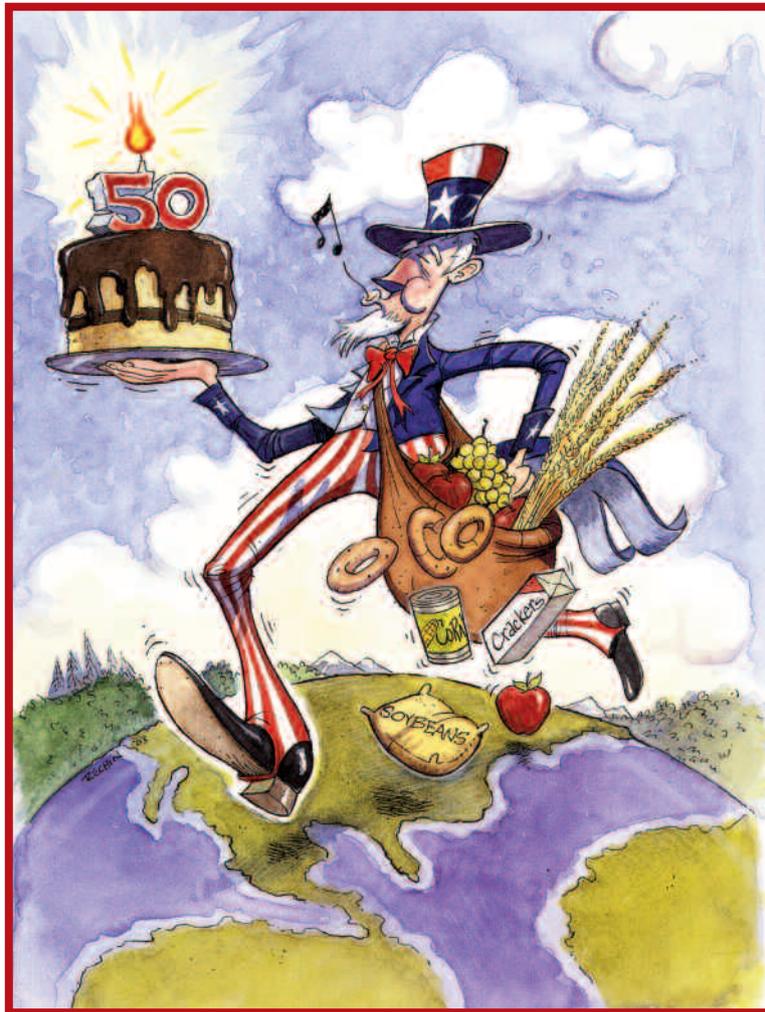


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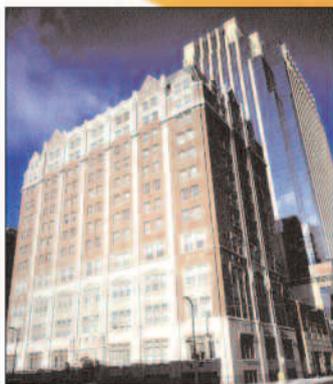
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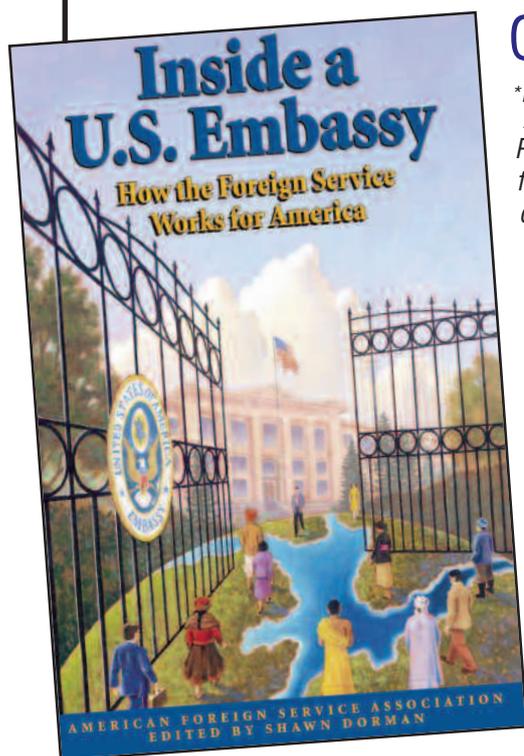
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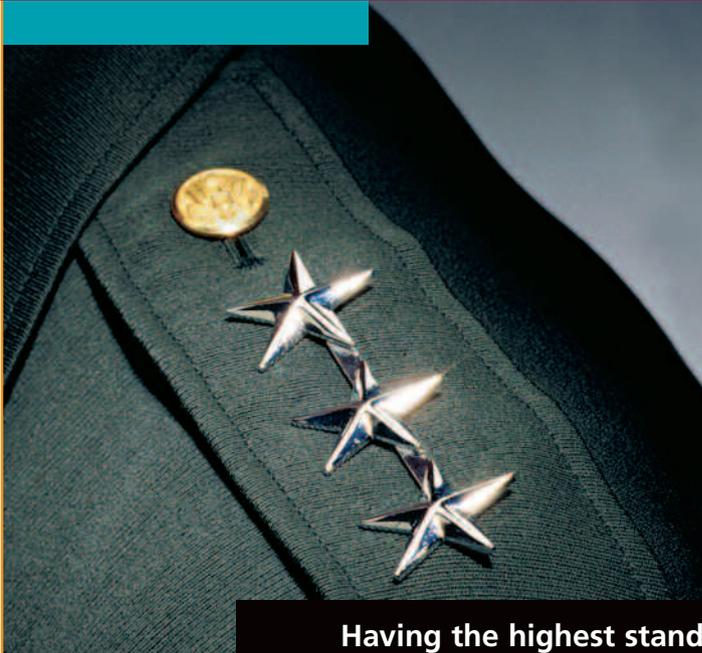
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# PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

## *What Next?*

By JOHN K. NALAND

Secretary of State Colin Powell had remarkable success in 2001 and 2002 convincing the White House and Congress to provide additional resources for staffing, information technology, and facilities. If, later this year, Congress approves the president's Fiscal Year 2004 budget at the requested level, then the Foreign Service (at least at State) will have finally overcome the legacy of the 1990s budget cuts that dangerously eroded our nation's diplomatic readiness.



While it will take several more years for promotions to refill the hollowed-out middle ranks and for modern information technology to be fully deployed, we may soon face the happy prospect of having all the physical tools that we need to do our vital jobs. But it takes more than people, technology and facilities to conduct diplomacy. The Foreign Service also needs the skills, outlooks and organization required to carry out its mission.

**Skills:** Full staffing and modern facilities will not sharply improve the effectiveness of an office if its personnel do not also have the technical, managerial, and foreign language skills needed to do their jobs. The State Department, with strong support from AFSA, has taken a good first step on the profes-

---

*John K. Naland is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.*

*AFSA continues to work to make the Foreign Service a better supported, more respected, and more satisfying place in which to spend a career.*

sional skills front by making the completion of leadership and management training a prerequisite for promotion effective in 2006. But much more needs to be done.

For example, a Senate Foreign Relations Committee staffer expressed concern to me on the eve of the Iraq War that the sum total of training in multilateral diplomacy available to U.S. diplomats is one three-day course that is given just twice a year. Elsewhere, I would hazard a guess that fewer than half of all tenured employees have had training in basic negotiating skills. More language training could be given to employees at the 3/3 level of proficiency whose next assignments will require them to give public speeches or press interviews. More computer training could be given to employees who do not know how to take full advantage of word processing and e-mail software. And a strong case can be made that everyone

should attend training on the care and feeding of Congress.

**Outlooks:** All the training and equipment in the world will not improve the efficiency of an employee who finishes drafting a "must-go" memorandum or telegram at noon only to have to wait around until 7 p.m. for his or her supervisor to begin to review it. While mandatory leadership and management training should lessen this problem, much work remains to be done to get some of our colleagues to act more efficiently and with more of a sense of urgency.

**Organization:** Even two years into the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative hiring boom, I still hear from employees who are working impossible hours in understaffed offices. As AFSA pointed out in testimony submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees in April, the world has changed considerably since the DRI hiring targets were set three years ago. This makes it vital for State to update its workforce planning to identify new staffing needs that the Congress can then provide resources to address.

The Foreign Service has gotten stronger over the past two years, but much work remains to be done. As always, AFSA will continue to work to make the Foreign Service a better supported, more respected, and more satisfying place in which to spend a career. This, in turn, serves to make the Foreign Service a more effective agent of U.S. international leadership. ■

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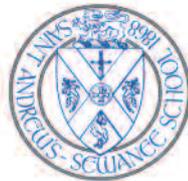
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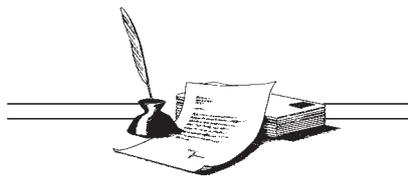
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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Many of you are already getting ready to come back to the Washington area for a new assignment this summer. So I would like to take this opportunity to invite active and retired Foreign Service employees from all foreign affairs agencies to nominate themselves or colleagues for a two-year term on the *Foreign Service Journal* Editorial Board beginning in September. Because of normal turnover and moves abroad, the Board expects to have at least three vacancies this fall.

Board members set the general editorial direction of the *Journal*, in consultation with the AFSA Governing Board and editorial staff. They evaluate submitted manuscripts, choose future focus topics, and weigh in on other matters affecting the *Journal's* style, substance and process.

Please note that board members must be able to attend monthly mid-day meetings in Washington and should be able to devote several hours a month to reading articles and considering other *Journal*-related matters.

If interested, please get in touch by June 1 with me (preferably by e-mail: [honley@afsa.org](mailto:honley@afsa.org)), sending some information about yourself (or the colleague you are nominating) and explaining why you would like to serve. The Editorial Board will evaluate the candidates and propose a list to the incoming AFSA Governing Board for approval.

Editors are trained to smooth the transitions between sections of an article or column. But we were recently confronted with the kind of abrupt ending that even the best-chosen words just can't fix. In mid-March, we learned of the untimely death of retired FSO Arnold Schifferdecker, who, among many other distinctions, was chairman of the *Foreign Service Journal* Editorial Board. You will find an "Appreciation" of Arnie on page 51 of this issue, but I would like to say here how grateful I am to have had the privilege and the pleasure of working with him, both at the *Journal* and when we served together as FSOs on the Board of Examiners nine years ago.

Arnie was — to quote a phrase I've heard many others use about him — the "very model of a Foreign Service officer." He will be sorely missed.

On a brighter note, I'd like to remind you of the focus section topics our Editorial Board has identified for this fall (the summer issues are already largely set) and invite you to contribute articles or Speaking Out columns addressing them:

- SEPTEMBER Foreign Service Specialists
- OCTOBER Judicial Issues and Diplomatic Tradecraft
- NOVEMBER "In Their Own Write"
- DECEMBER The World Politics of Energy

As you can see, most of these themes relate directly to Foreign Service professional and lifestyle issues, so I hope many of you (particularly specialists) will consider sharing your insights and expertise on them with your colleagues.

For the "In Their Own Write" compilation, we invite Foreign Service-affiliated authors who have had a book published either by a commercial or academic publisher in the past two years (2002-2003) that has not previously been featured in the roundup, to send a copy of the book, along with a press release or backgrounder with information on the author, to Associate Editor Susan Maitra. The deadline for inclusion is Sept. 1; please contact Susan directly at [maitra@afsa.org](mailto:maitra@afsa.org) with any questions.

Finally, I hope you will keep in mind that the Speaking Out column is your forum to advocate policy, regulatory or statutory changes to the Foreign Service. These can be based on personal experience with an injustice or your insights into a foreign affairs-related issue.

Please note that all submissions to the *Journal* must be approved by our Editorial Board and are subject to editing for style, length and format. For information on how to submit a column, article or letter, please contact us at [journal@afsa.org](mailto:journal@afsa.org) and we will be delighted to respond.

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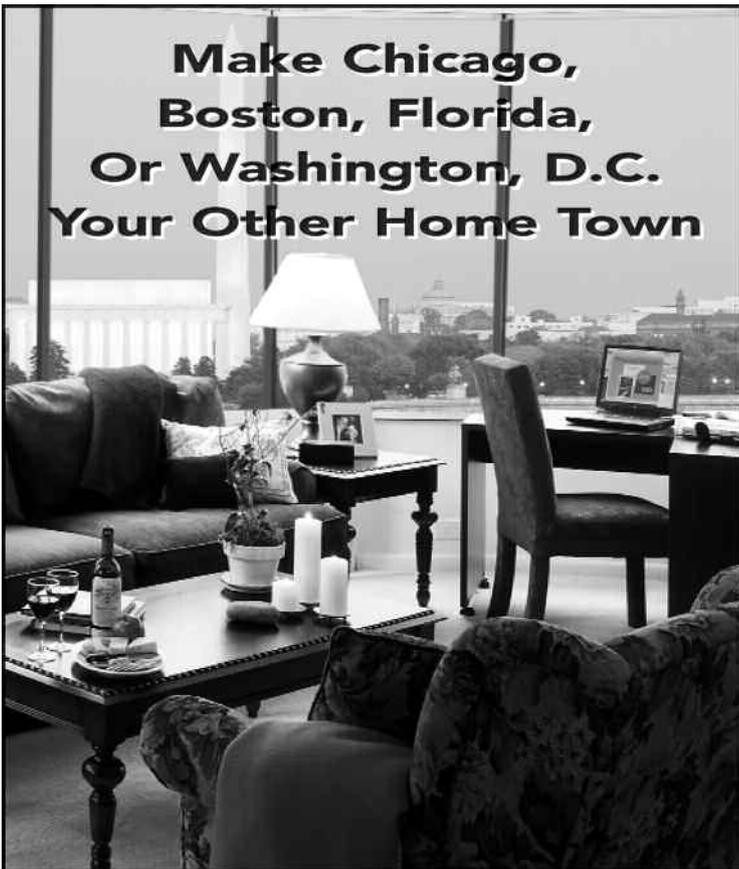
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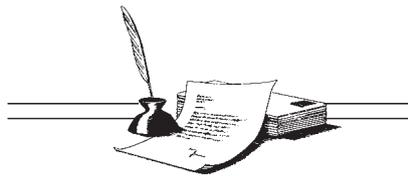
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# LETTERS

## SOS for Consular Work

Would that AFSA really cared about consular affairs. If the State Department does not get the visa function right soon, it will be long gone to Homeland Security. I saw a virtual Homeland Security attaché at work last summer, when one of the finest consular officers I know was brutally removed from his post by an ambassador (a lawyer!) who, by all accounts, didn't give a tinker's dam about due process. His DCM (a consular officer, no less!) was unable to stop it.

Where was AFSA on that one?

AFSA is right to advise consular officers to obtain liability insurance. And yes, AFSA raised this issue with the secretary and with the Management Bureau. But what has come of it? I predict fewer and fewer consular officers (other than eunuchs and saints) will take senior jobs.

Has AFSA taken a "robust" stand on any individual case? I doubt it, but would be pleased to see any information to the contrary.

The Consular Officers Association should be revived — if not as a subunit of AFSA, then as a strong, independent union for consular officers. While I admire Maura Harty's energy, leadership, loyalty to colleagues and other qualities that led to her appointment to head Consular Affairs, I predict she will not last more than a year. Then we'll see the bureau handed to some retired general who will not tolerate the kind of ineffective manage-

ment that has characterized CA for too many years. That general also will fail, and the whole shebang will go to Homeland Security.

Let us hope I am wrong!

*Thomas R. Hutson  
Consul General, retired  
Acting Section Chief in  
Tashkent (WAE)*

## AFSA State VP Louise Crane replies:

AFSA's defense of the Bureau of Consular Affairs has been robust. When members of the House moved last July to strip the consular function from State and move it to Homeland Security, AFSA was first off the mark. We sent a three-page letter to Congress explaining why CA should stay at State. The very next day, AFSA's president was called to the Hill to make the same argument to staff from the House committees working on the legislation. The rest is history, and this history demonstrates that AFSA is exactly the "strong, independent union" Hutson argues consular officers need.

When AFSA met with the new Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, Maura Harty, we urged her to consider extending the U.S. government's subsidy of professional liability insurance to include consular officers who issue visas. She agreed that consular officers should carry this insurance. However, getting them included in the program

requires study and might involve a change in the law.

As for the incident Hutson describes, if he felt so strongly about it, why didn't he rise to his colleague's defense and alert AFSA to this egregious miscarriage of justice at the time?

And why does he lack faith in his consular colleagues' ability to be as protective of national security as their domestic counterparts? AFSA has never ceded its members' dedication to national security to anyone and has consistently criticized those who have, including the chairmen of the House Judiciary and Government Reform Committees and even the department's own former inspector general.

## A Remarkable Man

As a former colleague of Brady Kiesling, I was distressed by his resignation from the Foreign Service, but not at all surprised that he did so as a matter of principle. Brady and I worked together in the European Bureau at State during the early 1990s when internal disagreement over U.S. policy in the Balkans provoked at least two Foreign Service officers and one civil servant, who were our colleagues, to resign from the State Department. Brady's resignation reminds me of that difficult time, the lessons that might be learned and — more hopefully — how disastrous situations sometimes gradually improve.

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**If interested, please get in touch by June 1** with *FSJ* editor Steve Honley (e-mail: [honley@afsa.org](mailto:honley@afsa.org)), sending some information about yourself (or the colleague you are nominating) and explaining why you are interested in serving on the Board.

**For more information**, you may also call (202) 944-5511, fax: (202) 338-8244, or write: Editorial Board Search, *Foreign Service Journal*, 2101 E Street N.W., Washington, DC, 20037-2990.

## LETTERS



Brady is a remarkable man. We met 12 years ago when he was a political officer at Embassy Athens; he served as my control officer when I, as a desk officer for Greece, visited in 1991. During that visit, I learned that Brady is a classics scholar, which I assume is why he liked serving in Greece and returned there. That training also probably helped him to analyze the internal logic (however absurd, sometimes) of the political dynamics in the Balkans.

Soon after my visit, Brady returned to Washington as desk officer for Romania. He and I watched from our respective Romanian and Greek sidelines, as Yugoslavia disintegrated and war broke out in Croatia and then Bosnia. That crisis was compounded by a diplomatic quarrel with Greece, which objected strenuously to the U.S. intention to recognize the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I still remember several of us mid-level desk officers in EUR meeting informally in Brady's office with bag lunches to try and make sense out of this unfolding disaster and to exchange ideas on what, if anything, we could do at our level to mitigate the worst of this process. Several colleagues evidently thought it was in their best interest to resign.

In November 1992, I, too, resigned from the Foreign Service but for personal reasons, to accept a job at the Environmental Protection Agency. The U.S. still had not recognized Macedonia, but it appeared to be moving slowly to do so. When I told Brady about my imminent departure, I remember joking that this was my opportunity to score points with my Greek friends by asserting publicly that I was resigning because of American insensitivity to Greek concerns

about Macedonia. If I did so, I suggested to Brady, I would probably be decorated by the Greek foreign minister!

Of course, I had no intention of making a mockery of the honorable act (too rarely exercised) of resigning as a matter of principle. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance did it in 1980 when he disagreed with the abortive military operation to rescue the American hostages in Tehran. A few colleagues did so in 1992 when they disagreed with U.S. inaction in the Balkans, and now Brady has done it.

For better or worse, U.S. policy on Iraq has clearly not been altered by Brady's resignation. However, as a scholar of ancient civilizations, perhaps he can find solace in the longer view of things. After all, over the past decade, the U.S. led a successful air war against Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic is now on trial in the Hague as a war criminal, American troops have been deployed as peacekeepers in Bosnia and Macedonia, and Greek irritation about recognizing Macedonia has subsided. In fact, EPA Administrator Christine Whitman recently met with the Macedonian ambassador to the United States to discuss bilateral cooperation to control industrial pollution. The wars in what once was Yugoslavia were a humanitarian disaster, and life is not all that great in any of the Yugoslav successor states — but things could still be a lot worse. Let us hope for a similar outcome in Iraq.

*Paulo Almeida*  
FSO, retired  
Bethesda, Md.

### Back to Twain

Discussions of the Holy Land in the *Foreign Service Journal* generate a considerable amount of passion, even among staid Foreign

## LETTERS



Service types, whether in favor of the Israeli or Palestinian cause. I would like to bring the conversation back to that ancient, timeworn land called Palestine by the British and Israel by the Jews. I do not know what the Ottomans called it.

Let us return to the days of yesteryear. Until World War I, for several hundred years the Israel/Palestine area belonged to the Ottoman Empire and thereafter, until after World War II, was a British protectorate. What was it like before people in the last century started killing one another over it?

For answers, turn to an American, Samuel Clemens. He traveled around the area in the late-19th century on horseback. Read the details in the last chapters of *Innocents Abroad*. He wrote that in the sleepy, little town of Jerusalem there was nothing and no one except a few Bedouins and a small number of others. He used the word “desolate” over and over again to describe the Holy Land. For the most part, he found it an unrelieved wilderness: nothing along the Jordan, nothing by the Sea of Galilee, and nothing at the Dead Sea, except a barren desert broken only by a few green spots. The language he used to describe the few people he encountered would be deemed politically incorrect today, to put it mildly.

I think it is safe to say that people — Jews and Arabs — only moved into the area at the resettlement instigation of the Jewish Agency, which promoted Jewish emigration. By World War I there were enough people settled there for the British to tell Jews and the Arabs separately what each group wanted to hear.

Having set the stage, I will let another Foreign Service colleague discuss whether there is such a thing

as a Palestinian people or a biblical right for Jews to resettle this volatile and religiously significant portion of the earth. Frankly, in 2003, I’d say both points are moot. If, unfortunately for both, Arabs and Jews cannot live together there, then let them live separately.

*Sheldon Avenius*  
*FSO, retired*  
*Arlington, Va.*

### A Fond Farewell

When I boarded the train in early March 1977 on my way to the plane that would take me to Ankara, my first assignment, I never suspected that I would be back in the U.S. only for visits and classes for the next 26 years!

As I approach my retirement in June, I reflect upon a wonderful Foreign Service journey. Each post (Ankara, Bogota, Vienna, Johannesburg, Islamabad, Santiago, Managua, Bonn and Sarajevo) held a special gift for me. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my friends and colleagues for all your support and for your hard work and dedication. You shared my joys and sorrows and taught me about the real meaning of diplomacy. I also want to give special thanks to each of the wonderful Foreign Service Nationals I was privileged to work with, for their kindness and for making my tours more interesting and fun.

And special thanks to everyone at the American Foreign Service Association for your dedication and honesty, and for honoring me in 2001.

Thanks for a lifetime of experiences that I shall always cherish.

*Rosalie Kahn*  
*Office Management*  
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*Embassy Sarajevo* ■



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# CYBERNOTES

## The Coming Water Wars

Although not usually thought of in the same way as oil, gold, or other natural resources, water has been at the center of conflicts for centuries. After all, the word rival comes from the Latin *rivalis*, meaning one using the same stream as another.

According to *The World's Water*, even Leonardo da Vinci was a soldier in the water wars ([www.worldwater.org](http://www.worldwater.org)). The site's "Water Conflict Chronology" says that during a war between Pisa and Florence in 1503, da Vinci and Machiavelli planned to divert the Arno River away from Florence.

Today many believe there is real potential for conflict in the social disruption caused by competition for scarce freshwater supplies — a growing phenomenon in the South and West Asian region encompassing Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, India and Egypt.

To head off future "water wars," a new U.N. agency, the Water Cooperation Facility, was set up recently. The initiative was announced at the Third World Water Forum in Japan March 16-23, according to *BBC Online* ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)).

Based at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, the new facility will mediate in disputes between countries sharing a single river basin. A UNESCO report identifies 17 river basins with the potential for disputes in the coming decade.

Even when war is not a possibility, water is a critical issue. More than one billion people do not have access to adequate, safe water supplies, according to the World Health Organization. UNESCO's World Water Assessment

Program predicts that the water supply available per person will be, on average, one-third smaller than it is now by 2020.

In November 2002, the United Nations declared access to water a basic human right, named 2003 the international year of freshwater, and set a goal of bringing access to adequate water supplies to 500 million more people by 2015 ([www.wateryear2003.org](http://www.wateryear2003.org)).

But a problem that is as big and as basic as water, and the options for solving it, can be difficult to break down and understand. Fortunately, there are many Web sites that can help. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's *Water Portal* provides links to UNESCO's World Water Assessment and International Hydrological programs, water events and celebrations, and other water resources ([www.unesco.org/water/](http://www.unesco.org/water/)). Users can search these links by theme, geographical scope and organization type.

The *Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database* is a project of the Department of Geosciences at Oregon State University ([www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu](http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu)). The site was set up to help assess the "process of water conflict prevention and resolution." One can access data, publications and projects, including treaties and agreements, focused on water conflict. For example, the "Basins at Risk" project seeks to identify the sources of past freshwater conflict and predict future conflicts.

Stefan Deconinck, a researcher at the Center for Sustainable Development at Ghent University,

Belgium, edits *Water and Conflict* — a site mainly focused on Middle East water conflicts (<http://waternet.rug.ac.be>). This site links to news articles, publications and government documents on the internal and foreign policies concerning water of Israel, Jordan, Palestine and Syria.

The World Water Council ([www.worldwatercouncil.org](http://www.worldwatercouncil.org)), a nongovernmental, nonprofit, international water policy think tank, offers regular news updates, links, and a free, downloadable newsletter.

Other sites that have news links and calendars of upcoming events include the *Global Water Information Network* ([www.globwinet.org](http://www.globwinet.org)), the *Global Water Partnership* ([www.gwpforum.org](http://www.gwpforum.org)), and the *International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network* ([www.iwlearn.org](http://www.iwlearn.org)).

If you make it through all these sites, you may never look at a glass of water the same way again.

— Stephen E. Mather,  
Editorial Intern

## Doc.Com

There is no substitute for the care of a well-trained doctor or nurse, especially in a medical emergency, but carefully selected Web sites can be a useful information source for patients with routine health questions.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other federal agencies developed *Healthfinder* ([www.healthfinder.gov](http://www.healthfinder.gov)). The site is easy on the eye and free of the confusing advertising found on commercial sites. Users can click on "Health Library" for health information selected from government agencies, non-



# CYBERNOTES

## Site of the Month: The Internet Public Library

The *Internet Public Library* is the world's first virtual public library, replete with Reference Center, Reading Room, Subject Collections and Special Collections, and separate children's and teens' sections ([www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org)). Begun in 1995 as a graduate course project at the School of Information and Library Studies at the University of Michigan, and now an established entity with a small professional staff and approximately 1.5 million users per month, this is an excellent site for the whole family.

The site is user-friendly — uncluttered and fully searchable. It also has an interactive reference librarian function. The Reference Room contains annotated source links to hundreds of reference resources organized in 18 categories from “Almanacs” to “Trivia.” The Searching Tools section is the virtual equivalent of the Reference Desk, and a uniquely helpful part of *IPL*. Here users can access *IPL*-prepared guides — “pathfinders” — for how to go about research on a particular topic in over 100 different general areas, and find links to the top Web search engines and tips on how to get the most out of them. Besides viewing answers to

more than 50 of the most frequently asked reference questions, users can pose their own questions.

The Reading Room leads the user to newspapers and magazines from all over the world and more than 20,000 books searchable by author, title and Dewey Decimal System. Both “KidSpace” and “TeenSpace” have age-appropriate collections of resources on a range of subjects and general reference, as well as special feature collections. “KidSpace,” for instance, features a Culture Quest, extensive resources on science fair projects and preparation, and a story hour. “Teens” features term-paper help, special resources for teen girls, and career paths. Both offer the ability to ask *IPL* questions.

Like the best libraries, *IPL* has a number of “Special Collections” too, including a notable assembly of “Online Literary Criticism.”

*IPL* is recognized worldwide as a leader in Internet library service, according to the most recent of its many citations, an award from the 2002 Computerworld Honors Program. *IPL*'s “Ask A Question” Internet reference service and the QRC digital reference software *IPL* created are considered models for digital reference services. The group is presently involved with the Library of Congress and others in developing standards for digital reference.

profit organizations and universities. For example, someone researching a Type 1 diabetes diagnosis would have eight articles to choose from, such as “Helping Your Children Live with Diabetes” by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International. The site also has information on health insurance and Medicare, and is listed among the Medical Library Association's top 10 most useful medical Web sites (<http://mlanet.org/resources/medspeak/topten.html>).

The Mayo Clinic runs another of the Medical Library Association's top 10 Web sites ([www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)). The front page features a “find infor-

mation fast” option for diseases and conditions, and “timely topics” with links such as “Smallpox Vaccine: Deadly Dilemma.” It is also possible to ask a Mayo clinic specialist a question by e-mail. Selected questions from readers/users are answered on the site; it is also possible to review past questions and answers.

The world-renowned Johns Hopkins School of Medicine has a Web site that provides resources for patients researching a diagnosis ([www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org)). By clicking “patient care” on the home page, users can access an index of diseases, disorders and health resources

I know people have been skeptical and cynical about this, but I am absolutely determined that we take forward this Middle East peace process, because I believe it to be in the interests not just of the Palestinians, but of Israel too.

— British Prime Minister  
Tony Blair, *The IHT Online*  
([www.iht.com](http://www.iht.com)), March 26,  
2003.



## 50 Years Ago

I have not yet gotten over my feeling of surprise at the vast difference between the idea of the State Department and the Foreign Service that is current on Capitol Hill and what the State Department and Foreign Service really are like. I have been greatly impressed by the experienced, intelligent and dedicated civil servants with whom I have been brought into touch in my new job.



— Clare Boothe Luce, Ambassador to Italy, from a speech before the American-Italy Society on April 8, 1953, in the *FSJ*, May 1953.

and connect to the School of Medicine's clinical trials unit.

Another famous institution, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, the largest nonprofit hospital in the western United States, provides a Health Topics page on its Web site ([www.csmc.edu](http://www.csmc.edu)). The page offers health news and a health library with

information on illnesses and conditions, drugs, new FDA drug approvals, self-help groups and complementary/alternative medicine.

The American Red Cross provides information about Red Cross courses, such as first aid and lifeguarding (note: these courses are not free), and information for those interested in donat-

ing blood ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)).

There are also commercial Web sites that offer some search services, including *WebMD* ([www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)), *MedWebPlus* ([www.medwebplus.com](http://www.medwebplus.com)), *MDChoice* ([www.mdchoice.com](http://www.mdchoice.com)) and *MerckSource* ([www.mercksource.com](http://www.mercksource.com)).

For those contemplating buying medications online, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration offers a Web page of tips and warnings ([www.fda.gov/oc/buyonline/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/oc/buyonline/default.htm)). The Centers for Disease Control maintains an updated page of "Health Related Hoaxes and Rumors" that is also useful ([www.cdc.gov/hoax\\_rumors.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hoax_rumors.htm)).

Again, medical professionals should be contacted first for any health problem. ■

— Stephen E. Mather,  
Editorial Intern

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# SPEAKING OUT

## *Toward a True Israeli-Palestinian Peace*

BY MAX M. KAMPELMAN

In “Palestine: The Problem and the Prospect” (October 2002 *FSJ*), Terrell E. Arnold calls for the United States to lead the process toward peace between Israel and the Palestinians. His objective is commendable, but because his approach distorts the roots and nature of the conflict, it will not contribute to achieving the peace we seek.

Mr. Arnold begins his account of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with the 1917 Balfour Declaration, but its origins actually go back some three thousand years. Archeologists tell us that the ancient Hebrew tribes date back to the period between the 9th and 12th centuries BCE, and that at no time since that period has the area been without some Jewish inhabitants. As reflected in the Old Testament, this allegiance to the area is deeply rooted in the Jewish religion itself. During that early period, the area was also at different times occupied by tribes that were the antecedents of the modern Arab peoples. Thus, there can be no doubt that Jews and Arabs both have historical claims to the land now known as Palestine — a reality that cannot be ignored if we are to deal with the current crisis.

For hundreds of years prior to World War I, the Ottoman Empire was the governing entity for most of the Middle East. After the war, the League of Nations, with the explicit understanding that it was establishing the basis for a Jewish homeland, assigned a portion of the territory,

*The origins of the  
Israel-Palestinian  
conflict go back  
some three  
thousand years.*



encompassing what is now Jordan, the West Bank and Israel, to Great Britain as the mandated power. The British carved out a major part of the territory east of the Jordan river — then known as Transjordan and now, simply, as Jordan — and presented it, in appreciation for assistance during the war, to the Hashemite family. This was to be the homeland for the Arabs in the territory alongside the approximately 20 other neighboring countries in the area serving as homelands for the Arab peoples. As Mr. Arnold correctly notes, Lord Balfour, the British foreign minister, then issued a policy statement that his government also viewed “with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

During the early period, some Arab leaders welcomed the plan to establish a Jewish national home-

land. Sherrif Hussein, recognized as the leader of the Arab world during the First World War, publicly said so. His son, Emir Feisal, who represented the Arabs at the Paris Peace Conference, said in a letter on March 2, 1919: “We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement ... our two movements complement one another ... indeed, I think that neither can be a success without the other.” This spirit was, regrettably, not universally shared.

At that time, there were approximately 50,000 Jews living in the area, but other Jews throughout the world were eager to join or assist and raised funds in order to purchase property in Palestine from the Arabs. My own parents, in spite of their relative poverty, contributed small change weekly to that purpose. The purchases were done legally and were obviously welcome by those Arabs who sold the property.

The Zionist movement gained urgency once the Nazis came to power in the 1930s and launched the programs that would lead to the deaths of at least five million European Jews in the Holocaust. Those who managed to escape and reach Palestine did so even though the British — who were in the midst of a war for survival and did not wish to alienate the Arab states — refused to allow them to enter Palestine legally, despite the Balfour



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***Until the Israeli-  
Palestinian dispute is  
resolved, Israeli  
settlements in the West  
Bank have every right  
to be there.***

Declaration.

**Israel Is Born**

After World War II, Jewish groups in and out of Palestine attempted to persuade the British to establish the promised Jewish state, to no avail. This led some to resort to violence and terrorism against the British. Menachim Begin, later to become the prime minister who negotiated a peace treaty with Egypt, was among them.

In 1948, the United Nations declared that a Jewish national homeland should be established and legally recognized by the international community alongside an Arab Palestinian entity. Mr. Arnold conspicuously omits this reference.

Egypt, Jordan, Syria and the other Arab countries in the area refused to accept the U.N. decision to recognize Israel as a new state, and instead mobilized their armies and invaded against it. Contrary to Mr. Arnold's version of events, it was this war, not Jewish terrorism, that forced a U.N.-estimated 470,000 Arab refugees to flee their homes, hoping to return following an Arab military victory.

After Israel miraculously sur-

vived that war, an armistice line gave Jordan control of the area west of the Jordan River, now known as the West Bank, while Israel established its sovereignty between that line and the Mediterranean. Jordan did not move to establish a separate Palestinian state. Indeed, in 1950, it unilaterally asserted its own sovereignty over the territory. The Palestinian Arabs during this period, furthermore, did not call for the establishment of a state of their own in the West Bank then occupied by Jordan, which proceeded to oust all Jews from the West Bank and to desecrate Jewish cemeteries and other holy places.

Meanwhile, the surrounding Arab states continued to reject Israel's legitimacy and continued to wage war against it. Arab countries during this period expelled or encouraged the departure of more than 500,000 Jews living within their borders, who fled to Israel and were integrated into Israeli political and economic life. The fact that the Arab nations refused to absorb their Palestinian Arab cousins, and instead put them into refugee camps in the belief that frustration and anger would motivate them to destroy Israel, has contributed immensely to the serious human problem that still exists today in those camps.

In 1967, defending itself against yet another attempt by its neighbors to destroy it, Israel won the Six-Day War and gained possession of Gaza and the West Bank, captured by the Arabs during their 1949 invasion. United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 called for negotiations to resolve the dispute based on safe and secure boundary lines. There was no call by the U.N. to establish a new Palestinian state. Arab efforts to have the U.N.



require Israel to withdraw to its pre-Six-Day War borders failed. The boundary was to be negotiated so that the parties could feel safe and secure.

In that context, it is not accurate to use the pejorative word “occupied” to describe Israel’s presence in the West Bank, for that term implies illegality on its part. Since both parties have ambiguous but serious claims to the territory, the more proper term would be “disputed,” as is used in reference to Kashmir and Cyprus, for example. Until the dispute is resolved, Israeli settlements in the West Bank have every right to be there.

Following the Six-Day War, Israel encouraged and established settlements in the Sinai Desert and Gaza, previously captured and governed by Egypt, as well as in the West Bank, previously captured and governed by Jordan. Religious groups did so pursuant to their belief that the Bible describes the Jewish presence in Judea and Samaria — the Roman and Hellenistic terms for the West Bank area, respectively — as the cradle of Jewish civilization. The government of Israel did so to strengthen its defenses against future Arab invasions. Groups of Israelis did so to live in inexpensive rural surroundings.

It is interesting to note that Israel agreed to withdraw its settlements from the Sinai as part of its peace treaty with Egypt. (It is reported that Egypt did not want Gaza.) The Israeli official assigned to close the settlements in the Sinai was Ariel Sharon, who did so in the face of right-wing criticism. Notwithstanding the often-repeated assertions by the “experts” in and out of the State Department that the Israeli settlements are a fundamental barrier to peace, it took three serious armed

---

*There are many  
Palestinian Arab leaders  
who understand that  
establishing a state  
committed to democracy  
is the formula by which  
to achieve peace, dignity  
and economic health.*

---

attacks by Arabs against Israel before Israel initiated its active settlement program.

#### **The Path Ahead**

Mr. Arnold concludes his article with a list of policy recommendations for all parties to the conflict, most of which Israel accepted in the 1993 Oslo agreement and again at Camp David seven years later. I certainly concur that negotiations, not suicide bombers and retaliations, are the path to peace. After all, diplomacy has produced peace agreements between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Jordan. Negotiations can and should lead to a workable accord that assures the integrity of both Israel and Palestine — if safe and secure boundaries for both countries can be established in accordance with the U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Toward that end, there are many intelligent and responsible Palestinian Arab leaders (with whom American and Israeli officials have met) who

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understand that establishing a Palestinian state committed to democracy, human dignity and the rule of law — and peace with Israel, its neighbor — is the formula by which to achieve peace, dignity and economic health for themselves and their culture. In fact, Israel would welcome such a neighbor and partner.

Regrettably, Yasser Arafat is not among these enlightened statesmen. When President Clinton proposed a comprehensive peace agreement at Camp David in the fall of 2000, building on the 1993 Oslo accord, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak accepted it, but Arafat rejected it without an explanation or counterproposal. A meeting in Taba shortly

---

***There can be no doubt  
that Jews and Arabs both  
have historical claims to  
the land now known as  
Palestine — a reality  
that cannot be ignored.***

---

thereafter produced some modifications to the draft, under which Israel agreed to recognize a new Pales-

tinian state which would encompass 95 to 97 percent of the disputed area, with its capital in a portion of what is now Jerusalem. In return, Israel asked only to be recognized as a state with safe and secure boundaries. Again, Arafat denounced the deal, and proceeded instead to authorize a terrorist intifada that continues to this day.

As a result, attitudes are hardening on both sides. In Israel, the more militant Ariel Sharon succeeded Ehud Barak as prime minister and has withdrawn concessions made by his predecessor.

Increasingly, the world and the parties are looking to the United States to “impose” or direct a solution to the unfortunate impasse.

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## SPEAKING OUT



Israel looks upon the European Union as decidedly hostile, quick to criticize, and financially supportive of Arafat. The United Nations is also regarded as anti-Israel, given the more than 400 hostile resolutions passed by the General Assembly and Israel's distinction as the only member state ineligible for Security Council membership.

Golda Meier, one of Israel's founders and later prime minister, once said she could forgive the Arabs almost anything except the need they created for Israel to teach its young people how to kill. And, regrettably, Israelis are, indeed, killing in response to the terror they are experiencing. This will not produce "victory" for either side.

---

***I certainly concur that negotiations, not suicide bombers and retaliations, are the path to peace.***

---

As much as it dismays Mr. Arnold, the United States has indeed "always favored Israel in the conflict and still does." Until responsible Palestinian authorities are ready to negotiate in

good faith, it will remain essential for the U.S. to do so — both because Israel is the only democracy in the region, and because it has been victimized by its neighbors throughout its life as a nation.

---

*Ambassador Max M. Kampelman was Counselor of the Department of State from 1987 to 1989; Chairman of the U.S. Delegation for the Negotiations with the Soviet Union on Nuclear and Space Arms, 1985-1989; and head of the U.S. delegation to the CSCE from 1980 to 1983. He is also Chairman Emeritus of the American Academy of Diplomacy and of the Georgetown University Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. ■*

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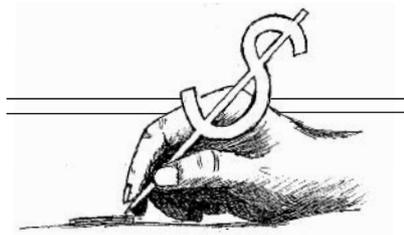
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# FS FINANCES

## *A Retroactive Windfall for Home Sellers*

By EDWARD J. MICHAL

With little fanfare, the IRS delivered a stocking stuffer for homeowners on Christmas Eve 2002 that could be worth tens of thousands of dollars to Foreign Service personnel. While Congress continues to consider — with strong encouragement from AFSA, among many others — the conferral of a specific, permanent exclusion from the capital gains tax on home sales for Foreign Service and military personnel, the Treasury Department has issued temporary regulations that greatly broaden the circumstances under which homeowners who sell their residences can claim a reduced maximum capital gains exclusion (see the January 2003 *FSJ* FS Finances article, “Claiming the Tax Exclusion for Gain on Home Sales”).

Specifically, the regulations offer a series of “safe harbors” — situations that automatically confer eligibility for the reduced maximum exclusion. These offer valuable relief to Foreign Service personnel who have suffered the indignity of holding onto a no-longer-needed primary residence to avoid paying capital gains tax or, worse, who already paid that tax on the sale of such a home in 2000 or later.

And, sweetening the pot even further, the IRS will allow homeowners who sold their residence before Dec. 24, 2002 (the effective date of the regulations), either to file a return for 2002 that does not include the gain that otherwise would have been taxed, or to file an

*AFSA continues to lobby Congress to grant a specific, permanent exclusion from the 2-in-5-year rule for FS personnel selling their homes.*



amended return to obtain a refund of tax paid on sales prior to 2002.

The new regulations are temporary and potentially subject to revision because the IRS received so many suggestions for circumstances that could trigger eligibility for the reduced maximum capital gains exclusion that it needs extra time to tweak the proposed provisions.

So the clock is ticking: April 15, 2003, was the last day to claim a refund for capital gains tax paid on a 1999 sale, and April 15, 2004, will be the deadline to claim a refund for capital gains tax paid on a 2000 sale (assuming no further changes to the regulations).

Make no mistake, though: temporary though they may be, these regulations have an extraordinary potential to liberate Foreign Service

personnel from the tyranny of the two-year residency test for the home sale capital gains exclusion. That test requires persons contemplating sale of their primary residence to have lived there at least two out of the five years immediately preceding the date of the sale to qualify for the full \$500,000 exclusion of gain, if married filing jointly, or the full \$250,000 exclusion, if filing under other statutes.

### **Safe Harbors**

Under the previous set of regulations, persons not meeting the two-year test could qualify for a reduced maximum exclusion (figured proportionately according to the number of days of occupancy of the property divided by 730; i.e., two years) if they were selling the property due to reasons arising out of a change in employment, health, or “unforeseen circumstances.” However, the IRS had not defined “unforeseen circumstances” and therefore would not allow exclusions based on that factor. The new regulations define that term and thereby greatly expand the ability of persons who do not meet the two-year test to reduce or even eliminate home sale capital gains tax.

The easiest way to qualify for the reduced exclusion under the new regulations is for your circumstances to fit within one of the “safe harbors” — events that automatically qualify a taxpayer for a reduced exclusion — described therein. The IRS has developed specific “safe harbors” for



claiming the exclusion on the basis of changes in employment, health or unforeseen circumstances.

The primary reason for a sale or exchange is deemed to be a **change in place of employment**, for example, if: 1) the change in place of employment occurs while the taxpayer owns and uses a property as a principal residence and 2) the taxpayer's new place of employment is at least 50 miles farther from the residence sold or exchanged than was the former place of employment — or, if there was no former place of employment, the distance between the taxpayer's new place of employment and the residence sold or exchanged is at least 50 miles.

Section 1.121-3T)(c)(4) Example 2) of the revised tax code offers a hypothetical case:

"B is an officer in the United States Air Force stationed in Florida. B purchases a house in Florida in 2001. In May 2002 B moves out of his house to take a three-year assignment in Germany. B sells his house in January 2003. Because B's new place of employment in Germany is at least 50 miles farther from the residence sold than is B's former place of employment in Florida, the sale is within the safe harbor of paragraph (c)(2) of this section and B is entitled to claim a reduced maximum exclusion under section 121(c)(2)." Foreign Service employees would qualify for the same relief when transferred to a new post.

The primary reason for a sale or exchange is deemed to be by **reason of health** if a physician recommends a change of residence for that purpose. (A sale or exchange that is merely beneficial to the general health or well-being of the taxpayer does not qualify, however.) The health safe harbor also includes a

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**Foreign Service  
personnel who might  
qualify for a refund  
should consult their tax  
advisers immediately.**

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sale or exchange undertaken to obtain or provide medical or personal care for a qualified individual (see description below) suffering from a disease, illness or injury.

The newly available **unforeseen circumstances** category assists taxpayers who do not qualify under either of those provisions. The new regulations describe a variety of safe harbors potentially available should specific events take place during the taxpayer's ownership and use of a residence as the taxpayer's principal residence, including any of the following:

- 1) the involuntary conversion of the residence (i.e., a governmental unit has condemned and seized a private property for public purposes);
- 2) natural or man-made disasters or acts of war or terrorism resulting in a casualty (i.e., physical damage) to the residence; and
- 3) in the case of a "qualified individual" (see description below), any of the following:
  - a) death;
  - b) loss of employment rendering the person eligible for unemployment compensation;
  - c) change in employment or self-employment status that causes the

taxpayer to be unable to pay housing costs and reasonable basic living expenses for his or her household;

d) divorce or legal separation under a decree of divorce or separate maintenance; and

e) multiple births resulting from the same pregnancy.

The IRS will allow any of these safe harbors to apply to events involving "qualified individuals," a category that includes the taxpayer, the taxpayer's spouse, a co-owner of the residence, a person whose principal place of abode is in the same household as the taxpayer, or certain other relatives of the taxpayer. This gives taxpayers greater flexibility than ever before, should an event involve a loved one or a person whose life is bound up with theirs, to sell their residence without having to pay capital gains tax.

The safe harbor provisions are not open-ended opportunities to claim the reduced exclusion, however. The cited events must take place "during the period of ownership and use of the residence as the taxpayer's principal residence." For example, a taxpayer getting a decree of divorce or separate maintenance who sells a residence before the decree has been issued would not qualify for the divorce safe harbor.

### Other Relief

Even if a safe harbor does not apply to a taxpayer's situation, he or she may still be able to obtain the reduced exclusion, either under a broad, pre-existing IRS ruling or through a private ruling due to "unforeseen circumstances," as determined by the Internal Revenue Commissioner, taking into account "all the facts and circumstances." Under the new, temporary regulations, the IRS will consider the following factors in making that determi-

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*Overall, the new regulations are a boon that could help Foreign Service personnel recover from the previous law's inflexibility.*

nation (without limiting its ability to consider other possible factors as well):

1) The sale or exchange and the circumstances that brought it about took place in roughly the same time frame;

2) There was a material change in the suitability of the property as the taxpayer's principal residence;

3) The taxpayer's financial ability to maintain the property substantially changed;

4) The taxpayer's use of the property as a residence while he or she owns it;

5) The circumstances that caused the sale or exchange could not be reasonably foreseen when the taxpayer began using the property as a principal residence; or

6) The circumstances that caused the sale or exchange occurred while the taxpayer owned and used the property as a principal residence.

Taxpayers who have already paid capital gains tax on the sale of a principal residence because they did not qualify for a reduced maximum exclusion under previous rules can



file an amended return on Form 1040X to obtain a refund of the tax paid. The catch is that the claim must be filed, as any other refund claim, within the time limits specified by the Internal Revenue Code. Taxpayers who sold a home in 2000, for example, and were forced to pay capital gains tax, must file an amended return by April 15, 2004, for a return filed on or before April 15, 2001, to obtain a refund of tax paid. (Returns filed before a due date are considered to have been filed on the due date.) Taxpayers who obtained an extension of time to file for the original return may qualify for additional time to file an amended return. It would be prudent, however, to submit such a claim immediately, to avoid disappointment should the "temporary" regulations be amended in an unfavorable way prior to finalization.

Finally, the tax treatment of gain on a home used *partially* for business or rental has also changed, and refunds based on retroactive application of the new regulations are available. However, Foreign Service personnel who might qualify for a refund should consult their tax advisers immediately since claiming refunds is not always a straightforward process. Thus, if thousands of dollars are at stake, the relatively small fee charged by a tax adviser would be well worth it.

Overall, the new regulations are a boon that could help Foreign Service personnel recover from the previous law's inflexibility, pending more specific and still-needed relief for Foreign Service and military families. ■

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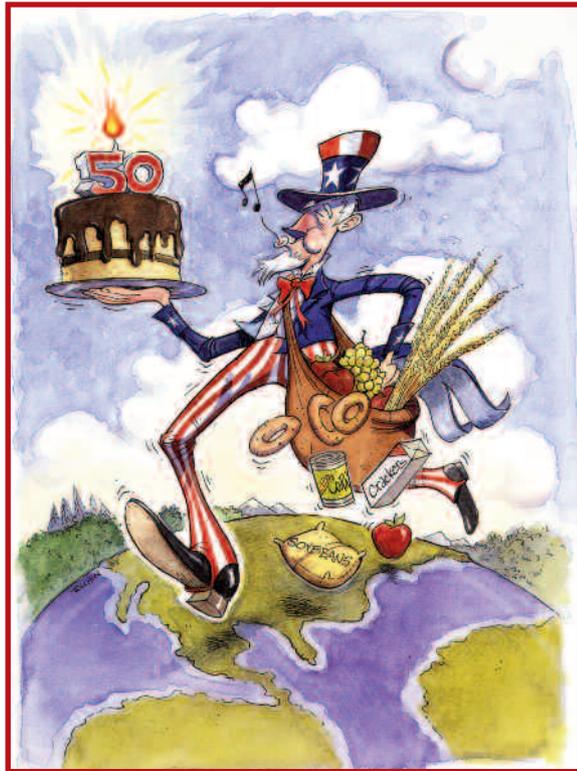
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# THE FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE TODAY



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THE OUTLOOK FOR THE FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE IS GENERALLY POSITIVE, BUT THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF ISSUES FOR IT TO ADDRESS.

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*By BOB GULDIN*

On March 10, the Foreign Agricultural Service celebrated its 50th anniversary, and the atmosphere could hardly have been more pleasant. Sunlight streamed through the skylights of the tasteful, old-brick USDA atrium, and Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., were on hand to announce that FAS would be the lead agency in a new international aid program. Agency retirees, invited back for the party, chatted cheerfully with old friends.

Things are indeed going well for FAS, one of the the smallest of the foreign affairs agencies in which Foreign Service

personnel work. The tight budgets and hiring freeze of the late 1990s are past, and the Service has grown a bit the last two years under FAS Administrator A. Ellen Terpstra, who before joining FAS had 18 years of experience as a Civil Service employee of the U.S. Trade Representative and other posts in which she worked on agricultural trade and policy. During the Clinton administration she headed two private trade associations, the Rice Federation and then the U.S. Apple Association. So she knows the territory.

But the agency, whose chief mission is helping American agricultural exports, does face two daunting challenges. The first is completing the transition (already under way) from being primarily a reporting office to one that actively promotes U.S. crops and related products. The second challenge is a subset of that one: with genetically modified organisms playing an ever-larger role in U.S. food production, and many importers — above all the European Union — resisting the new biotechnology, FAS is looking for ways to sell the world on genetically modified U.S. crops.

### **How the Foreign Service Fits In**

While FAS officially came into existence in 1953, the history of diplomatic personnel reporting on agricultural conditions abroad and helping U.S. exporters goes back to the early days of the new republic. Over the last century or so, the function switched back and forth several times between the State Department and the Agriculture Department, each time becoming larger and better organized. In July 1954, Congress passed legislation transferring the corps of agricultural attachés from State to USDA, and converting them from Foreign Service to Civil Service status.

FAS again became a home to FSOs after the Foreign Service Act of 1980. The agricultural attachés in FAS were given a choice of continuing as Civil Service or being grandfathered into the Foreign Service. Many became FSOs. Dan Berman, a senior FSO who was in FAS in the

***FAS is moving from being primarily a reporting office to one that actively promotes U.S. crops and related products.***

1970s, has always been glad he chose the Foreign Service. “Being in the Foreign Service gives you a sense of identity,” he says, “and you do so many different things over the years.”

Despite such career satisfaction, the Foreign Service officer contingent at FAS peaked at 210 a few years ago, and has not yet recovered fully from several years of sharp falls.

As of March 2003, the agency’s approximately 1,000 employees included 168 FSOs, of whom 99 were serving overseas, and 69 in the United States — almost all of those in Washington. Four FAS Civil Service professionals also work for the agency overseas, as do about 130 Foreign Service Nationals who provide FAS with vital local information and administrative support.

Because of the disproportion between the two types of employees, the question of which positions go to Foreign Service employees and which to the Civil Service can be a tricky one. Agricultural attachés are always FSOs, but there’s another type of overseas slot, known as agricultural trade officers, focused on export promotion, not on policy. Those officers can come either from the Foreign or Civil Service. In addition, directors’ positions in Washington can go either way — to a GS-15 or an FS-1.

In previous years, competition for positions often led to tensions. One senior Civil Service employee acknowledges, “It’s still a split agency. The two groups are always watching each other. We try to keep a balance.” However, both categories of employees tell the *Foreign Service Journal* that the tense feelings have abated recently.

Says Steve Huete, an FSO with 20 years at the agency, “There’s going to be a certain amount of tension. But we’ve been working it out, with help from the two unions, AFSCME (the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) and AFSA.” Huete believes one thing that has reduced tension is an improved placement process for overseas posts: “We [now] have established procedures for bidding. [The process] is fairly transparent.”

As for stateside jobs, a key improvement has been the Washington Placement Plan, one Civil Service manager tells the *Journal*. The WPP guarantees that “every Foreign Service person coming from overseas has to have a position waiting for them. Otherwise, as in the past, they’d be walking the halls.”

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*Bob Guldin is a former editor of the Journal. He is now a freelance writer and editor in the Washington, D.C., area.*

Like FSOs in other agencies, those in FAS are subject to up-or-out, time-in-class rules. Most FAS officers are commissioned after four years, and then have 22 years to make it into the Senior Foreign Service. Therefore, many wind up leaving FAS after about 26 years.

However, FAS is unique among foreign affairs agencies in that FSOs can enter only through a lateral transfer within the agency. All employees enter FAS as civil servants, often transferring from another part of USDA. Many have master's degrees in a field such as public affairs or agricultural economics. After 18 months, they have a career choice at the GS-12 level — Foreign Service or Civil Service.

If they apply for the Foreign Service, there's both a written and an oral exam to pass. While the exam is selective, one FSO told the *Journal*, "If you're a competent person and you keep trying, you'll probably get in." Once accepted, FAS officers, unlike their State colleagues, do not have an A-100 orientation course, but they do take language training and area studies at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

An FSO in FAS can expect to spend about two-thirds of his or her career abroad, the rest in Washington. When overseas, they are most likely to work as an agricultural attaché — a generalist responsible for reporting, trade policy and issues, food aid and marketing.

"The amount of marketing an attaché will do depends on the lay of the land in that country," says veteran FSO Dan Berman. "When I was in Portugal, I saw lots of opportunities and I set my own agenda."

The biggest markets also have agricultural trade officers, focused on marketing. Japan, China and Mexico have multiple ATOs, an indication of their importance as trading partners.

### **Part of the Embassy Community**

The FAS officers the *Journal* spoke with say that relations with State and other agencies are pretty decent these days.

Veteran officer Steve Huete admits, "Oh yeah, we're aware that we're part of the Ag[riculture] Department, not the State Department. But we're active in the work of the embassy."

Adds Berman, "The relations you have are the ones you make. I have never seen anyone looking down their nose at us because of our acronym."

Allan Mustard, a senior FSO in the agency, agrees:

"With State, we have a much better relationship than when I entered the department 20 years ago. We are viewed as full members of the Foreign Service now."

Of the Foreign Commercial Service, Mustard says, "We're like fraternal twins, joined at the hip. A lot of times we'll cover for each other. We help them a lot with their reports."

Perhaps the strongest evidence that USDA's FSOs are getting real respect is that two of them are now ambassadors. Christopher Goldthwait, formerly the third-highest administrator in FAS, was named ambassador to Chad in 1999 — the first FAS person to become a chief of mission. Mattie Sharpless, who rose through the FAS ranks, is now ambassador to the Central African Republic.

In addition, the highly experienced FSOs the *Journal* spoke with all report positive feelings about their careers. As Steve Huete says, "It's a fun life. When I was stationed in Russia, some of my State Department colleagues were envious of my freedom of movement."

### **A Period of Growth**

If FAS as an agency is doing relatively well now, it probably has not hurt that the current Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, first entered USDA as deputy administrator of FAS in the late 1980s.

When asked whether Veneman has any special fondness for her old agency, Administrator Ellen Terpstra diplomatically replies, "She's very well aware of the talents and capabilities of our staff here and in the posts around the world. She has a high expectation of how the Foreign Service and our FSOs around the world will represent the entire Department of Agriculture."

Whatever the reason, FAS's fortunes have improved since the Bush administration took office. "A few years ago," says FSO Steve Huete, "we were trying to squeeze every penny we could."

FSO Allan Mustard notes, "In the 1990s, we were losing bodies through attrition — both Foreign Service and Civil Service. We had 50 vacancies at one point."

FAS budget officer Hal Wynne agrees, "During the second Clinton administration we suffered. They talked exports, but they didn't want to walk the walk. Under Secretary Veneman, our budget recovered. She has a greater interest in exports than [former Agriculture Secretary Dan] Glickman."

The numbers back up that assertion. In the current

fiscal year (2003), FAS's budget is \$133 million. That compares with \$126 million in 2002, \$124 million in 2001, and \$113 million in both FY 2000 and 1999.

Despite the favorable trend, Terpstra is concerned that her agency may be required over the next few years to pay extra millions to help cover the cost of building more secure embassies. That could be a big blow to a small agency, unless the funds are provided by a special congressional appropriation.

One reason FAS may be getting more resources is that agriculture and related products is the one sector in which the United States is running a trade surplus. In 2002, agriculture showed a surplus of over \$12 billion (\$53.3 billion in exports minus \$41.0 billion in imports). By contrast, the overall U.S. balance of trade was a whopping minus \$435 billion last year — by far the highest ever. And when you're running a trade deficit like that, you appreciate the solace that the agriculture sector provides.

Agricultural exports may be a bright side of America's trade picture, but they're not nearly as important to the overall economy as they used to be. In the 1950s, agriculture's share was about 22 percent of U.S. exports; that's now down to less than 8 percent. However, exports are far more important to America's agricultural sector than they used to be. When FAS was founded in 1953, about 10 percent of U.S. farm output was exported. That figure is now 25 percent.

### **The Work of FAS**

The agency's core functions still include some central diplomatic tasks, such as reporting on and analyzing host-country conditions. But the reporting function has changed over time, says FSO Allan Mustard. Until recently, "when it came to market analysis, we were it. We had been doing it going back to the 1890s. Today, a lot of agricultural companies are doing it too — we're not the only ones. But we do bring value added, because we're unbiased. Even the biggest companies like Cargill and ADM are heavy users of our databases."

Another big change is the fact that a majority of FAS's reporting is accessible over the Internet: attaché reports, trade statistics and tariff schedules can all be read on [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov). FAS also hosts U.S. suppliers online,

***FAS is unique among  
foreign affairs agencies in  
that FSOs can enter only  
through a lateral transfer  
within the agency.***

and advertises a range of programs there. For a while, it openly listed foreign firms that were interested in buying agricultural products. But the agency soon learned (surprise!) that companies from other countries were using its site to identify potential customers, so it tightened up its procedures; now it will mail or e-mail information to U.S. suppliers only.

The analysis of trends in agricultural exports is another important FAS task. For example, you can learn from FAS that, thanks in large part to NAFTA, Canada and Mexico are now, respectively, the number-one and number-three importers of U.S. agricultural products. Japan, which for years was number one, has fallen to number two, due in large part to its prolonged economic slump.

Increasingly, however, FAS is focusing on export promotion. The agency has always had a broad portfolio, covering not just bulk crops like wheat and cotton, but also lumber and forest products, fisheries, and all kinds of consumer foodstuffs. But the strong trend, comments FSO Dan Berman, is that "the growth of agricultural trade is going up the value chain. The emphasis is on finished products." In other words, let's not just export wheat; let's export crackers.

Not coincidentally, the new emphasis on finished products vastly increases the constituency that FAS can serve. Berman noted, "Farmers are a tiny percentage of the population. We work with bagel producers in Brooklyn. Food processing is a ubiquitous industry; it's 96 percent of your potential market." Similarly, for wood products, there's more emphasis on veneer and plywood, rather than raw logs.

Dan Berman, FAS's Director of Agricultural Export Services, observes, "We work closely with the 50 state departments of agriculture. They all have international marketing specialists. We rely on them to bring the companies to the table." Once they are in contact, FAS uses a range of tools to help potential exporters. FAS brings potential buyers (serious customers only) to the U.S. to meet exporters.

The section of FAS that is devoted to trade shows carefully examines all international trade shows with agricultural export potential, chooses around 30 each year that seem to have the best marketing opportunities, and sup-

## F O C U S

ports American pavilions at those events.

FAS also organizes overseas trade missions for U.S. firms, and does retail trade promotions and menu promotions overseas. In addition, it actively pursues “matchmaking,” finding potential U.S. exporters and foreign purchasers and bringing them together. Unlike the Foreign Commercial Service, FAS almost never charges fees for its services.

Another difference from FCS is the fact that FAS does not have export promotion offices in the United States. Instead, it has partnerships with four regional marketing associations — in the Northeast, South, Midwest and West — that offer marketing counseling to businesses seeking to export.

In recent years, FAS has put most of its energy into helping small- and medium-sized enterprises, but that

***Tension between Foreign  
and Civil Service  
employees has sometimes  
been a problem at FAS,  
but recently relations  
have improved.***

doesn't mean it won't help a large U.S. firm when the need is there. Berman recalls that when Hershey's Chocolate “needed our help in Japan, we helped open doors for them.”

How well does FAS do its export promotion job? Chris Schlect is the president of the Northwest Horticultural Council, which represents fruit growers in Oregon, Washington and Idaho. The council

has had a “cooperator agreement” with FAS since the 1960s, and Schlect says it works quite well. (Cooperators are trade organizations that work closely with FAS on market access and development; most receive some funding from FAS.)

Northwest growers and packing houses are generally rather small operations. “A small firm can't send someone over to break into a market,” Schlect notes. “But FAS

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## F O C U S

allows us to go into markets we wouldn't have been able to go into on our own."

"We have a high degree of respect for the professionals of FAS," Schlect tells the *Journal*. "Their trade policy work is vital. With traditional trade barriers coming down, countries come up with technical barriers. Having FAS there to tell which are legitimate is really valuable to us."

FAS is also responsible both for participating in the negotiation of new agreements and monitoring compliance with existing agreements. On the agency's plate now are negotiations for a Free Trade Area of the Americas, bilateral trade agreements with Singapore and Chile, and free trade agreements with Central America and Southern Africa. FAS is also monitoring both China's and Taiwan's compliance with the WTO's terms of accession.

Since the U.S. Trade Representative is generally the lead agency in such negotiations, FAS has people detailed there. "We definitely have a seat at the table," says a senior FAS official. Farm-trade liberalization is a

key agenda item in the Doha Round of world trade talks.

Complicating the negotiating work of FAS is the fact that food carries an unusual cultural and political weight in many societies. Farmers, even when only a small percentage of a country's population, often have considerable political clout. Even in the U.S., notes a senior FAS official, "we have some sectors that are very, very difficult — sugar, for example." Though "we all recognize that food is different from cars," says FAS Administrator Terpstra, and "we believe in free trade, agriculture has lagged behind other trade areas."

### **Genetically Modified? Some Say No**

In terms of monitoring trade agreements, says FSO Steve Huete, the "hottest topic is sanitary and phytosanitary [SPS] issues." (That's animal and plant health and safety.) "Countries can't use tariffs to keep out trade," explains Huete, so they raise health issues instead. "Occasionally there are legitimate differences on risk

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assessment,” Huete concedes, but often the concerns are a disguised form of protectionism.

Perhaps the toughest issue to hit FAS in its 50-year history is that of genetically modified (or transgenic) organisms, also known as GMOs. (FAS prefers the less scary name “biotech” exports.) The term refers to a set of technologies that alter the genetic makeup of living organisms such as plants, animals or bacteria. Biotech food products have become common in the U.S., but are meeting stiff resistance elsewhere.

FAS FSO Allan Mustard was present at the opening skirmish of this war. He was stationed at Embassy Vienna when Greenpeace Austria dumped a ton of genetically modified soybeans in front of the embassy with a big “Return to Sender” sign. That very day, April 8, 1997, the European Parliament overwhelmingly passed a strong resolution against GM corn, and the battle lines have been fixed ever since.

Mustard recalls, “They [Greenpeace] put it on the glob-

al agenda [partly because] the introduction of the technology was not handled well; there was not sufficient marketing.”

It is likely, he adds, that some anti-Americanism has gotten mixed in with the issue, as well. After all, in 2000 the U.S. grew 68 percent of the world’s GM crops. (Argentina and Canada grew almost all the rest. )

Beverly Simmons, assistant deputy administrator for trade policy, points out that “GMOs are generally available in the U.S. The only labeling required by USDA is if it has an allergy component or nutritional differentiation.” She notes that the biotech issue affects “two of our biggest bulk exports, corn and soybeans. ... Wheat and rice could also be impacted.”

Although GM corn and soybeans have been approved and accepted in some markets, notably Japan, overall, the outlook is not promising for GM exports. “They [the European Union] haven’t approved any biotech exports in four years. Europe is the litmus test,” Simmons says. Worse, “in other regions, such as Africa, there is height-

### Do Poor Farmers Get Hurt By U.S. Exports?

**T**he charge has often been made that the agricultural trade stance of the developed countries — especially the United States, the European Union and Japan — makes life very difficult for farmers in the developing countries.

There are three ways that happens, says Eugenio Diaz-Bonilla, a senior research fellow on global trade at the Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute: trade barriers (like tariffs and quotas), export subsidies and domestic subsidies.

Diaz-Bonilla said that studies by his institute show that those factors cause “displacement of production in the developing countries of \$26 billion a year.” That’s \$26 billion worth of agricultural production that just doesn’t happen.

“About half of that is due to the E.U., about 30 percent to the U.S., 10 percent to Japan, and the rest to other OECD countries,” Diaz-Bonilla tells the *Journal*.

Direct export subsidies from the E.U. are \$5 billion to \$7 billion annually, and dwarf those of the United States, according to Diaz-Bonilla. U.S. subsidies are about \$100 million per year, going just to poultry and dairy products.

Diaz-Bonilla says that no one objects to typical FAS activities like trade fairs and promotions. “All countries do that — though of course the U.S. has the largest network of agricultural officers, the most money and resources.”

The World Trade Organization’s current negotiations — the Doha Round — are attempting to deal with agricultural trade barriers. “The U.S. proposal there is very good,” comments

Diaz-Bonilla, “moving toward a more level playing field.”

Jim Grueff, an FSO who works on agricultural trade policy at FAS, tells the *Journal*, “That’s something we talk about all the time — the issue of domestic and export subsidies in developed countries, the effects of high tariff barriers, and how damaging that is, including to producers in developing countries.”

“Rather than arguing, to no effect, whether certain U.S. subsidies are damaging or not,” Grueff urges critics to concentrate on current negotiations.

“If somebody cornered us in Geneva and said, ‘But what about your cotton subsidies, what you’ve done to poor farmers?’ I would respond by saying, ‘Let’s focus on what’s achievable.’ It would be different if we hadn’t made very pro-active, very substantial proposals that involve cutting our own subsidies, but we have.”

In any case, the big problem regarding the United States and agricultural trade is not the U.S. position at the WTO, but the latest U.S. farm bill, which continues to provide expensive domestic subsidies to American farmers.

However, agricultural economist David Orden has written that the U.S. “position as a rhetorical champion of agricultural trade liberalization within the WTO” is not just posturing. “While not reforming its farm policies unilaterally, the United States has expressed its willingness, if its proposal is taken at face value, to engage in simultaneous multilateral liberalization of a significant magnitude.”

— Bob Guldin

ened concern about what they hear out of Europe. They're concerned that if they accept biotech products, they may create trade barriers," Simmons notes.

Terpstra complains, "The Europeans have continued their fear campaign in Africa about U.S. food aid. That further endangers people at risk [of hunger]." Many African countries, including Zambia and Zimbabwe, have already turned away donated American GM grains, though that embargo seems to be breaking down, probably because food shortages in southern Africa have become so severe.

Bernice Slutsky, who worked on this issue at FAS for six years, points out that in many countries people do not have confidence in their own governments, which complicates the issue. "In the United States, on the other hand, there's an acceptance of technology. ... People here trust the FDA and the USDA."

Still, Administrator Ellen Terpstra is hopeful the issue can be resolved. "We've had some good discussions." But she also says, "There are some cases where they are misusing these concerns to create trade barriers."

FSO Dan Berman pointed out that one possible solution to the problem might be labeling certain food as GM-free, but that has its own problems. "You have to prove a negative. ... Certification can be very difficult, especially in processed products. You may have 20 ingredients."

## **Foreign Aid**

In addition to all its other activities, FAS has an active foreign assistance section, which is about to be expanded with the addition of an important new program. It is in charge of one of the best known and longest-running foreign assistance programs, "Food for Peace," which was established by Public Law 480 in 1954. P.L. 480 provides for sales of American food commodities on concessional terms to foreign governments or NGOs. It's oriented toward countries that are having difficulty meeting their food needs through commercial channels.

In Fiscal Year 2001, under P.L. 480 the U.S. shipped over 750,000 tons of food, worth more than \$100 million. That included wheat to Indonesia and Peru, rice to the Philippines and Uzbekistan, and vegetable oils to El Salvador.

In 1993, the Office of International Cooperation and Development, an independent agency, was transferred to FAS. In charge of the office is Deputy Administrator for ICD Suzanne Heinen, an

FSO who's been with FAS for 18 years.

Heinen says that much of ICD's work is trade-related, such as training people in how the WTO works. ICD does technical training as well — for example, teaching food processors how to "maintain the cold train" so that frozen and refrigerated foods stay cold and edible. After Hurricane Mitch struck Central America, ICD worked on stabilization of watersheds there.

Many of ICD's programs are carried out by "Schedule B" (contract) employees who are hired for a particular assignment. In addition, about 100 people hired by ICD are detailed to the Agency for International Development and actually work at USAID's building.

The newest addition to the FAS program portfolio is the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, named after former Sens. George McGovern, D-S.D., and Robert Dole, R-Kan. Building upon a successful pilot program, the new program will supply food to schools in developing countries.

The goal is not merely to feed children, but also to encourage them to attend school, thereby achieving two major benefits through one activity.

Sen. Pat Roberts of Kansas was on hand at FAS's March 10 birthday celebration to announce the start of the new program, which he said had received the support of all 100 U.S. senators. Tying the effort to the nation's security worries, Roberts announced, "If you promote food security, it reduces the chance that these children will be recruited by terrorist groups."

## **A Solid Future**

With a growing budget, a strong track record, and a highly valued portfolio of responsibilities, FAS appears to have a solid future. The same can be said of FAS's small but crucial Foreign Service contingent.

Still, FSO Dan Berman, the director of the Ag Export Services Program, notes of FAS: "We're going through a period of soul-searching. We used to be self-contained. Now we're working closely with USTR and Commerce. We're a small organization. We have to be careful not to become overextended."

But Berman, with the determined optimism of an export promotion specialist, soon turns to the positive challenges his small agency is preparing to meet. "There are so many companies that could be exporting but aren't," he says.

Berman concluded, "If a company in Brooklyn can sell bagels in Japan, anything is possible." ■

# LIFE IN THE FAS LANE

Kevin Rechin

**D**

PRECISELY BECAUSE FAS IS SUCH A SMALL AGENCY, ACHIEVING SUCCESS REQUIRES DEDICATION AND COORDINATION FROM ALL PERSONNEL, FOREIGN AND CIVIL SERVICE ALIKE.

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*By ED PORTER*

Despite its name, civil servants predominantly staff the Foreign Agricultural Service. In fact, Civil Service personnel account for approximately 70 percent of the nearly one thousand FAS employees. Foreign Service personnel (officers and administrative assistants) comprise only about 17 percent, while our dedicated Foreign Service National staff account for the remaining 13 percent.

FAS personnel serve in 70 agricultural offices around the world, covering almost 130 countries. Our smallest offices may be run by a single Foreign Service National without a resident FS officer, while the largest offices can

have up to five Americans and 10 FSNs. Wherever they are stationed overseas, in addition to their country-specific responsibilities, most FAS FS officers are responsible for their own personnel, budgets and procurement actions. As with State and the other foreign affairs agencies, a majority — over 60 percent — of FAS's Foreign Service personnel are stationed overseas at any given time.

Nearly all FAS FS officers assigned abroad have multiple-country responsibilities, unlike their State Department colleagues. This requires that they travel, often extensively, and report to several ambassadors, which can test the political savvy of even the most experienced officer. However, regional responsibilities permit FAS FS officers to develop a wider perspective on agricultural issues, which can be a tremendous benefit. In addition, it permits formation of a broad view of a range of other issues, including commercial and political developments.

While FAS FS officers move approximately every three to four years, FSN staff serve in the same office for their entire careers. For that reason, FSNs are the backbone of our agency's in-country institutional memory and experience.

### **A Diverse Mission**

No matter where they are located or how they are staffed, all but a few agricultural offices have export promotion as one of their primary missions. Beyond that, the mix of responsibilities of an agriculture office varies greatly from post to post, though some FAS offices have relatively well-defined portfolios. For example, our offices in Geneva and Brussels cover the World Trade Organization and the European Commission and therefore focus almost exclusively on agricultural trade policy. Similarly, FAS offices located in major food-producing countries are heavily involved with reporting on key commodities and trade prospects; the agricultural offices in Canberra and

***Whereas an overseas  
FAS FS officer must be a  
jack-of-all-trades, back  
in Washington, he or  
she is a specialist.***

Buenos Aires keep track of developments involving key rivals of U.S. agriculture. Although the issues the FSOs track are often technical and sometimes sound arcane (What is avian influenza?), they can have a major economic impact on the U.S. agricultural sector.

Large posts with FAS contingents are especially versatile. In Moscow, the Office of Agricultural Affairs (supported by branch offices in St. Petersburg and Vladivostok) issues more than 50 reports a year on local crop production alone. It also monitors and promotes a long list of trade policy issues, and runs a host of food aid and international cooperation programs.

This diversity of missions means that FAS Foreign Service officers may be called upon on any given day to: meet with a vice minister in the host country's Ministry of Agriculture regarding an agricultural policy issue; negotiate the release of a shipment of U.S. food products held by local port officials for any variety of reasons; submit a scheduled commodity report to FAS headquarters; meet with visiting U.S. business representatives seeking export opportunities; preside at the opening of the U.S. pavilion at a local food show; arrange the visit of a Forest Service delegation; facilitate the logistics of donated wheat shipments; collect insect samples from local fields for U.S. research programs; or challenge the scientific validity of a local quarantine-based import ban.

Whereas an overseas FAS FS officer must be a jack-of-all-trades, back in Washington, he or she is a specialist. Most headquarters staff work either as analysts or as marketing or trade policy specialists. A typical day for an analyst may include updating the official supply and demand forecasts for a specific commodity, while a marketing specialist might review marketing plans and funding requests from an FAS overseas office. A trade policy specialist may draft briefing papers in preparation for upcoming negotiations.

Because FAS FS officers normally are assigned to overseas tours of three to four years, they often are reluctant to accept short-term, TDY assignments. As a result, these opportunities primarily go to Civil Service employees, who wish to work overseas without com-

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*Ed Porter is AFSA's Vice-President for FAS. An FSO since 1988, he has served in France, the United Arab Emirates and Washington, D.C.*

## F O C U S

mitting to a career in the Foreign Service.

### **Hiring from Within**

Perhaps the most significant difference between the Foreign Agricultural Service and most other Foreign Service agencies is the fact that we actually select our FS officers from within our own ranks. This is done through a unique process, called Lateral Entry, which generally takes approximately one year to complete, from application to overseas assignment. (In fact, this is how I entered the Foreign Service 15 years ago.)

To apply, an FAS employee must be in a career or career-conditional position, have worked 18 months in the Department of Agriculture (of which 12 months must have been in FAS), and be at the GS-11 grade or above at the time of application. Each FS candidate must com-

***Though the FAS portfolio varies greatly from post to post, all but a few offices***

***concentrate on export***

***promotion.***

plete an extensive application, including written accomplishments in specified areas. Each application is reviewed by the FAS Qualifications Review and Evaluation Panel. This panel is comprised of five FS officers, ranging in rank from junior to Senior Foreign Service officers, of whom one is from outside the Foreign Agricultural Service. The QREP ranks all the applicants and recommends

the top qualifiers to the FS Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners administers two exams, one written and one oral, and based on the results, selects the most qualified candidates for the Foreign Service.

Each year, approximately 10 to 15 FAS Civil Service employees apply for the Foreign Service and, on average, about half successfully complete the process. Successful candidates are offered a three-year, career-

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conditional appointment, subject to obtaining security and medical clearances. Individuals who are not selected for the Foreign Service may apply again the following year.

One advantage of this system is that individuals who fail to meet FS commissioning requirements are entitled to re-employment rights within FAS at their former GS level. They are not out on the street. Also, junior officers who, after serving one tour of duty overseas, decide that a Foreign Service career is not for them, may return to the ranks of the Civil Service at the GS grade at which they left. This allows productive employees with overseas experience to remain within our agency, thus benefiting our mission.

### **Forging a Partnership**

Current relations between FAS Civil and Foreign Service employees are cordial and productive. This has not always been the case. In the past, differences between the two personnel systems, combined with the need to annually rotate FS officers back to headquarters each summer, led to heated disputes between management and the Civil Service and Foreign Service employee unions. Until about a decade ago, FS officers returning to headquarters were routinely assigned to a position with little fanfare. For example, often, an incoming officer followed an outbound officer into a position.

With the advent of an agency Partnership Council about 10 years ago came demands from Civil Service colleagues to change a system they perceived as covert and unfair. In response, the summer assignment process was opened to Civil Service employees who requested to rotate to a different position at the same grade or sought promotion to a higher grade. Thus was born the FAS Washington Placement Plan, or WPP as it is commonly known.

The early years of the WPP were difficult. Civil Service employees continued to push for expanded access to rotation and promotion opportunities on an annual basis. Foreign Service officers came to view the WPP as a means by which they were denied challeng-

***A review of the top  
20 positions within the  
agency indicates that the  
WPP system appears  
to be working.***

ing Washington assignments to accommodate a CS promotion or, worse, forced into positions below their grade (a situation CS employees are protected from) and thus possibly disadvantaged before selection boards.

Following several years of difficult negotiations, which at one point caused relations between the two services to plummet to rock-bottom, a compromise was reached a few years ago. While neither employee union is completely pleased with the final product, resolution of this issue has led to a significant improvement in relations between the two services. A review of the top 20 positions within the agency indicates that the WPP system appears to be working: the positions are evenly divided between FS and non-FS officers, including two positions held by political appointees.

Starting in the 2004 cycle, new regulations will require Civil Service personnel at the GS-14 and -15 levels to rotate to different jobs, if they have been in their current position for more than six years. This means senior positions, which would otherwise probably remain encumbered by Civil Service employees for years, will be available to FS personnel, those returning to headquarters and those already there.

Wherever they are located, FS and CS staff work together to carry out the two-prong mission of the Foreign Agricultural Service: to expand export opportunities for U.S. agricultural, fish and forest products, and to promote world food security. Carrying out this mission requires a combination of analytical, policy and marketing skills, as well as close working relations with other U.S. government agencies, state governments and organizations, U.S. and foreign private sector contacts, and foreign governments. And precisely because FAS is such a small agency, achieving success requires dedication and coordination from all personnel, in the Foreign and Civil Service alike.

Although they serve in the Department of Agriculture, FAS FS officers, like their colleagues in the other foreign affairs agencies, enjoy a unique lifestyle that offers significant challenges and rewards. To date, I have enjoyed the ride. I believe most of my colleagues feel the same way. ■

# AN UNAUTHORIZED HISTORY OF FAS

Kevin Rechin

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IN A TRADITION DATING BACK TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, FAS HAS DEDICATED ITSELF TO IMPROVING MARKET ACCESS FOR U.S. AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES PRODUCTS.

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*BY ALLAN MUSTARD*

hough officially constituted in 1953, the Foreign Agricultural Service enjoys a tradition dating back to the American Revolution. This long history includes ongoing, close relations with the State Department.

The first agricultural attaché was Thomas Jefferson. Before becoming Secretary of State, Jefferson was posted to Paris as the third-ranking officer of the American legation (after Minister Benjamin Franklin and his deputy, John Adams). In his memoirs, Jefferson wrote:

“My duties, at Paris, were confined to a few objects: the receipt of our whale-oils, salted fish, and salted meats, on favor-

able terms; the admission of our rice on equal terms with that of Piedmont, Egypt and the Levant; a mitigation of the monopolies of our tobacco by the Farmers-general, and a free admission of our productions into their islands were the principal commercial objects which required attention...”

Jefferson’s task list consists wholly of improving market access for agricultural and fisheries products — duties that remain today a major preoccupation of the Foreign Agricultural Service. During his years in Paris Jefferson also shipped interesting plants and seeds back to Monticello, where they were propagated and, if useful, introduced to American agriculture.

For years, State Department diplomats handled agricultural reporting and specimen collection. William Eaton, consul at Tunis during President Washington’s administration, shipped Barbary sheep back to Secretary of State Timothy Pickering. Under President John Quincy Adams, American consuls were formally instructed to forward rare plants and seeds to the Department of State, where clerks in the Patent Office saw to their distribution. State also began collecting agricultural information, especially statistics. These were first published in the Patent Office’s 1842 annual report, which commented on British imperial preferences and competition from Canada.

In 1862 President Lincoln created the Department of Agriculture, and collection of information on foreign agriculture shifted to the new USDA’s Statistical Division. Interest in information on potential demand for U.S. agricultural products led in 1882 to the Statistical Division hiring an agent in the London consulate general to collect statistics on European agriculture, especially grains and meats. This was USDA’s first overseas office.

In 1905, a USDA Bureau of Statistics employee was posted to London — the department’s first overseas agricultural “commissioner.” His regular reports were published in monthly bulletins. World War I saw the temporary end of nearly all foreign agricultural reporting, but

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*Allan Mustard is an FSO with the Foreign Agricultural Service, which he joined in 1982. His overseas posts have been Moscow, Istanbul and Vienna, and he will return to Moscow this summer.*

***Under President John Quincy Adams, American consuls were formally instructed to forward rare plants and seeds to the Department of State.***

USDA went ahead with creation of a Foreign Markets Investigation Division in 1917, anticipating what was to come.

The war ended in November 1918, and by May 1919 USDA “Commissioner” Ed Foley was in London to study markets for U.S. agricultural exports. His results were so favorably received that in the 1920s agricultural commissioners were posted to Buenos Aires, Belgrade, Berlin, Budapest, Marseilles, Rome, Vienna, Mexico City, Shanghai, and Sydney (though not all at the same time). Their good work led to a push for the commissioners to be granted diplomatic status, which the State Department rejected, saying there was no statutory authority to do so.

**Official Diplomatic Status for Attachés**

In 1924 Representative John Ketcham introduced a “Foreign Crop Marketing and Report Bill” to codify the overseas work of agricultural commissioners and to grant them diplomatic status. Some members of Congress objected on the grounds that the Foreign Commercial Service could adequately fulfill the reporting and marketing functions for agriculture, and the bill languished. In 1928 Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover testified in favor of the Ketcham bill, however, and after six years of wrangling, a bill granting diplomatic status to agricultural attachés was passed. By this time Hoover was president, and he signed the bill into law on June 5, 1930. The act also upgraded the USDA’s Foreign Section to division status, and renamed it the Foreign Agricultural Service.

At this time the Foreign Agricultural Service was tiny, with eight commodity specialists in Washington and seven overseas posts. As the Great Depression set in, the offices in Australia and South Africa were closed. In 1939, President Roosevelt ordered the attachés of both Commerce and Agriculture transferred to the State Department. The agricultural attachés thus moved over to State; the domestic analysts of the Foreign Agricultural Service stayed at USDA and “FAS” became known as the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, a staff office of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Initially, OFAR’s relations with State were good. Immediately after World War II, State expanded the num-

ber of attachés from seven to 74, with heavy coverage in Europe and Latin America. As time went by, however, friction developed. Although OFAR could influence attaché selection, State's hiring process was geared to the liberal arts and not agriculture. Thus between 1939 and 1954 only two new officers were hired for the career agricultural attaché service. OFAR complained that during tight budget years, State cut the agricultural attachés before cutting other programs, and also largely disregarded OFAR input when evaluating and promoting attachés. State also sometimes used the agricultural attaché service as a dumping ground for underperformers.

The final blow came in June 1951, when the State Department obtained authority from the White House to block requests from other departments for economic information from U.S. diplomatic missions. State began unilaterally deleting reports from USDA's standing attaché report schedule, and USDA's protests were ignored. With this, efforts got under way to bring the agricultural attachés home to USDA.

President Eisenhower's new Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Taft Benson, changed OFAR back to FAS, an agency of the USDA, on March 10, 1953 — the date considered the modern FAS's "birthday." Benson's budget assistant, W. Arthur "Art" Minor, began orchestrating lunches between FAS employees and key Congressmen to make the case for transferring the agricultural attachés back to USDA. Public Law 83-690, to do just that, passed with scant opposition and was signed into law on Aug. 28, 1954. A little over a year later, Secretary Benson emphasized two things in a speech to the USDA attachés assembled in Paris: they were again employees of USDA, and at the same time were to "function as a part of the working team of our embassies where you serve."

It is indicative of the depths to which relations had sunk, however, that a still-in-effect 1954 memorandum of understanding between USDA and State specifies that State shall not obstruct communications between an agricultural attaché and USDA headquarters.

### **The New Foreign Agricultural Service**

Outsiders view FAS as a single, unified agency, but it was actually cobbled together from several groups that survive today as four identifiable subcultures within the agency — the analysts, the marketing specialists, the surplus disposal folks, and the agricultural development and technical assistance group. By the end of the 1950s, the

first three groups were working smoothly, though it took until 1981 to incorporate the surplus disposal function formally into FAS.

The core of the FAS was made up of about 30 country and commodity analysts from OFAR, headed by Fred Rossiter as assistant administrator for "foreign service and agricultural analysis," and the attachés themselves. The attachés had a close kinship to the OFAR analysts, but virtually none of them had ever served in Washington. The analysts and attachés focused on economic and statistical analysis, and formed the kernel of what became FAS's analytical and trade policy units.

Starting in November 1953, the second "subculture" began to take shape as FAS launched a new program area, "market development and commodity programs." For this FAS needed a new type of employee. The old-line attachés, used to being reporting officers, thought market development "strange," and the old OFAR commodity analysts simply didn't know anything about marketing. In addition to the stereotypical "farm boy with a Ph.D." of the old attaché service, FAS went out to recruit commodity specialists from other corners of USDA. They generally had less formal education but enjoyed deep knowledge of specific agricultural products and the markets in which they moved. They formed a close partnership with the private-sector "cooperators," trade associations which in 1955 began to sign cooperative agreements with FAS on market development overseas.

Thus by the end of the 1950s FAS consisted of the analysts close to the numbers and the marketing specialists close to "the trade." Nearly 50 years later, this dichotomy has even been codified in law. The agricultural attaché, authorized under 7 USC 1762 as well as the Foreign Service Act of 1980, is principally engaged in market intelligence and trade policy matters; the agricultural trade officer, authorized under 7 USC 1765a, is required by law to focus on market development. It is unusual for corporate culture to be reflected in law, and no less unusual for a foreign affairs agency to have three legal authorities to send people overseas.

During the same period, the third distinct "subculture" of FAS came into being: the "surplus disposal" group led by Marshall Plan veteran Gwynn Garnett. Garnett had been a tank company commander in World War II, and after V-E Day was named director of the Food and Agricultural Division of the U.S. military government in West Germany, where he was deeply involved in the Berlin

## F O C U S

Airlift. Upon discharge, Garnett went to work for the American Farm Bureau Federation as a legislative liaison, promoting the idea of a program to sell surplus American commodities overseas for foreign currencies, and to use those funds for economic development projects. Garnett actually wrote his first draft of what became Public Law 480 in 1950 following a trip to India, where he collected more information in support of his concept. He later served as FAS administrator.

### “Food for Peace”

Public Law 480, the “Food for Peace” program that nearly 50 years later remains a cornerstone of American foreign assistance, was enacted on July 10, 1954. This food aid law grants USDA a rare privilege — authority to sign agreements with foreign countries without the advice and consent of the Senate. FAS attachés were responsible for overseas implementation of the program, but a domestic group responsible for surplus disposal was formed. In the 1950s this surplus

disposal group was housed in another USDA agency.

Until 1961 FAS coordinated surplus disposal through a sister agency within USDA, the domestically oriented and more politicized Commodity Stabilization Service. CSS was the home of the domestic commodity program offices, as well as the surplus disposal group and the general sales manager. The GSM, invariably a political appointee, was responsible for all policy issues relating to surplus disposal, including setting prices, and approving and signing food aid agreements. At the beginning of the Kennedy administration the GSM and his staff were shifted from CSS to FAS. This move irritated an important congressman, and touched off a political tug-of-war that continued for nearly two decades.

Representative Jamie Whitten, D-Miss., Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee’s subcommittee on appropriations for 44 years (and chairman of the full House Appropriations Committee for 13 years), was known informally as the “permanent secretary of agriculture.” Chairman Whitten thought the GSM should have

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his own agency. In an effort to cultivate good relations with the powerful Democratic majority congressman, one of President Nixon's first acts in 1969 was to create the Export Marketing Service in USDA, to be headed by the GSM. This lasted until 1974, when President Ford, a former House minority leader, ordered the GSM back into the Foreign Agricultural Service as the third-ranking official. Chairman Whitten continued to fight for a separate agency, however, and one of President Jimmy Carter's first acts was to create a new Office of the General Sales Manager. That lasted four years. Finally, in 1981, President Reagan ordered OGSM merged with FAS, where it has remained for the last 22 years.

The story didn't end there, however. Chairman Whitten pushed legislation through which stipulated that the GSM should report directly to the Secretary of Agriculture. Thus, though the FAS administrator had to report to the secretary through the under secretary for international affairs and commodity programs, by act of Congress his number-three subordinate had a direct

pipeline to the top! That law was repealed after Chairman Whitten's retirement in 1995.

One result of this back-and-forth movement was that the old OGSM, now called Export Credits, consolidated the surplus disposal subculture of FAS. These folks are the spiritual successors to Gwynn Garnett, the major architect of P-L 480. They focus not on analysis, nor on market development, but on the arcana of law and regulation governing surplus disposal, food aid, and export credit guarantees. Their culture is one of implementing the multitude of legal amendments and regulatory changes that have grown up around USDA food aid and export credit programs in the last half-century.

By the 1960s FAS had settled into a routine. The agency at home largely consisted of agricultural economic analysts and commodity marketing specialists, and during those interludes when the general sales manager was on board, of the surplus disposal specialists as well. As far as the overseas crowd went, they were divided into two groups: "house dogs" and "yard dogs". The house dogs did one tour



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as a junior professional, returned to Washington for 20 or more years, then served once more overseas before retiring. The yard dogs stayed out as much as possible. In an extreme case, Jerome M. “Jerry” Kuhl joined OFAR/State in 1952, and retired from FAS in 1989. In nearly 38 years of service he spent only 18 months in headquarters assignments, most of that in language training.

### FAS Rejoins the Foreign Service

In 1954, when FAS was taking permanent shape, the agricultural attachés became civil servants instead of Foreign Service officers. This led to a number of problems. First, rotational authority (the ability to “stretch” or “shrink” into assignments) is, of course, not inherent to the Civil Service. The ability to shrink was eventually written into Title 7 of the U.S. Code specifically for FAS, but with a limit of three years before an employee had to revert to a lower grade. This complicated overseas assignments and sometimes made matching the right person to the right job impossible for bureaucratic reasons. Benefits legislated for

Foreign Service officers did not automatically accrue to FAS attachés, so follow-up legislation was always required — and was not always forthcoming. On top of that, some foreign countries were unwilling to accredit agricultural attachés as diplomats, since they did not hold presidential commissions.

FAS was also irritated that State would not grant its attachés at important posts the title of counselor of embassy. Congressman Kika de la Garza, D-Texas, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, learned of this while on a congressional junket, and included language in a 1977 appropriations bill requiring State to grant no fewer than 10 counselor titles to agricultural attachés. State fumed, but granted the titles, then proceeded to upgrade its section chiefs at certain of those posts to the rank of minister-counselor. FAS asked State for that title, too, and was, of course, denied. In 1987, Chairman de la Garza struck again, with a rider in that year’s appropriations bill that accorded FAS up to 12 minister-counselors.

In the meantime, FAS had rejoined the Foreign Service.

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When the State Department invited FAS to participate in drafting a new act, Deputy Administrator for Attachés and Management Richard A. “Dick” Smith readily accepted. As a result, FAS, a foreign affairs agency and member of the Board of the Foreign Service since 1930, became a full-fledged Foreign Service agency with passage of the Foreign Service Act of 1980. Currently-serving attachés and others meeting specific, prior-service criteria were grandfathered into the Foreign Service on Nov. 16, 1981. Dick Smith, by now FAS administrator, became FAS’s first career minister.

But Administrator Smith also committed an egregious mistake, which haunts the agency to this day. He asserted publicly and repeatedly that the future lay with those who would join the Foreign Service, and the careers of those who intended to remain in the Civil Service would not be as bright. This fractured a previously harmonious working environment, soon leading to bitter conflict between civil servants and Foreign Service officers over promotion opportunities. The issue has by now been largely resolved through collective bargaining, but residual tension remains.

The fourth and last constituent of FAS popped up unexpectedly, the result of the merger of USDA’s Office of International Cooperation and Development into the Foreign Agricultural Service. Actually, the merger constituted something of a homecoming. In the 1940s OFAR had a technical collaboration branch that trained foreign agricultural specialists from Latin America and managed joint agricultural research programs there. From 1951 to 1954, first OFAR and then FAS collaborated with USDA’s Extension Service to train and send overseas roughly 400 agricultural development specialists as part of the Truman administration’s “Point IV Program,” one of several government programs later consolidated into the International Cooperation Agency, the precursor of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

### **The Development Thrust**

OICD was created in 1980 through the efforts of Dr. Quentin West, a former administrator of USDA’s Economic Research Service and former trade policy analyst in FAS. In the 1970s, the USAID headquarters staff included several agricultural development specialists handling overseas projects. Ostensibly to increase efficiency of government, but in reality due to criticism from Congress about USAID having too many people in Washington, they were transferred to USDA. At the time, USDA had no logical place to put them, but since the Economic Research

Service had analysts specializing in foreign countries, the development specialists ended up forming the Foreign Development Division of ERS.

During the Carter administration, Dr. West was made a special assistant to the under secretary for international affairs and commodity programs. There he assembled three units into a package, which he proposed be consolidated into a new Office for International Cooperation and Development. They were: the ERS’s Foreign Development Division, which did not really fit in a research agency; the foreign currency-funded exchange programs of the Science and Education Administration, a consortium of USDA agencies engaged in international research that no one agency really owned; and the International Organization Affairs Staff attached to the office of the FAS administrator, and in which the then-administrator had no interest.

In 1993, the new secretary of Agriculture, former Mississippi Congressman Mike Espy, realized that Congress was in a mood to reorganize USDA. To forestall this, he preemptively ordered his own overhaul, calling for a reduction from 43 agencies to 29. FAS and OICD were ordered to merge, precipitating a serious clash of cultures.

OICD was made up of aid-oriented staff, who saw development and technical assistance as their mission and tended to view the core FAS mission of promoting exports with distaste. In essence, OICD borrowed its culture from USAID, an agency historically often in conflict with FAS. To comprehend the level of anguish in both agencies over the summary merger, one must recall that at the first FAS attaché conference at Paris in 1955, Secretary Benson reminded the assembled attachés:

“The United States, as a matter of foreign policy, is aiding many countries in their agricultural development. But the Congress and the president did not give the Department of Agriculture the responsibility for foreign development. That responsibility is vested elsewhere in our government. Our own primary mission is to help U.S. farmers. Any unnecessary diversion of our efforts to other enterprises dilutes our effectiveness and runs counter to the expressed wishes of those who gave us our assignments.”

During the planning of the reorganization, the OICD representative on the merger team got administration consent to change FAS’s name to “International Agricultural Trade Service.” The idea was that a new name would lead to easier reconciliation of the two divergent cultures, but the move was thwarted by Congress because the FAS “brand name” was viewed as an asset to the government.

## F O C U S

Today the “international cooperation and development” subculture in the FAS is moving in the direction of support for the core mission of promoting exports, and the mainstream FAS culture is starting to recognize the utility of technical assistance in helping open markets. The new concept is “trade capacity-building,” and it appears to be on the way to acceptance.

### **FAS Today**

With 50 years (or 73, or 218, depending on how you count) behind it, FAS looks ahead to new challenges: negotiating the Doha Development Agenda and a Free Trade Area for the Americas, and the growing importance of high-value and consumer ready products. Europe is challenging us as a major food exporter while continuing to restrict access to its market. Technical assistance is more market-oriented today, competitors demand curtailment of our export credit guarantee programs, and both commercial sales and food aid delivery are complicated by the rise of foreign opposition to products of biotechnology.

In 1930 the attaché communicated with Washington by diplomatic pouch. Today he or she uses e-mail, phone, and fax. In 1930 all FAS attachés were white males. Today the service is much more diverse. Our most senior overseas officer is a woman, our administrator is a woman, and of two FAS career ministers serving in ambassadorships, one is an African-American woman. But, we are still working on bringing four disparate corporate subcultures together, not to mention healing the wounds of the Civil/Foreign Service fracas.

In 1930 the focus was on Europe, with only intermittent postings to Shanghai, Sydney, Buenos Aires and Mexico City. Today the focus is on Asia and the Western Hemisphere, and we are reducing our presence in Europe. In the 1950s, we mostly dealt with state trading organizations. Today the private sector reigns in most of the world. Some things remain the same, however. Just like Mr. Jefferson, we are still trying to get our agricultural products into Europe, and everywhere else, “on favorable terms.” ■

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# HIGH STAKES, HIGH HURDLES: U.S. FARM TRADE POLICY

Kevin Hechin

WHILE FAS STILL CARRIES OUT ITS “TRADITIONAL” FUNCTIONS, ITS ACTIVITIES ARE INCREASINGLY FOCUSING ON TRADE POLICY AND EXPORT PROMOTION.

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BY *ERIC TRACHTENBERG*

**A**

lthough it is not immediately apparent when one wanders through Iowa’s vast cornfields, 20 percent of total U.S. corn production goes to foreign markets. In fact, U.S. agriculture is twice as reliant as the economy as a whole on overseas markets, making it one of the United States’ most trade-dependent sectors. By 2000, exports accounted for 26 percent of total U.S. farm cash receipts, and considerably more for many products. Almost two-thirds of our almond harvest and 60 percent of American cattle hides are exported, as are nearly half of U.S. wheat and rice crops. About one-third of soybean, tobacco and cotton production, and fresh table grapes, dried plums, raisins, canned

sweet corn, walnuts, and animal fats, go overseas.

These numbers are not just dry statistics. When Taiwan suspended imports of U.S. apples because of pest concerns in late 2002, lower demand pushed prices for apples on the West Coast down, causing major financial problems for some growers. The problem became important enough to involve the governor and Washington state's congressional delegation.

Farms are not the only beneficiaries of agricultural trade. Agricultural exports also benefit the packaging, shipping and financing sectors of the U.S. economy. Agricultural exports, expected to reach \$57 billion in 2003, will generate an additional \$80 billion in supporting business activities and provide employment for 765,000 Americans.

In response, while FAS still carries out its "traditional" functions (such as reporting on local agricultural conditions), its activities increasingly focus on trade policy, export promotion, food aid, export credits and international cooperation programs. But this shift in focus is really nothing new: ever since its establishment in 1953, the agency has continually reinvented itself in recognition that both American and world agriculture have changed and globalized; information and communications technology have changed the way U.S. exporters do business around the world; and that the international trading system has expanded and evolved.

### **Pursuing Trade Agreements**

The increasing importance of foreign markets to U.S. agriculture has driven a major expansion of FAS's trade policy role. To secure markets for our agricultural prod-

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*Eric Trachtenberg is currently deputy chief of the agricultural affairs section at the American Institute in Taiwan. He joined FAS in 1995 and worked in Washington, D.C., covering trade policy in one assignment and forest products in the other. From 1998 to 2001, he served in the Office of Agricultural Affairs at Embassy Moscow. Prior to entering the Foreign Service, he worked in the House of Representatives, for the Environmental Protection Agency and on the Taiwan Stock Market.*

## ***Agricultural exports also benefit the packaging, shipping and financing sectors of the U.S. economy.***

ucts, the U.S. government has aggressively pursued trade negotiations wherever possible. Over the past decade, Washington has signed more than 10 trade agreements with major implications for agriculture. The most significant of these are:

- The Uruguay Round, which resulted in the creation of the World Trade Organization on Jan. 1, 1995.

This was the first multilateral trade round to deal with agriculture comprehensively. The Uruguay Round agreements resulted in lower tariffs, reduced export subsidies, disciplines on certain kinds of farm support, and the conversions of bans and quotas to tariff rate quotas that allow the entry of a quantity of products at a lower duty.

- The North American Free Trade Agreement, which was implemented in January 1994 to establish free trade rules among Canada, Mexico and the United States. The agreement phases out most trade restrictions within 15 years. Partially because of NAFTA, U.S. exports to Canada and Mexico now exceed those to Japan and the European Union combined. In 2002, American exports to Canada exceeded those to Japan.

These and other agreements have opened markets, reduced unfair competition, brought some discipline to quarantine barriers, and introduced more effective dispute-settlement procedures in global trade. As a result, USDA estimates that trade liberalization has increased exports by \$3.5 billion a year since 1985.

The U.S. is hoping to deepen liberalization through the ongoing Doha Round and negotiations for a Free Trade Area of the Americas, along with free trade agreements with Southern Africa, Central America, Chile, Singapore and Australia. FAS works closely with the State Department and the U.S. Trade Representative to advance those initiatives.

At the same time, U.S. trade faces threats from regional trade agreements that exclude the United States. There are today more than 130 preferential trade agreements around the world, of which the United States is a party to only three. E.U. expansion into Eastern Europe poses a particular threat, both by shutting us out of markets in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria and by encouraging them to overproduce through high subsidies. This overproduction can cut U.S. market share in third countries and lower prices for U.S. farmers.

However, negotiating agreements is only half the battle. Since agriculture remains one of the most contentious points in international trade, every trade agreement requires a sustained monitoring effort to ensure full implementation — even by close allies of the U.S. In 1997, Israel nominally liberalized imports of American beef, only to ban them as “non-kosher.” Since the determination of kosher status lay in the hands of the rabbinical authorities, the government claimed that its hands were tied. And for all their political differences, both China and Taiwan have dragged their feet on issuing the regulations required to implement their tariff rate quota commitments when they entered the WTO last year.

### **New Frontiers in Protectionism**

As tariffs and other traditional trade barriers have fallen, countries have been creative in finding new ones. Led by the E.U., our trading partners increasingly are using issues such as quarantine, biotechnology and food safety standards to evade their trade commitments, despite the clear intent of the WTO.

For example, under the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, better known as the SPS Agreement, WTO contracting parties are only supposed to use the “least trade-restrictive” barriers possible; to base their measures on sound science and international standards; and to accept alternative regulations that provide the same effective level of protection.

Nevertheless, many U.S. trading partners routinely use SPS measures to block trade. Some countries may suspend all American fruit imports when they find a pest in just one piece of fruit among thousands, or decide to ban imports from a whole state or country when only one county has a disease risk. Other tactics, such as E.U. restrictions on the approval and marketing of bioengineered food, or the Russian ban on U.S. poultry imports, violate another WTO guideline, that contracting parties should rely on “sound science to protect human, animal or plant life.”

Not all SPS trade barriers are illegitimate, of course. Many agricultural quarantines keep out pests that could cause significant damage to the environment and agriculture of the recipient country. (This is why even American travelers can't just bring fresh fruit or meat back with them into the U.S.) One pest, the Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*), also known as the Medfly, was inad-

vertently introduced into California in 1979 and into Florida in 1997. Although efforts to control the pest have been successful, they have not been cheap: since 1980, California has spent \$250 million to contain the Medfly. But the alternative is much worse: a University of California study calculated that a major infestation could cause output losses of \$538 million and 7,900 lost jobs in California alone.

In the post-Sept. 11 world, these SPS issues also have important national security ramifications. FAS works closely with USDA's quarantine agency, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, to protect the United States from harmful imports and to assist U.S. exporters in shipping products overseas. Reflecting this role, parts of APHIS were transferred to the new Department of Homeland Security.

Still, sometimes such restrictions reach the absurd. At FoodEx, the largest food show in Asia, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture insisted that organic products displayed would have to carry the ministry-approved organic label. This is despite the fact that the U.S. is considered equivalent with respect to organic production and the product would not be sold in Japan. The ministry also tried to insist that the trade show floor be designated as an import location, and that importer representatives arrive the day before the show to verify documentation and individually label every organic item. Although Japan relented and acquiesced to having the food products labeled “Sample — not for resale”, that required a concerted effort by FAS and others to achieve.

Another hurdle for U.S. farm exports has been the spread of “multifunctionality”: the idea that agriculture provides more than food and plays other important roles in conservation, the preservation of rural lifestyle, etc. The problem with this concept is that it can be applied to anything — for example, one could consider the steel industry multifunctional because it affects the environment and the local economy. At its base, multifunctionality, like opposition to biotechnology and other SPS barriers, is often merely an excuse to impede trade and thereby protect inefficient domestic producers under the banners of public health and environmentalism — without legal justification.

As such barriers proliferate, FAS will need expertise not only in trade policy but, increasingly, in the hard sciences. Although FAS works closely with scientists in APHIS, the Food Safety and Inspection Service, the

Food and Drug Administration and other agencies, there is always more demand for expertise than supply. Thus, FAS officers will need to deepen their own understanding of food safety and be able to distinguish between legitimate concerns and unjustified trade barriers.

### **Debunking “Frankenfoods”**

Of all the SPS issues, biotechnology is probably most important to the future development of U.S. agriculture and international development. As of mid-2002, biotech varieties accounted for 34 percent of corn, 71 percent of cotton, and 75 percent of soybean plantings in the United States. This dependence on biotechnology has made gaining worldwide acceptance of this technology vital for U.S. trade and the continued competitiveness of U.S. agriculture.

Conversely, failure to bring down such barriers will be very costly. The European Union’s restrictions on biotech foods (commonly known as Genetically Modified Organisms, or GMOs) are already costing U.S. corn exporters \$200 million annually. A proposed E.U. labeling regulation could result in a loss of an estimated additional \$4 billion in agricultural trade.

Unfortunately, these problems are likely to worsen before improving. Alarmed by failures in their food safety systems and by misplaced environmentalist sentiment, the governments of America’s trading partners are under increasing pressure to regulate trade. In Europe, outbreaks of “mad cow” disease, formally known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and foot-and-mouth disease, and the detection of cancer-causing dioxin in chicken, have all undermined European consumers’ confidence in their regulatory systems. Meanwhile, Japan has grappled with contaminated dairy products and processors who mislabel imported beef as domestic products to get higher prices. At the same time, parts of the environmental movement have been co-opted by protectionists into opposing biotechnology, despite scientific evidence that properly regulated GMOs are safe, reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides (not only helping the environment, but saving farmers’ lives, especially in the developing world), and help prevent erosion through use of min-

*As tariffs and other traditional trade barriers have fallen, countries have been creative in finding new ones to undermine their trade commitments.*

imum tillage cropping systems.

To counter negative public opinion (as shown in the popular denunciation of GMOs as “Frankenfoods”) and head off regulatory action against biotechnology, FAS also needs to reach out to host country opinion-leaders. Our message should be that biotechnology, trade and modern farming contribute positively to poverty reduction, the environment and public health. For example,

biotech Golden Rice has enhanced levels of Vitamin A that could sharply reduce the incidence of childhood blindness in many countries, while Roundup Ready Soybeans result in a lower application of chemicals and allow use of minimum tillage systems that reduce erosion and help conserve soil resources. GMO products also can increase yields and permit farming in adverse conditions, which benefit poor farmers, who make up a majority of the world’s poor.

Some FAS posts, often in cooperation with embassy public affairs sections, have held educational seminars and study tours for journalists and legislators along with outreach and scientific exchange programs between U.S. and other country scientists and regulatory officials. (See “Speaking Out: Using Public Diplomacy to Promote Agricultural Biotechnology” by Michael Conlon, July-August 2002 *FSJ*.) By conveying the benefits of biotechnology and sound SPS regulation to regulators, government officials and the public, such programs not only benefit U.S. trade interests, but can reduce hunger, increase rural income and improve the environment. This is a message worth spreading.

### **Marketing and Export Promotion**

FAS is unique in the Foreign Service because of its close relationships with U.S. private sector groups. Funded by U.S. producers and agribusiness, market development cooperator groups such as the American Soybean Association, U.S. Grain Council, U.S. Meat Export Federation, American Hardwood Export Council and the Washington State Apple Commission maintain a network of offices overseas to promote U.S. exports. FAS jointly funds market development activities with these and other cooperator organizations. In addition,

FAS provides funding to state and regional trade groups that provide support to small and medium enterprises that have shown promise as agricultural exporters.

FAS's agricultural trade offices, in particular, work closely with the cooperators and SRTGs on a variety of activities. The ATOs, SRTGs and cooperators co-sponsor educational seminars for food processors and importers, "America Week" supermarket and restaurant promotions for U.S. foods and beverages, and American pavilions at major food shows. FAS also organizes trade missions from our host countries to major trade shows in the United States. In recent years, the agency has moved away from micromanaging the cooperators to providing them with more strategic input. For example, 20 years ago every single activity required an FAS signature to pay the bills. Ten years ago, guidance was broader but any change in activity, no matter how small, still needed approval. Now the relationship focuses more on the "big picture."

Agriculture officers also work with exporters to find clients overseas. If a new apple exporter in California wants to find a market in Japan, it will work through FAS and its cooperators. The goal is to identify and build on new prospects for U.S. exports. Many of these come from several important trends including population growth and increasing urbanization in developing countries, the expanding middle class in emerging markets, and demand for new, specialty products in high-income markets.

Since FAS works so closely with the private sector, it is heavily driven by export numbers. FAS has performance indicators related to program efforts and generally expects cooperators to meet goals, especially over time. This close relationship also makes FAS very client-focused. If the trade is going badly, it reflects poorly on the FAS office in the country. Conversely, if a major trade barrier comes down, it's time to celebrate.

### **Food Aid, Export Credits and International Cooperation**

FAS offices are often called upon to play important roles in food aid programs. USDA provides U.S. agricultural commodities to countries in need of food assistance through direct donations and long-term concessional sales programs. Initiatives have helped fight starvation in sub-Saharan Africa, and are playing a major role in providing food aid to Afghanistan as it struggles to rebuild after more than 20 years of civil war. FAS food

aid also played a major role in Central America's recovery from Hurricane Mitch in 1998: a total of 180,000 metric tons of U.S. wheat and 50,000 tons of corn were provided.

FAS also runs export credit programs that reduce risk to U.S. exporters and increase their competitiveness. The latest farm bill will make \$5.5 billion annually available for the Export Credit Guarantee programs. The largest programs are the short-term (GSM-102) and intermediate-term (GSM-103) credit programs that guarantee repayment of credit extended by U.S. financial institutions to eligible foreign banks that issue letters of credit to pay for U.S. agricultural commodities. The Supplier Credit Guarantee Program insures short-term, open account financing. The goal of these programs is to help U.S. exporters become more competitive by offering lower interest rates, extending longer credit terms or increasing the amount of credit available to foreign buyers.

Finally, Foreign Agricultural Service offices work closely with host governments on a whole range of cooperation programs, from technical assistance and training, to collaborative research projects where U.S. and foreign scientists work on topics of mutual interest. FAS works with developing countries as they try to comply with their WTO agreements and take a science-based approach to biotechnology. The Cochran Fellowship Program, which provides a short-term U.S. training program for senior and mid-level public and private sector specialists and administrators from middle-income countries, emerging markets, and emerging democracies, has been particularly effective. Cochran programs have helped strengthen connections between U.S. agribusinesses and government officials and overseas importers and officials. Most programs focus on agricultural trade, agribusiness development, management, policy, and marketing along with U.S. agricultural and economic policies and business practices. Cochran alumni often go on to become some of FAS's most valuable foreign interlocutors.

### **Market Intelligence and Analysis**

When FAS was established in 1953, its primary emphasis was on agricultural reporting, with secondary attention to food aid and market development. (Involvement in trade disputes was actually discouraged.) Though that is no longer the case, the ability of an FAO to

## F O C U S

observe and report on local agricultural conditions (particularly in remote corners of the world) can still play a critical role in determining a country's contribution to the worldwide supply of a given commodity and thereby have a significant effect on market prices. A FAS report out of the Ivory Coast a few years ago added almost \$50 per ton to the value of cocoa on world markets by correctly projecting a relatively low pre-harvest forecast of production in the world's largest cocoa producer.

The individual agricultural attaché reports from around the world, along with satellite imagery used by FAS's Production Estimates and Crop Assessment Division and the analysis done by Washington-based FAS commodity divisions, are put together with other sources in the USDA "Lockup" to determine each country's offi-

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cial production, consumption and demand figures. (The name comes from the fact that this process of data reconciliation is so sensitive that employees used to be literally locked up until the report's release to prevent leaks.)

In 1998, early reporting from Russia and timely PECAD imagery helped detect the worst harvest there in 50 years. As a result, the U.S. was able to prepare a food aid package that helped stabilize the country during a time of extreme economic difficulty. Since this was also the year of the ruble devaluation and economic crisis, the intervention was particularly timely, and literally saved lives, as it does in other countries with potential food shortages.

FAS reporting also contributes to an embassy's knowledge of local economic and political conditions in a way that other sections of the mission may not be able to do.

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Agriculture officers usually travel frequently and extensively in-country, especially in places where reliable data are hard to come by. FAS officers can be seen evaluating the sturgeon catch on the Volga, examining the cotton harvest in China's Xinjiang province or talking to soybean farmers in Argentina. This breadth of contact allows an FAS officer to gain insights into life outside the capital that can be potentially valuable in post decision-making.

Yet with the proliferation of the Internet and other information sources and an increasing workload, FAS faces the question of how many resources to dedicate to reporting — and what reports to write. In recent years, FAS has moved away from long, production-focused reports to smaller documents of more use to small and medium enterprises. These reports cover foreign agricultural import regulations and standards, as well as specific sectors including retail trade, institutional buyers and consumers of organic products. FAS reports are free, unbiased and publicly available on the Internet at [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov). It is true that this information can help competitors, but that risk is outweighed by the benefits to analysts and exporters who could not afford access to a commercial agricultural news service.

Although there is pressure to cut reporting even more, allowing FAS personnel to spend more time resolving trade disputes or investigating a new market, going too far will result in the loss of valued contacts and expertise on local markets, deprive USDA of important input for its lockup process, and deny exporters a valuable information resource. So finding the proper balance between reporting and FAS's other overseas roles will pose an important challenge for the agency.

### **Other Challenges**

As FAS works to promote U.S. exports, resolve trade disputes, report on agricultural markets and provide support to developing countries, it faces a number of additional challenges:

*Maintaining faith in liberalization.* Low prices for commodities and higher volatility in exports, taken together with the use of SPS and other non-tariff barriers to trade by key importers, may undermine some

***FAS recognizes that information and communications technology have changed the way U.S. exporters do business around the world.***

farmer and agribusiness support for agricultural trade liberalization. If farmers lose faith in export markets, they will likely ask for more protection against imports. This change would pose a special challenge to FAS, an agency strongly dedicated to market access and export promotion rather than import administration. For this reason, it needs to continuously demonstrate progress in market access by successful agreement negotiation and imple-

mentation.

*The war on terrorism.* Trade promotion has become more difficult since Sept. 11, 2001, as Americans are understandably more reluctant to go overseas and there has been renewed attention to threats to the U.S. that could enter via trade. Although the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, requiring pre-notification of shipments for the U.S. and exporter registration along with improved container security, may reduce threats to the U.S., it will also add costs to foreign exporters and could bring about equivalent measures on U.S. exports. The key will be to balance security with openness. The war on Iraq may also trigger an anti-American backlash which may make it more difficult to promote U.S. products, especially in the Middle East, where "Mecca Cola" is already taking market share away from Coke.

*Information technology.* With elevated fears of travel resulting from the war on terrorism, there is a temptation to replace personal contact with e-mail, home pages and videoconferences. But to understand and influence consumers and markets, there is simply no substitute for personal contact. In any case, like most government agencies, FAS has been unable to keep up with the pace of change in information technology: many of our overseas offices are still using technology from the mid-1990s.

Although these issues will test FAS, its experience in promoting U.S. agricultural interests overseas will likely see it through. FAS offices overseas and in Washington have worked together to open up new markets to billions of dollars worth of U.S. agricultural products. With continued adjustments, there is every reason to believe this encouraging trend will continue. ■



# APPRECIATION

## ARNOLD P. SCHIFFERDECKER 1935 – 2003

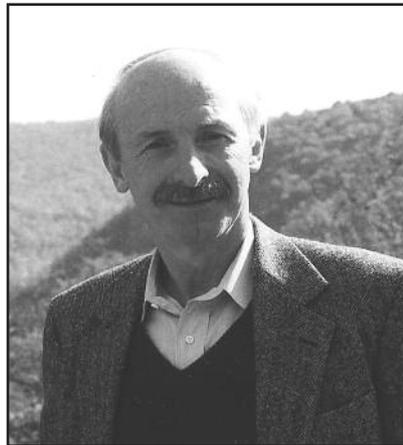
**Arnold P. Schifferdecker**, 67, a retired Foreign Service officer who also was a consultant to the State Department and chairman of the *Foreign Service Journal* Editorial Board, died March 15 at George Washington University Hospital following a heart attack.

A consummate diplomat who had a knack for appreciating the different cultures in which he worked and a perpetual twinkle in his eye, Arnie, as he was known to friends and colleagues, was also a marathon runner, a loving husband, father and grandfather, and a mentor and good friend who enriched the lives of all he touched.

A native of Missouri and graduate of the University of Missouri, Arnie served in the Navy as a carrier-based navigator.

In 1964, he joined the Foreign Service and served until 1995, mainly as a political officer, with assignments in Israel, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Morocco and Washington. He spoke French, Turkish and Dari, a dialect of Persian that is one of the two official languages of Afghanistan and the link-language for the many different language groups in that country. He also studied international economic and political affairs related to the Near East at Princeton and George Washington Universities.

After retirement, Arnie worked for seven years as a State Department consultant, which took him to Bulgaria, Albania and back to Afghanistan.



*Arnie at Harper's Ferry, W.Va., in 1992.*

### **An Afghan Hand**

Arnie will be perhaps best remembered professionally as 'an old Afghan hand,' as he described himself in a recent review of a book on Afghanistan for the *Journal*. Early postings as a political officer in Pakistan and Afghanistan first brought Arnie into contact with the Afghan people. He returned to Kabul as an adviser to the United Nations Special Mission in Afghanistan from 1997 through 1998, during the troubled reign of the Taliban.

In 1998 Arnie received a United Nations Peace Medal for his work in Afghanistan, for promoting a cease-fire between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Following the U.N. assignment, he continued his involvement in Afghanistan's efforts to recover from the ravages of more than two decades of war as a volunteer working with the Afghanistan-America Foundation.

"Such were his contacts and friendships in Afghanistan," recalls friend and colleague Tom Eighmy, "that President Hamid Karzai directed that a special message be sent to Arnie's wife, Joan, the day before the memorial service." Indeed, Joan Schifferdecker recalls that Hamid Karzai was a regular visitor during Arnie's tenure with UNSMA in Islamabad. "When he was in Washington for the first time after becoming interim president of Afghanistan," she remembers, "Karzai spotted Arnie at a reception at the Ritz and called out across the room, 'Arnie, I see you have a beard now!' He was a good friend."

In the letter to Joan, President Karzai and National Security Adviser Dr. Zalmay Rassoul extend their condolences: "...Although sympathy is only a small consolation even from the hearts of us who share your pain, I want you to know how deeply Arnie's loss is felt here. He was greatly admired and respected by us for his assistance and continued interest in our endeavors to bring prosperity and stability to our country. We will always remember Arnie's kindness and thoughtfulness. We shall dearly miss Arnie's presence."

### **Mentor and Friend**

A caring person, Arnie was also a strong, if unassuming, mentor — within his family and in his professional work. It was his unfailing kindness and the twinkle in his eye that made his mentoring effective and his friendships lasting.



Arnie with stepdaughter Susanna Fajardo in 1994.

Arnie's stepdaughter Susanna Fajardo captures his warm sense of humor in her memories of 1979, the year she and her mother and brother, Matthew, embarked on their life with Arnie. "We were soon made aware that our life with this Foreign Service diplomat would have its own special 'Arnie' flavor, as the first leg of the journey [to Turkey] was spent driving from Chicago to Washington, D.C. in his dilapidated 1964 Dodge Dart — the Dartmobile," she recalls.

Arnie and Joan built and maintained a large network of relationships with people from all ends of the world and took great pleasure in hosting friends and new members of the Foreign Service community for dinners, weekends, weeks and sometimes even months at a time. On these occasions, Susanna recalls, Arnie thrived on going out of his way to make people feel comfortable and welcome, and they in turn were gratified by his hospitality and presence.

Most recently, Arnie delighted in the joys of being a grandfather to Isabel, Susanna and husband Anton Pav's daughter. "Given the wonderful father that Arnie was to me, it came as no surprise when grandparenthood came so naturally to him," says Susanna. "I was blessed to be able to see the joy that baby Isabel brought to him."

In the past 10 years, Arnie had taken up running seriously, completing two Marine Corps marathons and competing in many 10Ks and other races in the area. He had completed the 2003 St. Patrick's Day 10K race and was on his way home when he suffered the fatal heart attack.

Arnie Schifferdecker was a member of the American Foreign Service Association and the Foreign Policy Association.

Survivors include his wife, Joan Schifferdecker of Washington; two stepchildren, Matthew Fajardo of Makanda, Ill., and Susanna Fajardo-Pav of Casablanca, Morocco; two brothers; two sisters; and a granddaughter, Isabel.

A memorial service, "Celebrating the Life of Arnold Schifferdecker," was held at the DACOR Bacon House on March 22. At the family's request, tax deductible contributions in Arnie's name may be made to the Afghanistan-America Foundation, 209 Pennsylvania Avenue NE, #700, Washington, DC 20003.

In response to an AFSANET announcing Arnie's untimely death, the *Journal* received many messages from friends and colleagues. We have only been able to publish excerpts from a few of them here, but all of the messages were forwarded to the Schifferdecker family.

#### THE ULTIMATE DIPLOMAT...

I knew Arnie Schifferdecker best when we were colleagues at the American Embassy in Kabul, where his special talent of identifying himself with the people and culture of the country in which he was serving was quickly apparent. He rejoiced with the rest of us when Kabul was liberat-

ed by the Northern Alliance and American forces. When many of us gathered here at home to celebrate that historic event, Arnie — true to form — appeared proudly in Afghan costume.

Arnie was the ultimate diplomat, but I remember him best for what he was as a human being — warm, decent and full of integrity. If there ever was a 'Mister Nice' in the Foreign Service, it was Arnie Schifferdecker.

— Bruce Laingen

#### A HEART AS LARGE AS HIS NAME...

Such sad news on my screen this morning. Arnie Schifferdecker was my supervisor in Rabat when I arrived in 1988. His affable, generous character set the tone for the office and I'm sure he will always remain one of my favorite FS supervisors. I did, however, have one complaint, which I voiced to him on several occasions: his name. How many times a day did I try to enunciate with my best French accent — "Scheef - err - deck - err" — over the phone to some hapless Moroccan who then would inevitably ask me to spell it for them? But for Arnie, a man whose heart was as large as his name was long, I would have done it for the rest of my career.

— Carol L. Scannell

#### MY INTRODUCTION TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE...

I hadn't actually seen Arnie in years, but he was in the most important ways one of my introductions to the Foreign Service. I arrived in Kabul in the summer of 1970 as a wet-behind-the-ears USIA junior officer. Arnie introduced me to Kabul, to life in an (old-style) embassy community, to what it meant to be a professional, and most of all, to what a

## APPRECIATION

decent, kind human being he was.

Perhaps my most memorable experience in those long-lost, pre-conflict days in Afghanistan was a several-day trip by four-wheel-drive vehicle, with Arnie, my bride, an Afghan Foreign Ministry colleague and our USIS driver, from Kabul over the Hindu Kush to Mazar-i-Sharif, the ruins of Balkh (Bactria), and a small Turkoman outpost (Akcha). Arnie arranged the trip, and I think something of the romance and adventure of life out there in the "boonies" kept me going when the bureaucracy worked in the opposite direction....

Even after all these years, his absence now hits hard.

— Jack Harrod

### THE CONSUMMATE POLITICAL OFFICER...

When we first arrived in Kabul some 30 years ago as USAID contractors, and rather timorously attended Ambassador Robert Neumann's "Hail and Farewell," this tall, good-looking chap bounded over, and addressed us by name, credentials and assignment, saying: "Hi, I'm Arnie Schiffer-decker!"

We came to know him as a friend, and we also sometimes observed him in action as the consummate political officer. While seated at the Kabul Hotel with Afghan and American colleagues from the Ministry of Planning, I would observe Arnie with a lone Afghan contact, doubtlessly discussing the politics of the day. We would avoid eye contact but share the hotel's plat du jour — fried sheep brains.

Our paths diverged and crossed — we were both in Morocco and Pakistan but at different times, and sometimes in D.C. at the same time. And during one of those times, Arnie met Joanie at a crab feast in our backyard. When we had both retired, we

were drawn again, by choice, to Afghanistan through volunteer work with the Afghanistan-America Foundation...

— Tom & Bev Eighmy

### WHAT ARNIE TAUGHT ME...

I first came to know Arnie some 30 years ago shortly after arriving in Kabul, my second post. A brusque and fragmentary cable from MED announced that the medical clearance and travel orders of a dependent were cancelled as that person had been ordered into involuntary psychiatric observation by the police. Frantic and without reliable phone communication to the U.S., I cabled the Afghan desk officer — Arnie.

Over the next weeks Arnie dealt

on my behalf not only with the department's bureaucracy but with police, family members and hospital authorities, until I knew what had happened and how it could be remedied.

Arnie taught me that what makes a life in the Foreign Service possible is not the "system," but the quality, caring, and support of fellow FSOs and their families. Without Arnie's humane and energetic intervention at a critical moment, I would have left the Foreign Service in disgust.

— Lee Coldren

### ARNIE'S WISE COUNSEL...

I was a second-tour economic officer in Casablanca when Arnie was the political counselor in Rabat.

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The economic counselor in Rabat — from whom I was supposed to get clearance on my reporting — could never get my name right, neither my first name (he called me Mark) nor my last name (he called me Vargas).

When I once complained to Arnie, who could recount his own horror stories about how others had mangled his name, he advised me that it was no big deal and I should not fret about it as long as my boss signed off on my cables.

After that, whenever I had to call Arnie about something, he would intentionally get my name wrong (“Is that Mark Vargas calling?”) to remind me of what was the crucial part of our work. I never forgot Arnie’s wise counsel.

— *Michael Varga*

### A WONDERFUL MENTOR...

Arnie was one of my examiners when I took the Foreign Service Oral Exam. After I passed, he introduced himself and expressed his pleasure at my success: as he was retiring, he felt it appropriate that another graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism “take his place” in the Foreign Service.

I can only hope to emulate such a wonderful mentor. Arnie provided guidance and friendship. He invited me to shadow him at the U.N. in New York, as he worked on Afghan issues at a time when much of the world had given up on Afghanistan. He and his wife Joanie welcomed my family and me into their home and their hearts. They visited me and cheered me on at my first Foreign Service post in Mumbai, India.

I will cherish my memories of Arnie and work to live up to his example.

— *Heather Variava*

### HE THRIVED ON FOREIGN SERVICE LIFE...

It was always wonderful to see Arnie when he appeared in my office doorway. He had a positive, genial way about him that always made him welcome. During the fall U.N. General Assembly sessions, he served as a senior adviser to the U.S. mission, consulting with other nations’ diplomats on the annual resolution on Afghanistan. To assist the U.N. Special Mission to Afghanistan, he volunteered for a three-month stint in Kabul, living under very austere circumstances.

Arnie never backed away from a challenge and thrived on the Foreign Service life, even in retirement. We have lost a giant, but gentle, spirit. He will be greatly missed.

— *Roberta L. Chew*

### HE WAS NEVER TOO PROUD OR TOO BUSY TO HELP...

We met Arnie and Joanie Schifferdecker during our assignment to Morocco in the 1980s. We were all booked together for a tour of the game parks of East Africa and Zanzibar this coming summer. That was one of the few parts of the world Arnie had not yet experienced.

We remember the great times we had together, hiking and camping the Ait Bougamaz Valley of the high Atlas Mountains of Morocco, the annual post-Thanksgiving hikes along the C & O Canal path, fishing on the Shenandoah River, sharing meals together, shopping for carpets in the souks of Morocco, and much more.

We remember his willing and fine work, too. He helped America in tough spots from Kabul to Istanbul to Casablanca. He was never too proud or too busy to help others with his expertise. While we were in

Morocco together, when I asked each year for his input as the political officer for the Peace Corps country submission, he came through.

We miss him for his analytical mind, his good sense of humor, his wonderful sense of place and responsibility in community, his love of his wife and family.

Peace and blessings be upon him.

— *David and Merry  
Fredrick*

### A FITTING TRIBUTE...

I served with Arnie in 1986-1987 in Rabat. He was political counselor and I was the USIS information officer.

Arnie was a man who walked through life armed with a warm smile and a twinkle in his eye. Whether in the heat of a VIP visit, in a conversation with Moroccan contacts or mission colleagues, or even in weekend recreation, he was never without the smile and the twinkle. I believe his warm and calm demeanor put people at their ease — interlocutors shared easily with him and colleagues got a good listen and a supportive word or hand of help for a good idea.

His enthusiasm for the Foreign Service both as an active diplomat and in retirement was admirable and his contributions to maintain the excellence of the *Foreign Service Journal* were much appreciated. During a recent stint at FSI, I had the chance to mix informally with the scores of recently hired junior officers. Several mentioned the *Foreign Service Journal* as a product, a part of the corporate culture in a way, that they viewed with pride — that validated their career choice in an important way. In my view, that endorsement is a fitting tribute to Arnie’s great leadership at AFSA.

— *Peter Kovach* ■

# PLAYING DIPLOMACY

AN FSO AND HIS CHILDREN GET ENTANGLED IN MORE THAN THE GAME OF DIPLOMACY.

BY LARRY LESSER

**Author's Note:** *"Diplomacy" is a board game based on the status of the European powers before the outbreak of World War I. There are seven players, each representing a power: Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Italy, France and Britain. Each has land and sea forces, which it deploys on the board — the map of Europe before World War I — to aggrandize its power and territory and defend against encroachment by the others. The ultimate objective is to vanquish every other power and be the last one standing. None of the seven players, however, has any chance of winning without assistance or cooperation along the way from one or more of the others.*

*That's where "diplomacy" comes in. Each round of the game represents half a year's military campaign and every player decides how to deploy his armies and fleets. Everyone writes down his or her moves and places them in an envelope. When they're revealed, the players see what the new situation is and begin planning their next set of moves. You can make a pact with another player — but you don't have to keep your word. If you think your chances of winning will be improved by making a different move from what you promised, there's nothing in the rules to prevent it or penalize you for it. On the contrary, that might be a winning strategy. Of course, your would-be ally can do the same thing. So you can't trust anyone. Your "ally" may do what was promised in one turn and then deceive you on the next. The moment of truth comes when everyone's moves are revealed and the armies and navies are moved in the theater of battle.*

## Setting Up

We decided to play "Diplomacy," the board game, in "Kinougou" a few years ago. (Kinougou is the capital city of a small African country. I won't wittingly tell a lie so, for the

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*After service as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nigeria, Larry Lesser joined the Foreign Service in 1966. He served abroad in New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Brussels, Kigali and Dhaka. After retiring from the Service, he worked for State's Office of Inspector General and for the Peace Corps. Since 1997 he has been a member of the Foreign Service Grievance Board. He and his wife live in Washington, D.C.*

sake of politeness, I'm using some fictional names in order to take liberties with the unvarnished truth.) It was the ambassador, my boss at the small American embassy, who proposed playing. Although the concept of the game troubles me, I reluctantly agreed to play. I thought playing the game could be a good educational experience for my children, Richard and Nina (then 13 and 11, respectively). I thought that by letting them work with me in planning moves they would gain a better idea of game theory, the history of the early 20th century and human nature.

Another reason I agreed to play was that my boss, Ambassador "Tristram Barnum 'Barney' Brinton," was eager to play and without me, it wasn't going to be easy to put together the seven players needed. It would have been awkward if I had declined to play. Also, Kinougou in those days wasn't really exciting and, while there was always plenty of scutwork for underlings like me to do just to keep the embassy functioning, the ambassador's workload was less taxing. So it was a good idea to come up with activities for the ambassador, in addition to official duties, to keep up his mental health. As his deputy I figured I ought to help make it happen. So we decided to play one round a day, at the cocktail hour after another quiet day at work.

We drew for our powers. I got Germany; I was not thrilled, but what can you do? Ambassador Brinton got France. Two other subordinates in our embassy chain of command got Britain and the Ottoman Empire. The three other players came from outside the embassy's hierarchy. Austria-Hungary was drawn by a guy employed by the company managing a U.S. government-funded development project. The player representing Italy was Peace Corps Volunteer Mark Silas, a wiseacre from New York who considered himself ready to match wits with any of us. And Hastings Hunter, a young and dashing Brit who was managing a British-American coffee-growing operation, got Russia.

We could count on Ambassador Brinton — young, brimming with energy, and assertive — to play the game with great intensity. He would consider it only appropriate if he were to win, and it didn't hurt his chances that three of the players were subordinate to him in the embassy. After all, he held the key to our career progress.

For all these reasons, while I like to play competitive

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games and do my best to win, I wasn't looking forward to clashing with Barney Brinton.

**Principle and Practice**

The time between rounds is available for secret "diplomacy" among the players, to negotiate agreements with one another: an entente cordiale here, a mutual non-aggression pact there. All the competitors make secret alliances to coordinate their moves and strengthen their positions, hoping to outwit and outmaneuver the others and eliminate them one by one. Of course, in order to end up as the one and only winner, eventually they have to turn against their erstwhile allies. This is the concept of the game. Simple but diabolically clever. And not very nice.

OK, so I'm Germany. According to history, I will not win. I figure my best chance is to make an alliance with a neighboring power at the outset. Something to relieve my forces from defending along at least one border — the eastern border. Then I'll be free to invade in another direction; south toward the Mediterranean, maybe surprising other players who are not taking my armies and fleets seriously enough. A long shot, perhaps, but worth a try. I figure I need a pact with Russia. Russia! Russia and Germany! What a concept! Anticipate Hitler by a generation and maybe gain an advantage.

My personal approach is going to be simple and direct — and naive. I will negotiate secret deals just like everyone else, but I'll keep my word. That's the bottom line for me, my core value. I'll ask the person with whom I negotiate to make the same solemn promise, putting our personal relationship on the line, making the stakes bigger than just the game.

The way I see it, both in life and in games, I think character counts. There has to be some congruence between the person in real life and the

person playing the game, whatever the rules. If a player breaks a promise, he may obtain a short-term advantage, but word will get around that he isn't to be trusted and his longer-term chances of winning may diminish. I personally favor situations and solutions that reward good behavior and punish bad. If you give your word you should live up to it, even in a game designed to reward deception and guile.

And that's what I told my kids. I would play hard and try every which way to win, but I'd try to be true to my own high personal standards that go beyond the game itself. It may be that I'm tying my hands and compromising my chances of winning. But I hope our commitment to personal integrity and straight dealing will enable us to pursue a winning strategy though we also have to be lucky enough that some of the others give us an opening on the game board.

Our first task is to exercise diplomacy with Hastings Hunter, the Brit playing as Russia. I liked Hasty and his freewheeling entrepreneurial style. Unlike the other players, he came from the world of business where you're always proposing and making deals, and I guessed that he was also more accustomed than us "guvvies" to making them come out win-win. Hasty was good at his work.

Initially, we — my kids and I — caught a lucky break. Hasty approached me and proposed that we make a pact as Russia and Germany, to become jointly a juggernaut of the east. I embraced the idea eagerly. I told him he could count on me to carry out my commitment and that I counted on him to do the same. If either of us wanted to abrogate the pact we would inform the other before taking adverse action. I even explained that I was working in tandem with my kids and that I was hoping to show them how people behave honorably even when they play a

game that rewards deception. Hastings Hunter and I shook hands. So far, so good.

I then discussed the proposed pact with Richard and Nina, explaining why I thought it was a good deal for our side. Richard asked perceptive tactical questions and agreed that we were embarking on a sound strategy, although he also appreciated the risk. Nina listened intently, more in the spirit of intellectual curiosity.

Hasty and I showed one another our proposed moves, a coordinated offensive against the vulnerable adversaries south of us: Italy, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. I would form a solid defense against invasion by France — Ambassador Brinton — to the west. Because of the pact with Russia, I wouldn't have to protect my eastern flank.

The moves were opened. I did as I had promised. But instead of moving his Russian forces as we had agreed, Hasty moved them directly west into the German territory I had left unprotected. Just like that, I was done for. My armies and fleets were dead ducks. I had been invaded and the homeland was going to be overrun.

### Risks and Penalties

I went home and told my children that we had honored the terms of our pact but Hasty had not. He had taken advantage of us and invaded our eastern border, despite our agreement.

Nina asked me: "Dad, if Hasty broke his part of the pact, do we still have to keep our part?" I told her that if one of us broke the pact there isn't any pact, not any more. But that didn't really matter anymore. Now that Hasty and Russia have broken the pact and turned against us, we were done for. Maybe we shouldn't have left ourselves so vulnerable, but that was a chance we took. Now our armies and navies would be swept off the board in the next couple of moves. We were out of the game.

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A few hours later Nina opened up the subject again. She told me that she understood the game and that it wasn't against the rules for Hasty to break the pact. But, she said, "I'll never trust Hasty again." That was a good conclusion for an 11-year-old to reach. She had learned a valuable lesson. I was pretty angry at Hasty myself but also at myself for not having had a backup plan.

I believe that character is destiny. I had been caught in a bind of my own devising. Diplomacy isn't the game for me. The game is designed to reward bad behavior and in that respect it isn't a worthwhile game. Or so I found, anyway.

#### **Lessons Learned**

A couple of weeks later, after the game degenerated into recriminations and was abandoned (I wasn't involved in that, since I was the first player to be eliminated), my anger towards Hastings Hunter abated. I told him about my conversations with Nina, my sweet child awakening to the complexity of the human heart. Hasty told me he was suffering inner turmoil over his betrayal of our pact. He had wrestled with conflicting impulses before deciding what to do. He said that Amb. Brinton had approached him before the game's first round and suggested a mutual non-aggression pact between France and Russia. The first piece of it should be the confidence-building measure of a Russian move against Germany, while France would concentrate first on Italy. Russia meanwhile could neutralize Germany before pressing Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Turks. Hasty said this loose pact had the advantage that he would be able to size things up for a couple of moves before having to decide whether to make a more detailed commitment.

Besides, Brinton was the ambassador and if he wanted Hunter's cooperation, it was probably a good idea to

give it to him. Compared to that consideration, the pact with me was expendable. Hasty had discussed it with his wife, who wasn't strongly interested in the game of Diplomacy. She was concerned, however, that her husband's conduct might make a difference in their business and social relationships. If so, he might do well to think carefully about it. Hasty told her it was just a game, and in the game he was supposed to be devious and outwit the other players. His wife responded that if that was the case, he should go ahead and play to win.

I thought Hasty was naive — in a different way than I had been — to think his conduct in the game wouldn't have repercussions outside the game, but before I could say so, Hasty did. He now believed he had made a mistake in breaking our pact — or maybe in agreeing to it in the first place. He now wished he had handled his moves in the game differently. He had thought about telling me that our deal was off before our moves were placed in the envelope, and maybe that's what he should have done. The way it worked out, he didn't even want to win anymore. In fact, he'd rather not even continue playing. It wasn't worth it; it wasn't any fun. He felt bad about being the one to destroy a child's illusions about relying on people's word.

It hadn't escaped Hastings' notice that I had kept my promise while he broke his. He told me that when he was deciding what move to make in the game, he convinced himself that I probably was setting him up for betrayal. That let him justify his own move partly as a way to make sure I couldn't play *him* for a fool. "You're a perfidious diplomat, after all, Larry," he said, smiling. "And very competitive." But he now saw that he had misread the situation and in his own eyes, as well as my daughter's, he was not the man he wanted to be.

As it turned out, Hasty's advantage

in the game was short-lived. True, he had nothing to worry about from my German troops, but another pact, between the ambassador's France and the development contractor's Austria-Hungary, soon isolated his forces in the east behind the equivalent of a Maginot line. Russia became irrelevant.

But the game was never completed. Just two rounds after my German forces were routed, another pact came unglued. This one involved Amb. Brinton's France and Peace Corps Volunteer Mark Silas' Italy. (The ambassador was making secret pacts with everyone but me, it seemed; the guy was *way* under-employed in his day job.) Mark had done diplomacy with the player who had Austria-Hungary and they came up with a super-secret counter-pact against Amb. Brinton's France. When they sprang the trap, the ambassador went ballistic. First he threatened to shut down the Peace Corps and the aid project. Then he cooled down and threatened just to send them both home. Then he cooled down further, and just threatened to black-ball Mark Silas from ever joining the Foreign Service (which Mark was thinking of doing after his Peace Corps tour). The ambassador's wrath ended the game prematurely with most powers still on the board and the outcome still in doubt — except, of course, that things suddenly looked bad for the ambassador's France.

For me and my kids the whole experience was educational — but not precisely in the way I had expected. My son Richard liked the game. He spent some time analyzing how we could have played better — maybe by conducting diplomacy with more than one of the other players; sort of what Ambassador Brinton had done.

Daughter Nina's final judgment was that you can call it a game, but it wasn't her idea of fun. ■

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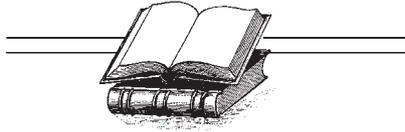
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# BOOKS

## The Age of Market-States

**The Shield of Achilles:  
War, Peace, and the Course  
of History**

*Philip Bobbitt, Alfred A. Knopf,  
2002, \$40, hardcover, 919 pages.*

REVIEWED BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Ordinarily, given the large number of titles competing for our limited space, the *Foreign Service Journal* would not review a book a year after its publication (let alone devote the entire book review section to it). But *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History* is no ordinary book, to put it mildly, either in its content or presentation.

Consider its sweeping thesis, as set forth in Bobbitt's prologue: "We are at a moment in world affairs when the essential ideas that govern statecraft must change. For five centuries it has taken the resources of a state to destroy another state: only states could muster the huge revenues, conscript the vast armies, and equip the divisions required to threaten the survival of other states. Indeed, posing such threats, and meeting them, created the modern state. In such a world, every state knew that its enemy would be drawn from a small class of potential adversaries. This is no longer true, owing to advances in international telecommunications, rapid computation, and weapons of mass destruction. The change in statecraft that will accom-

*The West's  
hard-won victory  
in the "Long War"  
has generated a  
brand-new  
constitutional and  
strategic dynamic:  
the current  
"society of states."*



pany these developments will be as profound as any that the State has thus far undergone."

In keeping with the range of ideas encapsulated in that one paragraph — and the book's title and its sheer bulk — Bobbitt's intellectual ambition is truly breathtaking. As a historian (he was formerly the Anderson Senior Research Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford, where he was a member of the Modern History faculty, and later the Marsh Christian Fellow in War Studies at King's College, London), Bobbitt skillfully leads us through the interplay over the past six centuries among war, diplomacy, and the rise and fall of individual states.

Wearing the hat of a policy analyst,

Bobbitt also details the relationship between various nations' foreign relations and domestic politics, as well as other intellectual trends at work in those societies. In so doing, he draws on his experiences (during the Reagan and first Bush administrations) as associate counsel to the president for intelligence and international security, legal counsel to the Senate Select Committee on the Iran-Contra Affair, and the counselor on international law at the Department of State, as well as director of intelligence, senior director for critical infrastructure, and senior director for strategic planning at the National Security Council.

Finally, writing as an expert on constitutional and international law (subjects he teaches at the University of Texas), he discusses the legal aspects of statecraft as well as the creation and evolution of international organizations.

Along the way, he also proves himself an entertaining, even witty, biographer, bringing to life such disparate figures as Hugo Grotius (the 17th-century Dutch jurist and politician who was an influential figure in early modern international law), Robert Castlereagh (who represented Britain at the 1814-1815 Congress of Vienna), and Colonel Edward M. House (President Woodrow Wilson's closest adviser and a major architect of the Fourteen Points and the League of Nations).

### The Long War

The narrative centers on the various phases in the evolution of the modern nation: the princely state, the



kingly state, the territorial state, the state-nation and the contemporary nation-state. Bobbitt is most interested in the ongoing metamorphosis into the state's next incarnation, which he calls the market-state: one whose borders are not based primarily on territorial markers but on a shared history and values, and whose strengths, weaknesses, citizens, and enemies roam across cyberspace. Or, to put it another way: while nation-states derive legitimacy from promising to improve the material welfare of their citizens, specifically by providing security and order, market-states do so by maximizing the opportunity of their people. Similarly, nation-states use force and law to bring about desired results, while market-states use various forms of market relationships to do so.

Bobbitt argues in his opening section that this shift is essentially a consequence of the "Long War" of 1914-1990: the epic struggle among fascism, communism and parliamentarism that began with World War I and ended only with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In Bobbitt's view, such "epochal wars," encompassing many limited military conflicts and their associated peace treaties, fuel the evolution of individual states and their relationships with others. (The religiously-based Thirty Years War of 1618-1648 is another example of this phenomenon.)

The West's hard-won victory in the Long War has generated a fundamentally new constitutional and strategic dynamic, the current "society of states" — what the first President Bush hopefully, if apparently prematurely, hailed as "a new world order." But since the Sept. 11 attacks (which occurred as Bobbitt was finishing the work, as he movingly discusses in his final chapter, "Postscript: The Indian Summer"),

---

***Bobbitt insists that states  
and individuals should  
be free to make their  
own choices — even  
when cooperation might  
produce a better result.***

---

this structure, in turn, is facing severe challenges of its own from non-state actors (at times supported by individual nations).

In perhaps the work's most stimulating section, he discusses three possible scenarios for reorganizing international relations to cope with various military (both state-based and terrorist) attacks, as well as assorted technological, economic and environmental developments, during the next half-century. The "Meadow," essentially an extrapolation of sociopolitical patterns currently dominant in the U.S., features high levels of individualism around the world at the expense of collective behavior at any level. The "Park," based on a European alternative, emphasizes regionalism and a striving for balance among the various state actors and goals. Finally, the "Garden" predicates successful market-states simply disengaging from international affairs to "tend their own gardens" and focus on renewed internal community.

The author freely admits that none of these systems will eliminate war, and all have advantages and disadvantages. However, his own pref-

erence is clearly the "Meadow," since it is most in harmony with the fundamental attribute of the market-state: the maximization of opportunities at all levels.

As that choice suggests, Bobbitt is a staunch political conservative with a visceral mistrust of any institutions that impede the ability of the U.S. to act as it sees fit, including pre-emptively (judging by several references to the threat posed by regimes such as Iraq). Though not formally affiliated with the current administration, I would not be at all surprised to learn that he is a favorite author of some senior officials in the White House and Pentagon. In particular, I detected strong echoes of Bobbitt's scathing indictment of the United Nations' many failures (most memorably discussed in a chapter called "The Kitty Genovese Incident and the War in Bosnia") in President Bush's denunciation of the U.N. as irrelevant and even dangerous.

It is to the author's credit that he makes no bones about his political views, which reflect his belief that states (and individuals) should be free to make their own choices and determine their own destinies — even when cooperation might produce a better result. But I suspect that even those readers who concur with Bobbitt's periodic attacks on affirmative action and "political correctness" will find such digressions unnecessary at best and annoying at worst.

Nevertheless, for sheer force and breadth of argument, I strongly recommend *The Shield of Achilles*. Timely and perceptive, it will change the way you think about the world at this critical juncture. ■

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*Steven Alan Honley is the editor of the Journal.*

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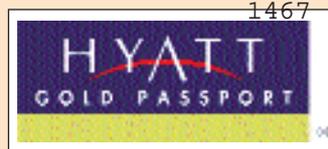
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## *Forever India*

BY KATHY UPHAUS

We'd just arrived in Calcutta and needed to exchange money. In most places, that would be a simple task, but this was India.

We searched the historic district we'd been exploring — site of St. John's, the city's oldest church; the infamous Black Hole; innumerable book stalls; and a coffee shop once frequented by India's founding leaders — looking for a money-changer. There was none, so we tried the banks instead. The first two offered no currency exchange; officials at the third assured us the closest place to change money was on the other side of town. So we tried one more local establishment, where we found a cubicle marked "Currency Exchange," staffed by a helpful-looking woman. She confirmed that, yes, she could change money. We sat in the chairs thoughtfully provided (whose presence should have hinted at the lengthy process to come), and gave her our money. She placed it in a metal box, simultaneously extracting a stamp, stamp pad and pen, and composed herself for the task ahead.

She handed my husband a long form. While he filled it in, she examined his passport with a puzzled, dubious expression and frequent questioning murmurs. Finally, she left, seeking

---

*Kathy Uphaus is a free-lance writer and the editor of The Jute Bulletin in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The stamp is courtesy of the AAFSW Bookfair "Stamp Corner."*

*Years of cultural  
sensitivity  
failed me.*



the advice of a superior. He accompanied her back to the cubicle for a first-hand examination of my husband's person, and then took the passport away again.

Meanwhile, our clerk examined the completed form, requested some clarifications, checked the exchange rate, totaled up the rupees we would receive, and prepared a handwritten receipt. These tasks were completed just as her superior returned the passport, which had apparently cleared whatever bureaucratic hurdles it had encountered. When our clerk opened what I thought must be a cash drawer in the desk in front of her, I assumed our transaction was complete.

Instead of rupees, however, she extracted a single large metal token and ceremoniously presented it to us. At this point, years of cultural sensitivity failed me, and I burst out laughing. She gave me a slightly startled glance and a small smile, and instructed us to take the token to Window 14.

We traipsed past seated customers, whose transactions were taking even longer than ours, to Window 14,

where another clerk waited. His desk was bare except for a lethal-looking instrument, a sort of cross between pliers and a wire cutter. He accepted our token, compared the numbers on it to the numbers on the paper he'd just received by runner from the first clerk, and asked my husband for his confirmation that the numbers matched. He then produced three stacks of bills, including one very fat stack of 50-rupee notes, and, using his lethal instrument, began to snip the bands and pry out the staples that secured them. My husband asked him if it might be possible to substitute a larger denomination for the 50s. Looking aggrieved, he dutifully took the notes on a circuit of all 13 other stalls, but finding no larger bills anywhere, eventually brought them back.

By now, we were more than happy to accept them and be on our way — but not before my husband had to sign his full name on the receipt, not merely the initials and last name he'd attempted to get away with. Rupees finally in hand, we returned to the first clerk to retrieve the passport. Here, another signature discrepancy had to be remedied. This accomplished, we departed, richer but exhausted.

And hungry. We repaired to a restaurant and lunched sumptuously on curried mushrooms and eggplant, spicy black dhal and buttery naan. Unfortunately, we had no room for dessert — ice cream with 'leeches' (lychees, we hoped) — intriguing as that sounded! ■

# AFSA NEWS

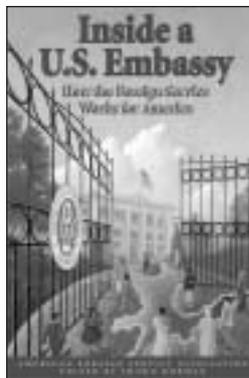
American Foreign Service Association • May 2003

## INSIDE A U.S. EMBASSY

### AFSA Launches New Book

BY STEPHEN E. MATHER, EDITORIAL INTERN

The launch of AFSA's new book, *Inside a U.S. Embassy: How the Foreign Service Works for America*, on March 27 at AFSA headquarters, drew distinguished guests, members of the press and the folks who worked hard to put together this new and improved second edition.



Under Secretary for Political Affairs Marc Grossman, a contributor to the book's Day in the Life section, spoke about the importance of the new publication and his efforts to promote it on Capitol Hill and with the press.

"This is a book about what the State Department does,"

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## FOREIGN AFFAIRS DAY

### AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony

The AFSA Memorial Plaque ceremony takes place every year during Foreign Affairs Day (formerly Foreign Service Day), to honor those men and women who have lost their lives while serving the U.S. government abroad in foreign affairs.

The first plaque was erected 70 years ago by AFSA on March 3, 1933. The secretary of State at that time, Henry L. Stimson, presided over the ceremony. Until two years ago, the criteria for inscription on the plaque required death under "heroic or other inspirational circumstances." In 2001, the AFSA Governing Board amended the criteria to also include those Foreign Service employees who died "in the line of duty." Using the expanded criteria, AFSA has added 25 names to the plaque. This year, the Governing Board approved an additional six names to be added to the plaque. Those employees will be honored on May 9 during the annual Foreign Affairs Day program, in a ceremony at the site of the plaque in the C Street lobby. Secretary of State Powell has agreed to preside, as he has done the past two years.

Included among the six honorees is USAID Foreign Service officer Laurence Foley, who was shot and killed last October as he was getting into his car to go to his office in Amman, Jordan. With the addition of these six names, the AFSA Memorial Plaque will honor a total of 215 fallen colleagues. Since 1975, employees serving in 32 different countries have lost their lives. As Secretary Powell has often stated, the men and women of the U.S. Foreign Service are on "the front lines of diplomacy," and, despite the growing personal risk to themselves and their families, they continue to advance and promote our country's vital interests abroad. □

## FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL EDITORIAL BOARD

### The Loss of Arnie Schifferdecker

It is with deep sadness that we report the death of retired FSO and Chairman of the *Foreign Service Journal* Editorial Board Arnold "Arnie" P. Schifferdecker, who died at George Washington University Hospital after a heart attack on March 15. He was 67.

Arnie's Foreign Service career spanned three decades (1964 to 1995), but he continued serving AFSA and the State Department after retirement. In recognition of Arnie's many years of devoted service to AFSA and, especially, the *Foreign Service Journal* Editorial Board, this issue of the *Journal* includes an "Appreciation" of his life and career. □

# AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



## Disability Income Plan Offered to AFSA Members

A disability income insurance plan, with monthly benefits up to \$3,000, is available to members of the American Foreign Service Association. All AFSA members and/or spouses/domestic partners under age 60 who are working at least 25 hours a week are eligible to apply for the AFSA Disability Income Plan.

The plan offers the choice of either a \$1,000, \$2,000 or \$3,000 monthly benefit, payable for up to five years for a covered accident and one year for a covered illness. This offer is available on a simplified application basis, which means there are only three short health questions to answer. The special enrollment period ends June 1.

For more information on the AFSA Disability Income Plan, contact the insurance administrator by phone: toll-free at (800) 503-9230; on the Web at [www.seaburychicago.com](http://www.seaburychicago.com); or by mail: Marsh Affinity Group Services, a service of Seabury & Smith, P.O. Box 9122, Des Moines, Iowa 50306-9122.

## Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER, FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER & CARTOONIST



## You and Your Vehicle

Currently, if your family is in the U.S. on Separate Maintenance Allowance, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, the regulations do not permit you to send your car back to the U.S. for your family to use. The department is considering changing this rule for involuntary SMA. If more posts move to unaccompanied status, more members are likely to want their families to have the car. AFSA is urging the department to allow POV shipment for both voluntary and involuntary SMA.

## Overtime for JOs

A recent A-100 graduate en route to a high-volume visa-issuing post dropped by to tell AFSA that the consular section at his new post is about to start "split shifts" (two shifts a day) and Saturday hours in order to meet the demand to interview visa applicants. We reminded him that untenured officers are eligible for overtime and premium pay. There are a number of untenured officers at this post so AFSA will be alerting the AFSA representative to these rules.

Briefs • Continued on page 3

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# FLO Celebrates 25 Years

BY SHAWN DORMAN

In her welcoming remarks at the 25th anniversary reception for the Family Liaison Office, FLO Director Faye Barnes said it best: “The June and Ward Cleaver family has given way to many more single parents, blended families, male spouses and foreign-born spouses in our communities today. Throughout these ongoing demographic changes, FLO has been there to help people help themselves through information and advocacy and to help management take family matters into account when making policy.”

The event was held in the historic Benjamin Franklin Room of the State Department. Also speaking at the event were Secretary of State Colin Powell, taking time off from calls to the Turkish Foreign Minister; Director General Ruth A. Davis; for-

mer Secretary of State Cyrus Vance’s widow, Gay Vance, who contributed to the founding of FLO in 1978; and one of the FLO founders and former president of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide, Lesley Dorman.

The creation of the FLO took many years of dedicated Foreign Service family member activism. It is hard today to imagine Foreign Service life without the support of the FLO or life at an embassy without the community liaison officers, the direct FLO link to the community overseas. The FLO

assists Foreign Service employees and their families with the unique challenges of Foreign Service life, from evacuation support to family member employment searches, from networking assistance including Web and other communications tools to advocacy with overseas schools. For more information, visit FLO online at [www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo). □



Left: Secretary of State Colin Powell cuts the first slice of cake at FLO’s 25th anniversary reception. Pictured with him is FLO Director Faye Barnes.

Right: FLO Director Faye Barnes presents Secretary Powell with historical information marking FLO’s 25th anniversary.

## AFFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Continued from page 2

### An Exclusive Discount Program for AFSA Members

Did you know as an AFSA member you could be taking advantage of discounts on subscriptions to top foreign affairs publications?

AFSA’s Magazine Discount Program offers up to 75 percent off the subscription price of a number of excellent magazines. If you have considered subscribing to one of these magazines in the past or would like to renew a subscription, contact AFSA’s Member Services for details on how to save money through this valuable program!

AFSA Member Services  
(202) 338-4045, ext. 525  
[member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org)

Magazine Title	Regular Rate (2003 rate in U.S. dollars for U.S. delivery)	AFSA Discount Rate (shipping not included, but may be free in U.S.)
Far Eastern Economic Review	\$215.00	\$193.50
Foreign Affairs	\$44.00	\$22.00
Foreign Policy	\$24.95	\$19.95
Europe-Asia Studies	\$239.00	\$60.00
Mediterranean Quarterly	\$24.00	\$18.00
Washington Quarterly	\$44.00	\$35.20
Washington Post National Weekly	\$78.00	\$39.00

### Family Members: Join AAFSW!

The Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide is a nonprofit organization that has been representing Foreign Service spouses, employees and retirees since 1960. AAFSW is an independent advocate for its membership, giving members a stronger voice when working on common concerns, and a chance to enjoy shared interests. AAFSW represents the changing interests and concerns of spouses and families in today’s dynamic Foreign Service. Membership is open to all adult family members of FS employees at foreign affairs agencies who have served, or are subject to service, at a U.S. diplomatic mission.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION FOR AAFSW:

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**AAFSW’s print newsletter, “Global Link”:** [newsletter@aafsw.org](mailto:newsletter@aafsw.org)

**Questions concerning the Livelines e-mail discussion group:** [livelines@aafsw.org](mailto:livelines@aafsw.org).

**Inquiries concerning the AAFSW Playgroup:** [playgroup@aafsw.org](mailto:playgroup@aafsw.org).

All other inquiries should be addressed to AAFSW headquarters at [office@aafsw.org](mailto:office@aafsw.org).

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## Hardening Our Soft Targets

Despite world events, our morning routine here in Rome appears normal. My husband goes to work, taking a different route than he took yesterday. I put the kids on their 15-seater school bus, run errands, and work at the computer — and try not to think too hard. Because when I think, I end up worrying about my children.

The resolve of the usually plucky Foreign Service community has been sorely tested in recent months. The church bombing in Pakistan and the murder of a senior diplomat in Jordan have upped anxiety levels, because now we're not talking about only embassies, military bases and warships — which were bad enough. Barbara Green and her daughter were sitting in church. Larry Foley was standing in his driveway.

In the wake of the 1998 African embassy bombings and, of course, after the Sept. 11 attacks, security has been tightened at U.S. official installations worldwide. But things happen more slowly when you're dealing with overseas schools; and a fast-moving truck filled with explosives only takes a few seconds to reach its target.

That target is, by definition, "soft." Once official installations get hardened, security-wise, unofficial American establishments such as schools are more vulnerable than ever. Most overseas schools are not protected well enough because, until Sept. 11, no one ever thought terrorists would go after children. Now we're not so sure.

Right after Sept. 11, a secular international school here in Rome applied for a grant from the Office of Overseas Schools to upgrade security. They were turned down, ostensibly due to lack of funds.

Meanwhile, even before Sept. 11, the Department of Defense School in Ankara, Turkey, had an armed guard on each school bus and an extremely tight security barrier at the school, with police checking each vehicle before it proceeded to drive anywhere near the school building.

When will the U.S. government take the safety of diplomatic dependents as seriously as it does military dependents?

To be fair, in some cases upgrading security is either not feasible or downright illegal. It's not always a question of getting the U.S. government to divert funds. U.S. law often forbids the mission from doing anything more than suggesting security measures to schools; it cannot actually implement or, in many cases, fund those upgrades. Local governments and laws also can get in the way.

Schools themselves usually don't have the money, either.

Yet even if there are funds available to improve security, school boards or even parents are sometimes reluctant to do so, because "nothing has ever happened here before." Apparently a school bus has to be blown up before we take protecting our kids seriously.

Congress appears to be taking the matter seriously, and has directed State to carry out a soft-targets "needs assessment," with particular attention paid to overseas schools. AFSA has asked Congress for more funding for protection of soft targets. But frustrated diplomatic families would love to know how long it's going to take to see results on a post level. Meanwhile, we're scrambling to figure out what we can do right now.

There are a few things we can do. We can request high fences, emergency drills, ID checks, armed guards, police escorts, and bus-driver training. We can request that bus yards be guarded at night. Parents can contact the RSO and schools before they even bid on a posting, and ask hard questions. If there's only one school at post, and that school has inadequate security, FS parents need to press the point, and consider withholding a bid on that post until something is done.

U.S. missions can tell schools that they "only feel comfortable referring families to schools with adequate security measures in place." After all, the State Department pays the tuition for these children.

Recently, we have had some success with our school in Rome. New security upgrades including armed policemen and new fencing have been put into place.

Little by little, if we insist on it, the system will change, because it's awfully hard to staff a mission abroad with just single officers, and it's awfully hard to run an overseas school with no American students.

My husband and I chose this life, accepting the risks accompanying it. But we sure don't want to sacrifice the safety of our children for the cause of diplomacy. If the U.S. government wants its diplomatic families to continue to sign up to serve overseas, even in a hostile world climate, it must work to make family members as safe as possible. Meanwhile, it's been left to the parents to start the ball rolling. □

Francesca Kelly is a free-lance writer and editor of the online magazine *Tales from a Small Planet* ([www.talesmag.com](http://www.talesmag.com)), which supports and informs Foreign Service members and other Americans overseas. The views expressed here are those of the author only. The mother of four children, she has served with FSO husband Ian Kelly in Milan, Leningrad, Moscow, Belgrade, Vienna, Washington, Ankara and Rome.

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## AFSA Helping DS

In response to increased demand for training for new federal law enforcement employees, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia, has been working on a six-day-a-week schedule for over a year. FLETC is the place all new State Department Diplomatic Security agents go for training. Ordinarily, employees who are forced to work more than 40 hours per week would receive premium pay, but the DS agents at FLETC were not receiving this. AFSA wrote to department management several times requesting overtime payments or Law Enforcement Availability Pay for these DS agents. The department's response was that overtime is not available to trainees and LEAP is not available until DS agents receive their credentials.

AFSA then learned that OPM recently ruled that the six-day training week is regularly scheduled work and constitutes hours of work for the purposes of calculating overtime. AFSA called the department's attention to the OPM decision and said trainees should immediately receive premium pay and all those who were denied premium and/or holiday premium pay while in training should receive back pay with interest. As a result, the department will begin paying premium pay to trainees at FLETC as soon as OPM clarifies its decision. AFSA is waiting to hear how the department will respond to the back pay issue.

## Business-Class Travel

AFSA recently wrote to urge the department



to allow business-class travel for employees and family members traveling on authorized and ordered departure, providing all the other conditions are met. We'll update you when we get a response. □

## Don't Count on Privacy

Several recent walk-ins to AFSA's State office prompt me to remind you that a key difference between Foreign Service life in the U.S. and overseas is that of privacy. While overseas, there is absolutely no guarantee that your confidences shared at post will be kept. State MED or Diplomatic Security may hear about your personal problem and become involved. Your assignment may be curtailed.

AFSA is concerned because some posts are so isolated that there is no one outside the mission — no pastors, no therapists, no counselors — to whom one can turn for help. If you or a member of your family confides in someone at post (including medical personnel) about a family issue — relations between a parent and child, relations between spouses, etc. — the information may be relayed to others who may decide that in the best interests of you and of the department, you and your family should return to the United States.

**There is absolutely no guarantee that your confidences shared at post will be kept.**

The Family Advocacy Program, 3 FAM 1810, describes the procedures used by the department for dealing with allegations of spousal or child abuse and prescribes the authority to medevac and curtail families from overseas postings in certain

circumstances. Allegations of spousal abuse do not always have to result in a medevac and curtailment, but we have found that they most often do. Federal law requires that allegations of child abuse be reported to the RSO and DS immediately, which invariably leads to a medevac and/or curtailment from post. Either of these scenarios usually results in an investigation by the DS Office of Professional Responsibility. This can prove very disruptive to families. Careers can also suffer, because the department may temporarily suspend the employee's security clearance. Cases vary widely but it is AFSA's experience that the department will err on the side of caution. Your colleagues at post are not trained to recognize which problems require outside attention, and simply want to see the family get help.

AFSA has no easy answers. Families in distress might wish to consider curtailing themselves, so they can control their move. An employee may also be able to seek assistance in another country where professional help is available.

Stress is another aspect of life at hardship posts. There have been recent cases of supervisors yelling at their subordinates in front of colleagues. Some have included threats to retaliate in evaluations if the subordinate pursues a certain line of conduct or inquiry. Several included threats of bodily harm. One threatened retribution if the employee complained to the "union."

Needless to say, this conduct is unprofessional and unacceptable. There are rules against intimidation. AFSA pursues all such charges vigorously with management. If the rater makes good on the threat to "get" the subordinate via the EER process, AFSA is there to protect the employee.

The better recourse is for supervisors not to indulge in such behavior. Everyone has bad days. Stress is inevitable. Better to take a walk, take a day off, eat some chocolate, go home early, go shopping, or talk it over in private. But don't indulge in abusive behavior. And if you find yourself having trouble with your subordinates, sign up for one of the FSI leadership and management courses. Because real leaders don't yell at their subordinates. □



# Q&A

## Personnel Issues

BY JAMES YORKE,  
LABOR MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

**Q: My college-age daughter is coming to post for summer vacation. By the time her unaccompanied air baggage gets here, it'll be time to send it back again. Can she store it in the States rather than bring it to post?**

**A:** Yes, she can, as long as the cost of storage does not exceed the cost of shipping the UAB to post. This was authorized by a 2002 amendment to the legislation on educational travel (Section 5924(4)(B) of Title 5 of the U.S. Code). The new rules are published in 6 FAM 125.4, and in Section 280 of the standardized regulations. Your daughter will have to make her own arrangements for storage near her school, and then you can claim reimbursement at post. You will need to provide receipts in order to receive expenses up to the amount it would have cost the U.S. government to ship the UAB to post, had that option been elected.

Since each trip on educational travel starts at post and finishes at post, your daughter will be able to take a UAB shipment back to school on every authorized trip from post to school, even if she stored some belongings before returning to post on the previous educational travel authorization. However, she may only ship 250 lbs. of UAB back to post on any one occasion. Additional belongings over that limit that she may have accumulated over the years while at school must be shipped back to post at your expense.

**Q: I'm a Diplomatic Security agent overseas and I've been assigned to the San Francisco Field Office. My last domestic post was in the New York Field Office. Can I get help with buying and selling houses?**

**A:** Yes. The detailed rules appear in the Federal Travel Regulations, Section 302.11 (on the Internet at <http://www.policyworks.gov/ptr>).

In brief, your new domestic assignment must be at least 50 miles from the old domestic assignment. If you are seeking reimbursement for selling costs, you must have owned a home in the New York area, and you must have lived in it and commuted to work from it. Most importantly, you must not sell the home in the N.Y. area or buy the home in San Francisco until you have been officially assigned to a different duty station in the U.S. You will have to



sign a continued service agreement prior to authorization of this allowance.

However, sale of a residence at the old duty station is not required for claiming expenses for purchase at the new duty station.

*Important note:* This benefit is available to any U.S. government employee who is moving from one domestic assignment to another that is more than 50 miles away.

**Q: What expenses will be reimbursed when I sell and buy a house?**

**A:** The lists of what can and cannot be reimbursed are quite long. See FTR 302-11.200 for reimbursable expenses, and FTR 302-11.202 for non-reimbursable expenses.

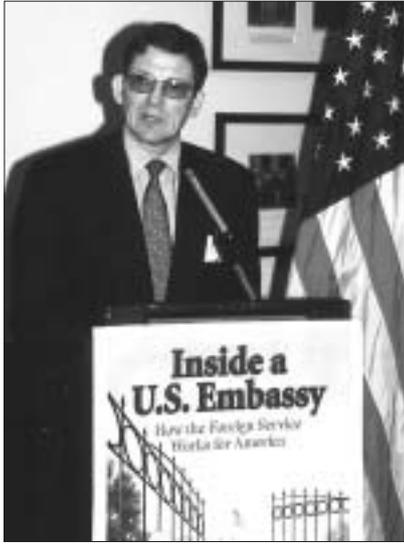
**Q: Is there a ceiling on how much I may be reimbursed?**

**A:** Yes, the maximum you can be reimbursed is 10 percent of the actual sales price of the old house, and 5 percent of the actual purchase price of the new one.

**Q: My supervisor has written me a poor EER this year, but we did not have any formal counseling sessions. Can I grieve this EER on the grounds that I was not adequately counseled?**

**A:** The answer to this is "it depends." The Foreign Service Grievance Board has ruled that an employee must not only be advised of the areas of performance deemed inadequate, but must also be given a reasonable opportunity to improve and given adequate guidance on how to improve. In addition, the department recently held that the lack of mandatory counseling that had been documented on the Counseling Certification Form (DS-1974), was sufficient grounds to expunge an EER.

Although this department decision sets a precedent, a similar case has not yet come before the FSGB. Indeed, in another case, the board ruled that this advice and counsel need not necessarily be given in a formal counseling session. If the objectives of the counseling have been achieved, the decision stated, the procedural error of failing to conduct formal counseling sessions does not constitute a substantive error. If it is clear that the employee knew what his or her duties were and was made aware of performance weaknesses through oversight and close supervision, then the intent of the counseling is considered to have been achieved. □



MARK BURNS & BERT ESCALANTE

Under Secretary for Political Affairs Marc Grossman praises the book.

Grossman said. "It is the most complete document about what we do. What makes it so interesting ... is that it's about individuals and it's about what they do all day, and it's about how they support the United States in an active way."

Grossman, who distributed the book at a recent Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, reported to the audience that Senator Richard Lugar, R-Ind., had told him, "Every American would be interested in this book."

The book includes profiles of Foreign Service officers and specialists in each type of embassy position, designed to illustrate actual job responsibilities in the context of specific embassies and countries. It also includes a compilation of personal experiences — one-day journals from embassy staff around the world and tales from the field — that give a realistic picture of what work and life in the Foreign Service are really like.

"This very attractive and colorful book is highly supportive of the department's goals on several levels," said Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources Ruth



MARK BURNS & BERT ESCALANTE

Shawn Dorman (walking) hands out copies of the book to contributors (from left): Robert Zimmerman, Chat Blakeman, Jim Wagner, Michael Newbill, Don Jacobson, and Mike Hammer.

A. Davis. "This book, with its intriguing cover, invites readers to open it and explore it and in the process to explore the entire world, because that is what we cover."

Amid much applause, Davis reported that the Bureau of Human Resources had purchased 10,000 copies of the book and would be recommending that Foreign Service candidates buy the book. The recruiting division has posted links to the book-ordering site in prominent locations on their careers Web site. This publicity, as well as other efforts under way at AFSA, has already led to steady sales, averaging 150 books per week.

The book's editor, AFSA News editor Shawn Dorman, spoke about what inspired her to take on the project.

"Ever since I was an intern on the Soviet desk a long time ago, and during the years

I was a Foreign Service officer, I always marveled at how little Americans knew about the Foreign Service and the role of embassies," Dorman said. "There were such great stories *not* being told."

Dorman thanked all of the book's contributors, most of whom are still overseas. The contributors present at the launch were Under Secretary Marc Grossman and Special Assistant Mike Hammer, Ambassador L. Bruce Laingen, Daniel Hirsch, Chat Blakeman, Jim Wagner, Michael Newbill, Don Jacobson, and Robert Zimmerman.

AFSA President John Naland moderated the program.

"Breaking down stereotypes and educating the American public about the Foreign Service are key objectives of AFSA outreach activities," Naland said. "Those of

us in this room recognize that life in an embassy is not only cocktail parties and ceremonies. Through personal accounts of coups, evacuations, terrorism and the everyday challenges that our diplomats and specialists face, the book explains what it is really like to be a member of the Foreign Service."

For more information about the book, and to order a copy, go to [www.afsa.org/inside](http://www.afsa.org/inside) or see the ad on page 52 of this issue of the *Journal*. □

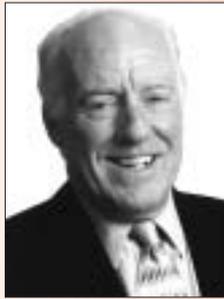


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AFSA President John Naland, Director General Ruth A. Davis, and AFSA State VP Louise Crane.

## The FS Troops Are Out There Too

As I write this (late March), the United States has gone to war with Iraq. By the time you see this, if all goes as predicted, the Iraqi armed forces will have been defeated and we will be deeply engaged in what comes after. We will know what sort of reaction the American-led invasion stimulated both in Iraq and in the surrounding region. We will know whether the Iraqi people greeted the coalition troops as liberators or whether they descended into factional fighting. Will democracy have begun to take flower in Iraq, or, to the contrary, will the ranks of al-Qaida have begun to swell? Such questions will fill the air.



The Pentagon will, of course, have taken every possible precaution to protect the lives of America's fighting men and women engaged in the campaign, both before, during and after the hot war. What may be less obvious to the lay observer, however, is that not only will our soldiers be at risk, but our diplomats stationed in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world will also enter an even more dangerous time as those angered by the Iraqi invasion bring U.S. embassies and consulates under even greater pressure.

Our diplomats stationed in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world will also enter an even more dangerous time.

AFSA must help ensure that the American public knows that members of the Foreign Service have been serving for decades in the Middle East, and make the case that their safety and security, and that of their families, must remain high on

the administration's agenda. What we, as retirees, can bring to the table is a willingness to raise our voices in whichever community we find ourselves on behalf of our diplomatic colleagues in the region. All of us have, to varying degrees, weathered tense times in our careers when a situation demanded drastic measures be taken to protect American lives and property. We therefore understand intuitively the broad outlines of what threats to security may be leveled at our diplomatic and consular establishments throughout the Middle East and elsewhere in these perilous times.

As the voice of the Foreign Service, AFSA needs our support now more than ever. If you haven't taken the time to join, rejoin or submit your annual dues, I ask you to consider doing so now. To be an effective voice, AFSA needs numbers, both in members and in financial contributions.

My term ends in July, so this may well be my last VP column. I feel both proud and humble to have had the honor of representing you on the AFSA Governing Board for the past two years. Frankly, I leave feeling I could have done more to advance the interests of the retiree community; for example, by traveling to meet more of you around the country. That said, I have tried to keep faith with what I understood were your broad wishes and what my instincts told me was the right way to go. In any case, it has been a good run and I leave with the sense that AFSA is strong, growing and in good hands. Thanks again for your support and friendship. □

## AFSA and USAID Support MCC Debate

BY JUDY SLATER, AFSA AT USAID FORUMS MANAGER

On March 3, AFSA officers met with Senate Committee on Foreign Relations staff members regarding USAID's role in the implementation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. On March 4 and 6, State Department Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business & Agricultural

To encourage cooperation and discussion of the MCC plans, AFSA and the Open Forum at the State Department initiated plans for a town hall meeting .

Affairs Alan Larson; Treasury Department Under Secretary for International Affairs John Taylor; USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios; and experts from think tanks and foundations spoke before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on International Relations.

Senators and representatives asked pointed questions regarding procedures for country selection and eligibility for Millennium Challenge Corporation support. They asked about funding allocation, the need for a separate development agency, corruption, and accountability. The debate will continue for the next few months. There are many practical details to work out.

AFSA submitted written testimony in advance of the Senate meeting to remind the committee members that USAID already has expertise and experience on the ground and should play an impor-

Continued on page 9

tant role in implementation of the MCC in the field. AFSA also suggested that before passing legislation, the committee test this new approach to development by starting a pilot program in one country.

To encourage cooperation and discussion of the MCC plans, in March the AFSA office at USAID and the Open Forum at the State Department initiated plans for a town hall meeting in early April. AFSA expected broad participation from Foreign Service and Civil Service USAID and State employees, members of Congress, the interagency committee drafting the MCC legislation, and development partners and professionals. A town hall meeting gives employees an opportunity to speak candidly about their concerns and learn details about MCC implementation in the field. The Open Forum planned to telecast the meeting at the State Department, USAID Washington, and USAID missions and embassies overseas. Members of Congress and the MCC committee were invited to contribute to the discussion.

Please contact Joe Pastic at [jpastic@usaid.gov](mailto:jpastic@usaid.gov) or Judy Slater at [aidproject@afsa.org](mailto:aidproject@afsa.org) for more information about the Millennium Challenge Corporation and/or to participate in future forums. □

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V.P. VOICE: FCS ■ BY PETER FREDERICK

## How Much Time Is Enough?

After almost four years of negotiations, the Foreign Service Impasse Disputes Panel has determined the amount of official time the AFSA vice president at Commerce can spend on AFSA activities. The FSIDP was the last stop on a long and frustrating road to get approval for the AFSA VP at Commerce to be accorded the same benefits and opportunities as the AFSA officials at all the other foreign affairs agencies who spend 100 percent of their time on AFSA activities.

AFSA made two points in its presentation. First, it takes more than 50 percent of the FCS AFSA VP's official time to fulfill responsibilities to constituents and to negotiate with FCS management. Second, in the evaluation process, the FCS VP cannot compete with fellow FSOs because the evaluation is based solely

on what he or she does for FCS management in the non-AFSA time, which has been as little as one hour per week. FCS management's position was that 50 percent of the employee's official time and other time "as needed and requested" is a satisfactory formula. If the AFSA VP does not do well in the evaluation process, it is a reflection of the officer's abilities, not a problem with the system.

AFSA presented detailed evidence showing that I was spending over 90 percent of my time counseling, researching and negotiating issues and providing the basic services of a professional association. We pointed out that twice in two years, FCS had agreed to a negotiated policy only to back off several months later. AFSA had to file Unfair Labor Practice complaints and institutional grievances for failure to negotiate in good faith on several occasions, all of which took time. FCS responded that I had used as much time as I needed to address AFSA issues, and implied that by signing my biweekly time sheets and activity logs, management approved the 90 percent of my time spent on AFSA business. The FSIDP held that there was no evidence in the record that the AFSA VP had been prevented from providing service to the unit due to lack of official time. Therefore the existing arrangement (a block grant of 50 percent official time and 40 percent approved additional time) should be maintained.

The performance evaluation part of the argument was less clear-cut. AFSA held that all my activities should be discussed in my evaluation without delineating whether the work was for AFSA or FCS. We proposed that, like the State AFSA VP, I be permitted to discuss what I did in my evaluation (in the past, AFSA VPs at State have discussed their AFSA accomplishments in memoranda for their official performance files). This was especially important in my case since FCS had not given me any meaningful assignments during my three-plus years in the position. FCS responded that my EER should only include FCS-specified activities. AFSA's position remains that since there are none, it is hard for the FCS VP to compete for promotion with his or her peers. The FSIDP did not address this in its decision.

After all our efforts, the collective bargaining agreement continues to state that Commerce agrees that 50 percent of the AFSA VP's official time may be spent on AFSA issues, with additional time as needed and approved. Thus, the FSIDP decision upholds the status quo of the VP devoting 90 percent of his or her time to AFSA. □





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