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Foreign Affairs Day 2003: Secretary Powell and Military Color Guard participate in AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony.

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JOSH

President's Views

If Not Now, When?

By John Limbert

In this issue you will read about the prospects for ensuring the Foreign Service continues to have enough people, with the right skills, to do its work for the next 30 years. Recruiting, screening, training and advising our newest generalists and specialists are no small tasks. Special kudos go to our colleagues who work on the Board of Examiners and in the Foreign Service Institute's Orientation Division. The former have an enormous responsibility for attracting the best and brightest to represent America overseas (in both senses of that term), while the latter must take a group of recruits from all walks of life, and, in a few weeks, make them think and act like Foreign Service professionals.

But the work does not end there, and the rest of us play a crucial role in it. I recently attended an Africa Bureau regional conference of entry-level generalists and specialists, who were doing superb work at some of the Service's toughest posts. These colleagues are our future, and their experiences — positive or negative — in their first posts will determine how (or if) they pursue their careers. They deserve all of the support and encouragement we can provide. We cannot afford to lose them; nor can we afford to see them end up embittered, cynical or ineffective.

Entry-level colleagues are our future. Their initial experiences will determine how (or if) they pursue their careers.

In most cases, our first-tour colleagues were positive and enthusiastic about their work. Being GSO or OMS in Luanda or Freetown may not be everyone's idea of fun, but they were doing it with the best spirits and, most importantly, with a sense of humor. Many spoke positively about their working environment and about how much they had learned from co-workers, including both Senior Foreign Service mentors and Foreign Service Nationals.

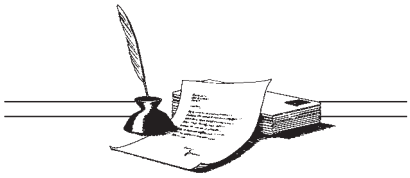
There were a few exceptions, however. In the conference corridors, and even in the public sessions, I heard, among all the positives, the occasional story about the non-collegial colleague, the abusive supervisor, the incompetent manager, and even the occasional burn-out. What does one do, for example, with senior officers who refuse to meet either with their own staff or with host country counterparts? What is one to make of the mid-level officer who bullies a subordinate and constantly threatens him with an EER that will "sink his career"? Yes, such cases are thankfully rare exceptions to the rule. But even one case is too many when the effect is to distort new employees' view of the organization they have joined.

There was a pattern in these rare cases of unprofessional behavior. The problems became worse when post leadership — ambassador or DCM — refused to deal with them, leaving our newest colleagues to cope as best they could. The Secretary and his team have made clear that they expect leaders to lead, and most have responded admirably.

For its part, FSI is doing an outstanding job of training leaders and managers. At the top of its syllabus is the principle that problems left untreated will fester and eventually burst, with toxic results. These poisons, moreover, will affect the most vulnerable members of the Foreign Service — our entry-level colleagues — who may reach the unfortunate conclusion that such negative behavior is normal and acceptable in their chosen profession.

In such cases, we risk not only derailing an employee's career at the beginning, but also losing him or her to the Service altogether. Given the high quality of our new employees, and their crucial part in our mission, we can ill afford such needless losses. ■

John Limbert is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.



LETTERS

Fair Share — But Not for Him?

"We believe in fair share, and we are enforcing it," Director General W. Robert Pearson said in the interview carried in the February *Journal*. This statement strikes me as more than a bit odd, coming as it does from an officer who served 10 consecutive years in Paris and Brussels. In fact, it appears that the two-year tour he spent in Beijing very early in his career comprises his entire service at hardship posts.

As the interview recognized, there is great skepticism in the Foreign Service that the fair share policy is enforced in a uniform manner. May I therefore suggest that the director general show his support for this policy by pledging to serve at a hardship post for his next assignment?

Steve Muller
FSO, retired
Troy, N.Y.

How Soon We Forget

Dr. Jaime Suarez's article on assessing Foreign Service morale (February *FSJ*) brought back many fond memories of my days as executive director of the Office of the Medical Director from 1977 to 1981 under Dr. Bill Watson and his successor, Dr. Eben "Dusty" Dustin.

Soon after joining MED, we embarked on efforts to gain approval from department management to begin the regional mental health program, with the goal of stationing regional psychiatrists overseas to provide coverage from key posts. We took a morale assessment trip that spanned three regional bureaus. Amazingly, the questions I asked and the answers I received from our Foreign Service members and their spouses in 1977 mirrored almost exactly the questions Suarez asked and the answers he received on his recent trip.

The results of our survey were telling and useful. The cost/benefit analysis of medical evacuations, broken assignments and family relocations, versus early diagnosis, intervention and mental health care overseas helped convince MED, then led by Ben Read, to approve our proposal.

During my assessment trip, I, too, found that morale at hardship posts very often was much higher than at "plush" posts. Additionally, the role of the ambassador, deputy chief of mission and administrative counselor was key to post morale. I compared the three senior management officials at post with the key to winning baseball: strength down the middle from the catcher, pitcher, second baseman, and center fielder. The stronger these positions, the better the team fares.

I was fortunate to have served with some of the best morale-building ambassadors in the Service. Productivity under these chiefs of mission was exceptional. Unfortunately, I also served with one ambassador who mirrored the unreasonable interpersonal traits Suarez describes in his article. I saw how quickly post morale could change under a self-aggrandizing ambassador who did not have a well-developed management approach. Not surprisingly, tour extensions became curtailments, post effectiveness decreased, and the costs to the department of doing business increased.

The measurable product of the Foreign Service is the output of its personnel. Good morale increases the effectiveness of that product. Good morale is a product of good management. Good management saves money.

Gerald S. (Jerry) Rose
FSO, retired
Falls Church, Va.

VOA's Vital Role

Your January issue is a goldmine of information on international broadcasting. Hopefully it will encourage those involved in foreign affairs to appreciate the increasingly vital role, at bargain cost, performed by VOA and the complex array of other public diplomacy outlets under the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

Audiences tend to believe what they hear if they trust the messenger. America's radio and TV voices must be accurate, comprehensive, objective and, yes, interesting. As Ed Murrow liked to say, "warts and all."

I hope our broadcasters are able to resist pressures to overemphasize entertainment in order to attract listeners like a sideshow barker. If Uncle Sam is to get his dollar's worth he should be given room to explain U.S. policies to the world, in a reasoned, convincing way, just as a newspaper reserves unto itself the right to print editorials to make known its views. A good many listeners, including world leaders, yearn to know the rationale behind policies which affect them.

Richard Cushing,
Former VOA Acting Director
FSO, retired
Mills Valley, Calif.

VOA *Is* USG

As a former VOA Spanish Branch chief (1977-79), I enjoyed the January *Journal*'s exploration of the current, confused state of U.S. international broadcasting. While VOA correspondents Alex Belida and Mike Drudge are absolutely correct when they say their job is to report the news honestly and accurately, they — like many VOA employees — make no mention of another key section of the Voice's 1976 congressionally-mandated charter: "To present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively, and also present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies."

Although VOA journalists aren't charged specifically with presenting those policies, they should recognize the importance of the policy explication portion of their charter. I had this discussion many times with the late, great Bernie Kamenske, VOA's longtime and highly-respected news director. The VOA newsroom can't and shouldn't operate in a vacuum, and the main reason so many foreigners listen to the Voice is precisely because it does represent the views of the U.S. government. If it didn't, why would the taxpayers invest more than $155 million per year in an "independent" radio station?

One final question: Why does the federal government continue to spend more than $25 million annually on a radio station (Radio Marti) that no one can listen to and a TV station (TV Marti) that no one watches? Or will our politicians continue to throw millions of dollars at Marti in order to buy Cuban-American votes in South Florida? Unfortunately, I think I know the answers to my own questions.

Guy W. Farmer
FSO USIA, retired
Carson City, Nev.

What State Won't Say

John Limbert's comments in the January *Journal* on the role that dissent plays in keeping the Foreign Service vital and relevant could not have been more timely.

With our country so divided today on the proper uses of our immense power, dissenting views are essential in forcing an open debate of vital national policies often fashioned in secret. In my opinion, Foreign Service professionals have no higher obligation than to share their insights with policy-makers, and, in some cases, with the American public. I was honored to have been mentioned by John among some notorious shin-kickers of yesteryear.

I offer a more recent personal anecdote to illustrate AFSA's irreplaceable role in encouraging people to risk speaking out. Secretary Powell in his October column in *State* magazine told his readers not to be concerned by the National Security Strategy Paper of September 2002 asserting the right of the U.S. to wage pre-emptive war against suspected evil-doers. He then urged all employees to get behind present policy. I assumed that the Secretary was addressing what he perceived to be a significant problem of dissension in the ranks, with echoes of Vietnam.

Since he had raised the issue, I wrote a brief letter to *State* magazine saying gently that I thought Sec. Powell was wrong both on the substance of the NSSP and in cheerleading our Iraq policy in the pages of State. It was no surprise that the magazine refused to publish my letter. Evidently, house organs are allowed to play only one tune. However, I was told to try the *Foreign Service Journal*, which does print contrarian pieces.

So, keep it up, AFSA. Continue to provide a forum for those who feel that it is their duty on occasion to speak out. And by all means, preserve and strengthen the annual awards program to recognize those who do.

Samuel F. Hart
FSO, retired
Jacksonville, Fla.

LETTERS

Recognizing Colleagues

I commend Louise Crane on her *AFSA News* commentary "Shaddupa Ya Face" in the January issue. Her message should become a mantra for all of us.

I agree wholeheartedly that we owe it to each other and to the health and vitality of the Foreign Service to express pride of profession in the face of public criticism and across all cones. AFSA has been instrumental, especially in its work on the Hill, in strengthening the image as well as the backbone of the Foreign Service.

I remember from early in my career how hard my consular colleagues worked, from Tehran to Warsaw to Manila. They not only had to staff the visa line, but after it closed, they spent many more hours processing their cases. They invariably stayed late and worked on weekends. They used their language training all the time in dealing with different kinds of applicants. They handled "congressionals," letters from members of Congress asking why a relative of a constituent had been denied a visa. Our consular colleagues were sometimes second-guessed by an ambassador if they denied a visa to someone well connected to the host government. This was demoralizing, because it called their judgment into question.

I also remember the hard work of our management colleagues, especially in Afghanistan after Ambassador Adolph Dubs was killed. The entire American and international community was in shock. An evacuation of all dependents and non-essential people was ordered, and the task of helping them leave post fell to our management colleagues. Evacuations have become more common in recent years, ensuring even more work for management employees.

Diplomatic and regional security officers at post have taken on increasing burdens to strengthen security measures and work with host country

officials to protect Foreign Service employees and their dependents. Fortunately, resources for enhanced security have increased, but for years they were inadequate to the threats facing us abroad, as the embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam demonstrated. We entrust our safety to them and should stick up for them when Congress or other public entities question their judgment or our diplomatic readiness.

I have gained a lot of respect over the course of my career for consular, security and management colleagues and also learned that they can be very helpful in public affairs work. Many of them have valuable contacts and understand public diplomacy programming better than some political and economic officers. They are service-oriented and this means that they can get things done and make needed connections to key local contacts.

When was the last time a senior consular or management FSO was promoted to career minister? Promotion incentives for all FS cones should be fair and equal, alleviating the appearance that certain kinds of work are more important. We all depend upon each other and should assume that we share the same standards of professional conduct and achievement.

Bruce K. Byers
FSO, retired
AFSA Vice President, 1995-96
Reston, Va.

At Sea on Dissent

I couldn't help but notice that the AFSA card asking members to nominate officers for constructive dissent and not being afraid to "rock the boat" shows a person sitting in what looks very much like a very unseaworthy coffin. I know that many feel that dissent may be akin to putting a foot in one's professional grave, but I'm sure that the image of burial at sea is not what was intended!

Last year I met an American graduate student at the University of Malta doing a dissertation on diplomacy and dissent. In briefly discussing the topic with her, I learned that she was not aware that the U.S. Foreign Service has a dissent channel and that people can actually receive awards for constructive dissent, something she was then able to further research and include in her paper. Keep up the good work!

Erik Holm-Olsen
Public Affairs Officer
American Embassy Valletta

Retirement Age Disconnect

Many Foreign Service employees who fall under the (new) FSPS pension plan do not appear to realize the disconnect between the Foreign Service mandatory retirement age of 65 and the "full retirement age" at which they are eligible to collect full Social Security benefits. Social Security benefits are reduced by 6⅔ percent for every year less than the full retirement age at which a person retires.

A useful table, entitled "Age to Receive Full Social Security Benefits," can be found on the Social Security Administration's Web site at www.socialsecurity.gov.

I raised the problem of the age disconnect at a 1999 town meeting at Embassy Port-au-Prince chaired by then-Director General Edward W. Gnehm, Jr. I have also brought the issue up several times in the past with AFSA. To date, nobody has taken a serious interest in trying to address and correct this disconnect. The stock answer is that most FS members retire before they reach age 65, or that Social Security is broke, so whatever the case, the problem is academic.

I intend to work as a Foreign Service officer until I reach age 65. With the fallout of the 2000-2003 bear market and its effect on Thrift Savings Plan balances, I assume there are quite a few other officers over age

50 who are also thinking of postponing their retirement dates.

If the FSPS retirement age disconnect affects you and your plans for retirement, please let our AFSA representatives know.

Nick Quackenbush
General Services Officer
Embassy Nassau

Reinventing the Wheel

There is much talk about creating a system for the INS to photograph and fingerprint all arriving aliens in order to keep track of them for national security purposes. When I joined the Foreign Service 50 years ago, a standard part of the visa-issuing system was to require fingerprints and two photographs of each visa applicant before a visa could be issued. One photo and the fingerprint card were sent to the FBI.

All non-citizen, non-green-card-holders were required to obtain a visa before a ship or airline would allow them aboard. Any transportation company that delivered an undocumented alien was subject to a major fine. Around 1970, word was sent to the field that the FBI was so far behind in filing fingerprint cards from the State Department that we should discontinue fingerprinting visa applicants. As part of the tourism promotion program sometime in the late 1980s, citizens of several Western European countries that did not require visas of U.S. citizens were allowed to enter the U.S. without visas on a reciprocal basis.

We're reinventing the wheel with all this talk about fingerprinting and photographing those entering the U.S. It would make much more sense to return to the system of requiring visas of all non-citizens applying for entry to the U.S. and to do the photographing and fingerprinting as part of the visa-issuing process. Applicants could be handled on an individual basis, rather than as part of an arriving planeload of 300 in a crowded airport with new planes arriving every 10 minutes. Security questions could be handled locally by delaying visa approval a day or two while inquiries were made to local police or security people.

Imposing these requirements on immigration personnel at ports of entry seems both inefficient and inadequate from the standpoint of ensuring real security checks. ■

David Timmins
FSO, retired
Salt Lake City, Utah

CYBERNOTES

Making a Difference in Iraq

The American public rarely gets a look at what FSOs actually do on the ground in the various countries in which they are deployed around the world. So an article by Anthony Shadid in the Feb. 16 *Washington Post* (**www.washingtonpost.com**), focused on the work of 29-year-old Tobin Bradley organizing elections in a remote province of Iraq, was good news — despite the fact that one had to get two-thirds of the way through the article to learn that Bradley was a member of the Foreign Service!

Datelined Chebayish, Iraq, the article, "In Iraqi Towns, Electoral Experiment Finds Some Success," throws light on the Coalition Provisional Authority's work organizing elections in Dhi Qar, a province some 230 miles southeast of Baghdad. There, residents voting as families on the basis of valid ration cards will have elected city councils in 16 of the 20 largest cities by March.

Tobin, a fluent Arabic speaker and political advisor for the CPA in Nasiriyah, organized 11 of the elections. "With a knack for improvisation and little help from Baghdad," writes Shadid, Bradley "carried out what may stand as one of the most ambitious democratic experiments in Iraq's history, a project that goes to the heart of the debate about how Iraq's next government should be chosen."

In each election, Bradley started with a preparation committee of unaffiliated residents. A month before the vote, the committee drew up conditions for candidates: a minimum age, no Ba'th Party affiliation and an often-contentious education requirement. The electoral rolls were based on ration cards, with two votes — one male and one female — for each family. Each voter chose between five and 10 names from the list of candidates. The actual voting was run by judges from outside the town, with Iraqi NGOs playing a growing role.

The process didn't always go smoothly. The preparation committees often struggled over things like candidates with suspected ties to the Ba'th Party and strong factional and other pulls from fellow villagers that took rounds and rounds of Pepsi and tea to resolve. Shahid reports that Bradley's father was a city manager, and Bradley says his own job now is "dealing with the same problems, but in a different place."

The results, however, have been significant. First, the ration card system worked well (Bradley says 95 percent of the families in the province have them). Second, voter turnout was 30 percent to 40 percent, with women's participation growing from zero to about 20 percent of the voters. And, significantly, voters typically elected professionals as opposed to tribal or religious leaders.

The elections have guaranteed the councils' legitimacy, but, according to Bradley, what is lacking is something he cannot give: credibility. He views the Iraqis' frustration with the lack of improvement in their lives as the greatest threat to the democratic experiment in Dhi Qar. "It's been nine, 10 months, with no results, really," Bradley says. "There's no point in having elections if there are no tangible results after them."

Bradley, who never expected to find Iraq "such a broken society," has no illusions about the challenge. He recalls working in State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research for four nights after the attacks of 9/11. He was angry, he says, and, with a bent of idealism, determined to bring about change.

"We have an opportunity to start something good here. Whatever you think of the war, I have the opportunity to build a stable democracy here in Iraq," Bradley says. "It doesn't matter whether you were for it or against it.

> As president, if necessary, I will use military force to protect our security, our people, and our vital interests. But the fight requires us to use every tool at our disposal. Not only a strong military — but renewed alliances, vigorous law enforcement, reliable intelligence, and unremitting effort to shut down the flow of terrorist funds. To do all this, and to do our best, demands that we work with other countries instead of walking alone. For today the agents of terrorism work and lurk in the shadows of 60 nations on every continent. In this entangled world, we need to build real and enduring alliances.
>
> — Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., Democratic presidential candidate, Feb. 27, *www.washingtonpost.com.*

CYBERNOTES

50 Years Ago...

During the past year there has developed within the ranks of the Foreign Service a deep and widespread feeling of uneasiness and uncertainty regarding the future of the Service. Not since the early part of the century when Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson firmly applied the career principle to the diplomatic and consular services, thus leading to the unified service set up by the Rogers Act of 1924, has there been so much doubt as to whether this principle would, or even should, continue to prevail.

— Editorial on the establishment of the Public Committee on Personnel, the "Wriston Committee," *FSJ*, April 1954.

The fact of the matter is we're here."

A graduate of Georgetown University, and fluent in French as well as Arabic, Bradley served at Embassy Amman from 1999 to 2001, and was then posted to the U.S. mission to NATO in Brussels. He was sent to Nasiriyah in September.

GAO Hits Delays in Visa Process for Science Students and Scholars

At a Feb. 25 House Science Committee hearing officials from the State Department, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security responded to problems and shortcomings in the current visa process for science students and scholars (**http://www.house.gov/science**). The officials were responding to a GAO report (GAO-04-371) released at the hearing, "Border Security: Improvements Needed to Reduce Time Taken to Adjudicate Visas for Science Students and Scholars" (**www.gao.gov**).

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Janice Jacobs told the committee, chaired by Sherwood Boehlert, R-N.Y., that the State Department was addressing one of GAO's main concerns, interoperability of computer systems, with an investment of more than $1 million to update from a cable-based system. Roger Garrity, deputy assistant director for the Records Management Division at the FBI said his agency hoped to be able to connect to this system shortly. State is also continuing to improve officer train-

Site of the Month: SatireWire

"High School Students Demand Wars in Easier-to-Find Countries." "Congress Forbids Economy to Recover Until Congress Passes Bill to Help Economy Recover." "AT&T to Cut Work Force 120 Percent." Are these real news headlines or just plain gibberish? Actually, they are neither, or perhaps a bit of both. A helpful antidote to election-year overload, www.satirewire.com offers the serious student of human affairs a perfect blend of hard-edged cynicism and sharp wit that more often than not cuts right to the quick.

Created by Andrew Marlatt, a comedy writer, **www.satirewire.com** offers a plethora of newsworthy headlines that often fail to make the final editions of other newspapers. Marlatt is the author of a book, *Economy of Errors: SatireWire Gives Business the Business* (Broadway, 2002), and his humor has been read and heard around the world, from the *Chicago Sun-Times* to the *Sydney Morning Herald* and Asahi Shimbun, and on radio networks such as NPR and the Australian Broadcasting Company.

CNN calls SatireWire "a treasure chest of satirical take-offs on current news items." The articles, which can be witty, satirical, or downright loony, poke fun at issues and events ranging from cuisine to education to software companies and government. The Web site also offers an extensive archives section in which interested readers can peruse older yet equally hilarious news headlines. The articles are guaranteed to bring howls and guffaws even if the news is no longer breaking.

The only "sad" news on SatireWire is Mr. Marlatt's decision to no longer update the site, but that is where the site's extensive Links section, cataloging over 30 other humorous sites, comes in.

— Dwijen Jaydev Mehta, Editorial Intern

ing at the consular level, said Jacobs.

DHS Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security Asa Hutchinson testified that his agency is continuing to improve the Student Exchange and Visitor Information System, and is also working to increase the DHS presence at consular posts throughout the world.

In its investigation, the GAO found that the State Department had no data on how long it took to issue a student visa. In a random sampling of cases of visa applicants subject to a security check known as Visas Mantis, which is designed to protect against sensitive technology transfers, GAO found that the wait averages 67 days, with many cases pending longer. Lack of interoperability among the systems used by State and the FBI, GAO found, is one of the main problems. Also, there are no checks to verify receipt of requests or information from one agency to another. During visits to posts, the GAO found that officials there lacked clear guidance on when to apply the Visas Mantis process, and were not receiving feedback on the information they provided in their Visas Mantis requests.

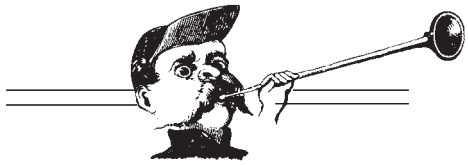
The GAO recommended that State, in coordination with DHS and the FBI should: 1) consider establishing milestones to reduce the current number of pending Visas Mantis cases; 2) develop performance goals and measurements for processing Visas Mantis cases; 3) provide additional information to consular posts that clarifies guidance on the Visas Mantis program; and 4) work to achieve interoperable systems and expedite the transmittal of data between agencies.

Speaking of Hard Languages

American diplomats who master hard languages like Bosnian or Tagalog can win a prize. But imagine yourself in the shoes of a South Korean diplomat, whose 23-year career is suddenly on the line over proficiency in what is arguably the hardest language of all: English.

The South Korean Foreign Ministry initiated the English test in 2003 to make the civil service more competitive, according to the magazine *Korea Now.* Diplomats get three chances to pass the test, and move up the career ladder. (Current heads of mission are exempt.)

Some Koreans believe the test is unfair to diplomats who have mainly served in non-English speaking countries, and, while crucial, should not be the most decisive factor in a diplomat's qualification for advancement. ■



SPEAKING OUT

The Weakest Link in Our Foreign Policy Arsenal

BY WILLIAM P. KIEHL

Facing an implacable enemy, with the fate of the world and the future of Western democracy at stake, the most powerful country in the world seems unable to sway world opinion in its direction.

Sound familiar? It's all about terrorism, Iraq and radical fundamentalist Islam in the post-9/11 era, right?

Wrong. It happened more than 50 years ago and the implacable enemy then was Soviet Communism. Reviewing commentaries of the late 1940s and early 1950s, one can see eerie echoes of the panic in today's media about Islamic terrorism and American impotence in winning hearts and minds. In particular, the thrashing about for a solution to America's latest "image problem" has an apt parallel in the 1953 creation of the U.S. Information Agency to address the threat of Soviet propaganda by telling America's story to all the world.

More than anything else, that initiative reflected the vision of President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. As a former military commander, Eisenhower understood the value of nonlethal persuasion, while Dulles recognized the need to free the public diplomacy function from the tradition-minded machinery of the State Department — and vice versa. To accomplish those goals, the new agency consolidated the government's tools of influence into a single entity that reported to the president while taking foreign policy guidance from the Secretary of State.

Rectifying the failures of the current structure of public diplomacy should be the State Department's top priority.

USIA was the perfect solution for its time, and it lasted nearly half a century. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the agency was dismissed as a Cold War relic and eventually merged into the Department of State on Oct. 1, 1999. Proponents of the reorganization pledged it would keep the public diplomacy function at the center of foreign policy. But the aftermath of 9/11 demonstrates that in the post-USIA era, public diplomacy has become perhaps the weakest link in America's foreign policy arsenal.

Fixing the Problems

The amalgamation of the public diplomacy function into the State Department hasn't worked very well for a number of reasons. These include: differences in the cultures of the two organizations; some resentments over past clashes between State and USIA; a poorly organized division of the bureaucratic "spoils" among State bureaus; and a mass exodus of experienced public diplomacy professionals who "hadn't signed up to be part of the State Department."

But an equally important reason is a fundamental misunderstanding of what public diplomacy can and should accomplish. Just as in the early 1950s, many in America once again see everything in terms of a single struggle: Islamic radicalism (expressed through terrorism) vs. Western democracy. But by focusing single-mindedly on the Islamic world, as we have been doing, at best we may have some limited success there while allowing anti-American currents to flourish in the rest of the world.

Instead, America's current "image problem" must be addressed not just with an infusion of money and programs for a single region but with a planned and structured approach to public diplomacy as a whole. Rectifying the failures of the current structure of public diplomacy should be the State Department's top priority.

Fortunately, a number of thoughtful solutions have already been proposed in recent years by entities across the political spectrum, ranging from The Heritage Foundation to the Council on Foreign Relations (twice) and from the General Accounting Office to the USIA Alumni Association. Each study notes or implies that there are chronic and systemic problems within the Department of State that must be addressed in any renewal of American public diplomacy.

Some of the problems are:

Lack of Understanding of the Nature of Public Diplomacy

Unlike State, the U.S. military separates public affairs from psychological operations because it recognizes that the two elements can be incompatible or even contradictory. "Public affairs" principally deals with the media and is essentially *reactive*, responding to an event or news story with the government's story to pre-empt the media. The PA function's timeline is usually measured in a few minutes to a few days.

"Public diplomacy," like peacetime psychological operations, is *pro-active*. It deals with the whole spectrum of society, seeking to change attitudes and persuade the target audience. The PD timeline can be anything from a few hours to several decades. Our public affairs officers abroad are faced with mounting pressures from embassy front offices to devote their energies to public affairs at the expense of public diplomacy. In order to ensure that long-range public diplomacy goals are not overlooked, public diplomacy officers should report to and be rated by the chief of mission or DCM and by their regional public diplomacy supervisors in Washington.

Lack of True Integration in the State Department

If public diplomacy is ever to be at the heart of the foreign policy process, it must reside there. One cannot "call in" the public diplomacy team when needed. Rather, public diplomacy officers must be among those who would be doing the "calling in." In other words, the senior leadership of the real power centers of the Department of State — the regional bureaus — should include senior public diplomacy officers, at least at the deputy assistant secretary level.

But the reality in today's State Department is that senior PD officers

America's current "image problem" must be addressed not just in a single region, but with a planned approach to the whole field of public diplomacy.

are, for the most part, restricted to the two ex-USIA bureaus, International Information Programs and Educational & Cultural Affairs. Indeed, since the reorganization of the foreign affairs agencies in October 1999, there have been only two public diplomacy officers assigned at the DAS level within any regional bureau (both in the same bureau, within the past few months). If such exclusion were based on race, gender or ethnicity, rather than functional specialization, it would surely have evoked such an outcry that corrective action would have been taken immediately.

In the absence of sufficient numbers of senior public diplomacy officers in the regional bureaus' front offices, a more practical solution for the long term would be to remove the PD officers from the regional bureaus (leaving the public affairs functions behind) and reassemble them in a new Bureau of Public Diplomacy Operations under the aegis of the under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs.

Lack of Central Authority over Public Diplomacy Operations

The single most serious flaw in the 1999 reorganization plan was the inclusion of the regional USIA offices as public diplomacy offices within the regional bureaus of the department. This meant that the PD office director and the PD staff were under the direct supervision of one of the deputy assistant secretaries and, ultimately, under the assistant secretary in the regional bureau. In the State Department, the regional bureaus call the shots. No amount of "interaction" with the under secretary for PD and PA or with other PD bureaus can alter this fact. As a result, the PD office director's career is in the hands of those who may not well understand how PD works or who may have agendas that are inconsistent with what PD needs to accomplish.

Making matters worse, there are now at least six different public diplomacies (one for each region) rather than unity of command and a coherent and single public diplomacy, which is then adapted to local conditions as needed. The under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs has full responsibility for the conduct of public diplomacy worldwide but lacks real authority over it. As we have seen, this is a recipe for failure.

State's response to the Djeridjian Report acknowledged that public diplomacy must have a central policy and resource focus under the control of the under secretary. Exactly how much control will likely be an issue for prolonged negotiations. But the creation of a Bureau for Public Diplomacy Operations to coordinate, direct and be responsive to PD field posts would ensure that authority — not just responsibility — would be in the hands of the under secretary.

Lack of Adequate Funding for Public Diplomacy Programs

So far the war on terrorism has brought some modest additional resources to public diplomacy. But these funds, while welcome and already being put to good use, barely

constitute a down payment on an effective worldwide public diplomacy for the 21st century. In fact, America's current PD budget would not even match that of advertising for a mid-size global business — yet informing and persuading foreign publics about U.S. foreign policy, our values and our motives are far more complex endeavors than selling Uncle Ben's Rice or Coca-Cola. That said, without basic reform and restructuring of the public diplomacy function of the State Department, additional monies will not result in a more effective public diplomacy.

To sum up: any serious renewal of American public diplomacy must find a middle ground between the old USIA, an independent agency, and the weak structure that currently exists within the State Department. Dynamic leadership at the Department of State by Secretary Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage has brought increased funding and a new sense of purpose to a government agency badly in need of reform. Now is the time to extend that same energy and emphasis to the department's public diplomacy. This unfinished business — a genuine renewal of America's public diplomacy function — cannot be postponed any longer. ■

William P. Kiehl served as a public diplomacy officer at home and abroad for more than 33 years with the Department of State and the United States Information Agency. He is currently a senior partner with PD Worldwide (global public affairs, public relations and intercultural communications consultants) and executive director of the Public Diplomacy Council at George Washington University. His proposals for structural reform of U.S. public diplomacy are presented in more detail in "Can Humpty Dumpty Be Saved?," American Diplomacy, November 2003 (www.americandiplomacy.org).

FOREIGN SERVICE STAFFING: EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

David Coulson

Work force planning is a complex undertaking that does not have the most successful track record in U.S. government agencies. The foreign affairs agencies are wrestling with it now, as they struggle to recover from the mismanagement of the 1990s, when budgets and staffing were ravaged. But the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative at State and the Development Readiness Initiative at USAID are understandably directed more toward emergency rebuilding of staffing to meet the urgent responsibilities of the day than long-range planning.

In truth, exigency, not strategic planning, continues to drive the largely discrete decisions and policies concerning

staffing. So in the best improvisational tradition of the Foreign Service, we solved the problem of covering it by redefining it. Instead of a comprehensive, "macro" approach to our theme, we offer you a set of articles written from the "micro" perspective, each addressing a different piece of the Foreign Service staffing puzzle. Together, they constitute a progress report on Foreign Service work force planning, such as it is.

Each of these articles addresses a different piece of the Foreign Service staffing puzzle.

Some of you know that I was a Foreign Service officer from 1985 to 1997. My A-100 class, the 25th, contained 51 people, making it one of the largest entering groups in a long time — but just one of many during the mid-1980s recruitment surge.

For a whole variety of reasons, that hiring wave crested just a few years later, and, starting in the 1990s, the Foreign Service came under the budget-cutters' knife even as its responsibilities multiplied. Foreign Service hiring did not even keep up with attrition during the 1990s. The U.S. Information Agency was starved of funds, and then abolished. Hundreds of positions at the State Department and other agencies were left unfilled (some for years at a time); many employees were forced to forgo critical training in response to beleaguered posts' frantic cries to "be here yesterday"; and generally life was made more stressful for those trying (in the mantra of the period) to "do more with less."

Today, entrance classes routinely comprise 80 to 90 new hires, and they follow each other in remarkably quick succession. What made that possible? In a word, DRI: the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative, which has been under way for three years now. See our lead article, by FSO Niels Marquardt ("The DRI Rides to the Rescue," p. 20) for more details. And as a companion piece, first-tour generalist Bryan Olthof (a member of the 112th A-100 class) gives us "A Bird's-Eye View of DRI" (p. 26).

Those of us working in Washington sometimes forget about the vital contributions of Foreign Service National employees to our diplomatic missions around the world. So it is worth being reminded that FSNs do a whole range of jobs, sometimes under even more difficult conditions than their American supervisors experience.

In an effort to link FSN compensation more closely to the responsibilities performed, the State Department employs the Computer Aided Job Evaluation Process, more familiarly known as CAJE. But FSO Alexis Ludwig points out that FSNs who work in political, economic and pubic affairs sections possess special skills which are not easily measured — or remunerated — by the CAJE matrix. He therefore argues in favor of "Liberating FSNs from Their 'CAJE'" (p. 29).

Earlier, I alluded to the precipitous dip in Foreign Service hiring during the last decade. The U.S. Agency for International Development, in particular, suffered from that trend. Though it managed to stay alive, USAID was radically downsized, and underwent a reduction-in-force at one point. Shawn Zeller, a staff reporter for *Government Executive* magazine, describes how USAID is recovering and rebuilding its shattered work force to meet new challenges in "On the Work Force Roller Coaster at USAID" (p. 33).

Not a few commentators have remarked on the irony that, notwithstanding its rhetoric about wanting to shrink the federal work force, the Bush administration has actually increased its ranks. But at the same time, the administration has remained true to the traditional Republican preference for devolving government functions to the private sector via outsourcing. Heritage Foundation analyst Ron Utt explains the rationale for this approach in "Competitive Contracting: An Avenue for Improvement" (p. 41).

This being an election year, it would be even more foolhardy than usual to venture any predictions about the outlook for Foreign Service staffing in the near term. However, there is a set of new challenges before us that weren't on the table when the DRI was conceived: not just Iraq and Afghanistan, but also the impact of new homeland security requirements on consular services. One thing is clear: how these issues are addressed will affect every member of the Foreign Service, whatever our grade, agency or professional specialization. ■

Steven Alan Honley is the editor of the Foreign Service Journal. *An FSO from 1985 to 1997, he served in Mexico City, Wellington and Washington, D.C.*

THE DRI RIDES TO THE RESCUE

AFTER A DECADE OF STRUGGLE AND ATTRITION, THE DIPLOMATIC READINESS INITIATIVE HAS REVITALIZED THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S OPERATIONS.

BY NIELS MARQUARDT

"The Diplomatic Readiness Initiative." DRI. Three years after Secretary of State Colin Powell launched DRI in early 2001, these phrases continue to pepper conversations, cables and other communications throughout the department and at overseas posts. Arguably the most important and successful human resource management initiative undertaken at State in decades, the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative has not only revitalized the department's operations but, as suggested by its name, has enhanced our readiness for coming challenges.

But except for entry-level members of the Foreign Service, how many of us really know how DRI works, or what it has accomplished? Is it primarily a program to streamline red tape to get more people into the system, to more effectively train those new hires, or both? And, most importantly, do we have a shared sense of where it will take the State Department and the Foreign Service in the future?

Why DRI Was Necessary

The State Department work force that welcomed Secretary Powell on Jan. 20, 2001, had huge gaps in its ranks, with bureaucratic band-aids trying (and largely failing) to cover them up despite valiant efforts to "do more with less." Facing inadequate budgets through most of the 1990s, State had not been able to hire enough personnel to make up for attrition, even as it stretched to open several dozen new posts, from Asmara to Yerevan. The resulting staffing shortages affected the Civil and Foreign Services, specialists and generalists, alike. In 2001 we had a deficit of over 400 mid-level generalists, and were also short over 300 mid-level Foreign Service specialists. In Washington, we had over 600 vacant Civil Service positions.

Heroism abounded in the breach. Record numbers of civil servants went abroad to fill Foreign Service vacancies. Family members enlisted enthusiastically for work traditionally done by untenured generalists. Many Foreign Service personnel routinely skipped language and professional training (and even deferred home leave and vacations) to make direct transfers to their next post. And our diminished corps of untenured generalists stretched itself even thinner doing multiple tours adjudicating visas.

These creative approaches were critical in accomplishing our mission throughout the 1990s. However, with managers throughout the system "robbing Peter to pay Paul" to fill jobs, hundreds of positions were left unfilled, some for years at a time; the available work force was burning itself out; and there was no relief in sight.

Simultaneously, by the end of the last decade, the

Foreign Service appeared to have lost much of its luster as a premier public service employer. The Foreign Service written exam, which historically had attracted some 15,000 participants annually, drew a record low number of takers — 8,047 — in 2000. Twice in the 1990s, the exam was not given at all. The yearly budget for recruitment advertising was down to less than $100,000. Top talent clearly was looking elsewhere for employment. A "woe is us" attitude pervaded the department. (However, contrary to a widespread perception that exists to this day, the department did not encounter a spike in attrition in the 1990s.)

We are evolving from a system that placed little value on training to one that makes it a top priority.

Furthermore, by 2000 those who had passed the exam and subsequent oral assessment and had made it onto the hiring registers were distributed unevenly across the five career tracks. The department was struggling to hire sufficient management and consular officers in the face of a surfeit of political officer wannabes. This exacerbated systemic mismatches that already existed between the skills and interests of generalists and the careers for which we hired them, due in large part to the "unconed-on-entry" policy in effect for generalists hired from 1990 to 1996. On the Foreign Service specialist side, intake of office and information managers also had dried to a trickle, forcing posts to operate far below optimal staffing levels in critical areas. Training suffered enormously as well, creating for managers and employees the unpalatable choice between receiving a trained employee months late or welcoming an untrained one earlier. Department employees and retirees openly questioned whether our days were numbered and our relevance past.

Now fast forward to the current reality. A record 20,342 people sat for the 2003 exam, and another large crowd is expected on April 24, 2004. The registers of cleared, ready-to-hire Foreign Service generalist candidates now total about 1,500 people, of whom over 500 will be hired this year (compared with 110 hired in 1995). A-100 orientation classes at FSI now average over 90 participants, up from lows of 20 or so in the mid-1990s. We also have robust registers and intake for all Foreign Service specialist hiring categories, including office managers, general services officers and information managers.

At the same time, the historically high quality of our applicants has been maintained, garnering consistently positive feedback from supervisors in the field. Incoming specialists see a bright career ahead as special agents, officer managers or health professionals, while generalist candidates continue to bring in a breathtaking array of professional, linguistic and academic backgrounds and skills. The department's new "critical-needs language" hiring policy is making sure that qualified applicants — both generalists and specialists — who speak languages like Farsi, Arabic and Korean are placed higher on our registers. A visit to the Foreign Service Institute's George P. Shultz Center in Arlington, especially around lunchtime, bears unmistakable witness to the surge in hiring and ongoing follow-on training. Indeed, enrollment of State employees at FSI has grown 38 percent since DRI began in 2001.

DRI by the Numbers

To make all this happen, the State Department set about retooling its entire hiring process beginning in 2001. In June of that year, we staffed up a dedicated "Diplomatic Readiness Task Force" consisting only of six full-time members, representing Foreign Service generalists and specialists and the Civil Service. However, biweekly DRTF meetings (now monthly) also brought together colleagues from HR's Offices of Recruitment, Assignments, Policy Coordination, Civil Service Personnel, and the Executive Office; all five schools at FSI, plus its front office; the hiring and clearance operations in both DS and MED; and assorted others. These meetings focused on expanding pipelines and breaking bottlenecks to handle a doubling of clearances, intake, assignments and training throughout the DRI period. The meetings served as a catalyst for changes that affected how literally hundreds of department employees and contractors have done their jobs — and how over 4,000 new colleagues experienced being hired — since DRI began. Examples include:

- Expanding the budget for recruitment, advertising and outreach activities to over $1.5 million annually from under $100,000 in 2001.

The author, an FSO, has served as the State Department's Special Coordinator for Diplomatic Readiness since 2001.

• Expanding programs for Volunteer Recruiters, Recruiters Emeritus, the Pickering Program, and launching the Rangel Program.

• Focusing the Diplomats-in-Residence Program on recruitment and outreach.

• Offering "oral prep sessions" and writing workshops nationwide to candidates.

• Piloting an online application process for specialists.

• "Unblindfolding" the generalist oral assessment to take into account candidates' academic and professional backgrounds (retaining the unbiased nature of the "group exercise"), and focusing more on interpersonal and management skills.

• Offering the generalist written exam twice in 2002, once in other years.

• Reducing the average hiring delay from written exam to A-100 from 27 months in 2001 to 10 months today.

• Increasing the hiring priority given to candidates who speak critical-needs languages like Arabic, Urdu and Chinese.

• Expanding the size and increasing the frequency of specialist and generalist orientation classes.

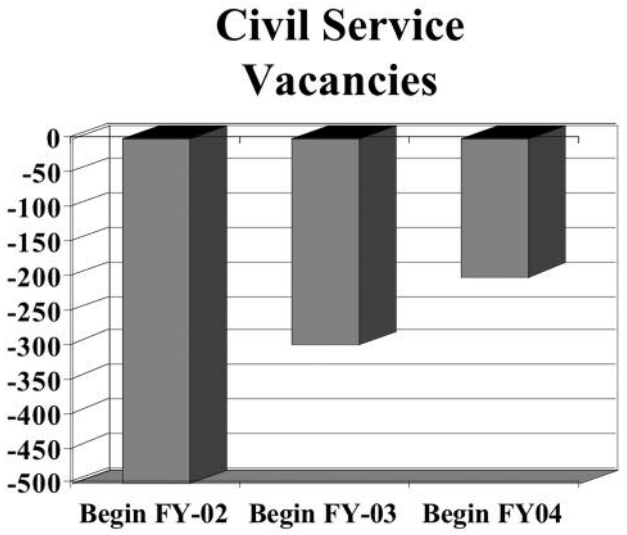
• Raising the ceilings on language training — especially in hard languages.

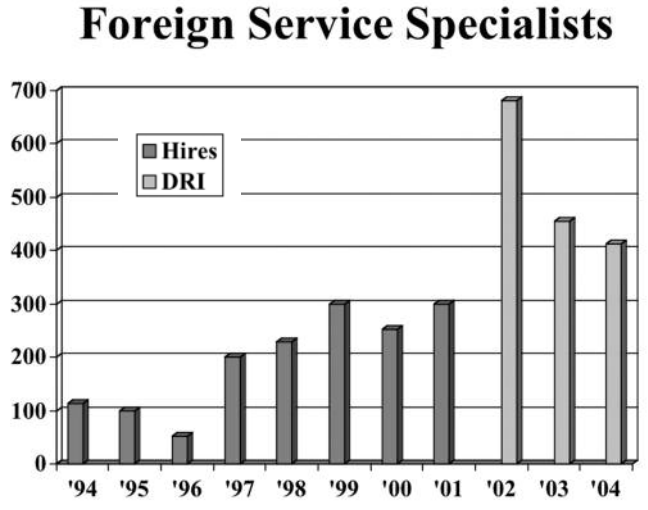
• Providing leadership and management training to our new hires, as well as their supervisors.

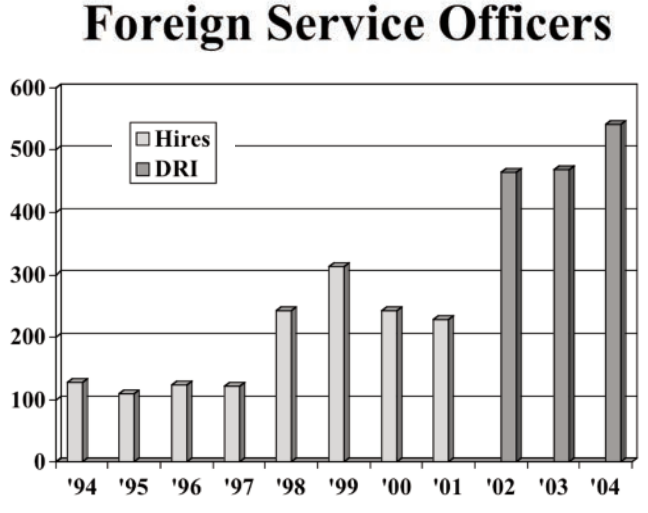
• Expanding the availability of all "tradecraft" courses and ensuring that all new employees receive all necessary training.

• Instituting a biennial "Employee Commitment and Satisfaction Survey" to obtain feedback from all American employees of the State Department.

The assignment and training process has been reformed as well. For the first time in years, new generalists are given the option of bidding on initial one-year tours in a range of understaffed Washington offices in both functional and regional bureaus. Roughly 10 percent of each entering class is assigned domestically under this new policy. Deputy assistant secretaries in each receiving bureau are asked to assume the mentoring role for these new employ-







Rebuilding Capacity With the DRI

When Secretary of State Colin Powell initiated the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative in 2001, the State Department had more than 600 vacant Civil Service positions and a deficit of more than 400 mid-level Foreign Service generalists and 300 mid-level specialists.

Responding to that situation, the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative is a three-year plan to hire 1,158 additional staff over attrition for the department. The DRI aims not only to cover the staffing gaps but to enable the department to respond to crises and new priorities and to provide employees with appropriate training.

As the accompanying charts from the Office of the Special Coordinator for Diplomatic Readiness show, in its first two years the DRI has succeeded in cutting Civil Service vacancies by almost two-thirds and significantly boosting the intake of Foreign Service specialists and generalists.

Monthly Diplomatic Readiness Task Force meetings bring together all the elements of the human resources system to coordinate and streamline the entire hiring process, from recruitment to testing and evaluation, security and medical clearances, assignment to first post, and orientation, language and professional training at the Foreign Service Institute.

State's 2004-2009 Strategic Plan pledges to continue the DRI.

– Susan Maitra

ees that is played overseas by DCMs. There are also regular sessions at which they receive further advice, information, and mentoring.

As mid-level positions overseas increasingly are filled by newer colleagues needing Foreign Service experience, mid-level officers, in turn, are filling ever-larger numbers of domestic vacancies — many of which have been vacant for years. (Contrary to fears that this approach could set up "green" officers for failure, Foreign Service managers are uniform in their high praise for the quality of the new personnel.)

The single most important lesson from the DRI experience is that continuous recruitment and hiring must always be the department's highest priority.

Tangible Progress

The difference DRI has made is already palpable, despite the fact that many of the people hired through the initiative are still in training en route to post. Almost 300 vacant mid-level positions have been made available to junior officers, including — when deemed appropriate — some straight out of A-100. Most embassies, even the smallest, now have at least two information managers and two office managers, permitting a healthier approach to issues such as work hours, overtime, R&R, home leave, TDYs and career development. Both specialists and generalists in almost all cases are arriving at post with the full complement of professional and language training required to excel in their new jobs. Ceilings on language training are being raised for all employees, particularly to permit greater proficiency in critical languages like Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

One basic goal of DRI is to return to the one-to-one match between people and positions at each grade level that existed before underhiring began in 1993. This goal will be achieved soon at the FS-3 level for generalists, and will also be achieved within the next decade at the FS-2 and FS-1 levels as well (senior generalists are not in deficit). A similar process is well under way to match specialist positions and people; already, that match has been achieved at multiple levels of the office and information management pyramid such that there are no longer unfilled OMS and IMS positions at the entry level and lower mid-level ranks.

The Civil Service Component

Often overlooked is the fact that DRI has an important Civil Service component as well. We already have created and filled 165 new CS positions under DRI. By the end of FY 2004, that number will exceed 200. Additionally, the ongoing emphasis on better resource management has improved hiring practices across the Civil Service at State. At the start of DRI, State had over 600 vacant Civil Service positions. The number has been reduced to about 200 under DRI; this gap is closing as we hire and as other Civil Service employees return to Washington from overseas excursion tours, now that Foreign Service personnel are filling those slots.

"Surging" with Help from DRI

While we launched DRI with a deliberate eye to improving our response capacities, we were unaware, of course, that 9/11 would follow shortly. Or that new missions in Afghanistan and Iraq and new homeland security challenges would follow 9/11. While staffing these missions and programs remains a challenge, it clearly could not have been done before DRI without major negative effects on other priorities. Indeed, Embassy Kabul started up thanks to 25 "DRI positions." Expanded programs for high-risk visa screening absorbed over 50 new positions. Our critical presence in Iraq, especially after we open our new Baghdad embassy

A Bird's-Eye View of DRI

During a gap between language and tradecraft training for my first assignment, I had a bridge assignment with the Diplomatic Readiness Task Force. My assignment was to draft a survey of junior officers, but I also spent time discussing my motivations and experiences in joining the Foreign Service with the very people responsible for my, and many others', employment with the State Department. Based on those conversations, I constructed the following brief narrative of the year-and-a-half-long process that brought me into the Foreign Service. While my experiences are by no means unique nor necessarily typical, I hope they will be of interest to others in the State Department community.

You can't make someone else's choices. You shouldn't let someone else make yours.

First, as I learned in A-100, always lead with a biographic introduction. My parents immigrated to the United States from the Netherlands about two years before I was born. I grew up in Pittsburgh, Pa., earned a B.S. and M.S. in chemical engineering and worked for a few years with Fluor Daniel's biotech/pharmaceutical division in San Francisco before deciding that engineering wasn't what I wanted to do for the next 40 years of my life. Throughout my years in university, I had harbored an interest in economics, international relations and current events and decided that the best place to combine those interests with my desire to engage in public service was the State Department. Not knowing whether the Foreign Service needed Dutch-speaking engineers but figuring I had nothing to lose, I signed up for the exam on the department's Web site.

I took the written exam in September 2001 in San Francisco, a couple of weeks after the attacks of 9/11. Although the events of that day didn't factor into my decision to take the exam, they did strengthen my intention to find a job that I wanted rather than a job that merely paid well.

Three months after the written exam, I received a letter telling me that I had passed and that my oral assessment was scheduled for April 2002. Provided with the list of characteristics against which candidates are judged, I proceeded to develop a list of work, school, and personal experiences that illustrated times at which I had utilized those traits. I also spent an entire Sunday cooped up in my apartment trying to compile a list of jobs held, schools attended, addresses lived at, friends known, etc. over the previous 10 years of my life for my security clearance paperwork.

What proved most useful, though, was a prep session offered in San Francisco by Steve Browning, a Diplomat-in-Residence based in Southern California. DIRs (not DRI — mind the acronyms!) are FSOs who spend a tour at universities around the country to educate people about, and recruit candidates for, the Foreign Service, and to demystify the examination process.

Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.

However these three activities factored into my oral assessment experience, I passed. I was given a conditional offer of employment and placed on something called the "Register," pending security and health clearances and selection.

I began my conditionally-employed waiting period with high spirits even though I had heard that candidates could reside on the Register for over a year before being offered a job. I still had a job at Fluor, my doctor used to work for the Navy so he knew exactly what I needed for my medical clearance, and I obtained my security clearance in about four months. I could wait a little longer.

In fact, I only had to wait about two additional months to hear that I would receive an offer for the March 2003 A-100 class (the 112th). And here I learned another thing about DRI. While I was worrying about the meaning of life and what my career aspirations should be, I hadn't thought much about the pay cut I would experience upon joining the government. But thanks to DRI, I didn't have to forgo too much money. Some of my A-100 colleagues who came from law practices didn't see it that way, but, to me, it meant a lot to know that the department was trying to match the private sector in pay while continuing to outdo it in benefits.

And thus I ended up in an A-100 class of 92 people in Washington, D.C. Our class started with an expedited swearing-in, followed by a day in which we took turns interviewing and then introducing the person sitting next to us. It was then that I learned the wealth of backgrounds and experiences that the Foreign Service was attracting: teachers, fishermen, fashion designers, journalists, lawyers, recent college graduates — and yes, engineers — speaking languages as diverse as Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian — and yes, Dutch.

Be careful what you choose. You may get it.

After the class introductions on the first day, we received our bid list. Given 10 days to pick our top 25 choices out of a list of 92 posts, we set about trying to figure out if we could handle two years in Bujumbura, Mexico City or Lilongwe. What was really surprising was that one person's paradise was another's least-favorite place on earth. Our A-100 instruc-

tors told us that our bid list was the envy of all the previous A-100 classes, but it seems like most everyone ends up happy with their destination, even if it was 25th on their list.

While daydreaming about life at our favorite post, we were taught public speaking, cultural awareness, "managing up," working with FSNs, composure under fire, cable drafting, how to get to your first post, what each officer does in an embassy, how the department is organized, how policies are made in Washington, and how to fill out an EER. There were sessions about language probation, hardship equity, entry-level requirements, tenure, security and promotion exams, and an offsite session. When I took my language exams, my high school Spanish earned a 0+ but my Dutch got me off language probation.

A-100 in its entirety was a great experience. But two moments will always remain as distinct memories. The first is Flag Day: all of us sitting in the FSI gym, backed by family and friends, with 92 flags perched on a desk in front of us. One by one, each flag was picked up, the name of the post read out, and the winner of the assignment announced. I ended up with San Jose, #4 on my bid list, which meant eight months at FSI learning Spanish and taking consular and political-economic tradecraft training. Being paid to learn a language is, so far, the best way to make a living I've found. But any time at FSI will always pale in comparison to the days of A-100 when everything was new, nothing was certain, and all we had was our desire to live a life of purpose, wherever the department needed us.

Then there was the second highlight: our official swearing-in ceremony at which Secretary Powell welcomed us and our families into the State Department community. Here was the man who made a lot of us think about taking the exam, the man who made us proud to say we worked for him, and he made a point of taking time to swear us into the Service and to welcome our families along for the adventure. It was kind of like the ad campaign, "This man wants to talk you about a very important job," as he did, in fact, tell us how important our job and our families are, to us, to the department and to our country.

My A-100 classmates and I have all spread to the far reaches of the earth to begin our own lives as representatives of the United States government. The motivating factors that brought us to our current jobs may not be what keep us in the Foreign Service, but we all came looking for something unique that we felt the State Department offers — a chance to represent America to the world.

— Bryan Olthof

Bryan Olthof was a member of the 112th A-100 class. He is now on his first tour in San Jose.

this summer, will have absorbed over 100 new positions and people. New domestic-based programs, such as the HIV/AIDS and Middle East Partnership initiatives, are also staffed with DRI positions.

Creating a "Training Complement"

Therein lies a coming challenge. DRI, by hiring exactly 1,158 new colleagues above attrition over three years, was intended to create a "training complement," representing over 12 percent of our total work force (a level that remains the target in coming years). This corresponds to the "training float" that each of the U.S. armed forces uses to manage and develop their people. We would then deploy a significant part of our work force to new training activities specifically designed to enhance our institutional readiness.

Some of this would be language training to expand our "bench depth," such as expanding our cadres of qualified Urdu and Chinese speakers. More colleagues would also be trained in the leadership and management curriculum, across their careers, starting well before they assumed management positions. In addition, others among us would enhance their skills to help ready the department for the complex contingencies likely to become more common in the 21st century, such as conducting diplomatic operations in unconventional environments, working with international coalitions on the ground, interacting with military forces and NGOs providing transitional assistance, responding to multidimensional crises, and establishing posts in zones of former conflict.

Looking Ahead to FY 2005

With so many positions going now to Iraq and Afghanistan, the training complement envisioned under DRI is almost 200 colleagues smaller than foreseen. For that reason, the State Department has requested a FY 2005 budget that includes 183 additional positions above attrition. This proposed additional hiring would provide the personnel resources for these critical but unforeseen priorities while continuing to build our training and readiness capacities to the levels intended under DRI. This funding request is important if the department is to avoid sliding back to the overstretched, under-trained, unready state that DRI was intended to remedy. Indeed, the single most important lesson from the DRI experience is that the continuous recruitment and hiring of sufficient new colleagues for our future work force

must always be the department's highest priority.

No Quick Fixes in Sight ...

Gratifying as DRI's first three years have been, it will take several more years for DRI intake to percolate upward fully into the department's staffing pyramid and correct the imbalances resulting from inadequate hiring in the 1990s. Thus, for example, some mismatches will persist between ranks of employees and the listed grades of jobs they are performing. But HR will continue, as it has since before DRI began, to make the best matches between our new colleagues and the higher-graded positions they often will fill. As a result, many of our new colleagues will have challenging "stretch" assignments.

The State Department work force that welcomed Secretary Powell on Jan. 20, 2001, had huge gaps in its ranks.

Meanwhile, many managers, especially at smaller posts, are assuming greater mentoring and career development responsibilities for their recently-hired staff members. But under DRI, many of these managers now also have the resources and flexibility to devise creative programs — including rotations between sections and temporary duty at other posts, among others — to enhance and accelerate the career development of our new colleagues. Indeed, Director General W. Robert Pearson recently directed every post to develop and/or reinforce such a program for its untenured employees. Finally, at all levels of the department, DRI is also making possible a return to the healthy balance between work and personal life that is critical to long-term, sustainable readiness.

What DRI Means to Each of Us

When DRI comes up, we in HR sometimes hear concerns expressed about perceived bottlenecks in future promotions. While it is true that fluctuating intake levels can complicate management's efforts to ensure steady promotion rates, there is no reason to expect DRI-induced delays. Moreover, the cultural changes DRI is designed to foster offer attractive benefits that should transcend this concern. Indeed, DRI gradually is changing our culture to one that puts more emphasis on the longer-term aspects of career development, with less short-term focus only on the next promotion. Survey results tell us that employees are deeply interested in improving the quality of our leadership and management capacities and that they see training as a critical element in meeting this challenge. DRI permits us, if we choose to seize this opportunity, to participate in training along the lines of the best practices of other government agencies and cutting-edge corporations, as exemplified by FSI's Leadership and Management Continuum and its just-released Language Continuum.

We are evolving from a system that placed little value on training — and offered few opportunities or incentives for it — to one that makes training and overall diplomatic readiness top priorities. Employee surveys and management literature tell us that our newer colleagues seek the opportunity for continual learning and thus are prepared to embrace this change.

In sum, DRI is a work in progress that invites the attention and active participation of each of us. Potentially, DRI has the capacity to affect every employee at State, by changing what we do, how we do it, even how we see ourselves and our roles in service to our country.

The Next Big Thing

The director general, with strong 7th floor backing, is already moving the department forward to the next level of our DRI-empowered evolution, which he is calling "Operational Readiness." As he discussed in his February *FSJ* interview, Amb. Pearson's concept involves three basic aspects. First, we are developing a robust new IT system — a "skills inventory" — for managing and tapping effectively the full range of operational capabilities of the entire State work force. This cross-cutting system, including both Civil and Foreign Service colleagues, will allow all employees to make maximum contributions to our readiness and response capabilities. Second, we are pulling together a "Readiness Reserve" potentially composed of all active-duty, and many retired, State employees to meet coming foreign policy challenges. And third, the department is expanding its training systems to maximize the impact and effectiveness of the emerging DRI training complement. Together, these advances are intended to create a lasting legacy for the State Department, and the Foreign Service, built on Secretary Powell's Diplomatic Readiness Initiative. ■

Liberating FSNs from Their "CAJE"

The Computer Aided Job Evaluation process is intended to give Foreign Service Nationals their due. But it isn't working as well as it should.

By Alexis Ludwig

Many of us in the Foreign Service have had the privilege, and pleasure, of working closely with some truly extraordinary Foreign Service National colleagues. Often it is they who do the real work of the mission while the Americans, demonstrating good management skills, stand aside and let them get it done.

It cannot be said often enough that FSNs are the real experts on the local terrain, safeguarding the institutional memory at most posts. Equally important, they are the indispensable guide for the wide-eyed and innocent newcomer Americans, helping to orient us to the problems and the tools to tackle them more quickly than we could ever hope to do without them. We ignore their advice at our peril.

While I certainly don't mean to belittle the crucial contributions of the majority of FSNs who work in administrative support to keep posts up and running, our paychecks coming and our housing in livable shape, I'll reveal my personal bias here by asserting that the relatively small group of Foreign Service National colleagues who work alongside us in our political, economic and public affairs sections deserve to be singled out for special recognition.

Their educational and professional backgrounds are often comparable or even superior to those of many Foreign Service generalists. (They are often expected to have an advanced university degree, whereas no such requirement exists to become a Foreign Service officer or specialist.) Many of them have served as government officials, journalists, politicians, lawyers or academics before joining the staffs of our embassies and consulates. And they know their own culture and language, and their country's social and political power structures, much more intimately than we ever will.

In short, Foreign Service Nationals are our peers in the broadest possible sense. But do we truly recognize and reward their contributions to the success of our diplomatic missions?

A Gilded "CAJE"

This brings me to my main subject: the Computer Aided Job Evaluation, or CAJE. Anyone who has worked with FSNs during the past year or so has become familiar with this unfortunately apt acronym. CAJE is the formidable logistical effort, already well under way, to classify (or reclassify) all FSN positions in every post in the world according to fixed criteria in a consolidated computer database.

In the most benign interpretation, CAJE is a necessary move to bring the FSN side of the State Department's human resource system into the modern

age, ensuring that FSN job descriptions and ranks are contained in one database that is immediately computer-accessible instead of in paper files that are sometimes inconsistent and contradictory, and in any case difficult to track and to manage.

If one accepts this rationale at face value, one can dismiss the shudder of nervousness passing through FSN ranks as merely a predictable resistance to change. Still, one does not have to be a cynic to understand the fear that the CAJE system is an elaborate scheme designed to lower the average rank of FSNs, thereby saving Uncle Sam money in the mid- to long term.

Do we truly recognize and reward all FSNs' contributions to the success of our diplomatic missions?

Granted, it was decided from the start that should CAJE reclassification cause an FSN position's rank to fall, then the individual occupying that position will retain the pay attached to his or her previous, higher ranking. Conversely, if the position's rank increases with CAJE, the individual will gain that benefit. By all appearances, it is a no-lose situation. But is it that simple?

During my previous and present assignments I have worked closely, if only in intensive bursts, on CAJE issues affecting several FSN colleagues. This has included helping shape one political FSN position that did not exist before. This "user's" perspective has given me reason to question the wisdom of the system, particularly its potential impact on the FSN group whose special value and contributions I highlighted above.

There are three interrelated dimensions to my concern, each pointing (in my view) to the narrow "admin-driven" nature of the reform. First, the CAJE calculus implicitly assigns more value to the work done by FSNs in the admin/GSO fields — thereby discriminating against the rest. Second, unlike the personnel system for the rest of the Foreign Service, CAJE assigns rank to the position, not the person — lending disproportionate weight to the bureaucratic qualification at the expense of personal quality. (This, of course, closely parallels the U.S. Civil Service employment structure.)

Third and perhaps most crucially, CAJE fails to recognize or assign value to some of the most important characteristics of superior "substantive" FSNs — precisely because these characteristics are difficult to quantify and impossible to squeeze into one of CAJE's discrete boxes.

Measuring Charm

The CAJE formula assigns value to an FSN position by assessing its relative requirements in the broad categories of, successively, responsibility, knowledge, intellectual skills, communication, and environment. On the face of it these categories seem neutral enough. But the system's marked tilt toward — along with the easier measurability of — GSO/admin-type responsibilities emerges on closer examination. Take a quick look at an instruction sheet listing examples for the kinds of tasks that count for something in each of those categories and you will note that they are weighted toward those who work with or manage resources and equipment — visa foils or machinery or cash. Again, these management-type tasks and responsibilities are crucial, and arguably as important as any other. (FS generalists seeking promotion understand full well how important they are.)

But even the three categories that would appear to apply to the primary responsibilities of "substantive" FSNs — knowledge, communication and intellectual skills — don't quite make the cut. Sifting through illustrative examples of hypothetical tasks in these categories that matter to the wizards who assess the position's rank, one senses that the contributions of key political, economic and public affairs FSNs were afterthoughts in the overall scheme — as though the system's designers realized they had to throw the few remaining folks a bone. For example, under the category of intellectual skills, which, among other things, measures the extent to which the job requires "plan-

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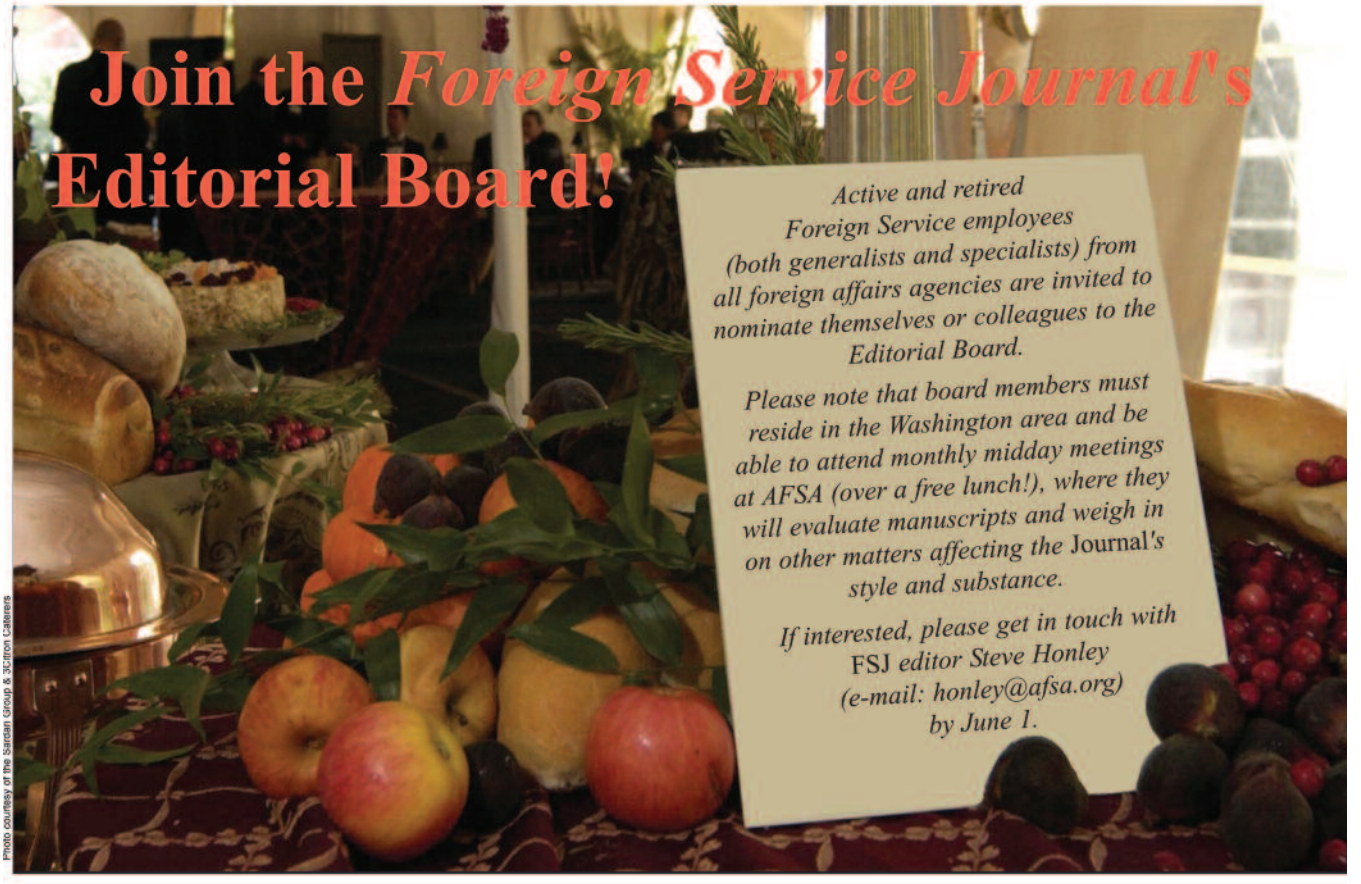
ning ahead," two of the representative hypothetical tasks given in a worksheet I saw were as follows: "The technician plans own work at least three days in advance. The Accounting Chief must plan the work unit tasks at least quarterly."

The fact that those wizards are judging the value and rank of a job according to special criteria to which only they are privy, and to which those outside, including the jobholder, have no access, only compounds the suspicion. (By design and rule, the outsider is supposed to "guess" what the CAJE system values when doing or redoing a job description, while only the job assessors in HR are allowed to see the concrete detailed criteria used to conduct the formal assessment.)

I should acknowledge that my experiences with several exceptional FSN colleagues have significantly shaped my views of CAJE. In Malaysia, for example, I had the privilege of working with one of the world's masters of charm and "interpersonal skills." And it did not take me long to recognize the enormous benefits, intangible though many of them were, that his skills and abilities brought to the embassy and to the U.S. government.

The CAJE framework fails to assign full value to the contibutions of all FSNs.

Like a number of other countries, Malaysia is a place where relatively few people agree with (or even understand) a number of key U.S. policy priorities, and where most people are predisposed to suspect the worst of us in any case. It is also a place (again, not unique) where many of our contacts, including close ones, do not see the point of returning our phone calls.



Thus, while hardly a hostile environment, Malaysia is a potentially difficult and lonely place for a political officer pursuing U.S. national interests. That it wasn't so for me or my colleagues in the political section was in large measure thanks to our fantastic FSN political adviser.

First off, the range of his contacts is enormous, cutting across all the important ethnic, religious, political party and social-sector groups. Remarkably, he appears equally comfortable in all of these milieus, diverse as they are. (To use an imperfect cultural parallel, imagine an American equally at ease with European-Americans, African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans, and with a similar breadth of contacts across the spectrum from lefty Democrats to hard-line Republicans.) Equally impressive, almost everyone genuinely appears to like him and to enjoy his company, and many folks seek him out to exchange views on the developments of the day.

One doesn't have to be a cynic to understand the fear that the CAJE system is an elaborate scheme designed to save Uncle Sam money.

To put it another way, he is a consummate diplomat. He knows how to make people feel intelligent and important and worthwhile, which facilitates an unhindered flow of opinions and ideas. As an information seeker, he knows that what one knows is secondary to what one doesn't know, and (to paraphrase an excellent former boss of mine) that one sometimes needs to play just a little bit dumb to do the political officer role well. I often thought we should hire him to teach junior officers a special "What they don't teach you in A-100" class on the interpersonal side of diplomacy. And to the extent that his skills "rubbed off" on the rest of us, he opened doors that may well have been shut to us without him.

I have already noticed a similar kit of tools in the possession of our political FSN here in Bolivia, though adapted to the different cultural circumstances. Let me cite just one example. Not long after I arrived here, I watched my colleague with a mixture of amazement and admiration as he moved in to meet, and charm, an internationally-known Spanish jurist who was the star attraction of a conference in which we had no role. Even though a crowd of conference participants was also flocking to the dignitary, in just moments he and our FSN were absorbed in friendly conversation. And before moving on, the jurist requested a copy of the State Department's human rights report on Bolivia, implying the possibility of ongoing contact.

CAJE cannot, and does not attempt to, account for these kinds of "immeasurable" skills. Important as advanced university degrees, work experience and technical competence all are, such attributes are inert and meaningless without considering the character, the human spark, the all-important internal resources, of the individual in question.

A Modest Proposal

I have a twofold fix for this problem. First, the CAJE matrix needs to make explicit allowance for the individual's interpersonal skills in determining the rank of the position, especially for those jobs for which such "human" skills are crucial. Second, the system needs to ensure that the all-important "immeasurable" abilities are also duly taken into account — somehow. I recognize the inherent difficulty of adding such factors to the calculus, but I am confident our intrepid human resources experts can meet the challenge. Perhaps there could be some provision for "bonus points," for example.

To seasoned observers of the bureaucratic mindset, this proposal must seem the very picture of tilting against windmills. Those of psychoanalytic bent may attribute the motive behind this critique to a thinly veiled fear that were the CAJE approach applied to the rest of the Foreign Service, it would come down hard on yours truly.

Both could well be right, at least in part. But I am willing to run that risk. Our FSN colleagues deserve an evaluation system that recognizes all their valuable contributions to our overseas missions — not just the ones that can be easily quantified and assigned to snug bureaucratic boxes. Otherwise, we may end up sacrificing some of our best people to an overly rigid system, defeating the very purpose of CAJE. ■

On the Work Force Roller Coaster at USAID

Following a decade of radical downsizing, the U.S. Agency for International Development is rebuilding to meet new challenges.

By Shawn Zeller

The numbers tell quite a story. Between 1962, when the U.S. Agency for International Development came into being, and 2002, its full-time staff declined from a peak of about 15,000 during the Vietnam era to less than 2,000. During the 1990s alone, 37 percent of the agency's employees either left and were not replaced, or were laid off in the 1995 reduction-in-force.

"It was a painful time," remembers Brian Atwood, USAID's administrator for much of the 1990s. "Our operations budget was cut continually." In just seven years, between 1995 and 2002, the agency lost over $50 million in funds for staff hiring.

At the same time, then-Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms, R-N.C., led a campaign to move USAID under the State Department umbrella. Atwood fought to preserve the agency's independence, arguing that its development mission was distinct from State's diplomatic one. But Helms was partly successful, requiring the USAID administrator to report to the Secretary of State. When Atwood left the agency in 2001, he was badly shaken. Congress, it seemed, no longer cared about development. Morale at USAID was at rock bottom.

But last year, in the wake of 9/11, the worldview of many politicians in Washington began to change. A consensus has emerged that terrorists breed in the poverty and desperation of the Third World and that foreign assistance, therefore, is a critical part of the war on terrorism. USAID funding for new hires in 2003 was boosted for the first time in more than a decade. President Bush also proposed creation of a new program — the Millennium Challenge Account, which was approved last year by Congress. It will fund development work in countries that rule justly, invest in their people and encourage economic freedom.

USAID's current administrator, Andrew Natsios, says the MCA "marks a revolution in foreign assistance." Natsios welcomes the new program "as the strongest possible commitment by the Bush administration to making development a core element of our foreign policy." As part of its core operations of setting the development agenda, letting contracts and overseeing the results, USAID will play a substantial role in the MCA's work.

But as Natsios well knows, if the new enthusiasm for development is to translate into solid accomplishments, USAID will have to oversee its contracts and grants much more thoroughly than it has in the past. To do that, the agency will have to rebuild its core staff of Foreign Service officers, a process that is only just beginning.

"We're making the transition from the 1990s, when our whole HR apparatus was focused on downsizing and outplacement of employees, into a growth mode where recruitment and leadership development and workforce planning, training — all of these capacities are being almost reinvented from scratch," USAID Assistant Administrator for Management John Marshall told the House Government Reform Committee last year.

Congressional meddling has had the effect of putting "a huge straitjacket on our people in the field," Natsios says.

It's a tough assignment to entirely rebuild an agency's staff, restore its morale, and at the same time, oversee two of the most important projects in the agency's history — assistance to Iraq and Afghanistan — but that is exactly what Natsios and Marshall are trying to do. In an interview, Marshall said he and Natsios understand their burden. They are attacking the agency's many problems "as diligently as we can," he says. They know that if they aren't successful in turning USAID around, all the new program spending and new enthusiasm for development may be for naught.

Ten Years in the Desert

Last August, the General Accounting Office — Congress's watchdog agency — didn't mince any words when it reported on the state of USAID. Reviewing the period from 1990 on, GAO noted that USAID had continued to evolve from an agency in which U.S. Foreign Service officers directly implemented development projects to an agency where a declining number of full-time staff struggle to oversee contractors and grantees who carry out the day-to-day development work.

In fact, USAID spokeswoman Portia Palmer says, the transition from an organization of "doers" to an organization of "managers" began in the 1980s. But the 1990s budget-cutting completed the process.

Long before 9/11, foreign aid was a conundrum for Washington policy-makers. Members of Congress faced a difficult task justifying it to their constituents, especially in light of the general perception that foreign aid has failed to lift developing countries out of poverty. There was also considerable pressure to cut discretionary spending to balance the budget. As a result, throughout the 1990s, Congress reduced foreign aid spending.

At the same time, Congress exacerbated USAID's problems by micromanaging its expenditures, loading up its appropriations with earmarks requiring it to work in particular countries or with particular contractors, rather than allowing the agency's technical experts to decide how best to allocate their dwindling funds. Congressional meddling has had the effect of putting "a huge straitjacket on our people in the field," Natsios says. Ironically, during the same period in which USAID lost 37 percent of its workforce, the number of countries with USAID programs almost doubled. Congress, for political and diplomatic reasons, ordered the agency to open many of those missions.

So for years, as the GAO reported, USAID has been taking from its program budget to cover administrative costs that should be covered by its operating budget. "We had so many mandates and so little funding, we're always robbing Peter to pay Paul," Marshall says.

Staffing was a major casualty of the cutbacks, forcing USAID to rely heavily on personal service contractors — primarily U.S. contractors and some foreigners, who work on temporary contracts at overseas missions — to manage development activities that are designed, implemented and evaluated by for-profit companies and nonprofit nongovernmental organizations. "We just didn't have enough people in the 1990s even to oversee our projects," says Atwood. "The consequence was that we became a wholesale agency. We had to farm out a lot of the work, and we were able to oversee it less effectively."

The problem continues today. About two-thirds of the personal service contractors at USAID work in technical positions, according to the GAO, but many

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serve as program and project development officers, controllers, executive officers, and occasionally temporary mission directors — positions that USAID considers inherently governmental. According to an agency study, about 160 such positions are currently filled by personal service contractors.

The staffing problems of the 1990s have come home to roost in the last two years, says Natsios. "We don't have enough officers to do the work," he says. Even so, the agency has stretched its limited resources further in order to respond to the need for development aid in countries that have spawned terrorism. It has opened five new missions to cover Southeast Asia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Iraq. "With no additional resources, we've been asked to let $1.7 billion in [contracts in] Iraq," the agency's chief procurement officer, Timothy Beans, said last year. That sum, by itself, amounts to almost half of what the agency has typically spent on development activities worldwide in recent years. And the sum keeps getting bigger as U.S. involvement in Iraq continues.

As preparedness goes, however, USAID didn't help its own cause by mismanaging the downsizing of the 1990s.

A Drastic RIF and Its Legacy

As preparedness goes, however, USAID didn't help its own cause by mismanaging the downsizing of the 1990s, or by failing to take steps to revamp its contracting process. The agency basically stopped hiring during the entire decade, allowing attrition to dry up the pipeline of junior officers. But even that didn't keep pace with the cuts to its operating budget imposed by Congress, according to Atwood. So in 1995, he says, USAID was forced to supplement the hiring freeze with a reduction-in-force, or layoffs. "We found that we didn't have enough funds to cover the staff. … We just couldn't make our budget," says Atwood. As a result, 100 Foreign Service officers and 100 civil servants lost their jobs.

Rather than targeting the staff cuts to hold onto the top Foreign Service officers and ensure a pipeline of future leaders, the agency opted for across-the-board cuts, says the GAO's top USAID analyst, Jess Ford. The 1995 RIF led to an ugly age discrimination lawsuit that was ultimately settled by the Justice Department with a financial settlement and the rehiring of some of the workers.

In the end, a whole generation was lost. Among 2,200 USAID employees today, only 45 — or 2 percent — are under the age of 30. At the same time, 10 percent of the workforce is over the age of 60, while 48 percent is over 50. As the GAO emphasized in its report, "Increased attrition of U.S. direct hires since the reduction in force in the mid-1990s led to the loss of the most experienced Foreign Service officers, while the hiring freeze stopped the pipeline of new hires at the junior level."

Terrence Brown, former USAID assistant administrator for management, says the agency did the best that it could. "When you go into a reduction-in-force, it is the most extreme management situation you can put yourself in. It means you don't have the resources to pay your staff, and you can't spend money you don't have." The RIF was "the last way out," he says. He believes it was done as rationally as possible, given the situation.

Some Foreign Service officers, however, still believe the RIF would not have been necessary if the agency hadn't — at the same time Congress was reducing the budget — wasted about $100 million on a failed effort to upgrade the financial management computer system. USAID was then forced to spend even more money hiring IBM to study how the project went awry. In addition, many USAID officers believe that Atwood and Brown were anxious to demonstrate their proficiency as managers during the decade of government-wide downsizing spawned by then-Vice President Al Gore's "Reinventing Government" initiative, says Bill Carter, a Foreign Service officer and USAID vice president on the American Foreign Service Association's Governing Board.

Still, Terrence Brown wishes it had never happened. "The bottom line is that the agency needs more people," he says. "There are functions that are inherently governmental. You need people to oversee contractors, to make decisions about the use of government funding, to evaluate activities and develop

strategy. We need to have people in the field for the long term. The overseas presence is what makes [USAID] effective."

When the dust of the downsizing settled, the agency didn't know what it had left. Even now, USAID has yet to conduct a full-scale assessment of its work force's skills and it has only begun to identify the expertise it needs to acquire to be effective in the future. But it is obvious that the brain drain was traumatic. Many of the most experienced Foreign Service officers left. In some cases, as the GAO report noted, inexperienced and untrained officers were given assignments abroad that they were ill-prepared to handle.

USAID employees, many of them among the foremost experts in various development specialties, were denied training in how to oversee contracts.

Downsizing's Domino Effect

According to the GAO, the USAID workforce is not geared for its current contract oversight mission. Staff training was hit hard in the budget cuts. USAID employees, many of them among the foremost experts in various development specialties, were denied training in how to oversee contracts. "When the budget is cut, you cut out what you can cut off and still maintain vital functions," says Brown. "So they cut staff training."

In 2004, Natsios requested and Congress granted $10 million for staff instruction. The agency has requested another $10 million for next year. "We have made training and investing in training a very high priority, and a lot of that is going to training our contracting officers in how to perform contract oversight," Marshall says. Even so, the lack of funding for so many years is still having repercussions.

In Iraq, for example, the agency had to take steps to outsource even the oversight of the contracts it has let. The agency hired the Army Corps of Engineers to help it oversee the largest contract — the $600 million construction deal awarded to San Francisco-based Bechtel Corp. And last June, USAID hired Washington-based Management Systems International to help oversee the remaining contracts.

Not surprisingly, the severe budget cutting of staff and training undermined efforts during the 1990s to increase efficiency and effectiveness by revamping USAID contracting processes. In 1993, USAID was named a "reinvention laboratory" by Vice President Gore's National Performance Review. "Procurement reform was considered one of the cornerstones of the reform effort within the agency," Clarion University Professor Ruben Berrios writes in his 2000 book, *Contracting for Development.* As Berrios explains, Atwood set up a pilot project in 1994 to implement performance-based contracting.

The plan was to move away from the "cost-plus-fixed-fee" deals that had become the norm at the agency. In a cost-plus-fixed-fee deal, the government and the contractor negotiate a profit margin, while the government pays for all costs associated with the project. When costs run high, the government just keeps paying. Under the new plan, the agency would grade contractors on their performance (poor performers would be ineligible for future deals). By 1995 a system had been developed to help agency contracting officers do the grading.

But today, nearly 10 years later, most of the agency's contracts continue to be cost-plus-fixed-fee deals. Evaluating contracts well, it turns out, takes the kind of time and effort that few USAID officers have. Agency reviews have been spotty, says Alan Chvotkin, a senior vice president with the Arlington, Va.-based Professional Services Council, a trade group that represents USAID contractors. "Some contracting officers are better at it, and more timely," providing detailed narratives explaining their review. Others, he says, just go through the motions.

The failure to complete the overhaul of the contracting process has had a cost of its own. Natsios acknowledges the problem that USAID is seen by many "as sort of a closed society." The perception is that "only a few big businesses do business with us" — a perception that, rightly or wrongly, grew to an uproar over USAID contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even earlier, Berrios found that most contracts go to a couple dozen large firms, mostly based in the Washington, D.C., area. Overburdened contracting

officers just find it easier to work with big firms with whom they are familiar, Berrios points out.

Marshall says USAID has taken steps to correct this problem by eliminating a requirement that agency contracting officers give added weight to a contractor's past performance for the agency. "We've leveled the playing field by eliminating USAID-specific past performance as a requirement. We're looking at past performance for any and all customers, including USAID." Marshall has also acted to broaden the base of organizations that do business with USAID by, among other things, simplifying the bidding process and reducing the number of different contract models the agency uses.

But throughout the 1990s, as USAID was wasting some $100 million on the failed financial management system update, agency managers overseeing contracts could not see how much contractors had spent, or how close they were to exhausting the appropriated funding. Natsios, to his credit, began last year to implement a new system, and for the first time ever, USAID's inspector general gave the agency a clean financial audit in 2003.

Rebuilding on the Fly

To be sure, the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan have revealed the agency's weaknesses. With so few Foreign Service officers, the agency lacks what Marshall calls a "surge capacity" to respond quickly to emergencies or unexpected situations around the world.

At a House Appropriations Committee hearing last September, Natsios testified that USAID simply couldn't let billions in new contracts without an increase in its operational budget. In the last two years, with major programs in Iraq and Afghanistan, Congress has boosted the agency's program budget by more than 50 percent from $7.3 billion in 2001 to over $14.1 billion last year. But at the same time, Congress gave the agency only an 11-percent boost in its operational budget.

In testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Millennium Challenge Account in March 2003, then-AFSA President John Naland focused on the problem. "AFSA believes the personnel budget and staffing levels provided fall far short of real requirements and that the same workforce planning review that gave rise to the State Department's seminal Diplomatic Readiness Initiative is required at USAID," Naland said. "USAID suffers staffing gaps, lacks a training float, and has too many categories of non-direct hire employees that seriously impact the work of the Foreign Service."

Through a new "Development Readiness Initiative," USAID plans to hire junior staff to "assure a continuous pipeline of talent into our system."

This year, Natsios finally got some help. With new funding, USAID plans to hire 40 Foreign Service officers (above attrition) this year and 50 in 2005. A total of 700 Foreign Service officers currently work at all of USAID's missions overseas, and the agency is ramping up recruitment efforts. Through a new "Development Readiness Initiative" modeled on State's Diplomatic Readiness Initiative cited by Naland, the agency plans to hire junior staff to "assure a continuous pipeline of talent into our system." In addition, the agency has begun to compile rosters of experienced personal service contractors and retired agency officers who have security clearances and are available for deployment on short notice.

USAID's personnel hiring system has been redesigned to make it easier to bring new people on quickly; the goal is to cut the time needed to bring on a new hire from about seven months to 28 days. Natsios has also implemented a standard procurement curriculum to train the agency's contracting officers and program staff. The training, according to one agency official, is "a huge undertaking" that "reflects the new thinking that the procurement and grants process is the responsibility not only of contracting officers and their staffs but of the whole agency."

Marshall, meanwhile, has formed a Business Transformation Executive Committee through which he and other top USAID officials meet regularly to discuss management reforms. Marshall has also met regularly with representatives of both the contracting and

NGO communities.

Last year, USAID conducted a study of its staffing at missions around the world and found that some bureaus in Latin America had more personnel than their funding warranted. For example, one mission with a $125 million budget had five Foreign Service officers, while another with a $10 million budget had seven. Already, the agency has moved about 20 Foreign Service officers from its missions in Latin America to its Asia and Near East regional missions.

USAID conducted a study of its staffing at missions around the world and found that some bureaus in Latin America had more personnel than their funding warranted.

The agency recently completed the first stage of a broader work force study, finishing a pilot analysis of staffers in the global health, work force procurement and human resources offices. In each division, the agency looked at the skills needed, the gap between needed skills and those of the existing work force, and at methods of closing the gaps. Getting to the rest of the work force may take at least another 18 months, say agency leaders.

"When Mr. Natsios arrived in 2001, he found the [work force planning] systems completely eroded and dysfunctional," Marshall told the House Government Reform Committee last year. "We're giving it all the emphasis we can. We're bringing in contractors, we're recruiting for the expertise we lack, but Rome wasn't built in a day. … And the turnaround of an organization in the state of dysfunction that USAID was in doesn't happen overnight, either." ■

Odette "Mimi" Brock (daughter of Foreign Service parents Odile and Samuel Brock) is the winner of the 2003 AFSA Art Merit Special Commendation and 2003/2004 AFSA Financial Aid Scholarship. A selection of Odette's artwork is shown here. AFSA uses bequests and gifts to the AFSA Scholarship Fund to recognize the achievements and potential of Foreign Service children.

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COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING: AN AVENUE FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESPITE THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S PUSH AND DEMONSTRATED COST SAVINGS, THE COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING PROGRAM IS ADVANCING ONLY SLOWLY.

BY RON UTT

President George Bush's campaign pledge to improve government service and reduce costs by requiring competitive contracting for commercial-type jobs in the federal bureaucracy became his administration's formal policy in early 2001. At that time the U.S. Office of Management and Budget announced that as many as 850,000 federal positions would be subject to formal competitions with private sector providers under the guidelines of OMB's Circular A-76.

To fulfill this obligation, each agency was expected to review its inventory of commercial-like positions, determine which ones were suitable for potential outsourcing, and each year subject 5 percent of that commercial inventory to formal competition with qualified private sector providers.

A Bipartisan Effort

Some opponents of the president's plan have attempted to present it as a radical, pro-business concept that would undermine the quality of government work. In fact, the program had its origins in the 1950s, and has received substantial bipartisan support from nearly every president since then. In one of the more significant enhancements of the program, President Bill Clinton signed into law in 1998 the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act, known familiarly as "FAIR," which required for the first time that all agencies compile a comprehensive inventory of their commercial job positions, as well as those positions deemed "inherently governmental."

This inventory is to be compiled annually and submitted to OMB, which reviews and approves the list. It is from this FAIR Act inventory that the Bush administration expects federal agencies to select positions and activities for its ambitious competitive contracting program.

Nor was that President Clinton's only commitment to contracting and privatization. In 1996 he privatized the Office of Personnel Management's background investigations. In 1998 he proposed to subject 229,000 Pentagon positions to competitive contracting, and then raised it to 400,000 a year later. Also during the 1990s, then-Vice President Al Gore endorsed the idea of privatizing the Federal Aviation Administration's air traffic control towers as part of his "Reinventing Government" program.

Yet despite its longstanding, bipartisan appeal, competitive contracting is actively opposed by many civil servants, their unions and some in Congress who want to protect some or all government employees from private-sector competition regardless of the nature of their jobs. Often presented as an anti-government

worker effort, contracting is, in fact, a pro-competition/anti-monopoly policy based on seeking the best work for the lowest cost.

Although OMB's circular is often widely criticized as cumbersome and time-consuming to use, many of the required procedures stem from an attempt to make the process as fair as possible to the existing work force, and to give them every opportunity to compete for the work. And the fact is that the existing government work force wins about half of the competitions conducted under the A-76 guidelines by improving their operations and lowering costs.

In fact, the program had its origins in the 1950s, and has received substantial bipartisan support from nearly every president since then.

Not Only Cost Savings

Admittedly, the chief attraction of competitive contracting to the government, and to the taxpayers who fund it, is that it has the potential to save considerable sums of money. Since the program's origins in the mid-1950s, much of the competitive contracting conducted by the federal government has been by the U.S. Department of Defense, and the outcomes of all these competitions since the 1970s has been compiled and studied by the CNA Corporation (formerly the Center for Naval Analysis, a not-for-profit corporation created by the Department of Defense decades ago to provide the department with independent research and evaluation).

In a recent review, CNA found that since 1978 the DOD has conducted 2,300 formal A-76 competitions covering 81,000 civilian and military positions, and overall these competitions led to an average saving of 33 percent over previous costs. Another study of DOD contracting — this one by the U.S. General Accounting Office — found that during the period 1995 to 2000, DOD conducted 286 separate competitions under the guidelines of OMB's Circular A-76, and estimates that these competitions yielded annual savings of $290 million.

Impressive cost savings were achieved in another agency through competitive contracting. During the tense debate in the U.S. Senate in late 2003 on the issue of whether the FAA should be exempt from the president's contracting program, the U.S. Department of Transportation released the financial and performance results from the 218 air traffic control towers that have been operating under contract for many years. An April 2000 study of 187 Level 1 towers by DOT's inspector general found that the agency saved $250,000 per year, per tower, through competitive contracting. It also estimated that the potential savings from contracting out the operations of another 71 FAA-operated towers could yield as much as $881,000 per tower, largely as a consequence of the substantial pay raises received by federal tower operators in the intervening years.

Subjecting federal offices and services to competition usually also has the beneficial effect of forcing them to take a hard look at their operations, ferret out waste and restructure in a effort to win the contract and retain the business. CNA reported in 1996 that between 1978 and 1994, 48 percent of the A-76 competitions conducted by DOD were won by in-house teams that had reorganized to improve performance. These winning bids saved 20 percent over previous costs, compared to the 40-percent savings earned when a private company won the bid, according to CNA.

In late 2003, for example, the National Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center was put out for competition, but the existing staff reorganized the operation, reduced costs by $850,000 per year, and won the contract. In early 2004, following the FAA's decision to put the half-billion-dollar operation of the flight service stations out for bid, the existing employees teamed with a private sector corporation to submit a joint bid in competition with the nine other private companies competing for the contract.

USAID and State: Potential Opportunities?

Despite the administration push and demonstrated cost savings, however, the competitive contracting program is advancing only slowly. More often than not, the most significant obstacle in the federal bureaucracy is agency foot-dragging: time-consuming appeals, differences of opinion about what jobs are commercial

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Ron Utt is a policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation.

and a simple reluctance to obey presidential directives.

Of all the competitive contracting done since the effort began in the 1950s, as much as 98 percent of it has been done by DOD. More recently, other agencies, namely Agriculture, Interior, Health and Human Services, Education, Treasury and the Veterans Administration, have begun to move ahead with the initiative.

Both State and USAID compile and maintain the mandatory FAIR Act Inventory, but neither has an active A-76 program. In the case of USAID only a few positions have been found eligible for contracting out, but the agency has no plans to subject any of them to the formal A-76 competition process. Indeed, since the inauguration of the president's program in 2001, according to USAID staff, the agency has competed none of its in-house positions — many of which have been on the FAIR Act inventory list since the Clinton administration — and has no plans to do any formal competitions in the future. However, in the recent past USAID may have gone directly to outsourcing without a formal study, a privilege permitted agencies for operations with fewer than 10 FTE. (According to the A-76 guidelines, a complete cost-accounting of the work of a government position or section — a formal study — is required before that work can be put up for competitive bidding.)

The fact is that the existing government work force wins about half of the competitions conducted under the A-76 guidelines.

Nonetheless, USAID's most recent FAIR Act inventory for 2002 does offer insight into how an agency chooses to categorize its many staff positions, and how it then responds to the opportunities identified. The first process involved in preparing the FAIR list requires the agency to

separate its full-time employee positions into two broad categories: those that are commercial in nature and those that are "inherently governmental." Out of USAID's approximately 2,400 FTE in 2002, about 2,000 made it onto the FAIR inventory, and of that number, 1,370 were deemed "inherently governmental," while the remaining 599 FTE were categorized as "commercial."

Of all the competitive contracting done since the effort began in the 1950s, as much as 98 percent of it has been done by DOD.

Among the 1,370 FTE placed off-limits to contracting, the chief reason given for why they were viewed as inherently governmental is that they are involved in "supervisory" positions. Lest one think this implies an agency that is top-heavy, with a ratio of two bosses per worker, many of these supervisory positions are at the core of USAID's work; namely, overseeing the many contractors working for USAID, both in the U.S. and in the field. Other reasons for this protected designation include work related to policy-making, strategy, congressional relations, contract oversight, and foreign relations.

For the positions included in the commercial category, the jobs so identified are then subcategorized by the extent to which they can be subject to competitive contracting. The three subcategories are: commercial, but protected by supervisor (core function); commercial and eligible for formal study and competition; and commercial, outsourceable without a formal study. In 2002, that latter designation usually applied to functions with 10 or fewer FTE, although a 2003 revision in the program substantially tightened up that provision by requiring more justification and some analysis, a "streamlined study" instead of a "complete study."

Among the types of positions at USAID in the third subcategory described above were 23 FTE in legal services, 26 in personnel, 10 in general accounting, and 11 in administrative support. Among the commercial-type positions that were exempted from any contracting were five budget programmers, 11 program planners, 26 in program management, and 79 in training. These are positions typical of an entity largely involved in administrative duties. But however routine they may seem to outsiders, there is, apparently, a fair degree of resistance to making any changes in the status quo, an objective USAID management shares with most other agencies and departments.

State maintains what it calls an "Inventory of Commercial Activity Work Years" in compliance with the FAIR Act. This inventory is limited to identifying "commercial" activities in the department, and does not identify those staff positions that are "inherently governmental" — presumably the balance of the department's approximately 29,000 positions. Of the total 2,288.3 man-years of work identified as "commercial" in 2002, 1,263 — or 55 percent — are "agency exempted," i.e. shielded from competitive contracting under A-76 guidelines that allow protection of core capabilities. Another 201.1 FTE work years are exempted for other reasons.

That leaves just 824.2 positions — or barely 3 percent of the State Department work force — exposed to the possibility of competitive contracting.

What About Quality?

Some critics of contracting claim that in the quest for monetary savings, quality of work is sacrificed. For example, opponents of the FAA's tower contracting program argue that DOT has sacrificed safety for savings. But the DOT inspector general's 2000 study revealed that there was "little difference in the quality or safety of services provided by Level 1 towers, whether they were operated by the FAA or by contractors." In fact, the contracted towers were actually slightly more error-free (.05 errors per 100,000 operations) than comparable FAA towers (.06 errors per 100,000 operations).

Behind the prejudice that some members of Congress exhibit toward private companies and their workers is the misperception that the contractors will not perform as well as government workers do. To the extent that these legislators are prepared to permit any federal competitive contracting at all, they believe it should be limited to simple, unskilled tasks such as janitorial work, minor repairs and other such routine services.

In sharp contrast to this view, the civilian and uniformed leaders of our defense programs have aggressively embraced competitive contracting for a variety of

services, ranging from simple to highly sophisticated, that are vital to national security, and have been doing so for several decades. One key reason for DOD's extensive reliance on competitive contracting is that any money saved on contracted-out services can be redeployed to direct defense needs, and frees up highly trained uniformed personnel for more vital tasks.

Examples of national security services that have been successfully contracted out range from military housing, food service and tank repair, to communications, supply management and aircraft maintenance, including the B-2 Stealth bomber. As is evident from the military's recent swift victories in Afghanistan and Iraq, DOD's aggressive use of competitive contracting does not seem to have undermined the performance of our fighting forces. Indeed, as more information becomes available on the recent conflict with Iraq, it is apparent that contractors have played a significant role in the war effort, and many of their responsibilities involved highly sophisticated and sensitive tasks.

In the end, barely 3 percent of the State Department work force is exposed to the possibility of competitive contracting.

Formidable Opposition

Despite the success of competitive contracting at the federal, state and local levels, opposition remains formidable. During 2003 provisions protecting influential groups of workers were included in several pieces of legislation introduced in Congress, chief among them the bills passed by both the House and Senate to reauthorize the Federal

Aviation Administration. Both versions of the bill included provisions to prohibit the application of competitive contracting to controllers and flight service station personnel who work for FAA's air traffic control system. The provisions proposed to accomplish this prohibition by reclassifying these FAA jobs from commercial to inherently governmental, thereby putting them off-limits to any competitive contracting.

A congressional declaration that these jobs are inherently governmental would come as a surprise to the hundreds of private sector controllers at work at the 218 U.S. control towers already contracted out to private business with considerable success and savings. It would also come as a surprise to the thousands of controllers now at work in the privatized and/or commercialized air traffic control systems in the United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Germany and more than a dozen other countries.

To protect its competitive contracting plans, the White House issued a statement of administration policy threatening a veto of any bill that includes such prohibitions on the executive's ability to effectively manage the federal work force on behalf of taxpayers and service users. Congress blinked, a relatively clean bill was produced, and shortly after it was signed into law the FAA announced a major competition for the flight service station components of the air traffic control system in 2004.

However much the proponents of unionized air traffic controllers argue that the proposed FAA prohibition reflects a special situation, it is, in fact, just one of many legislative efforts attempted over the past year to preserve the status quo and shelter government workers from the competitive forces with which most Americans comfortably exist. One notable example is last year's effort to preserve the Government Printing Office's printing monopoly. When OMB put the contract to print the federal budget up for auction, and allowed the GPO to bid for the work too, the GPO dropped the cost of its bid 24 percent from what it charged OMB a year earlier in order to keep the business.

Although opposition to competitive contracting in all levels of government is intense, the potential benefits in cost savings and program performance can be large.

An effort was also initiated in Congress to restrict competitive contracting at the National Park Service, where much of the work force is involved in routine maintenance, lawn care and janitorial work. Despite DOD's proven contracting success with sophisticated services, Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., argued that contracting will "put many of our great national treasures in the hands of private contractors who may put their profits above national interests."

Other congressional prohibition efforts included attempts to derail the U.S. Army's ambitious effort to compete 200,000 jobs, and the proposed amendment by Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., to forbid the White House from spending any money to manage its competitive contracting program.

None of these recent attempts have yet succeeded, although an earlier effort in the Senate to protect the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers from complying with the program was successful, as was an effort to prohibit the use of funds to execute the Department of Veterans Affairs' ambitious contracting program.

Final Thoughts

Although opposition to competitive contracting in all levels of government is intense, and sometimes successful, the potential benefits in cost savings and program performance can be large. For many agencies strapped for funds and receiving appropriations they believe fall short of needs, savings from competitive contracting can be used to fill the gaps.

As noted, DOD generally averages savings of 30 percent over previous costs, and the chief reason it uses the program is to free up resources for more pressing needs. Money saved by contracting out the lawn maintenance at a military base is money that can be used to repair the barracks roof, and by contracting out food service and maintenance, the military is better able to devote its highly trained personnel to tasks more directly related to national security.

Surely similar opportunities to enhance performance exist within the Department of State and USAID. ■

Remembering Rwanda: An Eyewitness to the Horror

In April 1994, an estimated three-quarters of a million men, women and children were brutally slaughtered in the tiny Central African country of Rwanda. It was one of the worst cases of genocide in the 20th century.

By Alex Belida

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948, soon after the end of World War II. Its preamble was clearly influenced by the atrocities of that conflict, asserting that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind."

Yet 10 years ago, in April 1994, despite the promises of "never again" uttered in the wake of the Holocaust, the international community failed to respond when ethnic massacres exploded across Rwanda. An estimated 750,000 men, women and children were brutally slaughtered in the tiny Central African country of Rwanda. It was one of the worst cases of genocide in the 20th century.

CIA World Fact Book

Despite warnings of imminent disaster from United Nations officials, diplomats and others in Rwanda, the United States and other leading countries refused to intervene. When the killing began, most foreigners were evacuated, leaving behind a small, helpless contingent of U.N. peacekeepers who could do little more than protect themselves. Even as the grim death toll brought on by machete-wielding ethnic Hutu fanatics mounted, no action was taken. For a while the U.S. State Department refused even to acknowledge that what was happening in Rwanda was, in fact, genocide.

Only after nearly three-quarters of a million ethnic Tutsi and reconciliation-minded Hutu were butchered was there any sort of concerted international relief effort — and that, bizarrely, went mainly to assist the killers and their supporters after they were forced to flee into neighboring countries by Tutsi-led Rwandan rebels who eventually halted the bloodshed.

Discovering A Massacre

There were many major massacre sites scattered across the country. But none was perhaps more emotionally overpowering than the one in the small, remote eastern Rwandan town of Nyarubuye, where in late May 1994 I was among the first journalists to discover hundreds of corpses in and around a church. The following is a verbatim record of the words I dictated live to tape as I approached, and then walked through the site.

We've just driven several kilometers along a dirt road north from the Rwandan border town of Rusumo and we've arrived in a small town called Nyarubuye. And right here on the ground in front of me is the decomposed corpse of a child, its skull bleached white, its dress still lying on what is left of the body. In the tall grass nearby, another body. ... This body has been flattened, its skull crushed.

These bodies are lying in front of a church. Just in the courtyard here in front of the church I can count 10 bodies, assorted body parts. ... There's a decapitated child.

We're now about to go into the church itself and right on the steps is a body. And inside the church are several more bodies, again badly decomposed. ... Obviously people fled

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Currently assigned to the Pentagon, Alex Belida is a senior correspondent with the Voice of America who has spent more than 30 years in international broadcasting. He is also the IBB representative to AFSA's Governing Board.

Among a handful of reporters who attempted to chronicle the bloodshed, often at great personal risk, Belida, then VOA's East Africa Bureau chief, traveled to Rwanda as the killing went on. He drew on some of his original broadcast scripts to prepare this article. The views are his own.

A Timeline to Tragedy: Rwanda, 1300–1994

1300s: Tutsis migrate into what is now Rwanda, which was already inhabited by the Twa and Hutu peoples.

1600s: Tutsi King Ruganzu Ndori subdues central Rwanda and outlying Hutu areas.

1800s: Tutsi King Kigeri Rwabugiri establishes a unified state with a centralized military structure.

1890: Rwanda becomes a German colony following the partition of Africa at the Berlin Conference of 1885.

1919: After World War I, control of Rwanda is transferred from Germany to Belgium. Like Germany, Belgium perpetuates a hegemony of the minority Tutsi over the Hutu.

1933: Belgian administrators begin identifying Rwandans as either Tutsi or Hutu on birth certificates and identity cards.

1959-1961: A Hutu revolution overthrows the Tutsi monarchy. Gregoire Kayibanda, a Hutu, is elected president in 1961. Thousands of Tutsis are exiled to neighboring countries amidst several waves of massacres of Tutsi.

1962: Rwanda is granted independence.

1973: Maj. Gen. Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, takes power in a coup d'etat.

1990: The Rwandan Patriotic Front invades Rwanda from bases in Uganda. The RPF is made up largely of Tutsis who were refugees in Uganda and served in the Ugandan Army. Maj. Gen. Paul Kagame is head of the RPF.

1992: A cease-fire is declared between the RPF and the Habyarimana government.

1993: In October, the U.N. votes to send 2,500 troops to monitor the peace and power-sharing accord between the RPF and the Habyarimana government.

1994: On Jan. 11, Maj. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, the U.N. commander in Rwanda, sends a coded cable saying he intends to take action on information that a Hutu plan to exterminate Tutsi is under way. The U.N. orders Dallaire to take no action.

On April 6, a plane carrying President Habyarimana and fellow Hutu President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi is shot down on approach to the Kigali Airport. The two were returning from a meeting in Tanzania to discuss implementation of the peace and power-sharing accord. The attack is widely believed to have been the work of extremist Hutu, opposed to any power-sharing with the RPF. Within hours, government soldiers and Hutu militia begin killing Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

On April 10, the U.S. embassy in Kigali is closed. France, Belgium and the U.S. evacuate their citizens.

On April 14, Belgium withdraws troops from the U.N. Mission in Rwanda.

On April 21, the U.N. Security Council reduces the size of the U.N. military contingent in Rwanda from 2,500 to 270.

On April 29, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali calls for more U.N. troops to be sent to Rwanda, stating that the number of killed may have reached 200,000. The Security Council rejects the request.

On April 30, the U.N. Security council passes a resolution condemning the killing in Rwanda, but does not identify the killing as genocide (which would obligate the U.N. to take action against the perpetrators).

On May 10, the U.N. begins to discuss sending 5,500 troops to Rwanda; the Clinton administration favors a smaller force.

On May 31, U.N. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali reports to the Security Council: "We have failed in our response to the agony of Rwanda, and thus have acquiesced in the continued loss of human lives." He states that "there can be little doubt" that the killing in Rwanda "constitutes genocide." The Clinton administration remains reluctant to use the word "genocide."

On June 8, the U.N. Security Council approves sending 5,500 troops to Rwanda.

On June 23, France, long a military supporter of the Hutu government, begins a "humanitarian intervention" in Rwanda that is opposed by NGOs but narrowly endorsed by the U.N. Security Council.

On July 4, the RPF captures Kigali, the capital of Rwanda.

On July 14, Rwandan refugees, mostly Hutus, begin flooding into Zaire, nearly a million over the next few days.

On July 18, the RPF says the war is over, declares a cease-fire and announces formation of a government.

On July 19, cholera strikes refugee camps in Zaire, killing thousands daily.

On July 23, President Clinton orders the Pentagon to send relief supplies to aid Rwandan refugees.

On Aug. 21, the French withdraw from Rwanda.

On Nov. 8, the U.N. Security Council approves a resolution setting up an international court to try people charged with genocide in Rwanda. Rwanda votes against the resolution, declaring it will cooperate with the court, but intends to carry out its own trials.

Source: *The New York Times* and BBC News.

here to take shelter and obviously they didn't find it.

In the gardens outside the church are spectacular flowers, amaryllis, marigold, daisies — a huge explosion of color. And ... more bodies. A mother and her child. The child appears to have been decapitated.

The entire [church] complex appears to have been ransacked, looted. Papers with the church's symbol on it are scattered about, drawers emptied, cloth material just ripped apart. And again, more corpses. And flies. And here what seem to be shotgun shells ... which raises, of course, the question of whether some of these victims were blasted.

In this small room, there are some wooden crucifixes on the floor and what is left of the body of a small baby.

Our guides have told us that in the direction we're heading now, outside the church complex, there is a place where there are many bodies. And they're right. In front of me I can see a dozen corpses. They appear to be mainly women, some children.

The stench is really overwhelming and I've put a mask on so that may muffle my voice. But in this courtyard there are easily a hundred bodies, all of them very badly decomposed, many with obvious hack marks (from machetes).

Feeling Yourself Hacked

And here is a room of horror, dozens upon dozens of bodies, piled one on another. I think it's fair to say there are hundreds of dead here ... and everywhere, flies.

This village, we are told by a woman who lived here, was a predominantly Tutsi village and [she says] that this massacre was carried out by predominantly Hutu Interahamwe, the dreaded militia whose name is so associated with the unspeakable atrocities of this war. ...

It was at Nyarubuye that I met an elderly Hutu man who, with his wife, watched the killings. He told me he personally saw friends and neighbors slaughtered with machetes. Speaking through an interpreter, the man, Krisustum Gatunzi said it was unbelievable.

Even as the grim death toll brought on by machete-wielding ethnic Hutu fanatics mounted, no action was taken.

It's unbelievable to see your neighbors, friends being hacked to death. ... These people [the killers] say they want to create a new Rwanda ... and I was asking them, "Do you create a new Rwanda by killing everyone inside that Rwanda or by killing neighbors and friends?"

The interpreter went on to say Mr. Gatunzi had a special expression for what he felt — feeling yourself hacked.

The old man and his wife were credited with saving a young Tutsi woman, a 27-year-old neighbor named Consolata Mukatwagirimana, whom they helped hide. She believed her entire family had been slaughtered. She heard their screams.

I had taken cover in the nearby bush. All I know is I was hearing my family being massacred. Shooting and cries, screams. I managed to come out in the evening and checked and found everyone who was at home was killed. ...

They Don't Look Like Killers …

Several days after visiting Nyarubuye, I was allowed by the predominantly-Tutsi rebels of the Rwandese Patriotic Front to interview a group of captured Hutu Interahamwe militia blamed for mass killings. I filed this report:

At first glance, nothing seems particularly sinister about this group of 21 Rwandans. ... They don't look like killers.

Yet in a series of interviews, members of this group of prisoners admit openly that they did join the Interahamwe, and that they did kill Tutsis and other political opponents at the group's behest. They now insist they only did so under duress and they say they didn't kill very many people, usually just one.

At 74 years of age, Joseph Rukwavu is the oldest member of the group. He claims government soldiers killed members of his family and then made him kill one of his brothers. He says he committed the murder with a club.

Like the elderly Mr. Rukwavu, 27-year-old Turatsinze [no first name] says he only joined the Interahamwe after the mass slaughter began in April. He also says he was forced to kill. His particular band of killers used machetes to hack apart more than 10 people, three of whom he admits he knew. He maintains that because he was forced to kill, he should be forgiven.

Julienne Mukanyarwa, 37 years old, is one of two women among the prisoners held at the jail. Her story is much the same. She says she joined the Interahamwe after other members of the group threatened to kill her baby.

She says the Interahamwe forced her and several others to finish off with machetes the survivors of a mass shooting organized by the militia and army soldiers. She insists she only killed one person, but says the massacre spanned three days.

And what about her baby? She says it is dead, fatally injured as it

was strapped to her back, killed by repeated blows aimed at her to urge her on in the killing fields. ...

The brutality that occurred in Rwanda 10 years ago need not have happened — or at least it could have been mitigated had the international community cared enough to act.

It Was No Secret

Ismael Amrisued was an aide and adviser to Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, whose death in April 1994 in a suspicious plane crash marked the start of the genocide. I interviewed him in Rwanda where he was under protective custody of the rebels of the Rwandese Patriotic Front. He was a Hutu but was marked for death by the Interahamwe because he was a political moderate who favored reconciliation and power-sharing with the Tutsi-dominated RPF.

He told me it was no secret that young people from the ethnic Hutu side were being recruited and trained at special killing camps.

It was public. They used to recruit young people, put them in buses, take them to [various places in the countryside] and those guys were staying there one month or more and they were coming back quite proud, telling their stories of how they were going to get us one day, how they are going to kill us. ...

Mr. Amrisued told me the killings that began the night the president's plane was apparently shot down could hardly have been spontaneous. Just hours after the crash, hundreds had been killed, even in Rwandan towns far from the capital, Kigali. He says people in Rwanda tend to go to bed early and since the crash occurred late at night, few could have heard the news on the radio.

But at 2 in the morning, they had already started killing. Which means instructions or some phone exchange had been circulating in the country, and then they started killing those who were already targeted or listed to be killed, and of course Tutsis were there to be killed.

Everyone in the world community knew what was going on.

He dismissed the notion that most of the killers had to be forced to participate in the bloodletting.

They were believing in what they were doing. I can't say all of them, but most of them were doing it willingly because they had been taught to do so. ... Once you believe that killing is good, killing a Tutsi is good, then you go and kill them. They have learned very well their lesson. ...

A Betrayal of Humanity

Senior U.N. officials confirmed to me that summer 10 years ago that they could have minimized the scope of the slaughter if authorities at the world body's headquarters in New York had approved action by the peacekeepers who were in Rwanda. The head of the peacekeepers, Canadian Major General Romeo Dallaire, had detailed information on the location of the weapons eventually used in the killings. He also had information on where the Hutu extremist militia were being trained in the art of killing and how their weapons were being distributed. He even knew which Rwandan political figures had been targeted for death.

Rwanda's current president, Paul Kagame, was head of the rebel RPF at the time of the genocide. He told me in an interview in the summer of 1994 that everyone in the world community knew what was going on.

The international community as a whole knew. Every ambassador here, from whichever European or American country, knew. So there is nobody who denies having prior knowledge. Everybody up to the Secretary General of the U.N., yes, that one I'm 100 percent sure of.

Understandably bitter, other leaders of the RPF were equally harsh in their condemnation of the foreign community, especially of France, Belgium and the United States. Theogene Rudasingwa was the secretary general of the RPF in 1994. He referred to an unholy alliance of foreign interests who not only ignored the warning signs leading up to the killing, but who later conspired to prevent the new Rwandese government from obtaining desperately-needed assistance.

We're talking about a very unholy cocktail of several people whom we may not mention [by name]. They may not be whole governments. They may be portions of governments. But at the end of the day, we are talking about a deliberate attempt on the part of some people in the international community to either do very little about what is happening or to conceal the evil that has been committed ... or to be accomplices.

It was not the international community's finest hour. It was a betrayal of the very essence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in which nations effectively promised to fight tyranny and oppression in defense of individual dignity. Most troubling to me, what happened in Rwanda suggests that the very first article of the declaration, while well-intentioned, is in reality still a distant dream: "All human beings ... are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood." ■

Toward a New U.S.-U.N. Rapprochement

If the U.N. did not exist, it has been said, it would have to be invented. Perhaps it's time to reinvent this imperfect but invaluable institution.

By Ronald Spiers

As World War II was drawing to its close, I was a newly minted 19-year-old ensign in the U.S. Navy, impatiently awaiting onward transport from San Francisco to the South Pacific. I was unaware that on that very day, President Harry Truman, seated across town on the stage of the San Francisco Opera House, was putting his signature to the charter of the United Nations. I could not foresee that my own future career would be much involved with the institution launched on that day. But I still remember the heady, optimistic sense of hope that the postwar world would be different, that a kind of Parliament of Man had been created with the birth of the United Nations.

Just as there would be optimistic talk of a "new world order" following the collapse of the Soviet Union nearly half a century later, the United Nations represented the postwar vision of its founders in 1945 for a better world. But sadly, the original idea that a coalition of the World War II victors, working together, could be relied on to enforce the peace did not last long. Throughout the Cold War, the Security Council — the heart of the organization's political and security decision-making — was rendered almost inert by the veto and the inability of its permanent members to achieve consensus.

Jefferson's warning against "entangling alliances" has been twisted by the Bush administration into a preference for going it alone wherever possible.

Consequently, today many of our fellow citizens and leaders believe the U.N. has lost its relevance. Partly for that reason, unilateralism in American foreign policy seems in the ascendancy. Taking its cue from a president inexperienced in, and incurious about, foreign affairs, this administration has instinctively resisted anything that smacked of multilateralism or "nation-building." In its first year alone, it targeted a lengthy roster of already negotiated agreements and conventions like ducks in a shooting gallery: among others, the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Control, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Landmine Convention and the International Criminal Court. In addition, withdrawal from the ABM Treaty became a priority, whatever the cost to U.S.-Russian relations. I do not mean to suggest that any of these agreements was perfect, but their faults were clearly susceptible to further negotiations. Instead, the Bush administration dismissed them out of hand.

Disdain for the U.N.

The unilateralist theory seems to be that the United States, enjoying almost a monopoly of power and superior

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moral rightness, cannot let itself be tied down like Gulliver by the Lilliputians. But Thomas Jefferson's warning against "entangling alliances" has been twisted by the Bush administration into a preference for going it alone wherever possible. And where we have sought the help of other nations, we have done so by asserting that "If you're not with us, you're against us." Disdain for the U.N. and other multilateral institutions seems to have become a pillar of a neoconservative credo, even as allies and adversaries alike have become increasingly anxious about the direction of American policy and U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has articulated public worries about the organization's future.

The invasion of Iraq was a crisis point because it pointedly bypassed the provisions of the U.N. Charter, which has the status of a treaty and is therefore, under our constitution, the "supreme law of the land." To be sure, those provisions had been ignored before, but never by a major power on such a scale and on so flimsy a basis.

Incidentally, the petulant demonizing of the United Nations for the fact that most of its member states did not agree with us about Iraq is nonsensical: it is like blaming Fenway Park for the Red Sox. Most members believed, as I myself did, that a weak and debilitated Iraq presented no imminent threat, that we had time to let diplomacy and the inspection process work, that the ultimate human, political and economic costs of a pre-emptive policy were underestimated, and that Western democracy was not something to be easily transplanted in an alien culture of which we had little understanding.

But even taken at face value, the aim of making Iraq a poster child for the Middle East, in hopes of a reverse domino effect, was thought naïve, even by many of our allies. President Bush's tendency to conflate the threat of international terrorism with local conflicts, as in Chechnya and Palestine, has been particularly befuddling to professional observers, and further increased suspicion of American aims and motives. And the fact that the senior civilian Defense Department officials urging the attack on Iraq were the same ones who authored the infamous 1996 "Clean Break" memorandum arguing the need to reshape the Middle East to Israel's "strategic advantage" by overthrowing Saddam Hussein did not help at all.

Demonizing the U.N. because most of its member states did not agree with us about Iraq is like blaming Fenway Park for the Red Sox.

Nor did basic public misconceptions about what the U.N. is. The United Nations, now with 191 sovereign members, is not an independent entity with a life of its own — although most Americans seem to think and speak of it as such. Rather, it is essentially a meeting place — or, more accurately, several places — with agreed rules of procedure and a secretariat to implement decisions reached by its members in accordance with these rules and the U.N. Charter.

Lamentably, such misunderstandings and controversies have obscured the organization's many accomplishments over the past six decades. These reside primarily in its multiple humanitarian and peacekeeping activities, which are carried out by a family of over 20 semi-autonomous specialized agencies, from the World Health Organization to the International Atomic Energy Agency. The importance of the work done by these organs cannot be overstated but it is seldom recognized or appreciated.

Organizational Problems

With the end of the Cold War, expectations for restoration of the United Nations' effectiveness rose. Unfortunately, several institutional anachronisms have prevented any major improvement in its functioning.

As already noted, the Security Council long ago ceased to be the locus of authority it was designed to be. To begin with, major regional and economic powers are not included as permanent, veto-wielding members. Yet reforming its membership to include some or all of these countries presents political problems the international community has been unable to overcome. A large enough expansion to satisfy all claimants would weaken its ability to act; in addition, no country was willing to risk losing a privileged position on the Council. So we are effectively frozen in the status quo of a body whose make-up is regarded by many as having highly limited legitimacy.

To fix this problem, Security Council membership should be a function of the U.N. assessment scale that accurately measures economic power and its derivative, military potential. The five countries required to make the largest financial contributions to the body would serve as permanent members. (Perhaps then the U.S. would be more diligent about paying its dues on time.) This formula would automatically put Japan (which pays 19.6 percent of the budget) and Germany (9.8 percent) on the Council alongside the U.S. (22

percent), but displace China and Russia (1.5 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively). France (6.5 percent) and the U.K. (5.6 percent) would remain as permanent members, at least until the European Union has expanded and evolved sufficiently to assume a "European" seat in place of individual countries. (This would be quite some time in the future, of course.) Other seats would continue to rotate, as at present, to provide some geographic and cultural balance.

This reform would make the Council more accurately reflect true political and economic heft, though it would obviously be unacceptable to the present veto-holders who would be displaced. But as long as the present format exists, the political reality is the Security Council will be sidelined when it comes to those issues of international peace and security that lack a strong consensus for action in the international community. For that reason, I believe the time has come to renew efforts to fix this and other flaws.

The United Nations has gradually evolved over time, and is probably going to continue to do so.

The other major organ, the General Assembly, has its own problems. Monaco, with a tiny population and an area equivalent to the Mall in Washington, D.C., has the same voice and vote as, say, India — a democracy with a population approaching a billion. Another weakening factor is the reality that many of its member governments do not really represent their own peoples. Last year Freedom House gave 85 of the 191 U.N. members the "free" rating that indicates full democracy. Of the remaining 106, 46 were in the "not free" category accorded authoritarian governments; the remaining 60 were considered only "partly free." It is difficult for democracies like our own to accept that countries whose governments do not represent and are not accountable to their populations deserve an equal voice with those that do. I believe this is one main reason the General Assembly has gradually lost its effectiveness.

In addition, the Assembly's resolutions lack force or authority. Its so-called "debates" lack focus or discipline, and call to mind the observation

of the late Rep. Morris Udall, D-Ariz., about congressional deliberations: "Everything has been said, but not everybody has said it yet." It is seldom a forum for serious negotiation. Instead, its major utility is in bringing together world leaders each September.

The ultimate corrective for this situation is clearly out of reach in today's world. Ideally, voting strength should be based on population (perhaps one vote per million of population; voting strength would today range from 1,284 votes for China down to Nauru's 12/1000th of a vote. The U.S. would have 280.) This would put things in perspective and would certainly be democratic in the "one person, one vote" sense. On the other hand, the Chinese people, among so many others, don't have much of a role yet in choosing who speaks for them or holding them accountable.

"Multis" vs. "Unis"

The role of international institutions like the U.N. and NATO in U.S. foreign policy is further affected by the continuing struggle between "multilateralists" and "unilateralists" that has been with us since we became a nation, though (thankfully) not often with its present ideological intensity.

The essence of the difference we face in our body politic is the view, among multilateralists, that the U.S. is a member of an international community and that it is in our interest to act, to the extent we can without clearly jeopardizing truly vital interests, cooperatively with other nations and with a decent respect for their opinions and interests. The U.S. may have overwhelming power but it certainly has no corner on wisdom.

The unilateralists disagree: the U.S. has an effective monopoly of power and should use it forthrightly to pursue national interests, unconstrained by others. The new national security doctrine of this administration explicitly advocates "pre-emptive action" against perceived (or fancied) threats. Imagine a world in which all nations claimed the right to make this subjective judgment!

Disdain for the U.N. and other multilateral institutions seems to have become a pillar of a neoconservative credo.

This clearly does not conform to the requirements of the U.N. Charter, which reserves to the Security Council the authority to approve the use of force "to restore international peace and security" in the name of the international community. The only exception is in the case of self-defense against an armed attack until the Council can act. Members pledge not to use force against the political independence or territorial integrity of any state, or, vaguely, in any other manner "inconsistent with the purposes" of the charter.

In the case of Iraq, it could well be argued that neither the political independence nor the territorial integrity of the country was our target. It was not the first time this provision of the charter has been ignored, of course. It had been breached repeatedly by the USSR, by the U.S. in Grenada and Panama, by NATO in Kosovo and Serbia in the Balkans and, most unambiguously, by Iraq in Kuwait.

Granted, the provisions of the charter, I believe, are inadequate to meet a number of current threats not thought about in 1945: genocide by a government against elements of its own population; violations of international law such as Israel's or China's of the Fourth Geneva Convention; situations such as we see in Zimbabwe, Uzbekistan, Belarus and Myanmar, where governments without the legitimacy conferred by popular choice tyrannize their own peoples; or state sponsorship of terrorism.

Moreover, old-fashioned "declared" state-vs.-state war is not the most frequent threat to international peace and security today, unlike six decades ago when the charter was drafted. Consequently, that framework seems too limited to deal with the new order of transgressions, none of which may be direct threats to international peace and security. But I see little early prospect of international agreement on expansion of the occasions when use of force may be authorized under Chapter 7 of the charter.

The Highest Common Denominator

The U.N. is still essentially an assembly of sovereign states trying, through diplomacy, to find the highest common denominator for dealing with international problems, and each is jealous of its sovereignty. Finding the highest common denominator takes work. The lowest common denominator is easy: you just relax and slip into it. The United Nations has gradually evolved over time (peacekeeping, one of its major activities today, is not even mentioned in the charter), and it is probably going to continue to do so. And this may not be so bad.

As globalization gathers momentum, transnational problems become more pressing: trade-distorting barriers, environmental degradation, non-state terrorism, disease and health issues, weapons proliferation, drugs, climate change, international crime, governance of the global common

spaces, etc. These demand increasingly intimate levels of international collaboration to manage. As of now the United Nations, for all its limitations and imperfections, is the best available framework for these tasks. Our policy should therefore be to strengthen the organization rather than denigrate it.

Much of this is now water over the dam, but the struggle continues between the yin and yang of multilateral/unilateral approaches to the problem of the day: dealing with the aftermath of the war in Iraq. Unilateralists prefer to bypass the U.N. as irrelevant. Multilateralists stress the urgency of restoring respect for the United Nations by ensuring it an important role in post-hostility reconstruction, which the unilateralists want to keep in American (and preferably the Pentagon's) hands. This drama tends to be played out between the poles of the State Department and the Defense Department in competition for presidential attention and decision. Not surprisingly, the president seems to lean one way this time, another the next. Confusion reigns.

The struggle between "multilateralists" and "unilateralists" has been with us since we became a nation.

Multilateralists want to give priority to repairing badly damaged relations with a large number of important countries: Russia, France, Germany, Canada, Mexico, Turkey and a number of Arab and Islamic nations prominent among them.

Unilateralists are suspicious of anything that implies sharing influence or decision-making or in any way hampering our freedom of action. The concept of an "international community" seems alien and softheaded to them. We don't need to worry about Muslim restiveness since we have the power to deal with it by ourselves, and their wrath will ultimately subside when its impotence and pointlessness are realized.

The U.S. is not an island, entire unto itself, say the multilateralists. They point to the indispensability of international collaboration in the fight against non-state terrorism.

The conflict is not likely to go away; in fact, it threatens to become bitterer and less civil. The petty get-evenness of the playground seems to characterize much of our public and congressional reaction to those who

disagree with our policies. This often turns legitimate disagreements over tactics and timing into damaging international crises, as has been the case with Iraq. Relations with France — our oldest ally — hit bottom in an adolescent squabble.

The Lessons of History

Both my first and last experiences as a 35-year career American diplomat were with the United Nations, and I believe I am as aware of its strengths and limitations as anyone can be. In the mid-1950s I was a junior member of a succession of delegations to the annual sessions of the General Assembly, dealing with political issues on the U.N. agenda. The number of members was in the 50s and the atmosphere was, for the most part, intimate and collegial. The United States was almost universally respected. I met fellow diplomats, then also junior members of their delegations, who later were ambassadors and foreign ministers and became my lifelong friends. I worked with Dag Hammarskjold and Ralph Bunche in setting up the United Nations Expeditionary Force, one of the earliest peacekeeping efforts, in the wake of the 1956 Suez crisis. Decolonization was proceeding apace, helped along by the U.N. I was a negotiator with the Soviets and others of the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, an organization today increasingly in the news. The environment was serious and efficient. We had a sense of participation in the making of history.

It was a difficult time because attitudes toward the United States had changed as well.

Thirty-plus years later, I was asked by President George Bush the elder, himself a moderate and intelligent internationalist and advocate of the U.N., to take the position first held by Ralph Bunche as the senior American in the secretariat. On his recommendation, U.N. Secretary General Perez de Cuellar appointed me under-secretary general for political affairs in 1989. The number of members had soared above 160, and the professional staff had increased along with it. But the atmosphere was much changed.

It was a difficult time because attitudes toward the United States had changed as well. This was the era in which our annual dues were being withheld by Congress, some key members of which, perhaps with visions of black helicopters dancing in their heads, were suspicious of the U.N. and were using this tactic to force reform (by which they meant reducing U.S. dues and forcing the organization to cut its staff and budget, which was substantially less than the annual cost of the New York Police Department).

It was symptomatic of the growing turn to unilateralism rather than a rational approach to needed changes. I remember one senator fulminating in outrage at the effrontery of the U.N. for selecting sites in the U.S. to add to the list of World Heritage Sites deserving protection by the international community if protection was needed. We had already withdrawn in high dudgeon from UNESCO, an error only last year reversed under pressure from several members of Congress. It was a crazy era and the U.N. was badly damaged by our deadbeat policy toward our annual assessment, prompt payment of which is a

treaty obligation under the charter. Naturally, we antagonized many members, including traditional allies.

Clearly the United Nations needed internal reform. My analysis of the problem was that a succession of secretaries general, generally chosen for their diplomatic experience, had little interest in management. The secretariat had become top-heavy and a rabbit warren of overlapping jurisdictions. My counterpart responsible for management (a man of great competence who later became president of Finland) was repeatedly taken away from his duties for special political assignments, while management issues went unattended. My boss, Secretary General de Cuellar, a suave and cultured former Peruvian diplomat, did not seem to see himself as head of a large and complex organization responsible for its efficient performance. It is admittedly difficult to manage an institution staffed by a multiplicity of nationalities and cultures, subject to constant political pressures and claims from national governments.

The U.N. is still essentially an assembly of sovereign states trying to find the highest common denominator for dealing with international problems.

One of my colleagues in the secretariat and I spoke often and saw eye to eye on what had to be done to rationalize the organization, including the need to resist political pressures and to take management responsibilities as seriously as political ones. This was a mid-level Ghanaian staff member named Kofi Annan. When he became U.N. secretary general years after I retired, my spirits soared.

It has often been said that if the U.N. did not exist it would have to be invented. Unfortunately, if we had to start from scratch I do not believe we could, in the politically charged world of today, improve on what we have. So I believe it is vital to preserve what we have, with all its warts and shortcomings. I can only hope, however, that the time will soon come when the hostile attitude of so much of our present political leadership will moderate and our readiness to work with others as a member of the international community, even at the cost of some of our freedom of action, will reassert itself. ■

The Last Flight of the Black Swan

The tale of a downed fighter plane brings an American and a Frenchman to a better understanding of their countries, past and present.

By Douglas W. Wells

As we all know, the French are not shy about expressing their opinion on things. In the run-up to the war in Iraq, and during the combat phase of the operation, our embassy in Paris received hundreds of letters every week. Most were addressed simply to "The Ambassador" or "The U.S. Embassy." Without a clear addressee, our mailroom screening staff had no choice but to separate these items and hold them for later disposition. With the heightened state of alert and the extra work brought by the conflict, no one showed much interest in each week's flotsam and jetsam of angry letters and hastily scrawled postcards. After being screened, they piled up in a box in the mailroom. Eventually we received the order to shred them.

Feeling a little uncomfortable with my mailroom employees throwing handfuls of embassy correspondence into a shredder, I took the box myself. I went through and destroyed hundreds of letters, anti-war petitions, schoolchildren's crayon drawings, and other items, some quite bizarre. While the bulk of these letters were simply rants and raves against the U.S., I uncovered a few real gems from people who felt a strong emotional connection with the United States because of World War II, or the Marshall Plan, or because of family ties. It put into perspective the duration and depth of Franco-American relations and made the news items about "freedom fries" seem that much more ridiculous.

Then, as I was getting near the bottom of the box, one letter caught my eye. It was in English, neatly written and quite short. The French author was obviously quite distressed about the current state of relations between the U.S. and his country. At the bottom of the letter was a beautiful color drawing of a B-17 bomber from World War II and the caption "The Black Swan will fly forever in our memories." Intrigued, I couldn't bring myself to toss this particular letter into the shredder. I set it aside. For the rest of the day, as I worked, I kept glancing over at the letter on the corner of my desk.

The questions in my head just wouldn't go away. Who was this guy? What was his relation to this B-17? The return address, in French, said something about him being the official historian for the crash of the "Black Swan" in Brittany some 60 years ago, but what made him write this letter now? Since it appeared we had enough U.S. opponents in France, I couldn't help but think that perhaps this gentleman, writing in support of our country, might merit at least a form letter in response. Finally, I decided that someone higher up in the embassy should look at the letter. If someone else saw it, and then said shred it, at least I would feel better for having tried. So I put a note on the letter and dropped it in the DCM's mailbox.

To my surprise, I got a call back before the end of the day. The Office Management Specialist for the DCM said she had been very impressed by the heartfelt tone of

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the correspondence and would show it to her boss. She had even gone so far as to call the author at his home and thank him personally for sending it!

Needless to say, I felt very good about this, and when the DCM's office later suggested that I send a return letter I jumped at the chance. But before writing the letter, I decided I had to solve the mystery of who this person was. So I did what any red-blooded American would do; I did an Internet search on "Black Swan" and "B-17."

I uncovered a few real gems from people who felt a strong emotional connection with the United States.

I had expected to have to wade through pages of useless results but what came up at the top was too good to be true. It was the personal Web site of none other than the pilot of the bomber himself — Lt. Verne Woods! He was 81, living with his wife in Massachusetts and on his Web site, he described in detail the night of Dec. 31, 1943, when his bomber was shot down.

They had been hit by flak on the way to Germany and had to turn back alone. By a strange twist of fate, he and the normal pilot had switched seats on that mission, and during the night, as the crippled bomber limped across Brittany, the co-pilot's side of the plane was raked by cannon fire from a German FW-190 fighter. The man in the co-pilot seat was killed instantly. The remaining members of the crew bailed out except for the top turret gunner, who couldn't make it out in time. The B-17 heavy bomber, still carrying the two brave American aviators, crashed into a barn on a remote Brittany farm. (As testimony to the power of the Internet, Woods recently posted a request on a Luftwaffe veterans' Web site asking, "Who shot me down?" Within a short time, he had not only the name of the German pilot, but also a scanned copy of the page in the pilot's logbook from the day he had attacked the "Black Swan" in the skies over Brittany!)

Well, that solved the mystery of the "Black Swan," but what about the author of the letter? Scrolling down a little farther gave me the answer. One of the pictures of a ceremony near a marble plaque explained that Mr. Yves Carnot, the author of the letter I had saved from the shredder, was none other than the grandson of the man whose barn the "Black Swan" had crashed into! I wrote Mr. Carnot back, thanking him for his concern, and reassuring him that there still was much friendship between the French and Americans despite the current political situation. I wasn't sure if I would get a response, but about two weeks later I received a fat envelope containing "the rest of the story."

In a 12-page, handwritten letter, Mr. Carnot recounted his lifelong relation with the last flight of the "Black Swan." His earliest memories, as a child in the late 1950s, were of crawling around in a barn littered with pieces of twisted aluminum plane parts that his grandfather had either hid from the Germans that night, or dug up later while planting. His grandfather's prize possession was the manufacturer's name plate from the B-17 plant in Detroit, still intact, showing the model and part number of the plane. It had a place of honor, nailed to the main support pole in the barn and was, in his words, "respected as a symbol, a testimony of this aerial fight, this tragic event."

Mr. Carnot's grandfather used to sit his young grandson on his knee and tell him the story of that New Year's Eve in 1943 when the flaming bomber fell out of the sky. "Every Sunday," Mr. Carnot wrote, "when I visited my grandfather, I asked him to tell me about this event. It became a ritual, and every week I came to contemplate that number plate and I dreamed about this fantastic plane." As Mr. Carnot grew up, the "Black Swan" came to symbolize the special bond between his grandfather and him. They used to walk around the farm together, the older man relating to the child every detail of that fateful night when the quiet night sky was shattered by gunfire and explosions. Just before Mr. Carnot's grandfather died, he gave the treasured nameplate to his grandson. Mr. Carnot, by then a young man, "undertook to do research on the B-17 in the memory of my grandfather, who could not do the investigation himself. I am sure he would have encouraged my work and in some way, it is a sort of eternal torch I am carrying; it's my mission."

Over the next 10 years he overcame numerous bureaucratic hurdles and painstakingly tracked down historical records that enabled him to find the names of the B-17's

crew and the crews of other planes on that mission. Based on that information, he managed to locate several surviving members of the "Black Swan" crew, with whom he now corresponds regularly. His work culminated in 1998 (the 55th anniversary of the crash), when, in a grassy field at the "Keranacreach" farm near the village of Keriquel, in the Bannelec area of South Brittany, a small memorial service took place. It was attended by crew members of the "Black Swan," a U.S. Air Force delegation, representatives of U.S. Army Air Corps Veterans, the French Air Force Color Guard, some French Resistance veterans, and many of the witnesses who had helped with the research. A delegate from the U.S. embassy was also in attendance. As a group of local musicians played "Amazing Grace," the superintendent of the American Cemetery of Brittany undid the tricolor ribbon holding a piece of parachute fabric, which fell away to reveal a granite memorial stone. On the stone — designed, paid for and installed by Mr. Carnot — was an epitaph in French and English for the two lost crew members. Now the memory of the "Black Swan" will truly keep flying in everyone's memory.

The older man related every detail of that fateful night when the quiet night sky was shattered by gunfire and explosions.

I had planned to meet Mr. Carnot for the 60th anniversary of the crash. But it turned out I was the Information Programs Center duty person that day, and with the raised terrorism threat level, I decided to stay close to Paris.

I look forward to the first warm days of spring so I can visit this memorial, as much a dedication to one man's perseverance as to the memory of two Americans who gave their lives to liberate Europe. Then we can make a pilgrimage to Normandy together, a Frenchman and an American. There, on the cliffs overlooking the sea, I plan to lay some flowers on the graves of 2nd Lt. Stuart B. Mendelson, Pilot and Tech/Sgt. Richard G. Hensley, Top Turret Gunner, the two members of the "Black Swan" crew that never made it home. ■

FSJ's Guide to Extended Stay Housing

Online resource page at www.afsa.org: CLICK on the Marketplace tab, CLICK on Extended Stay Housing

Property	Telephone	Web Address	E-mail Address	Location	Amenities[1]	Housekeeping	Accepts Pets	Minimum Stay	Accommodations	Style[2]	Dist. to State	Ad Page
Columbia Plaza Apartments	(202) 293-2000	None	leasingoffice@columbiaplaza.net	DC	FC, CC	No	Cats only	40 days	1, 2 Bedrooms	HR	1 block	17
Corporate Apartment Specialists, Inc.	(703) 979-2830	corporateapartments.com	cas@intr.net	DC, MD, VA	SP, FC, PG, RD, WD, CC	Optional	Yes	30 days	Studio, 1, 2 Bedrooms	GS, TH, HR	Varies	65
Crystal Quarters	(703) 671-7505	www.crystalquarters.com	home@crystalquarters.com	VA	SP, FC, CB	Weekly	No	7 days	1 Bedroom	HR	2 miles	57
Executive Club Suites	(703) 739-2582	www.dcexeclub.com	cathy@dcexeclub.com	VA	Vary	Weekly	Yes	1 day	Studio, 1 Bedroom, 2 bedroom	GS	5 miles	60
Executive Lodging Alternatives	(703) 354-4070	None	finder5@ix.netcom.com	VA	Vary	Optional	Yes	30 days	1, 2, 3, 4 Bedrooms	HR, TH, GS	3-5 miles	65
Georgetown Suites	(202) 298-7800	www.georgetownsuites.com	reservations@georgetownsuites.com	DC	FC, CC	Daily	Yes w/ deposit	1 day	1, 2 Bedrooms	LR	15-min. walk	65
Marriott	(703) 548-5474	www.marriott.com/wasdk	john.malixi@marriott.com	VA, MD, DC	Vary	Daily	Yes w/ fee	1 day	Efficiency, 1 Bedroom, 2 Bedrooms/2 Bath	HR	Varies	2
Oakwood	(703) 212-2605 (800) 888-0808	oakwood.com	lstevens@oakwood.com	DC, MD, VA	SP, FC, TC, CC, PG	Weekly	Varies	30 days	1, 2, 3 Bedrooms	GS, HR, TH	Varies	C-2
Pennsylvania House, The -DC Suites	(202) 331-5000	www.dcsuites.com	gm@dcsuites.com	DC	FC, CC, RD, BC	Weekly	No	30 days	Efficiency, 1 Bedroom, 2 Bedrooms	HR	6 blocks	24
Potomac Suites, The	(703) 528-2900 (877) 275-2877	potomacsuites.com	info@potomacsuites.com	VA	FC	Yes	Yes	1 day	1 Bedroom	LR	1.5 miles	9
Remington	(202) 223-4512 (800) 225-3847	remington-dc.com	reminc333@aol.com	DC	TC, PG	Weekly	Yes w/ deposit	1 day	Efficiencies, 1 Bedroom	HR	2 blocks	43
River Inn, The	(202) 337-7600	theriverinn.com	sales@theriverinn.com	DC	FC, CC, BC	Daily	Yes	1 day	Efficiency, 1 Bedroom	HR	4 blocks	67
Smith Corporate Living	(888) 324-4972 (703) 769-1266	smithliving.com	smithliving@archstonesmith.com	DC, VA	SP, FC, TC	Weekly	Varies	30 days	Efficiencies, 1, 2, 3 Bedrooms	GS, HR	Varies	25
Stay Bridge Suites	(703) 448-5400 (800) 238-8000	staybridgemclean.com	cathy.peck@staybridgemclean.com	VA	BC, CB, HH, SP	Daily	Yes	1 day	Studio, 1, 2 Bedroom/2 Bath	LR	14 miles	55
Suite America	(703) 383-7707	suiteamerica.com	benoostinga@suiteamerica.com	VA, MD	Vary	Weekly	Limited	3 days	1, 2, 3, Bedrooms	LR, HR	1.5 miles+	67
Virginian Suites, The	(703) 522-9600	virginiansuites.com	tvagm@erols.com	VA	SP, FC, CC, PG	Daily	Yes w/ deposit	1 day	Efficiencies, 1 Bedroom	HR	2 miles	10

(1) SP–swimming pool, FC–fitness center, TC–tennis courts, CC–conference center, DC–day care, PG–playground, RD–roof deck, CB–complimentary continental breakfast, BC–business center

(2) GS–garden-style, HR–high-rise, LR–low-rise, TH–town homes

APPRECIATION

AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE

Warren Zimmermann
1935 – 2004

BY ROSCOE S. SUDDARTH

Warren Zimmermann was the kind of foreign affairs professional that our nation needs to produce and nurture in the coming generation. As we confront dangerous and exotic adversaries abroad, excellence will remain at a premium in our foreign affairs community. Warren Zimmermann's life exemplifies the character and commitment required.

Zimmermann abandoned promising careers in teaching and then in journalism to join the Foreign Service in 1961, rallying to the newly elected President Kennedy's inspiring appeal for vigorous American leadership in foreign affairs. He spent the next 33 years in assignments in Washington and in Venezuela, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, France, Spain, Switzerland and Austria.

Zimmermann is best known as our last ambassador to Yugoslavia before its breakup, but throughout his career he was often at the epicenter of U.S. foreign affairs. A gifted writer, he was a speechwriter for Secretary of State William P. Rogers. As the deputy and later head of the U.S. Delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, in Vienna, he helped forge new standards for human rights behavior that contributed to perestroika and, ultimately, to the collapse of the communist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As chief of staff of the U.S. Delegation to the Geneva Arms Control Negotiations, Zimmermann helped hammer out the arms reductions that were so important in reducing the risk of nuclear war.

The Three Cs

What was it that made Zimmermann so extraordinary? I call it "the three Cs": curiosity, courage and compassion. First, he had an intellectual curiosity that propelled him to the deepest expertise on every foreign assignment. He learned Russian and Serbo-Croatian as well as French, Spanish and German. He read deeply in the history and literature of his host countries. He also made sure to get around outside the official circles in his country of assignment.

This preparation gave him extraordinary insight into the workings of the societies it was his job to analyze. His cables were often so engaging that they were passed around in the State Department. One cable, "Who Killed Cock Robin?", gave a fascinating account of the factors — which he continually argued were not inevitable — leading to the breakup of Yugoslavia. Another cable's title, describing the various Yugoslav leaders and their blindly disastrous policies, quoted the six-foot-tall American actress Josephine Baker's expression: "I'm Up to My Ass in Dwarfs." In recognition of his superb judgment, Zimmermann was often chosen for delicate assignments. For instance, he was the U.S. diplomat chosen to make contact with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's camp in Paris prior to Khomeini's return to take power in Iran.

Warren Zimmermann had a natural affinity for intellectuals, journalists and think-tankers, whom he cultivated in his various assignments — always with the same openness and command of U.S. interests and American culture that made him so attractive to his hosts as well as his diplomatic colleagues. In Paris, he made sure to keep the embassy door open to leftist opposition groups — with whom the U.S. had great differences — so that when the time came to deal with them as the majority, we would have strong relationships. Then, when the French Socialists came to power, he saw more clearly than most that President Francois Mitterrand, for his own purposes, might wish to distance himself from the communists in the government by closely aligning himself with U.S. security policies; e.g., regarding medium-

range missiles in Germany.

In Moscow, he and Ambassador Arthur Hartman established a program giving a day's in-country leave every month so that embassy personnel could get to know the "ordinary" Russia, outside the isolation imposed on foreign embassies by the Soviet authorities. Throughout his tour he led the embassy not only to the dissidents but also to the suffering intellectuals who were reaching out for our support. Thus, instead of feeling hemmed in by the restrictions that the Soviet situation imposed and believing that the Soviet internal situation was hopeless, embassy personnel came to feel the sorrows of real people who wanted a better life for themselves and their country.

Moments That Require Courage

Zimmermann's courage was rooted in his values. Like Ernest Hemingway, whom he admired, he recognized that there are moments in a lifetime that require acts of courage, regardless of the consequences. He was a loyal and disciplined civil servant and never to my knowledge failed to carry out his instructions, nor did he leak to the press. However, when the stakes required it, he was prepared to put his career on the line. In 1970 he joined in a private letter to the Secretary of State from a handful of Foreign Service officers criticizing our continued involvement in Vietnam. His courage also accounted for his ability to be tough when necessary. As charge d'affaires in Moscow when the Soviets shot down a commercial airliner, he gave a tongue-lashing to the Soviet authorities for their brazen refusal to admit the truth, even before Washington instructed him to do so.

Soon after arriving as the new U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, he publicly criticized the virulent Serbian nationalism of President Slobodan Milosevic that would soon cause Yugoslavia to unravel. His criticism put him on Milosevic's black list; the Yugoslav

Warren Zimmermann, 69, former FSO and the last U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, died Feb. 3 at his home in Great Falls, Va., of pancreatic cancer.

"Warren Zimmermann ranks among our finest career ambassadors," stated Secretary of State Colin L. Powell Feb. 4 in a tribute that hailed Zimmermann as "an eloquent defender of human rights and refugees" and extended condolences to his wife and family on behalf of "colleagues at the Department of State, and especially the many young men and women he so generously mentored over the years."

Warren Zimmermann was born in Philadelphia in 1935 and graduated magna cum laude from Yale University in 1956. He received a master's degree in history in 1958 from Cambridge University in England, which he attended as a Fulbright scholar.

In 1961, following work in teaching and journalism, Amb. Zimmermann joined the Foreign Service. He began a 33-year career that would take him from Washington, D.C., to Caracas, Madrid, Geneva, Belgrade (twice), Paris, Moscow and Vienna. Appointed U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia in 1990, he was recalled in 1992 to protest Serbian aggression in the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Amb. Zimmermann returned to the department as director of the Bureau for Refugee Programs, but resigned from the Foreign Service in 1994 in frustration over the Clinton administration's reluctance to intervene forcefully in the Bosnian war.

From 1994 to 1996, Amb. Zimmermann taught at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. During this time he wrote *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), a book about his experiences in Yugoslavia that received the American Academy of Diplomacy's Douglas Dillon Award for a Book of Distinction on the Practice of American Diplomacy in 1997. From 1996 to 2000 he was a professor of international diplomacy at Columbia University.

Amb. Zimmermann's most recent work, *First Great Triumph: How Five Americans Made Their Country a World Power* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), won the American Academy of Diplomacy's Dillon Award in 2003.

A lover and student of 19th-century English poetry, Amb. Zimmermann occasionally wrote humorous verse of his own for friends and family. He maintained a lifetime interest in playing squash and tennis, and was a fly fisherman. He spent summers at his cottage at Glandore Harbor on the southwest coast of Ireland, where he enjoyed long walks.

Amb. Zimmermann was a board member of Human Rights Watch, Partners for Democratic Change, the American Academy of Diplomacy and the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs. He was also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Metropolitan Club in Washington, D.C.

Survivors include his wife, Corinne ("Teeny") Chubb Zimmermann of Great Falls, Va.; three children, Corinne Alsop Zimmermann of Watertown, Mass., Lily Zimmermann Metcalfe of London and Tim Zimmermann of Washington, D.C.; and five grandchildren.

president refused to see him for a year. Many ambassadors would have muted their criticism in order to maintain acceptable relations with the host government (and to avoid the death threats that came afterward), but Zimmermann saw it otherwise and was vindicated by later events.

In 1994 he resigned from the Foreign Service in protest over Washington's unwillingness to intervene forcefully in Bosnia, and then spent months in public advocacy of his view, which ultimately prevailed and helped save Bosnia from extinction. Finally, only a few weeks before his death, in accepting an award for his book on Theodore Roosevelt's foreign policy, Zimmermann used what he knew was to be his last public appearance — in the Ben Franklin Room of the State Department — to voice his personal opposition to the invasion of Iraq.

He was also sometimes startlingly frank in self-criticism. In his book on Yugoslavia, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, he blamed himself for not insisting on U.S. intervention at the very start of the troubles in Yugoslavia in late 1990, attributing the failure to his belief that the U.S. government could not handle another crisis at the very moment when it was preparing for war in Iraq.

The Human Side of Things

Compassion is not usually cited as a diplomatic virtue, but Zimmermann turned his to good diplomatic purpose. He and his wife Corinne ("Teeny") were always alert to the human side of things. During the détente era in the 1970s he saw clearly that there was no path to a normalized relationship with the Soviet Union that did not recognize that the Soviets had to treat their people better and respect the rule of law. Later he saw the whole Helsinki process as a necessary prelude to making the Soviets see what they had to do in order to have the advantages of a more normal relationship with the Western world.

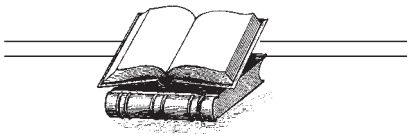
In the Soviet Union the Zimmermanns both took personal risks in supporting dissidents under the watchful eyes of the KGB. He won the Sharansky Award from the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews for his work in helping them emigrate despite enormous obstacles placed in their way by the authorities. He was instrumental in helping the talented dissident pianist Vladimir Feltsman obtain permission to leave Russia. Zimmermann was particularly protective of the beleaguered American press corps in Moscow, and helped many reporters out of scrapes with Soviet authorities.

His Belgrade embassy was given an award for management in large part because of Zimmermann's concern for the views and welfare of his subordinates. When Yugoslavia finally fell apart, the Zimmermanns arranged at their own expense to support the emigration to America of the entire staff of the ambassador's household.

In his retirement and until his death, Zimmermann passed on his knowledge and wisdom as the author of two award-winning books and as a gifted and caring professor of foreign affairs. Students, colleagues and friends all remember his humor, erudition and insight.

I hope that Warren Zimmermann's life and career will be an inspiration to the coming generation of Americans who are considering service to their country by working in foreign affairs. ■

Roscoe "Rocky" Suddarth is a retired Foreign Service officer, a former ambassador to Jordan and a personal friend of the Zimmermanns. Arthur Hartman, former assistant secretary for European affairs and ambassador to France and the Soviet Union, with whom Zimmermann worked on those assignments, also contributed to this appreciation.



BOOKS

The Loyal Opposition?

The Point of Departure
Robin Cook, Simon & Schuster, 2003, $27.00, hardcover, 365 pages.

REVIEWED BY HARRY C. BLANEY III

Robin Cook's *The Point of Departure* offers valuable insights into Prime Minister Tony Blair's government on several levels. Cook may not be familiar to most American readers, but he was British Foreign Minister and Leader of the House of Commons until resigning over the decision to go to war with Iraq last year.

As one would expect from a politician with those credentials, his memoir provides a front-row view of the self-destructive quality of internal Labor Party politics. But perhaps more importantly, he offers a critique of the profound debate taking place in Britain about its role in world affairs, its future in Europe, and the nature of its relationship with the United States.

Britain and America are both trying to deal with their own "intelligence scandal." For the U.S., the controversy is over a massive intelligence failure, and a White House, if former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill is to be believed, bent on invading Iraq regardless of intelligence evidence. In the British case Tony Blair had the good sense to call for a judicial inquiry, and even publicly testified before it.

Cook sees these vital issues through the prism of his anger over the overall direction of the Labor Party, his ambivalent feelings about the man who pushed him aside as foreign minister, and his view that Britain's future rests almost exclusively in Europe. He insists that he is not anti-American but simply opposes President Bush and his policies. However, he is scathing about the neocons in the Bush administration and their "determined unilateralism."

Cook writes powerfully about the very real contradictions involved in 10 Downing Street's handling of Iraq and the problematic state of current U.S.-Europe relations.

These biases periodically color his analysis. For instance, he clearly expected that the judicial inquiry into the British government's handling of prewar intelligence would bring the prime minister down a few notches; instead, Lord Hutton's report largely exonerated Blair. Similarly, Cook insists that the Iraq decision destroyed Britain's role as a "respected major player in Europe," but such dire consequences have not materialized.

Despite such lapses, however, Cook writes powerfully about the very real contradictions involved in 10 Downing Street's handling of Iraq and the problematic state of current U.S.-Europe relations (as well as many domestic issues beyond the scope of this review).

Understandably, most of the publicity about the book (on this side of the "pond," anyway) has centered on the Iraq controversy. As Cook lucidly explains, the war debate has had major ramifications for Blair's survival as prime minister, for the British public's long-term attitudes toward America, and for those worried about U.S. policies that are weakening ties with our closest allies.

The other major question this book takes up is Britain's role as a mediator between America and Europe. Cook says up front that "Blair is arguably the most pro-European prime minister in modern times, certainly since Edward Heath." Yet Cook appears neither to understand nor accept the central calculation underpinning Blair's position on Iraq: that Britain must not be placed in a position of having to choose between its ties across the Atlantic and across the Channel, thereby losing its role as an honest broker with both. Fortunately, it seems unlikely that Britain will lose that role so long as it has as smart, strong and determined a leader as Blair. Would that America could make the same claim.

This useful book is a kind of mirror to ourselves, holding up to us a view of our role in the world, the widespread perception that our unilateralism and triumphalism constitute hubris, and the importance of tough outside criticism. In that regard, it deserves to be read in tandem with Paul O'Neill's (and Ron Suskind's) *The Price of Loyalty*, which covers some of the same ground.

Retired FSO Harry Blaney is president of the Coalition for American Leadership Abroad (COLEAD). A former Visiting Fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, he was in London in March 2003 when the Blair govern-

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ment decided to go to war with Iraq.

The Globalization Bubble

The Roaring Nineties: A New History of the World's Most Prosperous Decade
Joseph E. Stiglitz, Norton, 2003, $25.95, hardcover, 336 pages.

REVIEWED BY PAULO ALMEIDA

The advocates of free-market economics often justify their policy preferences with the old saw that a rising tide raises all boats. Well, the tide of the 1990s has ebbed, exposing the rocks and shoals that wrecked some of those boats. Who better to comb the beaches than Joseph Stiglitz, first a member and then the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Clinton White House, before he closed out the decade as chief economist of the World Bank?

The Roaring Nineties: A New History of the World's Most Prosperous Decade is refreshing because, rather than touting the spectacular economic successes of the Clinton administration (in contrast to its besieged successor), Stiglitz thoughtfully picks through the flotsam and jetsam for clues to the causes of the wreck. He places much of the blame on the administration he served, and the president he still evidently admires, for allowing narrow, short-term interests to undermine the long-term health of the economy. Furthermore, he contends that these failures in domestic economic policy undermine international support for globalization.

It is worth noting that his previous book, the bestselling *Globalization and Its Discontents* (2002), was to some extent a memoir of an academic economist who comes to Washington to try his hand at public service and wryly professes to be shocked, shocked to find politics going on. The new book is likewise more personal than dryly analytical, but is still substantial enough to satisfy those with an appetite for recreational economics.

Stiglitz argues that exporting the U.S. model of market orthodoxy will not save developing countries, and may actually exacerbate their distress.

In a nutshell, Stiglitz contends that, by setting aside its campaign platform of "Putting People First" and focusing instead on deficit reduction as the means to restart the economy, the Clinton administration made a "lucky mistake" that succeeded in doing just that — but for reasons that were unique and probably not reproducible. Accordingly, exporting the U.S. model of market orthodoxy will not save developing countries, and may actually exacerbate their distress.

The main problem with the U.S. approach to globalization, Stiglitz argues, is that it diminishes the ability of governments to mitigate the inevitable market failures that result from "asymmetries of information," a new branch of economics research that he developed in his academic career. In his own words, this means that "different people know different things," allowing the better informed to speculate at the expense of the vulnerable, and encouraging the poorly informed to take dangerous risks. In addition, he declares that the U.S. interest in free trade and market liberalization often serves rather narrow financial interests. Why else, for example, would our negotiators press for the opening of foreign markets to trade in derivatives, which does not create significant employment in the U.S. and leaves foreign currencies more vulnerable to manipulation?

A few months after the World Bank sent him packing in 2001 (reportedly following pressure from the Treasury Department's new leadership), Stiglitz won the Nobel Prize for Economics. He has no need, therefore, to seek the consolation of a vindictive or self-justifying political memoir, but rather invites us to comb the beach with him.

Although the latter part of his book seems a trifle rushed (as if trying to keep up with the headlines), it is a pleasure to listen to his war stories. But these stories have morals: That the action of the marketplace should be balanced by judicious government regulation; that the government should protect the public interest by ensuring that the economy supports — or at least does not erode — social welfare; that economic globalization will only succeed in conjunction with the globalization of a political agenda that advances social equity; and that the U.S. must participate in that process as a partner, not as a speculator. ■

Paulo Almeida was an FSO from 1985 to 1992, serving in Lisbon, Oporto, Harare and Washington, D.C. From 1992 to 2003, he was an international affairs specialist at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He now

Real Estate

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

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Hagner Rideway and Jackson	(301) 968-2090	print1@print1.com	None	DC, MD, VA	73
Laughlin Management	(703) 356-6598	laughlinpm@aol.com	laughlincompanies.com	DC, MD, VA	71
McEnearney Associates	(703) 790-9090	pm@mcenearney.com	mcenearney.com	DC, MD, VA	72
Meyerson Group	(301) 657-3210	TheMeyersenGroup@aol.com	None	DC, MD	70
ProMax	(703) 642-5683	promax@erols.com	promaxrealtors.com	VA	73
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Stuart & Maury	(301) 654-3200	susanbader@stuartandmaury.com	susanbader.com	MD	69
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WJD Management	(703) 685-3600	wjd@clark.net	wjdpm.com	VA	72

[1] District of Columbia, Maryland, Northern Virginia

REFLECTIONS

Rickshaw Bridge

BY MAX UPHAUS

We were coming around Gulshan Circle toward the bridge to Baridhara when Shaun said, "This would be a great way to start a book."

"What?" I said, dodging a beggar in a dirty dress. "The sense of potential?"

We were heading we knew not where through the noisy heat of a Dhaka night. At 9 o'clock on a Friday night, when you are not yet 18, there still is a sense of potential.

"That, too," said Shaun, sidestepping an oncoming rickshaw as he fended off the eager wallah (driver) of another. "I was thinking about the sensory overload, though."

Nighttime activity was at its peak. The traffic around the circle was the usual swirling hell of three-wheel bicycle rickshaws; lawnmower-powered baby taxis; old cars; battered buses; laden trucks; hand-pulled bamboo carts; the tank-like SUVs of the expats and upwardly-mobile Bangladeshis; and pedestrians like us. The noise from this jumble was correspondingly confused: horns blared, engines growled, rickshaws rattled and their bells rang, baby-taxis coughed consumptively, and taxi wallahs and tea hawkers called for customers. Shouts, snorts, the entreaties of beggars, and ordinary conversation added to the din — all topped off by the piercing wail of Hindi movie music.

It seemed to promise infinity, clarity, peace, an end to the chaotic city.

On the ground, it was an impenetrable web of humanity. From above, the complex weave of traffic, light and life at Gulshan Circle must have appeared as one more element of an intricate earthly mandala (the holy Buddhist circle of the universe) — precise and perfect.

As we crossed Gulshan Avenue to the east side, I said, "Potential and sensory overload. Good combination."

"You could do something with it," Shaun agreed.

I can't remember the rest of the conversation as we followed Kemal Ataturk Avenue to the bridge. I'm sure it fell into the usual vein: movies, school, friends, life and other trivialities. But I remember what we saw.

In the darkness, the bridge to Baridhara was awash with myriad moving points of light — headlights, street lamps, flickering candles of roadside tea stands, squares of brightness from windows — all standing out brilliantly from the indigo of the sky and water. And on the far side of the lake, golden arms of light from street lamps reached across the water.

But, above this, the sky was aglow with a faint luminescence. I had observed that fluorescence many times — sometimes rosy pink, sometimes gold. On nights when I came home late, I would stop and look at the dark sweep of the lake, framed by the scattered lights from buildings on each bank. I suppose it was just light pollution, but it had an ethereal, unearthly quality. The human lights around us were solid, clear, and one-dimensional. In contrast, the halo of Rickshaw Bridge pervaded the skyline, formless, translucent, always fixed in the same curl around the bridge. It seemed to promise infinity, clarity, peace, an end to the chaotic city. That luminescence drew the aimless, man-made lights toward it. It was the fixed point, the center of the circle.

Yet, the center of the circle is forever empty; all paths bend toward it, but no path ever leads to it — at least not in our geometry. After that brief pause over the lake, we continued into the trees on the Baridhara side. Off the main thoroughfare, things were quieter. Five blocks down U.N. Road, and we were well into the "Georgetown" of Dhaka. As we ambled into Baridhara, the sensory overload faded away to the familiar — just the rush of headlights from a passing car and the heat resting on our foreheads. Potential likewise dissipated into the quiet. ■

Max Uphaus, an English major at the College of William & Mary (class of 2006), spent his last two years of high school in Bangladesh, where his father was stationed with USAID. The stamp is courtesy of the AAFSW Bookfair "Stamp Corner."

AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • April 2004

FOREIGN AFFAIRS DAY 2004

Join AFSA for 39th Retiree Homecoming

Planning is under way for the State Department's annual Foreign Affairs Day celebration, Friday, May 7. Invitations have been sent to all those who attended last year's event, as well as all new retirees. If you wish to receive an invitation, e-mail foreignaffairsday@state.gov, or call Peter Whaley at (202) 663-2383. As in previous years, there will be a wide selection of seminars presented by regional bureaus and other department offices, as well as a gala luncheon in the Benjamin Franklin Room at the State Department.

The 2004 AFSA Memorial Plaque ceremony will take place during Foreign Affairs Day to honor those Foreign Service personnel who lost their lives while serving their country abroad in foreign affairs. The solemn ceremony, including the presence of an Armed Forces Color Guard, will be held at the site of AFSA's Memorial Plaque in the C Street lobby of the State Department at 10 a.m. Secretary of State Colin Powell, who has presided at the last three plaque ceremonies, has been invited to once again help us honor our fallen colleagues. There are currently 215 names on the two Memorial Plaques, located in the east and west wings of the lobby. Although we are grateful that it appears no additional names will be added to the Memorial Plaques this year, this ceremony is an opportunity to remember all those direct-hire government employees who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving under the authority of a chief of mission. We are also reminded of the very real dangers and risks that our Foreign Service personnel continue to face every day no matter where in the world they may serve.

Continued on page 4

RECOGNITION FOR STUDY OF HARD LANGUAGES

AFSA Announces Sinclaire Language Award Winners

AFSA congratulates the winners of the 2003 Matilda W. Sinclaire Language Awards. These awards are presented annually by AFSA to Foreign Service employees who have distinguished themselves in the study of hard languages and associated cultures. Each of the winners will receive $1,000 and a certificate of recognition from AFSA.

Continued on page 5

Inside This Issue:

AFSA PRESIDENT ON THE ROAD

Limbert Meets with Entry-Level Employees in Africa

AFSA President John Limbert attended an entry-level professionals regional conference in Windhoek, Namibia, in February. Here's his message to AFSA members about his trip:

"Congratulations to our Windhoek and AF/EX colleagues for putting together a superb event. There were over 100 employees there representing almost all fields and specialties. During the conference we heard from Acting Assistant Secretary Snyder, and (by videoconference) from Secretary Powell, Under Secretary Grossman and Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Maura Harty.

"I was most impressed by the range of talents and the positive spirit I encountered. While all are doing excellent work, I would single out for special mention our entry-level GSO and consular colleagues, who have very sensitive jobs often performed under difficult and dangerous conditions. Do you think GSO work at an isolated, maximum-hardship African post is easy? Try it sometime.

Continued on page 4

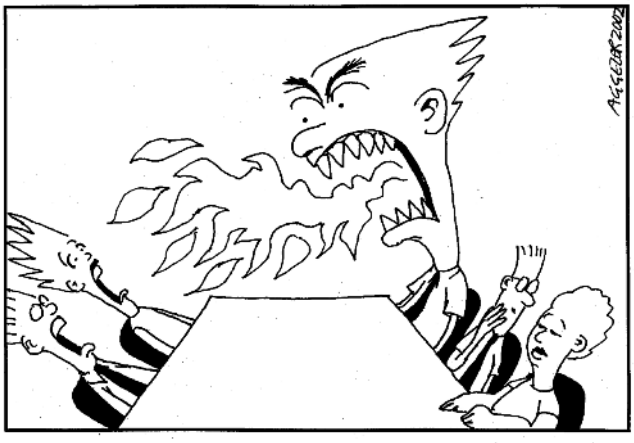
AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Welcome to AFSA's New FAS VP

AFSA is pleased to report that Laura Scandurra joined the AFSA Governing Board as AFSA Vice President for the Foreign Agricultural Service in February. She currently works in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations Division of FAS, and has served overseas in The Hague and Tokyo. She's a diplomat and an athlete, participating in triathlons, rowing, cycling and speed skating.

Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER, FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER



GOSH, HE'S REALLY MASTERED THAT CORE PRECEPT IN "PERSUASION AND NEGOTIATION."

AFSA MEETS WITH OPM DIRECTOR

An AFSA delegation met with Office of Personnel Management Director Kay Coles James on Jan. 15 to discuss the related issues of Senior Foreign Service pay and locality (or overseas comparability) pay for ranks FS-1 and below. AFSA pressed OPM to authorize travel overtime for specialists and to implement the regulations giving former "PITs" (employees on part-time, intermittent or temporary appointments) the option to buy back retirement coverage.

On the new requirement for all Senior Executive Service (and thus SFS) salaries to be based on a pay-for-performance system, the OPM director could not say much about specifics of the new system. She and her colleagues did say, however, that the Foreign Service, with its existing evaluations and rank-ordering, was well ahead of the rest of the U.S. government in putting such a system into place.

Although PIT buy-backs were authorized in legislation in September 2002 (go to www.aafsw.org/state/state_resources.htm for more information), OPM remains opposed to implementing the legislation for reasons of precedent and retroactivity. The OPM representatives told AFSA that they would look for alternative ways to move forward. AFSA will continue to press for a provision in the FY 2005 state authorization bill that includes a deadline for implementing the legislation.

On travel overtime for specialists, particularly Diplomatic Security agents, the OPM officials admitted that the "Strategic Compensation Initiative" that was supposed to deal with this issue remained moribund. They agreed to re-engage on the issue to work out an agreement.

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Locality Pay is Job Number One

Getting locality pay for every FS-1 and below posted overseas is AFSA's Job Number One. But before you get your hopes up, here's my "Surgeon General's" warning: It is going to be very difficult and the stress of waiting may be hazardous to your health.

First, in order for the foreign affairs agencies to authorize locality pay for all FS-1s and below serving abroad, legislation must be passed by Congress. This could come by way of an amendment to the 1990 Federal Pay Comparability Act that set up locality pay and categorically denies locality pay to any U.S. government employee working overseas. Or it could be accomplished through an amendment to the Foreign Service Act that would exempt the Foreign Service from that provision of the Federal Pay Comparability Act. Whatever the legislative route (remember your civics classes?), the bill has to be introduced, sponsored and assigned to a committee. The committee has to hold hearings, solicit views and then report the bill out of committee. The bill then has to be scheduled for a floor vote. To become law, it has to be passed by a majority of both houses and signed by the president.

This is not an easy task. Consider this example. Every year, a bill with over 100 sponsors is introduced into the Congress. This bill would guarantee reservists called up for service the salary they were earning before they were called up. It has public support, yet it never goes anywhere. How could such beneficial legislation fail? It fails because it would cost a lot of money, especially to the federal government, which is the largest employer of military reservists. And it would create a two-tier salary system on the battlefield, something I doubt the Pentagon favors. This bill never even gets assigned to a committee. It is DOA.

Suppose our bill gets sponsors, gets assigned to a committee, and hearings are held? The committee will most certainly want the views of the administration. Increasing the salaries of over 7,000 Foreign Service employees will cost money, lots of money — over 60 million additional taxpayer dollars. The budgets of the foreign affairs agencies would have to be increased. I don't need to tell you that with a swelling federal deficit, all budget requests are being subjected to intense scrutiny.

AFSA knows all the arguments in favor of the change and we use them all the time during frequent visits to the Hill: equity, fairness, morale, etc. We cite the CIA, DIA and NSA, all of which pay their overseas staff Washington-level salaries. The department has repeatedly made these same arguments with some of the same people AFSA talks to on Capitol Hill. Thus far, they remain unmoved.

One executive branch staffer we met said that State is unable to prove that the lack of locality pay has any effect on retention rates. During one call on House staff, AFSA was told, "We don't think anyone in a 'cushy' place like London or Paris should get any more money." AFSA knows that FS employees in London and Paris are doing meaningful work. We also know that they could be in Baghdad or Kabul tomorrow. It's called being worldwide available. On another call, a staffer said, "Frankly, it seems that all you ever come here for is to ask for more money." The anecdotal evidence points to a chilly if not downright hostile environment.

When a CODEL or STAFFDEL comes to your post, be sure and get on the notional schedule.

Is there anything you can do? Yes! When a CODEL or STAFFDEL comes to your post, be sure and get on the notional schedule. Provide the delegation members with your take on the denial of locality pay. The lack of remunerative employment for spouses is a good argument. In a dual-income society, the Foreign Service is a one-track career.

While our prospects appear dim, AFSA will not let up in its campaign to persuade the Congress and the administration to see the justice of paying locality pay to overseas Foreign Service employees. □

Note on SFS salaries: Many may ask why State was able to move so quickly to grant overseas members of the Senior Foreign Service a Washington-level salary. There are a number of complex explanations, but the simplest one is that no legislation was needed. The change required no sponsor, no hearings, no committee report. All that was required was an agreement among various players (including OPM, OMB, and the White House) that SFS members should be given a Washington-level salary so that all members of the Senior Executive Service and the SFS would be at the same salary level when locality pay was abolished and replaced by the new "pay for performance" system in January 2004.

V.P. VOICE: **FCS** ■ BY CHARLES FORD

A Call for Fundamental Change

As we work closely with the Foreign Commercial Service on priority issues for 2004, I am convinced that fundamental reforms are needed for both our mission and organizational structure. Our programs continue to be anchored too deeply in the last century. Staff resources are allocated much as they were 20 years ago despite major changes in global markets. Internally, we need to address structural problems that have long plagued the Office of Foreign Service Human Resources, diminishing our ability to recruit and support staff.

FCS is a separate and unequal part of the overall structure of the Commerce Department.

In the area of human resources, unfortunately it is more apparent than ever that the Foreign Commercial Service and its personnel system remain misunderstood. FCS is a separate and unequal part of the overall structure of the Commerce Department.

Delayed action on the issue of Senior Foreign Service pay adjustments in January is illustrative. FCS, State, FAS and USAID management worked tirelessly to achieve a timely and equitable solution. All but FCS were successful by the Jan. 11 implementation date. FCS management was just as committed to finding an equitable solution, yet the culture and structure of decision-making at Commerce did not allow for a timely decision on an issue where a consensus view had been reached easily at the other agencies. I am pleased to report that the agency did eventually succeed: a similar result was obtained from the Commerce Department two weeks after the other agencies had acted.

The lengthy processing of annual selection board decisions also illustrates the need for change. State Department results were announced in October 2003 and approved and implemented by the end of December. FCS results were also announced in October, but are still not implemented as I write in February.

Our new precepts and management systems were approved in January, five years after work began. FCS management and AFSA are committed to progress in the human resource area but remain hampered by a system and culture that has yet to learn how to manage a Foreign Service system almost a quarter-century after it was transferred from the State Department. Individuals are committed, but only fundamental reform can fix this sad situation. We look forward to working with our new director general to undertake such reforms.

As for commercial diplomacy, our programs and organizational structure call out for a fundamental review. The intense globalization process of the last decade has created new opportunities and challenges for our economic groups. Support for investment and the appropriate role for the federal government in regulatory policy advocacy are topics that have not been well debated. This is an increasingly urgent task, if only to better respond to the practices of competitor countries. We look forward to working closely with interested parties in designing a new policy framework.

I can close with a note of hope: FCS management and AFSA start out 2004 having eliminated a multiyear backlog of issues. We have started with a clean slate and a constructive attitude for a strong, collaborative relationship. As our FCS AFSA membership approaches 200 (close to 90 percent of our officer corps), I am convinced that working together with our new director general and senior management we can address this call for fundamental reform. □

Limbert Trip • Continued from page 1

"As for our first-tour consular colleagues, they deserve special respect for staffing the front lines of America's defense. One used to be able to say, 'If I make a mistake on this visa, the sky will not fall.' Now it just may. There is also a spirit that now recognizes the importance of what these colleagues do and the importance of supporting them with the right training, assignments and leadership.

"I recall in particular meeting a first-tour consular officer from a busy Francophone post. He joined the Foreign Service after a distinguished career elsewhere, and said, 'I think I've finally found what I love to do. I'm actually disappointed when we have too few visa applicants and we finish too soon.' Now that is dedication!

"We want all new-entry professionals to know that AFSA is there to help. If there is no AFSA representative at your post, we encourage you to volunteer to be one. During my visit, I heard from several people who had difficulty getting a post management official to pay attention to their problems. In such cases, the AFSA representative is your best spokesperson. In other cases, individuals can always phone or e-mail the Washington AFSA offices for advice." □

Foreign Service Day • Continued from page 1

Come with AFSA to Capitol Hill

In connection with Foreign Affairs Day, AFSA will hold its fourth annual "Day on the Hill" program on Thursday, May 6. AFSA encourages retirees to join us for a visit to Capitol Hill to meet with congressional representatives and staff. This event provides a unique opportunity for retirees to confer with key legislators and discuss Foreign Service and foreign affairs issues. Add your voice to AFSA's in support of the Foreign Service.

AFSA is sending out invitations for "Day on the Hill" to Foreign Service retirees (members and non-members). For more information, send an e-mail to Austin Tracy at tracy@afsa.org, or call him toll-free at 1(800) 704-2372, ext. 506. □

A FOND FAREWELL

Harry Sizer Retires from AFSA

Former Foreign Service officer Harry Sizer, who worked for the last nine years as an AFSA grievance attorney, is leaving AFSA for a second retirement. With a law degree from Yale University and vast Foreign Service experience, he was a tremendous asset to AFSA and will be sorely missed. He assisted hundreds of Foreign Service clients, always a source of comfort and moral support to them through the never-easy grievance process.

In tribute to his service, those who worked most closely with him had this to say:

Harry's counsel, assistance and guidance were invaluable to me. The department's grievance staff made a number of procedural errors and it would have been far more difficult to prepare my submission to the Foreign Service Grievance Board had it not been for Harry's excellent support.

— A Foreign Service Client

We'll all miss Harry Sizer in a hundred ways. His quiet demeanor conceals a tenacious spirit that refuses to let injustice prevail or to allow vital issues to be overtaken by the press of everyday business. His unique ability to lend a sympathetic ear and do his very best for every single one of the diverse clients who have stepped through his office door will be difficult to replicate. We wish him a long and peaceful retirement to enjoy what we hope will be an ever-increasing tribe of grandchildren.

— James Yorke,
Labor Management Specialist

Harry has been a valuable asset to the AFSA members. His experience as an attorney and a Foreign Service officer enabled him to give members excellent advice and counsel. He has dedicated two careers to serving the Foreign Service and we wish him the very best in retirement.

— Susan Reardon,
AFSA Executive Director

Harry brought an insider's knowledge of the system to his work. He married the skills of a therapist with his legal knowledge and his Foreign Service experience. At one of our staff meetings, Harry made a profound comment: "What my clients really want," he said, "is an apology." Since apologies were not forthcoming, Harry worked hard to get his clients redress through the grievance system and he was uncommonly successful.

— Louise Crane,
AFSA State Vice President

It was my great pleasure to work with Harry the past nine years. He assisted literally hundreds of Foreign Service employees with grievances, disciplinary cases and security investigations and saved many careers by persuading the grievance staff or Foreign Service Grievance Board to throw out a prejudicial evaluation or overturn a low ranking or selection out. Harry was always willing to meet with new clients on a moment's notice. He was extremely generous with his time, providing both legal and moral support. Harry never relented in his efforts to get rid of the mandatory 5-percent low ranking at the State Department, as he saw time and time again the arbitrary and unfair nature of this quota system.

— Sharon Papp,
AFSA General Counsel

Having Harry in the office when I started fresh from law school was a great gift. He was an invaluable resource for me as a sounding board for legal advice and guidance. Harry has a keen sense of fairness, professionalism and collegiality, as well as a sharp sense of humor. It was an honor to work with him.

— Zlatana Badrich,
Labor Management Attorney

My husband and I knew Harry from our posting to Muscat in 1977-1978. Harry was the deputy chief of mission, and his supportive, gentle management style at a difficult desert post was deeply appreciated. He made sure that everyone in the embassy felt included and received a fair shake. He's done the same thing at AFSA as an attorney for his Foreign Service clients.

— Christine Warren,
Labor Management Office Manager □

Sinclaire • Continued from page 1

Winners:	**Language:**
Anthony W. Baird	Georgian
Laura Brown	Bosnian
Anne S. Coleman	Tagalog
Frank Collins	Latvian
Cherrie S. Daniels	Hebrew
Henry S. Ensher	Hebrew
Kenneth Fairfax	Polish
Julia Jacoby	Hebrew
Timothy E. Liston	Lithuanian
Richard Rorvig	Polish
Landon Ray Lee Taylor	Latvian
Thomas K. Yazdgerdi	Greek

Language training supervisors at the School of Language Studies of the Foreign Service Institute nominate all candidates and a committee of AFSA staff and board members selects the winners.

Former Foreign Service officer Matilda W. Sinclaire established the Sinclaire Language Award through a bequest to the American Foreign Service Association in 1982, to "promote and reward superior achievement by career officers of the Foreign Service of the United States while studying one of the 'hard' languages under the auspices of the Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State." Sinclaire languages are those that have proven relatively difficult for native English speakers to learn and that normally require eight months or more of intensive study, either through formal training or field experience.

Over $150,000 has been awarded to members of the Foreign Service in the past 22 years for their achievement of outstanding language skills. □

V.P. VOICE: **RETIREE** ■ BY GEORGE JONES

Where Have All The Members Gone?

AFSA is justifiably proud of the fact that membership is at an all-time high: 12,474. The number of active-duty members is also at an all-time high: 74 percent of State Foreign Service employees, 72 percent of USAID and a whopping 86 percent of the FCS. Eighty-five percent of new entrants into the Service now routinely join AFSA, compared to 45 percent just a decade ago. How many retired members are there? There are currently 3,770, only a quarter of the estimated total number of retired Foreign Service personnel, 14,342.

If we assume that approximately 70 percent of retirees were once AFSA members, that means that there are over 6,200 retirees out there who let their membership lapse when they retired or sometime afterwards. That's 6,000 people who don't receive the Retiree Directory, the *Foreign Service Journal*, *AFSA News*, and the *Retiree Newsletter*, don't have access to AFSA insurance programs and don't have the option of seeking AFSA assistance with insurance, annuity or benefits issues.

We encourage retiree members to help us recruit their retiree colleagues back into AFSA.

It's easy to speculate on reasons why many retirees let membership lapse. Some retirees may simply want to close completely the Foreign Service chapter of their lives. Some specialists may have felt that AFSA was an officer-run, officer-oriented organization with little relevance to their concerns. However hard we have worked to change that image in recent years, perceptions often outlive the reality. Some may feel the dues are more than they can afford, even scaled as they are to annuity levels. Some thought their membership would automatically continue after they retired, and never renewed it when active-duty payroll deductions ceased.

What's harder to do is to find new ways to reach those old friends who have left us. AFSA President John Limbert and the retired members on the AFSA Governing Board are all ready and able to visit the retiree organizations around the country and talk about what AFSA is doing and why it matters to retirees. AFSA is always represented at the department's retirement seminars. We do an annual membership appeal to all retirees. We are working on improvements to the retiree page of the AFSA Web site.

We encourage retiree members to help us recruit retiree colleagues back into AFSA. We welcome your ideas and suggestions on what more we can do to reach our former colleagues, and in particular how we can improve AFSA's services to retirees. (Send your suggestions and comments to jones@afsa.org.) We are well aware that it's the services we provide that, in the end, are the best membership draw of all. □

***Note**: The very real prospect of increasing congressional pressure to cut federal retiree benefits underscores the importance of AFSA's role in protecting your hard-earned benefits. AFSA works actively with other retiree organizations to protect federal annuities, COLAs and health benefits. Bonnie Brown, our Retiree Affairs Coordinator, provides assistance with annuity, Social Security, and other retirement issues to over 40 members a month. Contact her at brown@afsa.org or (800) 704-2372, ext. 528.*

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Continued from page 2

USAID & the Millennium Challenge Account

Following several months of relative inactivity on the Millennium Challenge Account, AFSA is pleased to report that Congress passed the Omnibus Appropriations Bill that includes both the funding and the authorization for the MCA. In line with expectations, a total of $1 billion was budgeted for MCA-related activities, including the establishment of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The requirements for eligibility are laid out in this act (H.R. 2673), and the structure of the corporation is outlined. One section (Title VI, Section 615) defines how the MCC will cooperate with the U.S. Agency for International Development, an issue that is of particular concern to AFSA and AFSA members.

Included is a requirement for coordination, which states that "The Chief Executive Officer shall consult with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development in order to coordinate the activities of the Corporation with the activities of the Agency." In addition, it states that "The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall seek to ensure that appropriate programs of the Agency play a primary role in preparing candidate countries to become eligible countries."

At the first MCA board meeting on Feb. 2, Under Secretary of State for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs Alan Larson was appointed interim CEO of the MCC. The MCC is temporarily located in the USA Today building in Rosslyn, Va. U/S Larson hosted a briefing on the MCA at the Foreign Press Center on Feb. 3. To read the transcript and learn more about the MCA, please go to http://fpc.state.gov/28839.htm.

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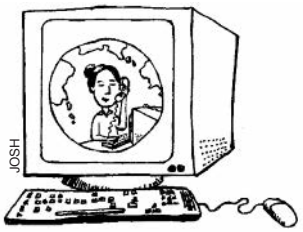

FS VOICE: **FAMILY MEMBER MATTERS** ■ BY MICHAEL HAAREN

Portable Career Options: Virtual Assistants, Virtual Professionals

The spread of the Internet coupled with the strong private-sector trend in the U.S. toward outsourcing has created attractive new portable career choices for Foreign Service spouses. Two expanding career options are the Virtual Professional and the Virtual Assistant.

Working with U.S. companies and using e-mail, fax and courier services, Foreign Service spouses with JD, MD, and MBA degrees can now provide litigation support, insurance case screening and corporate growth consulting as virtual professionals. Foreign Service spouses with business-support expertise can offer foreign-market research, database management and foreign-travel support to U.S. sales and marketing executives as virtual assistants.

Many business relationships, in fact, that were once considered "face-to-face or not at all" have given way to virtual arrangements. Granted, a Foreign Service spouse lawyer in Norway cannot appear "virtually" in a U.S. court — and will, of course, have to be cognizant of host-country restrictions on the practice of law — but he or she can just as easily summarize a deposition or review litigation documents as a U.S.-based colleague.

By the same token, a Foreign Service spouse with an MBA no longer need be present to advise the executives of young companies on their growth strategies (even the "virtual CEO" concept, emerging from Silicon Valley, has been around since the 1990s), nor does a spouse with research skills need to meet with a U.S. marketing executive before reporting on the market landscape in his or her host country.

The Background and Growth of Virtual Services

The concept of virtual support services began with the launch of the virtual assistant industry in 1995. Originally oriented toward administrative services, the "VA" industry quickly spread. The hiring marketplace understood that, just as in telecommuting, the physical presence of the assistant was not always necessary. Moreover, the VA, as an offsite independent contractor rather than an onsite employee, could save the hiring company significant costs in employee taxes and benefits, and in office space and amenities.

The VA industry has since grown to include over 80 skill sets or areas of expertise, many of which overlap into the virtual professional arena. There is room for debate as to whether some specialties belong in the "VA" or "VP" category: Is an interpreter a VA or a VP? Be that as it may, there are expanding work options for numerous skill sets.

The following is a sampling of the opportunities a Foreign Service spouse almost anywhere might pursue:

Business plan writing
Marketing plan writing
Academic writing
Press release services
Grant proposal writing
Import-export support
Foreign market research
Legal and medical transcription
Fundraising consulting and support
Nonprofit growth consulting
Audiovisual and multimedia presentations
Public relations/media relations consulting
Graphic design and corporate identity services
Technical writing and editing
Voice services (greetings, events)
Intranet development and support
Web community hosting and monitoring
Web site design and maintenance
Software programming
Customer service complaint/dispute resolution

Resources on the Net

Whether you opt for the virtual assistant or virtual professional path, you'll find plenty of tips on launching and growing a virtual services business on the Internet. A Google search will get your efforts off to the right start, and industry organizations like the International Virtual Assistants Association, at www.ivaa.org, can also help. The media has also embraced the concept, and archived articles, on virtual assistants in particular, abound.

Look Before You Leap!

There are, of course, caveats. The Foreign Service spouse must take into account potential conflicts of interest and other mission-specific considerations and sensitivities that non-diplomatic VPs and VAs can ignore. Be sure to read relevant Family Liaison Office publications such as Employment Options for Foreign Service Family Members and get guidance from your post administrative officer as first steps before undertaking any VP or VA self-employment effort, and most especially before accepting any client in a VP or VA relationship.

Enjoy, and may the heady and rewarding pleasures of successful entrepreneurship be yours! □

Michael Haaren, who was a Foreign Service dependent in the 1960s, is the co-founder and COO of Staffcentrix, LLC, which specializes in training programs in the Virtual Assistant/Virtual Professional industry.

Q&A

Personnel

BY JAMES YORKE, LABOR MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

A Look at Training and Lodging

Q: I'm coming to Washington for a year's language training. Can I live in my own house while I'm on long-term training between assignments, and claim per diem at the same time?

A: Yes, under certain circumstances.

First, you can buy a house to occupy while you are on temporary duty between posts, and you can claim per diem allowance in connection with your occupancy of the house, based on the standard meals and miscellaneous expenses allowance (M&IE), plus lodging costs determined as a proration of monthly interest, property tax and utility costs actually incurred. This is based on the 1977 "Larrabee" decision of the Comptroller General.

Second, you can move into a property that was rented out while you were away, and claim the same per diem costs. Most FS employees with homes in the Washington area can qualify as long as the house has been rented out for a significant period and the employee is on temporary duty orders that specifically state that he or she is en route to another overseas assignment. However, none of the case history addresses the question of someone returning for training to a house that he or she owned as a family home for a protracted period, but that has only been rented out for a short period before the return on TDY. This may still require a test case.

Q: I'm going to Fort Lauderdale for a three-week TDY and own a holiday home in the area. May I claim per diem as reimbursement for mortgage expenses if I live in this house for the period of my TDY?

A: No. The rationale here is that you bought this house for other purposes entirely, and any mortgage costs you incur are consequent on your ownership of the property, not your temporary duty. You may, however, claim M&IE and some other expenses, such as the cost of extra utilities that would not have been incurred had you not been occupying the house.

Q: I understand that per diem rates decrease over time during long-term training at FSI. How does that work?

A: While in long-term training at FSI, you may claim up to 100 percent of daily per diem for the first 60 days. This amount is reduced to 50 percent from day 61 to day 120, and to 25 percent thereafter. The reduction applies to both the lodging and M&IE portions of per diem. In 2003 lodging per diem for the D.C. area was $150 and M&IE was $50.

Q: Can I cover my rent during training by arranging a "front-loaded" lease?

A: No. A front-loaded lease, in this context, is a lease with a high rent for the first few months that is later reduced on a sliding scale to match the declining authorized lodging per diem amount. The Resource Management Bureau's policy, when faced with a lease of this kind, is to add up the total rent over the period of the lease, and divide that by the number of days of the lease. So beware: If you agree to a rent of $4,500 per month for the first sixty days (or $150/day), $2,250 for the next 60 days ($75/day) and $1,125 for the remainder of a six-month lease, RM will add it all together ($15,750) and divide by six to give a monthly rent of $2,625. So you'll only get $2,625 for the first two months, and the maximum amounts of $2,250 and $1,125 monthly for each of the next two-month periods. □

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

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All-Hands Meeting at USAID

On Feb. 3, USAID Administrator Natsios gathered employees for the first all-hands meeting of 2004. The administrator delivered remarks in which he emphasized the four main priorities for the coming year: 1) The reconstruction of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan; 2) HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Challenge Account; 3) President Bush's 19 Development Initiatives; and 4) the Business Model Review. Of particular interest to AFSA were the presentations on management and human resources, which were handled by Assistant Administrator for Management John Marshall and Director of Human Resources Rose Marie Depp.

AFSA and others posed questions concerning the Student Loan Repayment Program, spousal language and area training, reimbursement of expenses for new hires and business class travel. The overriding refrain was budgetary constraint, but there are efforts afoot to see if funds can be found for SLRP with the caveat that such a program would not provide blanket coverage for all. The agency must prove that the program is used to address recruitment and retention problems in order to provide this benefit. Regarding spousal language training at FSI, HR said "FAST" summer courses for spouses were a possibility, but only by request to USAID/HR. HR said that the cost of spousal area studies, however, was prohibitive. USAID is currently developing a plan that would provide some reimbursement of new-hire expenses. No answer on business-class travel was forthcoming.

Tax Time

The AFSA Tax Guide gives you a detailed state-by-state breakdown of tax laws as they pertain to Foreign Service employees and retirees. If you missed the 2003 Tax Guide in the February *AFSA News*, you can find it on the AFSA Web site at www.afsa.org/taxguide.cfm. The latest regarding the capital gains tax exclusion on the sale of a principal residence can be found in the congressional activity section of the AFSA Web site at: www.afsa.org/congress.cfm.

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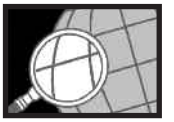

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THE FS & THE PRESIDENT'S 2005 BUDGET REQUEST

The International Affairs Account in the Fiscal Year 2005 budget request totals $31.5 billion. This amount represents a 10.53 percent increase over the FY 2004 request, and an 11.3 percent increase over the FY 2004 appropriation (not counting funds carried over from the 2003 supplemental or the across-the-board omnibus recission). Budgets were increased for nine departments or agencies and decreased for seven. The International Affairs Account was given the largest percentage increase.

The increase in the administration's request for the International Affairs Account was approximately $3 billion, most of it earmarked for three programs – the Global Aids Initiative, the Millennium Challenge Account, and the Andean Counter Drug Initiative. The accounts of special interest to AFSA did not do badly. The State Department personnel account (Diplomatic and Consular Programs Account) was increased to accommodate additional hiring of 184 employees above attrition, 63 additional consular officers separate from those to be hired through the normal use of visa fees, and 71 additional for DS. The Information Management Account was significantly higher than the 2004 appropriation but slightly (1.21 percent) below the 2004 request. The Worldwide Security Account was level at the agreed-upon $1.5 billion. At USAID, the Operating Expenses Account was up, to allow for the hiring of 50 additional staff above attrition for the agency's Development Readiness Initiative. The USAID Capital Investment Fund was down.

As the personnel accounts were increased, some of the program assistance funds were either flat or reduced in order to accommodate increases in other areas of the account. For instance, development assistance was down 1.19 percent when compared to the 2004 request or down 4.04 percent from the 2004 appropriation. Likewise, assistance levels for the Former Soviet Union and the African Development Foundation were down.

In the next phase of the process, the budget committees work on House and Senate budget resolutions, and after that, it's on to appropriations. Most people involved in the process predict this will be a tough year. The administration's request is tight, and Congress will have its own priorities as it tries to stay within budget limits.

Spotlight on the Senior Management Group

Back in July, shortly after the new AFSA Governing Board took office, AFSA requested a briefing from USAID management regarding certain senior management group decisions that did not appear to pass the transparency test. AFSA was concerned about the way these decisions, and others like them in the future, might influence promotion possibilities and whether the decisions might thwart the career advancement of some members. Every week since July, either by e-mail or in face-to-face meetings, AFSA has repeated this request. To date, no briefing has taken place or even been scheduled. "Of such stonewalling," says AFSA VP Bill Carter, "collaborative relationships are not made."

USAID-State Cross-Assignment Program Gets Started

AFSA VPs for State and USAID met with State Human Resources staff concerning the start-up of an excursion program designed to bring five State employees to USAID and send an equal number of USAID employees to State. AFSA supports this initiative, and hopes our consultations with management can result in a better program with a higher chance of success. The meeting was productive, and AFSA appreciates HR's openness. USAID has already posted five State jobs, and State HR agreed to put five USAID jobs on its bid list.

"KidVid" Contest Entries Due April 15

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation and the Overseas Briefing Center are sponsoring the Ninth Annual Worldwide KIDVID Contest for production of a video that depicts life for children and teens at your post. Winners are honored at the Youth Awards Ceremony at the Department of State. The FSYF awards cash prizes to the top three winners.

This contest is open to Foreign Service kids ages 10 to 18. Foreign Service families visit the OBC to research their assignments. The OBC needs videos that show life at post — housing, school, recreational facilities, community life, city life — from the vantage point of the younger members of the Foreign Service community. Videos should include views of what children and teens do in their free time.

All submissions become the property of OBC and will not be returned to contestants. The videos will be kept in the OBC Information Center and other Foreign Service reference libraries for use by Foreign Service employees and family members. As OBC property, these videos may also be made available to the public.

Find details and the rules at www.fsyf.org/kidvid/2003KidVidRules.doc

Submissions should be sent to: KIDVID Contest, Overseas Briefing Center, Room E2126, Shultz Center, Department of State, Washington, DC 20522-4201.

Submissions must be received in the Overseas Briefing Center by Monday, April 15, 2004. Contest winners will be announced by the end of May.

Questions? Contact Maureen Johnston at the Overseas Briefing Center: E-mail johnstonm5@state.gov, call (703) 302-7277, or fax (703) 302-7452. ■

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