any damage done to his or her credibility. Yet there seems to be a lack of understanding among many Foreign Service personnel of just how vital such devices are.

Having a disability does not simply limit your ability to function; it changes your entire method of dealing with the world. I do not speak American Sign Language, so I read lips. Having to focus entirely on the lips and body language of each person speaking to me is exhausting — so much so that I am fatigued at the end of the day. After many years of practice, I read lips well; in fact, I was once asked to assist in a hostage situation in Iraq due to the utility of this learned skill. But make no mistake: a disability places you at a disadvantage when you are competing with the non-disabled in a system that is not well equipped (or inclined) to level the playing field.

Up until very recently, none of the department’s training videos for worldwide distribution included closed captioning — subtitles that deaf and hearing-impaired viewers like me depend on. That meant that presentations on how to structure your employee evaluations and how promotion panels work were not available to us.

A year ago John Robinson, director of the Office of Civil Rights, co-hosted a town-hall meeting that was broadcast to many embassies without closed captions. Ironically, the subject of this broadcast was diversity in the workplace — yet I was unable to watch, let alone participate.

Most of the shows broadcast over State’s BNET closed-circuit television system, which is available through the Opennet network, are still not closed-captioned. Ensuring this medium is available to all viewers does not require any new technology; captioning has been available for more than 30 years and is required by law in all television sets manufactured since 1993. The only thing State has to do is hire a company to do the work.

In Poland, and other countries where I’ve served, I have received outstanding ratings on my performance evaluations. This is true despite the fact that picking up peripheral auditory information (e.g., overhearing a conversation or taking notes while lip reading) is beyond my abilities, so I have always been at the mercy of others for help.

Fortunately, most Foreign Service personnel, like the general population, are sensitive, kind and quick to offer help when they see someone struggling. I cannot count all the people who have privately taken me aside and invited me to sit next to them while they took notes to aid my participation in a meeting. To me, these people are angels in the making.

However, there are also some not-so-kind colleagues. Unfortunately, they are significant in number, mainly because the Foreign Service seems to tolerate their behavior. One consular officer volunteered the belief that the disabled should not serve in the Foreign Service. And when I asked a su-

pervisor why he ignored me and only talked to my subordinate, he responded — in front of others — that he found my need to read lips annoying. One of my subordinates was so shaken when a deputy chief of mission ranted to her that a deaf person should not be in the Foreign Service that she reported him to the State Department’s Office of Civil Rights.

And I will never forget the co-worker who responded, “What part of the sentence do you want me to repeat?” when I requested that something be repeated. Then there was the person who pantomimed and shouted one-syllable words in response to a similar request. Perhaps they had no malicious intent, but such treatment was very hurtful nevertheless.

In two decades of attending country team meetings with an entire room of people who could tell I was struggling to hear, not one colleague has ever asked if I would like to sit up front instead of off to the side. After a while, I just stop attending.

What is even more disturbing is the department’s ambivalence about this problem. Whereas those charged with security violations face specific penalties including dismissal, those who engage in insensitivity or overt discrimination — whether it is promotions, the bidding process or just lack of accommodation in the work environment — effectively face no penalties. The only means of charging a co-worker with discrimination against an employee with a disability is to file a formal Equal Employment Opportunity complaint, which is usually a long, drawn-out process.

Making the Employee Review Process Truly Fair

Then there is the particularly insidious procedure that institutionalizes

SPEAKING OUT



many of the problems faced by the disabled in terms of career advancement in the Foreign Service: the 360 review in the bidding process. Unlike traditional Foreign Service evaluations, which are vetted by a group of people to ensure that inappropriate comments are not included, the 360 review has no such safeguards; co-workers can write about colleagues without any restriction.

During one bidding cycle, I bid on eight overseas assignments, with only one hardship post in the 20- to 25-percent differential range; all the others were non-hardship posts. I received expressions of interest in my candidacy for every assignment except the hardship post — which normally would have been especially quick to respond. Only later did I discover that in my 360

review to that hardship post, someone had written something to the effect that “Michael is quite deaf and needs assistance at meetings.”

Twice I have asked S/OCR to investigate the inherent unfairness of the 360 review. While this office truly attempts to improve the situation for disabled employees, its authority is constrained by the fact that it is part of the State Department rather than an independent watchdog agency. Although the office has created a Disabled Working Group, it is limited in its functioning in a manner analogous to the management of an auto company creating its own workers’ union.

In 1998, I helped formed an employee association in the State Department, Disabled in the Foreign Affairs

Agencies. After a useful meeting with Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, we sent a follow-up letter asking for the appointment of a special liaison on the seventh floor to assist with disability problems, so that EEO complaints would be a last resort.

We also sought recognition of American Sign Language and its teaching at the Foreign Service Institute, to ensure that a deaf American who requires assistance in an embassy would be able to communicate, and such mundane things as ensuring hallways are kept free of clutter and posting tactile signs in the hallways (in Braille) during construction for blind employees. Every item on our list was flatly turned down and, needless to say, the organization fell apart soon thereafter.

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SPEAKING OUT



Not Yet Ready for Prime Time

An even bigger problem is the requirement in each Employee Evaluation Report that the reviewer comment on relations between rater and employee. Should a disabled employee protest unfair treatment by a supervisor to the next-higher level, the situation may be remedied but, in all likelihood, it would create animosity.

Moreover, come EER time, the reviewer is obligated to report that the relationship with the supervisor is troubled. Realistically, that negates any chance of a promotion. For all these reasons, that particular requirement should be removed or expanded to include an assessment of the rated employee's relations with subordinates.

With all that in mind, I would tell any disabled individual considering a career in the Foreign Service that it is an adventurous life, offering not only the opportunity to meet fascinating people, but also to be part of history. However, they need to know that struggling to overcome the limitations of their particular disability, coupled with the department's hesitance in taking a leadership role in making the working environment equitable, will cause them disappointment and frustration.

They also face the risk of being pushed aside while watching their non-disabled colleagues get plum assignments and career advancements. Unlike employees in the private sector, there is no bottom line to prove their

worth to the organization.

To borrow the famous line from the early days of "Saturday Night Live": When it comes to accommodating the disabled, the Foreign Service is not yet ready for prime time. However, I look forward to the day when the Foreign Service will be more comparable to another show: "Happy Days." ■

Michael Bricker, an FS-1 information management officer currently serving in Vienna, joined the Foreign Service in 1990. His previous assignments include Warsaw, Monrovia, Seoul (twice), London and New York. The views expressed here are those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State or the United States government.

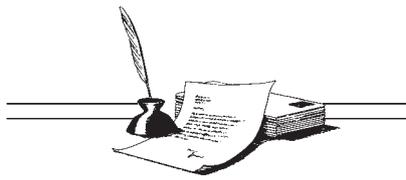


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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Happy New Year! Once again it's time for my periodic invitation to take advantage of the many opportunities to contribute to the *Journal*. Let me begin by noting the author guidelines on our Web site (www.afsa.org/fsj), which describe the various departments in the magazine and give the basic requirements (length, format, etc.) for each. All submissions to the *Journal* must be approved by our Editorial Board and are subject to editing for style, length and format.

Most issues feature a focus section examining various facets of an issue related to the Foreign Service, diplomatic practice or international relations. (You'll find a list of the topics our Editorial Board has identified for the coming year on this page.) Such listings are a guide to what's coming up in our pages, but are not set in stone.

This month, for instance, we had intended to offer a set of perspectives on "Foreign Service values and core skills," but decided to postpone that issue until the results of the American Academy of Diplomacy's assessment of professional education become available. (We still welcome submissions addressing that subject.) In its place, as you'll see, we are offering a cover story on "Microdiplomacy in Afghanistan" and a variety of feature articles for your reading pleasure.

*There are many ways
you can share your
insights in our pages.
Let us hear from you.*



Because of our lead time for publication, and the requirement for Editorial Board approval, we need to

receive submissions for focus sections at least three months (and preferably longer) prior to the issue's release date. Thus, we have already lined up authors for the January, February and March themes, but there is still time to submit manuscripts for later months. Submissions should generally be about 2,000 words long, though shorter pieces are always welcome.

If none of the focus choices grab you, or if you feel we have not devoted enough space to a professional con-

2011 EDITORIAL CALENDAR for the *FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL*

JANUARY 2011	Cover story: Microdiplomacy in Afghanistan (plus feature articles on Libya, China and Haiti)
FEBRUARY 2011	Economic Function/Trade & Economic Issues (PLUS AFSA Tax Guide)
MARCH 2011	Cover Story: AFSA Annual Report
APRIL 2011	Women in Security and Development
MAY 2011	FS Work-Life Balance (e.g., family issues, spousal/partner employment, Members of Household, single employees)
JUNE 2011	Latin America (PLUS semiannual SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT)
JULY-AUGUST 2011	Dissent in the Foreign Service (PLUS AFSA Awards coverage)
SEPTEMBER 2011	Ten Years Later: How 9/11 Has Changed the Foreign Service (+ article(s) on Peace Corps' 50th anniversary)
OCTOBER 2011	Cover story: "In Their Own Write" (annual roundup of books by FS-affiliated authors)
NOVEMBER 2011	Foreign Service Nationals/Locally Engaged Staff
DECEMBER 2011	20th Anniversary of the Soviet Union's Dissolution (PLUS semiannual SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT)



***We take seriously our
mission to give you
“news you can use.”***

cern or functional issue, please consider writing a feature article (also generally 2,000 words long, though shorter entries are welcomed) about it for us. Although we will not be holding our annual fiction contest this year, you are always welcome to submit short stories with a Foreign Service theme or setting for publication as feature articles.

We invite those of you who expect to publish a book between now and next fall to send us a copy (along with promotional materials), for inclusion in our annual compilation of recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors, “In Their Own Write.” Because that issue will run in October this year rather than November, **Aug. 1** is now the deadline for a listing in the roundup. For more information, contact Senior Editor Susan Maitra at maitra@afsa.org.

We continue to welcome submissions for our **FS Heritage** department, which spotlights past U.S. diplomats (either famous or obscure), as well as issues related to the evolution of the Foreign Service as an institution.

Share Your Insights

We take seriously our mission to give you “news you can use”: information about how to advance your career; tips on dealing effectively with the bureaucracy at State and the other

foreign affairs agencies, especially when you are trying to resolve a problem; and updates on how AFSA is working to improve working and living conditions for Foreign Service employees and their families.

Much of that coverage is found, of course, within the pages of **AFSA News**. That section offers many different ways for members to share their experiences, thoughts and concerns regarding professional issues.

AFSA News Editor Amy McKeever is particularly interested in hearing from members about lessons they’ve learned at post, retirement issues, family member matters and other topics, including any bureaucratic mysteries you’d like to see unraveled in our pages. (See her own “Letter from the Editor” on p. 50.) For more information, please contact Amy at mckeever@afsa.org.

Another place to look for such items is our periodic **FS Know-How** department. We welcome contributions on topics ranging from managing one’s career and cutting red tape to parlaying one’s professional skills in retirement, as well as financial information and guidance for Foreign Service personnel.

There are many other ways you can contribute to our pages, of course. Please share your reactions, positive and negative, to any of our content by

sending us a comment for our **Letters** department. Just bear in mind that, as with all periodicals, the briefer and more focused your letter is, the more likely we’ll be able to print it in full. (In general, 200 to 400 words is a good target.)

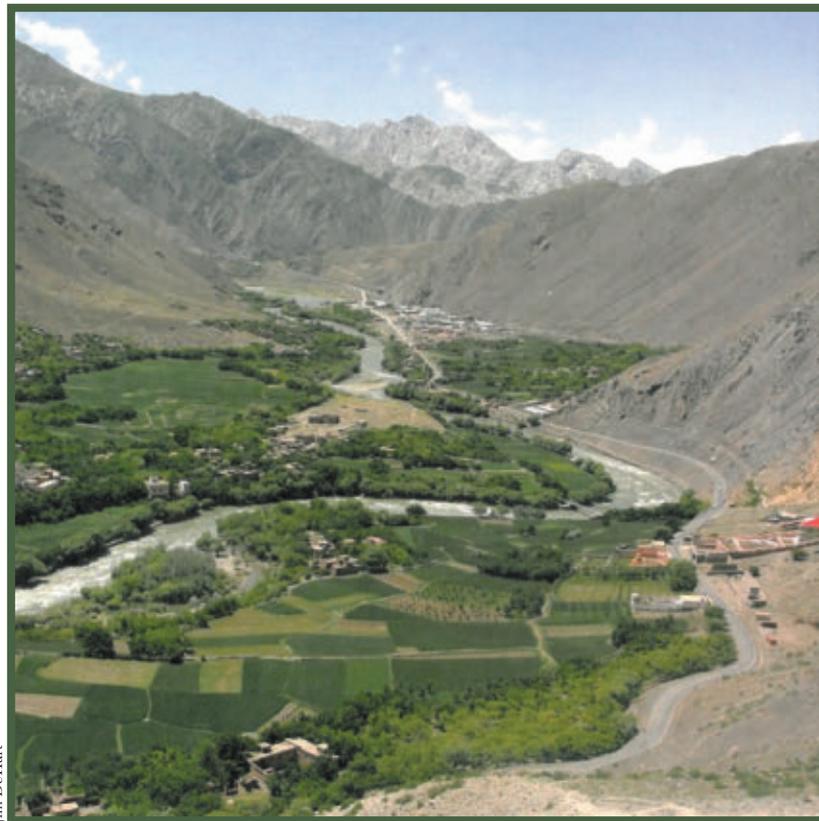
The **Speaking Out** department is your forum to advocate policy, regulatory or statutory changes to the Foreign Service. These columns (approximately 1,500 to 2,000 words long) can be based on personal experience with a professional injustice or present your insights into a foreign affairs-related issue.

Our **Reflections** department presents short commentaries (approximately 600 words long) based on personal experiences while living or traveling overseas. These submissions should center on insights gained as a result of interactions with other cultures, rather than being descriptive “travel pieces.” We are also pleased to consider poetry and photographs for publication, either in that section or as freestanding features.

Finally, if you have any questions about the submission process, need to change your mailing address, or want to give a subscription to a friend or family member, please contact us at journal@afsa.org and we will be delighted to respond.

Let us hear from you. ■

MICRODIPLOMACY IN AFGHANISTAN



Jim DeHart

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THE EXPERIENCE OF A PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM WORKING IN KAPISA PROVINCE SHOWS THE GREAT POTENTIAL OF LOCAL ENGAGEMENT.

By MATTHEW B. ARNOLD AND DANA D. DERE

.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, familiarly known as “COIN,” emphasizes “the people,” almost to the point of cliché. In Afghanistan the challenge for the United States and its allies on the ground is how to engage an exceptionally complex, ever-changing milieu of local leaders and communities. This means acting in a manner that effectively separates the population from the insurgency and strengthens the government in the process.

COVER STORY

The diplomacy required to successfully partner with local Afghans — such as village leaders and community councils — in the context of a COIN campaign can be understood as ‘microdiplomacy.’ While the U.S. has long experience working with formal government entities, the challenge of engaging local, informal actors is something at which we have not always been adept.

This article will present some of the microdiplomacy strategies used in Kapisa province to focus on strategically important communities, and their formal and informal leaders. Most notably, the French military (Task Force La Fayette) and the American Provincial Reconstruction Team which supports it, have sought to improve the consistency, unity of effort and productivity of partnerships with local Afghan actors through dedicated “engagement strategies” for local communities. Our analysis reflects the situation on the ground in Kapisa as of the summer of 2010.

Kapisa province is located on the strategic approaches to both Kabul and Bagram and has been on the front lines of every conflict since the Soviet invasion. Its deep valleys and high mountains proved impenetrable to the Russians and continue to offer sanctuary to various insurgent and criminal groups. The Tajik-dominated provincial government has a reputation for corruption, and the minority Pashtun and Pashai'i communities complain bitterly about the lack of social services from the government in the provincial capital at Mahmood Raqi.

As one village leader confided, “You know and we know the government [here] is weak.” Although various U.S. and French units have cleared the most insurgent-

plagued valleys several times over the years, and spent tens of millions of dollars on development projects, the insurgency has proven highly resistant to coalition efforts to win over the local populations and strengthen the Afghan government. Task Force La Fayette and PRT Kapisa have therefore begun to use the microdiplomacy principles described in this article to change that situation.

Obstacles to Successful Community Engagement

Before proceeding to describe solutions, it is necessary to outline several basic challenges to successful community engagement on the ground in Afghanistan. The first is inconsistency in the coalition’s efforts at building relationships with local Afghan leaders and communities. The primary cause of this inconsistency is the sheer multitude of coalition actors working on the ground, ranging from brigade teams such as Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Information Operations to platoons of combat troops. The PRT, for its part, has an eclectic mix of civilian representatives from the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of Agriculture, as well as military civil affairs and civil engineer teams.

In addition to this multitude of actors, there are multiple “lines of effort”: development, security and governance. In theory these ought to be building off one another, but in practice they can sometimes lead to divergent efforts. The challenge of coordinating so many internal actors is incredibly difficult, especially within the context of a violent combat zone and an incredibly complex local sociopolitical situation.

A related challenge is overcoming perceptions that coalition forces are unreliable — the result of multiple bureaucratic constraints. As a village leader once lamented to us, “Be serious if you start something; you must be consistent.” Sharing the sentiment, another added, “I am a man. When I shake hands, I will do what I said I would. So should you.”

Compounding this problem is the relatively quick rotation of coalition forces. This means a local leader or community cannot be sure that their PRT counterparts will stick around long enough to make a difference. One villager told us, “The problem is, I make friends and then they leave.” Many Afghans would like to support the coalition and the central government, but stay on the

Matthew B. Arnold recently completed a year as a social scientist on the Human Terrain Team with Task Force La Fayette, the French brigade in Kapisa province, Afghanistan. He has extensive experience working in conflict zones and will soon be on the ground in Sudan.

Dana Deree, a Foreign Service officer currently serving as deputy principal officer in Auckland, was the senior civilian representative on Provincial Reconstruction Team Kapisa. He has previously served in London, Managua, Tijuana and Washington, D.C. He is also a Marine Corps combat veteran and a Navy Reserve public affairs officer.

The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State, the Department of Defense or Task Force La Fayette.

COVER STORY

fence because the level of trust required for that is simply not attainable. Overcoming such issues is imperative when local leaders and communities are literally risking their lives simply by talking to us.

The most obvious solution is to focus the efforts of the various coalition actors on strategically important locales and resident communities. This means crafting engagement strategies that allow us to improve our own unity of effort so we can partner more productively with local leaders.

Microdiplomacy in Kapisa

For the past nine years, the coalition's efforts to engage the Afghan population have focused on undertaking governance and development programming. While much has been achieved, some of the most insurgent-plagued locales have been marginalized by a lack of productive interaction with the government and access to international development aid. In Kapisa, this led to an overemphasis on the more-secure western half of the province, at the expense of communities in the region where the insurgency has been most concentrated. As a result, the insurgents have largely been free to dominate local communities where there is little to no government control, notably in the southern district of Tagab.

Against this background, since the autumn of 2009 coalition forces have pursued holistic attempts to engage strategically important leaders and communities. The goal has been to build solid relationships with specific individuals and groups that can be entrenched, show positive results and then be leveraged to spread stability further out. This need has become especially pressing because the insurgents have been able to consistently pressure local leaders and communities to disengage from the coalition and the government.

The simple reality is that 30 years of war have left Kapisa, especially the Tagab district, socially fractured. Building stronger relationships must start from the bottom up, building the social coherence of communities and working to increase the stature of local leaders. As one village leader explains, "Strong people can help you, but if I am weak, then I can't help you or the people."

Focusing the coalition's efforts on communities that are supportive of the Afghan government sends a strong message about the benefits of cooperation.

In Kapisa the coalition has established a Positive Forces Network, a long-term strategy to draw together the assorted lines of effort — development, security and governance — and the various coalition actors. It then focuses their efforts on specific leaders and communities that are strategically significant both to the COIN campaign and broader efforts to strengthen the Afghan government.

This involves coordinating the following objectives, consistently and for the long term, under the framework of an "engagement strategy" for a particular community:

- Development projects
- Key leader engagements with community councils and local leaders
- Security initiatives
- Interface with the government.

The PFN has prioritized the district of Tagab, notably because of its detachment from the government and the endemic strength of the insurgency there. The insurgents had been able to exploit the exceptionally fractured sociopolitical life in the district by consistently killing or chasing out alternatives to their own local leadership. This, in turn, meant that there was a pressing need for the coalition to engage local leaders while they were still present. As one leader asked last autumn, "Right now the Taliban are chasing out all the leaders. What are you going to do when there are no leaders left?"

Building Local Ties

Coalition forces initially dismissed the area's Safi Pashtun population as "pro-Taliban." But a dedicated, consistent effort to engage local leaders and their home communities has shown strong results as the area has increasingly turned against the insurgents. At its simplest, this is because the coalition, the government and locals all share hopes for improved security and development. Given that, as one local leader explained, "We have a common problem and we have a common interest, so we should work together."

The initial focus of the Positive Forces Network has been on consistent engagement of the Safi Pashtun community of northern Tagab (along the major road that runs

COVER STORY

through the north-south axis of the district) in order to build a solid, long-term relationship linking the community with the government and coalition forces. The PRT and other coalition actors had been seen as highly unreliable partners in Tagab in the recent past. This began to change with the development of the PFN and its focus on northern Tagab.

We started with an emphasis on agricultural development. The province is blessed with high-quality pomegranates, but its farmers have historically had a hard time getting a good price for their produce. This was because the only buyers were Pakistani traders who purchased from individual farmers in a manner that drove down prices. Beginning in September 2009, the PRT worked with local leaders to establish a farmers' cooperative and linked the farmers to a

The quick rotation of our forces means a local leader or community cannot be sure that PRT counterparts will stick around long enough to make a difference.

USAID-funded juicing company in Kabul and buyers in Dubai and India.

Forced to contend with competition for the first time, the Pakistani traders tripled the prices they paid for Tagab pomegranates in the 2009 harvest. From a COIN perspective, even more important than the economic benefit of the pomegranate cooperative were the relationships it fostered between the coalition and local leaders and communities. As

these relationships grew, the coalition became able to respond more nimbly to events on the ground and strengthen the ties.

One example comes from a tragedy. On Nov. 16, 2009, the French commanding general held a large meeting in the Tagab District Center with tribal and government leaders to discuss the new focus on cooperation with the



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COVER STORY

people of the province. The Taliban fired two rockets at the gathering, but they fell short, landing in a neighboring bazaar. Sixteen Afghan civilians died and 37 were seriously wounded.

U.S. and French medics responded immediately and were able to save many lives. The PRT's USAID officer, with support from U.S. and French civil affairs staff, quickly organized substantial humanitarian aid packages for the survivors and the families of the dead. This assistance was followed up soon after with measures designed to provide long-term economic benefits for the rocket victims. All the while, the coalition continued to manage the responses through the leaders of the villages that had suffered casualties.

Signs of Progress

In addition to economic development and humanitarian aid, another major effort has been partnering with local communities and leaders in northern Tagab to improve security. The villages along the major road through the region had been plagued with improvised explosive devices and ambushes on coalition forces and the Afghan police and army. These attacks left local communities caught in the crossfire.

In response, the local Afghan National Police commander, a brave and effective leader who has been shot three times by the Taliban, organized two teams of men from local villages to improve security along the road. The coalition and PRT encouraged these efforts, known collectively as the Road Maintenance Initiative, by paying teams of 15 to 20 local men to clean up debris and fix potholes (taking away IED hiding spots) and maintain a presence on the main road.

In addition, the ANP partnered with U.S. special forces to train the men on how to report IEDs and ambush sites. Through such cooperation, the two teams have effectively eliminated attacks on the road and denied freedom of movement to insurgents. This, in turn, improved overall security in the villages, and extended the reach of governance and rule of law.

The coalition has complemented these efforts by focusing development resources in the area to serve as an

In addition to promoting economic development and disbursing humanitarian aid, PRT Kapisa has been partnering with local communities and leaders to improve security.

example for other Safi Pashtun communities in central and southern Tagab. This strategy takes advantage of the fact that local leaders who are able to procure development projects for their areas see their stature rise and hence their positive influence. Focusing efforts in locales supportive of the government and coalition also ensures that a consistent message is sent regarding successful cooperation: long-term positive relationships are possible because the coalition is a reliable partner.

In northern Tagab the coalition has worked with local leaders to build a courthouse, sports facility, clinic and wells; refurbish mosques; and clean irrigation canals. Much of this has been done through cash-for-work projects that ensure local villagers have access to the immediate benefits of such efforts and directly participate in bettering their own communities.

While these programs are still at an early stage, consistently engaging the communities of northern Tagab has proven that direly insecure locales can be turned around. There has been a significant reduction in insurgent attacks along the road through northern Tagab. Significantly, other communities in neighboring districts have asked for similar levels of engagement and inclusion in efforts like the Road Maintenance Initiative. The consistency of the effort has encouraged local leaders who were previously hesitant to interact with the coalition to step up.

For example, one elected official who had been highly reluctant to meet with coalition forces as recently as December 2009 is now a close partner who cooperates regularly on a host of issues. While coalition members have initiated many of these relationships, local officials have stepped up and furthered them.

This has been especially true of the district's subgovernor, who had suffered from a "siege mentality" and was left isolated in the district center. With improved security and a more consistent coalition presence, he has been able to further his own engagement with local communities in tandem with our efforts. As the Tagab representative for the provincial government commented, "Thanks to the improved security, the people finally be-

COVER STORY

lieve they have government.”

All too often, coalition efforts have been spread too thin for local communities to be comfortable supporting our efforts, given the risks they run by doing so. So the most important aspect of the coalition's efforts in northern Tagab is that we have sought to consolidate assorted lines of effort — development, security and governance — in a manner ensuring a critical mass of engagement that leads entire communities to stop sitting on the fence and start actively supporting their government. Undertaking consistent, focused microdiplomacy is essential to this outcome.

The recent successes in northern Tagab are tentative, but the methodology is being expanded to other commu-

As these relationships grew, the coalition became able to respond more nimbly to events on the ground and further cement the ties it had painstakingly built with local leaders.

nities in Kapisa province. (Other PRTs elsewhere in the country may be pursuing similar strategies, but we are not in a position to comment on that.)

The challenges of effectively working with and through the people of Afghanistan are profoundly difficult, but microdiplomacy offers great potential. As the Tagab chief of police says, “Security has improved a lot in the last year. People are looking to the government with good eyes for the first time. This comes from the coalition projects like the road and pomegranates, and the road teams. The enemy still attacks but the people turn away from them, so they are not earning anything with their attacks.” ■

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THE U.S. AND LIBYA: NORMALIZATION OF A STORMY RELATIONSHIP

THE RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH TRIPOLI SUGGESTS
SOME LARGER FOREIGN POLICY LESSONS.

BY DAVID L. MACK

Relations between Libya and the U.S. have a turbulent history: War at the beginning of the 19th century; U.S. government support for Libyan independence after World War II; official and private-sector American engagement in the development of the country's oil wealth and human resources in the mid-20th century; Libyan terrorism and U.S. military retaliation in the 1980s; U.S.-engineered economic sanctions and isolation in the late 20th century; and restoration of diplomatic relations in 2006.

Hopefully the 21st century will continue to feature positive interaction between Libya and the United States. But for that to happen, both sides must build on shared interests with serious diplomacy and mutual respect.

Early History of Bilateral Relations

Our first policy toward Libya was appeasement. The young United States established relations with the Bey of Tripoli in 1796 and signed a treaty of peace and friendship. Behind the fancy diplomatic language, the reality was that in

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return for an annual U.S. government payment, the Tripoli-based corsairs, who had preyed on U.S. shipping, guaranteed its free passage. Along with being a military hero, President George Washington was a foreign policy realist. He correctly assessed that it was hard enough to maintain land forces and a modest navy to deal with the British, French, Spanish and other threats, and he warned against entangling alliances even with states that could have defended our commerce in the distant Mediterranean.

The second U.S. policy emerged in 1801. Thomas Jefferson's administration decided to establish a naval presence in the Mediterranean, so it halted payments to the bey and spent the money on beefing up the U.S. Navy. That led to our first foreign war, which started badly with the Libyan capture of the U.S. frigate *Philadelphia* and incarceration of its crew in 1803. Two years later, William Eaton, the U.S. naval agent for the Barbary States, led a detachment of eight U.S. marines and a much larger foreign mercenary force overland from Alexandria to seize Derna, a port in eastern Libya. Eventually, the Ottoman Empire reasserted direct rule in Tripoli and agreed with the United States and European nations that state-licensed piracy should no longer be an acceptable tool of national security.

For the next century or so, the U.S. had minimal dealings with Libya. We were of little significance in the Mediterranean, compared to the Ottoman Empire, Britain, France and Italy. In 1911, Italy invaded Libya and established a colony. Completely shut out of business, the U.S. closed the consulate in Tripoli in 1916. Especially after the advent of fascism, Italian colonial rule proved brutal and racist. The Arab population in Libya actually decreased between 1922

and 1943, and very few Libyans benefited from modern agriculture, education or health care.

After U.S. forces landed in French North Africa in 1942, our diplomats gained a place at the table for postwar planning. In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt began a new policy toward Libya when he opposed plans for further European agricultural settlement. At the 1945 Potsdam Conference, President Harry Truman declined to take a trusteeship for Libya, and in 1949 we supported a United Nations resolution for Libyan independence.

The Importance of Oil

The new U.S. policy was cradled in the rhetoric of morality dear to Americans: self-determination and independence of colonial peoples. It also reflected the power politics of the Cold War. With its vast spaces and year-round flying weather, Libya was the perfect place for an air base. Moreover, Libyans were among the poorest people in the world, with an annual per capita income of less than \$50. Their postwar economy was based on subsistence agriculture, the export of esparto grass for fine paper and scrap metal from the battlefields. So rental paid by the U.S. and British governments for air bases looked like a good deal to a Libyan government with few options.

Even before Libya achieved independence in 1951, Washington started an aid program emphasizing secondary education, English-language and vocational training. While foreign assistance was desperately needed during this period, by the 1960s it was dwarfed in economic importance by the investments and training programs of foreign oil companies, especially the American ones. Libya's first oil shipment was in 1961, and its oil income expanded rapidly during the decade.

By 1969, the U.S. and British air bases in Libya were of declining strategic importance, but Tripoli had become a producer of energy vital to the economies of our Western European allies and profitable for American companies. Although Washington still enjoyed a cozy relationship with an aging monarch and his sclerotic political system, Libyan popular attitudes were not isolated from the rest of the Arab world. The war of June 1967 had left Arabs everywhere with a feeling of humiliation and a conviction that Washington had aided Israel's victory, achieved in large part by its devastating surprise attack on the Egyptian Air Force. This set the stage for the Libyan Revolution of Sept. 1, 1969.

Eventually, U.S. policy adapted to these new realities.

Henry Kissinger, who was President Richard Nixon's national security adviser, claims in his memoirs that he favored a covert action program to overthrow the new Libyan leaders and keep the airbase, but yielded to the State Department view of the primacy of the oil interests and declining value of our military base. Much later, during the Reagan administration, the U.S. supported and provided some military training to Libyan émigré opponents of the Qadhafi regime. They proved unreliable.

Ambassador Joseph Palmer left Tripoli in 1972, as U.S.-Libyan diplomatic relations were becoming more troubled. Not until 2009 did a U.S. ambassador return to Tripoli. Nonetheless, the volume of U.S.-Libyan trade grew until 1979, and large numbers of Libyan students received higher education in the United States. But after a Libyan mob sacked the U.S. embassy in 1979, we withdrew our remaining official personnel from Tripoli and gave Libyan diplomats in Washington their walking papers. Once Libya was placed on the terrorism list, the flow of business people and students between the two countries ground to a near halt.

Between 1980 and 1992, several acts of terrorism dominated the U.S. image of Libya. U.S. policy toward Libya featured military pressure, diplomatic isolation and unilateral sanctions. By 1992, we were able to make our punitive policy more effective with the passage of U.N. sanctions. Libyans began to feel the economic and political weight of being a pariah state.

Movement Toward Reconciliation

Starting in 1992, Libya took initiatives for secret talks to improve relations. After years of U.S. rebuffs, the Clinton administration joined Great Britain in secret talks with Tripoli in 1998. The George W. Bush administration continued the dialogue. The combination of this diplomatic framework with well-crafted and nearly universally applied U.N. sanctions led to the Libyan decision to change course.

The Libyan government took steps to end support for terrorism and cooperate with the Scottish court established to prosecute the 1988 bombing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. Nearly all of the families of the victims of Libyan-linked terrorism eventually accepted its offer of compensation. By December 2003, Washington, London and Tripoli were ready to formalize changes in Libyan foreign policy that were already evident. Libya's full implementation of the agreement to rid itself of chemical and nuclear weapons pro-

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grams accelerated the positive trends.

Since then, the U.S. government has followed a gradual process of normalizing our relations. For some, the process has been too fast. This is true of many families of American victims of terrorist acts connected to the Libyan government, for instance. Coverage of Libya in the U.S. mass media is sporadic and tends to focus on the personality of its leader, Muammar al-Qadhafi. Human rights groups and some Libyan émigré personalities emphasize Libya's lack of internal political reforms.

Others believe normalization has been too slow. Libyan government officials, business people and educators all make this complaint. It is also the view of most American companies, who have been at a competitive disadvantage in Libya due to the years of sanctions. They point to the speed with which European governments normalized relations with Tripoli starting as early as 1999 with the suspension of U.N. sanctions.

Within a short period, most of our close allies had opened full embassies in Libya, and many established direct airline links. The process of normalization accelerated after December 2003, with visits to Tripoli by top leaders of countries like Britain, France, Italy and Germany, just to name a few, often with delegations of businessmen on their coattails. There have also been return visits to West European capitals by Qadhafi, illustrating the reality that Libya was no longer isolated. It was Washington that was out of step with the rest of the world, and we no longer had international leverage to influence Libyan behavior.

In contrast to our allies and competitors, the highest-level U.S. official to visit Libya was Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and that did not happen until the very end of the Bush administration, in December 2008. (Her Libyan counterpart had visited Washington in January 2008.) U.S.

*The Obama
administration is
broadening bilateral
relations on many fronts.*

Ambassador Gene Cretz, whose nomination was held up by the Senate for more than a year, did not arrive in Tripoli until 2009. As the result of pressure from impatient U.S. companies and universities, full consular services returned to Libya's capital after some months.

In September 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met with her Libyan counterpart, Foreign Minister Musa Kusa, in New York on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly session. A State Department spokesperson indicated the conversation focused on regional issues such as the Palestinian-Israeli talks and the situation in Sudan, matters where the U.S. government seeks Libyan support.

Cautious Re-engagement

The Obama administration is in the process of broadening bilateral relations with Tripoli, especially in the areas of economic and scientific cooperation and expanded person-to-person contacts. Despite the recent signature of a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, the priorities of U.S. policy remain strategic, not commercial.

In this respect, the U.S. differs from nearly every country in the capitalist world, whose governments tend to make winning business contracts the principal measure of their relations. However, growing numbers of Libyans

and Americans are eager for expanded business and tourism and a resumption of the educational exchange that characterized U.S.-Libyan relations in the 1950s and 1960s. Recent steps by both governments to normalize visa issuance and travel are overdue and popular.

The strategic benefits to the United States of Tripoli's current posture are immense. Libya is no longer an adversary state located on the Mediterranean Basin. Instead, it can be a positive example to the North Koreans and Irans of the world of how to come in from the cold and become a respectable member of the global community. To be blunt, there are too many bad governments seeking bad weapons for the United States to bomb them all into submission.

The Bush administration needed an alternative paradigm for international cooperation, and diplomatic engagement with Tripoli also fits well with the overall foreign policy of the Obama administration. Normalization on a basis of mutual respect, including intelligence exchanges on terrorist threats, serves the security needs of both states. Economically, Libyan oil and gas reserves offer diversification of supply in a world of tight energy resources.

A major incentive for the Libyans has been full international acceptance. Restoration of diplomatic relations with the U.S. made it possible for Libya to be elected to the U.N. Security Council. Its record over the course of two years was generally responsible. Despite its own bad memories of U.N. sanctions, Libya voted for enhanced measures against Iran, and hosted the recent Arab League summit meeting that supported a resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Qadhafi, who recently concluded a year as chairman of the African Union, has cooperated with other African states and with the United States to ameliorate the Darfur problem and to prevent the growth of ungoverned spaces in the Sahara and Sahel regions,

which could harbor terrorist organizations. Tripoli has also made useful contributions to the development of African economies.

Internally, Libya is introducing cautious economic reforms, but thus far it has not initiated a process of political or constitutional change. The country has an elaborate formal structure of direct democracy, but non-Libyan observers view the current political system as authoritarian. The most meaningful civil society institution in Libya is the weak but ambitious private sector. Over the long term, interaction between Libyan and U.S. companies, and the reopening of American universities to Libyan students, can do far more to encourage reforms than lectures by human rights organizations.

The country's leaders sometimes make unpredictable, even disturbing, statements. (For their part, Libyans often regard Washington's public state-

ments as arbitrary and unfair.) Tripoli's actions, however, have followed a generally prudent course in recent years, so three successive U.S. administrations have steadily pursued closer ties, recognizing that it was a good idea to bring Libya in from the cold. Without false optimism or illusions, we should try to maintain the relationship and expand it where we can.

After all, the principal rationale for U.S. diplomatic relations is not to celebrate friendships with ideal democracies blessed with free-market economies. The real diplomatic challenge, and the one that offers the most benefit, is moving countries from the status of adversaries to former adversaries to partners, to deal with a world of global threats and cultivate common interests. Washington and Tripoli can take pride in having moved this process forward.

The history of Libyan-American re-

lations invites attention to a larger foreign policy lesson, as well. Neither government advanced its interests greatly by the use of military power in isolation from other forms of persuasion. Indeed, overt or covert violence was often the prelude to setbacks for both sides. This was true from the early 19th century through the 1980s.

Beginning in the 1990s, both governments employed a wider range of the tools of statecraft. Latent military force for purposes of deterrence played a role, as did international sanctions. But it was essential to construct a diplomatic framework to make such measures effective. Diplomacy allowed policymakers in both Washington and Tripoli to reconsider their respective interests and seek to advance them in a coolheaded way.

Such an approach has applications in the resolution of other international conflicts. ■

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A TALE OF TWO PARKS

A RETIRED FSO AND NATIVE NEW YORKER TAKES THE MEASURE OF A BUSTLING PROVINCIAL CAPITAL IN MODERN CHINA THROUGH THE PRISM OF CENTRAL PARK.

BY RICHARD L. JACKSON

As a native New Yorker, I have always thought of Central Park as an oasis. I've often returned to it over the years, even running through it in the 1982 New York City Marathon (time: 3:38). Its reservoir, model sailboat pond, Sheep Meadow, zoo and statue of Balto, the heroic Alaskan sled dog, fired my imagination as they have millions of other city kids. As the most-visited park in the United States, its 843 acres, landscaped in 1873 by Frederick Law Olmsted, always seemed to me the epitome of an urban park, open to all.

Arriving in Hangzhou for a month's stay in June 2010, I was unprepared to find at its center West Lake Park, dating from the 7th-century Tang Dynasty and surpassing Central Park in natural beauty, scale, upkeep and design. Surrounded by mist-shrouded hills dotted with Buddhist pagodas and tea plantations, it has an indescribable, evanescent beauty. Causeways and dragon boats crisscross its 2.4 square mile surface, connecting to dreamlike islands. The 9.3-mile path circling the lake passes pagodas, museums, tombs, carp ponds, botanical gardens, caves, waterfalls and strutting peacocks.

Everywhere one sees constant reminders of China's ancient heritage. Thousands of Chinese people stroll its vast expanse, contemplating nature — whether Hangzhou's sig-

nature lotus blossoms, osmanthus and mume — or weeping willows lining the shore. Walking paths wind through the surrounding 19 square miles of emerald hills and rolling parkland, yielding up sights like the Baochu, Liuhe and Leifing pagodas, where elderly Chinese practice tai chi at sunrise.

The surrounding city, whose name became Hangzhou only in 589, is small by Chinese standards, with only 6.6 million residents (compared to two or three times that in neighboring Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou). And yet, viewed at sunset from the Wulin Hills, its expanse of modern skyscrapers, stretching as far as the eye can see on both sides of the Qiantang River, appears at least equal to that of New York. The capital of Zhejiang, one of the country's richest provinces, Hangzhou is a bustling, vibrant metropolis with all the contradictions of modern China — though not necessarily an accurate mirror of the country as a whole.

But to form a first impression of the People's Republic of China — the largest U.S. creditor, a complex nation that accounts for 20 percent of the world's population and is a critical player today in saving the planetary environment — one has to start somewhere.

My Point of Entry

The choice of Hangzhou as my point of entry flowed from my son Richard's faculty assignment at the Wall Street Institute, whose school network in China serves the largest English-language market in the world today. WSI's Hangzhou branches teem with young professionals. I was regularly accosted there by dozens of students, determined to practice rudimentary and, in a few cases, advanced English. They invariably started and ended with "Have you visited West Lake Park?", "Was it beautiful?", "What did you see there?",

Richard L. Jackson, a Foreign Service officer from 1965 to 1999, served as president of Anatolia College from 1999 to 2009 and of the Association of American International Colleges and Universities from 2007 to 2009. He is the author of The Non-Aligned, the United Nations and the Superpowers (Praeger, 1983).

“Would you return?” and “Were the lotus in bloom?” Never in New York City was I so thoroughly interrogated about Central Park. West Lake is clearly millennia ahead in its hold on the imagination and civic pride of Hangzhou’s citizenry.

As father of a faculty member and revered for my age (70), I had a ready-made circle of friends including middle managers, housewives, doctors, engineers, lawyers, chauffeurs and university students, all struggling with English. Interestingly, female outnumbered male students by as much as 10 to 1. All had adopted new English names, in addition to their Chinese given names, to complement their new language personas. Hillarys, Chelseas, Shelleys and Joyces abounded. But there was also a scattering of Crazies, Daisys, Lazys and Solvents, the last undoubtedly selected for its connotation of well-being and wealth rather than as an emulsifier.

Once out on the street, however, it’s a different story altogether. The eager-to-please students are nowhere to be seen, and no one appears to speak a word of English. Taxis require full addresses written out in Chinese characters, and streets look so much alike that even the shortest walk becomes a critical test of visual memory. The Chinese language, with its tones, characters, dialects and alien vocabulary, is a lifetime pursuit, far beyond reach of the casual visitor.

Even in a relatively smaller provincial city like Hangzhou, one is struck by the rampant consumerism and the PRC’s raw economic power. The rush is clearly on to make up for past deprivation, and every high-end Western brand from Chanel, Hermes and Louis Vuitton to Ralph Lauren is present on the main avenues in emporia larger by far than those in Europe or the United States. Inside, Chinese customers, mostly women, are buying, and on crowded sidewalks bulging shopping bags are loaded into waiting limos. In the automobile department, Rolls Royce, Ferrari, Mercedes and Porsche showrooms compete for place with new four-door saloon cars specially designed for the Chinese market.

Going downscale, huge malls with every manner of product and multistory electronics centers are thronged with families, students and shopgirls. Of course, everything from knock-off computers to phony Vuitton bags can be had for almost nothing. Yet the status of being able to own and flaunt the real thing is so prized here that the two sectors appear to co-exist. The former are obviously making money hand over fist and appear reluctant to rock the boat with the government on trademark protection.

Beneath the veneer of the malls, however, one gradually detects an older China, unaffected by the headlong rush to

consume. In small streets and alleys, daily card games rage from morning until night with the same single-minded players, surrounded day after day by crowds of idle spectators. So great is their concentration that even a waiguoren (foreigner) passes unnoticed. Here and in adjacent “wet markets” offering a greater array of unidentifiable foods than I have seen in any supermarket or other region of the world, faces betray an unmistakable dignity and quiet will to survive, as well as the striking ethnic diversity of the PRC.

Obesity is rare, but joy in food is everywhere, and everyone seems to be eating all the time. This is true at West Lake, too, where families stroll, eating sweet black rice from tiny woven baskets or downing blackened eggs. Despite appearances, all are delicious. Even with the undervalued renminbi, yuan or kuai, as China’s currency is variously known, prices are absurdly low, and a full meal for two prepared to order

on the street comes to about \$1.50. (One can hire a cleaning lady once a week for \$3.) Traditional massages are also a very affordable luxury, unrelated to the widely advertised “happy ending” variety.

Pushing out from Hangzhou’s center, I saw further vestiges of ancient China: fishermen poling along canals with captive cormorants to dive for the catch, and mountain tea villages where time stands still and revered kung fu masters practice traditional medicine.

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Energy and Optimism

My June visit coincided with the World Cup in South Africa. Although China is not a soccer power, failing even to qualify this time around despite its immense athletic potential, the place went wild. Many games, including the final, were broadcast at 2:30 a.m. local time, and bars with huge screens were packed with smoking, beer-swilling young people. Their energy, optimism and passion for this un-Chinese sport were electric, despite a brutal job market for university graduates, which forces many to work, at least for now, in shops, taxis or clothing repair.

While laborers are in short supply in factory hubs like Guangzhou or Shenzhen, hiring notices for white-collar jobs and the occasional employment fair attract literally thousands of applicants for each position. Curious about higher education, I visited two stunning Hangzhou campuses of the Chinese National Academy of Fine Arts, one urban and one more rural.

I was impressed by their inspiring modern architecture, using all Chinese designs and materials, state-of-the-art facilities and motivated, inquiring students, who filled a multistory library at 9:30 p.m. With 50,000 applicants for its

freshman class, the academy accepts only one out of every 50 — making it five times more competitive than the top Ivy League schools, which boasted only a 10:1 ratio last year.

As a casual visitor coming to grips with China, I was advised to avoid the three Ts — Tibet, Taiwan and Tiananmen — and, in any case, I had no reason to probe in sensitive areas. In wide-ranging conversations, however, I found the younger generation to be self-confident and thoughtful on most subjects. They are genuinely trying to make sense of their turbulent recent history, from the Communist Revolution, Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution and Tiananmen Square massacre to the present economic boom.

History was brought home to me in wrenching personal stories of confiscated family properties, parents forced to inform on grandparents, forced re-education through labor in the countryside, and even families pulverizing

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prized heirlooms out of plain fear during the Cultural Revolution. What surprised me most, however, was the impact on this narrative of the PRC's contemporary economic miracle. I encountered no sense of bitterness or victimization, at least among the burgeoning middle-class Chinese I met in Hangzhou, but rather boundless optimism and pride in what they have

achieved. Clearly, the new lifestyles on display and access to previously unimagined fashion, cars and consumer goods trump the past, and the young are eager to make the most of them.

Still casting a long shadow over everything is the late Chairman Mao Tse-tung, whose likeness stares back from all paper money. Though he is revered as the father of modern China and admired for his military brilliance, citizens openly and hotly debate his responsibility for the excesses and fitful stop-and-start cycle of reforms during his tenure. I heard such arguments voiced in public and without apparent fear. In fact, while the state is everywhere and, most concede, observes and presumably knows everything, I did not myself experience such security as oppressive.

Admittedly, I never fell afoul of the law. On the contrary, I was reassured by the presence of laidback police agents as concierges at residential buildings and by gates manned by unarmed police at the end of each residential street or alley. In West Lake Park, for example — unlike in Central Park — artistic lighting and ubiquitous security cameras allow visitors to stroll safely through its vast grounds all evening long.

The nexus of privacy, security and individual rights in a country of 1.3 billion obviously has many dimensions. But as a casual visitor two decades after the crackdown at Tiananmen Square, I did not necessarily feel that the balance was skewed. Certainly, in the area of religion, the presence of Christian churches with active parishes alongside the prevalent Buddhist temples impressed me, as did gospel singers at public gatherings I attended.

What Lies Ahead?

The unanswerable question, of course, is how long can the PRC manage the present, precipitous rate of change? In New York City, stores vanish and are reborn, but in Hangzhou

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such change occurs virtually overnight. The elaborate corner barbershop that I patronized on a Monday, for example, was gone by week's end, occupied by laborers working and sleeping there to transform it into an instant showroom. All the barbers and staff had vanished without a trace.

On a visit to nearby Fuyang, billed in a 2006 guidebook as a bucolic river town of 250,000 and seat of the 3rd-century Wu Kingdom, I found instead a sprawling city of two or three million people. In the hills of its beautiful riverside park with its Buddhist shrine, ubiquitous amplifiers disguised as rocks incongruously blasted the latest American rap and hip-hop.

As elsewhere, tradition has always been based on family, which has assured its transmission and continuity through the millennia. Curiously, this remains especially true in Chinese communities abroad, where large fam-

In wide-ranging conversations, I found the younger generation to be self-confident and thoughtful on most subjects, genuinely trying to make sense of their turbulent recent history.

ilies and communal compounds remain the rule. Visitors from the PRC remark how much more conservative overseas Chinese in Malaysia or Singapore are than mainlanders.

In China proper, however, the one-child policy — initially applied in 1979 to head off a Malthusian population explosion — has over three decades changed the basic social fabric. While draconian family planning, with its underside of forced abortion and even female infanticide, has not necessarily produced a generation of pampered “little emperors,” it has certainly accelerated the rate of social change.

However, an unintended consequence of the one-child policy in China's cities, where it was most rigidly applied, was an obsession with change in all forms. Today's generation of only children are outward-looking, focused on individual wants and open to anything new. Some, caught in arranged marriages, rebel against parental pressure to produce even a single child, preferring a life of greater independence.

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alyst and cities leading the way, hutongs (alleys formed by lines of traditional courtyard homes) are giving way to mass housing, transforming the landscape at a dizzying rate.

Sparked by the World Expo in nearby Shanghai and a prevailing boomtown mentality, business leaders and investors, eager for a piece of the action, are still piling in. The talk in the expatriate watering holes continues to be of more high-end hotel openings and stratagems to exploit dollar-renminbi fluctuations in repatriating salaries.

Much will depend on China's ability to stimulate domestic consumption to offset expected export losses if the renminbi is revalued, a herculean task for planners in Beijing. Nevertheless, the energy, scale and can-do spirit I encountered make me optimistic that the PRC will continue to grow well beyond the current recession.

Still, world-class problems loom on

The unanswerable question, of course, is how long can the PRC manage the present, precipitous rate of change?

the horizon. Among them will be meeting rising worker and consumer expectations. Suicides at the huge Foxconn plants, strikes at Honda and acute labor imbalances may all be symptomatic of what lies ahead. There are already signs that once Beijing gives ground to worker demands, lower-end

industries will be lured away to countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam.

Also critical — and not just for China — will be how it manages soaring energy consumption and an increasingly polluted environment. Its total consumption of 2.3 billion tons of all forms of energy last year surpassed that of the United States by 4 percent.

While some expatriates complain of corruption at all levels, the determination and creativity of China's leaders in tackling these problems — a magnitude never faced before — are, I submit, actually grounds for guarded optimism.

I hope, however, that as the country's bureaucrats increasingly take decisions affecting the whole planet, West Lake Park's exquisite natural beauty will serve as a reminder of traditional China and a symbol of hope worth preserving intact — as Central Park in its own way remains for New Yorkers. ■

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HAITI: STRENGTH AMID DESOLATION

A YEAR AFTER THE JAN. 12, 2010, EARTHQUAKE, HAITI CONTINUES TO ENDURE MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF HARDSHIPS. BUT EFFORTS TO REBUILD CONTINUE, AS WELL.

BY CHRISTOPHER E. GOLDTHWAIT

As we walked through Port-au-Prince's filthiest and most dangerous slum, Little Haiti in Cité Soleil last April, a mob of children pressed against us, grabbing our hands. Our group included a German physician whom we all called Dr. Barbara. She heads her own tiny non-governmental organization that serves the health needs of children at Silesian mission schools, Les Petites Ecoles. Many of the students hail from this neglected neighborhood, and she provides the only medical help they or their families ever get.

The dilapidated, fungus-stained and broken concrete hovels gave way to shacks of rusty tin as we continued through the slum. Ironically, the January 2010 earthquake had done less damage to Port-au-Prince's worst housing than to its taller, fancier structures. Or perhaps the structures are so flimsy that it had been easy to put them back together again. At least they weren't heavy enough to have crushed anyone.

We made our way along the narrow dirt paths, with pre-earthquake rubble pressed into them to make them passable despite the previous evening's rain. The stench of urine was ever present. Dr. Barbara led us along byways to an open area that edged into a salt swamp, which housed the communal garbage dump and toilet. She pointed at a single scrawny tree

on the other side. When two of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's thugs had escaped prison and were robbing and terrorizing the neighborhood, one local leader had finally had enough and killed them both with a machete. He left the bodies under the tree to be eaten by the pigs.

Did we want to see the interior of one of the huts? A parent made way for us, pulling back the filmy cloth door so we could peer into the windowless interior. About the size of my master bathroom, the hut held two double beds, and a rack of shelves stacked with clothing and cooking utensils. Six people lived here. It was tidy and as clean as possible under the circumstances. As we exited, another woman pulled at my arm, urging us to look at her hovel, too. It was the same. These people took pride in making a life from so little; they were flattered, not embarrassed by our visit.

Heading back to our vehicle — Dr. Barbara's mobile clinic — I looked at the crowd around us. I felt less nervous now about being here. They wore the old garments that we in the United States give away to charities, which bundle and sell them by the pound to brokers for eventual sale in the market or on the streets. The clothes were torn and worn, but not rags — manmade fibers have their virtues. Dr. Barbara greeted a little boy who looked 5 or 6, but was probably 9 or 10. He had a severely burned arm, which she treated before we drove off.

In the mobile clinic, we squeezed by a water truck that had just pulled up. It cost two gourdes, about five cents, to fill a pail or other container. A few hundred meters along toward the main road, the driver pulled over and we saw the reconstruction of one school that was under way: a simple wooden frame for two or three classrooms, waist-high plywood panels for walls, and a corrugated tin or aluminum roof.

Christopher E. Goldthwait was the first career Foreign Agriculture Service officer to be named an ambassador, serving as chief of mission in Chad from 1999 to 2004, among many other assignments during a 30-year career. After retiring from the Foreign Service in 2004, he became an independent consultant.

The school director who was supervising the work came over to greet us. Dr. Barbara smiled, shook his hand through the car window; then off we went. It was he, she noted in her imperfect English, who had killed the two thugs.

First Impressions

My first impression of Port-au-Prince a few days before had been confused: instantly recognizable in many respects, yet different in some. The traffic on the airport road was the jumble familiar to me from countless developing countries I'd worked in or visited as a Foreign Agricultural Service officer. Once the piles of rubble began to appear, it seemed the entire area was a patchwork of blue-and-white tent cities, interspersed with the blocks of concrete buildings in pastel colors you'd see anywhere in the tropics.

Despite the country's reputation for abject poverty, before the earthquake it had more paved roads, electricity and other infrastructure than Chad or Liberia, countries I know well. As in Africa, there was plenty of life in the streets, with merchants selling all kinds of goods in their shops. But there was a more concentrated range of goods here: food, clothing, building materials, auto supplies, but fewer household goods.

Many of the buildings looked fine — but how to tell which were still inhabited, which not? Which were stable and which were in danger of collapse?

Everywhere there were tents — in parks, sports grounds, yards and the streets themselves. There were notably few dogs, cats and small ruminants.

Traffic was frenetic, augmented by sports utility vehicles from NGOs, the United Nations and diplomatic missions. Lots of local cars and tap-taps, gaily painted little pick-up trucks whose cargo platforms were covered and lined with benches to haul pas-

Most of the buildings looked fine — but how to tell which ones were in danger of collapse?

sengers. (In the Philippines they're called jeepneys.) These are Port-au-Prince's only public transport; a ride costs 10 gourdes, about a quarter.

I was trying to help the schools run by the Salesian Fathers and Sisters of St. John Don Bosco. Working with their New York fundraising office, I was putting together a proposal for school meals to be funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where I used to work.

The plan centers on Les Petites Ecoles, 100 schools that are privately run (like 90 percent of primary schools in Haiti). Aside from two government schools, they offer the only education available in La Saline and Cité Soleil, the poorest slums in the city. Before the earthquake, these 100 schools had at least 25,000 pupils all together, aged 3 to teens. Our proposal envisions 20 schools run by the Salesian Sisters in other poor neighborhoods scattered around the city, teaching another 5,000 kids.

After the government, the Salesians are the second-largest providers of education in Haiti. Adherents take vows of poverty and service — no chiefs of party with \$125,000 salaries, Western-style houses and private cars and drivers here! The priests and nuns I met here during my brief visit are absolutely dedicated to their order, which operates in some 130 countries and has the reputation of providing the best vocational education in the developing world.

Our hotel was the kind of place

where you *should* stay when doing development work. Two stars, maybe. The public areas were nice, if downright funky, with an odd array of small 18th-century cannons, 19th-century iron industrial implements and modern iron sculptures of people and birds — all strewn through the courtyard, open-air lobby and a charming patio/bar encircling the pool.

The hotel seemed to be an array of a half-dozen houses, walled into a single compound and subdivided into single hotel rooms and small apartments for short-term rental. The restaurant was on the second floor, again open on two sides, filled with the fragrances of flowering tropical trees. The food was satisfactory: ample servings of meat, rice and beans or plantains (but skimpy on vegetables), accompanied by delicious, spicy sauces of doubtful healthiness due to high salt and oil content.

The room was another matter. Very poor lighting made it hard to read, but it wasn't dim enough to hide the dinginess, poor workmanship, broken tiles and chipped baseboards. The closet was ample but lacked poles and hangers. There was a small living room and poorly equipped kitchen downstairs, while the bedroom and bathroom were above. The patterned bedspread and elaborate set of five matching pillows were an odd stab at elegance. I'd have preferred hot water.

As I tried to go to sleep each night, I'd hear the bark of a dog or a rooster's crow, along with people's voices. On Saturday nights the loud dance music struck my untrained ear as a Caribbean version of the popular musical genre known as Highlife.

A Memorable Mass

On my last morning in Haiti, I attended Mass at the Salesian Church of St. John Don Bosco. I'd been told it was quite close, but it took a long time to make our way around the piles of rubble and over the deep potholes of

numerous streets. We eventually climbed into Petionville, one of the better districts in the hills, where the main streets were lined with typical concrete buildings that seemed to have suffered little damage. But then would come a pancake, or a ruin with weirdly skewed slabs of floor or wall and a fan of twisted rebar.

Turning, we were in the middle of a lively street market with more people than vehicles. We edged along, the church tower now within sight. The driver made to turn right alongside it even though the entire narrow alley was occupied by street vendors.

Undaunted, he edged further in and lo, the waters parted. Clothing sellers with wares spread on plastic sheets hurriedly pulled them into bundles and sacks to make way. This I'd never seen before.

Mass, including a long sermon, was conducted in a mix of French and Cre-

*The traffic on the
airport road was the
jumble familiar to me
from countless countries
I'd worked in or visited as
an FAS officer.*

ole. I'd follow for a few sentences and then lose the drift. It was a very musical service, thanks to a band of three electric guitarists and two drummers who played many interludes. The church overflowed with people cleanly and neatly dressed, devout and joyous.

Communion was wafer-only, placed on the tongue by the priest. While waiting my turn, I pondered the contrast between the hopefulness and optimism of the congregation and the destitution of the slum I'd visited the day before and the still-fresh tragedy of the earthquake. I've never taken a more moving communion.

I hadn't expected the attitude I found among the Haitians. In 2008 Father Zucchi Ange Olibrice nearly died when an assassin shot him in the head at point-blank range. During the earthquake he narrowly escaped being crushed by jumping out his office window. Undaunted, he continues to work 14-hour days to get Les Petites Ecoles back into operation.

Then there was Marie J., locally employed at the U.S. embassy. She lost her house and car in the earthquake and lives in a tent in her backyard. But she smiles: "I'm lucky. I'd



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*The church overflowed
with people cleanly and
neatly dressed,
devout and joyous.*

left the house 15 minutes before, or I'd have been killed. I've gotten my 88-year-old mother into the countryside and my 19-year-old son to Miami. And I've got a job."

True Grit

A year after the earthquake, Haiti continues to endure more than its share of hardships. There have been tropical storms and a cholera outbreak,

even as thousands of people continue to make do in their tent cities. And the country's outlook is so dire that it was recently designated as a priority recipient in the Obama administration's "Feed the Future" global food security initiative.

The path for our school-building proposal has also been rocky; initially rejected, it has been resubmitted, and we do not yet have a definitive answer. In the meantime, more of the Petites Ecoles have been repaired or rebuilt and are back in operation, a small but encouraging improvement.

I've worked with other development groups to assist Haiti, as well. Studying the country's agricultural development plans, for example, I can say that they make sense. But most of all, I continue to be encouraged by the determination shown by the Father Zucchis and the Maries of Haiti. It's their grit that will yield progress. ■

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APPRECIATION

A VISIONARY AND ACTIVIST FOR THE FOREIGN SERVICE

STEPHEN LOW
1927-2010

By KENNETH L. BROWN

The foreign affairs community suffered the loss of a true friend and staunch advocate with the death of Ambassador Stephen Low, 82, on Nov. 5 at his home in Bethesda, Md., of congestive heart failure. Steve was not only an accomplished scholar and Foreign Service officer. He was an activist and visionary who sought to improve training for America's diplomats and to expand understanding and appreciation of their history and contributions.

During a 31-year career, Steve distinguished himself in numerous Foreign Service assignments, including service as a senior staff member at the National Security Council, ambassador to Zambia and Nigeria, and director of the Foreign Service Institute for five years. He was best known for his role in the mediation process of the late 1970s that led to an independent Zimbabwe in 1980.

There has always been a problem in our Service about training. It has never been considered the best recommendation for promotion, but that is starting to change ...

— Amb. Stephen Low, from the cover-story interview, "Charting FSI's Future," in the May 1986 *FSJ*

A Permanent Home for FSI

In his greatest contribution at home, Steve initiated and led the struggle — and a struggle it was — to create

Ambassador Kenneth L. Brown is president of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.



a dedicated site for FSI. The result is seen today in the beautiful campus of the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Va., where the library bears his name. In pursuing the new campus, Steve was fond of declaring that if McDonald's could have a Hamburger University (a photograph of which he kept in his office), surely the U.S. foreign affairs community should have its own institute.

Steve valued cooperation and recognized that it was only through the support and collaboration of others — such as Ron Spiers, George Shultz, Brandon Grove and Representatives Frank Wolf, R-Va., and John Spratt, D-S.C., to name but a few — that a permanent home for FSI could become a reality.

But he could also hold his ground out of deep conviction. When, for instance, at the end of an early discussion on relocating FSI he was outnumbered in opposing a move to another leased building, Steve de-

You have to have a lot of persistence. It isn't enough that you have an idea, tell somebody "let's do it," and then go about your business. You'll never get there unless you're prepared to make it a priority in almost everything you do every day. You push very hard in every possible direction, and when you can't succeed one way, you find another.

— *Amb. Stephen Low*

clared, "I vote against, and the nays have it."

Similarly, in rejecting a proposal to locate the new campus at the north end of the Pentagon parking lot, he noted that he did not want his name to come up in the future when planes from National Airport took off over the site and students wondered, "Who was the bright guy who chose this idiotic location?"

After retiring from the Foreign

Service in 1987, Steve continued his advocacy for a stronger foreign affairs community. He served as director of the Johns Hopkins University Graduate School in Bologna for five years, then as president of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training for another five.

Steve had founded ADST, which is located on the NFATC campus, while serving as director of FSI to act as the institute's channel to the private sector and help tell the Foreign Service story through oral histories, books and exhibits. He used his management skills and personal financial support to ensure its growth and success.

Telling the FS Story

Today ADST has 1,650 interview transcripts in its growing collection on the Web site of the Library of Congress (www.frontiers.loc.gov/ammem/collections/diplomacy/index.html) and has published 50 books, with more in production. Steve continued to be active on the association's board for the

The National Museum of American Diplomacy

In November 2000, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright presided over a groundbreaking ceremony at the Department of State for a museum of American diplomacy, to be located in the newly renovated part of the headquarters on 21st Street NW. Ambassador Stephen Low and Senator Charles (Mac) Mathias, R-Md., were both there to witness this milestone in their effort to raise the profile of U.S. diplomacy.

In an article for the September 2004 *FSJ*, Amb. Low explained his motivation for pioneering this project. "Of all the memorials and historical museums in this country, including some 220 administered by the federal government alone, not one focuses on our relations with the rest of the world or describes the proud record of American diplomacy. This sad situation reflects the fact that in our country diplomacy is neither highly valued nor well understood, and its contribution to the development of our modern nation is unappreciated," he wrote.

Turning to his vision for the museum, Amb. Low wrote: "In a city of museums, ours has to be compelling, first-class and state-of-the-art. I am convinced it will be among the finest. Through interactive media, the visitor center will spotlight the work of the Secretary of State and American diplomacy, and will explore the role of American diplomatic posts abroad. The public will learn what the Department of State and the other foreign affairs agencies have done and continue to do for the nation every day in helping to maintain security, promote prosperity, seek peace and expand American ideals."

The United States Diplomacy Center office at State was established in 2000 to oversee the project — known as the Department of State Visitor Center and National Museum of American Diplomacy — and has already collected 5,000 noteworthy artifacts and created exhibitions that have toured the country.

State, which will contribute space, staff and security for the center, has formed a public-private partnership with the nonprofit Foreign Affairs Museum Council, founded by Sen. Mathias, Amb. Low and others to realize the project, which has been endorsed by every living Secretary of State. The FAMC has raised an initial \$1.25 million, and the next phase of the capital campaign to raise \$50 million is under way.

— *Susan Brady Maitra, Senior Editor*

rest of his life. A special Stephen Low Memorial Fund has been created at ADST to continue his important work.

Steve was also dedicated to the idea of creating a center and museum for U.S. diplomacy. There were many museums for branches of the military and other organizations all over the country, he pointed out, but none for diplomacy.

He took up the challenge and, with the help of the late Senator Charles (Mac) Mathias, R-Md., led the effort as chairman and chief fundraiser of the Foreign Affairs Museum Council. Today Ambassador Bill Harrop and others continue that mission and are on the way to making Steve's dream a reality.

A Devoted Family Man

Throughout his remarkable career, Steve Low was fortunate to have at his side Helen (Sue) Low, a scholar of in-

*Low led the effort to
create such a center and
museum as chairman and
chief fundraiser of
the Foreign Affairs
Museum Council.*

ternational affairs in her own right, whom he married in 1954 and who survives him. Helen proved her Foreign Service mettle from the beginning. On the way with Steve and their newborn son to their first post to help open the new U.S. consulate in Kampala, their bush pilot had to fly his

small craft from one grass landing strip to another to refuel from jerry cans.

At one point the pilot declared, "Lady, when you finish diapering the baby, we're ready to go." Helen was a steadfast partner in diplomacy and a leader in the efforts of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide to strengthen and protect the rights and interests of Foreign Service spouses.

Steve was a devoted family man, ardent lover of music and talented wood craftsman. He was much loved by his family, friends and colleagues, as was abundantly evident at the Nov. 11 memorial service attended by more than 200 people.

Stephen Low will be greatly missed as an individual, and his impact in favor of American diplomacy and its practitioners will long be felt. (An obituary will appear in the February *FSJ*.) ■

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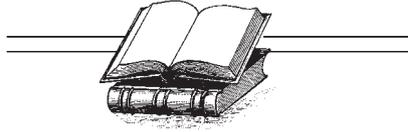


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BOOKS

A New Breed

Guerrilla Diplomacy: Rethinking International Relations

Daryl Copeland, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009, \$25, paperback, 320 pages.

REVIEWED BY EDWARD SALAZAR

Daryl Copeland has been a Canadian diplomat for almost 30 years, with broad experience in strategic policy, planning and communications. So it is refreshing to see an author with practitioner credentials employ a scholarly approach to reinvent the craft of diplomacy to meet contemporary challenges.

And make no mistake: Copeland's critique of the failures of modern-day diplomacy, supported by vivid vignettes, should hit all of us close to home.

While Copeland stops short of asking diplomats to trade in their pin-stripes for camouflage, he makes a strong, unapologetic case for a new, holistic "diplomatic ecosystem" that is more open, accountable and relevant to the realities of globalization. He argues that diplomats must be empowered to become the managers and integrators of globalization and that our profession must be "reimagined and linked integrally to development,"

Guerrilla diplomats are at their best as political counterinsurgents — "high-functioning, street-smart, Renaissance humanists with well-developed instincts, a BlackBerry and, when necessary, a Kevlar vest."

displacing defense as the centerpiece of international policy and global relations.

In the post-9/11 era, this argument is a familiar one, but Copeland draws on historical trends and the mechanics of globalization to make the case for diplomacy to regain the prominence it has lost to defense.

Perhaps influenced by Canada's "human security" agenda, Copeland argues that development must become the new driving force of Western engagement with the world. This, in turn, will empower the new "guerrilla diplomat" to become an agent of transformational change to promote peace, justice and development in the places where they are most needed.

Copeland describes this new breed as nimble, innovative and culturally aware, able to maximize use of modern technological and media tools. Far from being stovepiped by bureaucracy, guerrilla diplomats are at their best as political counterinsurgents — "high-functioning, street-smart, Renaissance humanists with well-developed instincts, a BlackBerry and, when necessary, a Kevlar vest."

But are they the answer to what ails diplomacy? Or would they simply be Don Quixotes, pursuing the impossible dream of a "human-centered development" utopia? After all, if one accepts the conventional wisdom that globalization is eroding the relevance of the nation-state — a view Copeland endorses — then how could guerrilla diplomats become effective agents of change?

The author draws heavily on his professional experience to offer tangible suggestions on how diplomats can succeed in this new environment. He argues that globalization is creating a larger, more level playing field for civil society groups of all sizes, including philanthropists and charitable foundations, universities and think-tanks, and even corporations. Today's diplomats must learn to work closely with these new players, perhaps even taking on their roles and adopting their agendas.

Although guerrilla diplomacy is



strikingly similar to “transformational diplomacy,” at least in terms of its aspirations, Copeland argues that the new approach must do more than re-tool outdated national security postures to meet new threats. It must also look at the sources and drivers of those threats and focus on the deeply rooted ills, not the symptoms.

As he explains, the pace of globalization is accelerating the fragmentation of the international system into four different “worlds”: the politically and economically advantaged; the fragile and partially developed; the completely dependent; and the entirely excluded.

Within this framework, Copeland’s analysis leads to the inescapable conclusion that “persistent insecurity” is the only thing these globally interdependent worlds have in common. What is missing, alas, is any interconnecting fabric of peacebuilding to reverse or minimize the process of fragmentation.

Copeland acknowledges that a complete makeover of our profession may not be feasible, particularly given the institutional resistance to such sweeping change. But he is absolutely right that 21st-century diplomats cannot escape the need to operate more effectively in a world dominated by news and information on demand.

Edward Salazar is a retired Foreign Service officer whose last assignment was as senior adviser in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. Now an international affairs consultant, he has been working part-time at the Foreign Service Institute to prepare the Intergovernmental Policy Seminar.



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Speaking Truth to Power

Superpower Illusions: How Myths and False Ideologies Led America Astray — and How to Return to Reality

Jack F. Matlock Jr., Yale University Press, 2010, \$30, hardcover, 344 pages.

REVIEWED BY
ERNEST H. LATHAM JR.

Ambassador Jack Matlock brings to his chosen theme, American foreign policy errors of the past 20 years, unparalleled experience and insight gained from four Foreign Service tours in Moscow — the last as ambassador

from 1987 to 1991 — as well as his work on Soviet affairs back in Washington. He also participated in 14 of the 15 U.S.-Soviet summits between 1972 and 1991.

The book is divided into three sections. The first is titled “Getting History Right,” which Matlock emphatically believes America has not done. He supports his belief by explicating four American myths and a half-truth. The myths center around the idea that America outgunned the Soviet Union and caused its collapse, while the half-truth is that America won the Cold War — to which the author replies that everyone won.

Countering the myths, Matlock identifies two realities that helped Mikhail Gorbachev modify Soviet be-

havior: President Ronald Reagan’s negotiating from a position of strength and not insisting on “regime change.” The author admires Reagan, who knew what he didn’t know, asked questions and learned from others’ expertise and experience.

The second section is bluntly called “Missing the Point: Sixteen Misdirected Years,” a wasted period characterized by Bill Clinton’s and George W. Bush’s shared “unipolar delusion.” Matlock faults Clinton for his indifference to foreign policy and disarmament, which led him (despite George Kennan’s advice) to disregard Russian sensitivities about NATO’s eastward creep, among other mistakes.

If Matlock finds the Clinton administration lackluster, he views the George



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W. Bush administration as virtually criminal for ignoring repeated warnings of an impending attack by al-Qaeda. After 9/11, President Bush was right to invade Afghanistan, but by no means justified in his methods. Matlock speculates that Bush “had been thinking of invading Iraq from his first Cabinet meeting.”

The third section, “The Tasks Ahead,” is the shortest, but arguably the most important. In it Matlock describes an agenda compatible with President Barack Obama’s mandate for change. Admittedly, all the items will be difficult, starting with straightening out the multidimensional financial crisis. Then we must refine the tools used to implement foreign policy, reduce the size of the armed forces, expand

Eschewing jargon and cant, Matlock has given us a book accessible to anyone seeking information on recent U.S. foreign policy.

and better utilize the State Department and, in place of arrogance, consult and share decisions with our allies.

Next, we should extricate ourselves

from Middle Eastern wars, by persuading the Palestinians to elect and support honest politicians and convincing the Israelis that time is running against them. The spread of nuclear weapons and ancillary worries about Iran, Pakistan and North Korea will also remain on the agenda, of course.

Superpower Illusions also contains essays on topics ranging from the nature of empire to the pernicious influence of neoconservatives, as well as capsule descriptions of such intellectuals as Francis Fukuyama and Sam Huntington. All are delivered in crisp, fluent prose, which can be pungent when necessary. Eschewing jargon and cant, Matlock has given us a book accessible to anyone seeking information on recent U.S. foreign policy.



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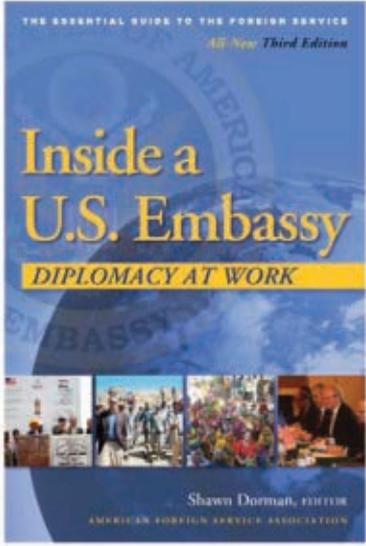
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To be sure, not all the book's insights are original; William Pfaff and Peter Beinart, among others, have expressed similar concerns. But what sets Matlock apart and raises him to the heights of a George Kennan is the fact that he is not just an external observer. His is the view of a practitioner who knew the players and was in the game.

Alas, like Kennan, Matlock's wisdom may also be ignored or misunderstood — the customary fate of Cassandras. Rudyard Kipling's poem "Recessional," which similarly preached modesty and restraint to a world power and probably cost him the poet laureateship of England, comes to mind:

*"If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
 Wild tongues that have not Thee
 in awe —*

*Such boasting as the Gentiles use,
 Or lesser breeds without the law —
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget, lest we forget.*

Ernest H. Latham Jr. is a retired Foreign Service officer who served in Beirut, Jeddah, Vienna, Nicosia, Berlin, Bucharest, Athens and Washington. He lives in Washington, D.C.

What Makes a Democracy?

India, Pakistan and Democracy: Solving the Puzzle of Divergent Paths

Philip Oldenburg, Routledge, 2010, \$39.95, paperback, 273 pages.

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA LEE SHARPE

Looking for case studies to illustrate the complications of democracy-building? The book you need is Philip Ol-

denburg's *India, Pakistan and Democracy: Solving the Puzzle of Divergent Paths*, a tightly-argued, richly-detailed, cool-headed and well-grounded study by a respected South Asia hand. Its bibliography alone is worth the price of admission.

Modern India and a brand new, largely Muslim Pakistan were born when England terminated its shape-shifting, three-century-old mercantile/colonial/imperial enterprise in South Asia. The two countries shared much at independence. They still do, but their political trajectories have been dramatically different.

Neither initially rejected the legal system, civil service or military traditions that evolved under British rule. English continues to be the language of their governing elites, and both are afflicted with caste or caste-like social divisions, vast income disparities and culturally homogenous subdivisions, analogous to countries in other parts of the world. Indians and Pakistanis also share food, dress and gesture, plus genes, thanks to millennia of interaction before the latest boundary-drawing.

Neat as it would be to cite a Muslim-Hindu divide to account for divergent degrees of democratization, India contains the world's third-largest Muslim population, and Islam as practiced in Pakistan is hardly homogenous. But a superficial contrast between the two societies masks a structural similarity: a seething diversity of religious inclination in both countries.

Probing on a more subtle level, Oldenburg speculates that Pakistan's lag in democratization may reside, at least partly, in the fact that India could build on an existing bureaucracy and army, while Pakistan had to build institutions almost from scratch. The nation did inherit civil service and military



personnel from the well-established, colonial cadres. However, something even more important was lacking: a sufficiency of well-seasoned politicians.

As Oldenburg points out, the Indian National Congress had evolved into an all-India mass movement with leadership depth well before becoming the ruling party of independent India under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Civilian politicians, not the military nor the unelected bureaucracy, dominated India from its very beginning.

By contrast, not only did Pakistan's Muslim League lack the long history of the Congress, but its leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah opted to become president instead of assuming the challenges of parliamentary leadership. Democracy has played second fiddle to generals and bureaucrats ever since; military coups are all but institutionalized in Pakistan.

Fear of India, understandable but often exaggerated, also enhanced the power of the military in Pakistan. One solution to this longstanding "security situation" was to seek an alliance with the United States. The U.S., alarmed by India's closeness to Cold War Moscow, happily sealed the deal, with consequences that should be noted carefully by U.S. policymakers seeking to strengthen Pakistan's democracy today.

As Oldenburg writes, although Washington has supported Islamabad's efforts to institutionalize democracy, those efforts do not come close to matching the support the military has received. And this contradictory policy continues.

In 1971, both India and Pakistan faced existential crises. Pakistan's eastern wing rebelled and became Bangladesh. The army was humiliated, but

*Civilian politicians,
not the military nor the
unelected bureaucracy,
dominated India
from day one.*

within a few years General Zia-ul-Haq had deposed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. By contrast, after suffering through two years of Indira Gandhi's imperious emergency rule, Indian voters tossed her out of office. They had

alternatives.

In short, as other political analysts have also noted, founding political choices have consequences. Accordingly, Oldenburg sees little prospect of convergence between India and Pakistan in the foreseeable future.

Meanwhile, the message to U.S. policymakers is this: there are no quick and easy recipes for cooking up democracy. ■

Patricia Lee Sharpe was an FSO with the U.S. Information Agency (and then State) from 1978 to 2001. A longer version of this review appeared on WhirledView, the world politics, public diplomacy and national security blog she co-writes with former FSO Patricia H. Kushlis (<http://whirledview.typepad.com>).

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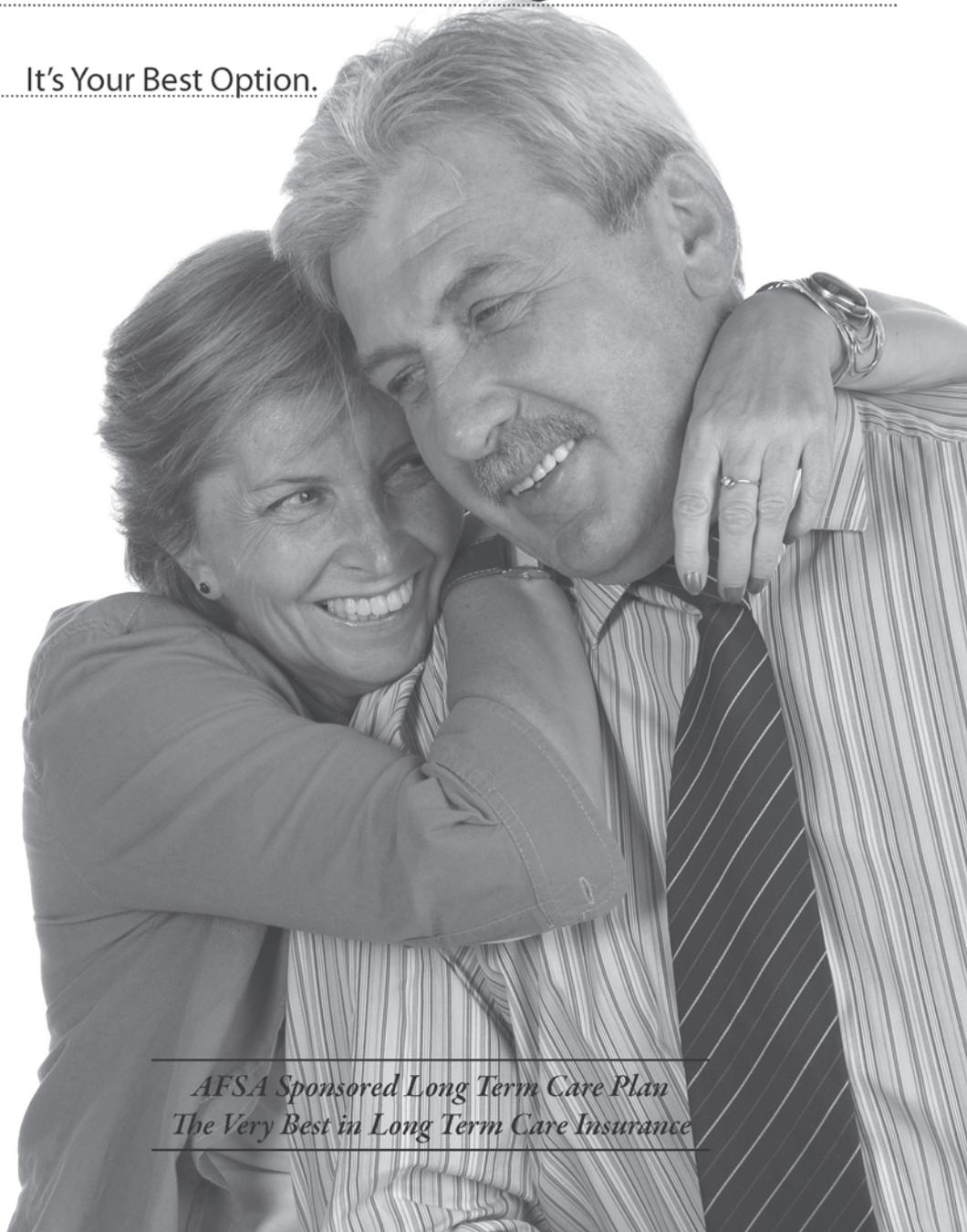
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AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • January 2011

Ambassador Jack Matlock Jr. Discusses Distortions of Cold War History

BY ASGEIR SIGFUSSON, MARKETING AND OUTREACH MANAGER

“When the Soviet Union collapsed, it was entirely because of internal pressure, not U.S. pressure.”

With that provocative statement, Ambassador Jack F. Matlock Jr. began the discussion of his new book, *Superpower Illusions: How Myths and False Ideologies Led America Astray — and How to Return to Reality*, during an appearance at AFSA headquarters on Nov. 4.

Amb. Matlock, currently an adjunct professor at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs, was in Washington to participate in the fifth event in AFSA’s new Book Notes series.

Before an audience of 60 or so history enthusiasts, Matlock presented his view of the end of the Cold War and the down-



Amb. Jack Matlock Jr. makes the case that Cold War history has been distorted in his Nov. 4 presentation at AFSA headquarters as part of the Book Notes lecture series.

fall of the Soviet Union, which he contends are not the same thing at all. In fact, according to Matlock, the Cold War ended well before the disintegration of the USSR, brought on by the

Continued on page 54

A Q&A with OPM Director John Berry

BY FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL STAFF

President Barack Obama appointed John Berry as director of the Office of Personnel Management in January 2009.

Last fall, Berry took time to answer some of AFSA’s questions about his ideas for working with Foreign Service employees.

Q: You have established a welcome tone by recognizing the sacrifices that civilian employees make for our country. Have you had opportunities to interact with members of the Foreign Service to gain a deeper appreciation for the unique challenges and dangers they face?

A: I have tried to set a different tone, and I’m glad to hear it’s resonating. We focus on the Civil Service, since that’s the OPM director’s job, but everything I say about the passion and sacrifice of federal workers applies to the Foreign Service as well.

Throughout my career in government, I’ve had the pleasure of interacting with Foreign Service members. This includes the 10 years that I served as Representative Steny Hoyer’s legislative director, my years as assistant secretary of the Interior for policy, management and budget, and other jobs. In those interactions, I’ve been extremely impressed with the dedication, the professionalism, the breadth of knowledge and the instincts they bring to the job. It’s hard to overstate the difficulty or the importance of the work they do each day for our country.

There’s no doubt that Foreign Service members and other federal civilians working in violent areas abroad face unique challenges and dangers and deserve to be compensated fairly. That’s why OPM is trying to level the playing field among civil-

Continued on page 55

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



State Department Unveils New Plaques

The Bureau of Human Resources unveiled two new plaques honoring those who have lost their lives overseas at the State Department Awards Ceremony on Nov. 3, 2010.

A Locally Employed Staff plaque honors 19 individuals from countries as diverse as Saudi Arabia, Haiti and Pakistan, who lost their lives in the line of duty due to terrorism, in an act of heroism or in other compelling circumstances while serving the foreign affairs agencies. In honoring their sacrifice, the State Department testifies to the importance of locally employed staff in the United States' ability to conduct diplomacy.

An Eligible Family Member plaque remembers those who have lost their lives due to terrorism, in an act of heroism or in other compelling circumstances while accompanying an employee serving overseas with a foreign affairs agency. In honoring the five individuals who lost their lives in Pakistan, Kenya and Haiti to terrorism, murder and natural disaster, we are reminded of the sacrifices made by our family members.

Both plaques, which cover the period from 1999 to the present, will be affixed to the wall in the C Street entrance of the department near AFSA's Memorial Plaques honoring our fallen Foreign Service officers.

Dear AFSA Readers,

I've only been *AFSA News* editor for a few months, but I've had a great time getting to know our readers and finding out what issues matter most to you. *AFSA News* has always been about that — making sure you have the information you need and want about what's going on in the Foreign Service. My goal for this year, though, is to bring your voices to the forefront of the discussion. You're the ones dealing with Foreign Service life, after all.

That's why I'm looking for new writers who can share their perspective, advice and, most importantly, their stories about Foreign Service issues. These can be serious or hilarious tales that relate to topics that you all know about better than most. Things like corridor reputation, raising third-culture kids, being a Third-Culture Kid, all that interminable waiting (for flag day, bid lists, UAB...), and degrees of separation among FS members — all would make for great topics.

You can write about your culture clashes as Melanie Harris Higgins did in the October 2010 issue, or you can discuss what it's like to be an EFM when your spouse is on an unaccompanied tour. Retirees can share how they decided where or when to retire.

Columns should be about 600-700 words long and written in your own voice, as if you're talking to a friend (not writing a cable). There should be a point to the story — i.e., a lesson learned, a decision made, an obstacle overcome ... any kind of denouement to satisfy your narrative arc.

Another new feature in the works for *AFSA News* is "Photos from the Field." I'd like to invite any amateur photographers out there to submit a great shot they've taken while at post, along with a short caption. One photo will be featured in each issue of *AFSA News*.

Please get in touch with me at mckeeper@afsa.org or (202) 338-4045, ext. 516, if you're interested in writing or if you have any suggestions as to what we can provide you within these blue pages this year. I look forward to hearing from you. Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Amy

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As Foreign Service members, we take justifiable pride both in serving our nation and in belonging to an elite group of talented and professional people. We seek to uphold the highest standards of integrity, productivity and patriotism throughout the Foreign Service. If colleagues do not measure up to the highest standards, we want them gone.

In this vein, I occasionally hear from employees who allege that AFSA impedes the proper purging of bad employees from the Service. I would like to set the record straight.

AFSA shares a common desire not only to maintain high standards, but to elevate them. We are, however, committed to obliging the foreign affairs agencies to maintain the same high standards that they expect from their employees. Our role is to ensure that employees are treated fairly, that allegations are backed by evidence, and that decisions and actions are balanced and based on consideration of all factors required by law or regulation. While many of our clients have erred, many have done so unwittingly; some have simply found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. Others have made mistakes due to compelling personal reasons or a medical problem, such as alcoholism, depression or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. These are often one-off events and should be addressed with those factors in mind.

We also push to ensure that the processes used are appropriate to the concern — that disciplinary matters are treated through disciplinary procedures, security through security procedures and performance issues through performance assessment processes. There is a tendency for the department to lock onto a certain desired outcome and improperly mix and match processes, such as using the security clearance or low-ranking system to purge the agency of employees when there is insufficient evidence to separate them for cause. On occasion, employees accused of an act of misfeasance receive no discipline but instead face clearance revocation or low-ranking simply because those processes require less evidence. If an employee is to be fired, suspended without pay or have a clearance suspended, we want to ensure that due process has been followed.

We are guided by a number of principles, particularly those laid out in Titles 5 and 22 of the U.S. Code. Under Title 5, agencies may not take adverse actions without meeting a

Employees are often unaware
of their rights or of the seriousness of
their situation until after the process
has turned against them.

burden of proof to establish the facts, identify a nexus between the facts and the efficiency of the Service, consider mitigating factors, and apply a penalty proportionate to the alleged infraction. They may not act arbitrarily or capriciously, or in violation of any law; they must follow their own rules; and they may not discriminate against employees based on age, sex, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability, among other things. Title 22 includes the Foreign Service Act, and contains additional rules specific to the Foreign Service.

Many issues handled by AFSA's Labor Management staff involve an agency action contrary to the agency's own rules, one which fails to meet the burdens of proof described above, or which appears disproportionate to the issue of concern.

It is important to understand that administrative actions such as disciplining an employee, revoking a security clearance, or recommending an employee for selection out are not constrained by the same safeguards that protect Americans from improper actions in a judicial setting. Cases can be decided by officials invested in a particular outcome. Processes are not always transparent, subject to case-level oversight, or even fully recorded. An employee is seen as guilty until proven innocent, with the burden of proof usually placed on him or her. Employees are often unaware of their rights or of the seriousness of their situation until after the process has turned against them, when AFSA's ability to help has been diminished.

With regard to performance, until this year when an agreement between AFSA and State lowered the quota to 2 percent, the State promotion boards had to meet an arbitrary 5-percent quota of low rankings. Many perfectly satisfactory employees were low-ranked, facing possible selection out, solely because the boards had to fill that quota. In some cases, alleged poor performance turns out to be a failure by the agency to provide training or resources or an attempt to blame a lower-ranking employee for a superior's mistakes.

Like all FS members, we want to see the Foreign Service be the best it can be, and we have no sympathy for those who abuse their positions. But AFSA wants to ensure that adverse actions are reserved for those who deserve them, and that good or innocent employees are not unfairly included in that category. □

What's Ahead in 2011

The midterm elections are now behind us and the leadership changes for both the majority and the minority in the House of Representatives are now settled. I think it is time for a little prognostication and constituency-sounding. Your comments on the following ideas are solicited.

I see a period of serious fiscal restraint ahead. For an institution like the State Department, which has little in the way of domestic constituency other than FS retirees, it will be an especially difficult period. The serious commitment of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and the White House to strengthening our diplomacy and reinvigorating the Foreign Service with new officers and enhanced training will be in peril. With little in the way of discretionary spending to attack, the State and USAID budgets will be especially vulnerable.

Dramatically compounding the problem are the funding requirements for our presence in Iraq after the expected end of our formal military engagement next year. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security is being called on to form what amounts to a mini-Army and Air Force to protect our State Department personnel. The cost will be in the billions, and while I doubt Congress would deny "force protection" for our diplomats, they will play the old fungibility game and bleed the necessary appropriations out of other parts of the State

budget. Promising targets for the Hill carving knife are the intake of new officers and training.

From the retiree perspective, I don't see a serious threat to our pension benefits; tinkering with the system would affect our elected representatives. Many Foreign Service retirees don't have Social Security benefits. But those who do, increasingly the younger ones, should be concerned about the prospect of means testing, and, in most cases, a reduction in payments. Similarly, an effort by the new Congress to apply the brake on the increasing costs of Medicare entitlements could result in a means-testing reduction of benefits for upper-income retirees.

Defending our earned pension and health care benefits will remain our number-one retiree objective. Lifting the cap on hours and pay for When Actually Employed employees is a close second. A more liberal, transparent and creative use of our retiree talent would go a long way to relieving the lack of mid-level officers in the department and help avert proposals for a new mid-level entry program into the Foreign Service. In contrast to such a program, intelligent use of the WAE mechanism can save money, provide critical mentoring for new entry-level officers and foster professionalism in the Foreign Service. □



Thursday Luncheon Group VP Celebrates 15th Anniversary at State

BY AMY MCKEEVER

It was in 1996, his first year of graduate school at Southern University, when Stacy Williams met Russell Taylor.

"If you're interested in an exciting career, the State Department is where you should be," Taylor, a recruiter visiting the Baton Rouge, La., campus, told Williams.

Williams had never given much thought to the State Department. The plan had been to become a lawyer. Plus, working overseas had always seemed to him to be the military's domain. The idea of embassies and diplomats intrigued Williams, though, and so he took Taylor's advice to apply for an internship.

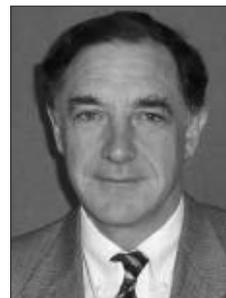


Stacy Williams, vice president of the Thursday Luncheon Group and executive secretary in the Office of the Haiti Special Coordinator, celebrates his 15th anniversary of joining State as an AFSA/TLG intern this year.

Now executive secretary in the Office of the Haiti Special Coordinator and vice president of the Thursday Luncheon Group, Williams knows a thing or two about international affairs. And this year he celebrates his 15th anniversary of working for the Department of State, starting first as an AFSA-TLG intern.

Williams came to Washington, D.C., excited to learn about the Foreign Service through his placement in Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott's office, where he assisted the speechwriter. But beyond his job duties, Williams learned what it was like to work in Washington, which seemed to the Shreveport, La., native like the center of the world.

V.P. VOICE: FCS ■ BY KEITH CURTIS



The Good and the Bad

“There was always a Foreign Service or Civil Service person inviting me to lunch, to church, to dinner and, as an intern, you like that attention you’re getting,” he recalls.

That initial positive experience as an AFSA/TLG intern led Williams further down the path that would eventually become his career. The following summer he interned at the embassy in Zambia, returning to Washington in the fall to serve in the Office of the Inspector General as a Presidential Management Intern.

That two-year program gave Williams a breadth of experience. He helped coordinate the U.S. and international response to Y2K, and he studied the security procedures of embassies worldwide. The latter job permitted him to travel the world, which is what he describes as “the most valuable piece to this whole thing.” At the conclusion of his fellowship, however, he decided to continue in the Civil Service rather than join the Foreign Service.

“I had a passion for being here in Washington and being able to travel the world and come back,” he said.

Williams’ passion has never waned. During the past year, as he worked on humanitarian response and reconstruction issues following the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti, Williams says that CNN’s depiction of life on the ground gave him the inspiration and motivation to come in and work longer hours.

Working as Haiti policy adviser “was a very valuable, rewarding experience,” he says. “And that really gets to the heart of what public service is.”

Throughout his experiences, Williams never lost sight of what got him this far in Washington. Almost immediately after concluding his internship 15 years ago, Williams took on the volunteer role as AFSA/TLG internship coordinator that he continues to fulfill today.

“And to me that’s what it’s all about,” he said. “How can you not only gain from an experience but also invest in it later and empower it and expand it and encourage other people to see the value of the program?” □

As the old joke goes: Do you want the good news or the bad news first? The answer: Tell me the good news first; the bad news will refuse to leave. We have one of the best director generals we have ever had in Suresh Kumar, the first true international businessman (which should be a basic requirement of the position). We have the best deputy DG we have ever had, Chuck Ford (though, of course, there’s still time for him to mess up). And we have a president who, with Commerce Secretary Gary Locke’s backing, is requesting the largest budget increase in our history via the National Export Initiative.

The bad news was Nov. 2 — Election Day. Coming into town soon are possibly the biggest group of budget cutters we have ever seen. With a little luck, the lame duck session will pass our NEI funding before they get here. But don’t hold your breath; we may be on a continuing resolution for the rest of the year. That would be bleak, indeed. Our hope is that both sides of the aisle understand the NEI’s importance to the economy.

This might be the time for each of us to think of how to remind incoming members of Congress that the best way to help our economy grow is through exports. I know that is what AFSA will be doing. I had a meeting in November with Representative Frank Wolf, R-Va., who was a great help to us last year and now appears poised to become the chair of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science in the House of Representatives. Many of our members in Northern Virginia may well have him as their representative. Those in Maryland have Senator Barbara Mikulski, chair of the Senate’s Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science.

Dare I ask what happens if the bad news refuses to leave? Well, you can speculate for yourselves — and I encourage you to let me know what you envision. We might just thin down and focus on 50 top-priority markets — consoled that at least we can have the resources to get the job done there. But that reminds us of the downward spiral that got us where we are in the first place.

We might seriously consider a list of all the things that we are not going to do — maybe market research (the Internet does it) or Invest in America (nice, but it has been an add-on in the last three years). Or maybe we charge more for everything. Or . . . no, I am not going to go there yet, but they do say that history repeats itself. We do have to be thinking hard and preparing for tough decisions. We need to know where you think AFSA should position itself on these issues and what direction FCS should take. Please get in touch at Keith.Curtis@mail.doc.gov. □

This might be the time for each of us to think of how to remind incoming members of Congress that the best way to help our economy grow is through exports.

Matlock • Continued from page 49

new policies of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), as well as Gorbachev's public statements renouncing the bulk of Marxist ideology, signaled the Cold War's end. It was only later, faced with significant internal dissension and the inability of the Communist Party to maintain control, that the Soviet Union fell apart.

Matlock argued forcefully for ratification of the New START treaty, suggesting that political pressures and posturing are the only reasons for its delay.

Matlock suggests that the U.S. role in defeating communism was smaller than conventional wisdom would have us believe. In fact, he says, it was never U.S. policy to bring down the Soviet Union. On the contrary, the U.S. government was worried about the possible consequences of the USSR's disintegration: Twelve new nuclear pow-

ers, the possible rise of dangerous nationalism, and the strong likelihood of the new states reverting to authoritarian rule. Matlock points to President George H.W. Bush's famous 1991 "Chicken Kiev" speech in the Ukraine, where he warned that freedom and independence were not the same thing.

In Matlock's view, the mistaken idea that the Soviet Union's demise meant that the U.S. had "won" the Cold War and was therefore the world's sole, undisputed superpower has led to seriously flawed foreign policy approaches in Washington during the past two decades.

During the extensive question-and-answer session, Matlock fielded a variety of questions from the audience. Many focused on current U.S.-Russian relations, in particular the fate of the New START Treaty in Congress. Matlock argued forcefully for ratification of the treaty, suggesting that political pressures and posturing are the only reasons for its delay. He believes that President Ronald Reagan would be strongly in favor of the treaty, which follows a tradition his administration embraced in the 1980s and adheres to his maxim, "trust but verify."

When asked about the situation in Russia today, Matlock agreed that there are many lingering problems. Democ-

racy is a fairly new idea to Russians, he said, and they don't always know what to do with it. Democratic institutions did not exist in 1991, and simply holding elections does not mean democracy has triumphed. The average Russian, however, has a much better life today than during Soviet times, with greater freedom of expression and religion.

Pressed on the issue of free speech by an audience member, Matlock condemned the disturbing murders of journalists and human rights activists in Russia. While suggesting that organized crime has diminished since its peak in the 1990s, having since then been largely absorbed into the bureaucracy, Matlock said that only external condemnations and involvement by such bodies as the European Court of Justice could help stem this tragic trend.

Finally, Matlock was asked about the status of Ukraine and Georgia, and what U.S. diplomatic strategy toward the two countries should be. Matlock warned against pressing for NATO membership for either, because doing so would adversely affect relations with Russia. Moreover, neither state would make a strong U.S. ally due to internal problems. He also suggested that the diaspora was much more in favor of NATO membership than the average Ukrainian.

Amb. Matlock, who served four times in the Soviet Union during his Foreign Service career, including four years as ambassador, revealed that his original choice for the book's title was *Distorting History*. Only opposition from his publisher persuaded him to change to the current wording. It is clear from his discussion, however, that Amb. Matlock's original title would have been very apt.

The Book Notes program is made possible by tax-deductible donations to AFSA's 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the Fund for American Diplomacy. This event, like other AFSA events, is available for online viewing at <http://forum-network.org/partner/american-foreign-service-association>. □



AMY MCKEEVER

Amb. Jack Matlock (right) talks with retired FSO and colleague Kempton Jenkins (center) and AFSA Director of Communications Tom Switzer (left) before diving into his lecture on Cold War history.

OPM Dir. Berry • Continued from page 49

ians from different agencies working in zones of armed conflict.

Q: Do you see a need for OPM to have a better understanding of the Foreign Service's culture?

A: Yes. I admire the traditions and esprit de corps of the Foreign Service. Your system and culture provide many useful contrasts with the Civil Service system. We've cast a wide net as we've looked for new ideas to revitalize our work force, and the Foreign Service system has influenced our thinking. Foreign Service members and their families set a sterling example of the dedication and commitment we're looking for.

Q: Do you have regular conversations with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Deputy Secretary Jack Lew or other senior management officials at State and USAID?

A: Secretary Clinton and I worked together on extending benefits to domestic partners of Foreign Service members and the Civil Service as well. I look forward to continuing the conversation about improving our personnel policies and ensuring that we're providing the benefits that both Foreign Service and Civil Service workers want and need.

Jack Lew is a friend, and we talk from time to time. I'm thrilled and happy for him for his appointment to the Office of Management and Budget. I know he will be deeply missed at State, and I look forward to working with his successor. I also meet regularly with Director General Nancy Powell and her deputies and interact with Under Secretary of State Pat Kennedy.

Q: Would you find it useful when you travel overseas to have opportunities to sit down with Foreign Service employees to hear from them directly about the circumstances and challenges they face? Or have you already done that?

A: Yes, I would love to sit down with FS members at post, although I haven't had the pleasure to do so yet. I've visited federal workers around the country



OPM Director John Berry poses with members of a Canadian delegation to Washington, D.C. on Nov. 9, 2010.

to learn how OPM can better serve them, and I'd like to do the same with government workers abroad. That's the best way to learn more about the obstacles they face and the resources they need to carry out their mission on behalf of the American people.

Q: Do you think that the Foreign Service rank-in-person system might be a model for some or all of the Civil Service or other parts of the federal work force? If so, what are the main reasons? If not, why not?

A: We looked at your rank-in-person system, and it has many positive qualities. However, we may not have the need for such a system governmentwide, and we note it takes a lot of senior staff time to run that system. While it enhances a smaller work force with similar functions at numerous locations worldwide, like the Foreign Service, it would be very difficult and expensive to apply to the full two-million-person Civil Service.

Q: What are your feelings about current benefits for paid maternity and paternity leave for federal employees? The Foreign Service is particularly interested in this, as are many junior-level federal employees, because they have not accrued much annual or sick leave and can't afford Leave without Pay under the Family Medical Leave Act. Currently, employees must use annual and sick leave to cover maternity leave because an expectant mother who resides in the developing

world must leave post six weeks before her due date and cannot return until six weeks afterward.

A: The Obama administration supports paid maternity and paternity leave. Supporting families strengthens our communities and our nation. It's also good business. Many leading private-sector employers provide this benefit because it helps them keep some of their best workers.

While we don't have separate parental leave, we do have other options. In addition to sick leave, which can build up over the years, most employees also earn 13 to 26 personal and vacation days each year, and they may carry up to six weeks of annual leave into the next year.

We also have flexible work schedules and telework options. While these are not best for the first few weeks when a newborn requires round-the-clock attention, they can help a new parent return to the work force sooner and still spend a lot of time with their babies.

I am concerned for the new employees who do not have the opportunity to accrue sufficient leave to cover those first few weeks — the time they need to be the best new parents they can be. There are informal leave donation programs that help new employees in this situation. There have also been past explorations of short-term disability insurance that employees would pay for that could be used to address this circumstance.

Q: As you know, the Civil Service and Foreign Service have separate retirement systems that are governed by USC Titles 5 and 22, respectively. The systems conform in large part, but there are differences that reflect the special nature of the Foreign Service; for example, in salary limitations on re-employed annuitants. How does OPM take into consideration these differences when formulating regulations and legislative proposals?

Continued on page 62

2010-2011 AFSA Financial Aid Scholars

A FSA is awarding \$145,000 in undergraduate need-based scholarships in the 2010-2011 academic year to 71 children of Foreign Service employees. In addition to the AFSA Financial Aid Scholarships, AFSA administers the DACOR Bacon House Scholarships and also awards scholarships in other organizations' names, such as the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide and Public Members Association of the Foreign Service. These groups, along with the past and present individual donors, provide valuable support to the scholarship program.

AFSA also provided \$35,700 in Academic and Art Merit Awards to 26 students in May 2010. These one-time-only awards reward the academic and art accomplishments of Foreign Service high school seniors. The winners of the AFSA Merit Awards were recognized in the July-August issue of the *Foreign Service Journal*. In all, AFSA has provided aid to 99 students totaling \$180,700 during the current school year.

Students who submitted photos are listed below in alphabetical order. Each listing includes the name of the recipient's mother and father, the university the student

Financial Aid Scholarship Recipients



Helene Andang — Daughter of Catherine and Guy Andang. Recipient of the Betty Carp Memorial Scholarship and the Evelyn K. and Horace J. Nickels Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending John Carroll University.



Paul Armstrong — Son of Alina and John Armstrong. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of St. Thomas.



Lovinda Badinga — Daughter of Leslie-Ann Burnette-Badinga. Recipient of the Louis C. Boochever Memorial Scholarship, the Ernest V. Siracusa Memorial Scholarship, the Louise Holscher Memorial Scholarship and the Julius C. Holmes Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending California State University—East Bay.



Erika Barnes — Daughter of Kiyomi and William Barnes. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Eastern Washington University.



Jonathan Christensen — Son of Margie and Casey Christensen. Recipient of the Gertrude Stewart Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Brigham Young University.



Nicholas Chung — Son of Yongi and Michael Chung. Recipient of the Lowell C. Pinkerton Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of Washington.



Christine Chung — Daughter of Yongi and Michael Chung. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the University of Wisconsin—Madison.



Andrew Curry — Son of Katherine Farrell and Mark Curry. Recipient of the George and Mattie Newman Scholarship. He is currently attending Indiana University.



Fiona Davidson — Daughter of Mary Kate and Robert Davidson. Recipient of the Cameron C. Turner Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the National University of Ireland at Galway.

attends, and the name of the scholarship(s) the student is receiving. Students who did not provide photos are listed subsequently.

It's not too late to apply for an AFSA Financial Aid Scholarship or even a Merit Award. Applications for the 2011-2012 school year are being accepted until Feb. 6. Financial Aid Scholarships range from \$1,500 to \$4,000.

To be eligible for an AFSA Financial Aid Scholarship, students must be tax dependents of Foreign Service employees, take at least 12 credits a semester, maintain at least a cumulative 2.0 grade point average, attend an ac-

credited two- or four-year college/university in the U.S. or overseas, and show need by completing the College Scholarship Service PROFILE. (Unfortunately, grandchildren of Foreign Service employees are not eligible for the program.)

Visit www.afsa.org/scholar/ for complete program details and to download an application. If you have any questions or are interested in establishing a scholarship in your name, contact Lori Dec, AFSA Scholarship Director at (202) 944-5504 or 1 (800) 704-2372, ext. 504, or dec@afsa.org.



Elise Bliss — Daughter of Kristin and Mark Bliss. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Old Dominion University.



Russell Charles — Son of Rose and Cleveland Charles. Recipient of the Wilbur J. Carr Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the College of the Atlantic.



Shandani Charles — Daughter of Rose and Cleveland Charles. Recipient of the Prabhi G. Kavalier Memorial Scholarship, the Everett K. and Clara C. Melby Memorial Scholarship, the Elizabeth N. Landeau Memorial Scholarship and the Naomi Pekmezian Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Saint Joseph's College of Maine.



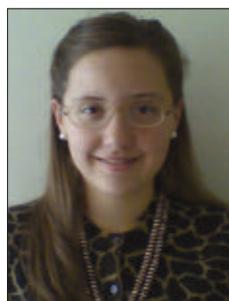
Zachary Charles — Son of Rose and Cleveland Charles. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of Pennsylvania.



Anthony Charles — Son of Rose and Cleveland Charles. Recipient of the George and Mattie Newman Scholarship, the James Bolard More Memorial Scholarship and the Jefferson Patterson Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of Virginia.



Alexandra Dubel — Daughter of Janice and Jefferson Dubel. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Scholarship, the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Scholarship, the Albert E. Carter Memorial Scholarship and the David K. E. Bruce Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Florida State University.



Abigail Einhorn — Daughter of Joy and Norman Einhorn. Recipient of the Barbara Bell Black Memorial Scholarship, the Harry A. Havens Memorial Scholarship, the Edward T. Wailes Memorial Scholarship and the Dalton V. Killion Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Purdue University.



Elizabeth Einhorn — Daughter of Joy and Norman Einhorn. Recipient of the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Scholarship, the David D. Newsom Memorial Scholarship and the Gertrude Stewart Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the University of Notre Dame.



Alexandra Einhorn — Daughter of Joy and Norman Einhorn. Recipient of the Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Washington University in St. Louis.



Emma Friedheim — Daughter of Julia Findlay and Daniel Friedheim Sr. Recipient of the John Campbell White Scholarship, the William Leonhart Memorial Scholarship and the Robert E. and Florence L. Macaulay Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the University of Virginia.

Financial Aid Scholarship Recipients



Daniel Friedheim — Son of Julia Findlay and Daniel Friedheim Sr. Recipient of the Gertrude Stewart Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of Virginia.



Daniel Fritz — Son of Jennifer Grise and Karl Fritz. Recipient of the Betty Carp Memorial Scholarship, the Howard Fyfe Memorial Scholarship, the Arthur B. Emmons Memorial Scholarship and the Suzanne Marie Collins Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Bucknell University.



Evan Fritz — Son of Jennifer Grise and Karl Fritz. Recipient of the George and Mattie Newman Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of Mary Washington.



Lara Garcia — Daughter of Kathleen and Rudolph Garcia. Recipient of the John M. and Anna B. Steeves Memorial Scholarship and the Janet K. and Charles C. Stelle Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Pikes Peak Community College.



Trevor Gilbert — Son of Terri and Jeffrey Gilbert. Recipient of the Rose Marie Asch Memorial Scholarship and the Selden Chapin Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Northern Virginia Community College.



Taylor Harley — Daughter of Caroline E. Harley. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Northeastern University.



Peter Harmon — Son of Rana Oktay and William Harmon III. Recipient of the George and Mattie Newman Scholarship and the Betty Carp Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending James Madison University.



Fiona Hogan — Daughter of Abby and James Hogan (deceased). Recipient of the AFSA Foreign Service Retirees Association of Florida Scholarship and the Martin G. Patterson Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the University of Florida.



Kiernan Hogan — Son of Abby and James Hogan (deceased). Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of Portland.



Katherine Holtrop — Daughter of Julie and Daniel Holtrop. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Calvin College.



Alexandra Kula — Daughter of Toni Lynn Kula. Recipient of the Philip C. Habib Memorial Scholarship and the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide Scholarship. She is currently attending American University.



Ashley Kula — Daughter of Toni Lynn Kula. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending American University.



Kelsey Landes — Daughter of Lisa and David Landes. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Eastern Mennonite University.



Brandt Lanzet — Son of Teresa and William Lanzet. Recipient of the Clarke Winship Slade Memorial Scholarship, the George Shultz Scholarship and the William P. and Adele Langston Rogers Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Virginia Tech.



Camila Liotti — Daughter of Akimi and David Rovinsky. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Virginia Thurgood Bingham Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Pennsylvania State University.



Jordan Gilbert — Son of Terri and Jeffrey Gilbert. Recipient of the William Leonhart Memorial Scholarship and the Francesca Bufano Lapinski Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Northern Virginia Community College.



Elise Guice — Daughter of Marie and Stephen Guice. Recipient of the Public Members of the Foreign Service Scholarship. She is currently attending Shepherd University.



John Guice — Son of Marie and Stephen Guice. Recipient of the Everett K. and Clara C. Melby Memorial Scholarship and the Stella Panagoulis Stutz Scholarship. He is currently attending Shepherd University.



Norman Guice — Son of Marie and Stephen Guice. Recipient of the Sheldon Whitehouse Memorial Scholarship, the John C. Whitehead Scholarship and the Clare H. Timberlake Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Shepherd University.



Therese Guice — Daughter of Marie and Stephen Guice. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Shepherd University.



Yun-A Johnson — Daughter of Mary and Michael Johnson. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Harriet P. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending American University.



Janelle Jorgensen — Daughter of Susan and Mark Jorgensen. Recipient of the Oliver Bishop Harriman Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Patrick Keaveny — Son of Martha and Michael Keaveny. Recipient of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide Scholarship. He is currently attending Creighton University.



Jeremy Keaveny — Son of Martha and Michael Keaveny. Recipient of the Charles B. Hosmer Memorial Scholarship, the Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Scholarship, the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Scholarship and the AAFSW Scholarship. He is currently attending Fordham University.



Nova Kennett — Daughter of Margaret and Peter Kennett. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Virginia Thurgood Bingham Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the University of New Mexico.



Ayele McCarthy — Son of Patricia M. McCarthy. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Scholarship and the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Prince George's Community College.



Patrick McGuire — Son of Suzanne and John McGuire. Recipient of the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Scholarship, the Robert and Evelyn Curtis Memorial Scholarship and the Ambassador Rozanne L. (Roz) Ridgway Scholarship. He is currently attending Stanford University.



James McKnight — Son of Margaret and Alexander Sokoloff. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Rollins College.



Andrew McNeill — Son of Anne and David McNeill. Recipient of the AFSA Lawsuit over the Movie "Missing" Scholarship and the Ruth Frost Hoyt Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Old Dominion University.



J. Frederick Miller V — Son of Angela and J. Frederick Miller IV. Recipient of the Gertrude Stewart Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of Louisville.

Financial Aid Scholarship Recipients



Joshua Mines — Son of Cecile and Keith Mines. Recipient of the George and Mattie Newman Scholarship. He is currently attending State University of New York-Maritime College.



Jonathan Mines — Son of Cecile and Keith Mines. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Virginia Thurgood Bingham Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of Edinburgh.



Daniela Naldoken — Daughter of Susanna and John Schuch. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Heyward G. Hill Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Northern Virginia Community College.



Fallon O'Dowd — Daughter of Rhonda Brown and Stephen O'Dowd. Recipient of the Clarke Winship Slade Memorial Scholarship, the Harriet Winsar Isom Scholarship and the Norton W. Bell Scholarship. She is currently attending Harvard College.



Idra Pavin — Daughter of Sherril Pavin. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Harriet P. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Middlebury College.



Anastasia Rowland — Daughter of Pamela Aulton. Recipient of the Elbert G. and Naomi M. Mathews Memorial Scholarship, the Walter K. Schwinn Memorial Scholarship and the Harriet P. Culley Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Prince George's Community College.



Jae Sung Shrader — Daughter of Sung Mi and Jeffrey Shrader. Recipient of the Dorothy Osborne and Theodore Xanthaky Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the University of Miami.



David Stuart — Son of Ellen Wilson and Steven Stuart. Recipient of the Col. Richard R. Hallock Memorial Scholarship and the John Foster Dulles Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the Illinois Institute of Technology.



Lillian Stuart — Daughter of Ellen Wilson and Steven Stuart. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Virginia Thurgood Bingham Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Wellesley College.



Marion Tilghman — Daughter of Christine and Joseph Tilghman. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Harriet P. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending American University.



Paul VanKoughnett — Son of Diane and Hale VanKoughnett. Recipient of the William A. Cole Memorial Scholarship and the Paris Scholarship. He is currently attending Harvard College.



Jordan Whitaker — Son of Jonita and Eric Whitaker. Recipient of the Beirut Scholarship. He is currently attending Syracuse University.



Cristina Wingerter — Daughter of Patricia and Charles Wingerter. Recipient of the Marcia Martin Moore Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the University of San Francisco.



Erika Wingerter — Daughter of Patricia and Charles Wingerter. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Harriet P. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending the University of San Francisco.



Hannah Zix — Daughter of Elizabeth and James Zix. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Scholarship, the Adolph Dubs Memorial Scholarship and the Jacq Bachman Siracusa Scholarship. She is currently attending Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.



Caroline Perkinson — Daughter of Laurel and Jeffrey Perkinson. Recipient of the Landreth M. Harrison Memorial Scholarship, the Marc Grossman and Mildred Patterson Scholarship and the Anthony G. Freeman Memorial Scholarship. She is currently attending Davidson College.



Philip Perkinson — Son of Laurel and Jeffrey Perkinson. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of Virginia.

Not Pictured: (Alphabetical by Last Name)

Anna Berstein-Simpson — Daughter of Rose Berstein and Peter Simpson (deceased). Recipient of the Rose Marie Asch Memorial Scholarship and the Stephen A. Hubler Scholarship. She is currently attending Dartmouth College.

Caitlin O'Dowd — Daughter of Rhonda Brown and Stephen O'Dowd. Recipient of the George and Mattie Newman Scholarship and the Vietnam Scholarship. She is currently attending Hamilton College.

Caitlin Sneff-Nuckles — Daughter of Wendy Sneff and John Nuckles. Recipient of the Brockman M. Moore Memorial Scholarship and the George and Mattie Newman Scholarship. She is currently attending George Mason University.

Alexander Sokoloff — Son of Margaret and Alexander Sokoloff. Recipient of the George and Mattie Newman Scholarship, the Robert Woods Bliss Memorial Scholarship and the Susan Lowe Modi Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending the University of North Carolina–Wilmington.

Peter Tilghman — Son of Christine and Joseph Tilghman. Recipient of the DACOR Bacon House Foundation Harriet P. Thurgood Memorial Scholarship. He is currently attending Dickinson College.

AFSANEWSBRIEFS

No Dues Increase in 2011 — Please Consider Supporting the Fund for American Diplomacy

For the second year in a row, AFSA has decided not to raise membership dues out of sensitivity to economic concerns. This does not, however, signal any cut or compromise in our services to you — on the contrary, we intend to deepen them in this new year. And so we ask you to consider donating to one of the funds that support our mission, in particular the Fund for American Diplomacy.

Each year, AFSA partners with our 501(c)(3) nonprofit Fund for American Diplomacy in an appeal for donations to a worthy cause. The Fund sponsors Foreign Service programs with AFSA and helps us tell the story of the Foreign Service to the American public in a variety of ways. Through a tax-deductible donation to the Fund for American Diplomacy, you will be supporting:

- AFSA's **High School Essay Contest**, where students can earn college scholarship money by writing an essay on a topic related to foreign affairs.
- The **AFSA Memorial Plaques**, the centerpiece of an annual ceremony at the State Department to honor our colleagues who have died in the line of duty.
- **Awards programs** recognizing FS employee and spouse achievements, and particularly those who have had the courage to dissent.
- The **AFSA/Thursday Luncheon Group Minority Intern Program**, which places a deserving minority student in a summer internship at the State Department.
- **Inside a U.S. Embassy**, our popular book providing insights into the Foreign Service to individuals preparing for the FS exam, students in college courses on diplomacy and international relations and to FS family members and relatives, as well as military and corporate personnel interacting with our missions abroad. A new edition will be published early this year.
- **Road Scholar** (formerly Elderhostel) programs on foreign affairs for retired Americans.
- AFSA's **Speakers Bureau**, where FS retirees draw on their real-life experiences in addressing business and community leaders and regular Americans across the country.
- You may also support us through a CFC gift. We are CFC #10646 and are listed under the name "Diplomacy Matters – AFSA." You can also donate securely online at www.afsa.org/fad.

No AFSA dues support FAD activities, so we rely on your direct donations to the fund in order to allow these successful and vital programs to continue. For further information on the fund and its activities, please contact AFSA Director of Communications Tom Switzer at (202) 944-5501 or switzer@afsa.org.

Don't Delay, Apply Today!

The submission deadline is Feb. 6 to apply for AFSA college scholarships for Foreign Service kids.

AFSA Names New Governing Board Member

At their Dec. 1 meeting, the AFSA Government Board approved the appointment of **Mary Ellen Gilroy** to serve as retiree representative. Gilroy, who joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1983, has served as a public diplomacy officer in posts from Ottawa to Port-au-Prince. She also served as a senior inspector (class of Minister-Counselor) for public diplomacy, political and economic affairs, and equal employment opportunity with the Office of the Inspector General.

TRANSITION CENTER SCHEDULE OF COURSES for January 2011 – February 2011

Jan. 3-4	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Jan. 7	MQ950	High-Stress Assignment Outbrief
Jan. 12	MQ853	Rental Property
Jan. 19	MQ203	Singles in the Foreign Service
Jan. 20	MQ703	Post Options for Employment and Training
Jan. 22	MQ116	Protocol
Jan. 24-25	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Jan. 27	MQ119	Orientation to State Overseas
Jan. 28	MQ704	Targeting the Job Market
Jan. 31-Feb. 1	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Feb. 2	MQ302	Transition to Washington for Foreign-Born Spouses
Feb. 4	MQ950	High-Stress Assignment Outbrief
Feb. 7-8	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Feb. 9	MQ220	Going Overseas Logistics for Adults
Feb. 23	MQ117	Tax Seminar
Feb. 26	MQ116	Protocol
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OPM Dir. Berry • Continued from page 55

A: It's true: the Foreign Service is significantly more specialized and homogeneous than the Civil and Excepted Services, allowing for a more specialized retirement system. The Civil Service Retirement System and Federal Employees' Retirement System must cover far more varied circumstances. We always try to be mindful of the provisions of the Foreign Service's retirement systems, and we do our best to coordinate with the State Department to avoid problematic inconsistencies.

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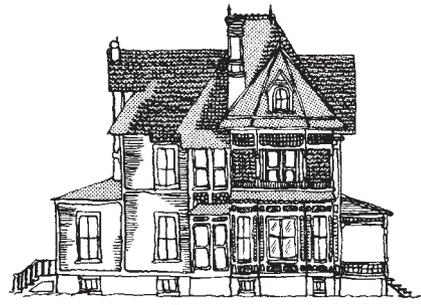
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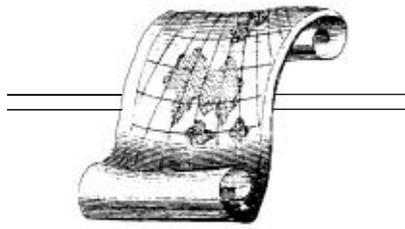
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REFLECTIONS

Our Little Secret

BY REGINA LANDOR

My husband is gone again, this time to an undisclosed Eastern European country. We arrange to visit him one weekend. Another couple wants to come along and are even willing to baby-sit our two kids one night. Are they kidding? “Come right along,” I say.

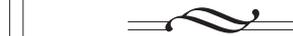
The weekend over, we leave my husband and are soon well on our way home. Rummaging inside my purse I suddenly realize our passports are in the hotel, two hours behind us. “Oh no,” I say. “S---! S---, s---, s---!” My 4-year-old in the back seat mimics me. “S---, s---, s---,” he says. I ignore him. “Our passports,” I wail. The wife of the couple, who is driving, exits the highway.

Experienced travelers, the couple are calm. I’m not sure what to do: cry, swear some more? What I want to do is throw myself on the ground and tear out my hair. They say we have to go back. All I am thinking of is how I have outrageously inconvenienced these people.

We are 10 miles from the border. I have an idea. I say we risk it. I say we see what happens. Maybe they will let us through. The couple is doubtful. I persist.

It’s been a two-hour challenge keeping the boys happy and feeding them every 10 minutes. I cannot tell another version of “Peter Pan.” I don’t think I have it in me. So I con-

*I’m just a mother
who’s tired, who
made a mistake,
who’s being honest,
and who needs
a break.*



vince the couple that we should keep going. We drive until we reach the border.

The guard looks at their passports, then wonders where ours are. “Oh yeah, ours. Well, the thing is...” I say in my best offhand manner, “they are in the hotel room.”

“Well then,” he says, “I can’t let you leave the country. You have to go back to the hotel.” There is nothing he can do. After an awkward pause, he says, “Look, I’ll call my supervisor.” He says something in an indecipherable language into his phone, and then repeats, “You have to go back to the hotel.”

We contemplate this awful decree. Then he offers, “You can talk to my boss if you want, but...” and shakes his head sorrowfully. I ask, “What’s his name?”

“Odon,” he says.

“Let’s go,” I say to the male half of

the couple. I jump out of the car. “Where do we find Odon?”

We walk inside the building and begin knocking on doors and opening doors that say “Stop! Do not enter!” until, a few moments later, Odon appears. He’s a tall man with a kind face. There’s always hope in kind faces. I explain what happened.

I don’t want to appear demanding or too eager. I’m just a mother who’s tired, who made a mistake, who’s being honest, and who needs a break. I guess he sees that, because he looks down at me and says, “I’ll make a call.” Moments later he says we can go through. But first he pretends to zip his lips and lock them with a key.

We get into the car, leave that country and prepare to enter the next. We don’t say anything to the guard when he approaches our car, but hand him the only two passports we have. Does he even notice there are three other people in the back seat? I’m not sure, but the bar of the gate goes up, and we are free to leave.

As we sail back down the highway toward home, I think of my dad, who used to say: “Never take no for an answer. Always speak to the supervisor.”

Remember: our little secret. ■

Regina Landor is a Foreign Service spouse on her first tour in Belgrade with her husband, a USAID officer, and two sons.

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