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CONTENTS

May 2007 Volume 84, No. 5

FOCUS ON THE FS AS A CAREER

20 / PLUS ÇA CHANGE ... ?

Many in the Foreign Service may hope that things will get back to "normal" once the Iraq War is over.

Don't count on it.
By Shawn Zeller

27 / COPING WITH UNACCOMPANIED TOURS

The unaccompanied tour, a rapidly growing category of overseas service, presents new challenges for the Foreign Service.

By Nan Leininger

35 / RECALLING ALL-PURPOSE DUTY IN RUSSIA

Two decades ago, Embassy Moscow and Consulate General Leningrad became the only U.S. diplomatic missions in a foreign country with no FSNs.

By Allan Mustard



FEATURES

THE EDUCATION OF CARNE ROSS: FROM OUTRAGE TO OPPORTUNITY / 42

A senior British Foreign Service officer who resigned three years ago over his government's Iraq policy now provides diplomatic advice to those who need it most.

By Ludovic Hood

THE LAST FLIGHT FROM TALLINN / 46

A Foreign Service code clerk finally receives recognition for his sacrifice in the line of duty two-thirds of a century ago.

By Eric A. Johnson and Anna Hermann

COLUMNS

PRESIDENT'S VIEW / 5

An Over-Ripe Opportunity Needs Attention Now

By J. Anthony Holmes

SPEAKING OUT / 12

When Importance Is Equated with Danger

By Brian T. Neubert

IN RESPONSE / 16

Much More than Pins on a Map

By Lawrence E. Butler

FS KNOW-HOW / 18

Dealing with Identity Theft

By David Zwach

REFLECTIONS / 72

A House Call in the Guatemalan Highlands

By Donald W. MacCorquodale

DEPARTMENTS

LETTERS / 6

CYBERNOTES / 8

FASTRAX / 11

MARKETPLACE / 13

AFSA NEWS / 53

BOOKS / 63

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS / 70

FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

An Over-Ripe Opportunity Needs Attention Now

By J. ANTHONY HOLMES

There aren't many things that unite every living former Secretary of State, pundits and academics, Republicans and Democrats, as well as AFSA and State Department management. One thing that does is the "United States Diplomacy Center," the museum of American diplomacy that currently has a staff of seven working on plans, over \$1.0 million in dedicated private funding sitting in the bank, and 20,000 square feet of vacant prime space in the newly renovated east wing of the Main State building, all just waiting to be used. And waiting, and waiting, and waiting ...



During his first week formally on the job in February 2001, Secretary Colin Powell signed a Statement of Support committing the State Department to provide staff, space, and security for the museum. Even earlier, at the department's request, a nonprofit foundation was formed and quickly raised \$1.3 million of the estimated \$25 million needed for the project, funds donated by foundations and State Department retirees. A quarter of this sum was spent more than two years ago on an impressive design concept by renowned museum designers and architects. Plans call for the center to be integrated with the snazzy new auditorium and meeting rooms already being used at the 21st Street entrance. In short, this project has all the makings of a

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

real winner.

Virtually everyone interested recognizes that our nation is woefully ignorant of the history of American diplomacy, the challenges it has overcome, its meager cost relative to the savings gained from wars avoided, and the monumental contributions it has made to our national security. As recent political discourse reflects, the importance of diplomacy to our national interests has never been greater. Nor has the relevance of this project. It would be a welcome addition to our public affairs program. And it could become an important element of our long-standing efforts to build a domestic political constituency that will advocate for greater U.S. involvement in the world and a larger role and adequate funding for the diplomatic component of that engagement.

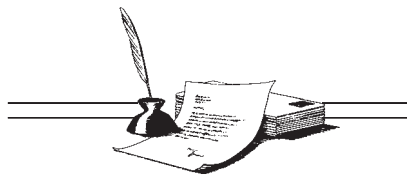
I was particularly pleased recently to hear some good news that I thought augured well for the center. Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns (one of the early backers of the idea) told AFSA that, in response to concerns expressed by recent hires about how useful some U.S. diplomatic history context would be in their orientation process, he had worked with FSI and the Historian's office to develop a three-day U.S. diplomatic history module to be included in future A-100 courses. The synergy this could create with the center seems obvious.

There have also been worrying omens. It is widely known that sever-

al attempts to take over the space set aside for the center have been fought off — for now. But how long can this prime space remain safe when bureaus are clamoring for more room and a new foreign assistance empire has been created and many staff shifted over from USAID? Already, details have come out about plans to kick out the long-time occupants of the 1200 "service corridor," such as the FLO offices, the travel and transportation people, AFSA, AFGE, and even the Employee Services Center (aka the Foreign Service Lounge) to create new office space.

"All the key people in the department support the diplomacy center," I've been repeatedly told. "It's like apple pie and motherhood." Even Secretary Rice supports it, they say, and she was very impressed six months ago by the design concept presentation. When I discussed the center with her in late 2005 and again last summer, she was indeed supportive, but she also had some concerns. Those issues have now been addressed, I'm told. But nothing happens — and no one can explain why.

As the Bush administration heads down the home stretch and the Secretary's staff ponders her legacy, it seems to me that having her break the logjam and get the diplomacy center project moving is a no-brainer. She would join an illustrious group of predecessors who have lined up behind this project. Both AFSA and I hope she will do the right thing, and quickly, lest the loss of momentum so far prove fatal. ■



LETTERS

The Neocon Agenda

The twin articles on foreign policy during the next two years (“A Bleak Outlook” by Dennis Jett and “A Sound Strategy” by Joshua Muravchik, *FSJ*, February) were balanced in every respect except one: the article by Jett was accompanied by a short bio of the author but the article by Muravchik was not. [Editor’s Note: A correction note about this inadvertent omission ran in the March issue.]

A quick Google search of Muravchik’s background revealed exactly what I thought: this ardent neoconservative is associated with hawkish think tanks such as the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, where he is on the advisory board.

The dirty little secret of the neoconservatives who urged unilateral aggression in Iraq, and who now urge the same in Iran, is that they are promoting the foreign policy of Israel, not that of the United States. These Israel-Firsters must contort reason and logic in order to convince us that Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s Iran are threats to the United States through a supposed connection to Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaida — an organization which really *is* a threat to the United States. So instead of concentrating our efforts in Afghanistan — finding, capturing and killing the leaders of the organization that attacked us — we are bogged down in a quagmire called “The Long War” by those who believe it is necessary. Everyone else calls it

“The Unnecessary War,” and believes it has lasted too long.

I add my voice to those like former President Jimmy Carter, who advocates a truly even-handed U.S. policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Ambassador Philip C. Wilcox Jr., whose excellent article in the December *Journal* (“The Holy Land: Can Peace Be Rescued?”) builds a persuasive case for the sort of intervention in the Middle East that could actually yield results. To the neoconservatives who have led us astray once and who seek to do so again, I say: sit down and shut up. Your agenda has been thoroughly discredited.

Lewis K. Elbinger

FSO

Air War College

Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

Requesting a Jett-ison

Your February focus section articles on the next two years of foreign policy were timely, and the topic was well chosen. Unfortunately, your series was marred by yet another completely unbalanced tirade by Dennis Jett against the current administration. This is not the first time you have devoted space to this inveterate Bush-basher, who obviously has some bitter grudge against those he once served.

In introducing the companion piece by Joshua Muravchik, which brings a right-wing perspective to the debate, you hasten to assert that Mr. Muravchik’s “prescription is emphatically not the view of the *Journal*, the Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board, etc.” Are we then left to conclude that Mr.

Jett’s grossly subjective anti-administration arguments *do* reflect those of the *Journal* and its board?

It seems to me that our professional *Journal* must reflect all carefully considered opinions, without gratuitous expressions of support, or lack thereof. Moreover, now that Mr. Jett has had several occasions to vent his spleen on our pages, do us a favor and give him a long rest.

Michael G. Wygant

FSO, retired

Scarborough, Maine

Iraq Reconstruction Specialists

The State Department is having difficulty finding the technical specialists, such as agronomists, engineers and police officers, for Iraq reconstruction. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was recently quoted in the *Washington Post* as saying “no Foreign Service in the world has those people.”

But we once did. U.S. foreign aid agencies from the 1950s to the 1970s had many such specialists, both career and contract, American and local-hire. In Pakistan, Bangladesh and Zaire, I directed scores of agricultural experts, education and health professionals, infrastructure engineers, public safety officers and others, who carried out countless development and reconstruction projects in conjunction with local officials. Such experts were doing the same in other Cold War frontier countries such as Turkey, India, Thailand and South Korea.

Unfortunately, beginning in the late 1970s, the executive branch and Congress regularly cut the budget and staff

LETTERS



of the U.S. Agency for International Development, relegating it to subsidiary status in the foreign policy arena. The same was done to our cultural and propaganda arm, the U.S. Information Agency.

The result is that today we have a warped foreign affairs establishment — heavy on the military and intelligence sides, but far too light on the reconstruction, foreign aid and cultural affairs sides. This urgently needs correction.

*Raymond Malley
State/USAID FSO, retired
McLean, Va.*

Refreshing Ideas

As an active Foreign Service Limited appointee who is new to USAID, I study the *Journal* with great interest and share its articles with colleagues in the United States and abroad. I have been especially interested in the “true confessions” aspects of retired officers who speak up now that they no longer actively serve.

Your December focus, “Keeping the Lid On: Prospects for Peace in the Middle East,” captured my attention, for I have worked in that region’s hot spots since the mid-1970s. As we all grow up under the influence of parents, family, teachers, religious and cultural leaders, etc., we cannot help but develop attitudes and make assumptions that we hold dear. Those assumptions then became realities for us. In reading the *FSJ* articles, my mind was free to roam over a spectrum of ideas beyond my own, which was refreshingly frightful and enlightening. Thank you so much for such experiences.

*Barney P. Popkin
Environmental Protection
Specialist
Bureau for Asia and the
Near East
USAID
Washington, D.C.*

One Foreign Service

I was disappointed by Francis Xavier Cunningham’s letter in the February issue, which attempted to draw a parallel between the behavior of the characters in the opera “Madame Butterfly” and relations between “substantive” and “non-substantive” officers of the Foreign Service. As an economic officer who is married to a management officer, I feel well-qualified to respond.

While there may be self-important people who perceive themselves as superior to members of other cones, they soon learn to appreciate their colleagues’ work when they need visa assistance for a contact or maintenance work on their air conditioning. And if they don’t learn to respect their colleagues, they may find that they get a rather grudging response to their requests!

Mr. Cunningham’s letter is a prime example of the debilitating tendency of the Service to Balkanize itself. With only a few thousand members in the corps — in which I would include our wonderful office management specialists, information managers and other professional staff, as well as colleagues in USAID, FCS, FAS and IBB — it makes no sense to divide ourselves through petty squabbles over which of us is more important. None of us can get along without the others; therefore none of us can be deemed to be superior to the others.

Rather than “Madame Butterfly,” the example I propose the Foreign Service adopt is Rudyard Kipling’s story, “Her Majesty’s Servants,” from the first *Jungle Book*. In this allegorical tale, several military draft animals (a cavalry charger, a pack camel, an artillery mule and so on) argue about their place in the army and which is more important. Their discussion makes clear that each has their own strengths and weaknesses, and each has an essential role to play. The story

ends, as all *Jungle Book* tales do, with a poem, which contains this couplet: “Children of the Camp are we, serving each in his degree.” Words to remember, perhaps, the next time we animals get to arguing about who is best.

*Colin Helmer
Economic Counselor
Embassy Kuala Lumpur*

Praise for the Boss

The March issue brought yet another letter of praise for Under Secretary Karen Hughes that, like others before, was from a member of her staff. Am I the only one who finds these testimonials lacking in credibility? Public expressions of praise for a supervisor from a subordinate should be embarrassing for all concerned, whether Foreign Service career officers or political appointees. Perhaps these accolades would carry more weight if there were not an employee evaluation report connecting Ms. Hughes and the writers.

To paraphrase Gertrude Stein, a suck-up is a suck-up is a suck-up. What’s next? Her staff’s nomination of Hughes for sainthood? Or a Nobel Prize?

*Robin Berrington
USIA FSO, retired
Washington, D.C.*

Reflecting Literature

I appreciated the September 2006 Reflections piece, “I Found Huck Finn in El Salvador,” by Jack Gallagher. The combination of Mark Twain and Huck Finn being rolled into such a well-written relationship with current events appealed to me greatly.

Very depressing in recent years is the lack of a connection many Americans feel to any work written — or often even anyone writing — earlier than, say, 1970!

*Steve Flora
Foreign Service Specialist
Embassy Dubai ■*



CYBERNOTES

Spotlight on Iraq Refugee Crisis

A March 26 hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia threw a spotlight on the Iraq refugee situation, described as “the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world” and one of the gravest (http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/hearing_notice.asp?id=792). The issue was first brought to lawmakers’ attention in January, when Senator Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., led Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on

the subject (<http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearing.cfm?id=2470>).

By most accounts, at least two million refugees have fled to Syria and Jordan alone. According to *Refugees International* (www.refugeesinternational.org), Iraqis were leaving the country at the rate of 100,000 a month until Jordan recently moved to shut its borders. Another 1.9 million Iraqis have been internally displaced.

Among this vast assemblage — which some anticipate will include more than 20 percent of the Iraqi population by the end of the year —

there is a particular group of individuals who are uniquely vulnerable: those Iraqis who have worked for the U.S. as translators, guides and in other capacities and who are now the special targets of the anti-American militants.

With the help of military officers and Foreign Service personnel, pressure is being stepped up on the U.S. government to honor the moral obligation to assist these individuals. Arabist Kirk Johnson, a USAID regional coordinator in Baghdad and then Falluja in 2005, was one of the first to publicize the issue. In a Dec. 15 article in the *Los Angeles Times*, Johnson painted a vivid picture of what “locally employed staff” face, and argued that assistance was not only a moral but strategic imperative as well.

More recently, the efforts of Angela “Khadija” Williams, an FSO posted as public diplomacy officer at PRT Anbar, to help a 34-year-old female Iraqi translator gain asylum have been covered in the press (www.realcities.com/mld/krwashington/news/special_packages/iraq/16947889.htm). Ansam, who has lost her entire family in the war, is one of hundreds of Iraqis who have put their lives on the line for U.S. forces — only to be denied or blocked from immigrating to the U.S., despite recommendations from a Marine brigadier general and other officers with whom she has worked.

Finally she was approved for a program to resettle at-risk interpreters, only to be told that the 50 slots were already filled. “Six groups have left her behind,” Williams says.

Introducing *The Vanguard*

On April 3, AFSA/USAID released the first issue of *The Vanguard* (www.afsa.org/usaid/040307afsanetvanguard.pdf), an electronic newsletter that aims to fill the void created by suspension of the agency’s *FrontLines*.

Produced by the AFSA office staff at USAID, *The Vanguard* will be published every few months in an effort to keep USAID active-duty and retired employees connected. An unofficial, informal publication, the inaugural issue contains a story on the new employees sworn in Feb. 5 and the celebration of International Women’s Day in Dhaka, a report on replacing coca cultivation in Peru and a former *FrontLines* favorite — information on personnel changes at the agency.

Though editors Francisco Zamora, AFSA vice president for USAID, and Ásgeir Sifgússon acknowledge that they have neither the funding nor resources to completely replace *FrontLines*, they were spurred to action by a steady stream of e-mails and comments from members upset over its termination.

The last *FrontLines* issue was May 2006. In response to AFSA/USAID’s inquiries in November, officials in the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs stated that USAID Administrator Randall Tobias had directed that publications in general were to be “reviewed to determine the adequacy of their purpose, message, consistency, audience and cost issues.”

By all accounts, *The Vanguard* has been well-received. Zamora received more than a dozen congratulatory e-mails and phone calls within several days of its release. Interestingly, sources also say that the re-launching of *FrontLines* is now under “active” consideration at USAID.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor



CYBERNOTES

“Whatever it takes, I’m getting her out.”

In testimony at the March 26 hearings, retired U.S. Army Major General Paul D. Eaton made the case for giving Iraqis who have worked closely with the U.S. priority status for immigration without regard to quotas. Since the mid-1970s, some 37,000 Iraqis have been allowed to emigrate; but since 2003, only 466 visas have been granted to Iraqi refugees, with an additional 50 per year accorded to military translators.

Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration Ellen Sauerbrey told the committee that in February Secretary Rice established the Iraqi Refugee and Internally Displaced Task Force, led by Asst. Sec. Paula Dobriansky, to coordinate the government response on behalf of Iraqi refugees.

Sauerbrey also said the administration is “working to identify the best way to broaden our existing authorities” to assist those at risk due to their association with the U.S.

Refugees International representative Kristele Younes stated that the problem was still not being adequately addressed either by the international community or the U.S. RI commends the Bush administration’s offer to resettle some 7,000 refugees found eligible under U.S. law, and supports its request to Congress for additional funding for resettlement and overseas assistance to internally-displaced persons and refugees. But, Younes adds, “the amounts requested and the admissions offered are far too small, given the level of need.”

50 Years Ago...

The statesman is ... like one of the heroes of classical tragedy who has had an intuition of the future but who cannot transmit it directly to his fellow men and who cannot validate its ‘truth.’ This is why statesmen often share the fate of prophets, that they are without honor in their own country and that their greatness is usually apparent only in retrospect when their intuition has become experience.



— Henry Kissinger, “The Problem of Leadership,” *FSJ*, May 1957.

Also testifying was *New Yorker* magazine writer George Packer. His report, “Betrayed,” an account of Iraqis who have worked for the U.S., is detailed and compelling (www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/03/26/070326fa_fact_packer). “They are,” he states, “truly a unique ‘homeless’ population in Iraq’s war zone — dependent on us for security and not convinced we will take care of them when we leave.”

— Susan Maitra, *Senior Editor*

Visa Waiver Expansion: Smart Move or Security Blunder?

Under legislation passed by the Senate on March 13, the Visa Waiver Program — which grants entry to the U.S. for 90 days — would be expanded for the first time since the program was adopted in 1999. The measure opening the VWP to allies in the Global War on Terror faces uncertain prospects in the House. Called for by President Bush, the initiative has revived the debate over access versus security in visa policy.

Included as an amendment to “Improving America’s Security by Implementing Unfinished Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007,” the provision would lift visa restrictions for citizens from countries that “cooperated with the government of the United States on counterterrorism initiatives and information-sharing” — provided that the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State expect such cooperation will continue. The administration has already identified 13 countries to add: South Korea, Greece, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, Malta, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland (www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=77894).

Under the VWP, the nationals of 27 participating states are inspected upon arrival at U.S. points of entry, but are exempt from the usual background checks and in-country interviews associated with obtaining a visa. Participating countries must issue passports that are machine-readable



and have a denial rate of less than 3 percent for non-immigrant nationals seeking U.S. visas. As of 2006, they must also have begun replacing their citizens' machine-readable documents with biometric passports.

Senator George V. Voinovich, R-Ohio, who wrote the measure, says that the move can "improve both our national and economic security while helping to solidify relationships and improve good will toward the United States for years to come" (<http://voinovich.senate.gov/public/>).

Business and education groups are the VWP's biggest supporters, among them the Association of International Educators, the Heritage Foundation and the Coalition for Employment

through Exports. The National Foreign Trade Council endorses the expansion of the VWP to protect the competitive U.S. lead in global technology (www.crn.com/it-channel/198500222).

Not everyone agrees. Within the security community there are concerns that in the absence of a rigorous visa background check, terrorists and international criminals have easy access to the U.S. Victims of terrorism are opposed as well. Michael Cutler of 9/11 Families for a Secure America believes that the VWP should be repealed altogether, and that the business community exercises undue influence on security policy (www.911fsa.org/articles/art2006jan31b.html).

The Government Accountability Office concluded in a July 2006 report that the VWP carries with it both risks and benefits (www.gao.gov/new.items/d06854.pdf). Noting that both Zacarias Moussaoui and would-be shoe bomber Richard Reid came into the U.S. from VWP countries, the GAO explained that stolen VWP passports are now a hot commodity, and emphasized the need for sufficient scrutiny over VWP procedures.

— Margaret E. MacFarland,
Editorial Intern

Zimbabwe: Beginning of the End for Mugabe?

On March 30, the central committee of Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF party opted to endorse President Robert Mugabe for the presidential election slated for March 2008 rather than agree to Mugabe's proposal to extend his current term for two more years, until 2010. The proposal for extension had suffered an unprecedented setback in December when, under threat of rebellion on the part of several influential members, the party's annual conference refused to

endorse it.

Signs of discontent within the ruling party are the focus of new hope that Zimbabwe's disintegration may be halted in the next year, and its battered economy and body politic put on the road to recovery. In a report issued March 5, the International Crisis Group examines the political crisis going into the July parliamentary session (www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1233&l=1). The ICG recommends negotiations among ZANU-PF and opposition leaders to bring about Mugabe's retirement and form a transitional government to implement an emergency economic recovery plan and draft a new constitution.

At a summit meeting of the Southern African Development Community in Dar es Salaam at the end of March to discuss Zimbabwe, regional leaders mandated South African President Thabo Mbeki to step up efforts to mediate the conflict between Mugabe and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change in Harare. Though it marks a departure from the group's adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, the move was criticized by those who had hoped for a harsher stance toward Mugabe (<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/2007033.html>).

The SADC summit also called for a study group to look at Zimbabwe's collapsing economy and come up with plans to help. Unemployment stands at 80 percent. Once an agricultural exporter with a vibrant manufacturing center and 4.3-percent annual growth on average, Zimbabwe can no longer feed itself. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other aid agencies estimate this year's harvest will only provide one-sixth of the corn needed to feed the population.

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Quite frankly, I think we have two significant problems in this country and in this government in terms of dealing with these kinds of situations, both in Iraq and Afghanistan. When I left government, USAID had 16,000 employees. It has 2,000 now. We used to have this kind of a deployable expeditionary capability in the government. ... We don't have that anymore. Now it's more or less a contracting agency. Similarly, in terms of the strategic communications part of civic action, we basically dismantled USIA and that capability at the end of the Cold War.

— Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, asked if he was satisfied with U.S. government support of the surge in Iraq, at the SECDEF Roundtable, March 22, www.defenselink.mil/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=3911.htm?

Inflation is running at 1,700 percent, the highest in the world, and government coffers are nearly empty. Between 1998 and 2006, the economy shrank by 40 percent, with output down in all sectors. The cost of living for a family of six rose by 26.4 percent in one month alone (September to October 2006), according to the government-funded Consumer Council of Zimbabwe. Moreover, an estimated 18 percent of the population has HIV/AIDS.

Many observers believe that Mugabe's days as the head of state are numbered (he has been in power since independence in 1980). According to the BBC's online news service, the British government believes there are several scenarios for his exit: he could negotiate his departure, be pushed out by the ZANU-PF or forced out by a civil explosion.

Britain and the U.S. are looking for ways to strengthen the economic sanctions they imposed in 2002 and 2003, respectively, in response to the land reform program Mugabe launched in 2000 and subsequent human rights violations. That move precipitated a collapse in foreign exchange earnings and helped trigger the cur-

rent economic crisis (www.cato.org/pubs/edb/edb4.html). The sanctions are widely credited with increasing pressure on Mugabe, as businessmen in his party have felt the pinch.

While there are differing views as to how events will unfold in Harare, there is no disagreement that the crisis is rapidly taking the country to a breaking point. The systematic government campaign against opposition supporters — political rallies were banned in February — has now begun to affect ordinary Zimbabweans, according to Human Rights Watch (www.hrw.org/english/docs/2007/03/28/zimbab15578.htm). U.S. Ambassador Christopher Dell has been a particularly outspoken critic of the Mugabe regime's heavy-handed tactics.

To monitor developments in Zimbabwe, go to www.allafrica.com or <http://news.bbc.co.uk>. In addition to the ICG, mentioned above, the Council on Foreign Relations offers insights into current developments as well as background material (www.cfr.org). The U.S. Institute for Peace also has useful information (www.usip.org). ■

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

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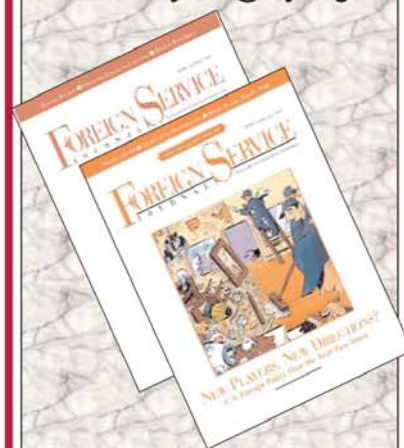
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SPEAKING OUT

When Importance Is Equated With Danger

BY BRIAN T. NEUBERT

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's global repositioning initiative will yield beneficial results if understaffed posts in China, India, the Middle East and Africa begin to achieve adequate human resource levels to carry out the important work of transformational diplomacy. Without a doubt, Washington and Europe remain important, but the repositioning exercise will restore some balance to staffing worldwide.

The imperfect Foreign Service assignments process has also received a much-needed overhaul that will facilitate the task of sending personnel where they are most needed to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives. Director General George Staple's initiative to conduct multiple assignment seasons is designed to enable the department to fill so-called "priority" posts before all others. Recently, for instance, the FS-2 generalist "regular season" was temporarily delayed because "pre-season" slots at that grade remained unfilled.

I can speak only for myself but, in general, these changes to the status quo seem reasonable. Within the framework of "worldwide availability," Foreign Service personnel enjoy some level of choice over where they are assigned. So, with the exception of (relatively rare) directed assignments, they choose to serve at a post, based on their own criteria. Family-friendliness, safety, the job portfolio, health conditions, pay incentives and career advancement all inform the

*Morale, recognition
and advancement are
all warped in a
system where good
work in successful
countries is
undervalued.*



decision to varying degrees.

Consequently, most effective officers are happy and fulfilled in their post of assignment because they (and their family members) have used their own criteria to select it. Following career development guidelines and meeting the needs of the Service, each bidder is responsible for managing his or her own professional advancement, weighing the information the system provides about the merits and disadvantages of each job on the list.

A Crucial Fallacy

It is in persuading bidders to consider the more challenging assignments that the department is failing. The message is that critical posts are dangerous posts, leading to the conclusion that safe posts are not critical. Yet the importance that a diplomatic posting or mission holds for U.S. national interests is actually based on many factors: political, economic, stra-

tegic, historic, cultural and geographic. For one factor, "danger," to trump all of these confuses and weakens the process.

Under the current paradigm, hardship and danger posts are given priority for assignments; thus, the importance of a posting is equated with its relative danger. But Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Pakistan, Haiti and Saudi Arabia are not important countries *because* they are dangerous. Rather, they are strategically important *and* dangerous.

Similarly, U.S. relations with friendly democracies like the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Germany and Australia continue to be important in their own right. So the relative safety of Paris or Berlin should not diminish appreciation for the good diplomatic work being done there.

Peace, stability and development in Iraq and Afghanistan are unquestionably top U.S. priorities — not because these countries are war zones, but because we have staked our reputation in nationbuilding on success in both countries. However, one need look no further than our consular information sheets to learn that doing any kind of business in either place poses enormous difficulties.

Furthermore, some policy goals in critical-needs countries are not attainable in the near term, precisely because the security environment does not permit us to pursue them successfully. Ironically, the danger makes



those jobs *less* important, because we are less able to accomplish our goals.

The department's current emphasis on the degree of crisis in determining staffing priorities fails to address many promising diplomatic opportunities. For example, according to a recent message from the director general, "priority" posts like Algeria, the Central African Republic and Burundi were 100-percent filled in the pre-season. Are any of these countries even close to India or China in terms of importance to U.S. interests?

Let me hasten to add that in no way do I wish to disparage my fine colleagues elsewhere in Africa with that comment. However, "danger" or "hardship" criteria writ large are hindering rational decisions by both bidders and the department's leadership.

Opportunities for Growth

Excellent diplomatic opportunities exist in many countries for Foreign Service personnel in all skill codes and at all levels. Even though those of us here in Madagascar are not anywhere near Washington's radar screen, let alone on it, throughout my two years here I have enjoyed a range of unique professional challenges. For example, Madagascar signed the very first compact with the Millennium Challenge Corporation, making it a prime laboratory for testing the usefulness of the Millennium Challenge experiment that should yield valuable lessons for other countries moving toward participation.

My two years in Hong Kong were among the safest in my life, yet my colleagues and I had a unique vantage point from which to engage China. We also promoted the Container Security Initiative at a port that sends more containers to the United States than any other. Or, drawing from a colleague's experience, a country of modest strategic importance may rise

on our list of priorities if it assumes leadership of a major regional bloc, like the European Union.

Equating importance with danger in the assignments process has implications above and beyond the decisions made every two to four years about who goes where. Morale, recognition and advancement are all warped in a system where good work in successful countries is undervalued. The ability to manage crises is undeniably important, but it is certainly not the only professional skill needed to conduct a sound foreign policy.

I have spent half of my career at 25-percent hardship posts — I cut my teeth in the war-ravaged Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1998 to 2000 — and I expect to bid mostly on hardship posts later this year. But I am growing tired of the messages dutifully forwarded by my career development officer reporting on the department's success in deploying our top people to dangerous postings. Even as I sit at a hardship post, it is frustrating to think we are deliberately choosing not to send our best people to relatively safe posts where critical diplomatic work is being done.

Of course, one can reasonably argue that we should not close our missions in critical-needs countries just because it is dangerous to be there. I think we all understand that the path to victory is strewn with obstacles. To leave the field of play would be to admit failure and surrender the world to the forces of chaos and evil.

Yet the opportunity cost of equating importance with danger decreases our diplomatic effectiveness in the rest of the world. It also implies that relative safety is relatively unimportant. Our relations with many strategically important, "safe" countries are less likely to remain strong, given a reduced investment of diplomatic capital.

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SPEAKING OUT



The department's current emphasis on the degree of crisis in determining staffing priorities fails to address many promising diplomatic opportunities.

Deservedly or not, the standing of the United States in the world is at an historic low. Underprioritizing positions in the very countries where this trend can (and must) be reversed is a mistake.

A Possible Solution

In closing, I would be remiss if I failed to offer any solutions to this problem. Perhaps the Bureau of Human Resources could develop a "Diplomatic Opportunity Index" that divides open positions into groups to be filled over several assignment seasons. An overarching theme for such an index should be the feasibility of getting the job done on the ground in the country. Criteria for selecting such positions could include promotion performance or major awards earned by incumbents.

Another approach would be for assistant secretaries in each geographic bureau to designate 10 to 15 positions in their region for priority assignment. Toward that end, a radical idea might be to align or connect the assignments process, the new Mission Strategic Plans and work

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Many slots in Iraq and Afghanistan would no doubt be included in any list of jobs to be filled early on a priority basis. But other positions, particularly those in countries where the security environment prevents normal diplomatic activity, would wait until the regular bidding season. In contrast, jobs in any country that offers opportunities for an individual to make a difference — particularly where incumbents have made good progress — should be considered for the pre-season.

A mentor once told me a great officer makes the most of any post. Yet some countries — safe and dangerous alike — offer more scope for success than others. Criteria like democracy, trade relevance, regional security, MCC eligibility, and health and environmental conditions, should justify pre-season placement for some jobs. Any one of these issues relevant to U.S. interests is a more valid indicator of importance than danger.

The pressure to staff the Iraqs and Afghanistans of the world is unlikely to abate anytime soon. Even so, the incentives and justifications built into our assignments process can and should be recalibrated to reflect diplomatic opportunities. It is when importance is equated with accomplishing the tasks the American people pay us for, not just how much danger we expose ourselves to, that the distribution of U.S. diplomatic talent around the world will be most effective. ■

Brian Neubert is currently the political, economic and commercial section chief in Antananarivo. Since joining the Foreign Service in 1998, he has also served in Kinshasa, Hong Kong and Washington, D.C.

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IN RESPONSE

Much More than Pins on a Map

BY LAWRENCE E. BUTLER

“Iraq’s PRTs: Pins on a Map,” Shawn Dorman’s article in the March issue of the *Foreign Service Journal*, captures the inherent complexities of creating a flexible and comprehensive U.S. government response to challenges posed by a post-9/11 world. The way we assess and manage conflict and stabilization has changed dramatically, and serves as the driving force behind Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s commitment to transformational diplomacy.

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and the Foreign Service officers who lead them, are the vanguard of this transformative process. It is challenging work. The *Journal* article highlights some of the logistical and coordination problems that hampered the initial rollout of the PRT program in 2005-2006, particularly with respect to generating a common vision and plan for the teams among departments with different institutional cultures.

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and the Foreign Service officers who lead them, are the vanguard of transformational diplomacy in Iraq.

It is true that the FSOs responsible for establishing the first PRTs during late 2005 and early 2006 often met hostile and unaccommodating environments, including lack of clarity about provision of crucial support. But these FSOs were pioneers: they helped develop a new approach and novel mechanisms to fight terrorism and mitigate civil strife, and their efforts laid the groundwork for the

progress that the PRTs are making today.

The PRT initiative has been a hard journey for the State Department. We have had to adjust our peacetime institutions and bureaucratic processes with their deliberative character to the rough realities on the ground, and we are still learning and adjusting. But as the *Journal*’s many examples prove, it is a tribute to our FSOs, excepted Civil Service officers (3161s), and partners from other agencies and the military that together they have achieved so much outside the Green Zone in the face of adversity.

The many examples of PRT accomplishments that the *Journal* cites add up to much more than pins on a map. The teams are helping to unify a country, enabling Iraqis to resist the centripetal forces that threaten to pull them apart. Broader political and economic engagement at the provincial and local level is a critical component of President Bush’s new strategy for accelerating the transition to Iraqi self-reliance.

Through mentoring, training and other support, the PRTs are assisting local governments, from Basrah in the south to Ninawa in the north, to execute their own budgets to fund projects and services that will benefit local Iraqis in their daily lives and in a non-sectarian way. As PRT Baghdad Team Leader Joe Gregoire aptly puts it, “We are seeing many successes as diplomacy transforms the relationship between the city’s inhabitants and its elected leaders in this former dictatorship.”



Secretary of State Rice meets with Iraq PRT members.



Forging a Common Civilian-Military Vision

For this unique civilian-military joint effort to work, however, certainly requires the forging of a common vision of what the PRTs are trying to accomplish. Through a robust interagency lessons-learned process, we are narrowing the “vision gap,” conducting an honest appraisal of our shortcomings and making the necessary adjustments to provide maximum support to the PRTs and ensure the success of their mission.

Toward that end, on Feb. 22 State and the Department of Defense signed a Memorandum of Agreement that codifies the civilian-military partnership, clarifies responsibilities for security and command and control arrangements, and sets forth the purpose of the PRTs. The MOA directly addresses the support challenges that we have faced since the teams first rolled out. That will greatly enhance effective execution of PRT programs, with “State and DOD shar[ing] a common understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities,” as called for by the report of the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction. This is of particular salience as brigade commanders and PRT leaders work together in designing and implementing a common plan of action under which they will target their combined resources.

Now we must go beyond words on paper and bridge the interagency cultural divide if we are to effectively operationalize “unity of mission” between civilians and the military out in the field. We are tackling this task head-on.

In March, over 40 new PRT officers — civilian and military — participated in the first PRT training course at the Foreign Service Institute. Part of a monthlong effort to prepare PRT personnel prior to reporting to their posts in Iraq, the course includes such

topics as civil-military relations, agency perspectives, U.S. strategy, public diplomacy and other relevant training modules. Specifically designed for Iraq PRT members, this training was delivered by experts with previous experience serving there, who helped give the new PRT members the “ground truth” as to what they will face on the job.

As a result of such joint pre-deployment training, incoming PRT members will now have a fuller understanding of the U.S. mission in Iraq, lessons learned, resources available to them, and the critical importance of teamwork. The process will also forge stronger bonds of interagency collaboration that will carry over into the field.

In addition, several months ago an interagency working group — comprised of representatives from State, USAID and the Departments of Defense, Justice, Agriculture and Commerce — began meeting regularly to address PRT policy issues and oversee the rollout of the enhanced PRT plan proposed by President Bush in January. Issues relayed from the field (whether about policy, staffing, funding, training or equipment) are more immediately digested, and their resolution prioritized, as the mission has adapted institutionally.

The civilian dimension is essential to the success of the President’s New Way Forward in Iraq. Indeed, the FSOs and our other civilian partners bring the ingenuity, special skill sets and relevant experience that will remain key determinants in transitioning the country to self-reliance. Those joining the PRT program now will find that they are increasingly better prepared, supported and resourced than those who pioneered the program. ■

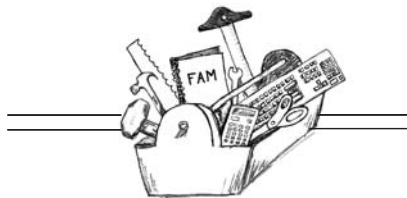
Ambassador Lawrence E. Butler is a deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.

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FS KNOW-HOW

Dealing with Identity Theft

BY DAVID ZWACH

As I've learned the hard way, Foreign Service employees are an attractive target for identity thieves, both because we tend to be affluent and because we frequently live overseas, where it can take longer to discover a financial problem.

One day in January 2005, a letter from Home Depot caught my attention. "Please call to verify your enrollment in the Balance Protector Program," it read. I knew I was not enrolled because I did not even *have* a Home Depot credit card. But when I called, the representative told me that they had indeed issued a credit card in my name — with a balance of \$6,980.22. That was my first inkling that I'd become a victim of identity theft.

I immediately called the big three credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and Transunion) to report the activity. They increased security on my records, so for the next seven years no creditor can issue me a charge card without first calling me at home. In addition, all requests for credit checks by companies intending to issue cards will be scrutinized more carefully, and all first-time purchases with new credit cards will be flagged.

While helpful, these measures only partially solved the problem. Credit-card companies do not have to verify information with any of those bureaus before issuing a card to

*Identity theft
is the fastest
growing crime in
the United States,
and anyone can be
a victim.*

someone claiming to be me. In addition, none of those unverified cards will show up on a credit bureau's radar until they're used for the first time. Sure enough, over the next couple of months I received more credit-card bills totaling \$65,000 from fraudulent accounts, including my hijacked Sears account. I guess I should feel lucky, though; most cases of identity theft involve losses in the neighborhood of \$100,000. It turns out I was able to limit the thief's window of opportunity by reporting the first incident right away.

Still, it took months of follow-up and the completion of numerous affidavits to clear my credit record. I also had to clear my family's record, as well, supplying signatures from my wife and children (including a 7-year-old!) to prove they had not opened any of these accounts. But all that effort paid off, because I was not liable for a cent.

Following the Trail

I filed the police report in Baltimore, Md. (the crimes occurred in Baltimore County, outside the city). Because their fraud division was understaffed and unable to begin investigating my case immediately, they accepted my offer to gather evidence on my own. Timely collection of evidence is critical to building a case because stores eventually record over their surveillance camera footage and archive their sales records.

I contacted the companies that were setting up charge accounts in my name to inform them of the situation and to find out where the thieves had made purchases. I was able to meet with security personnel who helped me review their surveillance records. I recovered footage identifying the suspects at specific cash registers on the days the fraudulent purchases were made.

At one store, a security officer recalled that the suspects looked like "nice people," and even questioned their guilt. When I asked the officer to describe the clothes they were wearing, the description matched the clothes they had purchased at a department store using "my" card.

A loan officer I spoke to was livid upon learning that she'd been duped into securing a \$40,000 car loan for one of the suspects, who had produced a fake military ID and a forged State Department pay stub.

I also asked a Boy Scout camp I'd



worked at in the 1970s to password-protect alumni information on their Web site, as that appears to be where the crooks found my old address and phone number.

In the ensuing months, the Baltimore County Police fraud unit pieced together enough evidence to build a case against what turned out to be a ring operation. An employee at a chain video store, where I used to rent movies, was pilfering customers' information, including Social Security numbers, and passing it on to an accomplice at an auto dealership. He, in turn, ran credit checks to mine for potential victims with good credit like me. Then a female accomplice generated fake documents like pay stubs and photo IDs.

With overwhelming evidence, the police moved in and arrested the ringleader — but he was released on bail and promptly disappeared. Six months later, the police caught up to him and arrested him again. By then, the Baltimore County police had involved the FBI, Secret Service, Baltimore City police and Metro police to clinch the case.

When the U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted the case in federal court, the ringleader pleaded guilty and is expected to be sentenced to 10 to 12 years in prison. His two accomplices have also been arrested, but have not stood trial yet.

Lessons Learned

Identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in the United States, and anyone can be a victim. No matter how hard you work to protect yourself, the security of your credit record depends a lot on other people, including low-wage employees of stores, credit-card companies and credit agencies.

*There are steps
you can take to
lessen the chances of
being targeted, and
to minimize the
damage if you
are victimized.*

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to lessen the chances of being targeted, and to minimize the damage if you are victimized:

- **Keep only the credit cards you really need.** At least one of the "big four" cards — Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover — can be used nearly everywhere.

- **Consider giving up all store credit cards.** Those issued by stores are far less secure than the "big four." At Sears and some other department stores, anyone with a fake ID and corresponding Social Security number can have a temporary credit pass printed up on the premises for immediate use. Home Depot, CompUSA and several other companies did not even confirm my real mailing address before allowing criminals to open accounts in my name. Mindful of that, I have closed all my store credit-card accounts.

- **Keep all your credit-card numbers and point-of-contact information handy in a safe place.**

Quicken, MS Money, Excel and for-fee credit-card protection services are all helpful tools for this.

- **Give out your SSN only sparingly.**

- **Collect electronic evidence quickly.** This is crucial in catching the bad guys. When you are overseas, it may take months to discover you've been defrauded — but regularly checking your accounts online for any discrepancies or unusual activity, and reconciling your statements and receipts, can speed up the process. Don't forget to periodically request your credit reports from the big three credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and Transunion).

- **Notify the State Department immediately if you fall prey to identity theft or any other crime.**

U.S. government employees under chief-of-mission authority should immediately contact their regional security officer. Domestically-based Department of State employees should contact their local police.

Finally, there is also a lot of helpful information available on the Internet: <http://www.identitytheft.org/> and <http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/fraud/idtheft.html> are good places to start. ■

David Zwach, a Foreign Service security engineering officer, is currently serving in Abu Dhabi. He has previously served in New Delhi, Frankfurt and Washington, D.C. He wishes to thank Detectives Mark Watkins and Missy Coyne of the Baltimore County Police Department, and Ms. Marsha Russell of the Baltimore County District Attorney's Office, for their assistance with this article. The views expressed herein are those of Mr. Zwach and not necessarily those of the Department of State or the U.S. government.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE ... ?



John Lawin

G

MANY IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE MAY HOPE THAT THINGS WILL GET BACK TO NORMAL ONCE THE IRAQ WAR IS OVER. DON'T COUNT ON IT.

BY SHAWN ZELLER

George Staples, like many in the Foreign Service these days, is striving to help the institution and its thousands of members deal with the dramatic changes that are reshaping what it means to live and work overseas.

Speaking during a Jan. 8 interview in his State Department office with the *Foreign Service Journal*, the director general did not sugarcoat his message. "What I tell junior officers, young officers, when I go around and speak at

the embassies and town meetings and so forth — I say it in this building and to anyone who will listen to me — is: ‘Be prepared ... to spend more time in more difficult posts with higher differentials, including perhaps those with danger pay. There may be in store for you in your career more family separation; and for tandem couples, there may be more times in a career where you have to serve apart.’”

That’s the long and short of it, Staples says, because the fundamental nature of what it means to be in the Foreign Service is changing. More posts are located in the developing world, often far from embassies, in countries where political violence is the norm. In that challenging atmosphere, Foreign Service personnel are leading an effort Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice calls “transformational diplomacy,” that is all about bringing democracy and economic development to parts of the world with little or no experience of them.

To do so, they will have to be jacks- (and jills-) of-all-trades, experts in development and proficient in media relations. As Staples puts it, they need to be eager to speak at the chamber of commerce over lunch, but then in the afternoon go talk to kids. It is, he freely acknowledges, a big change from the stereotypical image of the diplomat as information-gatherer and as liaison, simply and only, to a foreign government.

Yet even as Staples defines the role as a new one, he recalls the proud history of the Foreign Service officers who served in World War II and, more recently, in Beirut and other hot spots, where unaccompanied posts and extreme danger were the norm. It’s as if to say, this isn’t the first time the Foreign Service officer has done his patriotic duty in a time of war and it won’t be the last. The wartime diplomat’s role, in reality, is not new at all.

In line with that mandate, Rice has made it clear that officers will have to serve in hardship assignments if they want to advance to the Senior Foreign Service. A December 2006 memo from the director general’s office made it plain that review boards are being

***The Bush administration
has made it clear that
it views the military
as the ideal in
government service.***

encouraged to “weigh positively creditable and exemplary performance at hardship and danger posts because of the unique and challenging work environment, including service in areas of widespread warfare with U.S. combat troops.”

Although the American Foreign Service Association agreed to that change to the promotion precepts, it has reminded the director general of the importance of “preserving the fairness and integrity of a promotion system based on how well an employee performs, not on where an employee is assigned.” AFSA also expressed concerns about the potential of this new language to bias the selection boards in favor of someone, for example, doing mediocre work in Baghdad over someone doing brilliant work in London, Cairo or Beijing. The association also warned that it might adversely affect strong performers who do not happen to be in a position at this point in their lives to take on such tasks, such as employees with young children.

Staples insists that service in Iraq, Afghanistan and other critical-needs countries does not ensure a promotion in and of itself. Exemplary work performance remains the most important criterion. “A lot of people think, ‘My last year of service in Iraq or Afghanistan is going to get me promoted.’ It hasn’t happened that way.”

Nevertheless, many in the Foreign Service say the stronger push to serve in such places and make greater personal sacrifices conveys a mixed, and unfair, message. Those who have done their jobs well in other parts of the world, but are not able to volunteer for positions in unaccompanied and danger-pay posts (whether for family, health or other reasons), should not have to fear that their careers will suffer as a result.

Toward an Expeditionary Force

Staples is an articulate voice and advocate for the diplomatic corps. A longtime officer himself, with a long history of working in the toughest spots in the world — from El Salvador as a young junior officer to his more recent trips to Iraq — he knows what it’s like to serve his country where the stakes are highest. As

Shawn Zeller, a regular contributor to the Journal, is a senior staff writer for Congressional Quarterly.

Mette Beecroft, wife of a former ambassador and a past president of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide, puts it: "This is a man of great humanity who has a lot of hard decisions to make."

Many in the Foreign Service may hope that once the Iraq War is over, things will eventually return to normal. Staples bears the burden of delivering an unwelcome message: Don't count on it. These changes are not a purely wartime phenomenon, but the new norm. "All of this is not about Iraq," he says. "This is the way we will do business in the longer term."

Staples has nothing but confidence in the Foreign Service to meet the challenge of recruiting top talent and continuing to draw many more highly qualified applicants than it could ever hire. He is not only a cheerleader but a true believer, it would seem.

But might a little more concern be warranted? Patricia Ryan, another former AAFSW president, thinks so. "It's a nasty, difficult situation," she says, referring to the growing number of unaccompanied posts in dangerous parts of the world. "If it continues for many years, I believe it could reduce the department's ability to retain people."

Only time will tell, of course, whether retention rates drop or applicants for Foreign Service positions decline in either number or quality. As yet, Staples says, nothing of the kind has occurred. It may never. Still, there's a palpable anxiety within the Service about the changes transformational diplomacy is bringing. Already, a largely up-or-out system prevails within the Foreign Service, and turnover is not only normal, but encouraged. The instability such trends portend, many fear, could potentially threaten the effectiveness of the Foreign Service as a critical component of the foreign policymaking apparatus.

Few are more worried about that possibility than Steve Kashkett, State Department vice president of the American Foreign Service Association. Responding to concerns expressed by thousands of members in worldwide opinion polls conducted by AFSA, he has raised questions about whether the shift will truly make the

Director General Staples insists that service in Iraq, Afghanistan and other critical-needs countries does not ensure a promotion in and of itself.

Foreign Service more relevant and effective.

In Kashkett's view, "we in the Foreign Service already go where we are told and do what is asked of us, but most of us still hope that our hands-on expertise and unique insights will give us a voice in the foreign policymaking process." Many members increasingly resent being treated as mere "foot soldiers." Kashkett fears that, if the State Department places value

only on those who have an expeditionary mind-set and whose main qualification is willingness to serve in the hardest, unaccompanied posts, it risks "failing to attract and retain the brightest foreign-policy thinkers and the young diplomats who can become the policy analysts and formulators of the future, some of whom may well be expert in regions of the world far from Iraq and Afghanistan."

In an AFSA survey of more than 3,400 Foreign Service members conducted last year, two in three respondents said they were either "very" or "somewhat" concerned that the voice of Foreign Service careerists was not being heard in policymaking. Of those who said they'd be reluctant to serve in Iraq, nearly half said they disagreed with the Bush administration's policy there. "There is a perception out there," says Kashkett, "that the analysis and counsel of career diplomats are unwelcome, if they openly question existing policy decisions."

Staples, of course, doesn't see it that way. It's another instance, he says, of too much being read into the Iraq situation and the consequent muddling of the transformational diplomacy shift. He insists that the department foresees no move to a military-style diplomatic corps, nor hiring more short-timers. Well-trained, veteran diplomats are what the department now has, and will continue to need, he says.

A Military Model?

But don't fault the skeptics. The Bush administration has made it clear that it views the military as the ideal in government service, precisely because of its flexibility, discipline and willingness to follow orders without question.

In the biggest change in Civil Service rules in more than a generation, for example, Congress passed a Bush-backed plan to overhaul the Defense Department's rules for civilian employees in 2003. (The prior year, in creating the Department of Homeland Security, Congress provided it with similar personnel flexibility.) Though the courts have stalled the labor relations component at both departments, the implementation is moving ahead, albeit slowly. Both overhauls were mainly sold on the argument that the Civil Service needed to be more like the military.

"Today we have some 320,000 uniformed people doing what are essentially nonmilitary jobs," then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said at a 2003 Senate hearing. "And yet we are calling up reserves to help deal with the global war on terror. The inability to put civilians in hundreds of thousands of jobs that do not need to be performed by men and women in uniform puts unnecessary strain on our uniformed personnel and added cost to the taxpayers. This has to be fixed."

In the post-9/11 environment, Congress agreed, though the new Democratic majority on Capitol Hill is displeased with the Pentagon's implementation of the rules, particularly as they relate to the restriction of collective bargaining rights. But the Bush administration shows no sign that it is rethinking its top-down approach.

Promotions in the Foreign Service, which operates under its own set of regulations, have always been based on individual performance, as assessed in annual employee evaluation reports. In between promotions to the next full grade — which have become more infrequent and can often take five to 10 years — small, annual "within-grade" step increases have been automatic for all FS personnel with satisfactory ratings.

Because it is based on pure performance, Foreign Service members generally view the current system for determining pay raises as fair. But with the Bush administration's push for a more expeditionary model, there is growing concern that a politically motivated Secretary of State might seek to go beyond current financial incentives to reward employees with promotions simply for accepting such assignments. Under

*The wartime
diplomat's role,
in reality, is not
new at all.*

such a system, performance would not be the only criterion for promotion — or necessarily even a major factor.

A complex bill that would apply such an approach, in exchange for the introduction of overseas comparability pay, failed to win passage in the 109th Congress last year despite intense lobbying by AFSA and other players. Its prospects in the new, Democratic-controlled 110th Congress remain uncertain.

A Tough Balancing Act

At the root of the concern for many Foreign Service members who are reluctant to take on protracted assignments at unaccompanied posts, is family life. The AFSA survey last year found that two out of three officers are "very" or "somewhat concerned" about family-friendliness within the service. An equivalent percentage of those reluctant to go to Iraq said separation from their family was a primary concern.

No one is saying that balancing a family with a Foreign Service career has ever been easy. "There have always been balancing acts," says AAFSW's Ryan. "But it seems to me those balances are getting more and more out of whack."

The department now has about 750 unaccompanied, "danger-pay" positions at overseas posts to fill each year, nearly half of which are in Iraq and Afghanistan, a vast increase from prior experience. (The number of unaccompanied assignments has grown nearly fourfold since the 9/11 attacks.) By contrast, when Staples was a young officer in El Salvador, he recalls that the department only had about 100 such jobs.

Most of those jobs are in secure embassy compounds, but a growing number are comprised of positions on Provincial Reconstruction Teams. These employees are assigned to work on development and democracy-building projects in the countryside of Iraq and Afghanistan, far from the relative security provided in the Green Zone in Baghdad, or in Kabul. In the minds of many Foreign Service constituents, the very existence of these positions raises the possibility that more diplomats could be injured or killed in the line of duty. That is a grave concern throughout the corps, but all the more so for those with families.

If the Foreign Service adopts this expeditionary model, what does it mean for families? As Kashkett observes, "Diplomats are not soldiers who sign up with the expectation that they will spend a lot of their career without their families, but professional civil servants with special qualifications and expertise who happen to serve at overseas locations."

Staples admits that the current strain on families is likely to continue, but insists that he's doing everything he can to minimize the necessity for unaccompanied assignments. He points to several concrete steps that the department has already taken, among them creation of a separate maintenance allowance for families involuntarily separated. Worth between \$10,000 and \$17,000 per year, depending on family size, the allowance is 18 percent more generous than that traditionally provided to families who, of their own accord, decide to separate during an overseas tour.

The SMA supplements the increase in differentials for hardship and danger that was implemented last year. Nonetheless, the AFSA survey found that only 8 percent of officers believe the involuntary separation allowance is adequate; 40 percent said it was not, while 52 percent did not have an opinion.

For those serving on PRTs in Iraq, the department is now guaranteeing that employees will receive one of their top five choices for onward assignments. And for those serving anywhere in Iraq, the department is allowing families the possibility of staying at the losing post. To do so, however, they must forgo the involuntary SMA. Families staying at a foreign location may receive the at-post education allowance; if there are no adequate schools at post, the away-from-post allowance covers boarding school costs anywhere in the world.

Easing the Stress of Unaccompanied Tours

The State Department's Family Liaison Office has hired Nancy Leininger, who has a master's degree in social work, to assist families losing someone to an unaccompanied tour. (See "Coping with Unaccompanied Tours," p. 27.)

Beecroft says those efforts continue to be impeded

Balancing a family with a Foreign Service career has never been easy. But if anything, it seems to be getting harder.

by a lack of funding, but credits Leininger with making the best of what resources she does have, focusing on outreach to families. To begin with, the department is making a concerted effort to let Foreign Service employees know during their training about all the benefits available to their families while separated.

Leininger teamed up with the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide and the Foreign Service Youth Foundation to hold a first-of-its-kind information fair in Washington last year. A similar event was held earlier this year in Houston, where many affected families reside. In fact, about half of all Foreign Service families with someone serving overseas at an unaccompanied post actually live outside the Washington area.

Leininger is also coordinating with the department's Allowances Working Group to ensure that glitches in benefit packages are straightened out. On the front burner at the moment, the working group is seeking to grant home transfer and foreign transfer allowances to officers coming or going to unaccompanied posts, to help cover the travel and relocation costs for their families. Those benefits alone can be worth several thousand dollars.

Another change supported by the working group is a new regulation allowing FS personnel on the non-standard one-year tour in Iraq to take 10 days of rest and recuperation at home before heading to their next assignment. In the past, an employee had to serve 18 months before becoming eligible for that leave.

The Family Liaison Office has created a listserv in an effort to help families left behind during an overseas tour to connect and share advice. The office has also teamed with the Una Chapman Cox Foundation to sign a contract with Managed Health Network to create a Web site and a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week phone line, to help families experiencing grief or other mental health problems related to their separation. And beginning last October, a monthly electronic newsletter created by FLO and MHN has been sent to approximately 550 employees and family members experiencing unaccompanied tours.

F O C U S

FLO is also creating a handbook for children left behind that aims to help an overseas parent keep in touch with children, and become reacquainted upon their return. And on Foreign Affairs Day last year, the department issued certificates of recognition to children of parents serving unaccompanied tours overseas.

More Sacrifice Ahead

So far, State has not had to resort to directed assignments — the dreaded process of assigning Foreign Service members to posts against their will. But there was a brief scare earlier this year, when FS-2 generalist assignments were temporarily put on hold until key positions in critical-needs countries were filled.

Staples says that he cannot rule out the eventual use of directed assignments, but observes that the incentive

The fundamental nature of what it means to be in the Foreign Service is changing.

package, thus far, has prompted volunteers to come forward. “It’s gone extremely well,” he says. “We are far ahead of where we were for the summer 2006 assignments cycle. I’m extremely encouraged, and quite pleased to see the response.” Already, more than 1,000 officers have been through Iraq, mostly on one-year tours.

But the department, he notes, is planning to ask for still more sacrifice. Staples says that he’d like to extend some tours in order to enable officers to develop better relationships on the ground. “We have to find a way to go to longer tours in more difficult places, but we have to balance that with the issues of family separation,” he says.

The department is looking at additional incentives, but Staples admits that they probably won’t include greater pay packages. The cap on pay for personnel serving in Iraq in 2007 is \$212,100. “At a certain point, it’s

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a call to patriotism,” he says. “I don’t believe we can just keep offering more money.”

And, he notes, it’s a call to patriotism that the Foreign Service has answered many times before. As a result, he says he has every reason to believe FS personnel will meet the challenge yet again. He sees no crisis in the making. Far from it. In fact, Staples notes that the Foreign Service’s attrition rate for entry-level officers in 2006 was 2.3 percent, low by any standard, inside government or out. Meanwhile, applicants for the Foreign Service exam remain a large, highly accomplished group.

Any hardship the shift to transformational diplomacy is causing is worth it, Staples argues, because the new diplomacy will not only help ensure America’s safety in the face of an ongoing war on terror, but will also enrich Foreign Service members’ careers. “Rather than being worried about things like this, if I was a young officer starting out again, I’d jump at the chance to get out and run my own operation far from the embassy, with a lot of independence,” he says.

Those already at work, particularly on the Iraq and Afghanistan Provincial Reconstruction Teams, are showing just how successful the Foreign Service can be. “The work is quite demanding but quite rewarding as well. It’s real nationbuilding,” says Staples.

Notwithstanding the DG’s able cheerleading, many Foreign Service personnel view the whole notion of transformational diplomacy as flawed at its core — and not just because it’s hard to see it truly changing areas of the world long hostile to democracy. It also places Foreign Service members in harm’s way in situations where they cannot do the work of diplomacy. Looking at what is going on in Iraq, many ask, “How effective can our people be in a war zone?” “How much can an unarmed diplomat accomplish?”

Consider the Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams, for instance. Their ramp-up was long delayed over a fight with the Defense Department over who would be responsible for their security. Although a compromise has been worked out, it is still reasonable to ask whether the risks are worth the gains.

Kashkett and others argue that effective transforma-

***This isn’t the first time
Foreign Service
personnel have done
their patriotic duty
in a time of war, and
it won’t be the last.***

tional diplomacy will require a substantial infusion of resources. “The Secretary has asked that we all become ‘first-class managers of programs,’ yet we have few programs to manage in many parts of the world,” he says. “In the absence of substantial new initiatives designed to promote reform and democratic change, we will be repositioning people in ‘transformational’ countries without giving them the tools to effect real change.”

Meanwhile, many in the Foreign Service note that they are still expected to carry out all of the core tasks of traditional diplomacy and embassy service. As Kashkett wrote in the April 2006 issue of this magazine: “We still need our political, economic and public diplomacy officers to function as the eyes and ears of the U.S. government in those countries, meeting with a wide range of ‘insiders’ and doing expert reporting and analysis of vital developments there. We still need them to deliver Washington’s steady stream of *démarches* to host governments, argue the U.S. point of view, and transmit their replies. We still need them to negotiate a wide range of bilateral and multilateral issues, deal with problems that arise in the bilateral relationship, and prepare the endless reports required by the department or by Congress (human rights, narcotics trafficking, terrorism, Mission Program Plans, etc.). We still need them to babysit the endless high-level visitors, including frequent congressional delegations.”

Many in the Foreign Service disagree with those who suggest that an embassy’s role in managing bilateral issues and cultivating relationships with the various ministries of government — and with opposition parties, labor unions and prominent journalists — is no longer so necessary in an era of rapid communications. Experienced diplomats believe those functions will remain the core of any U.S. mission’s activities overseas. “An often-heard fear these days,” notes Kashkett, “is that the Foreign Service will have fewer and fewer George Kennan-style activist-diplomats — who become genuine experts in a region of the world and play a major role in the formulation of policy — and instead will be transformed into a civilian equivalent of the military rapid-reaction force.” ■

COPING WITH UNACCOMPANIED TOURS

THE UNACCOMPANIED TOUR, A NEW AND RAPIDLY GROWING CATEGORY OF OVERSEAS SERVICE, PRESENTS NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE FOREIGN SERVICE.

BY NANCY W. LEININGER

Since 2001, the number of unaccompanied positions for Foreign Service employees has increased from about 200 to nearly 800, with additional increases likely in the future. Most of these slots are in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Most of the employees serving at unaccompanied posts have either families or Members of Household who are also affected by the long separation in a variety of ways. Of the 800 employees currently in these positions, approximately 185 receive an involuntary separate maintenance allowance for their spouse and/or minor children. Most of the other employees have loved ones who do not qualify for ISMA; e.g. tandem spouses, MOHs, children of divorced parents, or worried parents, siblings or adult children. Only one-third of these families are in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. The majority are scattered across the United States, with a growing number remaining in foreign locations. Since May 2006, it has been possible on a case-by-case basis for employees at overseas posts to go on 12-month temporary-duty tours to Iraq or Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan, while their families remain at the previous post.

In response to this significant change in the character of overseas service, the Family Liaison Office created a new position in October 2005: the Program Specialist for Unaccompanied Tours has a mandate to develop a new

program to offer information, guidance and emotional support to employees and family members separated by assignments to unaccompanied posts.

One of the first things FLO's new program specialist did was seek more information. What are conditions like at unaccompanied posts? What do employees and their family members need to know before beginning an unaccompanied tour? Who are the family members? Where are they? How can we reach out to them? What are the regulations, allowances and services pertinent to affected employees and families? Are these adequate? Does everyone know what support services are already in place? What do people really need or want from this program, and from the department?

A Broad Response

With generous support from the Una Chapman Cox Foundation, last fall the Family Liaison Office conducted an electronic survey of employees and family members assigned to an unaccompanied tour — past, present or future — to uncover the answers. The resulting portrait of the challenges faced by both employees and their families has guided the development of new programs and initiatives to help overcome them.

The anonymous electronic survey, announced via a telegram and a department notice, was open from Sept.

14 to Oct. 10, 2006. The survey elicited 416 responses. Of these, 257 were from employees: 208 with the Department of State and 49 from other federal entities, contractors or “other.” The balance of the respondents (159) consisted of family members or Members of Household: 151 were spouses, including eight tandems; three were fiancées or partners; and five were parents, siblings or adult children.

The various categories of respondents reflects the entire spectrum of the population served by FLO. The responses from the 45 State employees currently serving at unaccompanied posts were particularly helpful, as their experiences have been directly affected by the numerous changes in regulations, allowances and support services enacted within the last two years.

The responses from employees and family members had many elements in common. Communication was cited as one of the most important issues — whether between the employee and family members or between the employee and headquarters in Washington.

Employees’ other top concerns were: inadequate technical support and orientation; frustration over security restrictions; lack of staff to enable them to do their jobs; and lack of communication equipment for work and/or personal use. Individuals serving on Provincial Reconstruction Teams felt especially cut off.

The family members’ concerns centered around children’s issues. Newly single parents found juggling the children’s schedules and helping them cope to be the most difficult parenting tasks. But for all family members, the toughest thing was asking others for help — 41

Now that FLO has someone dedicated full-time to serving this population, a communications channel has been opened, and the questions are coming in.

percent found this hard to do. This is in keeping with the “self-reliant” and “super-resilient” ideals held equally by Foreign Service members and their families. Significantly, many who would have liked to ask for help (about one-fourth of the respondents had questions or problems with red tape, home or car maintenance) did not know where to turn. This was especially true for foreign-born spouses, whether living abroad or in the States.

Communication Is Key

Now that FLO has someone dedicated full-time to serving this population, a communications channel has been opened, and the questions are coming in: “How do I get our sidewalks cleared of snow?” “How can I get the Social Security Administration to clear up years of mistakes in recording my parent’s earnings?” “Can you get the Department of Motor Vehicles off my back? My brother’s car is in storage, and not likely to get an emissions inspection any time soon!”

These issues may not sound earth-shattering if you aren’t the employee coping with mortar rounds overhead, or the employee’s family or friend coping with the anxiety of wondering if the latest casualty reported on CNN is a loved one. But the time and effort needed to resolve such issues take away precious time to relax and connect with those loved ones. Furthermore, the specific situation or problem that triggers a phone call to the program specialist is usually just the last of a long list of challenges — the proverbial straw that breaks the camel’s back.

To gauge how people were reacting to the announcement or commencement of an unaccompanied tour, both employees and family members were asked to check their experience against a list of behavioral changes previously reported to the program specialist. Multiple answers were allowed; the scores were aggregated to determine the rank order of prevalence of each behavior among the respondents. Apart from commonly citing a lack of sleep and fatigue, the patterns are strikingly different for employees and family members (see Table 1, p. 30).

Nancy W. Leininger has been the program specialist for unaccompanied tours at the Family Liaison Office of the State Department since October 2005. A Foreign Service spouse since 1971, she raised a “Third Culture Kid” while living in six countries and serving as CLO in three of them. She holds a master’s degree in social work, and has worked extensively in the nonprofit sector to strengthen families. Leininger loves the Foreign Service lifestyle and is pleased to report that her son, now 32, agrees it was a worthwhile way to grow up.

F O C U S

Both employees and family members rely heavily on their spouse/partner/MOH for support, followed by close friends and parents. On a positive note, the majority of family members rated their support system good or excellent. Nearly half of the family members said they would like to meet other families of unaccompanied personnel. Yet of those few who were aware of the listserv dedicated to families affected by an unaccompanied tour, only two in five belonged. We hope that since participating in the survey they will now join this group, and that readers of this article who are dealing with an unaccompanied tour will, too. (To maintain the privacy of members, the listserv, HomeFrontUS, is by invitation only — to sign up see the program specialist in FLO, whose contact information is on p. 32.)

The vast majority of both employees and family members report that communicating with family and friends occupies the lion's share of whatever leisure time they have. Other popular pursuits were reading for pleasure, watching TV or movies, exercising and socializing.

Money and Morale

Perceptions varied when the subject was money. Among those currently serving on an unaccompanied tour, a slight majority felt that the regulations and allowances were adequate for their needs. However, those who served in the past did not rate the regulations and allowances quite as positively. This may reflect some changes in recent years, such as the 18-percent increase in the involuntary separate maintenance allowance and the granting of 10 days of home leave after a 12-month, high-risk tour.

Family members, on the other hand, were less satisfied: only 28 percent felt the regulations and allowances were adequate. A persistent misconception held by many employees and family members is that the family should be able to subsist wholly on the ISMA, without recourse to the regular salary of the State employee. The most distressed family members were those who were or had been at an alternate foreign location during the unaccompanied tour. Those who were living “on the econo-

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Table 1
Behavioral Changes Since Announcement or Commencement of Unaccompanied Tour

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES	Rank among ALL EMPLOYEE RESPONDENTS	Rank among ALL FAMILY MEMBERS
Working excessive hours	1	6
Fatigue	2	1
Change in sleep patterns	3	2
Consuming extra carbs, fats, alcohol	4	8
Change in appetite	5	9
More organized, focused	6	10
Disengaged	7	5
Prone to angry outbursts	8	4
Being weepy/emotional	9	3
Demanding attention	10	7
Increased energy	11	11

my” with only ISMA (and, if they had school-age children, the at-post education allowance) were the most unhappy. They typically lament the lack of access to APO, the health unit, etc.

A careful reading of their comments, along with those from families left behind at posts during normal temporary duty assignments, reveals another issue — a sense of abandonment or shunning from embassy colleagues and former neighbors. Some TDY employees also complained of

“being punished for volunteering,” and of the lack of support at their home post when returning from the high-risk assignment. It is far too soon to predict how the recent provision for 12-month assignments to Iraq and Afghanistan PRTs will play out, but this could be a wake-up call to department management to set the tone for welcoming back these colleagues.

Employees were more apt to cite inadequate time or money when it came to transitioning to or from the unaccompanied tour; they also registered problems with getting travel orders, shipments or payroll changes processed in a timely fashion.

Foreign Service personnel are keenly aware of the toll their tour takes on their loved ones. Responding to an open-ended question of what challenges they themselves faced, three times as many respondents referred to the emotional toll — guilt and worry regarding their separation from family — as cited a crushing workload, security issues, communications problems or lack of support from D.C., red tape, etc. When asked what challenges they thought their families faced, employees specified anxiety over their safety or disturbing media reports; emotional stress or loneliness; coping with logistical, practical issues that the employee usually handles; and suddenly being single parents.

The majority of family members who commented on FLO’s outreach efforts have said, “We’re doing okay — sad sometimes, a little lonely, anxious at times — but

Priority Initiatives

Based on the results of the survey and other feedback, FLO has identified the following priorities to support employees on unaccompanied tours and their families, and is working on them in cooperation with many other offices in the department:

- **Expand the Diplomatic Security Antiterrorism Course training to unaccompanied posts beyond Iraq.** A new course, “FACT: Foreign Affairs Counterterrorism” has been offered to those going to other high-risk posts.
- **Station a mental-health counselor at high-risk posts.** Since December 2005, a licensed clinical social worker from MED/ECS has been based in Baghdad, and travels to the PRTs in Iraq.
- **Provide more out-briefings for employees returning from high-stress assignments, and improve attendance.** The director general’s office looked into this after receiving

a memo from FLO’s director, and steps are under way to improve attendance.

- **Improve Human Resources and payroll functions.**
- **Increase ISMA and provide TSMA (Involuntary and Transitional Separate Maintenance Allowances, respectively).** Proposed changes have been drafted and are being circulated at the time of this writing.
- **Establish a Community Liaison Officer at every unaccompanied post.** Riyadh has had a CLO since December 2006; one is being hired for Kabul; and the step is being discussed for Islamabad and Baghdad.
- **Inaugurate an e-newsletter for the unaccompanied-tour community.** Monthly distribution of *Keeping Our Heads Above Water* began October 2006 in conjunction with Managed Health Network.

F O C U S

basically, we're all right. But we are glad to know you are there if we need someone." As word spreads of the services available through FLO's program specialist, an increasing number of employees and family members can gain that modicum of reassurance.

Children's Issues

The final question in both the employees' and family members' sections of the survey asked about the impact of unaccompanied tours on children. Although Charleston's payroll figures indicate that fewer than one out of four employees at unaccompanied posts receive ISMA for children, nearly half of the employees and three out of four family members who answered the survey reported having children. At any given time, more than 250 Foreign Service minor children have a parent (or two) serving an unaccompanied tour for at least 12

***Significantly,
only 50 percent of
all respondents had
used FLO services.***

months. In addition to the pain of separation, older children are also aware of the dangers their parents face. FLO is developing a series of age-appropriate handbooks to help children and their parents and caregivers cope with the separation, handle their anxiety and pave the way for a smoother reintegration of

the family when the tour is over.

Family members and employees expressed varying levels of concern over their children's behavior once the tour began or was announced. In spite of parental concerns, observed behaviors raised no major alarms. However, there were differences in how the parents perceived their children. Employees currently on an unaccompanied assignment noted a slight increase in resisting authority, argumentative behavior and whining, but family members were most likely to cite procrastination, protectiveness toward family, concern for

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Table 2

Top Six Emotional Reactions Observed in Children Following Announcement or Commencement of a Parent's Unaccompanied Tour

EMOTIONAL REACTIONS IN CHILDREN	AS REPORTED BY EMPLOYEES	AS REPORTED BY THE AT-HOME PARENT
Anxiety	1	2
Sadness	2	1
Love/affection	3	3
Confusion	4	4
Anger	5	5
Pride	14	6

**Coping with an Unaccompanied Tour:
Resource Links**

Office of Casualty Assistance provides personal contingency planning assistance. E-mail oca@state.gov; call (202) 736-4302.

“Long-Distance Relationships” (MQ801) is offered on Saturday mornings twice a year by the Transition Center at FSI. Go to <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc> for class information.

The Transition Center and Overseas Briefing Center offer a wealth of information in the OBC as well as on the intranet (<http://fsi.state.gov/fsi/tc/>) and on the Internet (<http://state.gov/m/fsi/tc>).

IQ: InfoQuest, a free service for Department of State employees and families, offers information and extensive research capability for resources and service providers across the United States on child care, adoption, elder care, educational programs, legal and financial issues, retirement planning and consumer information. Go to www.worklife4you.com.

State Department employees can go to the intranet at <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/prd/hrweb/er/DependentCare/IQ/InformationQuest.html>, or e-mail DixonMJ2@state.gov for instructions on how to register.

MED's Employee Consultation Services offers free, confidential counseling to employees and family members by licensed clinical social workers. Call (202) 663-1815.

To access the HomeFrontUS listserv or the specialized support services from Managed Health Network, contact the program specialist for unaccompanied tours — see below.

For more information on support services and programs for those on unaccompanied tours, visit www.state.gov/m/dghr/c14521.htm, or contact Program Specialist for Unaccompanied Tours Nan Leininger at (202) 647-3179 or (800) 440-0397, or e-mail LeiningerNW@state.gov or FLOAskUT@state.gov.

FLO would greatly appreciate comments and additional suggestions.

younger siblings and sensitivity to others' needs. Substance abuse was the least reported category (about 3 percent) by either set of parents.

Respondents also noted the emotional reactions they observed in their children following the announcement or beginning of a parent's unaccompanied tour (see Table 2, left). A total of 13 emotions were listed, and respondents were asked to check off all that they observed. The answers were aggregated to provide rank orders. Interestingly, employees' and family members' observations were almost identical — except for “pride.” Although frequently mentioned by family members as an emotion they feel, employees didn't observe a feeling of pride in their children.

When asked what information they think parents should have before starting an unaccompanied tour, most respondents talked about the need for frank communication and discussion within the family. They also emphasized the importance of attitude, and wanted to know what is “normal” to expect from their children. Many wanted post-specific information on the country and living conditions — not just the sort of information found in post reports, but also what community liaison officers provide at post (several mentioned making that guidance age-appropriate for their children). These are some of the materials being developed for the handbooks mentioned earlier.

Support Services Underutilized

The final section of the survey focused on available support services and resources. Respondents were asked about their awareness of the FLO portfolios and services — Community Liaison Office, Unaccompanied Tours, Education and Youth, Expedited Naturalization, Family Member Employment and Support Services — as well as their utilization of the services, and their satisfaction with them. Significantly, only 50 percent of all respondents had used FLO services; among State employees currently on unaccompanied tours, less than 40 percent had utilized them.

There is reason to believe that awareness is an important issue. For many participants, this was their first exposure to these services. For each FLO office or service mentioned in the survey, a Web link, e-mail address or other contact information was provided, and several respondents expressed gratitude for bringing these resources to their attention. Among employee respon-

F O C U S

dents, about half had visited FLO's Web sites; by contrast, two-thirds of family-member respondents were familiar with the sites. A few respondents erroneously believed that because they were single, FLO had nothing to offer them.

When the survey opened, FLO had only recently announced a Cox Foundation-funded contract with Managed Health Network to provide 24/7 specialized support services to the unaccompanied-tour community through an interactive Web portal and toll-free telephone center. Yet significantly, only one-third of the respondents were aware of these services. Since then, usage of the Web portal has doubled each quarter.

When asked to rate their interest in a list of proposed workshop topics to be presented by MHN, the top choice in nearly all groups was "Managing Stress," followed by "Family Communication" and "Creating/Maintaining a Healthy Marriage." However, if one considered only the responses of those employees and family members who had completed an unaccompa-

nied tour, "Creating/Maintaining a Healthy Marriage" was number one. This reinforces the observation that for many, reintegration of the family can be more difficult than expected.

The survey response indicated that other support services are also underutilized. Only one in five were aware of the "Long-Distance Relationship" course offered at FSI. When asked what they would like to see offered prior to separation, the majority mentioned communication skills and an explanation of the emotional cycles they could expect. Many wanted classes along the lines of the Diplomatic Security Antiterrorism Course (Iraq), as well as post-specific information. While employees sent to all unaccompanied posts generally wanted the "Crash and Bang" portion of security training as well, family members wanted to attend the basic Area Studies/Life at Post/Office of Casualty Assistance/FLO briefing series.


Some family members sought financial management classes. Employees also wanted these, as well as per-




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sonal safety lessons, for their loved ones. Age-appropriate information for children was an issue for several parents. The majority in all categories indicated their interest in a course on "Re-integrating Your Family" and in participating in an out-briefing, such as that conducted jointly by FSI and MED. However, the vast majority could not or did not attend due to conflicts with the schedule, the fact that they were not located in D.C., or because such opportunities were not offered to family members.

Keeping in mind that one-fifth of all employee-respondents were not affiliated with the State Department, it is still disconcerting that approximately three-quarters of all respondents were unaware of the personal contingency planning offered by the Office of Casualty Assistance or the services offered through IQ:InfoQuest (please see the box on p. 32 for contact information). In addition, nearly as many were unaware of the free counseling offered by licensed clinical social workers through MED's Employee Consultation Services.

A Clear and Present Need

While the survey showed that employees are, on the whole, more positive than negative about the services and compensations provided to them and their families, family members are less satisfied.

In response to the survey results, FLO requested and recently received another Cox Foundation grant to develop (in partnership with the Transition Center, Office of Casualty Assistance, MED and others) a program of pre-departure briefings for family members. A series of short DVDs is being produced to make this information available to those who cannot attend. Furthermore, the program specialist for unaccompanied tours will be traveling to several locations in the United States this year to meet with families.

There is a clear need to provide more education about existing services (most of which were not in place when many respondents experienced their period of separation) and to dispel myths, as well as to reach out to employees and their families — especially those outside the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. ■

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TWO DECADES AGO, EMBASSY MOSCOW AND CONSULATE GENERAL LENINGRAD BECAME THE ONLY U.S. DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY WITH NO FSNs.

BY ALLAN MUSTARD

Today Embassy Moscow and its three consulates, various satellite posts and affiliated outposts employ over 750 highly skilled, often bilingual, and very dedicated Foreign Service National employees. The embassy is connected to Washington with dedicated telephone lines, multiple high-speed Internet connections and DHL courier service. Complaints about life here today are of the variety, “Snow removal woke me up this morning,” “High-speed Internet service in the city is so expensive,” and “The commissary is out of Texas toast.”

Just 20 years ago, however, working conditions were much more interesting. On Oct. 22, 1986, the Soviet government declared five American diplomats *persona non grata*, on top of five expelled the previous week. More crucially, the foreign ministry also unilaterally withdrew all 183 Foreign Service National employees from Moscow and Leningrad, plus another 77 personal maids, teachers and other private staff. Overnight, we became the only U.S. diplomatic missions in a foreign country with no Foreign Service Nationals.

Relations were already strained, even before that move. The Reykjavik summit had been a disaster. On Aug. 23, 1986, the FBI had arrested Soviet U.N. employee Gennadiy Zakharov for espionage; the Soviets retaliated by arresting U.S. journalist Nicholas Daniloff on simi-

lar charges. On Sept. 18, during Daniloff’s detention, the U.S. expelled 25 Soviet diplomats accused of espionage. The Soviets retaliated with the expulsion of five U.S. diplomats on Oct. 19. The U.S. countered by expelling five Soviet diplomats, plus 50 alleged KGB and GRU officers from Washington and San Francisco, ostensibly to bring Soviet staffing to the same level (251) as U.S. staffing in Moscow (225) and Leningrad (26). The U.S. also ordered the Soviet government to cut its U.N. mission staff from 270 to 165.

Washington made these moves with the knowledge that the Soviets did not employ American nationals in their missions, and an expectation that the story wasn’t over quite yet. When the Soviets responded by PNG-ing five more American diplomats, they also removed our FSNs, and limited the number of embassy guests and temporary-duty personnel.

One of the embassy officers expelled was Mike Matera, the human rights officer. Kathy Kavalec remembers “the great PNG party at the nearby dacha where we waited for the newscaster to announce the expulsions, and cheered when they read out the names, probably spurred on by the beer and indignation.” When Mike was named, he carried out some cake to put on top of the KGB surveillance car stationed outside the dacha.

The First Days

Assistant Press Attaché Margo Squire recalls the embassy's first day without FSNs, when Ambassador Arthur Hartman had lost his chauffeur:

"... I had to work a press event at Spaso House with Amb. Hartman. Because I was running late, I drove my car over, and after the event, the ambassador asked me for a ride back to the embassy. Serge Schmemmann of the *New York Times* walked out as Hartman was folding himself into my tiny Toyota Starlite and took a photo, which he gave to The Associated Press. The next day the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* carried this photo. ... My 15 minutes of fame."

Amb. Hartman, Deputy Chief of Mission Dick Combs and Administrative Counselor David Beall decreed that all embassy staff would henceforth engage in "all-purpose duty," each in turn, in alphabetical order, to perform the housekeeping tasks that previously had been done by FSNs. Only the ambassador and DCM were exempt.

Kathy Kavalec, a political-section human rights officer at the time, recalls: "[W]e had Elie Wiesel [visiting] when the whole thing began, and ... the expulsions and loss of Soviet staff were announced while I was squiring him around town. At the embassy reception for him, Mrs. Hartman and the Marines served popcorn [because] there was no house staff. ...

"I remember going out to the airport on the bus to meet a delegation of [congressional] wives, including Mrs. Teresa Heinz (now Kerry), who thoughtfully brought us a cooler full of fresh produce — only to find that the embassy had decided, in all its wisdom, not to provide a

Allan Mustard started his government career as an FSS-9 exhibit-guide/interpreter with the U.S. International Communications Agency in 1978. He joined the Foreign Agricultural Service in 1982 as a Civil Service employee, then underwent lateral entry into the Foreign Service in 1986. He is the only FSO veteran of the period described in this article currently serving in Moscow, where he is now minister-counselor for agricultural affairs, and can still touch-type in Russian when required. He has also served in Istanbul, Vienna and Washington, D.C

All embassy staff except the ambassador and DCM engaged in "all-purpose duty," performing the housekeeping tasks previously done by FSNs.

van to pick them up. ... (I always felt bad about that.) The ladies graciously agreed to ride the city bus with me to their hotel. ..."

Things were no better in Leningrad, as then-Deputy Principal Officer Jim Schumaker recalls. "The next thing we had to do was invite our FSNs back to the consulate for one last time to get their final paychecks. It was a very sad occasion. We knew, of course, that there were quite a few informers

among our FSN crew, and that UpIP, the KGB-supervised agency that provided our employees, even held regular debriefs on Thursdays. But many of these employees were our friends as well, and quite a few had divided loyalties. For some, their old lives were over."

The Routine

Running an embassy or consulate without FSNs was a lot of hard work, particularly in the Soviet Union's "deficit economy," under which basic necessities like food, plus cleaning, medical and office supplies, all had to be imported. The U.S. press focused on the poor American diplomats who, boo-hoo, suddenly had to clean their own homes and offices. But that wasn't the half of it.

All travel arrangements now had to be made by language-qualified officers, and the rule of thumb was that it took one day of preparation before and one day of paperwork afterward for each day on the road. Because all travel had to be approved by the KGB, we often spent days preparing for trips for which permission was denied at the last minute.

All high-priority messages to Soviet officials and all requests for hotel accommodations for visitors had to be hand-delivered, a time-consuming affair that required functioning autos. All cars also had to be washed daily, for under Soviet law, driving a dirty car in the city was against the law — and this in a city famous for its mud.

We chipped ice from sidewalks and hauled snow. We hauled furniture. Finnish contractors were building an ice barrier (to protect pedestrians from the massive icicles that formed on the back of the chancery each spring), and one afternoon a semi-trailer loaded with 30 tons of sheet steel and I-beams arrived. We unloaded it in 30-below weather. Because these tasks were not in our job descrip-

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tions, the embassy could not, by regulation, provide protective clothing, so we mail-ordered coveralls and heavy gloves at our own expense.

The embassy and consulate imported food, supplies and equipment each week, all of which had to be cleared through Soviet customs. Howard Clark spent all day at Butovo clearing one shipment, and wrote a telegram about his experience that was read by Secretary of State George Shultz. Mike Einik recalls this work as “[a] cross between Monty Python and Dante.”

We brought in monthly air shipments of fruit and vegetables on Pan Am, and had to send people to Sheremetyevo Airport in sufficient numbers both to clear the shipments and to keep them from being stolen. On Wednesdays, we received our weekly food shipments by

***Moscow’s decision to
withdraw our FSNs
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Diplomatic Agency
counterparts as to us.***

train from Helsinki, including a metric ton of milk (Soviet milk was unsafe).

To take just one day, Dec. 19, 1986: Administrative Counselor David Beale reported by telegram that APDer’s had “unloaded 80,000 pounds of commissary dry goods, 15,000 pounds of lumber and 7,000 pounds of mail. All of it got warehoused and/or delivered on the same day ... We also had a snowstorm on Saturday/Sunday. It has

been dealt with as well, and by the same people.”

At least Moscow had the luxury of rotating its all-purpose duty cadre. Leningrad was a different story, as Jim Schumaker relates:

“Early on, it became clear to us in Leningrad that we did not have the personnel to run a rotating roster. All of us would have to be on APD all the time. Fortunately, we

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had a fair number of enthusiastic volunteers. John Floyd, our Seabee, was able to keep the consulate's systems running while doing basic maintenance tasks in his spare time. John also volunteered for some of the more dangerous work, which included roping himself to an iron railing and lowering himself down the roof to clean off icicles and snow. Bea Burns volunteered to be the telephone operator. The husband of our consular officer, who himself was a retired FSO and had been consul general in Sydney, volunteered to be the consulate driver and also make customs runs. . . . Everybody volunteered for something, and everything was covered by at least one person."

"New Year's Greetings from the *Titanic*"

The weather remained bearable through mid-December; then, just as Christmas drew near, the thermometer plunged. We were later told that the winter of 1986-1987 was the worst in 54 years, the second worst in 105, and colder than the winter that defeated Napoleon's army. Whether this was true or not, we went through several weeks of temperatures below minus 35 Celsius. At that temperature few cars will start. By mid-January only six cars in the embassy motor pool were running (the ambassador's limousine and a pickup truck used for jumpstarting other cars were kept garaged). My Volvo hatchback was one of the six, but only because I arose every two hours at night, started the engine and ran it for an hour to recharge the battery. I then went back to bed for two hours before doing it all over again.

Shortly after Christmas, the steam pipe feeding the embassy heating system ruptured. The interior temperature of the chancery plunged to 33 degrees below zero within a day, and the heat was not restored until spring. People worked indoors all winter in long underwear and down coats. This event spurred Supervisory GSO Jane Becker to give one cable the subject line, "New Year's Greetings from the *Titanic*."

Commercial Attaché Mike Mears wrote a cable detailing the U.S. Commercial Office's own travails, noting that things couldn't get much worse. Then, on Jan. 12, 1987, a steam pipe blew in their own building. Mears and his administrative assistant, Cheryl Dustin,

***Another consequence of
the round of expulsions
emerged about this time:
a spike in vandalism,
home intrusions and
automobile sabotage.***

arrived to discover boiling water pouring out the front door. When the water was shut off, so was the heat, and the next morning USCO had six inches of ice on the floor, a glacier extending to the sidewalk, and condensed ice inside all office equipment. The summary paragraph of Mears' next telegram to Commerce read simply, "Things did get worse."

Another consequence of the round of expulsions emerged about this time: a spike in vandalism, home intrusions and automobile sabotage. The KGB already routinely engaged in harassment at the rate of about one or two incidents per week, but the frequency jumped to one or two per day. Margo Squire had her car's exhaust pipe sawn through. My (and many others') apartment windows were opened and left open when the temperature was 35 below zero.

Larry Goodrich recalls: "[T]he Soviets especially liked to prey on empty embassy apartments. One night an embassy telephone operator's ceiling fixtures were filling with water cascading in from the empty apartment above. . . . We found all the windows open (it was mid-January), which had caused one of the radiators to freeze and burst. We fought our way through the spraying water and turned off the water supply to the radiator. Then we went down to the staff member's apartment, where I emptied his ceiling fixtures with a turkey baster, taking care not to electrocute myself."

Hoses were slashed on washing machines, causing apartment floods. The lug nuts on DCM Combs' car were loosened, and the right front wheel fell off in traffic. Diesel fuel was poured into gas tanks, and it jelled when the mercury dropped, plugging fuel lines. We later learned that the PNG-ed KGB and GRU officers had been unleashed against us.

But then came the good news that State had awarded an "omnibus contract," and contractors would come in the spring. All-purpose duty might soon be behind us! In celebration, Christmas carol lyrics were rewritten and posted on the walls of the chancery's two elevators: "Here We Come on APD" (to the tune of "Here We Come a-Wassailing") and "God Rest Ye Merry, APDs."

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The Lonetree-Bracy Scandal

Then, in February 1987 the Lonetree-Bracy espionage scandal broke. The curious can read about it in Ron Kessler's book *Moscow Station* (Pocket Books, 1990) which, despite inaccuracies, provides the most accessible account of one of Embassy Moscow's worst episodes.

One immediate consequence was a shutdown of all the embassy's secure electronic communications. Another was confiscation of electric typewriters (they were presumed compromised). Amb. Hartman recalls that years later, high-ranking KGB officers admitted they hyped the Lonetree-Bracy case to cover the real intelligence leaks of Robert Hanssen and Aldrich Ames, so much of the added burden was actually not necessary.

We were already in a chancery with an ambient temperature well below freezing. Without typewriters, we drafted classified and Limited Official Use telegrams on yellow legal pads using ballpoint pens, a courier flew them to Frankfurt, and a secretary there typed and trans-

mitted them. At 30 below zero Celsius, ballpoint-pen ink freezes in about five minutes. We learned to keep three ballpoint pens inside our down jackets, where body heat could thaw the ink. You wrote with one pen until it froze, put it back next to your body, and continued drafting with the second pen, and so on, rotating them.

International direct dialing did not exist in the USSR. There were two dedicated "Washington lines," and each section had to sign up days in advance to get a 15-minute block of time. The alternative was to go to the post office, order international phone calls a day in advance, and pay \$18 per minute. E-mail didn't exist yet.

About this time, Steve Young accompanied the chargé d'affaires, Dick Combs, to a meeting at the foreign ministry. Steve recalls: "As we settled down to our tea and cookies, the Russian took on his best fake sympathetic tone and said, 'Deek, how are you making out over there?' It suddenly dawned on me that the Soviets were convinced we were near the end of our rope, and would any day come in seeking terms to resume the old arrangement. ... And a

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new understanding flashed through my mind: these were the real aristocrats, professional Soviet diplomats who would never stoop to clean toilets or lug refrigerators up narrow stairwells. They had mirror-imaged us, not for a moment grasping that Americans are always ready to roll up their sleeves and do what is necessary to get the job done.”

The Spring Thaw

As springtime approached, the U.S. government finally responded to the situation. The Defense Department was first, sending a half-dozen Army drivers to chauffeur the ambassador and drive our trucks (until then, first Arthur Hartman and, later, Jack Matlock had been driving themselves in an armored Opel sedan). The first contractors appeared in April. Heat was restored to the chancery and new telecommunications equipment was installed.

Metaphorically speaking, another historic thaw was taking place, in the relationship between Mikhail Gorbachev

***No Soviet FSNs
ever returned.***

and Ronald Reagan. So even though we still had no FSNs and only a handful of contractors, we began hosting congressional and other high-level delegations each month, starting in

the summer of 1987 and culminating in the Moscow summit of May 1988. As the summit date approached, a suddenly cooperative UpDK (the agency that had provided FSNs for the embassy) sent workers swarming over Spaso House and the exterior of the chancery to repair, clean and paint. The summit delegation numbered over 1,000, accompanied by over 1,000 journalists, outnumbering us eight to one — but we handled them.

The thaw had practical consequences, for though there was no chance of Foreign Service Nationals coming back in the near term, UpDK and UpIP became somewhat more cooperative. As Jim Schumaker observes: “It turned out that Moscow’s decision to withdraw our FSNs had been just as much a shock to our Leningrad Diplomatic Agency counterparts as it had been to us. ... A few people



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in each organization did what they could to help us, easing our administrative burdens considerably. More often than not, our requests for under-the-table assistance were granted immediately, and unofficially, and it really helped.”

Despite such progress, it seemed that Foreign Service National employees would never come back to Moscow and Leningrad. And they probably would not have, if not for an earthshaking event. Jim continues: “The issue was closed, forever. No Soviet employees would ever be allowed to work at our missions in Moscow and Leningrad. There was just one catch, of course: only four short years later, there would be no Soviet employees anywhere, because the Soviet Union itself had passed into history.”

The APD Legacy

The APD veterans were a varied group that, under enormous stress, kept two posts operating — despite overt Soviet efforts to force them to collapse. In his citation for a series of Superior Honor Awards conferred on the State

Department personnel in Russia, Secretary of State Shultz, a Marine Corps veteran of World War II, referred to the conditions faced by embassy and consulate general personnel in the Soviet Union during this period as akin to those faced during war.

Perhaps that experience partially forged our characters. An unusually high proportion of APD veterans went on to ambassadorships: Jane Becker, Mike Einik, Mary Ann Peters, Ross Wilson, Ed Hurwitz, Jim Schumaker, Priscilla Clapp, Eric Edelman, Steve Pifer, John Herbst, John Ordway, Steve Young. Many more served in highly responsible positions: Shaun Byrnes as envoy to Montenegro, Colonel Bob Berls as an adviser to the Secretary of Energy, Rear Admiral Ron Kurth as president of the Naval War College, and others too numerous to list here.

One thing we have all carried with us, whatever our rank, is a deep and abiding appreciation for the work of our Foreign Service National employees, wherever in the world we've been posted. ■



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THE EDUCATION OF CARNE ROSS: FROM OUTRAGE TO OPPORTUNITY

A SENIOR BRITISH FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER
WHO RESIGNED THREE YEARS AGO OVER HIS GOVERNMENT'S IRAQ POLICY NOW PROVIDES
DIPLOMATIC ADVICE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST.

By LUDOVIC HOOD

In the summer of 2004, the Butler Review, the official British inquiry into the intelligence failures surrounding the invasion of Iraq, received written testimony from an unlikely source: a senior British Foreign Service officer who was a former first secretary in the United Kingdom's mission to the United Nations. Carne Ross, who was London's point man on Iraq issues at the U.N. from 1997 to 2002, submitted a forthright critique of the Blair government's Iraq policy, asserting that the intelligence on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction had been grossly exaggerated and questioning the legal basis for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Soon afterward, Ross, a rising star in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, tendered his resignation, and established a nonprofit organization called Independent Diplomat (www.independentdiplomat.com). Instead of implementing policy based on politicians' interpretations of

national interest, Ross provides diplomatic advice to "those who need it most: the disadvantaged, politically oppressed and economically marginalized." In less than three years, Ross has built a roster of clients that includes the Kosovo and Somaliland governments.

Last month Ross published a book, *Independent Diplomat: Dispatches from an Unaccountable Elite* (Cornell University Press), asserting that "the institutions of contemporary diplomacy — foreign ministries, the U.N., the E.U. and the like — often exclude those they most affect." Speaking in a March 24 interview with the *Foreign Service Journal*, Ross argued that nation-states' narrowly defined interests often overwhelm and exclude more complex, sophisticated ways of understanding, and that "to cope with the complexities of today's world, diplomats must open their doors — and minds — to a far wider range of individuals and groups, concerns and ideas, than the current and increasingly dysfunctional system allows."

Ross joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1989, entering the "fast stream" of the British diplomatic corps. Before his five-year posting to New York, Ross served in Germany and Norway. He also held a number of prestigious posts in London, including the position of speechwriter to the Foreign Secretary at that time, Malcolm Rifkind.

In 1997, Ross was assigned to the U.K. mission to the U.N., where he was primarily responsible for matters con-

Ludovic Hood is a new Foreign Service officer, slated to join Embassy Kuwait later this year. He previously served with the United Nations in East Timor and New York, and taught a course on post-conflict democratization at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School in 2006. The views in this article are those of the author and/or the interviewee, and do not necessarily represent those of the Department of State or the U.S. government.

cerning Iraq. As Britain's lead negotiator of Security Council resolutions on Iraq, he recalls in his book, he developed a "Rottweiler-like reputation ... as the most effective and aggressive defender of British-American Iraq policy" on the sanctions regime and Iraq's WMD programs.

Doubts Surface

It was in this context, however, that Ross began to develop qualms about the sanctions regime on Iraq, which, he says, "primarily served to punish and harm innocent Iraqi civilians." Later, in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, he grew concerned about the rhetoric emanating from London and Washington, D.C., regarding Iraq's purported WMD programs. Ross's exposure to all manner of information regarding these programs over a five-year period convinced him that the case for war was being significantly overstated. He asserts that the claims made by the British government about Iraq's weapons programs were "totally implausible," as he put it in the interview.

In mid-2002, growing anxiety about British and American policy vis-à-vis Iraq led Ross to take a sabbatical at the New School University in New York, after which he sought out, and received, an assignment to the U.N. mission in Kosovo. While based in Pristina in June 2004, he submitted written testimony to the Butler Review, then resigned from the British Foreign Service shortly thereafter.

In his testimony, Ross wrote: "During my posting [at the U.K. mission to the U.N.], at no time did [the U.K. government] assess that Iraq's WMD (or any other capability) posed a threat to the U.K. or its interests. On the contrary, it was the commonly held view among the officials dealing with Iraq that any threat had been effectively contained. I remember on several occasions the U.K. team stating this view during our discussions with the U.S. (who agreed). ... At the same time, we would frequently argue, when the U.S. raised the subject, that "régime change" was inadvisable, primarily on the grounds that Iraq would collapse into chaos."

With reference to the U.N. Security Council deliberations prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Ross testified, "It is clear that in terms of the resolutions presented by the U.K. itself, the subsequent invasion was not authorized by the

Security Council and was thus illegal. The clearest evidence of this is the fact that the U.K. sought an authorizing resolution and failed to get it."

In the March interview, an impassioned Ross said, "In all my career, I had been taught and believed that Britain stood not only for a world of rules but also for fair play and integrity. Many will think me disingenuous, but this was the rock on which I based myself as a diplomat, even when contradictions presented themselves, as they often had. But the decision to go to war was simply too much." Even worse, Ross argues, was the failure of the U.K. and U.S. to

"give sufficient attention to closing off Iraq's illegal oil revenues which sustained the Saddam regime," an issue on which he worked for several years. Says Ross, "This was a real alternative to war that was not pursued."

His decision to resign did not hinge solely on his despondency over British policy on Iraq. As the subtitle of his book, *Dispatches from an Unaccountable Elite*, indicates, Ross had developed profound concern regarding the entire enterprise of diplomacy; in particular,

the lack of accountability and the dearth of information affecting diplomats' conduct. He explains: "The abiding feature of foreign policymaking is its closed, secretive and circumscribed nature. ... Policies are decided by small groups of officials and ministers based upon very partial (in both senses of the word) accounts of reality." The undemocratic nature of diplomacy, Ross charges, combined with many diplomats' lack of specialized knowledge — whether assigned to conflict-prone countries or to multinational institutions such as the U.N. and the E.U. — leads to decision-making largely detached from the needs and concerns of the people in the countries affected.

Indeed, Ross identifies the very existence of a separate diplomatic corps within national governments as a problem unto itself: "The existence of diplomats reaffirms the separated nature of diplomacy and international relations from other areas of policy, when, in fact, they are inextricably connected," says Ross. "Diplomats tend to be generalists who are unskilled in the complexities of global issues, from trade to terrorism, which now dominate our world. We need to promote multiple links at multiple levels between governments, avoiding the narrowing and outdated structures of traditional diplomacy."

***As Britain's lead negotiator of
Security Council resolutions
on Iraq, Ross was a zealous
defender of the sanctions
regime.***

A Difficult Decision

While Ross is speaking primarily about the U.K.'s Foreign and Commonwealth Office, there is an argument to be made that the foreign policy formulation process in Washington already partially sidelines the professional diplomatic corps. As the late, great George F. Kennan commented a decade ago in *Foreign Affairs*, "[T]he State Department has been largely deprived of its traditional role as ... the coordinator of foreign policy. ... [H]undreds of other areas of international relations have been abandoned to the desires and whims of the numerous forces on the Washington scene [including] various congressional committees, with their huge staffs, and the swarms of special interests that fasten on the latter like bees on a flower." Kennan also noted that only 30 percent of the U.S. government employees working in missions overseas were Department of State personnel; the majority work for other agencies.

Ross says that the foreign policy formulation process in the U.S. is more "transparent and eclectic" than in the U.K. For example, he deems congressional scrutiny of America's

"The abiding feature of foreign policymaking is its closed, secretive and circumscribed nature."

— **Carne Ross**

foreign policy superior to the "weak efforts" of Britain's parliament. However, Ross contends that "Even in the U.S., foreign policy is regarded as an elite practice, displaying particular 'statist' and thus narrow ways of thinking about the world." He says the interagency process "encourages an obsession with consensus," which often fails to give "proper consideration of the complex reality abroad."

When asked about the interagency process in the months leading to the 2003 invasion of Iraq — during which State lost more than a few turf wars — Ross notes that "the State Depart-

ment was clearly excluded from the thrust of decision-making in the run up to the war. It does not follow, however, that decisions would have been better. In the State Department, as in Britain's foreign ministry, there was a tendency to believe and plan on the basis of the most optimistic post-invasion scenarios."

Ross's anguish regarding his resignation was evident in our interview. He spent two years agonizing over the decision: "My attachment to my identity as a diplomat was so great that I could not tear myself away, despite my disgust at the behavior of my government. I drafted numerous resignation letters but did not send them. My anguish deepened after the invasion of Iraq, but I continued to waver between resignation and the self-interest of my career. To put off the choice, I went to Kosovo on secondment to the U.N. mission there."

"Then, in the summer of 2004, I testified to the Butler inquiry. The act of testifying was an epiphany of sorts for me: setting down my views (i.e., that the case for war was exaggerated and that there were viable alternatives to war) hardened my resolve. Shortly after giving my testimony to Butler, I sent it to the Foreign Secretary as my resignation from the British diplomatic service."

The Last Resort

Ross' advice for career diplomats with serious concerns about policies they defend and implement is simple. "Tell it like you see it. The Foreign Service, whether in the U.S. or U.K., needs open debate inside as well as out. Both should encourage a culture of questioning and debate: better policy will result."

Ross notes that the U.S. Army has encouraged and even appointed skeptics whose role it is to question the conventional institutional wisdom: "an official devil's advocate," as Ross puts it. He adds, "I did not do

For more information:

Ross' submission to the Butler Review, June 2004:
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/200607/cmselect/cm/167/6110810.htm

New York Times profile of Ross, March 3, 2007:
www.nytimes.com/2007/03/03/world/europe/03ross.html

Independent Diplomat: Dispatches from an Unaccountable Elite, Carne Ross (Cornell University Press, April 2007):
www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/cup_detail.taf?ti_id=4707

"Secrets, Lies and Diplomats," Carne Ross, *The New Statesman*, Feb. 26, 2007 (excerpt from his book): www.newstatesman.com/200702260026

"Diplomacy Without Diplomats?," George F. Kennan, *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1997: www.foreignaffairs.org/19970901faessay3805-p0/george-f-kennan/diplomacy-without-diplomats.html



Carne Ross

— Ludovic Hood

enough to raise my concerns internally. As for resignation," Ross says, "It's the last resort."

Ross is careful to point out that he means no criticism of his former colleagues who did not resign: "There were many good reasons to remove Saddam, and governments need good people to work for them. A decision to resign is deeply personal." He adds, "I simply felt I could not work happily for this government, which I felt had been dishonest with the British people."

A Global Service

Independent Diplomat, Ross' nonprofit organization, was founded on the premise that failing to heed the voices of the marginalized renders conflict and suffering more likely. As Ross notes, "In this complex and interconnected era, agreements that fail to take into account the interests of all concerned parties are not

***Ross came to believe
that there were real
alternatives to war
with Iraq that were
not pursued.***

good or sustainable, and too often they fall apart. The ultimate effect is a less stable world. If people are ignored, they tend to find ways — sometimes violent — to get heard."

Ross and his team currently advise the fledgling Kosovo and Somaliland governments, as well as the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic in Western

Sahara. Ross believes that empowering these and other entities to participate in international discussions pertaining to their regions is a critical form of conflict management: "Our hope is that by helping countries and political groups to use the existing international machinery and international law, we are helping to reinforce peaceful and lawful means of arbitrating international business."

Independent Diplomat does not only deal with self-determination cases, however. Ross is conducting talks with several more established states and governments in Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America "to assist and advise in their diplomacy." Should he succeed in building his organization up to the global service he envisions, more and more U.S. diplomats may find themselves talking to non-state and state actors who are benefiting from Independent Diplomat's advice. Some already are. ■

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A FOREIGN SERVICE CODE CLERK FINALLY RECEIVES RECOGNITION FOR HIS SACRIFICE
IN THE LINE OF DUTY TWO-THIRDS OF A CENTURY AGO.

BY ERIC A. JOHNSON AND ANNA HERMANN

On May 4, during this year's Foreign Affairs Day observances, the American Foreign Service Association will inscribe the names of several U.S. Foreign Service employees, all killed overseas in the line of duty, on the marble memorial plaques it maintains in the State Department's C Street lobby.

One of those individuals, Henry W. Antheil Jr., had his career cut tragically short on June 14, 1940. His plane, the "Kaleva," exploded at 2:05 p.m. local time, shortly after taking off from Tallinn's Ülemiste Airport en route to Helsinki.

Antheil (pronounced ANN-tile) was carrying three diplomatic pouches from the U.S. legations in Tallinn, Riga and Helsinki on the very day that the Soviet blockade of Estonia went into effect. Soviet troops had already been based in the country since Oct. 18, 1939, as a result of a secret protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany had signed earlier that year.

An Associated Press wire story about the tragedy appeared the following day and was picked up by the *New York Times* (under the lead, "Finnish Air Crash Kills U.S. Diplomat"). The June 24, 1940, edition of *Time* magazine ran the following item: "Died: Henry W. Antheil Jr., 27, attaché of the U.S. Legation at Helsinki, younger brother of

Eric A. Johnson, a Foreign Service specialist since 1999, has served in Moscow and Washington, D.C. He is currently public affairs officer in Tallinn, where he works in the same building that housed the U.S. legation to Estonia until it was forced to close in 1940. Anna Hermann, a student at Brown University, worked as an intern in the embassy's public affairs section in the fall of 2005.

noted composer George Antheil; when the Finnish airliner in which he was flying from Tallinn, Estonia, to Helsinki mysteriously exploded in mid-air and plunged into the Gulf of Finland." And on July 17, 1940, a very short and incomplete "exclusive" appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* under the headline: "Finnish Airliner Mystery Solved: Russians Shot Down American Courier."

Overall, however, the news of the Soviet blockade of Estonia and the downing of Antheil's plane were both overshadowed by a much bigger story that broke on the other side of Europe on the same date: the Nazi occupation of Paris.

A Quest for Adventure

Henry Antheil Jr. was born in 1912 in Trenton, N.J., one of four children to Henry William Antheil, owner of a shoe store, and his wife Wilhemine Huse, both Lutheran immigrants from Germany. Growing up in New Jersey, Henry was captivated by the life of his older brother George (1900-1959), an avant-garde composer who lived abroad in Paris and Berlin before ending his career in Hollywood, where he scored such classic films as "In a Lonely Place" (1950), starring Humphrey Bogart and directed by Nicolas Ray. As the title of his 1945 autobiography suggests, George Antheil was widely known as the "Bad Boy of Music" for his notorious "Ballet Mécanique" (1926) and other controversial compositions.

Not very much is known about Henry's early life in the shadow of his famous brother. We do know that Henry enrolled at Rutgers University in the fall of 1931, after graduating from Trenton Central High School, where he studied German and served as vice president of the public speaking club.

During George's occasional visits to the family home in Trenton and through their frequent exchanges of letters, Henry pressed him for information about life in Europe. He even asked if he could accompany him as his personal secretary. George turned down that request, instead suggesting that Henry join the U.S. Foreign Service.

In the fall of 1933, George put Henry in touch with William C. Bullitt, the newly appointed U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, who was a friend of George's. During a meeting in Washington, the photogenic Henry talked Bullitt into taking him along to Moscow to help open the new U.S. embassy. He left for the Soviet Union in February 1934 to pursue his European dream without finishing his education at Rutgers. (At the height of the Great Depression, an exciting job probably seemed more attractive than a college degree.)

Because he was not a Foreign Service officer, Henry's role at the embassy was largely clerical — although seldom routine. As George F. Kennan recalled in the Pulitzer prize-winning first volume of his *Memoirs* (1967): "We were in many respects a pioneer enterprise — a wholly new type of American diplomatic mission — the model and precursor of a great many missions of the latter day. We were the first to cope seriously, for example, with the problems of security — of protection of codes and files and the privacy of intra-office discussion — in a hostile environment. For this purpose, Bullitt brought in a detachment of Marine sergeants in civilian clothes" — the first-ever Marine security guards at a U.S. embassy.

Anheil ended up in charge of the embassy code room, transmitting telegrams written by George F. Kennan, Loy W. Henderson, Charles E. Bohlen, John C. Wiley and other key U.S. diplomats. After Bullitt's 1936 departure, he served under two other ambassadors in Moscow, Joseph Davies and Laurence Steinhardt.

While it appears that Anheil studied some Russian (Amb. Bullitt encouraged everyone on his staff to do so), he would still have lived a rather insulated existence. But he enjoyed being part of the diplomatic life that revolved around the ambassador's residence — experiences vividly captured in Charles W. Thayer's *Bears in the Caviar* (1951) and Irena Wiley's *Around the Globe in 20 Years* (1962).

Embassy life suited Anheil, as his brother George recounts in his 1945 autobiography *The Bad Boy of Music*:

"Henry was in Moscow now, a young attaché of the U.S. embassy and, in reality, one of our foremost war experts. He was then the 'brilliant young man' of the State Department; he had a sort of roving commission. His quest for more knowledge took him all over Europe."

In an unpublished letter dated Aug. 25, 1940, George wrote: "Henry lived a lone [sic] and dangerous life, traveling from country to country, followed by foreign agents from border to border, never knowing what moment might be his last." But even though he was blessed with matinee-idol good looks, Henry never seems to have spent any time in the diplomatic spotlight. Instead, it was assignments as a diplomatic courier that took him across Europe.

Motives for Murder?

In November 1939, Anheil got himself transferred from Moscow to the U.S. legation in Helsinki, where he was officially posted as a code clerk. Describing his character, H.F.

Arthur Schoenfeld, the minister in charge of the legation, emphasized his "sunny disposition, industry, enthusiasm for his work and high ability."

As luck would have it, he arrived in Finland right before the start of the Winter War and the Soviet bombing of Helsinki on Nov. 30, 1939. In search of safety, the U.S. legation evacuated to temporary quarters in the resort hotel of Bad Grankulla (also known as Kauniainen) outside of Helsinki. It was at this spa, where Alexander Kerensky gathered strength before leading

the Russian Revolution, that Anheil met and fell in love with Greta Lindberg in December 1939. Not long afterward, the couple were engaged.

Born in 1915, Greta was also working out of temporary quarters at the Bad Grankulla Hotel along with her fellow employees from the Sport Articles Company (the ski company and the spa shared a common owner). She was an active member of the patriotic Lotta Svärd (a Finnish women's auxiliary organization) and distinguished herself while helping at the front during the Winter War. But even out at Bad Grankulla the war was never far away: while cross-country skiing with Major Frank B. Hayne (the legation's military attaché) on Sunday, Jan. 14, 1940, Henry witnessed the Soviet bombing of Schoenfeld's villa in nearby Koklax and rushed over with his colleagues to help put out the flames.

Only seven months into his posting to Helsinki, Anheil

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the Nazi occupation of Paris.*

flew down to Tallinn on the morning of June 14, 1940, taking an Estonian commercial flight. Henry and Greta had just spent a happy getaway weekend in Tallinn on June 1-2. But he would never complete the short 50-mile journey back to Helsinki.

After learning of their son's death on June 15, Henry Anheil Sr. and his wife sent the following telegram to Secretary of State Cordell Hull: "We appreciate your words of sympathy. While deeply grieved, we know that Henry loved his work and his country even to giving his life for it. We will appreciate any further information you can give us."

Further information turned out to be rather difficult to get, however. Both the Finns and Estonians launched investigations, but these inquiries went nowhere once the Soviet occupation of Estonia became a fait accompli on June 16, 1940. From then until the collapse of the

***Anheil was in charge
of Embassy Moscow's
code room, sending
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Loy W. Henderson and
other key U.S. diplomats.***

Soviet Union a half-century later, any public mention of the incident was considered taboo.

Although the plane crashed several kilometers north of Keri Island, the

wreckage was never found and the nine bodies on board were never recovered. Documents in Russian, Finnish and Estonian archives are equally elusive. A Finnish commission assigned to investigate the crash did not clarify matters when it issued a cryptic report on June 17, 1940, concluding that "the explosion was caused by an external factor."

Despite such obstacles, Estonian and Finnish investigators have recently pieced together eyewitness accounts confirming that two Soviet bombers downed the "Kaleva" — despite the fact that the Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland had officially ended three months earlier, on March 13, 1940.

Some Estonians have mistakenly identified Anheil as the first U.S. official to die in World War II. That distinction actually belongs to Captain Robert M. Losey, killed by a German bomb in Oslo on April 21, 1940, while



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assigned to the U.S. legation in Helsinki as air attaché (see “The First American Official Killed in This War” by J. Michael Cleverley; December 2003 *Foreign Service Journal*). But Henry may well have been the first official U.S. casualty of the Cold War.

Speculation as to why the Soviet Naval Air Force shot down the flight from Tallinn swirls around several different theories. Perhaps the Soviets thought that it was ferrying Estonia’s gold outside the country (a popular urban legend), or taking Estonian President Konstantin Päts into exile. A third theory, perhaps the most compelling, is that the plane was shot down to prevent the diplomatic pouches on board the plane from leaving Estonia. Some Estonian researchers believe that Antheil’s pouches contained secret information detailing the Soviet Union’s future plans for the Baltic region — plans that the Estonian general staff had

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turned over to an unidentified U.S. government official just hours before Antheil boarded the plane.

The “Kaleva” also carried two French diplomatic couriers. Accord-

ing to a June 19, 1940, report by John C. Wiley, the minister in charge of the U.S. legations in Riga and Tallinn, the French diplomatic pouches may have included dispatches from French Ambassador Erik Labonne in Moscow reporting on his recent conversations with Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov — conversations the Soviets might not have wanted to fall into German hands. Wiley’s source for this information appears to have been General Johan Laidoner, commander-in-chief of the Estonian armed forces, whom he’d met with earlier that same day.

But perhaps the simplest explanation is the best: overzealous Soviet pilots decided to shoot first and ask questions later while enforcing the new Soviet blockade of Estonia. This was to become an all-too-familiar Soviet pattern. Just 12 years later (almost to the day), on June 13, 1952, a Soviet MiG-15 shot down a Swedish

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Douglas DC-3 over international waters as it was monitoring Soviet installations in occupied Estonia. Whether such actions were designed to provoke a reaction or serve as a show of force is still open to debate.

Skeletons in the Closet

Henry Antheil became the subject of controversy within the State Department immediately after his death. His work as a code clerk came under intense scrutiny when the legation staff member tasked with going through his possessions on June 20, 1940, discovered evidence in his apartment closet that he had failed to protect U.S. diplomatic codes properly.

Specifically, as materials from a recently declassified internal State Department investigation indicate, he had falsified assignment cables in order to remain together with his Finnish fiancée, Greta — and had been supplying his brother George

with snippets from Embassy Moscow reporting cables. This material, documenting Stalin's purges and the dark side of the Soviet Union, served as background information for George's articles in *Esquire* and his prophetic pamphlet, *The Shape of the War to Come* (1940). When many of his predictions came true, George was recruited by the *Los Angeles Times* to be one of their war correspondents.

A man of many talents, brother George went on to patent spread-spectrum (frequency-hopping) technology together with Hollywood movie star Hedy Lamarr in 1942. Both believed that German fascism and Soviet communism were simply different sides of the same totalitarian coin.

Married to a Hungarian Jew named Böski Markus, George developed a first-hand aversion for totalitarian regimes while living in Germany in the 1930s. Born into a

Jewish family in Austria, Hedy made her way to Hollywood after escaping both the Nazis and her first marriage to prominent fascist Friedrich Mandl, an Austrian weapons manufacturer. (After World War II, Mandl fled to Argentina, where he worked both as an adviser to strongman President Juan Perón and as a movie producer. He later introduced leading lady Eva Duarte to her future husband.)

Hoping that their invention would aid the ongoing war effort, they offered the patent to the U.S. Navy for use in its torpedo guidance systems. Unfortunately, the invention was 20 years ahead of its time, and the U.S. Navy was only able to make practical use of the idea for the first time during the Cuban blockade of 1962. Today, spread-spectrum technology is an essential part of mobile telecommunications and is used in everything from mobile phones to WiFi.

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Henry got into trouble a second time after his death. During the 1950s "Red Scare" in the United States, finger-pointing by an inside informant (who had apparently heard rumors of the State Department's internal investigation) led to a posthumous FBI investigation to see if he had been a Soviet agent.

In January 1956, the FBI concluded that State Department and "Bureau files contain no details concerning Antheil's involvement in Soviet espionage activities" and that "no further investigation is recommended at this time." (Back in Helsinki in June 1940, Henry's fiancée Greta had been the subject of a background check of her own.)

Memories of Antheil continued to fade until the beginning of the 21st century, when a series of articles in the Estonian and Finnish press generated renewed interest in the story of the "Kaleva." At about the same time,

*Although Antheil did
not speak Russian,
by all accounts
embassy life in Moscow
suited him.*

Aero Airlines resumed regularly scheduled flights between Helsinki and Tallinn using French-built ATR-72 twin-turboprops.

Although the Finnish Aero Company changed its name to Finnair in 1953 (Finnair still uses the original OH call sign on its planes), Aero was reborn in March 2002 as Finnair's

Estonian subsidiary. (Finnair had already resumed flying between Helsinki and Tallinn in March 1990 after a 50-year hiatus.)

On June 14, 2005, Estonian, Finnish and Russian researchers gathered for a symposium at the Helsinki Aviation Museum to mark the 65th anniversary of the incident. That same year, Ants Vist, Toivo Kallas and the Estonian company "Polar Films" began working on a documentary film on the fate of the "Kaleva." Thanks to a grant issued by the U.S. embassy in Tallinn, a Polar Films crew traveled to the U.S. in October and November 2006 to interview Antheil's surviving relatives.

Fittingly, Henry Antheil's name will forever be within sight of the black-blue-white Estonian flag that hung in the State Department's main lobby throughout the five long decades of Soviet occupation, waiting patiently for the next flight from Tallinn. ■



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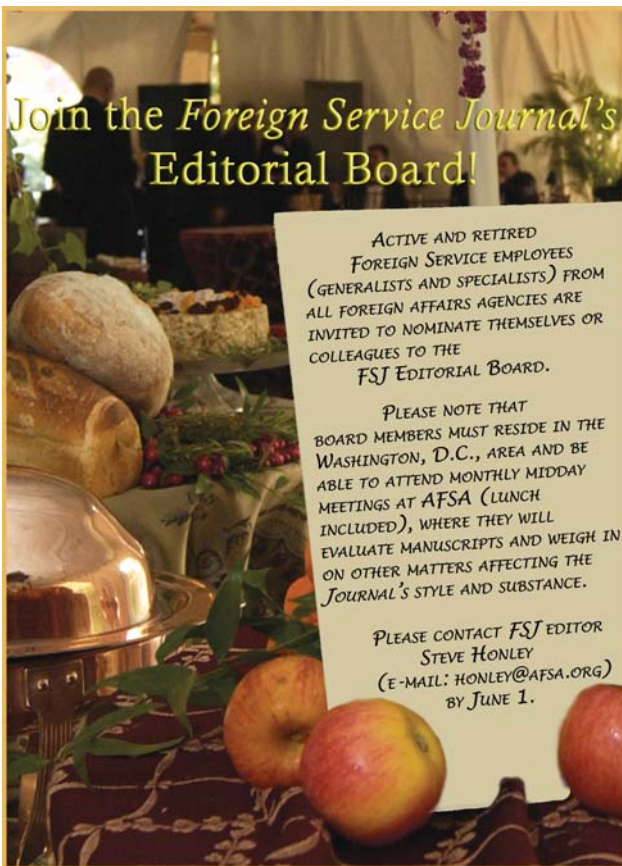
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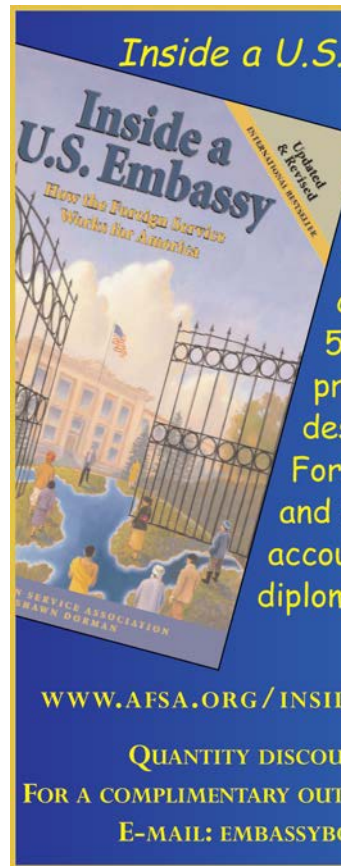
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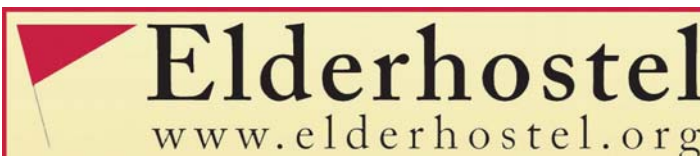
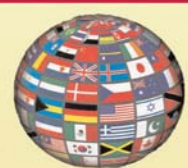


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AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • May 2007

ASSIGNMENT RULE CHANGE PROPOSALS FROM THE DG

State Department Seeking More Fair-Share Bidders

BY SHAWN DORMAN

On March 21, the director general sent out a worldwide cable to inform State Department Foreign Service members of proposals to make further changes to the assignment system rules, and requested feedback and suggestions.

Explaining the need for more changes to the assignment rules, the DG said short-term fixes were not enough. "At a time when we have about 750 unaccompanied and limited-accompanied positions overseas, more than half of which are one-year tours that turn over every cycle, and when almost 20 percent of Foreign Service employees have already served in Iraq and Afghanistan, short-term measures are insufficient to remedy the staffing problems faced by our high-differential posts during the next few years. ... We wish to ensure that the burdens of hardship service will be evenly shared throughout the Foreign Service." He also noted that the changes were tied to an effort to avoid resorting to directed assignments.

The new proposals (spelled out in the DG's March 21 message, State 35697) follow changes to the assignment rules that were implemented in August 2006. The changes made then and the new ones proposed in March aim to solve current staffing problems by creating a "fairer fair-share" system and by altering the so-called "6/8-year rule," which allows State Foreign Service employees to remain in Washington assignments for six consecutive years and up to eight years with a waiver.

The proposed changes, according to the DG's message, are intended "to reduce the department's own limit on continuous domestic service from six years to five, and to tighten the definition of 'fair-share bidder' status to raise the number of bidders submitting bids on 15-percent-or-greater posts." The 6/8-year rule would become the 5/8-year rule. This change was proposed by the DG during negotiations that preceded the August changes, but was rejected by AFSA and was put aside. (For a summary of the August 2006 changes to the assignment system, see "Walking the Tightrope," August *FSJ*, p. 71, at www.afsa.org/fsj/oct06/afsanews.pdf.)

Until last summer, fair-share rules required 18 months of service at any hardship-differential post, including those with 5- or 10-percent differentials, during the previous eight years prior to the employee's upcoming transfer. In August, with AFSA's concurrence, the DG changed the fair-share rules: instead of recent service at any hardship post counting toward fair-share requirements, only service at 15-percent and higher differentials (combined hardship and danger) would count. The current proposal would apply this definition of fair share retroactively, with no "grandfathering" provision. The new rule would also change 18 months to 20 months. Thus, any Foreign Service member who has not served 20 months at a post with a 15-percent or higher differential in the past eight years

Continued on page 58



Inside This Issue:

BRIEFS: MEETING ELOs.....	54
VP STATE: LOYALTY	55
VP USAID: WHERE'S MY AGENCY? ..	56
PAC ANNUAL UPDATE	57
FAMILY MEMBER CLASSES.....	57
Q&A: MEDICARE BASICS	59
FS VOICE: ASSIGNMENTS.....	60

AFSA GOVERNING BOARD ELECTIONS

Don't Forget to Vote



It is time for AFSA members to select the 2007-2009 AFSA Governing Board that will take office in July. Ballots and candidates' statements were mailed to all members in March.

Completed ballots must be returned by May 31, and must be mailed in the AFSA Elections Committee 2007 envelope provided with the election material to AFSA's P.O. box. Ballots must *not* be mailed to AFSA's offices. Votes will be counted on June 1. Details about voting are on the ballot.

Questions about the election can be directed to Elections Committee Chair Robert Wozniak at rjwozniak@gmail.com, or Professional Issues Coordinator Barbara Berger at berger@afsa.org or (202) 338-4045, ext. 521.

AFSA works because of you. Please remember to vote. □

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



AFSA President Meets with ELOs in Colombo

A FSA President Tony Holmes attended the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs' regional entry-level professionals conference held in Colombo March 8-9. The conference was well-attended, including by some who paid their own way in order to be there. Under Secretary for Management Henrietta Fore was the guest of honor.

Director General George Staples and Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Maura Harty, as well as high-level representatives from SCA and the Human Resources Bureau, spoke during the conference.

The conference focused on the Foreign Service career more than on policy, and SCA representatives made a real effort to promote the bureau as a "home" for the ELOs at the conference, encouraging them to return to SCA for future assignments.

Amb. Holmes participated in five different sessions. One was devoted to AFSA issues exclusively; in the other four, he was part of a panel discussing life in the Foreign Service and the FS career. Holmes tells *AFSA News* that the embassy and bureau did a superb job in organizing the conference and were open to and appreciative of AFSA's participation and contributions.

Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER



"You are a very fine Foreign Service officer, Sherman. But it just seems every month we come to the same Area for Improvement."

"Going It Alone" from AAFSW

In response to the growing number of unaccompanied postings for Foreign Service employees, the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide recently added a page to its Web site that pulls together information for families facing an unaccompanied tour. It is a good place to go to find information on the Separate Maintenance Allowance and links to State Department resources, as well as instructions for joining the e-mail listserv "homefrontUS" for Foreign Service family members, sponsored by the State Department Family Liaison Office. Go to www.aafsw.org and click on "Going it Alone."

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Prisoners of Conscience

I would like to use this column to pose a purely hypothetical question that is increasingly being whispered in the corridors here at the Department of State. Similar questions are being raised among career employees at the Pentagon, at the CIA and elsewhere in the federal government, but it has particular relevance and urgency here at State. The question is this: What does a professional Foreign Service member do if he or she reaches a point of insurmountable personal disagreement with a major component of U.S. foreign policy?

As career public servants, we are all accustomed to accepting policy decisions that we may personally judge to be misguided, then dutifully implementing them to the best of our ability in our daily work. Diplomats are expected to spend their lives acquiring expertise in foreign affairs as the result of living overseas for years at a time, developing a sophisticated understanding of how the world works, and dealing with foreign governments, cultures and situations.

Most of us take pride in our capacity to analyze the foreign policy issues facing our country in a way that Americans with less overseas knowledge cannot. This expertise may inevitably lead us to an honest disagreement with certain decisions taken by the political leadership. But the ethic of our profession is to keep one's personal opinions to oneself and to carry out faithfully the policies of the present administration. For most of us, this is not a problem.

But what happens, hypothetically, if a once-in-a-lifetime crisis arises in which we see our government pursuing a course of action which, we cannot help but conclude, threatens the very security of our nation and its standing in the world? What if it is a matter of war and peace? If our sense of patriotism impels us to speak out, do we not have an obligation to bring our unique perspective to the public debate over this course of action — whatever the risk to our careers?

In practice, of course, those few Foreign Service personnel who dare to participate in the public debate in their role as knowledgeable private citizens do so at their own professional peril. As

a result, that debate takes place largely in the absence of the one voice that is potentially most authoritative on foreign policy matters, the U.S. Foreign Service.

So how does a Foreign Service member in this predicament proceed? Is it acceptable, for reasons of conscience, to refuse to

accept assignments in the area directly affected by this particular foreign policy issue? Can we allow “conscientious objectors” to pursue their careers in other areas of foreign policy and reward them for excellence in those areas, rather than punishing them for their principled refusal to work on something they feel is deeply wrong? After all, the world is a large, complex place, and we do need to keep talented people who specialize in many different regions and

many diverse subject areas of foreign policy.

These days, we often hear certain colleagues declare self-righteously that anyone who refuses to embrace and carry out, without question, the administration's policies should be considered disloyal and should be removed from the Service. I would respectfully suggest that true patriotism is something broader than loyalty to one administration's policies, and that honorable, conscientious people in the Foreign Service may well feel that they are being patriotic by expressing dissent or choosing to avoid working on certain issues at a time of crisis so as not to advance policies they see as dangerously misguided. Such individuals should not be made to suffer for this principled stance in terms of promotions, onward assignments or career advancement.

Legendary American diplomatic pioneer George Kennan — who during his long, brilliant career never shied away from dissent — warned in 1997: “Diplomats have a unique point of view to convey ... Yet the political and bureaucratic establishments in Washington cannot tolerate for long any body of public servants established on a conceptual basis so different from their own and demanding such independence of administration.” A decade later, let us hope he was mistaken. □



I would respectfully
suggest that true patriotism
is something broader
than loyalty to one
administration's policies.

Where's My Agency?

Has anyone seen USAID? All of a sudden, I looked and it wasn't there anymore. At least not the way I remember it. Let me describe what I am looking for.

I recall USAID as the agency whose purpose was to assist less-developed countries around the world improve substandard conditions in agriculture, health, environment, education and economic performance. Decentralized USAID missions worked very closely with their counterparts to develop sensible on-the-ground projects. Concurrently, host-government representatives, many of whom were previous recipients of USAID scholarships, understood what we were striving to accomplish.

The best interventions were designed in a collaborative style using simplified but effective planning documents such as a planning tool called the Logframe which, if properly prepared, clearly identified the goal, purpose, outputs, activities and inputs. This document was easily understandable to all parties. Once the project was approved, USAID FSOs rolled up their sleeves and actually started implementation. At the project's middle and end, the results were evaluated and used to improve the next project.

There were overarching themes such as Basic Human Needs, the Four Pillars of Development and Core Values, but we were trusted and expected to operate our programs with limited interference from headquarters. The system worked and we got results. Mortality rates for children and mothers plunged in many of the countries where USAID worked. Family planning services were accepted, and successfully reduced fertility rates. Emergency assistance and food were delivered to the most remote regions of the world. Elementary educational services improved and thousands received a chance to study in the United States. Agricultural production increased significantly and economic activities improved. USAID had a secure reputation as the "premier" development agency in the eyes of other donors and developing nations.

Sadly, nothing looks like that now. New buzzwords abound for initiatives such as Transformational Diplomacy, Country Operational Plans, the Results Framework, Manage-to-Budget and the Joint Management Platform. Thousands of hours are spent in meeting after meeting discussing how to produce documents for these initiatives which, theoretically, should take us to higher levels of performance. But employees are so busy strategizing and reporting that by the time they finish, it is time to start over again. There is hardly enough time to tend to projects anymore. No one is allowed to proceed without a centrally-approved operational plan, which is a formulaic, top-down instrument previously developed for the one-theme-focused HIV/AIDS PEP-

FAR program. The appropriateness of adopting this model to the highly diverse world of development is of questionable value.

Apart from new initiatives, a full-blown reorganization is also in the works, but there is no clarity on how the agency will ultimately look or who will report to whom, because lines of communication are not apparent. What is clear is that authority is highly concentrated at the top. The assistant administrator for management position has been vacant for two years, and remains vacant. Some bureaus, such as Policy Program and Coordination, have been eliminated completely and their people farmed out to the new "F" Bureau over at the State Department or to the Office of the Chief Operating Officer at USAID headquarters. Executive officers are being "encouraged" to bid on State jobs offered under the Joint Management Platform, which raises uncertainty about their careers as USAID proceeds with its "stealth" merger with State.

To add to this mix, we also note that direct-hire staff numbers are woefully inadequate and recruitment is currently at only half of attrition (in 2006, 29 new FSOs were hired while 65 retired). There are 1,000 fewer USAID employees today than in 1992, yet we hear boasts that development aid has tripled from \$10 billion a year to \$30 billion under the current administration. What's more, the operating expenses budget request for Fiscal Year 2008 is 15 percent less than the actual FY 2006 budget. It appears there will be little funding to bring employee benefits into line with what State employees are receiving. It seems we are being asked to do more with less and less and less.

It is unrealistic to think that the momentous changes taking place can be successfully implemented within the 600 or so days left in the current administration. Already, many of the top political appointees at the agency are leaving to take other opportunities before the end comes. There seems to be very little buy-in to the changes being proposed because there is a lack of serious consultation about the process and ultimate goal. I am afraid that this will only leave a mess for the next administration to sort out.

I know I sound like an old-timer yearning for the good old days. However, many of the tried-and-tested ways worked, and what we have now clearly does not. Given that only 12 percent of FSOs in our recent survey thought that morale at USAID was good and that 67 percent believe that working conditions are worsening, I know I am not alone in this opinion. The agency I remember not only had a clear mission but was also well-staffed, respected, decentralized and effective. Has anyone seen it lately? □



2006 AFSA-PAC Treasurer's Report

BY TOM BOYATT, AFSA-PAC TREASURER

2006 was a dramatic year for the American Foreign Service Association Political Action Committee. We made significant contributions to the overall AFSA effort to pass overseas comparability pay. The stars and planets were just aligned when the effort stalled and foundered. Disappointment was sharp, but real progress was evident. Relationships were tested and strengthened, while new contacts were forged. Throughout the process, AFSA-PAC provided the AFSA legislative team a more robust presence at the congressional table.

In terms of raw metrics, 511 colleagues donated an average of \$60 each, bringing total contributions to AFSA-PAC to \$30,585. Regrettably, the downward trend that emerged last year has continued. The 511 donors in 2006 represent a decrease from the 622 who contributed in 2005. And it is far below the record level achieved in 2004, when over 800 AFSA members decided to pitch in.

AFSA retirees continue to make up the bulk of support (75 percent), while the num-

ber of overseas donors slightly increased to 17 percent. Although trends are discouraging — especially in view of AFSA's greatly increased effectiveness on the Hill — our financial position remains comfortable. Interested colleagues may review all of our monthly financial reports submitted to the Federal Elections Commission at www.fec.gov to learn more about your PAC.

With respect to output, AFSA-PAC donated \$32,000 divided equally between the two parties and concentrating, as usual, on the chairs and ranking members of our authorizing and appropriating committees in each chamber. Since its creation in 2002, AFSA-PAC has donated over \$140,000 to its friends and supporters on Capitol Hill. We are by no means a heavy hitter as PACs go, but we target narrowly our foreign affairs legislative universe, and we contribute consistently. We are there every year being part of the process and furthering and defending the interests of both our retired and active-duty colleagues on issues that affect us all. I would expect our contributions to increase in 2007 as we con-

tinue to struggle for overseas comparability pay and expanded retiree benefits, and in defense of the reality that the Foreign Service serves very effectively on the front lines in an ever-more-dangerous world.

I would like to highlight the dedication of several of AFSA's members who voluntarily serve on the PAC Committee. Ambassador Theresa A. Healy, Ambassador Nick Rey, Ambassador Vern Penner, Mr. Irv Rubenstein and Dr. Eugene Schmiel have helped guide and advise our small PAC to its current effectiveness. I would also like to record thanks to our late, great friend Ambassador Don Norland for his service and helpful advice provided since the foundation of AFSA-PAC.

In closing, AFSA-PAC relies entirely on the voluntary support of you, our members. No dues are used for political campaign contributions and all activities are in strict compliance with federal and local election laws. Our impact is cumulative over time. I look forward to adding momentum during the coming year to what we have achieved together thus far. □

NOTES FROM THE FSI TRANSITION CENTER

Courses for FS Family Members

We plan to periodically highlight upcoming Transition Center courses for members of the Foreign Service community. To register or for further information call (703) 302-7268/9 or e-mail FSITCTraining@state.gov.

May courses include:

MQ 115: Explaining America: May 24. Expatriates abroad face difficult questions about American society. Explore the roots of American cultural values for effective responses to those questions.

MQ 703: Post Options for Employment and Training: May 31. Designed to help U.S. government foreign affairs spouses identify and develop employment opportunities and personal strategies for seeking paid or unpaid professional opportunities overseas.

June courses include:

MQ 803: Realities of Foreign Service Life: June 1.

MQ 200: Going Overseas for Singles and Couples without Children: June 2.

MQ 210: Going Overseas for Families (for parents and chil-

dren grades 2-12): June 2.

MQ 220: Going Overseas: Logistics for Adults: June 2. The nuts and bolts of planning for the move overseas, offered in conjunction with MQ 200 and MQ 210.

MQ 230: Going Overseas: Logistics for Children (for parents and children grades 2-12): June 2.

MQ 703: Post Options for Employment and Training: June 12.

MQ 104: Regulations, Allowances and Finances in the Foreign Service Context: June 21-22.

MQ 801, Maintaining Long-Distance Relationships: June 23.

July courses include:

MQ 250: Young Diplomats Day: July 9, 16, 30. Introduces the world of diplomacy to children (grades 2-12) of U.S. government employees working abroad.

MQ 914: Youth Security Overseas Seminar: July 10, 17, 24, 31. Foreign affairs family members in grades 2-12 explore safety and security threats they might face in overseas environments and identify resources for protecting themselves.

MQ 115: Explaining America: July 7.

MQ 803: Realities of Foreign Service Life: July 28. □

Assignment Rules • Continued from page 53

would be considered a fair-share bidder.

The DG's proposal to replace the current 6/8-year rule for domestic service with a 5/8-year rule would mean that Foreign Service members could only serve a maximum of five consecutive years domestically, and would then need to seek a waiver to remain longer. Approval for such waivers would be a discretionary decision by HR, and the criteria for approval of such waivers would be narrowed. For example, the current nearly automatic practice of granting waivers for employees with a teenager finishing his or her senior year of high school would end. In practical terms, for most people, the new rule would mean a maximum of four consecutive years in Washington: two normal two-year assignments. No grandfathering provision for those already assigned domestically has been offered.

AFSA Response

AFSA transmitted a message to all Foreign Service members on March 21, the same day the DG's cable was sent. AFSA stated its agreement with the DG's belief that it is important for the members of the Foreign Service to continue to volunteer for all of the hardship and danger-pay positions that must be filled overseas, but offered another perspective on the proposals and requested immediate input from AFSA members worldwide.

In its message, AFSA stated: "Over the past six months, active-duty members worldwide have made it clear to AFSA that they want to be consulted on such proposed changes, which directly affect their ability to manage their careers. While most members have expressed support for greater enforcement of fair-share rules and limitations on domestic service, a strong majority attached tremendous importance

to the principle of fairness — and to preserving flexibility and family-friendliness in the Foreign Service. We believe these new proposals would have an undeniable impact on these principles. We are therefore seeking your feedback, which will help the AFSA Governing Board decide how to respond to the director general."

Results of the member poll were not in by press time, but will be reported in an upcoming edition of *AFSA News*. Early indications show great concern about the proposed changes among members. Hundreds immediately responded to the survey, and e-mail messages are flooding in to AFSA from members around the world. Many of these messages focus on the retroactive nature of the proposed rule changes as a key concern. AFSA intends to take members' views into account when formulating a response to management on the proposals. □

AFSANEWSBRIEFS**Lab in Bulgaria Named for FAS Attaché**

A new laboratory on the Black Sea coast was named in March for Brian Goggin, a former U.S. agricultural attaché in Bulgaria. The Foreign Agricultural Service office in Sofia was honored by the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture for its important contributions to the prevention and control of avian influenza in that country. Susan Reid, the current agricultural attaché in Sofia, gave a speech at the naming ceremony extolling Goggin's work. A marble plaque with Brian Goggin's name in gold letters is mounted at the lab entrance.

FAS/Sofia provided significant resources to create the new facility and train laboratory staff. The office's work continues with the lab and Veterinary Service, including training of 11 leading local experts in the United States.

Want to Run a Nonprofit? Tales Seeks CEO

The Web resource for Americans living abroad, *Tales from a Small Planet*, is seeking a new CEO to start immediately. *Tales* (www.talesmag.com) is a nonprofit organization/Webzine that was started by a group of Foreign Service spouses in 2000. *Tales* features over 1,000 *Real Post Reports* — honest opinions on life in 340 cities around the world. In addition, the site is an online literary magazine, sponsors newsgroups and message boards and offers links to overseas schools. In 2006, *Tales* won a "Best of the Web" award from *Forbes* magazine.

Tales has a talented, dedicated staff, and is seeking a CEO with energy and vision to take the organization to a new level of sustainability. The ideal candidate has vision and management skills, international living experience, and is not daunted by working entirely online with the board and staff. The new CEO will help provide leadership for *Tales* regarding Web content as well as fundraising and PR. The position is part-time, and currently pays a monthly stipend, but includes room for salary growth based on successful fundraising efforts. This is a great job for a self-starter with a business degree and/or business experience who wants to set his or her own hours and take a nonprofit, online corporation to the next level.

Please contact Francesca Kelly at francesca@talesmag.com for more information.

Transportation Offices Move

As the summer transfer season approaches, please be aware that despite strong objections from AFSA, State management has moved the transportation offices out of the service corridor to a new temporary location in the Truman Building: Rooms 4527, 4535 and 4634. Stay tuned for further information on a possible next interim move to SA-3. □

Q&A



Retiree Issues Medicare Basics

BY BONNIE BROWN,
RETIREE COORDINATOR

Q: What kinds of coverage are provided by Medicare Parts A, B and D?

A: Medicare Part A, which is hospital insurance, helps pay for inpatient hospital care, skilled nursing facility care and home health and hospice care. Medicare Part B, which is medical insurance, helps pay for doctors' services, outpatient hospital services and diagnostic tests. The new Medicare D provides prescription-drug benefits.

Q: Who may be covered by Medicare Parts A and B?

A: Medicare Part A is provided at no cost to all federal employees actively employed on and after Jan. 1, 1983, those eligible for Social Security benefits or who paid Medicare taxes for 10 years while employed by the federal government, and those whose spouses are eligible for Part A. Those who do not qualify may buy Part A. Part B is available to anyone 65 and older who is either a U.S. citizen, or a lawfully admitted alien, who has resided in the U.S. for five years.

Q: What are the premiums for Medicare Parts A and B?

A: Part A is free for most people. The 2007 monthly premium for Part A, if one is not eligible for free coverage, is \$410 (or \$226 if one has 30 to 39 quarters of Medicare-covered employment). The 2007 premium for Part B, which everyone must pay, is \$93.50 a month. Starting this year, Medicare B premiums will be means-tested: approximately 4 percent of Medicare Part B enrollees with high incomes (incomes in excess of \$80,000 for individuals or \$160,000 for couples) will pay a higher premium.

Medicare B premiums can be deducted from Social Security payments, but they cannot be deducted from Foreign Service annuity payments. Medicare sends a bill every quarter to enrollees without automatic deductions. The bill must be paid promptly to avoid cancellation of coverage.

Q: Do I have to apply for Medicare coverage?

A: If you are already getting Social Security benefits at age 65, you do not have to apply. Rather, Medicare will automatically enroll you in both Parts A and B and send you a Medicare card about three months before your 65th birthday. If you don't want Part B, follow the instructions on the card. If you are not getting Social Security benefits by three months before you turn 65, apply for Medicare at any Social Security Administration Office. This marks the beginning of a seven-month initial enrollment period. If one waits 12 or more months to enroll, the premiums will go up by 10 percent for every 12-month delay.

Q: Should I enroll in both FEHB and Medicare B?

A: The Federal Employee Health Benefits Program is regarded as the gold standard in health insurance, so the question retirees generally ask is whether it makes sense to also enroll in Medicare B. The answer to this is an individual one, based on health and financial considerations.

When a federal retiree enrolls in FEHB and Medicare B, Medicare B becomes the primary provider. It pays for most services for retirees in fee-for-service plans, such as Blue Cross or American Foreign Service Protective Plans. The FEHBP fee-for-service plan then pays a portion or all of the services not covered by Medicare, waiving most of its deductibles, coinsurance and co-payments with the exception of prescription drugs. This results in nearly complete coverage for all out-of-pocket expenses. Medicare pays the provider charges first and then sends the claim electronically to the FEHB health plan, reducing paperwork and the burden on enrollees.

In deciding whether to have both FEHB and Part B, you can run the numbers yourself. Look at the health services you generally require and calculate the amount of out-of-pocket expenses you ordinarily incur for these services during a year. Then balance this against the amount you would pay in Part B premiums for a year. In 2007, this would be \$1,123 for most enrollees. If you spend approximately this amount or more, then purchasing Part B could make sense. Of course, you cannot anticipate what your health needs will be in the future. Also, because means-testing will be phased in, you should continue to review any decision to see if it continues to make economic sense. On the other hand, be aware that a 10-percent penalty applies for waiting to enroll in Part B for each year after you reach the age of 65.

Retirees in FEHBP health maintenance organizations may not need Part B coverage because HMOs provide a full range of services and the co-payments are usually low. However, there may be other considerations; for example, retirees may need coverage when traveling outside the HMO service area or require an out-of-network specialist.

Finally, since FEHB enrollees have prescription-drug coverage that is as good as or better than Medicare Part D, they need not sign up for Part D. □

FS VOICE: **AFSA MEMBER MATTERS** ■ BY ROBERT J. RILEY, AFSA REPRESENTATIVE, EMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

Let's Be Fair on Assignments

As Embassy San Salvador's AFSA representative, I have been collecting feedback on the director general's proposals to change the rules governing fair-share bidding and continuous domestic service. That feedback can be summed up as: "The department is changing the rules in the middle of the game."

Many at post believe it is patently unfair for the DG to change the rules retroactively without any provision for grandfathering. Foreign Service members must be allowed to plan their careers and their lives. We have based our plans on the fair-share rules as they stand. How can we plan anything if the DG can at any time, for any reason, change the rules and apply them retroactively? What is to keep the department from changing this very same rule again next year, after another bidding cycle, to raise the fair-share level to 20 percent and apply it retroactively, wiping out the planning of all those who rely on the 15-percent rule this time around?

Personnel relations are a two-way street, and management must do its part. FS members should not be the only ones expected to plan prudently — State management should do so as well.

Additionally, the "November 1 rule" for determining which

service is considered fair-share is unfair: The proposed new rules state that "an employee would need to have served at least 20 months at a post with at least 15-percent combined differential during the previous eight years. ... Hardship differential levels for fair-share purposes would be calculated from Nov. 1 of the year the employee bid the position or Nov. 1 of the year the employee arrived at post, whichever is higher."

This unfairly prejudices officers whose post differential was raised to 15 percent or higher after they arrived. This is exactly what happened to Embassy El Salvador, which went from 10 to 15 percent in January 2007. In fact, under the November 1 rule, it is possible for Foreign Service members to spend up to 36 months at a 15-percent-differential post (if they arrived at post in December and the hardship was raised in January, for example), without receiving any credit for this service for fair-share purposes. That simply makes no sense. Whether or not the new fair-share rules are applied retroactively, the way hardship differentials are calculated for fair-share purposes should not ignore how much time Foreign Service members and their families actually spend at post under hardship conditions. □

Bob Riley is counselor for public affairs at Embassy San Salvador. He wrote this article in his capacity as AFSA representative for his post.

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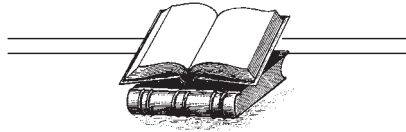
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BOOKS

Toward a Sounder Strategy?

Regime Change: U.S. Strategy Through the Prism of 9/11

Robert S. Litwak, *Woodrow Wilson Center Press and The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, \$25.00, paperback, 406 pages.*

REVIEWED BY HARRY C. BLANEY III

Robert S. Litwak's challenging new book, *Regime Change: U.S. Strategy Through the Prism of 9/11*, is an in-depth study of the significant impact of that terrible day on America's national security thinking and practice. It also offers an extraordinary dissection of the implications of the Bush administration's ideological prisms, and a practical guide to dealing with regime change, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

As that list of themes indicates, the book's scope is broad and deep. Litwak set out to "focus on the transformation of U.S. national security policy after 9/11, specifically exploring how that new vision has shaped U.S. strategies toward those countries grouped under the 'rogue state' and 'axis of evil' rubrics." In fact, Litwak goes well beyond that to offer alternative analytical frameworks for asking strategic questions, which the Bush administration clearly did not bother with in its haste to go to war with Iraq.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first gives a broad analysis

of perspectives and approaches relating to the international order, the use of force and development of strategies toward rogue states. The second part features case studies of Iraq, Libya, Iran and North Korea, as well as a discussion of the threat posed by non-state actors like al-Qaida.

Litwak puts forward three main arguments. One describes the 9/11 prism in terms of "groupthink" and its implications. The second describes tensions over the objective of U.S. policy toward rogue states — behavior change versus regime change. His third theme is the nexus of proliferation and terrorism, or the threat of mass-casualty attacks on the American homeland by non-state actors with the help of a rogue state.

A fascinating chapter titled "Strategies for a Change of Regime — or for Change Within a Regime?" delves into what used to be known as strategic policy planning. In looking at what Litwak calls a "target state," he defines key concepts like proliferation dynamics, societal change and target-state analysis. He concludes the chapter by examining and developing an analytic framework of the risks and benefits of different approaches to dealing with rogue states.

The second part of the book concentrates on dealing with Iran. Litwak makes the point that "the WMD intelligence fiasco in Iraq ensures that many of the international community will view U.S. claims about Iran's nuclear program with skepticism. In effect, we are paying a high price for our deceptions.

He concludes by taking on the key question of the nexus of proliferation and terrorism. Litwak deplores the Bush administration's emphasis on WMD at the expense of attention to "potential attacks of equal lethality employing more readily obtainable conventional means." He warns: "Hedging against the worst is critically necessary but should not be done in lieu of, or at the expense of, preventing the more likely."

The sad fact is that the interwoven problems of rogue states, terrorism and WMD were foreseen as far back as the 1970s, when this reviewer worked on those issues as staff director of a National Security Council task group. But then, too, the various federal bureaucracies were unwilling to cooperate with each other, much less abandon their preconceived notions.

The secondary consequences of the Iraq War were clearly not those the neocons or Bush administration hawks had envisioned. These issues not only reverberate today in our national debate, but may also inhibit positive engagement in the world — a double tragedy.

Fortunately, this sensible book (which should be required reading for all Foreign Service personnel and U.S. policymakers) constitutes a good "prism" in its own right for examining the flaws of current U.S. policy, and offers a better framework for the future.

Harry C. Blaney III, a retired Foreign Service officer, is a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy.



A Grim Portrait

Putin's Russia: Life in a Failing Democracy

Anna Politkovskaya, Henry Holt Company, 2007, \$16, paperback, 274 pages.

REVIEWED BY
E. MARGARET MACFARLAND

Few people better exemplify Russia's long, proud tradition of dissent, and the price dissidents too often pay, than the late Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya. Her second book, *Putin's Russia: Life in a Failing Democracy* (originally published in 2004), takes on a grim new significance following the author's October 2006 assassination.

To be sure, there are no revelations here for anyone at all familiar with the chaotic conditions of New Russia. Nor does the author claim any unique insight into President Vladimir Putin's secretive government. Rather, the focus of the book is the plight of "Mother Russia" and her people. The individual tales of suffering Politkovskaya compiles here, meted out by corrupt oligarchs and bureaucrats or inflicted during the war in Chechnya, are as relevant as ever.

The Russian language has two different words to indicate one's nationality — one connotes citizenship, and the other refers to cultural Russian-ness. The conceptual conflict between the two is a theme that runs throughout *Putin's Russia*. The Kremlin is at odds with Russia herself

— a circumstance made clear in the story of Navy Captain Alexey Dikiy. Despite poor living conditions in isolated Kamchatka, Dikiy refuses to even consider resigning his commission. "I am defending the people of Russia," he tells Politkovskaya in the book, "Not the state bureaucracy."

The dichotomy between the people and the state has not stopped Putin from exploiting national and cultural identities to suit his aims. Politkovskaya attributes the rising tide of racism among Russian nationals to Putin-generated propaganda in support of the Chechen War, a conflict which Putin spins as a part of the larger war on terror. In a scene that would seem satirical had it not actually happened, concerned parents at a Russian elementary school lobby for the expulsion

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of a mischievous Chechen boy whose behavior would normally be met with a mild reprimand, on the grounds that they do not want their children to “learn bad things from a possible future terrorist.” The discriminatory treatment Chechens receive at the hands of ethnic Russians, with tacit government approval, goes beyond all but the worst instances of racial profiling in the United States.

Politkovskaya describes how common it is for ethnic Chechens to have drugs and even grenades planted on them by authorities, after which they are coerced into signing false confessions to capital crimes — such as the rape and murder of a Chechen girl, actually committed by a Russian officer. She asks the obvious question: Does Moscow want Chechens to live

within the Russian Federation or not?

The book portrays an authoritarian regime bereft of any real ideology, committed merely to preserving and benefiting from the status quo. Writing not as an authority on Putin’s policies, but as “one person among many, a face in the crowd,” Politkovskaya sought to awaken a sleeping populace to the corruption at every level of government. Putin has a hand in every endeavor and those who serve him faithfully, regardless of the human cost, are rewarded.

What occurred to me repeatedly while reading this somber report was that in a post-Soviet world there should never have been occasion for this book, much less the fate that befell its author. After the collapse of the communist system, facilitated by

Mikhail Gorbachev’s era of glasnost and perestroika, threats of censorship and severe punishment should no longer loom before Russian writers and journalists. The Russian people, after centuries of authoritarian rule under the czars and then the communists, are entitled to a transparent government instead of the propaganda their leaders continue to feed them. But for that happy day to dawn, however — as Anna Politkovskaya believed — Russian voters must first wake up to the ugly realities of their society. ■

E. Margaret MacFarland is the Foreign Service Journal’s spring 2007 editorial intern. She is currently a junior at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., majoring in political science.

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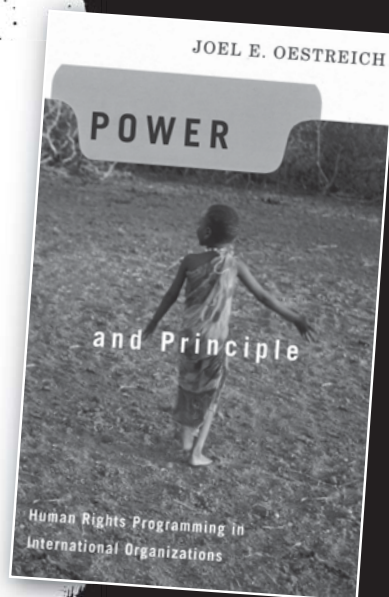
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Pictured from left to right: Dara Laughlin, Will Heim, Muff Philipps and Jessica Laughton.

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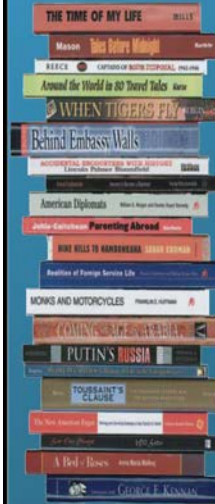


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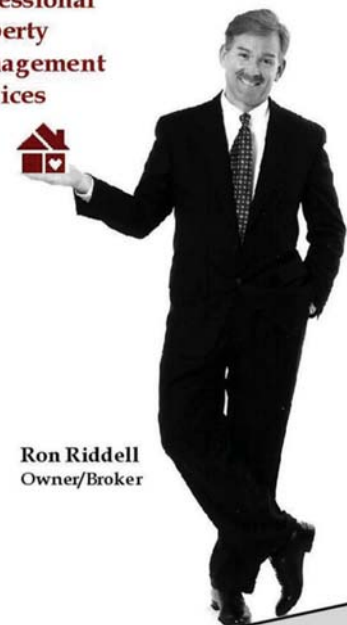
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MCG Financial Planning / 64
State Department Federal
Credit Union / 48

HOUSING

Accommodations 4 U / 49
Arlington Residence
Court / 25
Attaché Property
Management LLC / 50
BridgeStreet Worldwide / 39
Capitol Hill Stay / 33
Corporate Apartment
Specialists, Inc. / 45

Executive Lodging
Alternatives / 51
Korman Communities /
Inside Front Cover
Oakwood Corporate
Housing / 37
Pied à Terre Properties,
Ltd. / 40

Remington Hotel, The / 31
Suite America / 64
Virginian Suites, The / 15

INSURANCE

AFSPA / 15
Clements International / 1
Hirshorn Company, The /
Outside Back Cover
Jannette Embassy Plan,
The / 34

MISCELLANEOUS

Cort Furniture / 2
Electronic Land, Inc. / 49
Georgetown University
Press / 65
Inside A U.S. Embassy / 52

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Executive Housing
Consultants / 71
Hagner, Ridgway &
Jackson / 69
McEarmey Associates / 71
McGrath Real Estate
Services / 67
Meyerson Group Inc.,
The / 66
Peake Management, Inc. / 66
PROMAX Management
Inc. / 68
Property Specialists, Inc. / 67
Prudential Carruthers / 69

RE/MAX / JoAnn Piekney / 70
Stuart & Maury Inc. / 68
Washington Management
Services / 67
W.C. & A. N. Miller / 66
WJD Management / 71

SCHOOLS

American Military
University / 41
COEUS International
School / 45
Texas Tech University / 33

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AFSA Legacy / Inside Back
Cover
Elderhostel / 52
FSJ Editorial Board / 29, 52
In Their Own Write / 68

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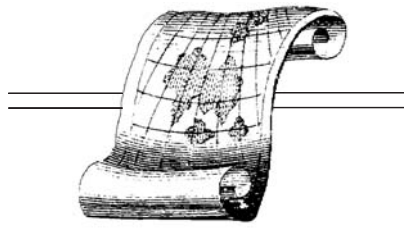
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REFLECTIONS

A House Call in the Guatemalan Highlands

BY DONALD W. MACCORQUODALE

“Are you sure this is a road?” my wife, Joyce, asked. It was 1965, and after driving from Guatemala City to nearby Chimaltenango on the paved InterAmerican Highway, we had just turned off onto a dirt road.

“Don’t worry,” I replied, “Santiago Cabrican is just 20 miles from here.” One moment, we were fording a rushing stream. Minutes later, I was straining my eyes, trying to maneuver through the ruts on some mountain ridge that might lead us to our destination. After two more hours, we finally reached the tiny, dusty plaza of Santiago Cabrican.

A week earlier, my secretary in the USAID mission had stepped into my office and announced that a Father Thomas Melville wanted to see me. I was in charge of the mission director’s Special Development Fund, which provided small grants (up to \$5,000) directly to rural agricultural cooperatives, credit unions and peasant leagues. Father Melville was seeking a grant of \$3,000 to buy a machine for the local Indian cooperative.

Joyce and I drove up to the small church facing the plaza, stepped out of our four-wheel drive van, and noticed a slender, young Indian girl in a colorful native blouse and ankle-length skirt

Dr. MacCorquodale served as a health and population officer with the USAID missions to Guatemala, Colombia, the Philippines and the Dominican Republic from 1964 to 1978.

outside the priest’s residence.

“Buenas tardes,” I said, and knocked on the door. A singularly dour-looking woman opened it and glared at me.

“I would like to see Father Melville,” I said.

“He’s sick,” she replied curtly, and slammed the door in my face. I banged on the door furiously, and growled that I was the doctor from the American embassy. Some minutes later Father Melville, looking rather pale and drawn, appeared in slacks and a sweater.

“Hi, Doctor,” he said, and then turned to the young Indian girl. They chatted in rapid Spanish, and Father Melville turned to me with a grin.

“How would you like to make a house call?” he asked. The girl’s father had been thrown from a horse two days earlier, and was still in considerable pain. She wanted the priest to see him, but he had explained that I was a doctor and assured her that I would be glad to examine her father.

I was terrified. The man might well have a broken spine, and he almost certainly needed to be X-rayed. What could I do with just my eyes, ears and two hands?

We walked about a quarter of a mile through a heavily wooded area to a small adobe hut with a red-tiled roof. When we stepped into the dimly lit hovel, I noticed a tiny woman in typical native dress standing against the wall. My patient lay on the floor, groaning audibly from time to time.

I don’t think I ever examined any-

one quite so meticulously. I carefully felt every vertebra in his spine and palpated his arms, legs and collar bones. Then I pressed gently but firmly on his pelvis. I noted that he had extensive bruises, but found nothing to suggest he had any broken bones.

“Father,” I asked, “do you have any aspirin?”

“Yes,” he replied, “I have a jar full of the stuff.”

I turned to the Indian girl and said in Spanish, “Father Melville has an excellent medicine, some white tablets. He’s going to give you some for your father, and I want you to give him two tablets when he wakes up, two more when he has lunch, and two just before the sun goes down.”

As I turned and started toward the door, the patient’s wife stepped out of the shadows and reached out as if to take my hand. I started to shake hands with her but she turned my palm upward, and put two eggs into it. She was not about to accept the charity of strangers. I wanted her to keep those eggs — a cash crop in Indian communities — but felt I didn’t dare offend her by refusing her gift.

“Matiox chawichin (Thank you very much),” I murmured in Cakchiquel Maya. I knew she spoke Quiche Maya, but hoped the phrase was close enough for her to understand. I took the eggs, and bowed slightly.

When Father Melville stopped by my office a few weeks later, I was greatly relieved to learn that my patient had completely recovered. ■



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