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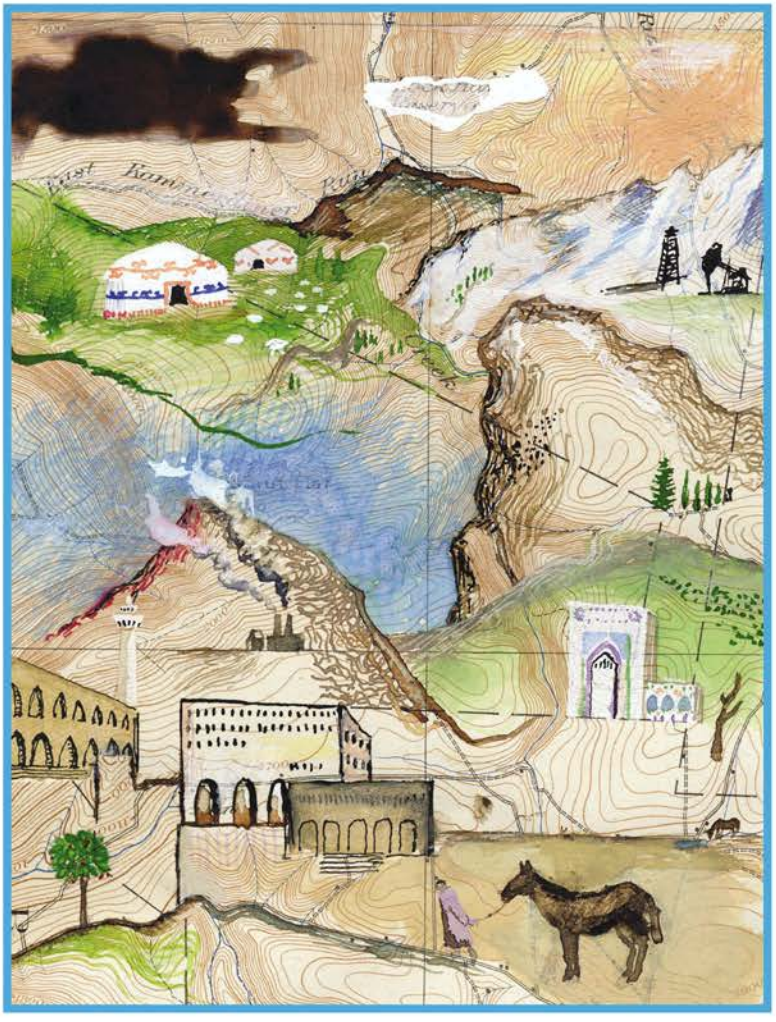
The Magazine For Foreign Affairs Professionals



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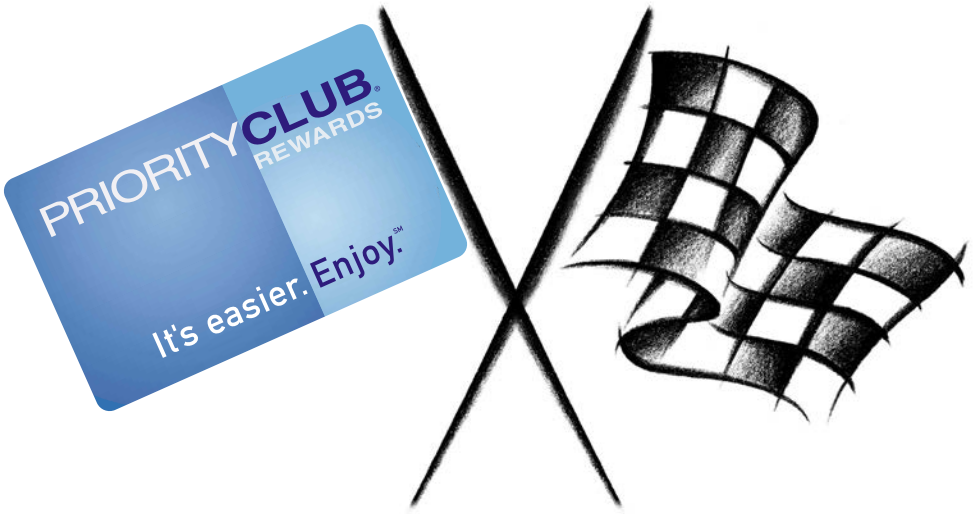

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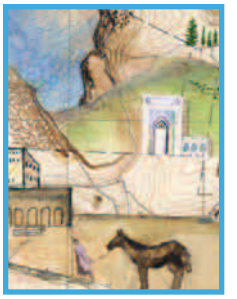

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President's Views

A Career in Balance

By John K. Naland

Among its many other duties, AFSA serves as an emergency room for wounded careers. Each year, hundreds of employees come to AFSA seeking assistance with falsely prejudicial evaluations, disappointing assignments, denied benefits, and other problems involving the personnel or administrative bureaucracy. Feeling let down by the system, these employees often comment with sad irony on the many sacrifices that they and their families have made over the years for the needs of the Service.

The list of sacrifices includes things big and small: enduring long separations from friends and family in the U.S.; risking injury and disease at hardship posts; seeing poor overseas job opportunities eat away at their spouses' lifetime earnings and retirement savings; repeatedly cutting short home leave in order to rush to the next post; working long hours doing "more with less"; losing annual leave at the end of the year due to a heavy workload caused by inadequate staffing; and receiving a base salary lower than that of domestic colleagues due to the lack of overseas locality pay.

But over the long run, most Foreign Service members come to judge their sacrifices to be counterbalanced by the rewards (material and emotional) of service. This concept of balance is also important in recruiting new Foreign Service personnel. While a weak economy and a superstar secretary of State may have postponed the competitive "War for Talent" about which McKinsey & Company warned the State Department in a 1999 report, recent national studies show that job seekers increasingly are looking for balance when evaluating prospective employers. Significantly, they are not only looking for a balance between the demands and rewards of the workplace, but they are also seeking a healthy balance between career and family.

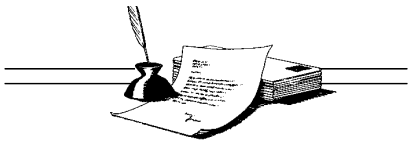
Demanding as it is, the Foreign Service is still a calling in which members should expect to have a balance between their job and their non-work life.

But is the Foreign Service, with its 24-hour-a-day national security responsibilities, a calling in which members should expect to have a balance between their job and their non-work life? The answer is "yes." Of course, there inevitably will be days, months, even whole tours during which the demands of the office will overshadow the needs of family, friends, volunteerism, or hobbies. But, over the course of a career, there must be a balance. As Secretary Powell once advised an audience, "Never become so consumed by your career that nothing is left that belongs only to you and your family. Don't allow your profession to become the whole of your existence."

In addition to telling employees to "do your work and then go home to your families" and to "take leave when you've earned it," Secretary Powell has also urged employees to "have great fun" in their assignments. Again, not every day, month, or even whole tour is going to be enjoyable. But, over the course of a career, if someone is not having fun they are either in the wrong line of work or are doing their work in the wrong way. Here, another Powell principle is instructive: "I like staff members who take their work seriously, but not themselves. I like people who work hard and play hard."

The Foreign Service career is best viewed as being a journey rather than a destination. In other words, the most important thing is the experiences that we have day by day throughout our careers rather than some exalted title or high position that we may achieve at the end of our careers. From that perspective, it is vitally important to maintain a balance between work and family. ■

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



LETTERS

Great Evacuation Coverage

My compliments on the February *FSJ*'s coverage of evacuations. Perhaps because I was fortunate enough never to be involved in an evacuation myself, I did not know any of the procedural angles cited in the various articles. It was a terrific presentation which I hope gets coverage in other journals and newspapers.

I do wish it had been mentioned that there have been something like 128 evacuations since 1988. Such statistics always help, I have found, in perking up people's ears. I use them in talks I give around the Washington area and elsewhere, precisely to make the point that our so-called "striped-pants" diplomats (thanks a lot, Ari Fleischer) are often in danger. Nor do they live in the luxurious circumstances that so many non-Foreign Service people assume they do. My objective, of course, is to give our fellow taxpaying citizens a better understanding of what the Foreign Service does and what life is really like for us — neither of which is either well-known or fully appreciated.

Again, let me reiterate my compliments on the high quality of your coverage.

Gilbert Sheinbaum
FSO, retired
Vienna, Va.

A "Must Read"

I was very pleased to see that Ambassador Tibor Nagy ("Ambassadors and Post Morale: The Most Critical Element"; Speaking Out, February *FSJ*) highlighted from personal experience what is one of the most important items in the success of any mission: an ambassador who cares. I am sure that many field positions around the world remain open for long periods due to individuals in the mission leadership having placed great demands on the staff, without responding to their efforts in a positive manner. But this problem of not showing appreciation is nothing new or unique to the Foreign Service, of course: one can see the same phenomenon at other federal agencies, as well as in the private sector.

We all want service, that very elusive quality — yet when we find it, we often forget to even say "thanks," etc. So I believe Amb. Nagy's article ought to be a "must read" — not only for new officers, but for newly assigned senior officers, as well, regardless of their years of service, rank or title, before they take up their responsibilities. After all, we are all prone to forget how to deal with our staff at times, regardless of our rank or title.

Woody Hickson
FSO, retired
Ft. Worth, Texas

Praise for FCS Issue

Thanks for your excellent focus section about the Foreign Commercial Service (January *FSJ*).

It is unfortunate that, perhaps reflecting political reality, services such as FCS are more nationalistic than global in outlook, based on mercantilist theories of how to achieve greater economic prosperity for national benefit rather than mutual benefit (aside from dealing with the distortions created by intervention of other governments). The same is true of their trade and investment promotion counterparts in other countries. They all try to push exports and attract foreign investment, instead of realizing that international business is a two-way transaction which brings benefits to both parties, since otherwise the deal simply doesn't get done.

Following my retirement from State, I set up a new business, Global Direct Investment Solutions, to deal with the challenge of connecting corporate executives, professional service providers and investment promotion officials worldwide to support direct investment projects (as opposed to just export trade promotion) by companies. That includes investment by foreign companies anywhere in the U.S.

I believe my work may be of interest to many Foreign Commercial Service officers, even though our roles differ. Accordingly, I invite your readers to visit my Web site, www.gdi-solutions.com, for more information, and would welcome their insights and suggestions. In turn, there they may encounter executives who would value the expertise my colleagues offer.

I also think there may be linkages to explore between my work and the interests of other AFSA retirees, including many with significant insights to share about the challenges of doing business in other countries. After all, a lot of very talented FSOs were pushed into retirement over the years even though they still have very valuable knowledge to share. So I would like to make it easier for executives to find such unique talent, and for my retired colleagues to apply their knowledge.

Bruce Donnelly
FSO, retired
Fox River Grove, Ill.

How Times Change

My, how times change. Or perhaps, as the French saying goes, they don't. While I was NATO Ambassador Harlan Cleveland's executive officer in 1964 — before DeGaulle kicked NATO out of Paris — Amb. Cleveland decided to call his latest book about the American role in NATO *Policeman to the World*. The department demurred, saying this unrealistically exaggerated the U.S. role in the world and was contrary to the Kennedy administration's view of U.S. foreign policy. A different title was adopted.

Four decades later, every talk-show host speaks of the United States as "policeman to the world," and Kurt Shafer (Letters, January *FSJ*) casually uses the phrase as a commonplace description of the U.S. foreign policy role in the world.

On to another subject: My brief comment (Letters, November 2002 *FSJ*) on some of the reasons for Muslim antagonism toward the West in general, and the U.S. in particular, was intended as no more than a review of major events since Israeli recognition in 1948. I only wish I had written William Harkell's impressive tour de force (Letters, November 2002), reaching back to the Muslim conquest of formerly Christian North Africa and the Balkans. One must have served in Romania, which was under Turkish occupation for over three hundred years (with Islam knocking on the doors of Vienna twice during this period), or know a good deal more about French history than the average American, to recognize the full force of Harkell's argument. Indeed, I suspect few people, even among those who know how Islam was turned back at Poitiers, realize that the Moors conquered the High Alps as far as the borders of modern Switzerland — as evidenced by the village of Tour Saracen not far from Albertville.

When one knows enough to appreciate the basis for the centuries-long contention over Lotharingia, between the other two remnants of Charlemagne's medieval empire, one can perhaps understand the validity of Harkell's, Robert Blau's, Richard Miles' and Shane Myers' astute contributions to this ongoing search for understanding of why Arafat has repeatedly turned down accommodations which appear eminently acceptable to us. And one can better appreciate why Palestinian kids are willing to die for a cause that Europeans gave up fighting for after the Hundred Years War and the Treaty of Westphalia.

David Timmins
FSO, retired
Salt Lake City, Utah

Doug and "Wahwee"

A couple of years ago, I started collecting anecdotes about the late Career Ambassador Douglas

MacArthur II and his colorful wife Laura "Wahwee" MacArthur, the daughter of Vice President Alben Barkley. I now have about 20 such stories from 10 contributors, including their daughter Mimi, who lives in Belgium. Before going to press, I would be grateful if anyone who has heard such accounts — even apocryphal ones — would send them to me at:consultimate@sidney.heartland.net, or to P.O. Box 121, Thurman, IA 51654-0121.

Tom Hutson
FSO, retired
Thurman, Iowa ■

Year-End Roundup of FOREIGN SERVICE AUTHORS

As we have done each year since 2000, the November 2003 *Foreign Service Journal* will include a list of recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors in a special section: "In Their Own Write." FS authors who have had a book published either by a commercial or academic publisher last year or this year (2002-2003) that has not previously been featured in the roundup are invited to send a copy of the book, along with a press release or backgrounder with information on the author, to:

Susan Maitra
Associate Editor
Foreign Service Journal
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Deadline for submissions

CYBERNOTES

HIV/AIDS Pandemic Drives Food Crisis in Africa

There are 11 million orphans in southern Africa, 780,000 of them in Zimbabwe. In Malawi, 10 percent of families are headed by a child. Zambia lost 2,000 teachers last year to AIDS, and half the country's students have dropped out of school. Seven million agricultural workers have been lost in southern Africa since 1985; another 16 million are projected to be lost by 2020. Some 70-80 percent of hospital admissions in the region are people with HIV/AIDS; 8,000 people die every 24 hours.

These are among the chilling statistics presented to the U.N. and in meetings in Washington, D.C. with senators, representatives and President Bush, by James Morris, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's special envoy for humanitarian needs in southern Africa and executive director of the World Food Program, according to reports by *allAfrica.com*.

Morris and Stephen Lewis, the U.N. Secretary General's envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, returned recently from a tour of Zambia, Lesotho, Malawi and Zimbabwe, with an urgent warning that a new and bold approach was needed to meet the intertwined crises of devastating illness and drought-afflicted agriculture in Africa, where some 40 million people are at risk of starvation today.

"The magnitude of the disaster unfolding in Africa has not been fully grasped by the international community," Morris told lawmakers. "An exceptional effort is urgently needed if a major catastrophe is to be averted. Business as usual will not do."

HIV/AIDS is a fundamental driver in the food crisis engulfing Africa, Lewis and Morris found. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is intersecting a crisis in the agricultural economy. In southern Africa, 14.5 million face starvation, half of them in Zimbabwe, where drought, cyclone damage and poor governance are compounded by HIV/AIDS.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on women and children, in particular, and the sheer magnitude of the number of people who are infected, are without precedent. "My country is on the verge of extinction," one head of state told Morris.

Hunger is still the greatest threat to life, with more than 800 million people in the world chronically hungry, says Morris. And, with a surge in both manmade and natural disasters recently, "the worst is yet to come." A decade ago, 80 percent of the work done by the WFP was in development; food aid was used in food-for-work programs, nutrition and education projects to help the chronically undernourished. Only 20 percent of the work was in response to food emergencies.

Today, nearly 80 percent of WFP operations are emergency-driven. And at the same time, ominously, official development assistance for agriculture has dropped precipitously, from U.S. $14 billion in 1988 to barely U.S. $8 billion in 1999, compromising future agricultural output.

Information Economics

Intellectual property is a major issue in the information age, and, increasingly, a controversial one. So, it is perhaps ironic that China — known for its knock-offs of patented consumer goods — will host a World Intellectual Property Organization summit this month.

WIPO (**wipo.org**) promises the April 24-26 meeting in Beijing will focus on "the key role of the intellectual property system in stimulating creativity and innovation to foster economic growth and social well-being through wealth creation and business development."

The World Trade Organization's 1995 trade-related aspects of intellec-

The policies we are now asked to advance are incompatible not only with American values but also with American interests. Our fervent pursuit of war with Iraq is driving us to squander the international legitimacy that has been America's most potent weapon of both offense and defense since the days of Woodrow Wilson. We have begun to dismantle the largest and most effective web of international relationships the world has ever known. Our current course will bring instability and danger, not security.

— John Brady Kiesling, former FSO, from his letter of resignation to Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, Feb. 27, 2003.

CYBERNOTES

tual property rights agreement made intellectual property rights an important issue for developing countries (**www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/trips_e.htm#issues**). TRIPS requires member countries to adopt international standards for the protection of intellectual property rights, or face sanctions and other penalties.

Developing countries have protested that the cost of developing intellectual property protection systems is an unfair burden, and that the agreement favors wealthy nations. Poor WTO member nations also argue that they need cheap generic copies of patented drugs, which violate TRIPS, to cope with the AIDS epidemic and other health problems. President Bush touched on the issue, during his State of the Union address in January, when he quoted a frustrated rural South African doctor unable to provide his AIDS patients with anti-retroviral drugs.

Recent talks have focused on patent exemptions for countries, such as India, which produce generic drugs. WIPO represents drug companies and other intellectual property owners, and argues that protection of intellectual property is vital for healthy economies. WIPO also says that intellectual property rights will help poor countries develop their economies by rewarding homegrown innovation.

There are a number of excellent Internet resources on this complex international issue. For a general IPR overview, the Department of State's International Information Program Web site is a good place to start (**www.usinfo.state.gov/topical/econ/ipr**). The site's IPR page offers news, fact sheets and links to relevant U.S. government and legal documents. A page titled "Introduction to Intellectual Property Rights" features various perspectives, more links and a glossary of terms (**http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/intelprp/**).

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office provides an authoritative gateway to the U.S. intellectual property system (**www.uspto.gov**); it should be the first stopping point for anyone with bright ideas, and is useful for those just

Web Site of the Month: Magnum Photos

Let the right side of your brain take over and visit the Magnum Photos Web site for an enjoyable and enlightening experience of stories told with high-quality pictures (**www.magnumphotos.com**).

Since 1947, Magnum photographers have covered life and death around the globe. The co-operative agency was founded by four photographers, Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, George Rodger, and David "Chim" Seymour, who wanted to record the world after the war. In the process, they advanced what we now know as photo-journalism.

Today Magnum provides photos to the press, publishers, advertising, television, galleries and museums from its offices in New York, London, Paris and Tokyo, and more than 200,000 of their images are available online. That part of the Web site is strictly commercial. But, if your interest is of an educational or vocational nature, you are still free to browse the information pages, books, features, exhibitions, and photographer biographies and portfolios — and there is plenty there for the casual viewer.

Clicking on the "Features" link at the top of the homepage will connect you to photo-essays such as "Stalin in Georgia," a black-and-white view into the world of modern-day Stalinist cults in the dictator's native Georgia, by Thomas Dworzak. "In my opinion the Georgian cult of Stalin is foremost a expression of nationalist pride, even though Georgians have suffered repressions by the Stalinist regime as much as other Soviet countries," Dworzak says in his introduction to the piece.

Other essays include the "The Nonconformists: The Mennonites of Bolivia," by Larry Towell, "AIDS in India, 2002," by Alex Majoli and "Demonstration Against War with Iraq," by Chris Steele-Perkins.

These titles give the impression that heavy issues are typical Magnum fare, but the going is not always so serious. "127th Westminster Dog Show," by Bruce Gilden provides light relief through 27 well-taken photos.

There are approximately 30 feature pieces to chose from, each accompanied by a short article explaining the story. Users can view the photos as a slide show, or in thumbnail sketches, which can be enlarged by clicking on the image.

— Stephen E. Mather, Editorial Intern

surfing for an understanding of the issues. The USPTO site explains the difference between a patent, a trademark and a copyright in plain English.

The Harvard Center for International Development offers a summary of the IPR issue, with a special focus on the question of generic medications (**www.cid.harvard.edu/cidtrade/issues/ipr.html**). The site also contains links to an impressive list of papers.

To find ways to make the intellectual property system work for developing countries, the British government created the Intellectual Property Rights Commission (**www.iprcom mision.org**). The IPRC's Web site provides an introduction to the issue, free copies of the commission's report and supporting documents. A review of the IPRC report, giving some historical perspective to the wider issue, can be found in the Sept. 12, 2002, *Economist* (**www.economist.com/science/displayStory.cfm?story_id=1325219**). In addition, links to key Web sites are provided.

The *Indian Intellectual Property Law Resources* site (**www.iprlawindia.org**), maintained by the National Law School of India University in Bangalore, India, contains discussions, news, articles and cases on Indian intellectual property law and international developments in the field. Surfers must register to get full access to the site.

Finally, the *Berkeley Digital Library Sunsite* (**http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Copyright/**) provides a comprehensive linked bibliography focused mainly on copyright issues.

— Stephen E. Mather, Intern ■

50 Years Ago

What's the *Journal*'s position on the [State] Department's program to cram air travel down our throat by veiled threats? Aren't there more constructive and different ways of reducing the work time lost because of the 'man in motion'?

— FSO James A. May, in Letters to the Editor, *FSJ*, April 1953.

SPEAKING OUT

Does State Need Volcker-Style Reform?

BY ANTHONY C. E. QUAINTON

Paul Volcker is best known to most Americans as the longtime former chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. But he recently performed another valuable public service by chairing the National Commission on the Public Service. This commission, sponsored by the Brookings Institution Center for Public Service, brought together 11 distinguished citizens from both political parties to examine how the federal government might achieve disciplined policy direction, operational flexibility and clear and high performance standards. Among its prominent members were former Senator Bill Bradley, former Defense Secretary (and FSO) Frank Carlucci, former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala. Bruce Laingen, a former FSO and executive secretary of the first (1988) national commission on the public service, served as an ex-officio member. The commission, which was established early in 2002, held public hearings in July and conducted a wide range of interviews with experts in the field of public administration.

When Volcker unveiled the commission's report, titled "Urgent Business for America: Revitalizing the Federal Government for the 21st Century," at the National Press Club on Jan. 7, 2003, he acknowledged in his remarks that many Americans do not respect or trust their government.

To rectify that situation, the commission is calling for sweeping changes in the federal government's organizational structure and personnel incentives and practices to meet the demands of an environment very different from that in which the current rules were shaped in the 1970s and 1980s. A summary of the commission's report, including its 14 main recommendations (several of which are discussed in detail below), can be found at: www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/gs/cps/volcker/reportfinal.pdf.

As Mr. Volcker himself would likely concede, many of the commission's recommendations are nothing new.

As Mr. Volcker himself would probably concede, many of the commission's recommendations are nothing new. The State Department has struggled with the need for reform for much of the last 20 years. During the mid-1990s, when reinventing government was fashionable, the department launched a Strategic Management Initiative designed to answer many of the same problems which the Volcker Commission cites: overlapping structures, highly layered systems, an ineffective personnel review and promotion system, and declining morale among both Foreign and Civil Service employees. Yet that effort, like most of those that preceded it, ran into the bureaucratic sand, both because there was a lack of senior-level interest and because of the perceived impossibility of gaining congressional approval for any major restructuring. Indeed, the campaign of former Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., to impose consolidation on the foreign affairs agencies led to a circling of the wagons and a hardening of resistance to reform. Even the reluctantly-agreed-to incorporation of USIA into State took place without basic reform of the public diplomacy function, which was essentially glued on to existing departmental structures.

Still, let us suppose for a moment that Paul Volcker's views prevail in the post-Sept. 11 environment and that the recommendations of his commission are accepted by both Congress and the administration. What would the consequences be for the foreign affairs establishment, given that at least nine of the 14 recommendations clearly apply to the Department of State (Nos. 1, 2, 5-7 and 11-14)?

Some Progress

To give Foggy Bottom its due, State has already made substantial progress in two areas. Unlike most federal agencies, the department already has an under secretary for management, fulfilling Recommendation 2's call for "managers chosen for their operational skills and given the authority to develop management and personnel systems appropriate to their missions." And the Foreign Service has also sharply stepped up recruitment over the past two years, fulfilling Recom-

The State Department has been struggling with the need for reform for much of the last 20 years.

mendation 12.

In addition, State is already doing its part to speed and streamline the presidential appointment process (Recommendation 5) for ambasadors, particularly on the security side. More could be done, although many of the current delays are outside the department's control in the White House and on Capitol Hill.

But what of the other proposals?

By far the most sweeping, and hence the most difficult, is the commission's first recommendation: that the federal government be reorganized into a limited number of mission-related executive departments. In the foreign affairs arena, the fragmentation of authority is quite extraordinary. The Foreign Service is divided among the Departments of State, Commerce and Agriculture, USAID, and the International Broadcasting Board. All five branches of the Foreign Service are governed by the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

Beyond consolidation of personnel systems comes the more difficult issue of how to create a single department whose mission encompasses the vast array of foreign affairs functions. Take economic, trade and development policies, for example. Four of the five foreign affairs agencies have officers engaged in those activities. Should they be consolidated under a single agency? If so, should the U.S. Trade Repre-

sentative's office, part or all of the Export-Import Bank, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation also be included in such a restructured department?

And what of visa issuance and verification, and criminal investigation of passport and visa fraud? Given the new Department of Homeland Security's field oversight responsibility over the State Department's traditional visa issuance function, should the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Immigration and Naturalization Service continue as independent entities?

Whatever the answer to those questions, it is unlikely that Recommendation 1's call for consolidation of functional responsibilities will see fruition any time soon. Similarly thorny issues would arise if most of the Volcker Commission's other recommendations were taken seriously.

Top Guns

A particularly neuralgic issue is posed by Recommendation 6, calling on Congress and the president to reduce the number of executive-branch political positions. As the report concludes, such layering forces "talented and experienced career managers further and further away from the centers of decision-making." In State's case, the issue is not just the number of non-career ambassadors but the presence of too many assistant secretaries and deputy assistant secretaries who are political appointees. Clearly, the solution is either to convert them all to career positions or eliminate them entirely.

Nor is a preponderance of political appointees the only serious problem at the top of State and other agencies. The Senior Foreign Service was established by the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to mirror the Civil Service's Senior Executive Service, set up two years before. Like the SES,

the SFS was intended to create a cadre of managers to serve as ambassadors and deputy chiefs of mission abroad and office directors, deputy assistant secretaries, etc. in Washington. However, both groups have become cluttered with non-generalists, doctors, engineers, security officers, and IT specialists. While some of these specialists have managerial responsibilities, they are not fungible with SFS officers from the traditional diplomatic and consular services.

Recommendation 7 calls for dividing the SES into a Professional and Technical Corps and an Executive Management Corps. In addition, the report urges that talent in these two corps be drawn from the private, public and non-profit sectors, argues for mobility across agencies and endorses the implementation of performance-based pay. While the division of the SES would not automatically affect the SFS, there is a strong case to be made for dividing the generalists and specialists into two separate cadres and creating interagency mobility for the generalists. Such mobility into other foreign affairs agencies for SFS officers would be of considerable benefit to the department and expand the horizons of its best and most talented officers. At present, only a handful of USAID and FCS officers attain ambassadorial status, and regular secondment of SFS officers, or of the smaller pool of SES officers, to other agencies is rare. State is highly resistant to receiving SFS or SES officers from outside into its own ranks.

Recommendation 7 also calls for greater effort to identify potential managerial talent early in employees' careers and to nurture it through training, professional development and subsidized opportunities for graduate education and work experience outside government. While State has begun to move in this direction, much more needs to be done. University opportunities need to be expanded, senior training made mandatory, and excursion tours to other agencies and to the private sector encouraged. In a world dominated by global issues that no longer fit conveniently into a tidy, traditional, political/economic framework, no senior foreign affairs manager will be able to fulfill his or her functions adequately without exposure to, and understanding of, the cultures of other bureaucratic players and the non-governmental organizations that

are already engaged in the process of shaping and implementing American foreign policy.

Twin Systems

The report's section on operational effectiveness in government makes a compelling case for more flexibility in developing personnel management systems and for permitting agencies to set compensation levels related to current comparisons with the private sector. State Department employees are currently locked within the twin GS and FS pay and performance evaluation systems currently mandated by the Office of Personnel Management and the Foreign Service Act. Both systems are vigorously defended by their respective unions, the American Federation of Government Employees and the American Foreign Service Association, and any changes of the kind approved for employees of the Department of Homeland Security would meet with instant opposition from Civil and Foreign Service employees alike.

Yet a case can be made for similar changes at State. Foreign Service officers should not continue to campaign to keep civil servants out of FS positions. Lengthening grievance and disciplinary proceedings denies management needed flexibility. "One size fits all" should be the rule, not the exception.

If the General Schedule system were abolished or, at a minimum, reformed into a "broadband" system, the FS system would also come under great pressure. That would present a golden opportunity to establish a single State Department-wide service, without the invidious distinctions which now exist between GS and FS. While Civil Service officers would undoubtedly welcome such a change, Foreign Service officers would be more resistant, pointing out that their conditions of service are often more arduous and demanding and that the unique requirement for worldwide availability makes a separate personnel system essential. Nonetheless, the CIA has managed to combine its domestic and overseas functions within one excepted service and the State Department could do the same. In addition, pay in such a new system could and should be linked to market forces as Recommendation 13 suggests, without eroding long-held merit system principles.

In summary, the Volcker Commission, while not focusing on the foreign affairs agencies, has provided many recommendations which would enhance the management and bureaucratic effectiveness, as well as morale, of the Department of State. Employees in both the Civil Service and the Foreign Service stand to gain from the proposed reforms. A new mindset, however, is necessary. Foreign Service officers will have to give up the disdainful elitism of the past. They will have to accept that government service in the future will be more permeable and less based on caste and career. Personnel policies will have to be more agile, more market-based and more flexible. This, as the commission report's title proclaims, is the "Urgent Business for America." ■

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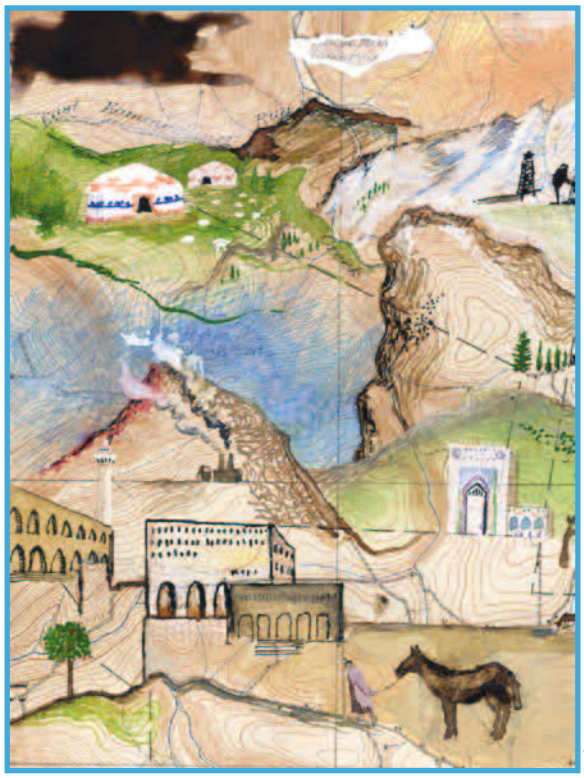
THE U.S. REDRAWS THE MAP



Josh Dorman

IN SETTING UP MILITARY BASES IN CENTRAL ASIA, THE U.S. REDREW THE GEOPOLITICAL MAP OF THE REGION. HERE ARE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES THE U.S. NOW FACES.

BY DR. SVANTE E. CORNELL

In October 2002, the Bush administration took a decision that will likely be recalled as a landmark in Central Asian history. By deciding to set up military bases in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the U.S. redrew the geopolitical map of the region. The ever-evolving and shifting distribution of power and influence among the states surrounding Central Asia — and the regional states themselves — was fundamentally altered by the serious commitment of the United States to a military and security engagement in the region, even though the length of this commitment was not announced. America's advent on the scene restored a cer-

tain freedom of movement to Central Asian states that were becoming increasingly constrained in an environment dominated by Russia and China.

Eighteen months later, America is firmly entrenched in Central Asia. It has considerable military bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and a ubiquitous military presence in Afghanistan; it upgraded political and security links with all states in the region save isolated Turkmenistan, and has a relationship amounting to a strategic partnership with Uzbekistan, the most important regional state. The states hosting U.S. troops are generally happy to see an increased American presence in Central Asia. Some larger neighbors think otherwise, but have neither the intention nor the capacity to dislodge the United States from the region. There is no great danger to U.S. troops or citizens in the region comparable to that in the Arab world or even Southeast Asia, and anti-Americanism is arguably less prevalent.

It is clear that the U.S. will remain engaged in the security affairs of Central Asia for the foreseeable future.

This means that in practice, the U.S. is in Central Asia for at least as long as it wants to be. It does not mean that the U.S. will maintain large military bases in Central Asia for decades, or automatically get drawn into regional troubles. But it is clear that the U.S. will remain engaged in the security affairs of Central Asia for the foreseeable future to a larger extent than it was at any time before Sept. 11, 2001, and its policies will concomitantly contribute to determining the future of Central Asia to a considerable extent. This raises the question: What major challenges can the U.S. expect to face while dealing with Central Asia as a region, and the individual Central Asian states, in the coming years?

Six major challenges will be dealt with here: the posture that America can expect from regional actors including Russia, China and Iran; the threat of radical Islam in Central Asia; the burgeoning illegal drugs trade; the challenge of guiding Central Asian states closer to and not farther away from open societies and democratic reform; the special case of Turkmenistan; and the challenge of relaunching regional trade and development.

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Regional Actors

America's presence in Central Asia may have been welcomed by the local states, but most regional powers were less thrilled. Russian President Vladimir Putin may have voiced no objection publicly, but he spent energies after Sept. 11, 2001, trying to convince Central Asian presidents not to allow the U.S. in. Putin was, however, shrewd enough to understand the futility of the enterprise and abandon it without losing face. China is also, though less acutely, feeling alarmed by American encirclement. The American military presence in Kyrgyzstan — which does not share a border with troubled Afghanistan, the stated reason for the base, but does share a long one with China — is reminiscent to some Chinese observers of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, during which U.S. troops massed on the borders of the People's Republic.

In apparent reaction, for the first time since 1949, the People's Liberation Army held exercises on another state's territory in 2002. Of the 13 countries that China borders, the exercises were held in Kyrgyzstan. Meanwhile, Russia, also in 2002, opened a military base in Kant, Kyrgyzstan, just miles from the American base, in a clear signal that it, too, remains a player in Central Asia.

In fact, China and Russia had worked hard to exert a dominant influence over Central Asia, using the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for this purpose. Though local states had a modicum of interest in the establishment of a cooperative umbrella organization for the resolution of disputes in Central Asia, by 2001 the SCO was effectively being used to force the Central Asians to follow Beijing's and Moscow's foreign policy priorities, including so-called "multilateralism" — shorthand for a world not dominated by America. As local states found no concrete support

from the West for their acute security concerns, including Islamic radical incursions, they cautiously sought the support of Moscow and Beijing. The way in which, later, they ostentatiously ignored the SCO — whose main aim was counterterrorism — and opted for bilateral relations with the U.S. points to their apprehensions about Sino-Russian policies.

Iran, for obvious reasons, is feeling extremely threatened as it sees American military forces that could potentially be used against it surrounding it from all sides, in Georgia, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and likely soon in Iraq, in addition to the earlier bases in Turkey, Oman, and the Persian Gulf.

As the war against the Taliban and al-Qaida winds down, and the U.S. bases are no longer as clearly motivated by the war on terrorism, the U.S. is certain to face increasing pressure — whether explicit, implicit or perhaps even covert — from Russia, China and Iran to withdraw or to downscale its presence. Whether in tandem or individually, China and Russia are likely to take initiatives to regain some of the ground they lost in the region since the fall of 2001. Current initiatives such as Russia's Kant Air Base suggest this process may already have begun. America should expect implicit tests of its determination to remain in Central Asia; any lack of attention to the region will likely be exploited by other powers to try to increase their own presence, perhaps at the expense of American interests there.

Whether in tandem or individually, China and Russia are likely to take initiatives to regain some of the ground they have lost in the region since the fall of 2001.

Radical Islam

Movements espousing a radical and millenarian version of Islam have made inroads in Central Asia since the early 1990s, but their influence remains very limited. Central Asian Islam is very different from Arab Islam, especially the Gulf variety, and Central Asians have a centuries-long track record of living peacefully with other religions and allowing for a plurality of views within Islam. Yet a set of factors has enabled radical movements to prosper there. Islam suffered heavily from the Soviet experience; young and middle-aged people have a much weaker knowledge of the tenets of the religion than their parents due to forced Soviet atheism. This contributed considerably to the secularization of society, but also created a moral and spiritual vacuum among the youth. Knowing their own religious traditions less well, youngsters in Central Asia are particularly susceptible to the belief that views imported from the Arab world are the *true* Islam, especially as indigenous religious institutions are weak.

Poverty and increasing social and income gaps, together with official corruption, also play into the hands of radical groups, whose message is not only a religious one but also one of social justice and equality, stressing the maintenance of law and order and just rulers. In addition, the large financial sums available from the Gulf region to radical organizations help them propagate their views effectively. Finally, the absence of legal alternatives to political activity independent of the governments may be pushing increasing numbers of politically active citizens toward radical movements.

Rising radical Islamism brings with it increasing anti-American sentiments. These views are marginal today, but need to be watched, analyzed and preempted by regional governments with U.S. support and assistance. Central Asia is an area where America still has a positive connotation for most people; the U.S. needs to ensure this remains the case through its policies toward the various regimes in the region. Strengthening and supporting moderate Islamic institutions in the Central Asian societies is one example of how the U.S. could not only curtail possible extremism and terrorism, but also gain popularity in a region where radical groups are feared and loathed by a majority of the population.

Suppressing the Drug Trade

The trade in narcotics, especially opium and its main derivate, heroin, is perhaps the area in which the U.S. has failed most blatantly since September 2001. For all its flaws, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan eradicated almost all opium production

in the part of the country it controlled, but the new U.S.-backed Karzai administration has done very little to prevent the boom in opium cultivation and heroin production that has taken place since the Taliban regime fell. In fact, parts of the government are likely deeply involved in the trade. And the drug trade is no peripheral issue. Central Asia, with the weakest and most corruptible states surrounding Afghanistan, has rapidly become the main trafficking route for Afghan heroin, eclipsing even Iran. In a region with little economic activity, save for oil, gas, and cotton, the drug trade plays an important role. The region is impoverished, and the profits of the drug trade are so enormous that it infiltrates governments and society as a whole.

Suppressing the trade in narcotics is perhaps the area in which the U.S. has failed most blatantly since September 2001.

Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are by now candidates for the label of "narco-states" — countries where the drug trade has infiltrated the bureaucracy and political elite to such an extent that it actually controls part of the state. Over a third of Tajikistan's GNP is considered to be drug-related. Drug consumption, which follows the trafficking routes, affects public health conditions, opening the way for severe diseases including HIV/AIDS; creates social conflict; fuels corruption; finances extremism and terrorism; and even plays a role in civil wars. The armed incursions by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in 1999 and 2000, which affected Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan significantly, was almost certainly in great part related

to the IMU's role in the drug trade, and its need to open up new trafficking routes.

In Afghanistan, the return to a drug economy directly conflicts with the rebuilding of the state and its central authority. Drug production and trafficking depend on instability and weak central governments. The stronger the state is, and the more efficient the police and system of justice are, the worse the environment for criminal networks. These networks therefore have an interest in keeping whole areas outside government control, or in other ways making sure the government does not disturb their criminal operations. The consequences are deteriorating law and order, exacerbating an already difficult situation for the local population by discouraging investment, which decreases economic production and increases poverty. This situation forces the population to participate in the production and/or smuggling of narcotics. It is hence imperative for the U.S. to tackle the drug trade, both its roots in Afghanistan and its role and salience in the politics and economy of Central Asian transit states.

Turkmenistan is at present the most problematic country in Central Asia, and the one most likely to see violent unrest or an implosion in the near term.

Democratic Reform

Ever since the mid-1990s, the Central Asian region has been notorious for backtracking on democratic development. While Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have been exposed more than others for their shortcomings and human rights abuses, a functional opposition and free media are suffering in the entire region. Even Kyrgyzstan, which once tried to portray itself as an island of democracy in Central Asia, has reverted to governmental behavior very similar to that of its autocratic neighbors. Differences between the Central Asian governments are not in the nature of their rule, but in degree and in their capacity to enforce that rule.

So far, America's closer ties with the regional states have done little to improve this situation. Issues of human rights and democratization have clearly dropped in priority in American foreign policy, though they are constantly mentioned in dealings with the region at all levels. In fact, the Central Asian governments have tried to exploit the war on terrorism to eliminate, neutralize and discredit their political opponents. The "consolidating autocracies," as Freedom House calls some of the Central Asian states, risk further exacerbating social tensions and political instability by pushing opposition to the fringes of the political scene, playing into the hands of radical Islamic and other violent forces.

In the past, western and American governments rightly accused Central Asian governments of undemocratic policies and human rights abuses, and threatened sanctions when matters grew worse. This policy produced little result, as it was very much a monologue rather than a dialogue. The Central Asian governments felt hectored and alienated by the West, and shrugged off Western criticism, which they felt failed to comprehend the very serious security threats in the region. In particular, the West's failure to understand their suppression of Islamic radicalism estranged them.

Since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, however, America (along with some European states) has changed its approach. The U.S. now holds a dialogue with countries like Uzbekistan, and as Uzbeks feel that the U.S. is listening to them, they are slowly becoming more receptive to influence and advice regarding reforms. This is an important lesson, as it shows that these countries are not impermeable to change; the process may be excruciatingly slow, but the right approach and attitude in dealing with these governments can pay off.

Turkmenistan

Since independence, Turkmenistan has remained aloof from developments in the rest of Central Asia. Its policy of "permanent neutrality" has enabled the country to stay out of any regional alliance or organization; it has also meant that Turkmenistan has freely conducted relations with all neighboring states, including Iran, and the two opposing administrations

in Afghanistan, the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, both of which were simultaneously accorded diplomatic status. Turkmenistan is also a country that has a potential to become wealthy, as it has the world's fourth largest reserves of natural gas for a population of less than five million. However, Turkmenistan is at present the most problematic country in Central Asia, and the one most likely to see violent unrest or an implosion in the near future.

The reconstruction of major highways, bridges and tunnels through Afghanistan is crucial.

Turkmenistan's problem is its leader, Saparmurat Niyazov. In power since the Soviet era, Niyazov began building an ever-more-erratic personality cult as soon as the nation gained its independence. The cult began with the standard omnipresent posters and slogans, but soon expanded. Niyazov named cities, buildings, parks and streets after himself, then erected statues of himself around the country, including a 30-foot golden statue in central Ashgabat that rotates with the sun. He named himself "Turkmenbashi" (Head of all Turkmen) and prohibited any mention of his name in the press without this title. By 2001, the epithet "the Great" was added, and Niyazov published the *Rukhnama*, a book he allegedly wrote. *Rukhnama*, which claims to "explain the world anew," is really an esoteric mix of mythology, an ambitious but questionable history of the Turkmen nation (said to date back to the prophet Noah, whose accomplishments include having founded 70 states, including Safavid Iran), and general ethics and admonitions ("wear clean and decent clothes").

These measures, including Niyazov's renaming of

all months of the year (with January named after himself), are the subject of much ridicule, but actually obscure the seriousness of the situation. In spite of its gas wealth, the people of Turkmenistan are increasingly impoverished and isolated, and health care and education are collapsing. Niyazov slashed higher education to two years, and made the *Rukhnama* the focal point of school instruction. For weeks at a time, pupils are taken away from school, for example, to harvest cotton fields. No legal opposition exists in the country, but many of his former aides have joined the exiled opposition. Niyazov's rule is becoming increasingly paranoid: he moves high officials every six months and constantly purges key offices to prevent the emergence of any rivals. Some suspect a failed assassination attempt on Nov. 25, 2002, was staged.

It is impossible to speculate on the prospects for Niyazov's regime, as even Central Asia experts know very little of what is actually going on inside Turkmenistan. But it is safe to say that the situation is not viable. Tribal divisions are very strong, and the country's position between the Caspian Sea and Afghanistan, as well as its large gas reserves, invites foreign meddling. Though the U.S. presently lacks significant leverage to influence the country, the situation developing in Turkmenistan should be a major concern.

Regional Trade and Development

A final but important challenge is the need to revive the stagnant economies of the entire region, including Afghanistan and Pakistan. Kazakhstan (and, in the future, Turkmenistan) may have large energy resources, but these capital-intensive industries are not a sound base for the economy of the region, and will certainly not generate enough jobs. In addition, Central Asia is landlocked, and still overwhelmingly linked to Russia and Baltic seaports for its foreign trade. This Soviet legacy is clearly unnatural, given the relative proximity of the Arabian Sea and the port of Karachi, which is Central Asia's historic link to the world. Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire, wrote in his memoirs about how the pistachio nuts of Fergana were of such high quality that they were exported all the way to Hindustan — in the 16th century. However, the British-Russian standoff in Afghanistan that began in the early 19th century forced Central Asian states into an isolation from their southern neighbors that intensified under Soviet rule and lasts to this day.

Afghanistan's general lawlessness and the preoccupations of the Taliban regime made the use of that country as a transport corridor impossible. The fall of the Taliban generated great hope in Central Asia for the opening up of routes that could help this wider region restore its traditional trade links to the South, which is indispensable for its economic development. For this purpose, the reconstruction of major highways, bridges and tunnels through Afghanistan and the improvement of their links to Central Asian infrastructure are crucial. If these major repairs are undertaken, and a modicum of security and stability persists in Afghanistan, restoration of a significant part of the great Silk Road has a chance of gradually being accomplished.

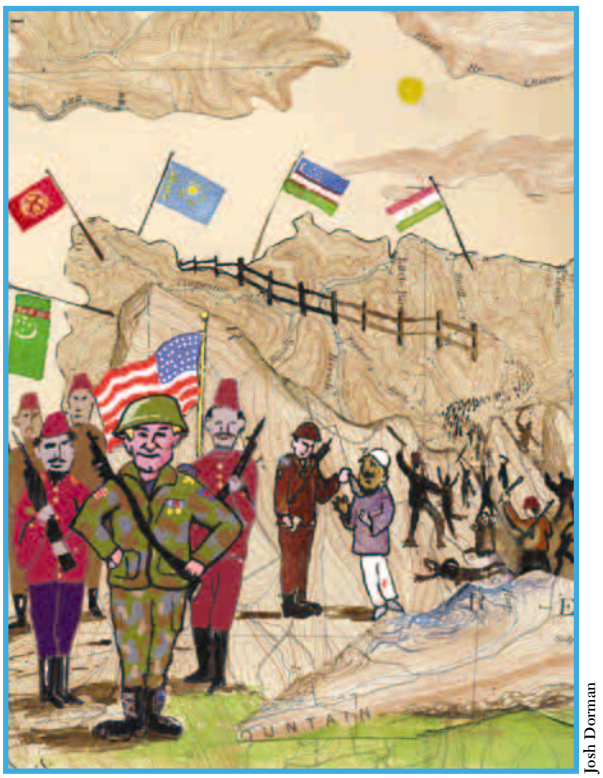
To promote the economic development of Central Asia, reduce poverty, and thereby address one of the principal roots of Islamic radicalism, then, the U.S. needs to keep its focus on advancing regional cooperation in the transportation field.

Conclusion

The United States is in no position to dictate the policies of the Central Asian states. Nor should it try to do so. But the maladies of faraway lands in the heart of Asia can and do affect the interests and the very security of the United States, as was so tragically shown by the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The U.S., however, is in a position to have a significant influence — perhaps the most significant external influence — on the course of Central Asia's political future. Some of the issues it will have to confront are discussed above.

More generally, U.S. policy toward Central Asia has in the past been characterized by a measure of unpredictability. The sheer power of the U.S. made its potential role in the region well understood by all actors, but America's failure to clearly outline and determine its interests and policies toward the region was destabilizing, as different actors and states had different assumptions regarding America's role. In formulating a long-term policy in Central Asia, America's focus on clarity and consistency will be crucial to its success. ■

PUTTING HUMAN RIGHTS BACK ON THE AGENDA



Josh Dorman

OVER THE PAST DECADE, U.S. PRO-DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS LEVERAGE HAS BEEN SQUANDERED. IF NOT CORRECTED SOON, THE RESULTS COULD BE DISASTROUS.

BY ED MCWILLIAMS

Few regions are more important in the war on terrorism than the newly independent states of Central Asia. The decade-old former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan form a crucial platform for ongoing U.S. and allied military efforts in Afghanistan. Moreover, efforts to transform Afghanistan into a viable, democratic state depend on redevelopment and expansion of historic transit routes and economic ties with the region.

The region's importance is reflected in a cascade of U.S. diplomatic, economic and military initiatives over the past

18 months that vastly exceeds in scale and scope the previous decade of limited U.S. activity in the region. But as a review of the past decade shows, U.S. leverage on the crucial issues of human rights and democracy here has been dangerously squandered. If not corrected soon, this situation could seriously compromise the entire anti-terror campaign.

To attract Western aid and investment, the new governments posed as democratic and sensitive to human rights concerns.

A Hopeful Beginning

In February 1992, six weeks after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, U.S. diplomatic teams opened embassies in Bishkek, Almaty and Tashkent. Six weeks later, U.S. diplomats opened missions in Dushanbe and Ashgabat. In their early months these thinly-staffed missions focused on democracy promotion, humanitarian assistance ... and battled daunting logistical problems.

From the beginning the U.S. tended to measure these states' significance in terms of their economic resources and from the perspective of other geopolitical considerations. Oil and gas reserves in Kazakhstan and, to a lesser extent, in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan drew attention, as did Kazakhstan's inheritance of Soviet-era nuclear weaponry. Tajikistan, which quickly began to disintegrate in an Iranian-influenced civil war, attracted senior policy-level "crisis" attention. With the conclusion of fighting, however, it joined Kyrgyzstan on the diplomatic sidelines.

As a hedge against any reassertion of Moscow's control and to attract Western governmental assistance and business investment, these new governments initially posed as democratic and sensitive to human rights concerns. Popular support for development of ties to the West, especially to the U.S., was strong: even Islamic political movements, such as those in Tajikistan, were initially open to such contacts. U.S. diplomats in the newly-minted embassies strongly encouraged these tendencies, with some success.

In Bishkek, President Askar Akayaev, a physician-turned-political leader and the only regional leader without Soviet bureaucratic roots, was eloquent and energetic in advancing a democratic model. In early 1992, he engaged the new U.S. embassy regarding development of a democratic culture, a market economy and, more pragmatically, in shaping a strategy to resist aggressive Iranian diplomatic activity. The Kyrgyz people's welcome to the U.S. team was particularly warm. In Almaty, President Nursultan Nazerbayev offered a warm welcome to western businesses and to market economy ideas.

If Kyrgyzstan, portrayed in the western media as a "Central Asian Switzerland," represented the zenith of early optimism about democratic prospects in Central Asia, Tajikistan represented the nadir. Islamic and democratic forces had demonstrated against the old Communist elite the previous fall. By the late spring of 1992 these demonstrations had resumed on a massive scale in a prelude to civil war. The Soviet-era holdover government led by Emomali Rahmonov, sensitive to its image in Washington, sought and initially followed U.S. advice to avoid bloodshed in dealing with peaceful protest. Underscoring the popular good will toward America in this turbulent period, even after fighting erupted, both sides permitted U.S. humanitarian relief convoys to reach besieged populations, waving convoys manned by embassy personnel across the shifting battle lines.

Pro-Democracy Leverage Wanes

In the mid-1990s, efforts to nurture democratic development and respect for human rights faltered due to diminishing U.S. attention to the region, just as Russian, Chinese and Iranian influence was growing. Meanwhile, growing domestic political challenges and economic difficulties, along with security threats posed by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, impelled local leaders to resort increasingly to Soviet-style authoritarian rule. Although the Afghanistan-based IMU militants mainly targeted

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Uzbekistan, they also posed security problems for Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, through which they transited from their Afghan sanctuary.

The initial approach of the Bush administration to the region paralleled that of the Clinton administration: it entailed limited dialogue and assistance, constrained in part by concern over human rights problems and faltering democratic reform. Ominously, the Afghanistan-based fundamentalist Islamic insurgency in Central Asia and massive illicit drug flow from Afghanistan through Central Asia to European markets escaped serious attention or action by the Bush administration. The State Department's annual human rights reports echoed other human rights reporting in candidly charting the deterioration of human rights, but the Central Asian governments largely ignored the criticism because there was little at stake: Early hopes of meaningful U.S. developmental and other assistance had been dashed. Moreover, U.S. business investment, such as in oil and gas development, went forward absent any consideration of burgeoning human rights and democracy faults.

Central Asia Moves to Center Stage

The terrorist attacks on the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001, marked a watershed in the U.S. relationship with Central Asia. Within weeks of the tragedy, military basing agreements were in place or under negotiation with Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and senior U.S. officials had launched intense bilateral dialogues focused on security concerns. In support of the new military arrangements the U.S. hastily revived diplomatic ties, notably in Tajikistan, and proffered new economic and technical assistance programs, many related to security and the movement of illicit drugs.

This shift in U.S. perception of the region from a problematic backwater to a zone of critical importance in the war on terrorism prompted an urgent desire to enlist the regimes as "partners" in a global anti-terror coalition. That strategy, however, ran up against the reality of endemic human rights abuse and stunted democratic development that had cast a shadow over U.S. ties to the region for most of the previous decade. Secretary of State Powell acknowledged as much. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Feb. 5, 2002, he noted: "We have a number of new friends, but we're not unmindful that a number of these new friends — and I will say Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan — do not have the kind of political systems yet that we think are appropriate to the 21st century. And we have no reservation about saying that to them."

That testimony hinted at Bush administration sensitivity to criticism that, as in the Cold War, the U.S. was again aligning itself with authoritarian regimes in service of a global strategy; i.e., a war against global terrorism. Congressman Christopher Smith, R-N.J., a noted proponent of human rights and chairperson of the Helsinki Commission, stated in a March 2002 public hearing: "I do think that Americans would be shocked to learn that some of the allies that we've embraced in our fight against al-Qaida and worldwide terrorism are at the same time torturers who not only permit but use means for extracting confessions, horrific beatings, coupled with rapes and threats of rape against family members." He added: "We need zero tolerance for torture, and it seems to me it starts at the highest level with President Bush." Rep. Smith called on U.S. leaders to speak out against abuse "even if (they) are partners with us in fighting terrorism."

In response to concerns that human rights not be sacrificed for security and geopolitical advantages, the administration developed a two-track approach. Continuing its public criticism of deviance from democratic and human rights norms, the administration also unveiled what was billed as a pro-active approach to human rights and democracy promotion.

On June 27, 2002, Lorne Craner, assistant secretary of State for democracy, human rights and labor, told the Senate Subcommittee on Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus: "Even while we ramp up our military cooperation with governments that have troubling human rights records, we also see this as an opportunity to enhance our engagement and impact on issues of democracy and human rights. … Our firm message to the governments and their leaders has been that [having] closer relations with the United States brings with it a heightened level of scrutiny and that, therefore, any deepening and broadening of our cooperation will depend on continual progress in respecting human rights and democracy."

Craner described "enhanced engagement" as entailing closer cooperation in promoting an agenda of democratic reforms and human rights through a variety of initiatives, principally orchestrated through the State Department/USAID apparatus. These included support for media freedom; development of nongovernmental

organizations; programs in civic advocacy, the judicial sector, and the rule of law; and political party development. The U.S. encouraged Central Asian regimes to cooperate with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and U.N. human rights bureaucracies. The U.S. also pressed for registration of opposition parties and improved treatment of prisoners, and made public and private appeals on behalf of specific victims of brutality and repression.

"Engagement" on Rights and Democracy

While the invigorated U.S. democracy/human rights agenda appeared ambitious, its results have been disappointing. Echoing the foreboding from Congress and others a year earlier, respected human rights observers, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, are increasingly critical of the approach, seeing it as more form than substance.

A Jan. 15, 2003, HRW report contends that the administration's "rhetorical embrace of human rights has translated only inconsistently into U.S. policy" and that "the Bush Administration is fighting terrorism as if human rights were not a constraint. … [It] made repressive governments in the former Soviet Union allies in the global campaign against terrorism, without a consistent policy of checking their proclivity for human rights violations. … The U.S. failed to take full advantage of many opportunities to use its influence with Central Asian governments." While on occasion raising concerns diplomatically, the report notes, "the U.S. did not make clear that there would be consequences for failure to make real improvements." Indeed, a doubling of aid to the region in 2002 sent a contrary message.

In a 2002 report, HRW had zeroed in on the military component of U.S. assistance, observing: "Modification in the U.S. foreign military policy assistance program makes it easier for known violators to acquire the tools of abuse, thus implicating the United States in that result." More broadly, it noted, "the loosening of restrictions on military assistance sets a dangerous example for arms-exporting nations around the world." Moreover, the great imbalance in resources available to the Defense Department and to the State Department led to an emphasis on security-related assistance relative to that available for human rights and democratic development.

A December 2002 review by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reached a similar conclusion, describing human rights in Central Asia as "in decline." The review stated: "U.S. officials have pledged to put human rights at the top of their Central Asian agendas. But if anything, closer relations with the West seem to have emboldened Central Asian leaders to continue a region-wide crackdown on human rights in the name of fighting terrorism and religious extremism." That report concluded that because of "grim" conditions and a continued isolation from the "democratic part of the world … there is growing distrust and anti-Western feelings in Central Asia."

That anti-Western mood contrasts sharply with the popular attitude of a decade earlier, when U.S. diplomatic pioneers were warmly welcomed by local populations hopeful that their arrival would usher in democratic reform. The RFE/RL report quotes Aaron Rhodes, executive director of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, as observing that "the United States and other Western countries have lost much of the moral authority they once enjoyed in Central Asia and elsewhere. … The danger of the situation is that, in the framework of this so-called war on terror, there is a sense of accepting the policies of repressive governments. And that puts the U.S. and its allies really on the wrong side of things."

The RFE/RL report concludes with an assessment of the costs of a strategy that deprioritizes democratic reform and human rights: "The growing frustration of the region's peoples, combined with the authorities' unwillingness to introduce reforms and to liberalize society, might prove a recipe for unrest rather than for true stability and prosperity." Instability, in turn, will discourage private investment, which the last three administrations have stressed are important to improving macroeconomic conditions in the region.

Deterioration Across the Board

In Tajikistan, President Emomali Rahmonov's one-party rule represses dissent, free media and peaceful Islamic religious activity. Regime authorities brutalize detainees, and Amnesty International notes that capital crime trials have been held in secret. In its 2003 annual report on Tajikistan, HRW observes that senior visitors from Washington "referred to Tajikistan's new political

stability but neglected to highlight torture and ongoing political and religious repression." This approach, the report points out, "only served to embolden the government's repression." Contacts in the region report that President Rahmonov is laying the groundwork for an unconstitutional extension of his rule to a second term. Still the U.S. has embraced Rahmonov, who was accorded a visit to Washington in December 2002. And on Jan. 9, 2003, the State Department announced the removal of arms sales restrictions on Tajikistan that had been in place since 1993.

A December 2002 review by Radio Free Europe/RadioLiberty described human rights in Central Asia as "in decline."

In Kyrgyzstan, the 2003 HRW report's assessment is: "With its increasingly close relationship to the U.S. and heightened international profile, the government appeared confident that repressive measures would have no diplomatic consequences." As elsewhere in Central Asia, the Bishkek regime has repressed the Hizv-ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation), a nonviolent Islamic group that seeks to establish an Islamic state in Central Asia. As in Kazakhstan, the Bishkek regime has cooperated with the Chinese government in expelling Uighurs fleeing China's Xinjiang province, sending them back to China, where they face persecution. As this article goes to press, President Akayev appears intent on eliminating opposition to his rule in the nation's bicameral parliament by abolishing it in favor of a new unicameral body. Despite this record, the U.S. embrace of the Akayev regime has been warm. Kyrgyzstan reportedly received $50 million in U.S. assis-

tance during 2002, and, in September, President Akayev was accorded a visit with President Bush. HRW noted that at that meeting, the U.S. failed to ask for specific human rights improvements. The U.S. provides nonlethal equipment and military training to Kyrgyzstan's military.

In Kazakhstan the Nazerbayev government is increasingly authoritarian, according to HRW's January 2003 report. The regime uses false arrest to intimidate the media and opposition politicians. President Nazerbayev rigged a 1995 referendum and committed electoral fraud in 1999 to strengthen and extend his hold on power. The persistence of a moderate political opposition in the face of such pressure underscores the potential value of a U.S. reprioritization of human rights and democratic development. Failure of the U.S. to insist on democratic reform and respect for basic human rights could enable Nazerbayev to snuff out that peaceful, democratic opposition or drive it underground. Thus far, the U.S. has effectively endorsed Nazerbayev's authoritarian rule. In eight years from 1992 to 2000, Kazakhstan received $610 million in U.S. assistance. And in January 2002, on the heels of a rigged referendum extending Nazerbayev's rule, Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Jones announced in Tashkent that the U.S. would triple its economic assistance.

Uzbekistan is by far the most important Central Asian state for the U.S., serving as it does as the principal platform for U.S. and international coalition operations in Afghanistan. The importance of the role played by President Islam Karimov's government was reflected in his March 2002 visit to Washington. At the same time, no state in the region can match the Karimov regime for sheer brutality. The January 2003 HRW report describes human rights abuse in Uzbekistan as occurring on a "massive scale." It notes "gestures" by the regime such as allowing one political party to register and admitting ICRC personnel and a U.N. Human Rights Committee rapporteur. Officials of the opposition Birlik Party have been allowed to register but remain under tight police scrutiny. Formal censorship rules have been replaced by an equally effective system of self-censorship. A judicial reform program, touted as progress by the State Department, remains unimplemented. The report concludes that these steps, undertaken to appease international human rights concerns, do not represent "fundamental improvement."

The government has also launched Soviet-style repression of Muslims seeking to practice their faith, falsely contending that its campaign of brutal repression was a part of the war on terrorism. Uzbekistan's 7,000 or more political prisoners include minors who inhabit a prison system that is notorious for its abuses and poses conditions that are life-threatening. Forced child labor is rampant in the important cotton sector. The 2003 HRW Report observes that the U.S. "sometimes exaggerated Uzbekistan's progress in meeting its human rights commitments," citing an August 2002 State Department certification that Uzbekistan was making progress as demanded by supplemental aid legislation. The decision allowed the release of $16 million in military and security assistance to the very security personnel enforcing Karimov's dictatorial rule. The administration has yet to issue a biannual report established by Congress regarding Uzbekistan's "serious human rights violations" that is required for the release of $173 million in aid.

In Turkmenistan, President Saparmurat Niyazov is building a Stalin-like personality cult with attendant powers. He persecutes all manifestations of religious faith other than Islamic and Orthodox Christian. An alleged assassination attempt targeting Niyazov at the end of 2002 has led to a broadening purge, with show trials reminiscent of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. There are credible allegations of torture; family members of the accused have been rounded up and diplomats have been denied access to the trials. The Niyazov government defends the broadening purge as part of the international campaign against terrorism.

Altering the U.S. Course

Under the political and diplomatic cover accorded by a strategy of intermittent public criticism and "engagement," the Bush administration is rendering important and growing support to dictatorial regimes in Central Asia. Doubling aid, with especially significant increases in the security sector; empowering despots by allowing them to visit Washington; and acquiescing to claims by these regimes that their persecution of political opponents and believers is a part of the international war on terrorism, are all betrayals of the peoples of the region who once placed great hope in the U.S.

Congress has attempted to correct the administra-

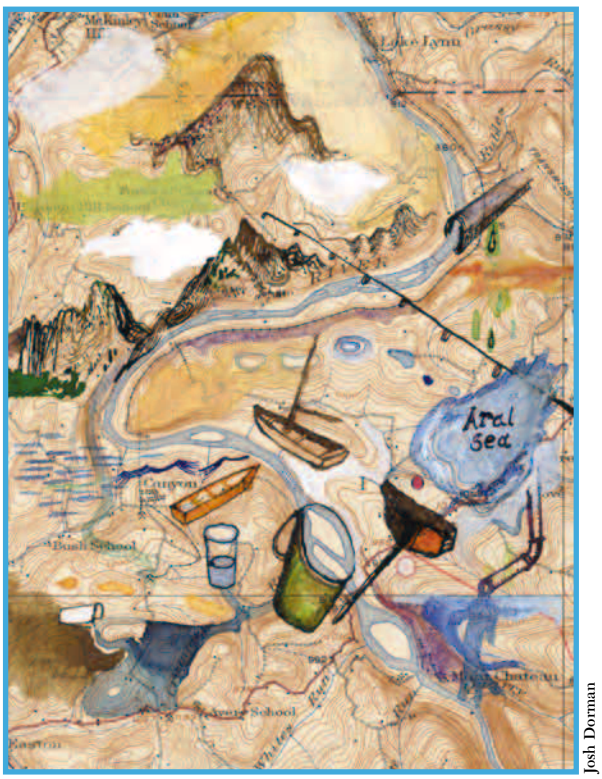
tion's course by tying assistance to requirements for progress in the areas of human rights and democratic reform. But the administration's disingenuous claims of progress, as in Uzbekistan, indicate that these legislative provisions need to be strengthened.

The rights and welfare of the peoples in a vast and increasingly restive region are not all that is at stake. Repression and corruption have spurred ideological fundamentalism, ethnic and tribal divisions and drug-based criminal enterprises. These developments could lead to unprecedented instability in the Eurasian heartland, which in turn would severely undermine our anti-terrorism efforts in Afghanistan and around the world.

The administration, in conjunction with Congress, should identify benchmarks for progress that target the most egregious and most pervasive abuse of human rights and the greatest barriers to democratic development. Benchmarks should be framed in specific terms, avoiding formulations such as "making progress toward…" Specific targets might include torture in detention in Uzbekistan, religious persecution in Turkmenistan, and intimidation of the media and political opposition generally. U.S. assistance as well as diplomatic/political support, excluding humanitarian assistance and the most critical security cooperation programs, should be tied to these benchmarks. U.S. support should be measured against actual accomplishment and not on simple pledges. Administration reporting to Congress regarding achievement of those benchmarks should be timely and candid, and should take into account reporting by respected nongovernmental organizations and media. Other coalition partners, especially the Russians, should be urged to participate in the strategy, as well.

The U.S. cannot pursue human rights and democratic development at the expense of security considerations and cooperation with the Central Asian regimes in the war on terror. But neither should the U.S., through a policy of empty rhetoric and cosmetic, ineffectual "engagement" on human rights, conspire with these regimes in their denial of fundamental rights to their citizens. ■

PICKING UP THE PIECES: THE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE



Josh Dorman

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEEDS TO PLAN FOR THE LONG HAUL, AS THE CENTRAL ASIAN NATIONS STRUGGLE TO BUILD VIABLE ECONOMIES.

BY DAVID PEARCE

When the Soviet Union broke up in 1991, the five Central Asian states — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — were among the poorest and the least developed of its former republics, and among the least known in the West.

At independence — unexpected, unplanned, even unwanted — they were confronted suddenly with at least three types of major adjustments. First, the new Central Asian nations had to adjust to the economic shock caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union's erstwhile common market. Second, they had to shift their economies from state-controlled

central planning to government-guided regulation of mixed, public and private sectors. And third, they had to press forward with perestroika-inspired political and social reforms, while at the same time rebuilding their nations as sovereign states.

None of these fundamental transitions is yet complete.

A Devastating Blow

The Soviet Union's disintegration was a devastating blow to the Central Asian nations, partly because of their geography. This fact has long been underestimated. Trade and transit were disrupted by new borders, increased transportation costs, and the loss of traditional, guaranteed markets, especially in Russia. The reduced access to essential inputs and markets seriously hurt industrial and agricultural output. Further, the new nations suddenly lost Soviet subsidies as high as 30 percent of GDP for budgets, enterprises and households — subsidies that were paid directly and indirectly through social transfers and subsidized energy, food, and transport prices.

In addition, as the traditional Soviet republican and communist party apparatus fell apart, there was a serious loss of administrative capacity. Because many Russians and other ethnic minorities left, the ranks of skilled labor were reduced at the same as new national institutions had to be established.

Finally, the Central Asian nations inherited serious environmental burdens — industrial, biological, chemical and nuclear — the most dramatic and visible of which were the drying up of the Aral Sea and the nuclear test sites at Semipalatinsk. Tajikistan also experienced a post-independence civil war for several years.

As a result of all these disruptions, from 1990 to 1999 the Central Asia states suffered declines in economic growth and output equivalent to 20-60 percent of GDP. For some perspective on what this means, the losses far exceed those experienced by Americans during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Macroeconomic Instability

Replacing a state controlled, centrally planned economy with a market-based one was — and remains — a major challenge for all five Central Asia states. Unlike the formerly communist countries of East and Central Europe, the Central Asian states had virtually no modern experience of market economics. Thus, like all post-Soviet states, they were initially confronted with severe macroeconomic imbalances, although most were able to bring hyperinflation under control relatively quickly. However, implementation of market-oriented economic policy reforms has been uneven. By most measures, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have advanced most, and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan least.

Market institution- and capacity-building have advanced slowly, with progress in such areas as setting up central banks and payments systems, as well as basic national administrative structures and legal systems. But fundamental structural weaknesses remain, especially the lack of a truly independent civil service, weak fiscal management, inadequate regulatory agencies and judiciaries, and a growth in corruption.

Progress in establishing representative, democratic institutions, promoting civil society and developing social capital has been slow and uneven. In some countries, there have arguably been reversals, although the growing strength of civil society — including a vibrant nongovernmental sector — has been noteworthy in some countries, especially in Kyrgyzstan.

Serious Poverty

In terms of economic performance, there has been significant recovery since the mid-1990s, although this was dramatically interrupted by the Russian financial crisis of mid-1998. Since 2000, there has been modest growth, propelled in part by Russia's recovery, giving some hope that the worst may be over. But some countries, especially Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, are still suffering from the lasting impact of the earlier post-Soviet economic shock. Their high debt burdens and low per capita incomes place them among the poorest of the developing countries.

All countries suffer from serious poverty problems, which are most severe in Tajikistan where 70-80 percent of the population are poor, and most face increased inequality. Social sector spending by governments is very low by international standards and compared to Central European countries and even Russia.

Within the region, the disintegration of "economic space" due to lack of cooperation is dramatic. For example, the maintenance of dams and irrigation systems is grossly inadequate, with a large waste of scarce water and

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an increased risk of catastrophic failures. There is also a lack of cooperation, and increased political tension, about intra-regional water sharing and management, with some countries contemplating large, potentially inefficient investments in water storage and transmission based on narrow country-based, rather than regional-level considerations.

Trade and transit of both goods and people are increasingly problematic, with Uzbekistan's recent trade policies now creating a special problem for the entire region, and for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in particular. Communicable diseases, especially HIV/AIDS and TB, and the narcotics trade have both become serious problems for the entire region.

Finally, the poorest sub-regions within these countries — for example, the densely populated Ferghana Valley that goes through Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and the Aral Sea region of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan — are hardest hit, with the most vulnerable population groups bearing the brunt of regional disintegration.

Unlike the formerly communist countries of East and Central Europe, the Central Asian states had virtually no experience with market economics.

Common Challenges

The Central Asia countries face a common set of challenges, although their intensity and impact differ significantly from nation to nation. At the national level, these challenges include: further market reform, enhanced institution building, an improved investment climate, reformed social service needs, and, in two cases, high external debt. At the regional level, the challenges include trade and transit, water and energy cooperation, oil and gas pipeline access, communicable diseases and drugs, and the environment. In addition, at least two countries face special needs for increased concessional finance, and all will require additional political reforms.

Looking at these key challenges country by country, the following broad-brush picture emerges:

Kazakhstan probably has the brightest economic prospects among all five Central Asian states, comparable to Russia and Ukraine, thanks entirely, and fortuitously, to its extraordinarily rich energy endowment. The major risk in the longer term may lie in the inappropriate use of revenues earned from these energy resources — a problem that has plagued many other resource-rich developed and developing countries.

Kyrgyzstan, much less well endowed with natural resources, except for water, has arguably made most progress in terms of economic reforms and in building a vibrant civil society. However, its lack of market access, serious institutional weaknesses, pervasive poverty, and an increasingly unsustainable level of external debt pose tremendous challenges and risks.

Tajikistan is faced with challenges and risks that are very similar to those of Kyrgyzstan, and may be even more pronounced, especially in the light of the country's institutional weaknesses and continued risk of internal instability and conflict.

Turkmenistan stands out even within the region due to its near-total isolation and almost complete lack of economic or political reforms. Since there is little evidence that its policies or strategy may change in the foreseeable future, it also constitutes a significant obstacle to efforts to enhance regional cooperation in crucial areas such as water allocation and management.

Uzbekistan, by far the largest in terms of population and the only country bordering the other four, faces serious challenges in most dimensions. As a key player in the region, progress in economic reforms, an improvement in its economic performance and an increased readiness to deal with regional issues in a cooperative manner would have major benefits both for Uzbekistan and for the region as a whole. If, on the other hand, economic growth and structural reforms stagnate or, worse, go into reverse, the consequences for its poorest neighbors, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, could be very serious.

Priorities for the International Community

Several key priorities emerge for the international community as it reinforces its commitment to support economic recovery, poverty reduction and regional cooperation in Central Asia. Some priorities are country-specific while others are regional in scope.

Among the country-specific priorities are:

Democracy-building and political reforms. Bilateral aid agencies, multilateral organizations with specific mandates

such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the U.N., and especially international nongovernmental organizations should be leading international community support in this area, although all donors can promote participatory approaches and a stronger civil society in their special spheres of involvement.

Capacity-building. Technical assistance, training and programs and projects in support of reforms of public administration, the judiciary and market institutions, such as banking systems, and for the development of civil society are all areas that deserve enhanced support by development partners, by the U.N.'s specialized agencies and by international and regional financial institutions.

Improving the investment environment. Technical assistance, training, and programs and projects for improvements in the regulatory framework for private sector development, such as enterprise registration, inspection and licensing, property rights and bankruptcy laws, are all essential prerequisites for private domestic and, especially, foreign investment. The international financial institutions may have a special role to play here.

Investment in physical and social infrastructure. While direct financing and budget support for programs and projects in these areas are essential, they need to be combined with policy reforms and institution-building within each sector for sustainability and effective targeting. Many development partners can contribute in this area, but they need to coordinate and cooperate better to assure consistency and synergy in their sectoral approaches.

Concessional finance and debt relief. The international financial institutions have to date been the principal source of external financing, but their support in the future may be limited due to issues of debt-sustainability. For the poorest countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, increased bilateral concessional, and if possible grant, finance linked to satisfactory performance may be essential.

At the regional level, priorities for the international community include:

Water management. The Aral Sea Basin Program, while not without its difficulties, provides an important analytical base, institutional lessons and a programmatic framework for further initiatives in helping to develop regional approaches to water allocation and management. Following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the U.S., the increased frequency of high-level dialogue with the political leadership of Central Asia provides additional opportunities to encourage improved cooperation in this essential area. However, in the immediate future, practical support will likely have to focus mainly on bilateral and trilateral arrangements between two or three countries, and on country-specific or river basin-specific reforms of and investments in improved water management and use.

Energy. International development agencies will continue to advise on energy transit and trade issues and to finance high-priority investments, preferably with private sector participation. However, energy sector reforms, including improved payments discipline, will need to be a key condition of such support. Attention is already directed toward the potential for electricity supply from Central Asia to Afghanistan and the possibility of routing new international pipelines through Afghanistan.

Trade and Transit. Uzbekistan's currency and trade policies remain the key to resolving the physical and policy obstacles to improved regional trade and transit. Also, investment and institution-building in trade and transit facilitation and infrastructure are of high priority.

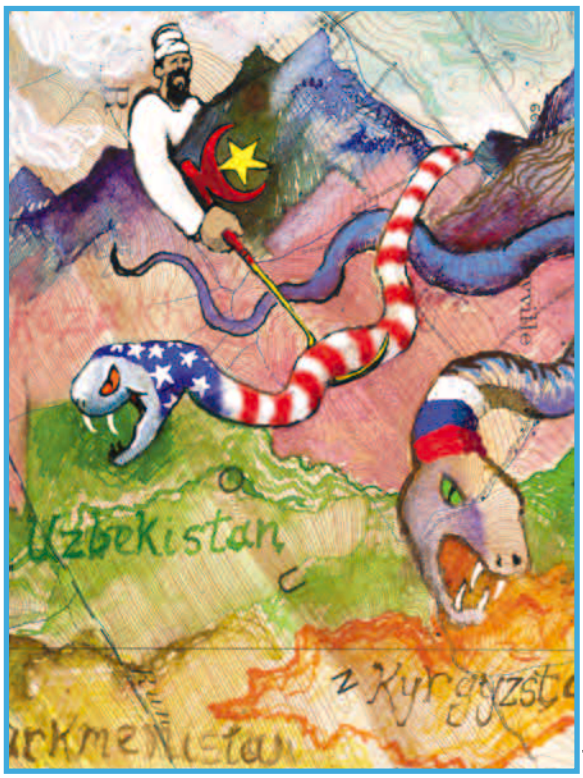
The Long Haul

In considering strategies for support to the still newly independent countries of Central Asia, the international community first needs to plan for the long haul. The constraints are daunting, especially the lack of a strong political umbrella for regional cooperation, such as the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (itself anchored in the European Union accession perspective) provided for the countries of that region.

Second, the international community needs to build on country demand in developing pragmatic solutions, but stress performance and advocate change at the highest level. The appetite for vigorous reforms and/or regional cooperation is probably at best mixed, and in some areas is totally lacking. This will require "opportunistic" responses, including confidence-building measures, most likely resulting in only incremental change in the short term.

Third, the international community needs to work in partnership and avoid duplication and redundancy. All countries receiving soft loans from the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility and the World Bank's International Development Association are now required to prepare "Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers." This process provides an appropriate instrument for international donor cooperation and coordination in the three IDA countries of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). ■

ISLAM & THE U.S. IN POST-SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA



Josh Dorman

IN CENTRAL ASIA, THERE IS PLENTIFUL EVIDENCE THAT NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES ARE CREATING FERTILE GROUND FOR ISLAMIST RECRUITERS.

BY EDWARD SCHATZ

Not long ago, most policy-makers referred to the ex-Soviet states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as examples of distant, geostrategic backwaters. The "stans" were metaphors for irrelevance — at least to core American interests. Before energy resource development intensified in the region, and before a military campaign routed the Taliban from Afghanistan in 2001, this was natural. In fact, ever since the advent of the steamship marginalized overland transport routes centuries ago, Central Asia had seemed unimportant to international politics.

Now, Central Asia is again at center stage — not least because of the potential for Islamist activism to collide with American interests in the region. But what exactly are American interests there, and what exactly provides the potential for Islamist activism?

Political Islam in Central Asia

How significant is political Islam (or "Islamism") in ex-Soviet Central Asia? In his book *Jihad*, the respected Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid offers a resounding "very significant," and a knowledge-hungry Western public — fundamentally stunned by the reach of Islamists worldwide — finds no reason to disagree. The evidence, however, is ambiguous. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations, but is estimated to have no more than a few thousand followers. The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan garnered only 7.5 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections in 2000. Its popularity had eroded, because attempts at Islamist governance at the regional and local level proved inadequate.

Whether this level of activism seems impressive or unimpressive depends on whether one views these states as part of the Soviet or the Muslim world. The Soviet world was atheist, and even though this was a fiction in some areas, broad cohorts of the region's population nonetheless bear the imprint of secularism. From the standpoint of Soviet secularism, this activism appears impressive. By contrast, the Arab Muslim world is notable for its potent admixture of religion and politics.

The reality is neither purely Soviet nor purely Muslim. Political versions of Islam have traditionally had little appeal in Central Asia which has a longstanding tradition of religious tolerance without a political orientation. The region was a latecomer to Islamization, and in many areas the religion simply overlays deeper animistic and shamanistic practices. Some degree of Islamist activism emerged in the late 19th century, but only at the behest of ethnonationalist actors. During 70 years of Soviet rule and state-endorsed official atheism, the practice of Islam weakened further.

The influence of orthodox Islam spread in the 1990s, but it is worth highlighting the limits to this influence. In Tajikistan, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan used the language of Islam in a civil war that wracked the country from 1992 to 1996, but its major strength came from mercenaries from Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, the Middle East and the Caucasus. After the civil war, its support dropped precipitously. Hizb-ut Tahrir, a transnational group that advocates the establishment of an Islamic government through peaceful means, became particularly active in Tajikistan in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Prosecuted actively by the state, it enjoys some — albeit unmeasurable — popular support.

Uzbekistan also has an Islamist opposition, which the state consistently depicts as significant. At first glance, the evidence appears uncontroversial. An attempt on authoritarian president Islam Karimov's life in February 1999, incursions by the IMU into neighboring Kyrgyzstan in 1999 and 2000, and the frequent identification of "cells" of HT are central on the list. But how real is the Islamist "threat?" There are reasons to doubt the veracity of official accounts. Karimov, a standout in an all-authoritarian cast of regional lead characters, assumed power in 1989 and immediately began an anti-Islam campaign. Islamists had negligible societal support at the time, and yet Karimov used the specter of Islamism as the centerpiece of his emerging ideology. The IMU's activities were deeply disrupted by the U.S. military presence in the region, but they attempted to regroup in the Garm Valley of eastern Tajikistan over the past year.

In Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, Islamist activism was even more limited. In the former, it was primarily the domain of ethnic Uzbeks from the Ferghana valley who felt victimized by Kyrgyz discrimination. In the latter state, which has enjoyed a recent economic growth through its oil, gas and mineral sectors, activism has been limited to the southern border with Uzbekistan.

While it is tempting to exaggerate the role of Islamist activists, to date local beliefs only rarely have squared with the radical ideologies that some (but not all) Saudi, Egyptian, Pakistani, and other missionaries attempted to bring to the region. But missionaries are salesmen; they try to sell their ideas. Increasingly, these salesmen have made novel appeals that have found resonance.

The Emergence of Anti-Americanism

At the conclusion of the Cold War, local populations in Central Asia — like their counterparts in the rest of the former socialist bloc — had tremendous (even unrealistic) expectations for their futures. In the vacuum left by the

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Soviet collapse, pro-Western and pro-American popular attitudes were widespread at the outset of the 1990s, but by the mid-1990s, the tide had shifted. The prosperity that ordinary people expected to accompany independence did not materialize; quite to the contrary, many felt their hopes dashed and sought someone to blame. The usual attitude was that the West's interest in the region was limited to its energy resources, which it hoped to extract for profit. By all political and economic measures, most Central Asians were worse off after independence than they had been during the Soviet era. As a result, anti-American attitudes were increasingly voiced and frequently animated the behavior of ordinary people on the ground.

Pro-Western and pro-American popular attitudes were widespread in the vacuum left by the Soviet collapse, but by the mid-1990s the tide had shifted.

The American presence was most palpable in the products of U.S. culture. American videos, in particular, made a deep impression on ordinary people, glamorizing all the vices that Muslims were forbidden — especially drinking and sex. We know from public opinion studies conducted in the region that by the mid-1990s, Central Asians were already ill-at-ease with the values that they understood U.S. films to be promoting. It made no difference that the films that made their way to Central Asian pirates were not Hollywood's best; they were taken to represent American attitudes and American interests.

Unease about the United States was, of course, not new to the region. Soviet propaganda had for decades painted the U.S. as driven by economic interests (rather than moral concerns) and willing to use the language of democracy to further these interests. America was painted as a place where the wealthy enjoyed great decadence at the expense of the poor. It does not matter that this propaganda rings hollow to Western ears; what matters is that many of the ways that Central Asians encountered the U.S., its cultural products, or its role in the region, seemed to confirm messages that had bombarded these societies for years.

This is not to say that a majority of Central Asians are anti-American. Indications are that they are not. But when grievances (about local economic, social, or political conditions) are plausibly framed with reference to the exercise of U.S. political and cultural influence, political Islam has a powerful ideological fellow traveler.

Islamism and Anti-Americanism Meet

Rising anti-Americanism makes plausible the sales pitches of radical missionaries. As they recruited new members, the IMU and HT, in particular, tapped anti-American themes. First, they depicted Western models of economy and polity as alien to the region. The nation-state was considered to be a foreign invention that was anti-Islamic at its core. The HT was particularly active on this front. Calling for the restoration of the Islamic caliphate, which ended in 1924, it claimed that local conditions required Islamic solidarity based on egalitarianism. To construct an authentically Islamic form of government was to reject the West and its imperialist agenda. (Ironically, in the heart of the Muslim world — the Arab Middle East — the HT faced publics that were skeptical of calls for a caliphate.) The IMU's literature stressed the need to create an authentically Islamic government within Uzbekistan, describing — always vaguely — the Islamic banking system, political structure, and code of morality that would ensue. After decades of Soviet rule, indigenously Uzbek forms of governance were a distant memory, so these claims to authenticity readily found adherents.

As salesmen, the activists were attentive to their audience. HT decrees allowed women to shake hands with men in public, kiss them, and even hold seats in parliament. These were odd concessions from strict Islamists, until one considers their target population. They were attempting to recruit ex-Soviet citizens who had been schooled that women play a prominent public role in society. The HT's stress on a rather idyllic form of governance (the caliphate) based on a high-minded principle (egalitarianism) also recalled Soviet-era promises about the "bright future" under communism. Since its social base was relatively well educated (and therefore highly Russified and Sovietized), HT was particularly intent on tapping Soviet-era norms and showed flexibility in doing so.

Islamist recruiters sought to depict Islam as inherently peaceful and the U.S. and its allies as inherently war-seeking. The HT, in particular, was a strong advocate of

peaceful tactics (even if its final vision of the caliphate was radical). After the violence advocated by the IMU in 1999 and 2000 discredited it in the eyes of the broad populace, the HT enjoyed some moral authority and a notable audience as it made continuing reference to Palestinian, Algerian and Chechen Muslims as the victims of infidel aggression. Initiatives for peace, by contrast, were painted as emerging from the peaceful nature of Islam. These depictions rang true for many, for the same reason that conspiracy theories developed about the "true" causes of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Because Muslims are inherently peace-oriented, the thinking went, such atrocities must have been committed by non-believers.

By late 2001, the U.S. was no longer merely an abstraction; it was a real presence to which radical missionaries could make concrete reference. American personnel, materiél and strategic interests were increasingly prominent features on the Central Asian landscape. Central Asian airspace, transport facilities, and air bases were now facilitating the U.S. presence. Most ordinary Central Asians — as horrified by terrorism as their American counterparts — welcomed that presence. But, simultaneously, it fed the seething resentments of others — resentments that now had a face to attach to hitherto abstract grievances.

Sensing a rise in anti-American popular sentiment, Islamists made frequent reference to the U.S. and its allies in their recruitment literature. HT literature from economically depressed southern Kazakhstan was typical: "People who abide by the shariat of God, restore the religion of Islam and spread it throughout the world will replace the pliant leaders. They will erect a unified caliphate instead of those who helped Jews to assume power." (The latter reference is to the United States.) Uzbekistan's Karimov was increasingly depicted as a Jew, a Zionist and a puppet of the United States. In undated literature from the IMU (probably from the late 1990s), a drawing depicts the U.S., Russia and Israel as a single venomous snake swallowing the Central Asian states one after the next.

Short-Term Tactics vs. Long-Term Interests

The usual language used to describe the U.S. presence in Central Asia is that of classical realism: Our foreign policy there is guided by our "interests." Although vibrant debates emerge about what exactly constitutes our interest in Central Asia, the vocabulary is uniformly accepted. If we are in a region, we must have compelling interests there (or are there by mistake). If we do not have a presence there, we must not have compelling interests (or are mistaken in our non-intervention).

The U.S. has compelling interests in the region, and central among them is to prevent anti-Americanism from emerging.

U.S. policy-makers have elevated self-interest as a cardinal virtue of American foreign policy; indeed, the pursuit of self-interest helps to avoid the sort of wishful thinking that hampered foreign policy before World War II. But the language of realism may itself irk local populations. Take a Central Asian perspective. If the United States is involved in Central Asia for the sole purpose of pursuing its own interests, then it is confirming a wide array of stereotypes about its behavior (many of which emerge from Soviet propaganda). When the U.S. seeks to protect access to global markets, it is interpreted as U.S. economic imperialism — a centerpiece of Soviet depictions of the U.S.-dominated international capitalism. When the U.S. seeks to oust a regionally destabilizing regime such as the Taliban, it is viewed as an understandable but fundamentally selfish campaign. The United States, it is argued, would have stood idly by if the events of Sept. 11, 2001, had occurred in Moscow, Beijing or Kuala Lumpur. Central Asians feel that they are on the map only to the extent that the U.S. can exploit the region's economic resources and combat terrorism. Local cultures, languages and histories mean nothing. It is all about U.S. interests.

The perception that the U.S. is too unilateralist and too self-interested is, of course, broad. Whether this perception is justified or erroneous is irrelevant: the point is that perceptions — right or wrong, justified or not — have a real political impact. In Central Asia, the evidence is that negative perceptions of the United States are creating fertile ground for Islamist recruiters. That is, a population that is ambivalent (at best) or hostile (at worst) about U.S. foreign policy, cultural products or morality is a population that is susceptible to certain kinds of extremist appeals. Under such conditions, Islamist "salesmen" find a wide array of "consumers" who are ready to buy into radical ideologies.

The U.S., of course, does have compelling interests in the region; central among them is to prevent anti-Americanism from emerging. Doing so will, in turn, complicate Islamist recruitment efforts. Preventing anti-Americanism is, of course, no mean task, but the U.S. has little choice but to do something about it. In at least three areas, the U.S. could have an immediate effect.

Winning Hearts and Minds

First, the U.S. must uphold international standards for human rights in Central Asia — not only because of a moral imperative, but because this will go far to gain the hearts of local populations. Central Asian leaders, notable for their authoritarian streak even in the 1990s, felt positively emboldened after 2001. As civil liberties came under fire even in the United States and Europe, the pattern was even more dramatic in Central Asia. Uzbekistan's President Karimov has intensified his campaign to jail (and often torture) anyone who practices Islam in ways that strike the regime as unusual. Tajikistan's President Rakhmonov, who until recently paid lip service to human rights standards, has likewise cracked down on alleged Islamists with impunity.

Nor are the victims of human rights abuses confined to alleged Islamists. In Kazakhstan — once the region's hope for economic prosperity and democratic governance — President Nazarbaev has used his privileged position in the U.S.-led war on terrorism to justify a crackdown on a secular, democratic opposition. The arrest on trumped-up charges of rape and speedy conviction of Sergei Duvanov, a critic of Nazarbaev who wrote about the latter's secret bank accounts in Switzerland and ill-begotten spoils, inspired vociferous criticism by international human rights groups and many European states

during the past year. The United States offered only mild statements of "concern" about "procedural irregularities" involved in the trial. In fact, Nazarbaev himself publicly stated before the "trial" itself that Duvanov's guilt "was proven." This pattern of silencing critical voices only shows signs of intensifying.

Even as the U.S. faces difficult questions at home about how to balance liberties with the need to combat terror, its record is still dramatically better than those of the Central Asian states. Were the U.S. to increase pressure on these states to protect human rights, it would immediately bolster America's moral authority in the region. This does not mean taking sides in any contest between the local opposition and the regime; what it does mean is upholding basic standards for the treatment of human beings. Broad Central Asian publics would find this worthy of applause; finally, the impression would be that the U.S. takes a firm, moral stance instead of an opportunistic one based on narrow notions of self-interest.

Second, the U.S. would change its popular image in Central Asia were it to become centrally involved in helping develop the region's infrastructure — schools, roads, communications, rail, and the like. At a bare minimum, this could be accomplished by encouraging U.S. companies operating in the region to involve themselves in development projects. These economic actors have deeply benefited from Washington's bidding to open up Central Asian economies; they could be expected to return the favor by investing in infrastructure as a way to further Washington's strategic interest in preventing anti-Americanism. But this may not be enough. Central Asian states require a Marshall Plan — an unprecedented commitment of material, ideological and human resources to a region that otherwise may prove to be destabilizing altogether too soon. And we now know that instability in any region of the globe — no matter how seemingly remote — can have profound effects even in North America.

Cultural Engagement

Finally, the U.S. should combat anti-Americanism through cultural engagement. Many plans are already in the works to do so. Typically, this involves some kind of cultural exchange between U.S. and Central Asian counterparts, but the effort, at least in its early stages, has been lopsided. For example, when Central Asian religious scholars visit the U.S. to witness how the Muslim community in America practices its faith freely, they learn something valuable. They no longer can view the U.S. simplistically as the source of secularism, materialism and global immorality (assuming they had such views in the first place). On the contrary, they understand the U.S. as a state that protects religious freedom. This is important, but only half the battle.

Something as challenging and complex as Islamism has roots in something as simple as a region's collective identity and self-esteem.

What has *not* occurred is much learning in the West about Central Asian culture. Only when Central Asians feel that their culture and traditions are valued and respected in the West will they find no reason to harbor resentments against the United States.

The foregoing leads to two surprising conclusions. First, something as challenging and complex as Islamism has roots in something as simple as a region's collective identity and self-esteem. Striking though it is, this is what the region's recent history suggests. Second, areas of the world (such as Central Asia) that are otherwise unlikely candidates for Islamist mobilization, may in fact witness a significant degree of radical activism. What makes radical Islam marketable is a nascent anti-Americanism that the U.S. has every reason to be concerned about. ■

CASPIAN BASIN OIL: JUST A PIPE DREAM?

Josh Dorman

WASHINGTON HAS USED THE PROMISE OF HUGE CASPIAN OIL RESERVES TO ATTRACT AMERICAN INVESTORS TO THE REGION. BUT WHAT IS THE REALITY?

BY ALEC RASIZADE

Ever since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Caspian Basin has been touted in many quarters as one of the world's biggest new energy sources. This was partly because the region had been off-limits to the West for so long that its potential was genuinely unknown. In addition, the Persian Gulf War had underscored the need to find dependable energy sources outside the Middle East.

But in retrospect, it is clear that the Caspian oil rush was akin to a high-stakes game of cards, complete with a great deal of bluffing as each new republic exaggerated its own potential in the race to attract foreign investment. For exam-

ple, Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliev painted so rosy a picture of his country's energy potential at the 2001 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that his Armenian counterpart, Robert Kocharian, retorted: "Is there any water in the Caspian, or is it only oil?"

Even the State Department got into the act, using the promise of huge Caspian oil reserves to lure American investors into the region and thereby help the republics secure real independence from Russia. For example, the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Export and Trade Promotion, heard testimony from two State Department officials, Stephen Sestanovich and Marc Grossman, at a July 1998 hearing, to the effect that Caspian oil reserves contain at least 200 billion barrels (compared with Saudi Arabia's 260 billion), valued at $4 trillion.

The hype machine was still in full swing as late as last year, though the numbers were beginning to come down by then. For example, a story in the April 8, 2002, edition of *Newsweek* breathlessly claimed that, "The Caspian Basin, at a conservative estimate, contains about 70 billion barrels of oil."

But speaking at the Eurasian Economic Summit in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on the very same day that story came out, the head of a major oil company painted a very different picture. Gian Maria Gros-Pietro, chairman of Italy's ENI oil company (the only Western company to have discovered a new oil field in the Caspian in the past decade, the Kashagan field in Kazakhstan), asserted that the Caspian Basin contains just 7.8 billion barrels of oil — about a tenth of what *Newsweek* and other analysts were maintaining.

Indeed, we now realize what the local oilmen always knew: the Caspian Basin's energy reserves have been seriously depleted by decades of Soviet exploitation. The U.S. Energy Information Administration now calculates that the Caspian Basin's oil holdings total somewhere between 18 billion and 34 billion barrels, 75 percent of which lie under Kazakhstan's portion of the sea. In other words, far from being a rival to America's current oil sources (see sidebar), the region's potential is roughly the equivalent of Alaska's Prudhoe Bay field.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST CRUDE OIL PRODUCERS IN 2001

Country	Reserves (billions of barrels)	Production (millions of barrels per day)
Saudi Arabia	262	8.8
Iraq	112	2.4
United Arab Emirates	98	2.4
Kuwait	96	2.1
Iran	90	3.7
Venezuela	78	3.4
Russia	49	7.1
U.S.	30	7.7
Libya	29	1.4
Mexico	27	3.6

(Source: *The Economist*, 14 September 2002)

Practical Difficulties

Current oil production in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan combined totals less than a million barrels per day, of which about two-thirds is used domestically. Even under a best-case scenario, such as Daniel Yergin and Thane Gustafson detailed in their August 1997 *New York Times* piece, "Evolution of an Oil Rush," the countries' combined annual production could only reach three million barrels a day by 2010, of which about two million would be available for export — representing about 3 percent of global oil production. By comparison, the OPEC countries already account for over 40 percent of current oil production, a share that is expected to rise to 52 percent by 2010.

To be sure, even that relatively modest estimate still represents an attractive target, particularly in a region with few other assets. But one of the differences that set the landlocked Caspian apart from other important marginal suppliers is the difficulty of getting the oil and gas production to world markets. The energy transportation systems of the region were designed and built to serve

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the strategic needs of the USSR, and all export pipelines still pass through Russia. For example, the 30-year-old Caspian Pipeline Consortium pipeline is a Russian-Kazakhstani project, ending at the Black Sea, from where the oil must then move via ship through the Bosporus. (It is also worth noting that the CPC is already carrying as much oil as it can, raising doubts about its future utility.)

To get around this problem, the Department of State has backed a grandiose strategy to export Caspian oil and gas westward through Azerbaijan and Georgia — avoiding Russia and Iran altogether — through a series of pipelines that would terminate on Turkey's Mediterranean coast. The construction of the best-known of these, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, will begin this summer near Baku at a cost of $3 billion. This tube will be 1,730 kilometers long and have a capacity to carry 50 million tons of oil per year when completed in 2005.

Although this plan is "geopolitically correct," many major oil companies doubt it is financially feasible. British Petroleum-Amoco and Statoil have already formed an alliance as chief operators of the rival Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli offshore concession (commonly known as the "Deal of the Century") in Azerbaijan and are thus uninterested in moving their production through this pipeline. And after drilling dry wells, Lukoil and Exxon-Mobil have sold their own shares in the consortium and are in the process of pulling out of Azerbaijan altogether.

Recent studies by two independent research groups in Washington, the Cato Institute and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, have also criticized the economic justification for the project, urging consideration of existing alternatives. They calculate that the BTC pipeline would need $200 million per year in subsidies to break even, which is nowhere in sight. While the U.S. government is the project's chief promoter, the U.S. Export-Import Bank has declined to provide any non-commercial credits, and the World Bank recently blocked its own line of credits for the project.

Furthermore, the BTC pipeline needs to carry at least 50 million tons of oil per year (one million barrels a day) to be economically viable. Yet Azerbaijan produced only 15 million tons in all of 2002, while Kazakhstan managed just 40 million tons last year. In addition, the existing Baku-Supsa (Georgian Black Sea coast) pipeline is currently being filled to only one-quarter of its 18 million-ton capacity. Finally, the oil fields encompassed in the "Deal of the Century" concession are collectively producing about five million tons a year, which is only projected to rise to 25 million tons per year (500,000 barrels a day) by 2010. Thus, at best, the total Azerbaijani output will reach 35-40 million tons (750,000-800,000 barrels per day) by 2010 — well short of the 50 million-ton mark.

The announcement of a large oil discovery (Kashagan) off the coast of Kazakhstan has encouraged supporters of the BTC pipeline. However, it is premature to count on the Kazakh oil to make up the shortfall. And even if it does, a costly underwater pipeline will still have to be built across the Caspian Sea to Baku.

As for the Georgian portion of the route, many local and international NGOs have expressed grave concern over the environmental impact of the pipeline on Georgia, and are pressuring international financial institutions to hold up loans. These groups note that the pipeline is set to pass through the marvelous Borjomi spa gorge, noted for its invaluable mineral water springs and spa resorts. (My father used to regularly drink bottled "Borjomi" mineral water to treat his digestive disorders.) The activists fear that an oil spill will forever destroy the subsoil undercurrents that carry the mineral waters, among other environmental hazards.

Competing Projects

Meanwhile, Russia has already completed its new 1,580-kilometer overland North-Caspian pipeline linking Kazakhstan's Tengiz oil field to its Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. With an estimated nine billion barrels of reserves, Tengiz is the world's sixth-largest land oil field and is operated by Chevron-Texaco. When Kashagan does begin producing oil in earnest, its export through this northern pipeline will make far more commercial sense than a commitment to the BTC project.

Armed with that knowledge, the Kazakh government reportedly used the specter of renationalization of oil assets to pressure Chevron-Texaco into negotiating a new agreement last year. But after Chevron called Almaty's bluff by announcing that it would not expand its Tengiz stake — the largest foreign investment in the entire region — the two sides eventually came to an agreement.

Then there is Turkey, which has signed agreements to purchase natural gas from Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, as well as Russia, Iran and Iraq, in the past several years. These deals were accompanied by proposals to construct

expensive new pipelines. Of these, two giant projects stand out: the Blue Stream from Russia and the Trans-Caspian pipeline from Turkmenistan.

The Blue Stream pipeline is intended to supply 16 billion cubic meters of gas per year over a period of 25 years, to be delivered through an undersea pipeline reaching depths of 2,150 meters in the Black Sea (setting a record for underwater pipelines).

Although the U.S.-backed BTC pipeline is "geopolitically correct," many major oil companies doubt it is financially feasible.

The pipeline was completed last year, but the Turkish economic crisis brought expectations down to earth. Ankara canceled this year's gas deliveries and negotiated with Russia to slash next year's supplies by half. This makes it appear that, as with the BTC oil pipeline, the Blue Stream would turn into another technological feat with little chance of paying for itself.

The Blue Stream did succeed in scuttling the rival Trans-Caspian project from Turkmenistan, despite Washington's strong support for it. This tempted Turkmenistan to look east of the Caspian Sea. Construction of a 1,000-mile pipeline through Afghanistan has been under consideration since 1996 when Unocal won a contract to exploit the Dauletabad gas field in Turkmenistan, which is the fourth-largest on the planet. The project was halted due to Afghanistan's growing instability, but is now reportedly being revitalized with the help of Afghan President Hamid Karzai and President Bush's former special envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad — both of whom are former Unocal consultants.

A Caspian Arms Race?

The other major obstacle to exploration and production of the region's oil and natural gas holdings is the lack of a mechanism for delimiting the territorial and maritime boundaries among the four new post-Soviet states in the Caspian Basin: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Russia. The issue remained moribund until 1994, when Azerbaijan struck its so-called "Deal of the Century" with the first consortium of international companies on the development of oil fields in the middle of the Caspian — some of which Turkmenistan had also claimed.

Accusing Azerbaijan of acting against the norms of international maritime law, Ashgabat promptly announced that it was close to signing $10 billion in contracts to develop its own Caspian oil field, known as Serdar (which Azerbaijan calls Kiapaz). It also lodged new claims to other fields that are part of Azerbaijan's package deal.

Similar charges were brought against Azerbaijan in 2001 by Iran, the other littoral state, which cited Soviet-Iranian agreements regarding the Caspian Sea signed in 1921 and 1940. Iranian warships opened fire and drove back Azeri geological survey vessels in what they claimed were the territorial waters of Iran. (In response, Turkey — one of Azerbaijan's closest allies — sent its air force to conduct a military show over Baku.) Tehran, which possesses the strongest and most experienced land force in the region, has also conducted a number of army maneuvers along its frontier with Azerbaijan (which was historically part of Iran until Russia seized it during the wars of 1814-1828).

Diplomatic talks among the five littoral states have dragged on for a decade without resolution. The major stumbling block has been how to apportion the rights to the seabed where the oil fields are located. Russia has argued for national sectors along a median line according to the length of each country's shoreline, but only on the seabed, leaving the waters for common use. This formula would allow Russia's navy to roam the waters at will and would give Iran (which has the shortest shoreline of the five countries) only 13 percent of the seabed. While Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan have agreed to this framework, Turkmenistan has not taken a position, and Iran continues to seek either joint control of the sea or at least a 20-percent share of the seabed for each state.

The presidents of all five states met for the first time for an overall discussion of the issue in Ashgabat in April 2002, but failed to reach any agreement. In fact, they were unable even to issue a joint communiqué. Thus, the only existing agreements on the Caspian remain the Soviet-Iranian agreements of 1921 and 1940, which call for a 50-50 split of the sea and its resources.

President Vladimir Putin went from the Ashgabat summit directly to Astrakhan, the principal base of his Caspian fleet (by far the largest in the region), and ordered naval exercises, which took place in August 2002 and involved 60 warships and 10,000 military personnel. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan has inherited the main headquarters and part of the old Soviet Caspian flotilla based in Baku, while Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have allocated huge resources to the procurement of gunboats and navy equipment.

Despite the importance that the Caspian Basin has assumed for Washington, the area is at best of secondary significance for the United States.

Geopolitical Implications for the U.S.

Despite all these difficulties, all indications are that Washington is holding fast to its support for the BTC pipeline. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher issued a statement on Dec. 2, 2002, hailing Georgia's approval of the pipeline as "a significant milestone in the development of the project which will bring welcome investment to Georgia as well as strengthen the sovereignty and independence of countries in the Caspian Basin."

A month later, a Jan. 9, 2003, media note announcing State and Commerce Department sponsorship of a conference in New Orleans on Caspian Basin business opportunities expanded on that theme: "The U.S. strongly supports the development of the oil and gas resources of the Caspian Basin and the means to transport them to market … Caspian oil represents the largest non-OPEC source of production growth in the coming decade."

However, that assessment ignores the very real prospect of collapsing world oil prices, once the U.N. trade sanctions against Baghdad are removed with the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime there. According to an estimate by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, a $6 fall in the price of a barrel of oil would slash Caspian oil revenues in half. If the price fell to $13 a barrel, most Caspian oil consortia would no longer be profitable.

Whatever the future of the competing pipelines, preoccupation with energy development has led the U.S. to form a myopic picture of these states. By the time we began to realize that the three most important Caspian Basin energy producers — Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan — suffered from systemic corruption and nondemocratic practices, we had lost much of the leverage on their leaders that we had enjoyed just a few years before.

However, it is still not too late to widen our horizons and to recognize the risks that exist in the region, and the ways in which proposed plans for energy development are increasing some of them.

With time the Caspian region seems almost certain to turn into more of a strategic burden to the United States than a strategic asset. Consider just a few of the many headaches the region poses: ethnic conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, Chechnya, and South Ossetia; Uzbekistan's expansion to become a regional power; Russia's ambition to reclaim the South Siberian territories lost to Kazakhstan after the breakup of the Soviet Union; and territorial and water disputes involving Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Then add to those ongoing instability in Afghanistan and Islamist plans to create a caliphate in a unified Turkestan. All of these issues are difficult dilemmas for the U.S. regarding the appropriate level of support and security guaranties it should extend to its new Caspian allies.

The partial nature of our commitment to the development of Caspian deposits has led us to create the illusion of a stronger strategic relationship with these states than actually exists. Fortunately, there are signs Washington is beginning to recognize this reality. As we have come to better understand the difficulties inherent in the development of Caspian oil and gas, the need for pipelines has not been considered of sufficient strategic interest for the United States to be willing to underwrite substantial costs of their construction.

Indeed, despite the rhetorical importance that the Caspian Basin has assumed for Washington, the area is at best of secondary significance for the United States. Consequently, U.S. policy in this region should reflect our broader security and energy concerns — those having to do with the Persian Gulf, Russia, Iran and China; Islamic radicalism in Central Asia, including Afghanistan; and a host of global issues, such as terrorism — not an oil rush for a largely imaginary bounty. ■

FILLING THE VOID: THE U.S. IN CENTRAL ASIA

In the decade between the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, U.S. policy toward Central Asia was marked by ambivalence. Central Asia's remote location, lack of historical or cultural ties to the United States, and its centuries-long domination by other powers, combined to leave the policy community without easy answers to a host of questions about the region's strategic significance for the U.S.: What are U.S. interests in Central Asia? Does the United States care about Central Asia because it is the soft underbelly of China, Russia and Iran? Or is U.S. interest in Central Asia a byproduct of U.S. commitment to expand the zone of economic prosperity and democracy worldwide? Or, is the United States simply after Caspian oil and gas resources?

SOON AFTER SEPT. 11, 2001, CENTRAL ASIA BECAME THE FRONT LINE IN THE U.S. WAR ON TERRORISM. THAT FACT HAS ONLY REINFORCED OUR PRE-EXISTING STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE REGION.

BY EUGENE B. RUMER

The short answer is: all of the above, and more. The post-Sept. 11 military campaign in Afghanistan has transformed Central Asia into the front line in the global war on terrorism. The war on terrorism has given a new and very concrete rationale for U.S. presence in the region: U.S. military presence in Central Asia is required for reasons of operational expediency mandated by the deployment of American forces in Afghanistan. This, in turn means that a set of robust military-to-military relationships with Central Asian militaries is essential. But U.S. involvement cannot stop at that. To counter the appeal of militant Islam to the region's impoverished population, it is equally important to promote more tolerant regimes, better governance and opportunities for economic development, and to encourage dialogue with moderate Islamic forces. Central Asia's oil and gas resources can provide it with much-needed revenue and other benefits of foreign investment, as well as help bring more energy resources to the global marketplace to the benefit of the United States and all oil-consuming nations. Finally, the map of Central Asia leaves no doubt that it is a tough neighborhood full of former and aspiring hegemons. To guard against them and help Central Asia defend its strategic independence U.S. political and security assistance is essential.

Regional Rivals

Russia's retreat from Central Asia in 1991 left a geopolitical vacuum. Many in the Russian national security establishment realized that, but Russia's weakness and preoccupation with domestic crises all through the 1990s had denied Moscow meaningful opportunities for effective intervention.

Russian policy toward Central Asia during the decade of the 1990s was full of inconsistencies. The notion that Russia had sacrificed too much for the Soviet Union and for the well-being of the Central Asian republics played a pivotal role in accelerating the USSR's dissolution. Russia's political elite wanted to jettison the country's Central Asian burden and with it leave behind the unpopular war in Afghanistan and its difficult legacy.

But far from leaving its burdensome colonial ties behind in the new era, Russian foreign policy quickly focused again on relations with the former colonies, raising the specter of Russian imperialist

domination of Central Asia. Moscow claimed a special zone of interest in Central Asia, insisted on the right to intervene in the region to protect the lives of fellow Russians and sought to control Central Asian export routes, especially for oil.

Despite these grand aspirations, one thing became increasingly clear: Russia was not up to the task of playing the region's security manager. It had neither the military muscle nor the resources to back up its ambitious claims. Its residual military presence in Central Asia was at least as much a part of the problem as a part of the solution. Mired in allegations of drug-trafficking, the Russian military in Tajikistan was clearly not equipped to keep Central Asia stable and defend it against the threat of militant Islam. In short, the Russian presence in Central Asia did little to fill the security vacuum. It would have to be filled by someone else.

Despite grand aspirations, Russia was not up to the task of being the region's security manager.

Surprisingly, however, the United States resisted the temptation to get into a modern-day "great game" in Central Asia. The single most important statement about U.S. policy in the region in the 1990s was made by then-Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, the key architect of U.S. policy in the former Soviet Union, in a 1997 speech with a memorable title: "Farewell to Flashman." The United States, Talbott made clear, rejected the "atavistic" approach of 19th-century colonial powers. The goal of U.S. policy in Central Asia was not to dominate the region, but to make it free of other powers' domination, thus making it possible for the five Central Asian states to become stable and peaceful. In other words, instead of dominating Central Asia, the United States would be satisfied to see it as a no man's land.

Other regional powers — Russia especially, but also China and Iran — did not take that announcement at face value, however. They saw the very fact that the United States was articulating a vision, however limited, for Central Asia as proof of its unprecedented ambition. Moscow feared the specter of geopolitical encirclement between an ever-expanding NATO to its west and a growing American presence to its south and east. China had to wonder whether the U.S. move was intended as a geopolitical pressure point to leverage the U.S. relationship with Taiwan. And Iran viewed with alarm the simultaneous expansion of U.S. influence in Central Asia and the Persian Gulf.

A Geopolitical Free-for-All

Accordingly, all three powers moved to shift the geopolitical balance in their favor, but failed to do so. None had the resources needed to dominate the region on its own, yet suspicion of each others' motives prevented them from allying. For example, both Russia and China feared Iran as a supporter of militant Islam. Yet Russia feared Chinese dominance, while China didn't trust Russia to keep the region stable as it had already let go of it.

Most of all, none of the five Central Asian states was content with the prospect of either Russia, China or Iran playing the role of the region's hegemon. Good relations with all three were important, but none of the three was to be trusted. Each had ulterior motives for building ties to the region, which Central Asia would be expected to reciprocate by granting access to its resources, or by compromising its strategic independence.

The United States, by virtue of geographic distance, lack of geopolitical ambition in Central Asia and its stated preference to see all other would-be hegemons stay out, was the best possible partner for Central Asia. However, good relations with Washington had their price, too. Absent a geopolitical stake in Central Asia, the U.S. interest was not in staying there, but in getting out as soon as the newly independent nations were strong enough to stand on their own. And the best way to achieve that, from the American perspective, was through economic and

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political reforms, which would bring with them stability, a degree of prosperity and security.

But because reforms would also tend to undermine the personal political regimes of those nations' leaders, they proved highly resistant to U.S. efforts to promote political and economic change. Some countries, particularly Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, made considerable progress toward a market economy. However, even there, the benefits of economic reforms have been tempered by widespread corruption, which has exacerbated societal inequality and undermined domestic stability.

Political reform has proved even more elusive. Suffice it to say that none of the Central Asian states has had a peaceful transfer of power, and all but one (Tajikistan, whose last Soviet-era leader died shortly after independence) are governed by the same rulers they had before the Soviet Union broke up.

So, by the end of the 1990s, Central Asia was seen not as an opportunity for U.S. policy, but as strategic quicksand: further involvement was fraught with the danger of entanglement, but abandonment of the region to its own devices raised the prospect of failed states and geopolitical dominoes.

New Urgency, Old Dilemmas

Central Asia was saved from political oblivion by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Since then, all five states have become U.S. allies in the war on terrorism. Their proximity to Afghanistan and ability to accommodate U.S. requests for basing or access — unencumbered by the shifting tides of domestic public opinion and electoral fortunes — proved useful assets at a critical time. In return, they have enjoyed growing economic assistance, enhanced international stature and unprecedented access in Washington.

There is no dispute that the United States and its Central Asian partners share the same adversary — militant Islam — and the same objective: preventing it from spreading further and destabilizing the region. Toward that end, U.S. military success in Afghanistan has resulted in a greatly improved security environment in Central Asia. The removal of the Taliban regime has meant that the region's various militant movements no longer have a ready base of operation under the protection of a friendly government.

Furthermore, the war against the Taliban regime produced a new defacto coalition: the United States, China, Russia and Iran had all come to see the Taliban as a major threat to their interests. Thus, the American success in defeating the Taliban benefited China, Russia and Iran. Still, the U.S. presence in Central Asia undoubtedly fuels suspicions in Moscow, Beijing and Tehran about U.S. interests and intentions in the region. But at the same time, their suspicions are accompanied by rueful recognition that none of them was able to provide for the region's security since the breakup of the Soviet Union, and that a security vacuum in Central Asia is in nobody's interest.

Yet experience cautions that the very factors that make the five Central Asian states such agreeable partners in the near term are also the chief obstacles to U.S. cooperation in the long term. Despite stepped-up U.S. involvement in Central Asia, the region is steeped in authoritarianism and corruption. All five regimes, to varying degrees, are corrupt and averse to the kinds of reforms that are tied to U.S. assistance and that represent the essential preconditions for long-term stability and security.

Equally damaging, all five leaders are using American support as a personal endorsement of their regimes, and see the U.S. presence through that prism. For that reason, they would like Washington to continue to manage the region's security, while leaving the task of managing domestic stability to the regimes themselves. This is clearly not a desirable situation for the United States. The United States runs the risk of finding itself in the unenviable and unsustainable role of the region's gendarme. If local regimes fail to maintain their own domestic stability, their and their neighbors' security is likely to erode, thus raising the specter of U.S. involvement in domestic policing operations as a means of ensuring regional security.

Toward Realistic Objectives

So is the United States facing a familiar cycle in Central Asia, where stepped-up involvement will once again lead to unfulfilled expectations, mutual recriminations and disappointment? It is easy to construct such a pessimistic scenario. But U.S. policy toward the region need not be a prisoner of the past.

The first step toward a viable policy in Central Asia is to understand that the region's problems are long-

term and will require long-term solutions. This will require U.S. involvement there, which will most likely be measured in decades, not years.

Given Central Asia's current condition, it is only realistic to expect its regimes to entail some form of authoritarian rule for the foreseeable future. This means that Washington will have to accept and deal with Central Asia as it is, not as the United States would like it to be. Staying engaged in Central Asia will require the U.S. to balance its commitment to promote freedom and democracy against operational expediency. The nature of the trade-offs is likely to vary depending on the specific conditions in each of the region's five countries.

By the end of the 1990s, Central Asia was seen not as an opportunity for U.S. policy, but as a strategic quagmire.

Accepting Central Asia as it is also means paying closer attention to its cultural and historical roots. The absence of democratic traditions in itself is not reason enough to give up on the region's democratic prospects. However, Central Asia's legacy, coupled with the absence of grass-roots pressures for political liberalization, suggests that U.S. energies may be better focused for the foreseeable future on moderating the excesses of the Central Asian regimes.

A short, but meaningful list of improvements would include: curbing corruption, police brutality and torture; allowing a degree of self-expression for the population; tolerating a moderate version of Islam; and permitting development of economic activity and trade. Ideally, Central Asian regimes with these attributes should also be able to provide for their own stability and security with limited assistance from the United States.

A Strong Military Component

Given the prominence of security concerns on the U.S. agenda in Central Asia, U.S. involvement in the region will undoubtedly have a strong military component. Forging a robust military-to-military relationship in support of U.S. short- and medium-term objectives, as dictated by ongoing operational requirements, will be essential. In general, U.S. military-to-military assistance can help regional stability by promoting the U.S. model of civil-military relations and assisting Central Asian militaries to establish themselves as professional military organizations. The militaries' marginal role at present in Central Asian domestic politics and the lack of military traditions present the United States with an opportunity to shape the development of the region's military institutions. In this context, the experience of U.S. involvement with military institutions elsewhere — in Europe, Asia and Latin America — can be a source of useful lessons.

Lastly, the U.S. military presence in Central Asia is likely to be the most visible element of its engagement there. From Washington's perspective, America's presence may be relatively insignificant and pale in comparison with its military deployments in other regions. However, from the standpoint of Central Asia's rulers and the leaders of other powers — Russia, China, etc. — the U.S. presence has to be reckoned with. Their perceptions of the U.S. military role will probably be a function of the overall quality of their relations with the United States.

Nonetheless, a reverse dynamic is also possible, with their perceptions of the U.S. posture in Central Asia defining their assessments of their relationships with the United States in general. Thus, it will be important for Washington to maintain a healthy degree of transparency about its intentions in Central Asia, albeit not at the price of implicitly accepting other powers' droit de regard over the region.

As the United States pursues these objectives in Central Asia, it is important not to inflate expectations among congressional and private sector audiences in the United States. Two or three years' worth of slower-than-expected progress, or no progress at all, could produce a backlash in the United States against Central Asia and U.S. policy there. Reminding all parties involved that long-term problems require long-term solutions is an essential element, albeit not a guarantee, of long-term success. ■

TURKMEN ARCHAEOLOGY: A CENTRAL ASIAN SURPRISE

TURKMEN ARCHAEOLOGY AFFORDS A GLIMPSE INTO CENTRAL ASIA'S ANCIENT HISTORY, AND TYPIFIES THE CULTURAL SURPRISES THE REGION OFFERS.

BY TATIANA C. GFOELLER

The silence is strange. I have lost sight of the road to the Iranian border. Disoriented, I'm exploring a combined Pompeii and Grozny. Was the city abandoned in the 1920s, the Middle Ages, or the Bronze Age?

This happened to me in the fall of 1996 in Turkmenistan, on the Ashgabat-Tejen-Sarax road. I called the place the Mysterious City. The director of the Ashgabat Archaeological Museum said it sounded like Altyn-Tepe, a Bronze Age settlement he had excavated 10 years earlier. My driver said it was the medieval settlement Sandyk Gashi, meaning "the place where they dropped the trunk." He claimed that merchants traveling on the Silk Road dropped a trunk at that place, and as the lid flew off a river of gold coins flowed over the sand.

My Western European diplomat counterparts were skeptical. They claimed to see distinctive turn-of-the-century building patterns in the ruined walls, and scoffed at finding any relics among the sea of shards lining the deserted streets. But even they were seduced by the Mysterious City's enigma, and we organized a number of picnics there together.

This is Central Asian archaeology in microcosm. While I have traveled to all of the Central Asian countries, Turkmenistan — where I spent two wonderful years of archaeological exploration during my tenure as deputy chief of mission at Embassy Ashgabat — is the one I know best. Turkmen archaeology aptly illustrates the cultural surprises Central Asia offers.

The Most Splendid City

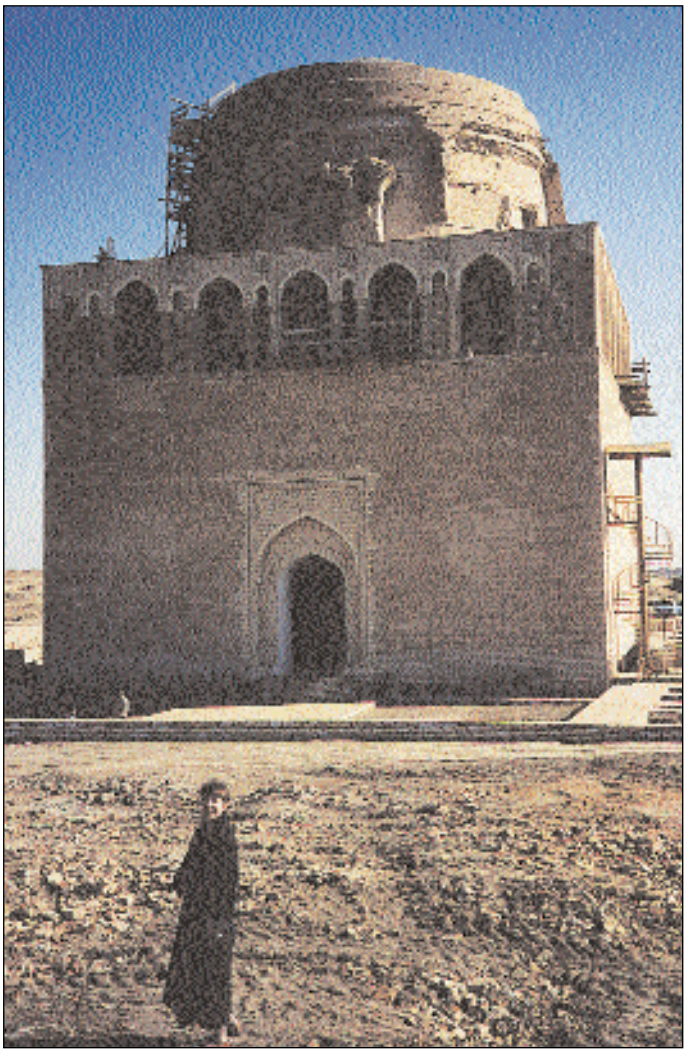
Turkmenistan's jewel is ancient Merv, near Mary, that country's second most important city. Some historians believe Alexander the Great visited the city during his daring sweep through the area. At Merv, I found the ruins of the Erk-Kala Fortress — a sixth-century B.C. edifice reconstructed extensively during Merv's Greek period by one of Alexander's generals, Antiochius. The fortress resembles a huge earthen doughnut, 600 meters across, with walls 50 meters high. In the middle are the ruins of a Buddhist monastery from the sixth century A.D. and a Christian monastery, both destroyed by the Arabs who forced Islam on Merv. Mohammed, my local guide during the visit, recalled the tale of the beautiful Persian princess who built the Christian monastery. When she converted to Christianity, her distraught father, the Sassanian shah of Persia, was told by Zoroastrian priests that he had to sentence her to death. Instead, he sent his only child into exile to provincial Merv, where she married a local tribal prince and founded what is to date Turkmenistan's only home-grown Christian dynasty.

In the middle of the seventh century, the Arabs invaded present-day Turkmenistan, bringing with them forcible conversion to Islam. Merv and its outlying lands became a part of the Umayyid and Abbasid caliphates, and then subsequently the Tahirid and Samanid states. It was during this period that the Silk Road — a complex network of trade caravan routes from Europe to China, invariably crossing the medieval Turkmen towns of Merv, Amul, Zemm, Gurganj, Sarax, Abiverd, Nissa, Dekhistan, and others — became an important factor in world trade. The

11th century was marked in Turkmenistan by the birth of a powerful centralized empire, founded by the Turkic Seljuks, famous for their military prowess. During their apogee, they ruled lands stretching from Palestine to the Chinese border.

Merv's 12th-century mausoleum of the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar has been rebuilt, but with new bricks cemented to old. Mohammed, a trained archaeologist, lamented that with the fall of the USSR, money for archaeology dried up and most excavations at Merv ceased. Yet money suddenly materialized to rebuild the mausoleum, "a really pedestrian piece of medieval Islamic architecture," according to Mohammed. Many of the area's Moslem clerics, however, consider the late sultan a saint, even if, in my driver's opinion, "he obviously chose his architects badly." Indeed, Sanjar is a noted historical figure and the successor of Mohammed Togrulbek the Turkman, the founder and first Sultan of the Seljuks. It was Sanjar who is credited with Merv's rebirth after the Arabs sacked it, turning it into the cultural capital of Central Asia and inviting eminent Islamic scholars and poets to work there, including the world-famous Omar Khayyam.

The author unearthing a human skeleton (under archaeological supervision) at Margiana, and below, in front of the Sultan Sanjar mausoleum in Merv.



Nearby stand the Great Kyz Kala and the Small Kyz Kala, two remarkable fortresses. Built just before the Arab invasion in the seventh century, they feature a totally unique architectural style, with walls shaped like petrified, undulating waves. Tragically, half of the Small Kyz Kala crumbled in 1995. Mohammed attributed the decay to increased humidity from the

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Karakum Canal built nearby in the 1950s. He predicted the rest would collapse within 10 years and gave the Great Kyz Kala only 20 years to stand. There appears to be little interest in preserving this one-of-a-kind monument.

The Erk-Kala Fortress is a sixth-century B.C. edifice reconstructed during Merv's Greek period by one of Alexander's generals, Antiochius.

Ignorance and Neglect

As happened to most empires throughout history, the Seljuk empire eventually succumbed to a more ruthless conqueror, in this case, the Mongols. At the time, Merv was considered one of the most splendid cities of Islam, boasting a then-unheard-of population of about one million inhabitants (including Christian, Jewish, and Buddhist minorities). The Mongols are credited with slaughtering the entire city. After killing most of the men, they offered safety to the remaining families if they would surrender the city. When they did, they forcibly marched all of them out into the surrounding desert "for a temporary stay." They then watched as hundreds of thousands of women, children, and older people died of dehydration, sunstroke, and starvation. Merv had been effectively annihilated. It is said that the Mongols piled the skulls of the dead in several-meter-high hills all around the charred city. Indeed, one just has to scratch the surface at the Merv archaeological site to unearth human bones.

After the defeat of the Seljuks, the subsequent dynasty moved its capital to a city they named Urgench, which presently straddles the Turkmen-Uzbek border. In pre-Soviet days, it was a whole city, belonging to the Khanate of Khiva and boasting a series of splendid medieval Islamic monuments, mainly burial chapels of imposing proportions. With their arbitrary slicing up of Czarist-era Turkestan (roughly speaking, another name for the whole of present-day Central Asia), the Soviets cut right through the city. They left all of the ancient sites in Turkmenistan (now renamed Kunyurgench; i.e., "old Urgench"), and built an abominable concrete-slab proletarian chicken coop of a city on the Uzbek side, now called by the ancient name of Urgench. Kunyurgench is definitely worth a respectful visit, while Urgench is best honored by avoiding it.

Where neglect is slowly destroying the hauntingly beautiful Kyz Kalas in Merv, sheer ignorance has already obliterated half of the medieval Fortress of Amul, just outside the industrialized city of Chardjou, also on the Turkmen-Uzbek border. Tore, my official guide, sighed as he described how he had played on the site as a child, when it was at least twice as large. Where has all of the mud brick architecture gone? Into a brick factory built on the fortress site. When I visited, other children were playing on it, clambering to the top and exploring orifices that look like entryways to former dungeons. Though the once proud Fortress of Amul is no longer much to look at, it demonstrates the fragility of archeological sites and the wisdom of preserving historical heritage.

A Lost Civilization

In the middle of the forbiddingly huge Karakum Desert — Turkmenistan's "inland sea" of sand, covering most of this California-size country — lies the lost civilization of Margiana. Dating to the Bronze Age, the winsomely named city-state is believed to have been Alexander the Great's capital while he was in Turkmenistan. When the Murghab River — on which Margiana, situated in the river's delta, based its livelihood — changed course, the city was abandoned. Margiana is a bumpy, two-hour ride in a military jeep through the desert from the nearest inhabited settlement.

The ride was well worth it, however, for stretching before us were miles of foundations, streets, occasional ovens, and burial grounds. Pot shards were plentiful. My then-8-year-old son Emmanuel found the scattered human skeletons awesome. One can literally dig for skulls at every step. Talk about a place for a Halloween party! Archaeologists have found numerous sculptures of the tutelary goddess Anahit, reputed to bring good luck and particularly to increase the erotic enjoyment and fertility of women. Male priests, who drank a potent narcotic from ceramic pots studded with animal sculptures, worshipped her. Fascinating examples of both sculptures and pottery can be seen at the Mary Archaeological Museum.

This site is most associated with the famous Russian archaeologist, Victor Sarianidi, who began digging here in the 1970s and continues to this day. His first famous find was a golden treasure of Bakhtrian artifacts in Tillya-Tepe, near the present Afghan town of Shibirgan, not far from Margiana. Subsequently, he located a vast palace and a monumental Zoroastrian fire temple in Gonur-depe, a major town in Margiana. Data obtained there have permitted scientists to determine that Margiana was probably the birthplace of one of the world's major religions, Zoroastrianism (commonly referred to as "fire worship"). For example, in the necropolis of Gonur unusual burial chambers have been unearthed where the walls had evidently been burnt by fire — the first time such a practice was documented in Central Asia. Archaeologists believe that this was done to purify the walls, since Zoroastrians believe that corpses defile the "pure" earth. Interestingly, these burial sites have a lot in common with present-day Turkmen burial sites known as "mazars."

With their arbitrary slicing up of Czarist-era Turkestan (another name for the whole of present-day Central Asia), the Soviets cut right through the city of Urgench.

It should be noted that though Zoroastrianism has seen the number of its adepts shrink thanks to inroads by Islam and Christianity, it is still practiced openly in parts of India and the Caucasus and some of its cultural traditions persist to this day in Central Asia. Indeed, while most Turkmen are at least nominal Moslems, they readily acknowledge that many of their beliefs, folk holidays, customs, and traditions include a great number of pre-Islamic, including Turkic pagan and Zoroastrian, elements. Examples of "fire worship" include springtime festivals, during which young couples jump over fires holding hands; people ride in large swings over open fires; and fires are built to honor forks in the road.

What is the origin of this formidable city-state, or possibly nation? It can truly be said to be shrouded in the dusk of ages. As far as Sarianidi figures it, by the second and third millennia B.C., Aryan-Indo-Iranian people had started occupying the lands of present-day Turkmenistan and other parts of Central Asia. In the Stone Age, the Jeitun culture of agriculturalists and herdsmen formed there — one of the earliest in Central Asia. As the centuries passed, the local population mastered the arts of metal smelting, livestock (especially camel) breeding, and horse domestication. In addition — and most visibly seen at the Margiana site — the ancient Margianians perfected the difficult science of crop irrigation, leading to exceedingly high agricultural yields. What is left of these achievements can now be found in the scattered oases of southern Turkmenistan.

Archaeologists interested in this site have documents pertaining to it only from the middle of the first millennium B.C., when it was part of the Achaemienian dominion, where the ancient Zoroastrian religion held sway. By the end of the fourth century B.C., Alexander the Great occupied this territory (as well as neighboring Afghanistan) with his army, leading to the formation of the better-known Bakhtrian state (mostly in present-day Afghanistan). When Alexander left his conquests to his successors, near-by Margiana fell to the lot of his general, Seleucides. In the middle of the third century B.C., the Parthian kingdom was founded in the foothills of the Kopet Dagh mountains.

A Long View

Finally, a mere half-hour from the American Embassy in Ashgabat are two exciting archaeological sites. Destroyed by the 1948 earthquake that leveled Ashgabat, the 15th-century mosque of Anau is one of Central Asia's most picturesque ruins. Gorgeous blue and green dragons used to twist their tails over the doorway. Now pieces of mosaic are strewn about. The tomb of a reputed Moslem saint is nearby, festooned with ribbons, safety pins and even pacifiers because local lore says leaving offerings will make the barren fertile. Farther on are three tumuli, or mounds, which display an impressive chronological stratification; where they've been excavated, you can see items dating from the Bronze Age to the 19th century.

Possibly Central Asia's most important archaeological site is the ancient Parthian capital of Nissa, referred to by the Parthian kings as their "patrimonial nest."

Parthia once vied with Rome for control of the world. The Parthian kings were defeated in 224 A.D. by the Sassanians, however, and Nissa then became a Sassanian city. As Turkic-speaking peoples spread from Turkmenistan to Siberia, ancient Parthian and Sassanian traditions melded with Turkic agriculturalist and nomadic-herdsmen customs. Nissa remained where it was, but its character reflected the evolving nature of the local civilization. Some stately mud brick buildings (reconstructed to reflect the Parthian era) still stand on their original site. You can enter some rooms and even try your luck at digging (discreetly) a little farther on. As a frequent visitor, I would issue only one warning: Beware the illegal weekend dogfights organized within the ancient walls — those dogs look dangerous!

Possibly Central Asia's most important archaeological site is the ancient Parthian capital of Nissa. Parthia once vied with Rome for control of the world.

From the stately walls of Nissa you can see a long way — all the way back to the Bronze Age of Central Asia. And throughout that vast open space, other archaeological sights of equal importance — though less fame — beckon the connoisseur, dilettante and just plain tourist alike. For all of our sakes, I hope that the present turmoil and instability of Central Asia will soon recede. That would allow this great resource to be preserved and developed with international assistance for the economic and cultural benefit of this fascinating region. ■

Gfoeller and her son Emmanuel on the roofs of Nissa; below, Gfoeller at the Great Kyz Kala; and right, with husband Michael and son in front of the Small Kyz Kyla.

Helping to Reunite Families: The Office of Children's Issues

Resolving international child custody disputes is a high priority for the State Department's Consular Affairs Bureau. The Office of Children's Issues is on the front line of those efforts.

By Barbara J. Greig

As more and more congressional and media attention is focused on international child custody disputes, resolving such issues has become a major focus for the Department of State — both at our embassies and consulates and back in Washington at the Office of Children's Issues in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. Consider the following case study from last year, one of approximately 1,100 in CI's active files.

Seven-year-old Billy (his name has been changed), an out-of-wedlock child, was abducted by his Iranian-born father in July 1999 during an unsupervised visitation period in defiance of a Georgia court order awarding temporary custody to his mother. The mother suspected the father and the child were in Iran when she subsequently received a letter or two from the father with an Iranian postmark. She filed a missing child report with local law enforcement officials, who contacted the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to open a case. Local and federal law enforcement authorities then filed criminal charges against the abducting father and Interpol notices were posted worldwide.

In 2001, the mother married and moved from Georgia to Washington, but she never gave up hope that someday she would be reunited with her child. In late October 2001, U.S. Interpol was notified by their Australian counterpart that the abducting father had been picked up and questioned about a violation of Australian immigration law. He was scheduled to appear for a hearing at a later date. Interpol quickly notified the FBI office in Georgia and both offices made contact with the State Department's Office of Children's Issues. The CI officer immediately called the left-behind mother in Washington, who burst into joyful tears at the news. The officer then told her about the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and explained how to file an application for Billy's return.

Since the abduction had taken place in Georgia, the mother needed an Affidavit of Law from a Georgia attorney affirming her custodial rights at the time Billy was abducted. The attorney who had represented her pro bono during the custody proceedings was delighted to hear that Billy had been found and once more offered his services at no cost to the mother. CI coordinated the collection of all the necessary documents from the mother in Washington, the attorney in Georgia and the FBI agent.

Unfortunately, due partly to Sept. 11-related delays, it took until February 2002 for the application package to reach the Australian government, and, as the U.S. consulate in Perth reported, by that time the abducting parent and the child had disappeared. As local law enforcement authorities searched for them, Australian officials requested that the left-behind mother obtain a passport and be ready to travel at a moment's notice. The Seattle Passport Agency arranged expedited issuance and the Australian Consulate in California pre-cleared mom for visa issuance.

On May 20, 2002, CI was informed that the father and Billy had been located again. Australian officials arranged for an experienced Australian social worker to pick up Billy at the school he was attending, and his father was taken into custody at another location by immigration authorities. As soon as CI

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learned of the pickup, the case officer called the mother. Her excitement was obvious, even over the telephone. Meanwhile, the social worker explained to Billy that, although his father had told him his mother was dead, she was actually alive and well and eager to see him. The mother was put in contact with the Australian social worker and the important job of reunification with her son was initiated: first by e-mail, then by telephone. A Hague hearing was scheduled for early August, and Mom traveled to Australia at the end of June to become reacquainted with her son. A week before the hearing, Billy's new stepfather flew out to Australia and quickly bonded with the child.

Further documents were needed for the Hague hearing, which required coordination with the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the State Department's Visa Office, the Georgia attorney, and the FBI agent. But all the work paid off. On Aug. 7, 2002, the Australian Court ordered Billy's return to the United States, telling the abducting father, "You are an affront to all that is civilized." Billy, his mother and stepfather returned to the United States immediately after the hearing. The father remains in detention in Australia and has filed an appeal of the Hague ruling.

A High Priority

Billy's story had a happy ending, but not all do. Hundreds of children are abducted by a parent and taken abroad each year. The State Department is committed to resolving as many of these cases as possible.

At the recent swearing-in ceremony of Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Maura Harty, both she and Secretary of State Colin Powell stressed that the issue of international parental child abductions remains a high priority for the bureau and the department. And they have backed up their words with actions.

New Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Maura Harty and Secretary of State Colin Powell have backed up their words on child abductions with actions.

• In December 2002, at Assistant Secretary Harty's request, CI sent over 500 letters to the left-behind parents involved in current outgoing cases asking them to indicate if they would be interested in meeting Assistant Secretary Harty to discuss international child custody issues.

• Assistant Secretary Harty traveled to Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Syria in early January 2003 to meet with government officials to discuss child custody and access issues. Future trips to other regions are already in the works.

• On Feb. 24, 2003, Assistant Secretary Harty met with over 70 left-behind parents from all over the United States in Washington, D.C. Speakers from CI, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the FBI and the Department of Justice's Office of Victim Assistance told what each of their agencies did to assist left-behind parents, followed by a Q&A session. The parents expressed their thoughts, ideas and suggestions during brainstorming sessions on the Hague Convention and related topics. The final session on coping with the temporary loss of a child was led by a professional grief therapist. Future meetings will be arranged in other parts of the country in conjunction with Assistant Secretary Harty's visits to passport agencies and attendance at other outreach events.

• State is also increasing efforts to reach bilateral arrangements regarding child custody issues, especially with countries who are not party to the Hague Abduction Convention. For example, CI management, the CI case officer for Egypt and the regional bureau desk officer for Egypt recently met in Washington with a special delegation of government officials from Cairo to discuss ways to improve cooperation in handling such cases.

At the working level, much progress has been made since the last article profiling State's efforts to resolve international child abduction cases appeared in the November 2000 *Foreign Service Journal.* For starters, CI's staffing pattern has increased. In addition to the office director and deputy director, there are 11 case officers (both Foreign and Civil Service), an Abduction Branch Chief and support staff. In 2002, a weeklong training program was developed for new case officers to ensure they can provide a high level of customer service. There are also bimonthly continuing education seminars.

Portfolios are based on workload rather than geographic bureau. An internal analysis in January 2003 showed an average of 66 active cases of children abducted from the U.S. to a foreign country per CI case officer. Each officer handles an average of 10 to 15 incoming calls daily, occasionally receiving a report of an abduction in progress, where a child is actually in the process of being removed from the U.S. In some cases, coordination with law enforcement, airport, immigration and/or customs authorities can delay the departure of the child, but all too often this is not feasible.

Case officers also stay in close contact with left-behind parents, law enforcement authorities and attorneys, update case files, draft and revise flyers on child custody and Hague procedures for the countries

in their portfolios, maintain contact with foreign counterparts and posts, and prepare briefing papers and talking points for demarches and congressional testimony.

Each overseas post has a designated Children's Issues officer, who is encouraged to come to CI for consultations prior to leaving for post. CI case officers also conduct specialized training in child custody and abduction issues as part of advanced consular courses and workshops at the Foreign Service Institute.

While consular officers at overseas posts are charged with protecting the welfare of American citizens abroad, they cannot assist a left-behind parent in breaking the laws of the country where they are assigned. Likewise, a consular officer cannot just take custody of a minor American citizen child and put him/her on the next flight home. But consular officers do a magnificent job of persuading caretakers to allow welfare visits with American citizen children, and CI has noticed a definite trend toward more detailed reporting cables on these visits. They are often able to persuade a caretaker to allow photographs of the child, and may even negotiate permission for direct contact between the left-behind parent and the child. Such contact, while not a substitute for seeking the child's return, allows the left-behind parent to maintain a relationship with their child, and is critical for both parent and child.

An Important Remedy

As Billy's story demonstrates, the Hague Abduction Convention is probably the most important current remedy for resolving international parental child abduction cases. Formulated in 1980 at the Hague Conference on Private International Law, the treaty is a means by which a designated civil court in the country where the child is temporarily located determines the country where custodial issues will be adjudicated.

Approximately 80 percent of abductions involve children with a claim to more than one nationality. In fact, some of our outgoing Hague cases do not involve any U.S. citizens — adults or children — at all, since the convention focuses on a child's habitual residence, not nationality.

Each Hague treaty partner has designated a Central Authority to handle incoming and outgoing applications. Following the 1988 passage of the International Child Remedies Act that implemented the convention in the United States, the Department of State was designated to fulfill the responsibilities of our Central Authority. However, under a special agreement between the State and Justice Departments, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children handles incoming Hague cases. (NCMEC's outstanding ability to locate missing children within the United States is just one of the reasons why this arrangement has proven to be a successful example of public-private partnership.)

Article 3 of the Hague Convention lists five requirements that must be met to file an application: (1) the convention must be in force between the two countries at the time the child is abducted, (2) the child must be under the age of 16, (3) prior to the abduction, the child must have been "habitually resident" in the country from which taken and to which the return is sought, (4) the applicant must have had some form of custodial rights at the time the child was removed or retained, and (5) the applicant must have been actually exercising those rights.

Even if those conditions are all met, the convention defines a few exceptions to return. If the court in the country where the application for return is filed determines that the return of the child will cause grave physical or psychological harm, the application can be denied. Last year, a

HAGUE CONVENTION OF 25 OCTOBER 1980 ON THE CIVIL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL CHILD ABDUCTION

Party Countries and Effective Dates with U.S.

ARGENTINA	1 June 1991
AUSTRALIA	1 July 1988
AUSTRIA	1 October 1988
BAHAMAS	1 January 1994
BELGIUM	1 May 1999
BELIZE	1 November 1989
BOSNIA & HERZ.	1 December 1991
BURKINO FASO	1 November 1992
CANADA	1 July 1988
CHILE	1 July 1994
CHINA - Hong Kong	1 September 1997
- Macau	1 March 1999
COLOMBIA	1 June 1996
CROATIA	1 December 1991
CZECH REPUBLIC	1 March 1998
CYPRUS	1 March 1995
DENMARK	1 July 1991
ECUADOR	1 April 1992
FINLAND	1 August 1994
FRANCE	1 July 1988
GERMANY	1 December 1990
GREECE	1 June 1993
HONDURAS	1 June 1994
HUNGARY	1 July 1988
ICELAND	1 December 1996
IRELAND	1 October 1991
ISRAEL	1 December 1991
ITALY	1 May 1995
LUXEMBOURG	1 July 1988
FMR. YUGOSLAV REP. OF MACEDONIA	1 December 1991
MALTA	1 February 2003
MAURITIUS	1 October 1993
MEXICO	1 October 1991
MONACO	1 June 1993
NETHERLANDS	1 September 1990
NEW ZEALAND	1 October 1991
NORWAY	1 April 1989
PANAMA	1 June 1994
POLAND	1 November 1992
PORTUGAL	1 July 1988
ROMANIA	1 June 1993
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	1 February 2001
SLOVENIA	1 April 1995
SOUTH AFRICA	1 November 1997
SPAIN	1 July 1988
ST. KITTS AND NEVIS	1 June 1995
SWEDEN	1 June 1989
SWITZERLAND	1 July 1988
TURKEY	1 August 2000
UNITED KINGDOM	1 July 1988
Bermuda	1 March 1999
Cayman Islands	1 August 1998
Falkland Islands	1 June 1998
Isle of Man	1 September 1991
Montserrat	1 March 1999
VENEZUELA	1 January 1997
YUGOSLAVIA, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF	1 December 1991
ZIMBABWE	1 August 1995

U.S. court denied the return of a child to a country where terrorist violence is commonplace. Or if more than a year has elapsed since the abduction or retention, the court can find that the child is "resettled."

A return can also be denied if the child has strong objections to return and is "of sufficient age and maturity" to have his or her wishes taken into consideration by the court. For example, a Polish court denied the return of a 14-year old who had immigrated to the United States with his parents but was abducted back to Poland by his father within six months of their arrival. The child testified in court that his school classmates in the U.S. teased him cruelly about his accent and he was beaten up and robbed several times by street gangs. School and police reports corroborated his testimony.

Treaty Partners

We now have 52 Hague Convention treaty partners (see table, p. 59).

The top destination countries where the Hague Convention is in force are Mexico, the United Kingdom, Germany, Israel and Canada. There are approximately 15 other countries that have acceded to the convention, but which the U.S. has not yet accepted as treaty partners. Because of past experience with governments that did not fulfill their responsibilities under the convention, posts in prospective treaty partner countries are asked to evaluate the government's ability and willingness to meet its treaty obligations. These factors include: whether the country is able to locate missing children and report on any gender or nationalistic bias in child custody cases; whether the judiciary is subject to financial or political pressures; and whether there are mechanisms to enforce civil judgments. Only after a careful review does State recognize the country's accession to the convention.

Treaty partners meet once every four years at The Hague in the Netherlands. At the Fifth Special Commission meeting of the Hague Convention, held Sept. 27-October 1, 2002, delegations approved the first chapters of a "Good Practices" guide that will provide useful information to both new and old members.

Regrettably, the convention is not available as a remedy for left-behind parents whose children have been abducted to non-member countries, most commonly the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan and Japan. In those situations, the parent must decide whether to pursue custody through the courts of that country. While the U.S. government cannot pay legal expenses or court fees, act as an attorney, or represent a left-behind parent in court, CI can provide information on retaining a foreign attorney, lists of attorneys who practice in a particular country, and in some cases, general information on child custody issues and precedents. Much of this information is available on the Bureau's Web site: http://www.travel.state.gov/children's_issues.html . In addition, consular officers abroad make every effort to alert the appropriate foreign authorities to any evidence of child abuse and/or neglect, and to monitor judicial and administrative proceedings.

An Ounce of Prevention

CI firmly believes that the proverbial ounce of prevention can avoid a pound of cure. Many of our outreach efforts to the judiciary and attorney networks, the law enforcement community, Congress and the general public are focused on preventative measures. CI has responsibility for the Children's Passport Issuance Alert program — a database of over 2,800 names. Any parent, legal guardian and/or legal representative can request that a U.S. citizen child's name be entered as a lookout. Some requests simply ask that the person be notified if a passport application is submitted; others, backed up by supporting legal documentation such as custody orders, may ask that a passport not be issued. When a passport application is submitted at any of the 16 U.S. passport agencies or at any U.S. embassy or consulate worldwide, and a child custody hold appears, that passport cannot be issued without clearance from CI. Holds remain in the system until the person who placed the hold asks that it be removed or until the child reaches 18. In 2002, CI received an average of 235 passport hold requests each month.

Another helpful measure is the Reid Amendment that took effect in July 2001. The signatures of both parents are now required on all U.S. passport applications for children under the age of 14. Exceptions are made if the applying parent produces a letter of consent from the other parent; a court order of sole custody; or a death certificate for the other parent. There are also exigent circumstances in which a passport may be issued if the child will be endangered, though these situations are more likely to occur overseas and might involve an evacuation or other emergency.

In December 2000 a new database to track international child custody cases was installed in CI. Eventually, portions of this database will be available to overseas posts, NCMEC and the law enforcement community.

Still, there is much work to be done. For example, there are many countries for which we do not yet have flyers describing child custody issues. But our overseas posts are being asked to bring child abduction issues to the attention of foreign governments more often and at higher levels than before. So there should be no doubt of the State Department's ongoing commitment to resolving such cases wherever they may arise. ■

Arabian Nightmare: The Patricia Roush Case

Patricia Roush's 17-year campaign to get her daughters back from Saudi Arabia has received a lot of publicity and high-level congressional attention, but to no avail. She blames the State Department for not doing more to help.

By George Gedda

It was Jan. 25, 1986, a night to remember for Chicagoans. Their beloved Bears, habitual losers, won the Super Bowl. For different, less joyful reasons, it was also a memorable night for Patricia Roush, who was living on the outskirts of the city.

Her daughters, Alia, 7, and Aisha, 3, were spending the evening with Roush's former husband, a Saudi Arabian named Khalid al-Gheshayan, whom she had divorced a month earlier. The two had met at a party in San Francisco in 1975. They wed three years later, but the marriage soon foundered, partly because of his excessive drinking.

As Roush glanced at Alia's Brownie handbook on a nightstand, something told her that all was not well with her daughters. When she tried to call Gheshayan, there was no answer. She rushed over to his residence and was told by a neighborhood child that Gheshayan had taken the girls away in a taxi over their vigorous protests. Days later, he informed her by telephone that he and the girls were in Saudi Arabia.

One of Roush's first calls was to the State Department's Office of Overseas Citizens Emergency Center. Roush says she was told there was nothing they could do for her. But she was not about to give up. She had been given court-ordered custody rights. So to her, Gheshayan's act was an outright kidnapping. Her grief was compounded by the fact that her daughters had been taken to Saudi Arabia, a country known for the subservient role it assigns to anyone who doesn't happen to be male. Beyond that, Gheshayan had a long history of psychiatric and alcohol problems.

Roush's campaign to get back her daughters has now lasted 17 years. She has written to every member of Congress, asking them to plead her case with the Saudis. She has arranged for the hand-delivery of letters to three U.S. presidents. Her lobbying of the State Department has persisted through four secretaries of State and included frequent contact with consular affairs officials.

In 1989, she even employed a private investigator, Ed Ciriello, to find her daughters and bring them back to her. Ciriello, a veteran of Middle East intrigue, hired four Saudis. They made their move on Jan. 18, 1991, just as the Gulf war against Iraq was getting under way. The plotters had the awful misfortune of crossing paths with police in Riyadh who were chasing a traffic violator; Ciriello thought he and his companions were being pursued. Shots were fired, two of Ciriello's accomplices were killed and the mission was aborted.

Since her daughters were whisked away to Saudi Arabia, Roush has seen them only once, during a two-hour meeting at a Riyadh hotel on June 13, 1995, sponsored by a wealthy Saudi sympathizer. The Washington Center of Peace and Justice gives the following account of the meeting:

"They were now young women, clad completely in black draping. They removed their veils, and stood perfectly still. Roush searched their faces, trying to determine which daughter was which. The eyes, of course, provided the answer.

"'Is that Alia?' the mother asked. 'Yes,' was the murmured reply. Roush was overcome with emotion. She ran to the girls sobbing, grabbed them, touching their hair and kissing their faces. They sat on a sofa, Roush in the middle. She showed them photos of themselves when they were small, she told them repeatedly in Arabic that she loved them.

George Gedda is the State Department correspondent for the Associated Press.

"Alia spoke English with an Arabic accent, while Aisha spoke no English at all. Alia told her: 'He (her ex-husband) said you left us here.'

"Roush said, 'Alia, you know that isn't true.' She continued, 'I am going to get you out of here; I am working with the embassy. I will never stop until I bring you home.'

"Gheshayan waited outside the room. But unable to resist a look at his former spouse, he stepped inside for one moment. 'Hello, Patricia,' he said. 'Hello, Khalid,' she answered."

Eight years later, Roush's children, now 24 and 20, are married to Saudis. Aisha has a child. In almost any other country, the sisters, given their respective ages, would be able to pack up and leave if they wished, but under Saudi law a woman cannot depart without the permission of her husband, father or brother. So far as is known, they have never been in a setting in which they have been allowed to voice their true feelings about their situation.

Help From the Hill

By now, Roush's story is known to many Americans, thanks to the visibility the media has given to her plight. But her quest has cost her and her family hundreds of thousands of dollars, much of it in lost time at work, airline tickets, phone bills, attorneys' fees and detective fees.

It has also been for naught. Neither the U.S. nor the Saudi government seems willing or able to do much to help her. The State Department might have more leverage in the case if Saudi Arabia were a member of the Hague Convention, an international agreement that requires signatory countries "to secure the prompt return of children wrongfully removed to or retained in" another member country and "to ensure that rights of custody are effectively respected." The United States ratified the convention in 1988.

Roush's lobbying of the State Department has persisted through four secretaries of State and included frequent contact with consular affairs officials.

In her attempts to reclaim her children from Saudi Arabia, Roush is far from alone: there are at least 10 other current abduction cases involving Saudi parents and American children. But the Roush case is perhaps the most prominent.

Patricia Roush vented her frustrations about her ordeal at a June 2002 hearing of the House Government Reform Committee. The panel was chaired by then-Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., perhaps Roush's strongest supporter on Capitol Hill. Roush told the committee: "My daughters have been stolen and kept in captivity for 16 years — incommunicado with the entire world.

"They have no knowledge of the rest of the world except by way of Saudi Arabian-censored television and the males that are their masters. Saudi Arabia is a totalitarian state where my daughters are locked up, wrapped up and shut up."

Burton, who has a way of getting the media's attention, voiced his own indignation toward the Saudis at a hearing of his committee on Oct. 3. He said he would find ways to increase pressure on the Saudis. "The drumbeat is going to get louder and louder and louder," he said. At one point, he took aim at what he described as Saudi Arabia's male-dominated culture. "If a man tells a woman, 'Don't go to the bathroom,' she doesn't go to the bathroom," he said.

Burton pointed out that Saudi oil imports have declined sharply as a percentage of total U.S. imports and are now in the 15-percent range. He suggested a U.S. embargo on Saudi oil might be appropriate. Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., signaling agreement, replied, "If we have to stand in line for oil, so be it."

Indeed, of the dozen or so lawmakers who attended the hearing, none spoke of Saudi Arabia as an energy, security and trade partner of the United States. All seemed to agree that pressure on Saudi Arabia was entirely appropriate, given the injustices committed against American children.

Burton has never been a favorite among State Department officials who, not surprisingly, believe it would be a mistake to follow his advice and allow the future of U.S. relations with one of the Arab world's most important countries to be determined by its policy on child abduction issues. Nor is it likely that Burton's threats to pressure the Saudis into submission will get very far.

This past fall, Burton's committee tried to subpoena documents from some of the Saudi Embassy's U.S. lobbyists and lawyers, as well as Qorvis Communications, a public relations firm that Burton said is paid $200,000 per month by the Saudis. The Saudi government refused to hand over the documents, contending that internation-

al law gives it immunity from surrendering documents related to its diplomatic mission. Burton maintains that these records could shed light on child custody cases and accusations that the embassy aided the abductors.

The Saudi Perspective

For their part, the Saudis are mystified as to why they are getting far more attention than other countries that have a higher incidence of custody fights that involve international abduction.

"If there is concern with the issue of child custody, the focus should be on the most egregious violators," said Adel al-Jubeir, a spokesman for the Saudi Embassy, speaking at a December news conference. "And the focus should be on the countries that have the largest number of cases, not a country that has less than 1 percent." As examples of countries with worse records, he cited Germany, Austria, Mexico, Canada and England. He said the Saudi Foreign Ministry has established a task force with a view toward setting up mechanisms to resolve child custody cases. However, State Department officials doubt this approach will make a difference.

The State Department would have more leverage in the case if Saudi Arabia were a party to the Hague Convention.

Al-Jubeir suggested the problem may not have a solution. "At the end of the day, these are strictly personal matters between parents [who] happen to be in two different countries, protected and subjected to two different laws." Al-Jubeir had noted previously that while a U.S. court may have decreed that Roush has a right to custody of her daughters, Gheshayan can also claim custody rights, based on an order from a Saudi court that was handed down after he returned to his homeland with his daughters.

Ryan Crocker, a deputy assistant secretary of State in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, told Burton's committee last October that the administration, as well as left-behind parents, have difficulty getting around Saudi law.

Crocker pointed out that the

Saudi government does not consider it illegal for the children of Saudi citizens to be removed from the United States and taken to the kingdom, regardless of their place of habitual residence or lack of consent by the other parent. In addition, the absence of a U.S.-Saudi extradition treaty has rendered meaningless U.S. arrest warrants that have been issued against Saudi abductors who have returned to their homeland.

Crocker also noted that Saudi children must have permission from their father to leave the country. Indeed, it is a crime in Saudi Arabia for women to remove their children from the country without the father's permission.

In some instances, a Saudi parent has allowed a U.S. consular official to check on the well-being of an American child. But only rarely have Saudi parents allowed American-citizen parents to visit their American children.

Crocker testified at the October hearing that abduction cases "are some of the most daunting we deal with ... Let me be perfectly clear: there are no easy answers. We understand the human tragedies involved for the parents as well as the children, and view continued engagement, no matter how disheartening and difficult, as a major priority."

A Trip to London

The Roush case took a bizarre twist last summer when Burton led a delegation to Saudi Arabia to discuss the abduction of Alia and Aisha, as well as other kidnapping cases. As the delegation was flying to Saudi Arabia in late August, the Saudi government flew the Roush sisters and their husbands to London, where Alia and Aisha issued a statement condemning their mother and saying they had no desire to return to the U.S. They reaffirmed that view in a meeting with a State Department consular official and in an off-camera interview with a producer from the Fox network's widely watched show, "The O'Reilly Factor," hosted by Bill O'Reilly.

State's critics say it is unwilling to risk U.S. relations with one of the Arab world's most important countries over its policy on child abduction issues.

Joining the producer were a Saudi public relations official and a Fox translator. The sisters' husbands were not present. O'Reilly interviewed the producer, Stacey Hocheiser, and Roush on camera a few days after the London meeting.

O'Reilly said he believed the London trip offered the girls the opportunity to make a "run for freedom," which they passed up. Hocheiser said the sisters, in addition to denouncing their mother, discussed other issues. According to Hocheiser, Aisha, the younger sister, thought that Osama bin Laden was a "peaceful" person. Alia, he said, believed the United States was a violent country. Both acknowledged, however, that they knew no Westerners. There is no way of corroborating Hocheiser's account of the meeting.

Roush insisted on the program that the London trip proved nothing. "You've got Saudi Arabian men

on the grounds, relatives, their husbands — God knows who else was there behind the scene," she said. "My daughters had no chance to say what they wanted to say," she said.

Burton wrote a memo in late September to other members of the Government Reform Committee in which he sided with Roush. He said the only person who might be able to communicate effectively with the sisters was their mother, who was not informed of the London visit until afterward. The trip, euphemistically described as a "vacation," was paid for by the Saudi government. Burton wrote that the trip seemed intended to undermine his mission to Saudi Arabia before their plane had even landed in Riyadh.

William McGurn, the *Wall Street Journal*'s chief editorial writer, agreed with Burton. He said the London trip should not be construed as the last word because all it did was bring the sisters "out of one controlled environment into another."

Enter Maura Harty

Roush, no great admirer of the State Department, was an outspoken critic of President Bush's choice this past summer of career diplomat Maura Harty to replace Mary Ryan as assistant secretary for the Consular Affairs Bureau. Rightly or wrongly, Ryan had been a lightning rod for criticism following the disclosure that her bureau had issued visas to the Sept. 11 terrorists.

The opposition of Roush and other parents of abducted children to Harty's nomination was based mostly on Harty's role in creating and overseeing the Office of Children's Issues in the Consular Affairs bureau in the mid-1990s. Abductions are a prime responsibility of that office. Roush told the

Washington Times that Harty's record "was one of indifference bordering on hostility toward the interests of parents of abducted children."

Officials say the State Department is taking a far more active role as an advocate for these parents. The abduction unit of the office now employs 17 officers and staff devoted exclusively to working with left-behind parents to resolve their cases. The office currently handles approximately 1,100 international parental child abduction cases — including abductions *to* the United States.

Responding to Roush and other critics, Secretary of State Colin Powell defended the selection of Harty in a statement on Nov. 1, calling her "an experienced leader and a firm decision-maker." Her talents have been evident to at least three secretaries of State — Powell, Warren Christopher and George Shultz; she served each either as special assistant or executive assistant.

U.S. officials also say it is unseemly for Roush and other parents of abducted children to take their wrath out on Harty, a 21-year veteran of the Foreign Service. For one thing, they point out that Consular Affairs and all other bureaus take their cues on policy from higher-ups. On cases involving Saudi Arabia, officials say that however regrettable such cases may be, they must not be allowed to dominate one of the most important U.S. relationships in the Arab world.

Friends or Foes?

The extensive criticism of Saudi Arabia growing out of these cases is part of a larger sequence of events, mostly related to terrorism, that have roiled U.S.-Saudi relations for well over a year.

Nowadays, the kingdom is perhaps known less for its role as a U.S. ally in the Middle East than as the place that produced Osama bin Laden and 15 of the 19 Sept. 11 bombers. There are believed to be about 100 Saudis among the 600 suspected foreign terrorists being detained at the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Allegations persist that Saudi-based individuals and charities provided financing for al-Qaida.

State's critics say it is unwilling to risk angering Riyadh over its policy on child abduction issues.

The Bush administration continues to tout Saudi cooperation in the war on terrorism but acknowledges that more can be done. Saudi officials say that as of October, the kingdom had questioned 2,800 individuals and detained more than 200 suspects, including those involved with al-Qaida. They say intelligence sharing has resulted in the freezing of more than $70 million linked to terrorist organization financial accounts.

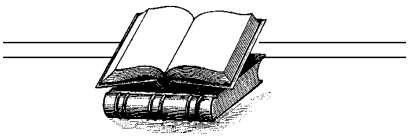
But the relationship seems much more vulnerable now than it did a year and a half ago, when Saudi Arabia was best known as a reliable energy supplier to the United States, boasting 25 percent of total oil reserves worldwide. It could be counted on, and still is, to jack up production when prices rose too high, thereby helping to bring them down. Almost forgotten amid the criticism nowadays is the Saudi role as a major market for the United States, vying with Israel as the chief purchaser of American products.

Total U.S. sales to Saudi Arabia in 2000 were $6.2 billion. In the fall of 2001, the Bush administration welcomed a Saudi proposal for settling Israel's conflict with the Palestinians. The United States has reciprocated Saudi friendship by serving as a guarantor of Saudi security. Thousands of U.S. troops are stationed outside Riyadh, guarding the kingdom against would-be predators, including Iraq.

So is the United States doing enough to help Roush and other American parents in a similar situation? The State Department says it is doing all it can, but getting around Saudi law has proved an insurmountable problem.

However, Daniel Pipes, author of five books on the Middle East, says the administration is not applying enough pressure on the Saudis. Writing in the winter 2002 edition of *National Interest* magazine, Pipes says that in cases involving the abduction of American children by Saudi parents, "the State Department has behaved with a weakness bordering on sycophancy." Specifically, he says that the State Department "has accepted the Saudi law that gives the father near-absolute control over the movement and activities of his children and wife (or wives)."

Pipes says that State's obsequiousness is not limited to the issues of child abduction. "The Saudis routinely set the terms of this bilateral relationship," he writes. "For decades, U.S. government agencies have engaged in a persistent pattern of deference to Saudi wishes, making so many unwonted and unnecessary concessions that one gets the impression that a switch has taken place, with both sides forgetting which of them is the great power and which the minor one." ■



BOOKS

A Bloody Consistency

Saddam: King of Terror
Con Coughlin, Harper Collins, 2002, $26.95, hardcover, 350 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVID CASAVIS

The best biographies usually come out decades after the death of their subjects, but while many who knew them still live to tell the tale. *Saddam: King of Terror* by Con Coughlin is an exception to this practical rule. In spite of personal danger, he uses in-depth research and a wealth of Iraqi and other sources to show us how consistently bloody Saddam's career has been.

The book gets off to a strong start with a vivid account of Saddam's early life, which was undeniably miserable. So it is perhaps understandable that some of his classmates recall his slipping a snake into a religious teacher's robe during an embrace as just a boyish prank. And even his viciousness as a young street tough, copiously documented by Coughlin, could perhaps be explained away as the legacy of Saddam's being cruelly belittled and bullied as a child.

In any case, he never forgot such slights to himself and his family, and exacted revenge on his tormentors many years later. When a senior military officer confided to his mistress that he had once slept with Saddam's mother, the conversation was taped by Iraqi secret police and a transcript handed to Saddam. The officer, his mistress and his son were soon executed.

Coughlin sheds especially valuable light on the viciousness of Saddam Hussein's early career.

But Coughlin makes clear that Saddam was not just a thug. Looking at the book's many photos, the astute reader will notice that in the early ones, the young Saddam is slavishly attentive to far more important Baath Party members, and makes no effort to be the center of attention.

Yet Saddam's relationship with former Iraqi president Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr, his mentor and kinsman, and the most important influence on his life and career, shows that loyalty is a one-way street for him. While it was long assumed that Bakr died after a long struggle with disease, Coughlin presents compelling evidence that Saddam had him murdered after he heard talk advocating Bakr's return to power.

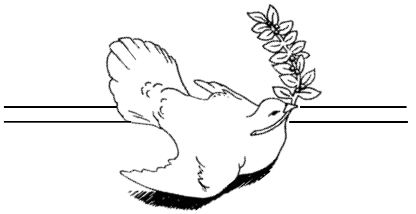
The book also sheds light on the failed 1959 assassination attempt on General Quassem that launched Saddam's political career. Coughlin cites the attending doctor's statement that Saddam not only ruined the operation by firing too early, but was only grazed in the subsequent bloodbath. Middle East specialists familiar with Iraqi propaganda industry films surrounding this event will find a stark contrast with the real story.

Coughlin's detailed account of Saddam's famous meeting with April Glaspie, the last U.S. ambassador to Iraq, on the eve of his 1990 invasion of Kuwait will be particularly thought-provoking for Foreign Service officers — as is Joseph Wilson's (the American charge d'affaires in Baghdad after Glaspie's recall) later demarche seeking guarantees for the security of Saudi Arabia. FSOs may well wonder what they would do, and how easily things could go wrong, in a similar situation.

For their part, no matter how long and distinguished their careers, Iraqi diplomats are always vulnerable under Saddam's regime. Consider Salim Shakir, a former Iraqi army officer who became a hero for his role in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. While serving as ambassador to Senegal, Shakir obeyed a call to return to Baghdad for consultations. But instead of being debriefed on new diplomatic objectives, he was arrested at the airport for alleged disloyalty and tortured. When he dared to ask Saddam upon his release how he would feel if he had executed him by mistake, the dictator replied, "It is far better to kill an innocent man than to allow a guilty man to survive."

That chilling quote — like the rest of *Saddam: King of Terror* — is a salutary reminder of just how far Saddam Hussein will go to stay in power. ■

David Casavis works for the U.S. Department of Commerce in New York City.



In Memory

Robert M. Brandin, 83, retired FSO, died Feb. 6 at the Monadnock Community Hospital in Peterborough, N.H., after a sudden illness. He was a resident of Jaffrey, N.H.

Mr. Brandin was born in New York City on March 2, 1919, the son of Nils and Dorothy (Mead) Brandin. He was raised on Long Island and in Northern New Jersey. Mr. Brandin graduated from Princeton University in 1940.

One week after Pearl Harbor, Mr. Brandin entered the Department of State where he was assigned to consular and economic warfare work at Embassy Madrid. He was also involved in special intelligence missions throughout southern France.

In 1947, Mr. Brandin was sent to Columbia University to study graduate economics. It was there that he met and married his wife, Barbara M. Lockton, a former captain in the Women's Army Corps.

In June 1948, Mr. and Mrs. Brandin were transferred to the American legation in Helsinki, where Mr. Brandin was chief of the economic section. In 1950, he was transferred to Paris as the first secretary in the American embassy working on military aid to France for Indo-China. Later, Mr. Brandin was the chief of the economic section of the U.S. mission in West Berlin, and was in charge of the financial aid program there.

After returning to Washington, D.C. in 1958, Mr. Brandin attended the National War College and studied national defense and foreign policy. Following this training, Mr. Brandin was placed in charge of Northern European affairs and was appointed deputy director of German affairs during the Berlin Crisis of 1961. In 1963 he became the deputy chief of mission at the American embassy in Vienna, and in 1967 was transferred to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, where he served as political advisor to two Supreme Allied commanders. Later, Mr. Brandin served as deputy chief of mission in Athens and Mexico City. He and his family retired to Jaffrey, N.H., in 1975.

In Jaffrey, Mr. Brandin served on the Planning Board and other town committees. He was president of the Amos Fortune Forum and the Thorndike Pond Club. Mr. Brandin was also a part-time lecturer in economics and history at Nathaniel Hawthorne College and Franklin Pierce College.

Mr. Brandin's wife of 54 years, Barbara M. (Lockton) Brandin, died one day after he did. Mr. Brandin is survived by his four children; a daughter, Robin Brandin of Albuquerque, N.M., and three sons, Christopher Brandin of Colorado Springs, Colo., Eric Brandin of Portsmouth, N.H., and Raymond Brandin of Nottingham, N.H.; and six grandchildren.

A memorial service will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Mr. Brandin's name to the Salvation Army, 15 Roxbury Plaza, PO Box 417, Keene, NH 03431. To send condolences to the family or for more information, please visit the Web site: www.cournoyerfh.com.

Barbara M. Brandin, 81, wife of the late FSO Robert M. Brandin, died Feb. 7 at the Monadnock Community Hospital in Peterborough, N.H., after a sudden illness.

Mrs. Brandin was born in New York City on May 23, 1921, the daughter of Raymond P. and Helen (Berkery) Lockton. She spent most of her childhood in Harrington Park, N.J.

Mrs. Brandin enlisted in the U.S. Army, Women's Army Corps in August 1942. She attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned on Aug. 13, 1943. She was stationed in Berlin from July 1945 to March 1946. After achieving the rank of captain, Mrs. Brandin separated from the Army on March 15, 1946, to take a position at Embassy Moscow. She left Moscow in 1947 and returned to New York to attend Columbia University, where she met Foreign Service officer and husband-to-be Robert M. Brandin.

Shortly after their marriage in June 1948, Mr. and Mrs. Brandin were transferred to Helsinki, where their first child, daughter Robin, was born. They subsequently did tours of duty in Paris, Berlin, Washington, D.C., Vienna, at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in

Belgium, in Athens, and Mexico City. During this period their three sons — Christopher, Eric and Raymond — were born. When Bob retired from the Foreign Service in 1975, the Brandins moved to Jaffrey, N.H., where they both were very active in the community.

Mrs. Brandin is survived by four children and six grandchildren. A memorial service will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Mrs. Brandin's favorite charities: Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, 5001 Angel Canyon Road, Kanab, UT 84741; American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Membership and Donor Services, 424 East 92nd Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 101298; or, Wolf Haven, 3111 Offut Lake Road, Tenino, WA 9858.

To send condolences to the family or for more information, please visit the Web site: www.cournoyerfh.com.

Consuelo Mata-Olalde Farmer, 66, wife of retired USIA FSO Guy W. Farmer, died Feb. 12 at the Evergreen Hospice in Kirkland, Wash., of pancreatic cancer.

Mrs. Farmer was born May 26, 1936, in Mexico City. She graduated from high school and secretarial school there before emigrating to the United States in 1960 to work at the Mexican Government Tourist Office in Los Angeles. She and her husband were married in his hometown of Seattle later that year. After living in Klamath Falls, Ore., for two years, they moved to Carson City in January 1962, when he was named Associated Press correspondent in the Nevada capital.

Mrs. Farmer became an American citizen in 1967, when her husband joined the Foreign Service. Together, over the next 28 years, they lived and worked in Bogota, Canberra, Caracas, Lima, Madrid, Mexico City, Newport, R.I., and Washington, D.C., while maintaining their permanent, legal residence in Carson City. Mrs. Farmer used her bilingual abilities as secretary to the first State Department anti-narcotics coordinator in Bogota, and also managed the American Embassy Commissary in Madrid, in addition to undertaking extensive charity work with embassy women's organizations.

The Farmers moved back to Carson City in 1995 following his retirement from the Foreign Service. During the past four years Mrs. Farmer volunteered at the Ross Medical Clinic, which provides free medical care to indigent patients.

In addition to her husband of 42 years, Mrs. Farmer is survived by two children, Guy J. Farmer of Reno, Nev., and Maria Consuelo Farmer of Seattle; an older sister, Lucia Mata de Flores of Mexico City, and numerous nieces and nephews. A brother, Rodolfo Mata, preceded her in death.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Ross Medical Clinic, c/o "FISH," 131 E. Long St., Carson City, NV 89706 and/or the Lustgarten Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research, 1111 Stewart Ave., Bethpage, NY 11714.

Ralph Anson Jones, 84, retired FSO, died on Feb. 10 at the Moravian Hall Square Nursing Home in Nazareth, Pa.

Born in 1918 in Mount Bethel, Pa., Mr. Jones received his B.A. degree from Penn State University in 1938 and an M.A. degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1939.

Mr. Jones entered the U.S. Foreign Service in 1941, and during his 29-year career served overseas in Chile, Brazil, Poland, Thailand, Germany, Spain, the Soviet Union and Kenya. He also served in the Department of State in Washington as deputy director of the Office of U.S.-USSR Exchanges in the 1960s, during a critical time in U.S.-Soviet relations.

After Mr. Jones was medically retired in 1970, he made his home in the Washington area, working for three years for the Conservation Foundation and for four years with the Gallup Poll.

Mr. Jones was a longstanding member of the National Cathedral Association in Washington, and served as the NCA representative on the Committee for Selection and Supervision of the Cathedral Young Volunteers-in-Service. He taught at the Cathedral Medieval Workshop, and he worked on several D.C. Habitat for Humanity building projects. His many civil rights activities included participation in Dr. Martin Luther King's 1965 Selma to Montgomery (Alabama) freedom march and helping to desegregate Bethesda, Md. Boy Scout Troop 134 in 1963. He was scoutmaster of that troop from 1962 to 1966.

During World War II, Mr. Jones served with the U.S. Army in the Philippines, China and Japan. He was a charter member of the Department of State American Legion Post 68, and a member of both the Sons of the American Revolution and the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War.

His wife, Margaret Elizabeth Bayer, died in 1952. One son, Timothy, died in 1969. He is survived by another son, Philip, and a daughter-in-law, Jill O'Hara, of Mt. Bethel, Pa.

Dr. Joseph Trotwood "J.T." Kendrick, 82, retired FSO of Vail, Colo., died on Jan. 2 of complications following surgery to repair a fractured neck.

Dr. Kendrick was born and raised in the Oklahoma farm community of Pryor Creek. Following two years at the University of Oklahoma, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Nicaragua in 1941. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy as a Russian-language intelligence officer. Dr. Kendrick returned to the Foreign Service in 1946, and served subsequently in Poland, the Soviet Union, Germany, Afghanistan, France and Norway. He also worked at the Department of Defense and the Department of State in Washington, D.C. During this same period he earned a B.S. degree at Georgetown University and an M.A. at Columbia University.

After leaving the Foreign Service, Dr. Kendrick wrote comprehensive analyses for Congress on the process of consultation between the executive and legislative branches regarding foreign affairs. He also earned a Ph.D. in political science at George Washington University, and produced a book on the genealogy of the Kendrick family. In his late 60s, Dr. Kendrick, an avid trekker, realized his dream of climbing to the Everest base camp. He skied and played tennis throughout his 70s and, as he turned 80, rounded out his academic career with a year of classical studies in England at Cambridge University.

On the eve of his death, he, along with a German and a British colleague, finished a book on their exploration and cultural study of remote areas of Afghanistan. Proceeds from the book, to be published in 2003, will go to Afghan charity.

Dr. Kendrick is survived by a sister, Betty; three daughters, Pamela, Juliette, and Katherine; and seven grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son, Drew. A memorial celebration of Dr. Kendrick will be held later this year in Pryor Creek.

For those wishing to make a contribution in memory of Dr. Kendrick, the family suggests a charity of the contributor's own choice or an Afghan charity such as Humanitarian Assistance for Women and Children of Afghanistan (HAWCA), 1220 Venice Blvd., #315, Venice, CA 90390 (www.hawca.org).

Thomas D. Lofgren, 62, retired FSO with USAID, died Nov. 23 at the Northern Virginia Hospice in Arlington, Va., of cancer.

Mr. Lofgren was born in Greeley, Colo., on Jan. 10, 1940, to Vernon and Ann Lofgren. After receiving his early schooling in Greeley, he graduated in 1962 from the University of Colorado in Boulder with a degree in political science. Following graduation, he joined the Peace Corps and served two years in Zomba, Malawi, teaching history and English at the Malosa Secondary School. Upon returning to the United States, he earned a master's degree in international relations from the University of Pittsburgh, where he met his wife, Marcie. They were married there in 1971.

Mr. Lofgren joined USAID in 1969. Accompanied by his wife, his career included tours in Vietnam, Kenya, Somalia, Malawi and Moldova, where he was country affairs officer.

In addition to his wife, of Washington, D.C., Mr. Lofgren is survived by his mother and brother Jack, both of Greeley, and brother James, of Denver.

Yvette Paule Francoise LeDain Munn, 75, wife of retired FSO Lewright Munn, died at her home in Reston, Va. of cancer on Dec. 18, 2002.

Mrs. Munn was born on June 27, 1927, in Hanoi, Tonkin (then French Indochina) to the late Col. Paul LeDain and Albertine LeDain of the French Colonial Service. During World War II, the LeDain family were interned by the Japanese. Following the Japanese surrender, the family returned to their ancestral homes in Toulon and Chateau Chinon, France, later settling in Bellevue, a suburb of Paris.

According to her obituary in *The Reston Observer*, Mrs. Munn met Lewright Browning Munn, a next-door neighbor of her aunt, during a visit to the United States in 1947 for medical care. While in Washington, D.C., Mrs. Munn worked as an executive secretary in the Office of the French Economic Mission with the Economic Cooperation

Administration for three and a half years. She returned to France on the death of her father, and became an executive secretary in the French shipping company Chargeurs Reunis in Paris.

By this time Mr. Munn, who had joined the Foreign Service in 1947, was working for the American consulate general in Bremen, Germany. After numerous trips to Paris and an exchange of letters, the couple became engaged on Washington's birthday and were married in a civil ceremony in the mayor's office on Sept. 21, 1951.

Mrs. Munn accompanied her husband on his travels and lived in nine countries. Their children Sharon Claudette and Alan Paul were born in Athens, Greece; Alison Leslie was born in Tripoli, Libya. Following Mr. Munn's retirement in 1975, the family lived in Florida, Virginia, and North Carolina, before settling in Reston, Va.

Mrs. Munn is survived by her husband; her children Sharon Claudette Shell of Chalfont, Pa., Alan Paul of Indianapolis, Ind., and Alison Leslie of Centreville, Va.; and three grandchildren, Kelley Leanne Shell, Brett Patrick Shell and Sara Kathleen Shell.

The family plans to hold a memorial service for Mrs. Munn at Arlington National Cemetery in the spring of 2003.

James Richard Todd, 82, retired FSO and one of the first African-Americans in the U.S. Foreign Service, died Jan. 3 in Red Bank, N.J.

Mr. Todd was born in Ashville, N.C., but moved with his family to Philadelphia, where he was raised. He attended Morris Brown College in Atlanta and Howard University in Washington, D.C. Following graduation, he worked at the Department of Defense in Washington, where he met his wife, Norma.

In 1945, shortly after their marriage, Mr. Todd joined the State Department, the 11th African-American inducted into the Foreign Service. He was posted to Egypt.

This was a breakthrough for the Foreign Service; all 10 previous African-American FSOs had served only in Liberia, the nation founded by freed slaves from the U.S. in 1820. The Todds' first daughter, Cynthia, was born in Cairo; their second, Coralie, was born in Tel Aviv. During a 35-year career, Mr. Todd was assigned to posts in the Middle East, Europe and Asia, retiring in 1980 after serving as head of the visa section in the U.S. consulate in Madras, India.

Following retirement, the Todds settled in Red Bank. According to his Asbury Park Press obituary, Mr. Todd then worked for several years as a customer service representative for Sears. Since 1984, he had assisted his wife, who is director of the Lunch Break program in Red Bank, and traveled throughout the U.S. He was a member of St. Augustine's Church and was active in his fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. in Red Bank.

Mr. Todd's daughter, Cynthia Todd-Takeyama, said that as one of the first African-Americans in the U.S. Foreign Service and the first posted to a country other than Liberia, her father had made a significant contribution to the civil rights movement. It was an honor and a responsibility, she said, because it carried with it the obligation to mentor. That was a task her father, who knew several languages, including Arabic, French, German and Hebrew, took up willingly, to the benefit of many young people.

"Many of us aren't concerned enough about others, but James had a great sense of love for helping people," Norma Todd told the family members and friends who gathered at the memorial service for Mr. Todd at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church on Jan. 11.

In addition to his wife of 58 years, Norma, Mr. Todd is survived by daughters Cynthia and Coralie; a son-in-law, Glenn; an aunt, Annie; two granddaughters, Korinne and Erika; many nieces, nephews, a godson, and cousins; his church family, Alpha fraternity brothers, and many cherished friends.

F. Donley Trebbe, 75, retired FSO, died on Oct. 16, 2002, in Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Trebbe was born in Galesburg, Ill. He went to school there and joined the U.S. Air Force in 1944, serving until 1947. From 1947 to 1953, he served in the Department of the Army in Europe, and during that period developed a lasting interest in foreign affairs. After returning to the U.S., Mr. Trebbe worked as a commercial photographer from 1953 to 1957.

In 1957, he joined the U.S. Foreign Service, and served as a cryptographer in Austria, Vietnam, France, Burma, Thailand, Norway, Cambodia, and Portugal. He retired in 1976 and settled in Illinois.

Mr. Trebbe is survived by a brother, and cousins Gayle Hurley of Illinois and Terry Hurley of Indiana. ■

Please send your **In Memory** item to: *FSJ*, 2101 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, or e-mail to journal@afsa.org, or fax to (202) 338-8244.

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Online resource page at www.afsa.org, CLICK on the marketplace tab, CLICK on Property Management

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Washington Management Services	202 462-7212	wms@wmsdc.com	wmsdc.com	DC, MD, VA	78

[1] District of Columbia, Maryland, Northern Virginia

REFLECTIONS

Big City Fix

BY SIMON HANKINSON

I live in Suva, which is a nice, quiet, friendly town of about 100,000. There are two buildings of more than 10 stories, a movie theater, about a hundred Chinese restaurants, a market, and some streets full of low-rise little shops. In Fiji, the dress code is strictly 1950s Biloxi on a Sunday. I like it here, but once in a while I need an urban escape.

To me, a real city is not just about size or population. First, it's a place where you can feel movement, energy — the collective forward force of civilization. Real cities have a tangible atmosphere of ancestral achievement: monuments, noble public buildings, museums, theaters, and restaurants, testaments to an enduring culture. The easiest way to tell a tell a proper city is by the smell – not the familiar hardship-tour pungency of diesel, drainage and dung-fires, but a fine blend of the sophisticated and the elemental: competing ethnic cooking vapors, coffee, car and bus fumes, baking, perfume and garbage juice (the ineradicable fluid that seeps out of a pile of black trash bags over a three-day summer trash strike). That combination of smells, mixed with the hot-dough baking steam of pretzels, takes me back to summer days in New York (let's face it, the ur-city) when I was a kid. Some years ago I met our family lawyer, an octogenarian who had worked for my great-grandfather's firm. Despite being blind since his teens, he had traveled the world — India, Africa, Europe — by ship. I didn't ask but I imagine he told each place apart by its distinct cocktail of odors.

A short-sleeved shirt costs a whole day's per diem.

Lastly, a real city has serious shopping. In Fiji, there is not much to spend one's money on. In Sydney, by contrast, I wander into places where I can't afford anything. In one mall off Market Street, I see nothing but boutiques in which scarcely a pair of socks is within budget. I wander in and out of several of them in guilty awe before buying an espresso and two small chocolates from Godiva ($5) as an excuse to stay and watch the people. Hong Kong is worse. In the mall below our hotel, there are three floors of Euro-designer stores all using a hundred square feet to display three handbags and a pair of shoes. (You can imagine what the shoes must cost, to afford that rent.) There are no price tags and a short-sleeved shirt costs a whole day's per diem. I feel like I have been plucked out of 1970s Smolensk and dropped into the Mall of the Americas the week after Christmas. It is good for the ego to realize that, whatever one's apparent economic status in a Third World country, there are plenty of places where a State Department salary is barely bus money, and plenty of people who put more cash on their backs in a year than I put in my Thrift Fund. After two days of only being able to afford the food court, I'm starting to feel a little 214b, so I go to Kowloon and buy 10 watches for 15 bucks and a handful of "silk" ties that, when unwrapped, seem to have been tailored for Herve Villechaize.

After a week, I am happy to be back in Fiji. The peaceful, traffic-free drive back from the airport takes me past quiet, burned-out sugar cane farms, criss-crossed with sluggish, overloaded, miniature cane-trains; through a pine-forest; and on via the coast road with its beautiful bays full of shallow, clear, blue water and waves breaking on the distant reef. But back in Suva, driving down its low-rise main street, the countdown starts ticking for my next big city fix. ■

Simon Hankinson is a vice consul in Suva. The stamp is courtesy of the AAFSW Bookfair "Stamp Corner."

AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • April 2003

RECOGNIZING RETIREES IN ACTION

AFSA Presents First National Alumni Service Award

BY THOMAS SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Scott L. Behoteguy of Sarasota became the first recipient of the AFSA National Alumni Service Award on Jan. 24. The purpose of the newly established award is to honor retirees who, in the eyes of their colleagues, do the most to develop a foreign affairs constituency in their area of residence. Through this new award program, AFSA seeks to recognize Foreign Service retirees who voluntarily continue to support and explain American diplomacy after they retire from active U. S. government service. In addition to Behoteguy, a number of other AFSA retirees will receive the award during 2003.

The first award was presented to Behoteguy at a Foreign Service Retirees Association luncheon in Bradenton, Fla. on Jan. 24 by AFSA Communications Director Thomas Switzer. The award was given in recognition of his more than 25 years of outstanding volunteer service in the Sarasota area.

Retirement does not describe Behoteguy's vigorous lifestyle of recent decades. Almost immediately after arriving in Sarasota he became active in groups like the Foreign Service Retirees Association of Florida, the United Nations Association of

Continued on page 6

AFSA Communications Director Tom Switzer presents first Alumni Service Award to Scott Behoteguy on Jan. 24.

WELCOMING ALUMNI BACK

Join AFSA for Foreign Affairs Day

Mark your calendars for Friday, May 9, when the next Foreign Affairs Day will take place. Invitations for this event were mailed out by the State Department in March to all those who attended last year, as well as everyone newly retired in 2002. If you have not received an invitation, e-mail foreignaffairsday@state.gov, or call Peter Whaley at (202) 663-2383.

Secretary Powell is scheduled to deliver the keynote address and will also preside at the AFSA Memorial Plaque ceremony. This year the ceremony will take place at approximately 10:20 a.m. at the site of the Memorial Plaque in the C Street lobby of the State Department. The plaque honors

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GOVERNING BOARD TERM
JULY 15, 2003 TO JULY 15, 2005

AFSA ELECTION RESULTS

Here is the final ballot tabulation for the 2003 AFSA Governing Board Election, as certified by the AFSA Election Committee on March 4, 2003.

Winners are marked with an asterisk. Each candidate's name is followed by the number of votes received.

Total Ballots Returned: 2,470

President	*John W. Limbert (2,292)
Secretary	*Tex Harris (2,310)
Treasurer	*Danny Hall (30 write-in)
AID VP	Joe Pastic (85)
	*Bill Carter (120)
AID Rep	*Thomas Olson (171)
CS VP	*Charles A. Ford (64)
CS Rep	*William Crawford (67)
FAS VP	*Lloyd Fleck (29)
FAS Rep	*Mike Conlon (4 write-in)
IBB Rep	*Alex Belida (7)
State VP	*Louise Crane (792)
State Rep	*Pamela Bates (687)
	*Cynthia G. Efird (668)
	*Scot L. Folensbee (649)
	Danny Hall (497)
	*Raymond D. Maxwell (607)
	*John C. Sullivan (659)
	*Jim Wagner (625)
Retiree VP	*George F. Jones (1,213)
Retiree Rep	*Gilbert Sheinbaum (1,167)
	*David E. Reuther (1,145)
	*Theodore S. Wilkinson (1,190)
	*Stanley A. Zuckerman (1,153)

Questions regarding the election should be directed to Susan Reardon, Executive Director, (202) 944-5505/reardon@afsa.org or Robert Wozniak, Election Committee Chair, (202) 686-0996. □

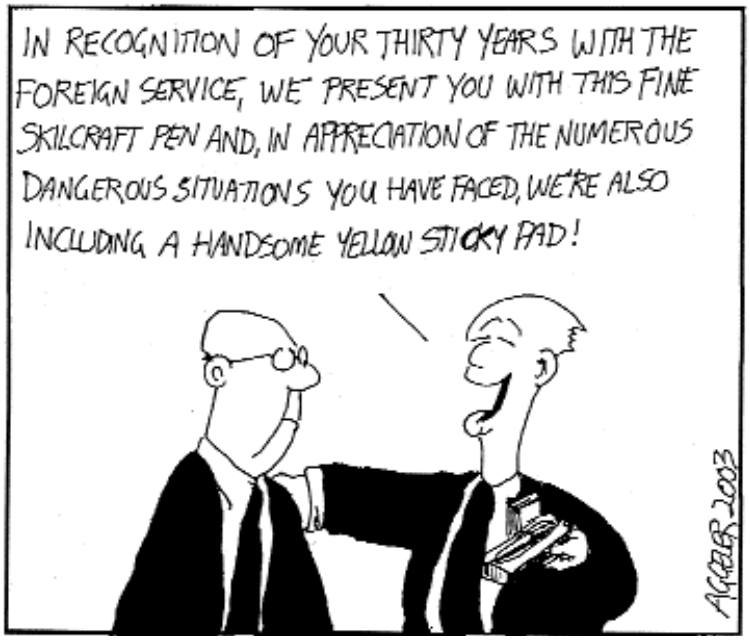
AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Legislative Update: Funding for Diplomatic Readiness

Some 136 days late, Congress finally passed an appropriations bill funding the foreign affairs agencies for the fiscal year (2003) that began last Oct. 1. Secretary Powell's requests for funding people, technology and facilities fared well. Meanwhile, Secretary Powell has already started making the rounds on Capitol Hill testifying for the president's Fiscal Year 2004 budget request for international affairs. The secretary's testimony can be found at www.state.gov.

Life in the Foreign Service

BY BRIAN AGGELER, FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER & CARTOONIST



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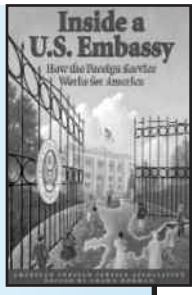

Inside a U.S. Embassy: How the Foreign Service Works for America

Do your friends and relatives in the U.S. still get that glazed-over look in their eyes when you try to explain exactly what the Foreign Service is and what kind of work you do? Help give them a clue.

The most informative book on the inner workings of the Foreign Service is now available. AFSA's all-new edition of *Inside a U.S. Embassy: How the Foreign Service Works for America*, is a must-read for anyone who wants to know more about the people who work in American embassies and consulates around the world, and about how embassies operate.

Inside a U.S. Embassy includes profiles of outstanding representatives in each type of Foreign Service position. The book also includes a series of one-day, hour-by-hour journal entries from Foreign Service members around the world, illustrating what Foreign Service employees in different jobs actually do on the job. The selection of stories in the final section highlights tales of the extraordinary in Foreign Service work.

We hope you will invite your friends and relatives to share the real-life experiences of work and life in the Foreign Service: the coups, the evacuations, the adventures, the heroics, and the everyday challenges and rewards of representing America to the world.

TO ORDER: Go to www.afsa.org/inside or call 1 (847) 364-1222 to place an order by phone.

The price of the book is $12.95 plus shipping and handling. Proceeds from the sale of the book will be used to enhance and expand AFSA's public outreach efforts.

Briefs • Continued on page 3

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Foreign Affairs Day • Continued from page 1

Americans who have lost their lives while serving the U.S. government abroad in foreign affairs. Six names of Foreign Service members will be added this year, including USAID officer Laurence Foley, who was murdered in a terrorist attack in Amman, Jordan, in October 2002. The other five individuals are being added under the expanded criteria approved by the AFSA Governing Board two years ago, which now also honor those Foreign Service employees who were killed overseas "in the line of duty." They are Jerry V. Cook, Richard Arthur Coulter, Howard V. Funk Jr., Oscar Curtis Holder and Sidney B. Jacques. Family members, friends and colleagues of the honorees are invited to attend the ceremony. Contact Barbara Berger at (202) 338-4045, ext. 521, or e-mail berger@afsa.org if you are interested in attending.

The program for Foreign Affairs Day will be similar to last year's, with a wide selection of seminars from the regional bureaus and other department offices. There will also be a seminar offered on the new long-term health care plan. The traditional luncheon will be held in the Benjamin Franklin Room of the State Department, and Director General of the Foreign Service Ruth A. Davis will be the featured speaker.

AFSA will again hold a reception at the Foreign Service Club from 3 to 5 p.m. AFSA scholarship winners will be acknowledged during the reception. All participants in Foreign Affairs Day are invited to relax and mingle with former colleagues. There will be a cash bar, and complimentary hors d'oeuvres will be served. □

SUPPORT THE FOREIGN SERVICE ON CAPITOL HILL

In connection with Foreign Affairs Day, AFSA will hold its third annual "Day on the Hill" program on Thursday, May 8. There are many international challenges facing our country at present and American diplomacy needs the support of the American people and Congress. We encourage retirees to join AFSA in visiting with congressional representatives and staff on Capitol Hill. This event provides a unique opportunity for retirees to confer with key legislators and discuss Foreign Service and foreign affairs issues.

AFSA is sending out invitations for "Day on the Hill" to Foreign Service retirees (members and non-members). If you need more information, send an e-mail to Marc Goldberg at goldberg@afsa.org. □

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Continued from page 2

AFSA Scholarship Applications

By the Feb. 6 deadline, AFSA had received 62 Academic Merit Scholarship applications, 17 Art Merit Scholarship applications, and 118 Financial Aid Scholarship applications from children of Foreign Service members. This is consistent with the number of applications received in 2002.

In May, AFSA will announce 15 Academic Merit winners and one Art Merit winner. These Foreign Service high school students win one-time-only awards of $1,500.

JOSH

The Financial Aid Scholarships are based on need and are for undergraduate study for the 2003/2004 school year. Of the 118 students who have applied, approximately 70 will receive college awards of $1,000 to $3,000, totaling $124,000 from AFSA. Most of the remaining applicants were ineligible based on their parents' assets and income.

Disincentive Pay

The good news for domestic federal employees is that the FY 03 appropriations bill includes a 1 percent increase (retroactive to Jan. 1) in locality payments. This, for example, will raise Washington, D.C. locality pay to 12.74 percent. The bad news for overseas employees is that the "overseas disincentive pay cut" will also rise to 12.74 percent. Thus, folks at 10-percent differential posts such as Kingston and Shanghai will now earn 2.74 percent less than colleagues in Washington, D.C. Employees at 15-percent differential posts such as Dakar and Rangoon will earn an effective hardship differential of only 2.26 percent. Please see AFSA's Feb. 4 cable and AFSANet message for details on efforts to eliminate this financial disincentive to overseas service.

Last-Minute State Tax Questions?

The February issue of *AFSA News* contains our annual guide to federal and state tax provisions affecting the Foreign Service. The guide can be found on the AFSA Web site. There is a link from the home page at www.afsa.org, or go to http://www.afsa.org/tax_guide2002.pdf.

V.P. VOICE: **STATE** ■ BY LOUISE CRANE

The FS and Your Credit Rating

I have just gone through the rigors of buying a house and obtaining a mortgage, and would like to share what I learned. You can delay paying your utilities, you can let your medical bills slide, you can ignore the cable bill, but you must be absolutely sure to pay your mortgage and your credit card bills on time. Even better, pay them online. This is important advice for our colleagues serving overseas without — among other amenities — reliable mail.

I am writing this because several potential lenders demurred at first because I had paid credit card bills and my mortgage late last year when I was overseas. While I was away, my bills accumulated and went unpaid. They were reported as late to the credit rating agencies. While these late payments may be an aberration for me here in the U.S., for overseas colleagues without access to reliable mail, they may be a regular occurrence.

Despite the recent significant improvements in pouch mail service (kudos and applause to A/LM/PMP/DPM for this), it is still slow by comparison to regular mail. And there is the added problem of what happens to your bills while you're on home leave, emergency leave, evacuation orders or TDY. You may not have access to a computer and, even if you do, you might not have thought to bring all the passwords and PINs needed to access your various accounts with you, so paying online becomes difficult. Meanwhile, arrangements to have your mail forwarded from post depend on someone's good will. But even the greatest good will in the world can't shorten the time it will take for the mail to catch up with you. By that time, your payment is already late anyway.

> The credit rating agency ... only measures how promptly you paid your mortgage and credit card bills.

Once I decided to buy a new house, I applied to several well-known companies offering mortgages, including USAA. But because of those late payments last year, my credit rating was not up to the lenders' standards. Your credit rating has nothing to do with your net worth. You can have $150,000 in the TSP, another $50,000 in Series EE bonds, stocks and bonds, thousands in savings (for that down payment), and a lot of equity in your current house. You might have a year's worth of sick leave that would cover your salary should you fall ill. The credit rating agency which lenders depend on does not measure any of this. It only measures how promptly you paid your mortgage and credit card bills. Your credit score is how they make the first cut.

My advice to you is to pay your credit card bills and your mortgage promptly. I know this is difficult for those of you at the far ends of the earth. Some dedicated department employees have worked very hard to improve pouch service, but it is ultimately dependent on a lot of factors over which the department has no control.

Ultimately, my solution was to go to a mortgage broker. I provided him with documents to prove my net worth and an I-was-overseas explanation for those late payments. Within two days, he found a lender who made the mortgage at the going low rate. While there are ways around it, this is an example of how the hardship of overseas service exerts an impact on your life. □

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Continued from page 3

Hardship Working Group Update

Under Secretary for Management Grant Green approved the recommendations of the Overseas Staffing Incentives Working Group that he had convened following a June 2002 GAO Hardship Staffing Study and a June 7, 2002, letter from AFSA (see State 036475 and the State Intranet site http://hrweb.hr.state.gov for a list of the recommendations). Under Secretary Green approved 25 recommendations for immediate action and 19 more for possible implementation pending further analysis. By our count, AFSA originated 12 of the 25 proposals identified for immediate action, plus 9 of the 19 approved for further study. AFSA also proposed 8 of the 36 ideas that were turned down.

Under Secretary Green told AFSA that his staff will now task out the implementation of each recommendation and will keep employees informed of progress. We noted that July 2003 (i.e., the start of the 2004 assignment cycle) was a logical target date for getting as many as possible of the items implemented, because a key goal of this initiative is to encourage employees to bid on hardship posts.

AFSA thanks HR/CDA Director Ralph Frank, M/P Director Jay Anania, HR/CDA Officer Ted Gong, Allowances Director Margaret Uyehara, FLO Director Faye Barnes, EUR/EX Deputy Director Bill Haugh, and the two dozen other Foreign Service and Civil Service employees who worked on this project. We also thank our many members who sent us suggestions — 21 of which are now set for implementation or for additional staff work.

Briefs • Continued on page 5

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Continued from page 4

Do You Get AFSANet?

AFSANET is a free service of the American Foreign Service Association designed to provide updates on items of interest to the foreign affairs community.

To subscribe, go to www.afsa.org/forms/maillist.html.

Letter from a Reader: Where to Retire?

I would love to see a section with comments from AFSA retirees about how they feel (both pros and cons) about their selected

JOSH

place of retirement or places they seriously considered but decided against. It is difficult to get information while posted far away from the U.S. and it would be helpful to get insight from others who have shared a similar lifestyle and experiences while working abroad.

Thank you,
Virginia Krivis

Editor's note: This is a great idea! We ask that retirees or those considering retirement options share their insights into what places make good, or not so good, retirement locations, and why. Send your input to afsanews@afsa.org. If we get enough responses, we'll share them in these pages.

V.P. VOICE: **USAID** ■ BY JOE PASTIC

Call for Better Service from Travel

Customer service is an elusive concept. "Who is my customer?" falls in the same category as "Who are the beneficiaries?" in development assistance planning. It is vital to think this question through to make one's efforts effective.

A manager friend of mine in the private sector shared a valuable anecdote about how he greatly improved his unit's productivity and morale. His unit (Fujitsu) installed communications hardware for Verizon to expand their phone service. He told his crews that their customers were not the public telephone users, but the Verizon workers installing the computers and wiring into the Fujitsu-supplied equipment. Good customer service in this case meant clearly marking all input, output and cross-connection locations and cross-referencing them with design drawings. Going that "extra mile" eliminated 50 percent of the possible mistakes that the Verizon installers might have made. In other words, look beyond the immediate tasks to the real reason for your work.

> We don't need experts in ways to say "no." We need experts in "getting to yes!"

Travel is an integral part of work at USAID: travel to permanent assignment, home leave travel, rest and recuperation travel, and TDY travel. Some officers stationed overseas are in travel status over 60 percent of the time. Most people assigned to Washington travel at least once per year, while many travel several times a month.

So why don't we get better service from the travel office? Maybe there is a question in M/TT as to who the customer is. In the past, "good" managers minimized costs by cutting corners, and if employees were caught in the squeeze, too bad. But now there are laws that prescribe adequate constraints. USAID employees need the agency to manage the laws governing travel as flexibly as possible. For this to work, it must be made clear from the highest levels of senior agency management on down that accommodating the travelers' needs is the priority. Managers responsible for travel and transportation must be assured of top-down support. Conversely, foot-dragging and negative customer relations must not be rewarded or even tolerated.

First and foremost, cost-constructive travel must not be frustrated. AFSA has received reports from travelers who were not allowed to combine personal with official travel, even though the law and the Combined Federal Regulations permit cost-constructed travel. Other "interpretations" should not be used to interfere with this. USAID travelers deserve a travel office that works with them to meet their needs. We don't need experts in ways to say "no." We need experts in "getting to yes!" Genuine customer service requires recognition of the unique needs of the traveler and finding ways to meet them.

We have similar needs in the area of transportation. When an employee assigned overseas loses a vehicle due to natural disaster or an act of terrorism, why should a claim be denied in spite of precedents? If an employee can't produce receipts because personal files in the custody of the U.S. government have been lost through no fault of the employee, why should the employee's claim be denied?

Senior agency management should sanction negative decisions on travel and transportation only when all other options have been exhausted. USAID employees expect, and agency management should demand, that travel and transportation officials aim to meet the needs of the traveler rather than come up with clever and insidious ways to say "no." □

Awards • Continued from page 1

Sarasota/Manatee Counties, and the Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning. He has worked tirelessly as a Foreign Service recruiter, greeter, briefer, speaker and organizer to better acquaint as many citizens as possible with their nation's role in the world, and the important role of U.S. diplomacy. Behoteguy's dynamic approach has made his programs models for others to follow in broadening the national dialogue on foreign affairs and has made him an invaluable asset to AFSA's own outreach efforts.

Behoteguy's dynamic approach has made his programs models for others to follow.

Behoteguy has truly sustained and enhanced the many organizations in which he has participated. There is no way to measure the extent to which the Sarasota, Venice and Bradenton regions, and the United States government, are indebted to this special person and community leader. Largely through his personal efforts, hundreds of outstanding diplomats and other specialists have come to the area and been given a platform on which international issues could be debated by local citizenry.

After receiving a B.A. from Wooster College and an M.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, Behoteguy served with distinction in the Navy during World War II. He then began civilian work with the Foreign Liquidation Commission and the Economic Cooperation Administration (the famous Marshall Plan) in Paris, followed by a number of high-level posts for the Agency for International Development in Washington, D.C., Cameroon, Turkey, Tunisia and Haiti before retiring in Sarasota in the mid-1970's.

AFSA is proud to salute Scott Behoteguy for his outstanding work in helping to build a solid domestic constituency for the U.S. Foreign Service and for American diplomacy. □

RECOGNIZING RETIREES IN ACTION

Outstanding Retirees Receive National Alumni Service Award

AFSA has honored eight retirees thus far with the newly established National Alumni Service Award. The first recipients of this award were: Scott L. Behoteguy; William J. Cunningham; Ambassador James D. Rosenthal; E. Victor Niemeyer Jr.; Marguerite Cooper; Lillian P. Mullin; Ambassador Robert J. Ryan Sr.; and Vernon L. Merrill.

Following are brief summaries of the winners' achievements in helping build public support for American diplomacy and the Foreign Service. (Scott Behoteguy is covered in a separate article.)

Marguerite Cooper

Marguerite Cooper was presented with her award by Ambassador Ray Ewing and AFSA Retiree Liaison Ward Thompson, who were visiting California in January for an AFSA Elderhostel program. She was recognized for her strong dedication to improving public dialogue on foreign affairs. Following her retirement from the Foreign Service in 1987, Cooper took time from her activities as a political and social activist to work as a volunteer in AFSA's legislative effort. After settling in California in the mid-1990s, she established ties to other Foreign Service retirees and founded the Foreign Affairs Association of South and Central California. As chair of this association, she has continued to support AFSA outreach efforts to the public,

Ambassador Ray Ewing presents the National Alumni Service Award to Marguerite Cooper during a California Elderhostel program.

Congress and the media, and has provided key assistance in establishing the Elderhostel Foreign Service program in Ventura County.

William J. Cunningham

William Cunningham was given the award in recognition of his extraordinary achievements in promoting awareness of foreign affairs and the Foreign Service throughout the Houston metropolitan area. Since his retirement from the Foreign Service in 1982, Cunningham has served as chairman of the Center for International Studies and an associate professor emeritus at the University of St. Thomas, and as chairman and chief executive officer of the Houston World Affairs Council. A frequent speaker on foreign affairs and a recruiter for the Foreign Service, he regularly draws on his broad academic, media and business contacts to further community dialogue on foreign affairs. He has also taken a leading role in bringing together Foreign Service retirees in the area and has provided invaluable assistance in arranging outreach opportunities for AFSA governing board members whenever they visit Houston.

Vernon L. Merrill

Vernon L. Merrill received the award in recognition of his long-time leadership role in the Foreign Service Retirees Association of the State of Washington. Merrill was one of the co-founders of that association in 1982, on settling in Washington after retiring from the Foreign Service and pursuing a business career. He served as secretary of the association for many years and in that capacity he significantly strengthened the sense of community among Foreign Service retirees in the state. The association's members serve as speakers on foreign affairs to a broad range of service clubs in the area. Under Merrill's leadership, the association has been

active in legislative outreach. In response to AFSA's request, the association sent an appeal to Washington's senators that produced the key co-sponsorship of a successful Senate resolution calling for national recognition of Foreign Service Day.

Lillian "Petey" Mullin

Petey Mullin received the award in recognition of her initiative and dedication in developing key AFSA outreach programs. Following her retirement from the Foreign Service in 1989, Mullin became acquainted with the Elderhostel organization and had the idea of devising an Elderhostel program to educate Americans about the Foreign Service. She worked with other AFSA colleagues to create the Elderhostel Foreign Service program, launched in 1996. She continues to play a central role in these programs, which by 2003 had given over 3,000 participants an in-depth appreciation of America's professional diplomats. Realizing from the start the importance of maintaining ties with graduates of the program, Mullin developed the concept of Friends of the Foreign Service, which AFSA has now instituted as an association for anyone who wants to support the Foreign Service. In terms of the impact of her proposals and of the time she has volunteered to help carry them out, Mullin's contributions to AFSA constitute an unparalleled model of retiree activism.

Petey Mullin speaks before an Elderhostel group.

Mary and Bob Ryan.

Ambassador James Rosenthal speaking at a California Elderhostel program.

E. Victor Niemeyer Jr.

E. Victor Niemeyer Jr. received the award in recognition of his dynamic leadership in establishing a Foreign Service retiree association in central Texas. Following his retirement from the United States Information Agency, Niemeyer settled in Austin, Texas, where he has remained internationally active, traveling and working with organizations like Rotary International and its Polio Plus program. Maintaining ties with dozens of other Foreign Service retirees in the Austin area, in 1994 Niemeyer organized them into the Central Texas Foreign Service Group, which he led for many years. Through his efforts, the members were exposed to high-quality foreign affairs speakers, initiated joint meetings with the San Antonio group and engaged in public outreach activities including participation in Foreign Service recruiting events at local universities. In 2002, Niemeyer took the lead in organizing and coordinating an Elderhostel Foreign Service program in Austin.

Ambassador James D. Rosenthal

Ambassador James Rosenthal was presented with his award by Ambassador Ray Ewing and AFSA Retiree Liaison Ward Thompson, during their January trip to California. Amb. Rosenthal received the award in recognition of his extraordinary achievements in promoting awareness of foreign affairs and the Foreign Service in the San Francisco Bay Area. He retired from the Foreign Service in 1990, and since then has been an active participant in many area associations relating directly or indirectly to foreign affairs, including the University of San Francisco's Center for the Pacific Rim, the World Affairs Council of Northern California and the Marines Memorial Association in San Francisco. He served for many years as the Executive Director of the Commonwealth Club of California and is Chairman of the Foreign Service Association of Northern California. He lectures on international relations, recruits for the Foreign Service and engages the media on foreign policy issues. He actively supports AFSA's outreach efforts in the area and provided key assistance in establishing the Elderhostel Foreign Service program in Ventura County.

Ambassador Robert J. Ryan Sr.

Ambassador Robert J. Ryan Sr. received the award in recognition of his tireless efforts promoting public interest in foreign affairs. Following his retirement from the Foreign Service in 1972 and from the United Nations in 1977, Amb. Ryan became a model for Foreign Service retirees seeking to raise the quality of public discussion of America's role in the world. Since settling in Florida, he has been active in local, state and national activities of the United Nations Association, has lectured on international relations, has recruited for the Foreign Service and has had numerous articles published in local media. As a longtime board member of the Foreign Service Retirees Association of Florida, he has encouraged fellow retirees to help educate the public on foreign affairs. Amb. Ryan has also provided invaluable advice and assistance to AFSA's public outreach efforts.

AFSA is proud to salute these award winners for their work in helping to build a solid domestic constituency for the U.S. Foreign Service and for American diplomacy. □

AFSA NEWSBRIEFS

Continued from page 5

Overseas Comparability Pay

AFSA met with Under Secretary Green on Feb. 12. During the meeting, he said that the department continues to seek administration support for giving employees abroad overseas comparability pay. We also discussed a number of other issues, including: overseas security, the assignments process, support for consular officers, and repealing the World War II-era law that limits overtime compensation for Foreign Service specialists serving overseas. We thanked Under Secretary Green for all that he, Secretary Powell and other senior managers have done over the past two years to improve diplomatic readiness.

Watch Out for Identity Theft

Hardly a week goes by without a major U.S. newspaper or television network running a story warning of the rising tide of financial fraud committed with stolen identities (e.g., credit card numbers, Social Security numbers). Here are a few tips to help you avoid identity theft: buy a paper shredder and shred all trash showing your Social Security or credit card numbers; guard your Social Security number (note: if it doubles as your driver's license number, then get it off there the next time that you renew); order your credit report from the main credit reporting bureaus (www.equifax.com, www.experian.com, and www.tuc.com) to check for errors and unknown accounts; and keep your virus protection software updated to guard against malicious codes causing your computer to transmit files.

D.C. Tax Information

AFSA has learned that the District of Columbia's Chief Financial Officer's Web site, which contains all DC's tax information, has changed. The address is now http://cfo.dc.gov. Our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused.

TDY in Your Own House?

BY JAMES YORKE

In three recent cases, Foreign Service employees have taken advantage of a number of decisions by the Board of Contract Appeals at the General Service Administration to buy a house in the local area for use while on temporary duty between overseas assignments.

In the first case, the employee learned that his onward assignment would be via language training at FSI, so he bought a property to occupy during the training period. After an initial refusal by the Resource Management Bureau, the employee was able to muster an array of decisions in his favor, including one that allowed for the payment of a per diem allowance based on the meals and miscellaneous expenses allowance and a prorated lodging allowance consisting of monthly interest, tax and utility costs (but not mortgage principal). The facts in the other two cases were sufficiently similar that RM agreed to pay per diem based on the first case.

The BCA decisions all hinged on the fact that the residence in question had been purchased as housing for a particular period of temporary duty away from the employee's permanent place of duty. Most employees on training between assignments meet this requirement when they elect to be detailed, rather than assigned, to FSI, since they remain officially assigned to their previous post until arrival at the new post.

What is not clear is whether an employee can return to the same house for subsequent periods of TDY between overseas assignments later on in a career. There will probably need to be a test case and another decision from the BCA, and the decision may rest on whether the house was ever occupied as a home while the employee was actually assigned to D.C.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:

Service to America Medals

The Service to America Medals ("SAMMIES") program was created last year by the Partnership for Public Service and the Atlantic Media Company (*Government Executive*, the *National Journal*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*) to honor federal employees who have made a significant contribution to our country. SAMMIES honor unsung heroes throughout the federal workforce who make a difference every day in their work. Nomination categories include National Security and International Affairs. Awardees will be honored at an awards dinner on Oct. 15 in Washington, D.C. Significant monetary prizes ($3,000 to $10,000) are associated with the awards. Nominations will be accepted through May 2 and must be submitted online. Go to www.govexec.com/pps for more information and to submit a nomination. AFSA would like to see Foreign Service employees honored.

COLEAD UPDATE

NGO Summit on International Landscape

BY HARRY C. BLANEY III,
PRESIDENT OF THE COALITION FOR AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ABROAD

Uncertainty, unpredictability, complexity, turmoil, lack of resources and generally difficult working conditions are the most common elements characterizing the current landscape facing foreign affairs NGOs as they seek to carry our their crucial missions for the public good. This was one of the key conclusions from a January NGO leadership meeting.

It was in that context that some 40 leaders of America's NGO community came together at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington on Jan. 24 for discussion and reflection. Because many of our colleagues in the NGO community face the same problems as the United Nations and its specialized agencies, representatives from the U.N. community also attended. This was a unique event sponsored by the Coalition for American Leadership Abroad, a group of more than 45 NGOs. (COLEAD is headquartered at AFSA, and AFSA is a founding member of the organization.) The January meeting was in keeping with COLEAD's mandate to provide a forum for the internationally-oriented NGO community to share concerns and, where possible, work together to seek common solutions.

One of the background elements for this meeting was the broad recognition that while foreign affairs NGOs have a significant mission, they are comparatively less influential in shaping the direction of policy and the environment in which we work than do many other sectors of our society.

From the discussion, which included AFSA President John Naland, participants concluded that the NGO community is now facing more challenges to carrying out our missions than we have seen in recent memory. This is especially daunting considering that this community is accustomed to facing wars, crisis and natural and man-made catastrophes. It was agreed that there is a need to cooperate better and to make our

Q&A

Retiree Issues

BY WARD THOMPSON, RETIREE LIAISON

Q: How do I know I have not overlooked something affecting my Foreign Service retirement benefits?

A: If you understand the basics regarding annuities, survivor annuities, Social Security, life insurance, health plans and Medicare, you probably either have enough information or know where to look for it. The information is available from the State Department Retirement Office and is covered in the Retirement Planning Seminar. However, the burden is on the employee/retiree to be familiar with the regulations governing benefits. Relevant information should be retained and reviewed periodically to avoid surprises.

Q: What kind of surprises?

A: The most common surprises concern the following:

ANNUITY SUPPLEMENT — Designed to provide Foreign Service Pension System (FSPS) annuitants the equivalent of a Social Security benefit until age 62, when one becomes eligible for a minimum Social Security benefit, the supplement is not increased by an annual COLA (cost of living adjustment) but is subject to the Social Security earnings cap. Some consider it unfair for the supplement not to extend until full Social Security eligibility (age 65 or higher), especially if they are involuntarily retired. However, retirement planning must take into account the fact that Congress intended the supplement only as a bridge to minimum Social Security eligibility.

WINDFALL ELIMINATION PROVISION (WEP) — Congress also decided that individuals receiving pensions from jobs not covered by Social Security should have any additional Social Security benefits reduced. The WEP applies to Foreign Service Retirement System (FSRDS) annuitants who reached age 62 after 1985 and were not eligible for a federal annuity until after 1985 (those who were under 62 and still working in 1985 but who could have retired then are not affected by the WEP). Many members who acquired Social Security eligibility before or after the Foreign Service are now turning 62 and discovering that the WEP reduces their Social Security benefits by up to 55 percent.

GOVERNMENT PENSION OFFSET — This law effectively eliminates any Social Security spousal benefit for most post-1982 FSRDS annuitants who did not switch to FSPS before 1988. (Note: the WEP and GPO do not apply when one's annuity is a survivor benefit, only when an annuity was earned as an employee.)

Q: Is my spouse due for any unpleasant benefit surprises if I should die first?

A: There are two areas where some members encounter problems that could have been prevented but that cannot be remedied after the fact:

SURVIVOR ANNUITY — Provision must be made at retirement or within one year (FSRDS) or two years (FSPS) following a marriage that occurs after retirement (and the annuitant must not have declined to elect a survivor benefit for a spouse at retirement). Survivor annuities for former spouses and second spouses are subject to additional rules, whose impact on retirement planning should be understood by all parties concerned. An employee providing a minimum survivor benefit (see below) may not increase it more than 18 months after retirement.

HEALTH BENEFITS — A surviving spouse may continue receiving full federal employee health benefits only if receiving at least a minimum ($1.00 per month) survivor benefit and if the deceased had been enrolled in a self-and-family plan at the time of death. □

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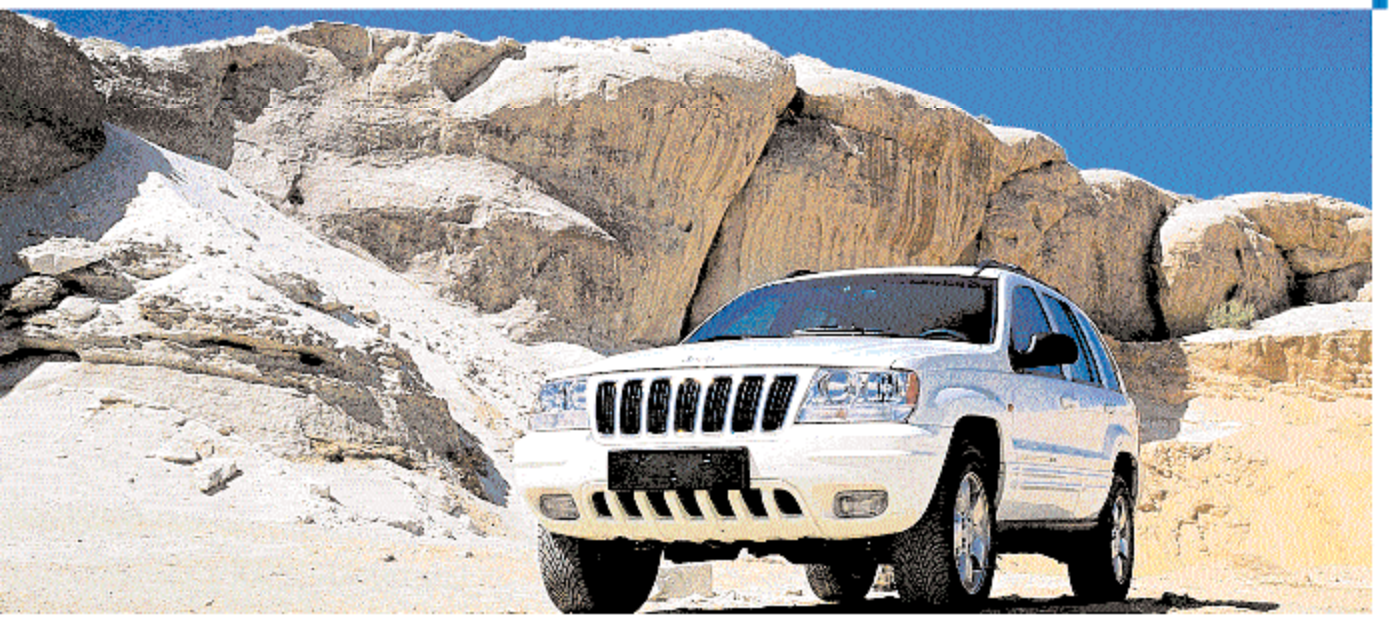

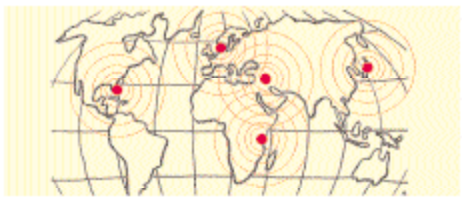

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