

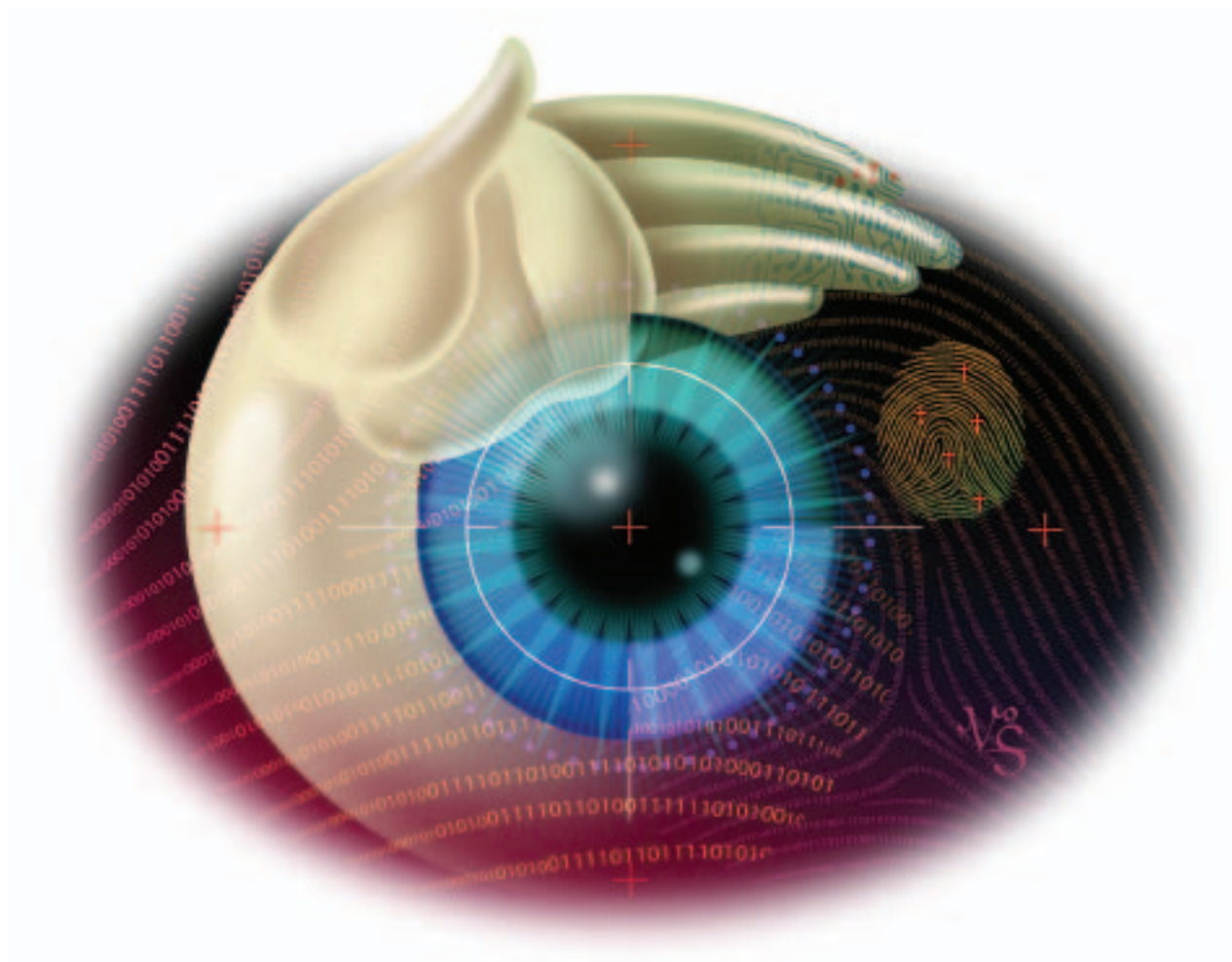
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Foreign Service Journal (ISSN 0146-3543), 2101 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2990 is published monthly with a combined July/August issue by the American Foreign Service Association, a private, non-profit organization. Material appearing herein represents the opinions of the writers and does not necessarily represent the views of the *Journal*, the Editorial Board or AFSA. Writer queries and submissions are invited, preferably by e-mail. *Journal* subscription: AFSA Members - \$13 included in annual dues; others - \$40. For foreign surface mail, add \$18 per year; foreign airmail, \$36 per year. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Foreign Service Journal*, 2101 E Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2990. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS). The *Journal* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photos or illustrations. Advertising inquiries are invited. The appearance of advertisements herein does not imply the endorsement of the services or goods offered. FAX: (202) 338-8244 or (202) 338-6820. E-MAIL: journal@afsa.org. WEB: www.afsa.org. TELEPHONE: (202) 338-4045. © American Foreign Service Association, 2005. Printed in the U.S.A. Send address changes to AFSA Membership, 2101 E Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2990. Printed on 50-percent recycled paper, of which 10 percent is post-consumer waste.

Cover and inside illustration by Valerie Sinclair

J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST

AN INVITATION TO PROPOSE PROJECTS FOR FUNDING

BY THE J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST IN 2006

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is a charitable fund established in the memory of Kirby Simon, a Foreign Service Officer who died in 1995 while serving in Taiwan. The Trust is committed to expanding the opportunities for community service and professional fulfillment of active Foreign Service Officers and Specialists and their families.

The principal activity of the Trust is to support projects that are initiated and carried out, not in an official capacity and not on official time, by Foreign Service personnel or members of their families, wherever located. The Trust, however, will also consider proposals from other U.S. Government employees or members of their families, regardless of nationality, who are located at American diplomatic posts abroad.

In 2005 the Trust made its ninth round of grant awards, 37 in all, ranging from \$505 to \$4,327, for a total of \$85,836. These grants support the involvement of Foreign Service personnel in the projects briefly listed below (further described in a Trust announcement entitled *Grants Awarded in 2005* and available at www.kirbysimontrust.org). The grants defray a wide range of project expenses, including books, food, medicines, furniture, computers, sanitary facilities, kitchen equipment, job training machinery and staff costs, excursion costs, supplies for school and orphanage renovation and for playgrounds.

- **Educational Projects:** Botswana - nature reserve educational center, Burundi - school for orphaned children; Cambodia - library for local school, Costa Rica - English class for teenage mothers, Iraq - computers for girls' school, Mexico - life-skills training for orphans, Swaziland - school for orphans, The Gambia - classroom for a rural school, Zimbabwe - art program for street children.
- **Other Projects for Children:** Albania - community children's playground, Azerbaijan - orphanage building, Brazil - computer for children's center, Brazil - refuge for street children, Chile - playground for abused children, Estonia - beds for orphanage, Ghana - shelter for orphaned and abandoned children, Israel - inter-cultural summer camp, Lithuania - excursion for residents of a children's shelter, Mexico - refuge for homeless children, South Africa - safe haven for children in distress, Uruguay - regional softball league.
- **Health-related Projects:** Albania - palliative care for cancer patients, Albania - emergency treatment for respiratory failure, Belgium - housing and employment for mentally handicapped adults, Cambodia - water wells in rural village, Colombia - nutritional lunches for under-nourished children, Ghana - sanitary facilities and health education for rural school, Morocco - kitchen for the physically handicapped, Sri Lanka - dog-bite prevention program, Suriname - walkers for disabled

children, Venezuela - eyeglasses for the visually impaired, Zambia - water well in "day orphanage."

- **Other Facilities in Poverty Areas:** Chile - communal kitchen, Japan - food bank for the poor, Uganda - livestock-raising program.
- **Project for Animal Care:** Egypt - shelter used in humane animal programs.

The Trust now invites the submission of proposals for support in 2006. It is anticipated that most of the new grants will fall within the same funding range as the 2005 awards, and that projects assisted by the Trust will reflect a variety of interests and approaches, some of which are illustrated by the 2005 grants.

Grants provided by the Trust can be used to support several categories of project expenses; the third paragraph of this announcement provides examples. Grant funds from the Trust, however, cannot be used to pay salaries or other compensation to U.S. Government employees or their family members. Because of the limited resources available to the Trust, it is not in a position to support projects that have reasonable prospects of obtaining full funding from other sources. Nor does the Trust support projects that require more resources than the Trust and other funders can provide.

The Trustees wish to emphasize that the Trust will provide support for a project operated by a charitable or educational organization only where the Foreign Service-related applicant(s) play an active part in initiating and carrying out the project, apart from fundraising.

A proposal should include a description of the project, what it is intended to achieve, and the role to be played by the applicant(s); a preliminary plan for disseminating the results of the project; a budget; other available funding, if any; and a brief biography of the applicant(s). Proposals should be no longer than five double-spaced pages (exclusive of budget and biographical material). Applicants should follow the application format available at www.kirbysimontrust.org/format_for_proposals.html or that can be obtained by communicating with the Trust (see below).

Proposals for projects to be funded during calendar year 2006 must be received by the Trust no later than March 1, 2006.

Proposals and inquiries can be sent by mail, fax or e-mail to:

**J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust
93 Edgehill Road
New Haven, CT 06511
FAX: 203-432-0063
info@kirbysimontrust.org**

Further information about the Trust can be found on the Web at www.kirbysimontrust.org.



PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

The Foreign Service as a Political Foil

BY J. ANTHONY HOLMES

In my initial meeting with Secretary Rice on Oct. 27, I asked her to help AFSA defend the Foreign Service. I told her that in addition to “bread-and-butter” issues like Overseas Comparability Pay that we’d just discussed, AFSA members care deeply about the Foreign Service as a profession with a vital role to play in defending our national security and advancing U.S. interests. I noted that the Foreign Service continues to come under fire unfairly from certain quarters, including accusations of disloyalty, unwillingness to serve in difficult places and handle tough tasks, favoring foreign over American interests, and even compromising our nation’s interests in pursuit of “lucrative post-FS employment” (sic).



I pointed to Jim Hoagland’s Aug. 25 *Washington Post* column as an example of the slurs and distortions to which the FS is regularly subjected. Hoagland urged Sec. Rice to quell “the hotbed of rebellion” at a State Department dominated by FS “battle-hardened policy warriors,” whose “Olympian view of current events discounts an administration’s ideology and political needs” and whose “clientitis” leads them to favor foreign nations or “potential future employers.” She’d better watch her back, Hoagland concluded, because “the fire can come from any direction.”

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

I told the Secretary that, while AFSA puts out its own statements to respond to these “cheap shots,” a first-person statement or op-ed piece answering particularly egregious and inaccurate criticism and reaffirming her confidence in the loyalty, courage, and professionalism of FS employees would go a long way toward refuting our detractors. Everyone remembers how then-Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage’s “Newt’s off his meds again” quip made a mockery of the former House Speaker’s attack.

Foreign relations are too important to be left to a corps of ‘yes men.’

— Gerald Ford, 1974

The Secretary responded that she does not believe it effective to react to every slight. She regularly praises the Foreign Service in her speeches, she said. I noted that AFSA members had listened to such remarks with satisfaction. Unfortunately, though, this type of support has been articulated almost exclusively to in-house audiences at town hall meetings and swearings-in.

I’ve always been appalled by attacks like Hoagland’s and the seemingly willful ignorance behind them. We in the Foreign Service take an oath “to uphold and defend the Constitution.” Ever conscious that we need to work for whichever party controls the White House, the vast majority of FS person-

nel are studiously apolitical and would not dream of going beyond the rules of the game. We offer advice based on unparalleled experience and expertise, rarely dissent, even within the system (i.e., before the policy is set), implement the policies our political masters choose, analyze the results, and try to get them fine-tuned.

Both parties in Congress recognized the need for a professional diplomatic corps loyal to the nation, and not to political parties or individuals, when it passed overwhelmingly the 1924 Rogers Act that ended the spoils system and created the modern Foreign Service. As President Gerald Ford said on its 50th anniversary, “Foreign relations are too important to be left to a corps of ‘yes men.’ You must report without fear or favor what you actually see abroad, not what we in Washington want to hear.” The Foreign Service Act of 1980 consolidated this professionalism, again with broad bipartisan support.

Detractors like Hoagland make me wonder what they want. Is it results or just the immediate political splash and glitz of the initial rollout? Are they committed to success, or just the spin? Do they want pros who see the forest through the trees, or hacks who let short-term exigencies obscure long-term interests? Whatever motivates such attacks, I trust Secretary Rice will not allow slurs against the Foreign Service to become the perceived foil for her success. An occasional public defense of her troops would be highly appreciated. ■



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LETTERS

Bias Against DS

As a Diplomatic Security agent, I often find cause to disagree with articles presented in the *Foreign Service Journal*. Many times I have picked up my pen (or keyboard) to write you, only to end up scrapping the message for fear of appearing petty. I have even considered resigning my membership in AFSA over some of the more anti-security positions it has held over the years. So imagine my surprise when I opened my copy in September to see a whole issue dedicated to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security!

However, upon reading the issue, my previous opinions were validated, as your editors found it necessary to trot out critics of DS even in an issue designed to highlight its contributions. This type of criticism is not included when the *Journal* highlights other bureaus, and betrays what I perceive to be the deep-seated biases of your editorial staff and, indeed, some members of the Foreign Service.

I question the appropriateness of including an essay about Overseas Buildings Operations by Jane Loeffler, in an issue supposedly meant to tout DS. Ms. Loeffler is a longtime critic of DS, and it appears that no amount of security included in embassy design would be acceptable to her. She continues to cling to the past, when aesthetics were the only concern and award-winning architects were commissioned to produce buildings that

looked good, but wasted space, cost inordinately too much and were unsafe for our employees.

A discussion of the Office of Overseas Buildings' standard embassy design program has no business in an issue dedicated to DS. This program was put into place by OBO to save money and reduce project timelines, and has next to nothing to do with security. Congress continually criticized the former Foreign Buildings Office for overspending on extravagant designs and for taking too long getting embassies built. The result was reduced funding for new embassy construction. Say what you will about OBO's chief, retired Gen. Charles E. Williams, but at least he fixed the problem and got the funding spigot turned back on. Perhaps Ms. Loeffler is prepared to "err on the side of openness" and have hundreds of our fellow officers die in the process.

Out of nine articles on security, one was neutral (Honley), four were negative (Jones, Loeffler, Hannon and Anonymous), and four were positive (Griffin, Whitelaw, Johnson and Renzuli). Not surprisingly, DS employees wrote most of the positive ones. The sad thing is that this percentage probably reflects the attitudes of your editors and readership. Is it any wonder that DS employees feel alienated from the Foreign Service in general, and AFSA in particular? DS does its best to safeguard the lives of our fellow employees under difficult circum-

stances and to create a safe and secure environment for the conduct of diplomacy. Like no other federal security agency, it does so in a way that is sensitive to foreign culture and the need to conduct business. Instead of criticizing DS, I would recommend that the *Journal* do something to highlight the lives of the two agents who lost their lives in service of their country this year in Iraq. These DS employees were killed while protecting others so that critical Foreign Service objectives could be met.

In the mid-1990s, there was a move orchestrated by high-level officials within our own department to cede most DS responsibilities to another federal agency. I would venture to guess that the department would be remembering DS with fondness today if that had been allowed to occur. The bureau's employees will never feel fully integrated as part of the Foreign Service team until biases like the ones presented in the September issue are corrected, and the brave professionals that staff DS are made to feel that their contributions are valued.

*Frank DeMichele
Regional Security Officer
Embassy Lusaka*

Editor's Note: As with all topics the Foreign Service Journal covers, our intent was neither to "tout" the Diplomatic Security Bureau's accomplishments nor to condemn its short-



comings. We always strive to present a wide range of perspectives — positive, negative and mixed — in our pages and let readers make up their own minds.

Balancing Security and Openness

The *Journal's* September edition on Diplomatic Security is an important service to the foreign affairs community, and especially to the Foreign Service, but its contents are chilling and the policies described potentially self-defeating. It is true that foreign affairs professionals, both overseas and in Washington, are working in a dangerous world. It is also a world in which their effectiveness in their jobs is crucial to our nation's long-term security.

I'm afraid that the mind-set described by David Jones and others in that issue undermines that effectiveness. Walling ourselves off overseas will make the United States more vulnerable, because it will undermine our ability to understand and communicate with the societies with which we are dealing. Paranoia about losing a security clearance will also discourage Foreign Service personnel from understanding and communicating with these societies.

It was therefore encouraging and refreshing to read Jane C. Loeffler's article about the need for both security and openness in embassy design. If Karen Hughes' mandate to re-energize our public diplomacy is to have a lasting and positive impact, this balance has to be maintained. In the personnel arena, as AFSA General Counsel Sharon Papp argues, there is a need for a stronger system of checks and balances, one that protects the rights of employees threatened with loss of their security clearances.

The Foreign Service has known

times when security fears dictated policy and treatment of its employees. The nation's interests were not served then and will not be served now if such fears dominate our decision-making and our policy implementation.

Pierre Shostal
FSO, retired
Alexandria, Va.

One Service?

Two points were not touched upon in the series of articles in the September *FSJ* dedicated to Diplomatic Security. One, which ought to be a sore point within AFSA, is that DS officers are unique among Foreign Service professionals for their ability to earn overtime pay for doing their job. I always found it inexplicable, for instance, that embassy and department FSOs expect and accept the need to work long hours without compensation to prepare and execute a visit by the Secretary of State — while the Secretary's DS protection detail earns overtime pay for sitting outside a hotel room.

The other point is that DS service seems to attract a different kind of person than is drawn to traditional Foreign Service work. I joined the Service because I was interested in international affairs and wanted to experience life in other cultures. I have been struck that many DS officers appear to have little interest in the substance of the work done by their Foreign Service colleagues, but see themselves primarily as law enforcement personnel whose job is to separate official Americans from the world at large. This would perhaps not be so important if DS simply played a supporting role, but now that it is in a position to make or affect major department policies, we see this narrow perspective having a neg-

ative impact on key decisions such as embassy design, location and access.

Stephen Muller
FSO, retired
Troy, N.Y.

Good but Dark Fiction

I took the fiction issue of the *FSJ* with me to Baghdad and found it very enjoyable. In addition to being an appreciative reader of short fiction, I had submitted a story for consideration. Since it wasn't selected, I was curious to see my vanquishers.

Taken as a group, the stories are interesting and well-told. They certainly reflect a Foreign Service perspective, set as they are in exotic foreign places. But with the exception of "The Allemande Left Plan" and, to a certain extent, "The Interview," the events recounted were set in the foreign society at large, not in the insular world of diplomats and their diplomacy. I was also struck by two motifs that run through almost all the stories: they take place in a dark, malevolent world, and women are treated abusively.

In next year's fiction issue I'd like to see a greater range of subject matter and more relief from the oppressive mood set in most of them. I'd also like to see at least one or two stories told in a less conventional narrative style. Of course, that depends to a considerable degree on what gets submitted. I pledge to do my part to offer something along the lines I'm recommending.

Larry Lesser
FSO, retired
Washington, D.C.

A Ranking Error

Thanks for making me an ambassador (Letters, "Squandered Promise," September *FSJ*). Too late, alas. That honorable title belongs to my

LETTERS



son, Stephen R., not to me, Stephen N. The letter, however, was mine, not his.

I served happily in the department's and USIA's Foreign Service at posts from Singapore to Helsinki from the 1940s to the 1970s. Now in my 93rd year, I have the enormous pleasure of seeing my children pick up where I left off. My work appeared numerous times in the *FSJ* in mid-century and mid-career.

Stephen N. Sestanovich
FSO, retired
Moraga, Calif. ■

We regret an error in "Breaking through Diplomacy's Glass Ceiling," by Ann Wright (*FSJ*, October 2005). In Chart 1, "Firsts for Female Diplomats," the entry for 1995 is incorrect. The first female ambassador to a Middle Eastern country was April Glaspie (FSO), who served as U.S. ambassador to Iraq from 1988 to 1990.



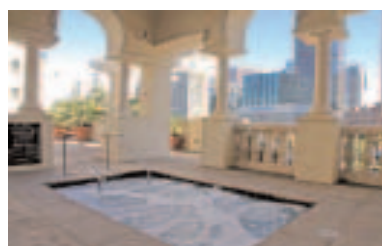
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Happy holidays! As we all take stock of this year and look forward to 2006, I'd like to issue my periodic invitation to avail yourselves of the many opportunities to contribute to the *Journal*. In that regard, let me thank those of you who responded to AFSA's recent online survey of active-duty State members, which contained a number of questions referencing the *Journal* (some indirectly). Approximately 2,000 members, nearly a quarter of the State contingent, responded to the survey, a remarkably high response rate. Of those, about 400 respondents offered written comments and suggestions about the magazine's coverage, readability, etc.

While they varied considerably in subject matter, level of detail and tone, one theme was dominant: a real hunger for "news you can use" — e.g., information about how to advance your career; tips on dealing effectively with the bureaucracy at State and the other foreign affairs agencies, especially when you are trying to resolve a problem; and updates on how AFSA is working to improve working and living conditions for Foreign Service employees and their families. Much of that coverage is found, of course, within the pages of *AFSA News*. But another place to look is in our relatively new **FS Know-How** department, which ran four times this year — three of them by AFSA members sharing the hard-won benefits of their own expe-

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



riences. We welcome contributions on topics ranging from managing one's career and cutting red tape to parlaying one's professional skills in retirement, as well as financial information and guidance for Foreign Service personnel.

There are many other ways you can contribute to our pages, of course. The **Speaking Out** department is your forum to advocate policy, regulatory or statutory changes to the Foreign Service. These columns (approximately 1,500 words long) can be based on personal experience with an injustice or offer your insights into a foreign affairs-related issue.

Focus Topics

Each issue of the *Journal* features a **focus section** examining various facets of an issue related to the Foreign Service or international relations. We commission most of the

articles for these sections from different sources, but warmly welcome contributions (2,000-3,000 words is the usual range, though shorter submissions are also accepted) from FS personnel who are familiar with these issues.

On the facing page you will find a list of the focus topics our Editorial Board has identified for the coming year (subject, of course, to revision).

As you can see, most of these themes relate directly to Foreign Service professional and lifestyle issues, so I hope many of you will consider sharing your insights and expertise with your colleagues. Please note that because of our lead time for publication, and the requirement for Editorial Board approval, we need to receive submissions at least two months (and preferably longer) prior to the issue's release date. Thus, we have already lined up authors for the January and February issues, but there is still time to submit manuscripts for later months.

If those choices don't grab you, or if you feel we have not devoted enough space to a professional concern or functional issue, please consider writing a **feature article** (generally 2,000-3,000 words long) about it for us.

While we are continuing our annual **fiction contest** (now beginning its second decade, by the way), based on your input, we have decided not to devote a summer issue to it this year. Instead, we will publish the



2006 EDITORIAL CALENDAR for the *FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL*

JANUARY	Life and Work after the Foreign Service
FEBRUARY	The State of State after Condi Rice's first year
MARCH	Third anniversary of Iraq War (central theme: impact of staffing posts in Iraq and Afghanistan on the Foreign Service as an institution)
APRIL	Latin America
MAY	Career development for FS Specialists
JUNE	Globalization & Development: The U.S. Role (USAID, MCC, etc.) (PLUS: semiannual SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT)
JULY/AUGUST	The Post-DRI Era: Human Resources Management (PLUS: AFSA Awards coverage)
SEPTEMBER	Reforming the United Nations and other international organizations
OCTOBER	Public Diplomacy (evaluating Karen Hughes' first year)
NOVEMBER	Best & Worst of the Foreign Service (based on reader survey) (PLUS: "In Their Own Write," annual roundup of books by FS authors)
DECEMBER	Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union (PLUS: semiannual SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT)

winning story (most likely in the July-August double issue, as in years past) and a few of the other stories in other issues throughout the year, space permitting. Otherwise, the rules and timing are the same: entrants are still restricted to one story of 3,000 words or less, which must be e-mailed to *Journal* Business Manager Mikkela Thompson at thompsonm@afsa.org no later than April 1. For more details, see the ads in the next several issues of the *Journal* or contact Mikkela directly.

We invite those of you who expect to publish a book between now and next fall to send us a copy, along with promotional materials, for inclusion in our seventh annual compilation of recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors, "In Their Own Write." Sept. 1 is still the deadline for inclusion in the roundup, which will run in November (but, in a change from the past few years, it will appear as a feature, not as that issue's focus). For more information, contact Senior Editor Susan Maitra at maitra@afsa.org.

Share Your Insights

Our **Reflections** department presents short commentaries (approximately 600 words long) based on personal experiences while living or traveling overseas. These submissions should center on insights gained as a result of interactions with other cultures, rather than being descriptive "travel pieces." Note that

we are pleased to consider poetry and photographs for publication, either in that section or as freestanding features.

Don't forget that the monthly *AFSA News* section offers many different ways for members to share their experiences, thoughts and concerns regarding professional issues. We are now — as always — accepting submissions for a number of features, including: Family Member Matters, Of Special(ist) Concern (a forum for specialists), Where to Retire, Memo of the Month and The Lighter Side (FS humor). Find more details in this month's *AFSA News*, or contact *Journal* Associate Editor Shawn Dorman for more information at dorman@afsa.org.

Finally, let me invite you to share your reactions, positive and negative, to what you read each month in our **Letters** section. Just bear in mind that, as with all periodicals, the briefer and more focused your letter is, the more likely we'll be able to print it in full.

Please note that all submissions to the *Journal* must be approved by our Editorial Board and are subject to editing for style, length and format. For information on how to submit a column, article or letter, please contact us at authors@afsa.org and we will be delighted to respond. For other inquiries — changes of address, subscriptions, etc. — e-mail us at journal@afsa.org

Let us hear from you. ■



CYBERNOTES

Public Diplomacy in the Spotlight

Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes' high-powered "listening tours" to the Middle East and Muslim Asia, including her gaffes on Saddam Hussein's gassing victims and other missteps, have received lively press attention worldwide. But getting "out there" with America's message speaks to only one aspect of Washington's much-studied public diplomacy crisis. Even more critical, perhaps, is to break through the structural and organizational problems that have kept PD on the sidelines ever since USIA was abolished and folded into the State Department in 1999.

Hughes addressed some of the underlying problems on Oct. 14, when she keynoted a forum on the future of public diplomacy, "America's Dialogue with the World," co-sponsored by The George Washington University's Public Diplomacy Institute, The Public Diplomacy Council and the American Academy of Diplomacy. There, in the second half of her talk, she shared "a few of the tactical specifics of what we're doing" with an audience of 300, mostly PD professionals. (The transcript on Amb. Hughes' remarks is available online at <http://www.state.gov/r/us/2005/55165.htm>.)

"First of all, we're bringing public diplomacy to the policy table and integrating it into every aspect of the State Department," Hughes stated, explaining that she or one of her senior staffers attends Secretary Rice's first meeting every morning and last meeting every night, and many in between.

In an unprecedented move, she has already created a deputy assistant secretary for public diplomacy position in each regional bureau, who reports both to Hughes and to the regional assistant secretary.

"We're also speaking at all the seminars for new ambassadors," states Hughes, "emphasizing that public diplomacy is now part of the job

description of every single ambassador and every single employee at the State Department." Further, Hughes plans to attend each of the chiefs-of-mission conferences, and has directed the ambassadors to bring their public affairs officers to these meetings.

In the discussion following her talk, Hughes spelled out yet another

Site of the Month: Audit of the Conventional Wisdom

In this age of relentless media hype and information overload, where there is a premium on byte-size packaging of ideas and events, no matter how complicated, the essay series launched by MIT's Center for International Studies in May offers welcome relief (www.mit.edu/cis/acw.html). The essays "audit" the conventional wisdoms that underlie U.S. foreign policy, putting them to the test of data and history and exploring their effects on American policy.

By "conventional wisdoms" CIS means the folk axioms, bromides, platitudes and generally superficial explanations that, once entrenched, go unchallenged. Whatever the source and whoever the supporters, when conventional wisdom in foreign policy is mistaken, it can be damaging to U.S. interests and to global peace and stability.

Take the case of the "free market" economic policies fostered globally by the United States. Though insisted upon by the U.S. and known, ironically, as the "Washington Consensus," many economists point out that "structural adjustment" and similar marketization schemes have failed time and again to alleviate the problems of low or no growth in developing countries.

So far, the series includes such provocative titles as "All Weapons of Mass Destruction Are Not Equal," "The United States as an Asian Power: Realism or Conceit?," "U.S. Military Power: Strong Enough to Deter All Challenges?" and "Iran: Rogue State?"

"By subjecting particularly well-accepted ideas to close scrutiny, we hope to start an argument, or to re-engage policy and opinion leaders, on topics that are too easily passing such scrutiny," states the MIT Center for International Studies. "We do so as academics, rather than as policy-makers, by accepting complexity, marshaling historical evidence, offering new or overlooked data, and providing fresh analysis."

CIS hopes this will lead to "something we can all agree on: better foreign policies that lead to a more peaceful and prosperous world." At least it can help to keep the debate honest.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor



CYBERNOTES

objective: that the Bureau of International Information Programs ought to become a technology hub, not only for the department, but for the U.S. government. “We’re going to make that one of IIP’s core missions, and we’re convening a private-sector advisory council where I’m reaching out to some of the best minds in the technology world to try to get them to help me,” says Hughes.

These measures and plans may be driving a healthy institutional shake-up at State, thanks to Karen Hughes’ close friendship with President Bush. But whether that political backing will translate into financial backing, enabling her to command the resources necessary to actually implement her ideas, remains to be seen.

As on previous occasions, Hughes reiterated her determination to step up exchange programs and institute a vigorous citizen ambassador program. Some “new money” has been diverted into both exchange and English-language training programs already, Hughes reports, and a “significant” increase is planned for Fiscal Year 2006: \$74 million.

But fully \$180 million of the \$430 million requested for educational and cultural exchange programs in FY 2006 is specifically earmarked for “Muslim Outreach” programs — despite the fact the America’s image is no less tarnished among non-Muslims. The \$74 million increase will only allow the mainline exchanges to continue at about 2005 levels, and there is no telling whether more will be cut in the post-Katrina budgetary universe.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

New Report Finds Decline in Global Violence

The Human Security Report, a comprehensive study released by The Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia, has found surprising evidence of a decline in the number of wars, genocides and human-rights abuses over the past decade. Terrorism is an anomaly, being the only category in which armed conflict has risen. (The full report is available online at <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/>.)

The report credits three major political changes over the last 30 years for the decline in violence. First came the process of decolonization. Wars of national liberation accounted for 60 to 100 percent of the conflicts from the early 1950s to the 1980s, depending on the year. But since colonialism’s virtual demise, no such wars have occurred.

Second was the end of the Cold War, which has resulted in an end to the instigation of proxy wars in the Third World. During the Cold War period these accounted for approximately one-third of all conflicts.

The report pays special attention to the upsurge of international activism from the World Bank, donor states, a number of regional security organizations and NGOs. However, the United Nations is given most of the credit for its effectiveness in spearheading these international operations. This may be surprising in light of some of the U.N.’s recent and highly publicized failures, but the report maintains this is because success is never as widely reported. The report details a sixfold increase in U.N. pre-

ventive diplomacy initiatives and a fourfold increase in peacemaking efforts since 1990.

“The increase in preventive diplomacy helped prevent a number of latent conflicts from crossing the threshold into warfare, while the rise in peacemaking activities has been associated with a major rise in peace settlements,” the report concludes. Further resources on the subject are available at the Human Security Gateway (<http://www.humansecuritygateway.info/>), a research and information database affiliated with the Liu Institute. The site offers a treasure trove of electronic and bibliographic resources on human security, including access to maps.

The decreasing trend in armed conflict runs counter to common perceptions of an increasingly violent and chaotic world, though the researchers insist their positive findings are no grounds for complacency. The report is ultimately intended to help the international community learn the lessons of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, both when policies work and when they do not.

— Daniel Zussman,
Editorial Intern

Video Games: A Changing Medium

A new generation of nonconventional video game-makers is promoting world peace through a medium notorious for embracing violence. Those concerned about the effects of exposure to video-game violence on young people have reason to hope the newest line of constructive video games will produce a similar, yet

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Those who argued at the time that the acceptance of democracy in Iraq would be easy, and who drew on our experience with Japan and Germany, were wrong. They were dead wrong.

— Richard Armitage,
former Deputy Secretary
of State, *The Diplomat*,
Oct.-Nov. 2005.

opposite outcome.

The United Nations' World Food Program has seen enormous success since the release this past spring of "Food Force" (downloadable for free at <http://www.food-force.com/index.php/game/downloads/>), an online game primarily targeted at children, in which players must fight hunger in conditions replicating modern-day humanitarian crises. In a sign of the game's popularity, Yahoo! had to step in as Web host when the original U.N. site was overwhelmed by users.

A team at Carnegie Mellon University has produced "PeaceMaker" (<http://www.etc.cmu.edu/projects/peacemaker/TheGame.htm>), a strategy game whose objective is to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. CMU designed it especially for Israeli, Palestinian and American youth in high school and college settings.

The Serious Games Summit, an annual conference dedicated to advancing this new market, offers a guide to upcoming conferences and an abundance of downloadable information sessions from previous keynote speakers on their Web site ([\[www.seriousgamessummit.com/home.html#\]\(http://www.seriousgamessummit.com/home.html#\)\). These efforts are evidence of a maturing video game industry whose constructive potential is just now being realized.](http://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

— Daniel Zussman,
Editorial Intern

Hurricane Season 2005: A Global Warming Link?

The destructive hurricane season of 2005 has added new urgency to the question of climate change, already contentious well before Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma struck the Gulf Coast and Florida within a two-month period this fall.

Ross Gelbspan, who believes global warming is a man-made phenomenon, is the author of *Boiling Point: How Politicians, Big Oil and Coal, Journalists and Activists Are Fueling the Climate Crisis — And What We Can Do to Avert Disaster* (2004). Gelbspan asserts that Katrina's "real name is global warming." However, such claims from him and other alarmists were met with skepticism in some quarters. But despite the apparent lack of consensus, this year's devastation has caused a growing number of people to grasp the seriousness of the debate.

The Web offers an array of perspectives on global warming, ranging from general background information to polemics on both sides. A good introduction is available at the Environmental Protection Agency's information page (<http://yosemite.epa.gov/oar/globalwarming.nsf/content/index.html>). This site presents a balanced view of the phenomenon, laying out the problems it poses across many categories, and its likely causes. It also offers extensive data and research material for download, giving the public sufficient knowledge to form its own opinion on the matter.



NASA's Earth Observatory Web site (<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Laboratory/PlanetEarthScience/GlobalWarming/GW.html>) provides background information on climate change, but it is better suited for the tech-savvy visitor. Here one can find writings as well as video clips on the different aspects of climate change, and an interactive map for obtaining information about a specific region.

Another valuable resource is the September issue of *Science* magazine, which offered a comprehensive collection of global-warming articles regarding Hurricane Katrina, and climate change more generally, available free to all visitors (<http://www.sciencemag.org/sciext/katrina/>). Overwhelmingly, its articles attribute deadlier hurricane seasons to man-made global warming.

In a timely study done at Georgia Institute of Technology's School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, researchers gathered hurricane data on the number, duration and intensity of hurricanes during the past 35 years. "What we found was rather astonishing," says Peter Webster, who took part in the project with Greg Holland,

Judith Curry and Hai-Ru Chang. "In the 1970s, there was an average of about 10 Category 4 and 5 hurricanes per year globally. Since 1990, the number of Category 4 and 5 hurricanes has almost doubled, averaging 18 per year globally." They conclude that the spike in Category 4 and 5 hurricanes is caused by a global rise in sea-surface temperatures, which intensifies the magnitude of hurricanes once they have formed. (The full report is available at <http://webster.eas.gatech.edu/Papers/Webster2005b.pdf>.)

However, these studies have come under attack from a number of critics, most notably Dr. Patrick Michaels of the University of Virginia, a longtime skeptic of global warming and the author of *Meltdown: The Predictable Distortion of Global Warming by Scientists, Politicians, and the Media* (2004). Michaels maintains that the latest claims of a link between increased hurricane activity and global warming are unfounded. "The conclusion many draw from papers such as these is that anthropogenic global warming from the burning of fossil fuels by humans is causing more lethal storms. A closer look, though, reveals

not human actions but rather natural cycles are the primary cause." (The article is available at <http://www.techcentralstation.com/091605F.html>.)

Others have gone further, criticizing not only the content of these studies, but the publications themselves. Dr. Benny Peiser, an authority on the effects of environmental change at Liverpool John Moores University, claims that *Science* magazine refused to publish his findings because it raised doubts over a link between global warming and human activity. Professor Roy Spencer, another prominent skeptic and an expert on satellite measurements of global temperatures at the University of Alabama, also accuses *Science* of bias. He claims that when his own team submitted findings casting doubt on the existence of global warming, they were rejected by reviewers from *Nature* and *Science* magazines (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/05/01/wg1ob01.xml&sSheet=/news/2005/05/01/ixworld.html>).

As the global-warming debate rages on, it remains uncertain which side will ultimately gain popular support. In light of recent events, the skeptics have hit back hard, while advocates of a link wonder what will convince doubters, if not this year's record-breaking hurricane season. In any case, the magnitude of destruction along the Gulf Coast has awakened many people to the gravity of the issue. As Sir John Lawton, chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, puts it: "If this makes the climate loonies in the States realize we've got a problem, some good will come out of a truly awful situation."

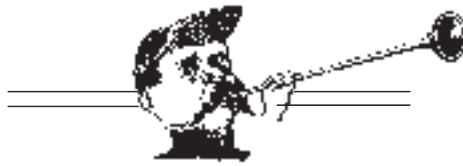
— Daniel Zussman,
Editorial Intern ■

50 Years Ago...

In this little world, we constitute perhaps the happiest family of any "hardship" post. It is hot here, and mail takes eight days to reach us, but we are working hard and having fun. By Christmas, those of us who do not yet have apartments will have them, and air-conditioned, too. We have a boat which takes us on picnics up the Mekong, and once a week we look at American movies on the roof of the embassy residence.

— Martin F. Herz, from Phnom Penh, in "News from the Field," *FSJ*, December 1955.





SPEAKING OUT

Implement Career Development by Reforming the Assignment System

BY CAMILLE HILL

I applaud the intent of the new Career Development Program, but am concerned about flaws in the implementation plan that compromise employees' ability to obtain the kind of planned series of assignments required by the letter and spirit of the CDP. The most crucial of these flaws are two: first, the failure to eliminate the assignment system's longstanding bias against consular, management and public diplomacy officers; and, second, the failure to provide adequate rewards for FSOs in all cones who have demonstrated their willingness to meet the needs of the Service through a series of assignments to differential posts.

Eliminating Conal Bias

As a consular-coned officer, I have consistently encountered the attitude that while reporting (i.e., political and economic) officers should have a chance to learn program management and consular skills, it is a lower priority for consular, public diplomacy and management officers to learn reporting skills. This attitude appears to reflect one of two beliefs. First, some assume that consular, management and PD officers are mainly going to be filling in-cone jobs throughout their careers, and therefore do not need to learn reporting skills. (There is some truth to this claim regarding management officers, given the real shortage of officers in that cone compared to the number of positions, but that disparity should not be used to deny them out-of-cone assignments.) Alternatively, officers in those cones are

Employees should be proactive in planning their careers, but the system must facilitate their efforts to develop and implement reasonable plans.



simply viewed by some colleagues as incapable of performing at an acceptable level in reporting positions.

In effect, political and economic officers are being treated as true Foreign Service generalists who can serve in any capacity, while consular, PD and management officers are treated as glorified specialists. This bias severely disadvantages officers in the program management cones in obtaining the career-enhancing assignments needed to be competitive for cross-grade promotions and to satisfy career development requirements, and runs contrary to the letter and spirit of career development.

The Career Development Plan should develop the skills of *all* officers in *all* cones, not just offer out-of-cone opportunities to political and economic officers. Toward that end, I suggest the following possible fixes:

Dual Cones. Every officer could have two cones. The Bureau of Human Resources would assign one

upon entry to the Service, and employees would select the second upon being tenured. One would be from the reporting cones (political or economic) while the other must be from the program management cones (public diplomacy, management or consular). During bidding, employees would be considered in-cone for both of their cones. They would designate one cone as their dominant cone (major cone) for in-cone promotions. They would not be considered for promotion in their other cone (minor cone). They would be expected to serve in both their cones, along the lines of the requirements for the CDP regional major/minor — three tours/six years of in-cone service for a major and two tours/three years of in-cone service for a minor.

Preferences for Out-of-Cone Bidders. Alternatively, HR could reserve certain “cushy” jobs in developed countries in all cones for qualified out-of-cone bidders. This could be done by offering specified positions only to out-of-cone officers, or by allowing anyone to bid but giving preference to out-of-cone bidders. Or, a quota system could be set up, requiring that a given percentage of all jobs in each region or bureau be filled by out-of-cone bidders.

Individual Development Plans. Yet another solution would be to replace the coning system with Individual Development Plans that each employee would sign with HR. These would be along the lines of a contract between the employee and the bureau of his or her choice regarding



completion of a certain number of assignments. While the details would obviously have to be worked out, each FSO could design an IDP with the geographic bureau responsible for his/her regional “major” under the Career Development Program; with the appropriate functional bureau for his/her major cone under the dual-cone system outlined above; or with the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs or one of the bureaus under the under secretary for global affairs. The plan could be flexible in that the order of postings could be rearranged according to available jobs, etc.

Using Incentives to Meet Service Needs

The other major flaw in the assignments system concerns bidders with a pattern of service at differential posts. I have served in four of these in rapid succession: Lagos to Douala to Beirut (via Arabic training) to the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration to Baghdad. So, again, I speak from personal experience when I say that the system does not adequately reward FSOs for meeting service needs. Hard assignments in difficult places do not earn tenured employees equity toward future assignments in nice places. In addition, the very fact that employees are serving in difficult and isolated spots makes them less able to lobby than their colleagues closer to Washington.

At present, the only payback in the system for service at hardship posts is the differential-bidder program, which treats bids on one-grade stretches the same as at-grade bids. However, given the natural tendency of the system to favor at-grade bidders, in most cases this is a nice but hollow gesture. Moreover, this option only applies to the bidding cycle

immediately following the hardship tour. And, because there is no retroactivity to the new rule, those of us who have accepted several substantial hardship assignments over the course of our careers are on the same footing as fair-share bidders who took their first hardship tour only under protest. This disparity is effectively a slap in the face to those of us who really came through when asked to meet the needs of the Service.

To remedy this, I propose instituting a system of hardship equity points that explicitly favors bidders with substantial fair-share service over bidders without it. It would give bidders hardship equity points for every year (i.e., at least 10 months of actual time at post) served at a differential post along the following lines:

- One hardship point per year at a 5- or 10-percent differential post.
- Two hardship points per year at a 15- or 20-percent differential post.
- Three hardship points per year at a 25-percent differential post.
- One extra hardship point for every year in which the employee received danger pay for at least six months.
- One extra point for each year of service in critical-need/hard-to-fill assignments or at unaccompanied posts.

Employees would accumulate hardship equity points from their date of entry into the Foreign Service.

A minimum number of hardship points would be required to bid on any position with no hardship differential. I would suggest a minimum of seven points — i.e., the equivalent of two years of service at a post with a hardship differential of 25 percent, with one year at a danger pay, critical needs, hard-to-fill or unaccompanied post, or one additional year in service at a post with any level of hardship dif-

ferential. The required number of hardship points to bid on non-hardship jobs would go up according to the grade of the position (perhaps seven points to bid on an FS-3 position with no hardship differential, 10 for an O2 position, 13 for an O1 position). Employees would also need to accumulate a minimum number of hardship points to be eligible to bid on any jobs on the DCM/principal officer list — perhaps seven.

Similarly, a minimum number of hardship points would be required for an employee to be eligible for promotion. The required hardship points for each promotion would increase for each grade (seven for promotion to FS-3, 10 for promotion to FS-2, 13 for promotion to FS-1 and 16 to open one’s window). Employees with fewer points would not be presented to the boards unless/until they had been at grade for at least seven years. And the boards would be instructed to low-rank them unless they had a valid waiver for health reasons (including dependents’ health).

Additional Measures

I would also propose the following steps:

Designate advocates for the bidding process. HR should assign advocates in the bidding process to all employees coming from 20-percent and above differential posts, as well as all posts with danger pay. This will help level the playing field for those bidding from remote and dangerous locations overseas, who are often “out of sight, out of mind.”

Establish directed assignments for “plum” positions. HR should treat all assignments below the DCM level to non-differential posts, and certain “juicy” domestic assignments (such as watch officers in the Operations Center and all country desk officers



below the office-director level), as directed assignments for which bidders with hardship equity above the minimum would be given priority consideration.

HR should have total control over these plum assignments, as it now has over entry-level jobs, and prohibit lobbying for them. It would then give bidders with at least a set minimum number of hardship points a special early-bidding opportunity before the regular bidding season to bid on these posts, and would be able to offer handshakes (informal promises of assignment) before the regular bidding season. These posts would open up to all bidders as of the opening date of the regular bidding season if no handshake had been given, but no bidder with less than the minimum number of hardship points could be assigned to any of them as long as there was at least one bidder with the required minimum number of points who had not yet been given a handshake on a job.

Offer linked follow-on assignments. Employees who accept assignments at 20-percent and higher posts, or those with danger pay, should have the chance to be paneled into a desirable follow-on assignment at the same time as they are paneled for the hardship tour. This could be an offshoot of the Individual Development Plans discussed above, or a separate program allowing those who agree to take a tour at post with a differential of 20 percent or higher to pick from the next cycle's list ahead of time.

Link professional development to hardship service. The aim would be to make service in a minimum number of hardship posts a requirement for attractive professional development assignments. For example, one hardship tour after tenure would be needed for FS-3 professional development, two hardship tours after

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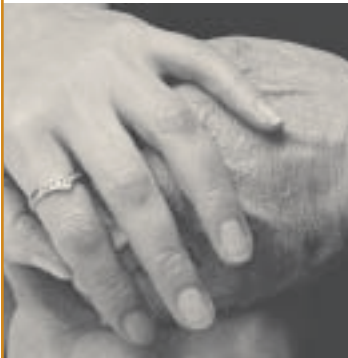
I propose instituting a system of hardship equity points that explicitly favors bidders with substantial fair-share service over bidders without it.

tenure for FS-2 professional development, three tours after tenure for FS-1 professional development, etc.

Reward sustained hardship service with language-training incentives. Employees who accumulate the level of hardship points needed to open their windows should receive an extra year of language training in the language(s) of their choice. Employees would decide when to take the training (i.e., after which assignments), so that employees with heavy hardship service early in their careers could save the training for timely use within seven years prior to opening their windows. Employees would not need to have a follow-on assignment in hand where the language would be used. They could take the training in a one-year block, or break it up into two or more segments to use at different times. Language training linked to an assignment before reaching the FS-1 level would not count against the year; however, training linked to assignments after promotion to that grade would count. In addition, upon opening their windows, employees would lose any unused portion of the year of language training.

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SPEAKING OUT

Dividends of Proposed Reforms

Employees should be proactive in planning their careers, but the system must facilitate the efforts of individual employees to develop and implement reasonable plans. I would like to see a frank and open discussion of the assignments system. Management should brainstorm with the Foreign Service on possible improvements, vet all the options with an open discussion of merits and disadvantages of various schemes put forward, and select a way forward from among the available options.

The reforms to the assignments system that I propose would correct long-standing inequities in the system that have disadvantaged certain cones and created disincentives for employees to meet service needs by serving in hardship tours. Dual cones, preferences for out-of-cone bidders and Individual Development Plans are ways to enhance employee morale and job satisfaction by giving *all* officers a realistic chance to serve in several generalist functions. Those officers who demonstrate their commitment to meeting service needs through a series of tough assignments would be favored for promotion and for the most desirable assignments. Real incentives for hardship service should encourage bids on such jobs, providing the department with a robust selection of qualified and motivated candidates.

Moreover, these reforms would facilitate the Career Development Program's fundamental purpose: training and developing a cadre of officers with broad experience competing for promotion to the Senior Foreign Service. ■

Camille Hill, an FSO since 1991, has served in Sao Paulo, Lagos, Douala, Tunis, Beirut and Washington. She is currently refugee coordinator in Baghdad.

WIRING STATE: A PROGRESS REPORT



A

ONCE A TECHNOLOGY LAGGARD, THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS BECOME AN INNOVATOR. BUT THE PACE MUST BE SUSTAINED TO TRULY TRANSFORM DIPLOMACY.

By JOE JOHNSON

couple of years ago, I bought a new personal computer. Selecting exactly the features I wanted proved fascinating, and purchasing the equipment was easy.

It was when the boxes arrived on my doorstep that the fun stopped. The new machine held a magnitude of capabilities, but none of my own data. All my e-mail addresses and contact information, settings for my Internet provider, and the thousands of records I had built up were on my obsolete machine. It took more than two months of painstaking work before I could

disconnect my old but smart computer and take it off the card table where I had kept it, next to the new, dumb PC on my desk.

In thinking about how the State Department has adopted information technology to carry out its mission, that experience is a good starting point. It's not enough to buy the gear; you have to work to put it to use. Sometimes new capabilities even change how you work.

Over the past decade, the State Department has moved with increasing speed to establish strong networks of computers, to integrate computer applications to manage its global operations, and to ensure that new investments would be sustainable and accountable to Congress. So this is a good time to ask: what did the department get, and how well is it using its new capabilities?

To what extent State can and will use its new electronic capability to further its core mission of conducting and leading diplomacy remains an open question.

Information: A Core Resource and Responsibility

Information has always been a core resource and responsibility for the State Department. When Congress established the department as the first cabinet agency in 1789, the act of law gave the Secretary of State custody of all official records going back to the Continental Congress and the Articles of Confederation.

State's mandate has evolved since then, but not its reliance on information, which is increasingly automated. To think of all the diverse ways in which the department is using information technology right now, it helps to imagine the daily routine at an average embassy.

- The consular officer pulls up electronic files on the applicant before him or her, including previous visa applications with photos, thereby revealing evidence of fraud in an instant. Outside the embassy, a private call center answers applicants' questions for a fee and schedules their appointments with the visa officer.

- The management officer uses a suite of software applications to view the budget, logistics and critical functions at post, while requests for services go electronically to administrative staff.

Joe Johnson recently retired from the Foreign Service after heading the State Department's Office of eDiplomacy. He now works for the Computer Sciences Corporation as a part-time consultant.

- In the political section, the office management specialist posts the latest reporting cable to the embassy's classified Web site, where everyone on the Secret SIPRNet (Secret Internet Protocol Router Network), including the regional combatant command headquarters, can find it.

- The public affairs officer convenes local opinion-makers with an expert in Washington via videoconference; the embassy's public Web site is updated automatically.

- After everyone has gone home, the embassy duty officer carries a palm-size BlackBerry device with all reference information and contact points. This digital assistant receives and sends e-mail and doubles as a telephone.

The above are ideal cases, not available at all posts. (BlackBerry deployment overseas, for instance, is only beginning.) But all these technologies are in use today in embassies and inside the department.

Measured against State's total operating budget, the \$1 billion per year being spent on information technology outstrips the proportion spent by a typical American company by a factor of two or more, however you take the measure. Admittedly, the department has had to play catch-up. In 1999, examining the East Africa embassy bombings, the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel levied the following judgment: "We were dismayed to find that our embassies are equipped with antiquated, grossly inefficient, and incompatible information-technology systems incapable of even the simplest electronic communications across department lines that are now commonplace in private-sector organizations."

Powell Ramps up Technology

A modernization program was already in progress when Colin Powell launched his Diplomatic Readiness Initiative in 2001, but Powell sent the makeover into high gear. William Smullen, who served as Secretary Powell's chief of staff at that time, recalls: "At our initial briefings, we learned that State was not even close to being able to grapple with the requirements of the 21st century." The upgrades would include new Foreign Service personnel, more modern and secure embassy buildings, and enhanced technology. "Ever since I've known him, Secretary Powell believed in technology as a force multiplier," Smullen says. When the Secretary went to Congress for new money, he justified information technology as an integral part of diplomatic readiness.

By the time Powell left office, 43,000 employees the

world over were linked through State's unclassified OpenNet, which included broadband Internet access. Nearly all embassies were embraced in an expanded classified network. These networks in turn could access inter-agency intranets. OpenNet computers offered the Open Source Information System, while ClassNet computers displayed the secret-level SIPRNet.

The business systems on State's networks needed costly upgrades as well. Incompatible software programs could not provide the consolidated management information needed by State's new, hands-on leadership. Grant Green, Powell's under secretary for management, overruled Chief Information Officer Fernando Burbano to assume direct oversight of key projects to modernize the old software with commercial, off-the-shelf systems. The Powell team added a further upgrade to the agenda: a 21st-century messaging system to replace cables, which dated back to the end of World War II, as the department's main communications network.

Other budget resources went into less visible upgrades: a permanent set-aside to refresh equipment, and accountability programs strengthening network security. As a result of the work done over Powell's tenure, the President's Management Agenda, which summarizes all agencies' fitness with simple traffic-light indicators, flipped State's color first to yellow, then to green.

The new Secretary billed himself as a chief executive officer, but his role (unlike that of his predecessors) was more like a rainmaker, according to Smullen and Bruce Morrison, who replaced Burbano as chief information officer in December 2002 and served until last year.

Consider the move to give Internet access to everyone on the unclassified network. That may seem a no-brainer, but it actually took Powell's personal intervention. Morrison describes the internal controversy this way: "It was a difficult situation, because of the fact that we share our Sensitive-But-Unclassified network with FSNs. [The open Internet link] made the possibility of any security breaches much more likely. We went back and forth with Diplomatic Security for well over a year before finally working out a method. Secretary Powell's eagerness to get it done helped us all to get to a compromise. In his first town hall meeting, he had talked about Internet on the desktop, and he told us he would find the resources. In the end, it cost over \$100 million to do it."

The Secretary also pressed for more open information-sharing generally, referring to his own experience on the

board of America Online. For instance, he made known his complaint that Diplomatic Security took away his personal digital assistant.

Smullen recalls, "The computer was always on in his office; he talked online all day." Powell would check classified memos against public information obtained from Google. He pushed to get broadband on his official aircraft. When traveling, he would duck into embassy offices at random to check his e-mail. At daily senior staff meetings, he would often point out official Web sites that were out of date, and he amiably nagged his press spokesman to get more pictures and human-interest information on State's public Web site. It made the IT transformation about more than new gear.

Systems Integration: A Work in Progress

But just as the work did not begin with Powell, it was not complete at his departure. Secretary Condoleezza Rice has expressed support for continuing investments in IT. Still, sometimes State reminds me of myself two years ago, trying to transfer masses of information to new computer circuits.

One major challenge is the integration of commercial standard software to manage basic business functions like human resources, budgeting and logistical support to embassies. Old systems developed by individual bureaus would not share information, so managers had difficulty relating expenses to budget lines, or merging bits of personnel information to make and execute personnel decisions. Over the past decade, the department has acquired new computer programs built and maintained by large software vendors. The problem arises in adapting the standard software to State's entrenched bureaucratic processes, and in making the major components work properly with each other. Broadly, this process is called systems integration.

Christopher Bronk, who wrote software before entering the Foreign Service, summarizes the difficulty: "The issue is combining so many different systems into a homogenous network. Do you change the software to fit the business function, or the function to fit the software?" A common technique is to make diverse databases deliver their information to Web browsers like Windows Internet Explorer or Mozilla, which most workers can use efficiently. "The goal," says Bronk, is "making the State computer environment work the way common transactions do when you buy something from Amazon over the Internet."

Former CIO Bruce Morrison spoke of how PeopleSoft, the largest commercial provider of business software for human resource management, has improved personnel management after a multiyear investment. "I think the department has a much better grasp of who has language skills, who has training and experience for a job. It's also now much easier to use the Internet and Web technologies for all kinds of HR activities, from assignments to retirement to functions like changing your dependent status. The old system would never have adapted to the Internet." The department recently used its integrated databases to quickly identify team members in response to the Asian tsunami of December 2004.

The vision is to enable all management data to be shared, mixed and matched. For example, embassy purchase orders can update the global financial accounting database, and can also feed supply chain software. This is the Valhalla of most large organizations. And like most bureaucracies, State remains far from that goal, partly as a result of uncoordinated and poorly-conceived software decisions made over the previous 15 years.

Centralized or Federated?

Federal legislation, notably the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 and the E-Government Act of 2002, required every agency to name a chief information officer and to centralize information technology under government-wide standards. But State's CIO is no czar. The position controls less than half of the relevant outlays, which reside mostly in the accounts of regional bureaus and management bureaus like Consular Affairs, Administration and Diplomatic Security. New projects require approval by a department-wide executive board, which has not so far been able to secure a comprehensive accounting of bureaus' expenditures from their operations and maintenance budgets.

Fulfilling congressional mandates, says former CIO Morrison, "very much colored my tenure, as did the subsequent President's Management Agenda. Compared to prior decades, the department is very centralized." Morrison recalls an era when each region and bureau spent money on IT entirely as it saw fit. Foreign Service officers often had to learn different equipment when transferring from one post to another, State lost out on economies of scale, and connecting everyone together in a network was impossible.

This is a common concern throughout the federal

government. During confirmation hearings last October for John Grimes, the president's nominee for chief information officer at the Defense Department, Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., asked Grimes to report on whether centralizing DOD's information technology spending would make the diverse armed services work together better. Levin complained, "We hear constant references to technical difficulties."

The Next Challenge: Reaching Out

Arguably, a core challenge in conducting foreign relations in this era is to coordinate more than a score of federal agencies that engage in international operations. Today's embassies are, in effect, federal buildings where State employees are sometimes in the minority. As the lead foreign affairs agency, State must track DEA agents, Library of Congress functionaries, and military attaches and their support staff in the U.S. at the same time that they handle State's internal business. That is where the solutions are not all in view, despite the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel's call for "electronic communications across [departmental] lines."

Not surprisingly, USAID is the agency most closely tied to State through information technology. The two agencies have begun joint infrastructure planning, and last year linked their networks. State employees can now view USAID's intranet from their OpenNet screens, and vice versa. This has eased electronic communication between all personnel and opened new sources of information to both agencies. It may also enable (if not lead to) shared administrative functions in the future.

Other extra-agency business is harder. Paul Christy, deputy CIO for the Foreign Commercial Service, was unsuccessful this year in getting Commerce Department software approved for use on State's OpenNet computers. At 11 embassies, State Department personnel are carrying out commercial services and programs in conjunction with FCS, but they are doing it on individual computers that link back to Commerce's network.

Nevertheless, Christy is upbeat about his experience at State: "State is 10 times bigger than FCS. That means a lot more process and less flexibility in managing the desktop." Christy's office is modifying its applications so that they can be accessed from common Web browsers, which would enable more economic sections to use the commercial tools.

State needs a way to conduct business with more than

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30 agencies at embassies, each with its business applications locked in stovepiped systems. Its first attempt to leap across the stovepipes failed at the pilot stage. The Foreign Affairs Systems Integration System, funded at \$17 million, aimed to create a specialized, unclassified-but-protected network called the Interagency Collaboration Zone. FASI was abandoned in January 2003 after the software was tried at Embassy Mexico City.

The leadership replaced FASI with a dual approach: the new messaging system, which was already in the early stage of development, and full participation in two networks linking multiple intelligence and defense agencies. Neither has yet achieved a breakthrough.

Getting SMART

SMART messaging will replace cables, e-mail and other correspondence with a system that looks like Outlook e-mail to the user, but tags and archives each policy-oriented message for easy retrieval. Deployed across more than 50,000 unclassified and classified

computers on two global networks, SMART is complicated. The new SMART messages will have to interface with other agencies' existing systems set up for cables, and the system's designers want it to pass information across security classification boundaries within security guidelines.

A blue-ribbon steering committee made up of senior officials and technologists selected these characteristics and — after surveying 24 private- and public-sector messaging systems for ready-made programs — decided in 2002 that SMART would have to be built from several commercial software components. Headed by retired Ambassador Joe Lake, the committee set up a project office and, in November 2003, selected the Northrop Grumman Corporation to build and maintain a system at a potential cost of \$270 million.

Originally intended for deployment in 2005, SMART is now running more than a year behind schedule. A system is currently being tested in State facilities for a pilot run at embassies in Northeastern Europe and in parts of the

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Diplomatic Security Bureau in Washington. Northrop Grumman's contract for the current developmental phase has been extended until Jan. 31, 2006. The project office is guarded on next steps, but it appears to be preparing alternatives in case Northrop Grumman's product cannot pass muster by that date.

Why is it so hard to install a system that might appear to be nothing more than souped-up e-mail? The new program also has to include all command-and-control features of cables, including automatic distribution to responsible offices. It must tag each message on the fly (supplementing existing TAGS indicators with new categories) and deliver it to an archive open to all with the proper clearance, thereby enabling a decision to move from a concept of "need-to-know" to one of "need-to-share." Finally, the vision requires communication between unclassified and classified systems, e-mail access to employees away from their offices, and access to instant messaging and collaborative workspaces.

Charles Wisecarver, who heads the SMART project office, says State recently updated its earlier study of alternative systems. "None satisfies the State Department vision of a system that is simple, secure and user-driven," he says. Newly installed Under Secretary for Management Henrietta Fore has endorsed the SMART concept. At a more senior level, the Office of Management and Budget has a say. According to an OMB official, "OMB continues to closely monitor the SMART project and State's internal IT governance process as the department works through the continued development of, and alternatives for, a modernized messaging system."

Crossing Lines

If Northrop Grumman cannot deliver a working system, the original vision will face hard questions. One option for State would be to continue the project on its own. Any new attempt would have to consider delaying or eliminating one or more of the advanced features called for in the original design.

Even if it eventually works, SMART messaging will not solve the problem of agency computer systems that do not link to each other. By opening its unclassified network to the Internet, State enabled routine e-mail to most other foreign affairs agencies. However, without security protection for information going across the Internet, or comprehensive address lists, Internet e-mail cannot meet the burgeoning needs for cross-agency business.

Current acting CIO Jay Anania wants to fully utilize protected channels to other agencies that are already in place: two interagency networks operated by Intelink, an office of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Open Source Information System is a governmentwide intranet, cleared for Sensitive-But-Unclassified information. The SIPRNet allows multiple agencies to share information through the secret classification. Both networks are expanding to cover all foreign affairs agencies, and they offer up-to-date features like Google search, weblog software and automated information updates. State employees can access OSIS from any OpenNet workstation, and SIPRNet from any ClassNet computer.

In fact, some 180 embassies already maintain Web pages on SIPRNet, featuring staff lists and political and economic reporting; cumulatively, those pages were drawing more than a million visitors per month at the end of 2004. In addition, State's OSIS page offers an e-mail directory of State and USAID personnel.

In a speech to Intelink's annual conference last September, Anania laid out the vision that every foreign affairs employee should have access to all relevant U.S. government information from any U.S. government computer, proposing Intelink as the carrier. No funding has yet been announced to support the concept, however. Many agency offices overseas already pay for OpenNet terminals, and some — citing difficulties in accessing OSIS, in particular — believe State should simply make it easier for other agencies to access its own networks.

State hosts occasional meetings of foreign affairs agency CIOs to discuss these problems. An Interagency Collaboration Working Group, chaired by Deputy CIO Christine Liu, convenes senior information managers from all foreign affairs agencies to discuss these matters. Paul Christy, the Commerce Department deputy CIO, stresses the value of this: "It doesn't take a lot of funds to keep people talking and collaborating."

The Two Cultures

New technology projects are involving workers from throughout the organization as information processing requires less technical intervention and maintenance but pervades everyone's daily business.

In a 1959 lecture titled "The Two Cultures," the British novelist, scientist and government administrator C.P. Snow argued that the crumbling of intellectual connections between scientists and humanists (the "two cul-

tures”) prevented society from dealing with its most intractable problems. In our era, the phrase describes aptly the gap between the State Department’s generalists and its specialists. Technology’s value depends upon the willingness of the generalists to get involved in how it is applied, but so far only a few have been willing.

A handful of Foreign Service officers have crossed the lines between information technology and generalist assignments. Jay Anania, a senior FSO from the management career track, is acting chief information officer. Ambassador James Holmes, a political officer, started the eDiplomacy Task Force in 2002, and in 2003 helped restructure the Bureau of Information Resource Management. The bureau clustered existing planning and customer service staff with the eDiplomacy task force as an office.

Current eDiplomacy director Gary Galloway, whose experience includes both IT work and management, describes the office’s function in the following terms: “The challenge of eDiplomacy is to influence the department’s IT policy to ensure that investments serve the user community, particularly the diplomat overseas.” The eDiplomacy staff includes FSOs, General Schedule employees, IT specialists and a science fellow who evaluate emerging programs by gathering input from a growing cadre of employees around the world. They have promoted a broad range of technologies, especially access to State’s unclassified network for employees outside the office. Lately, eDiplomacy has focused on enabling online collaboration by virtual teams engaged in a common task like standing up Embassy Baghdad, or in pursuit of a common interest like economic analysis.

A 2002 study by Barry Fulton, published by PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, analyzed 12 innovative State Department programs that emerged mostly from demands of the post-Cold War world: for instance, the collapse of Yugoslavia, the bombing of the World Trade Center and efficiencies required by budget cuts. Analyzing the programs, Fulton found that nearly all “were initiated and developed by individuals who were part of the user community that they were designed to serve.”

Powell’s team, where Fulton served as an adviser, incorporated that principle to form the steering committee for SMART messaging. They recruited people like Charles Ries, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, to join func-

tional and management bureau leaders along with technology experts. Many new applications now involve generalists to a greater or lesser degree. Some individual diplomats are taking the applications already on their desktops and using them in new ways. Some examples:

- Embassies and consulates have opened more than 20 Virtual Presence Posts designed to deliver as much service to remote cities without a permanent U.S. diplomatic presence as possible. Thomas Niblock, a consul in Yekaterinburg, Russia, developed the concept by using tailor-made Web sites for several cities in his district to display personalized information, link to standard sources, and coordinate and publicize official travel. The virtual post in Davao, The Philippines, staged a number of online discussions last year for locals on topics of interest, including visa regulations and study in the U.S.

- The consulate in remote Chengdu, China, opened a blog to recruit officers and to provide State and interagency readers with information about Chengdu. Consul Jeffrey Moon says, “I have always believed that this is a difficult-to-fill post because potential bidders are unfamiliar with conditions here. I attribute our success in attracting good bidders this year at least partially to our increased ability to share multimedia information about the post.”

- Seven different bureaus are interested in combining information from databases into images from satellites to make policy-relevant maps and charts, according to Dr. Carol Christian of State’s eDiplomacy Office. These geographic information systems and related technologies provided new abilities during the 2004 Asian tsunami by visualizing the conditions of infrastructure, locations of affected populations, existence of assets and the distribution of personnel with skills to support the relief and reconstruction efforts.

Next Stop, Your Desktop

Most State employees use what is put in front of them and retain their hands-off attitude toward technology. But new technology will change how all of them get their work done. Here are some megatrends to expect.

- *More self-service.* Administrative processes are increasingly driven by a simple Web browser, enabling each employee to apply for travel reimbursement, provide information to renew a security clearance, or apply for a job or assignment. Even senior officers will be doing more for themselves online — often through government-wide service providers other than State.

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- *More work outside the office.* The advent of remote access to the unclassified network means that more employees can telecommute using random number generators (called “fobs”) for extra security. The ONE system, unveiled earlier this year, was snapped up by senior officials to check their unclassified e-mail from home and on the road, as well as by employees with telecommuting agreements. As the technology spreads, middle managers will be challenged to deal with the new demands of supervising staff who are often working from home.

- *More access to information.* It is getting harder to compartmentalize information, and that applies right up to the secret level of classification. Even public affairs officers are disturbed when Washington offers electronic “feeds” of announcements that local editors may see before they do. Old-fashioned diplomats will have to become more agile as tactics of deception and surprise become more difficult, and as the pace of developments continues to accelerate.

- *The techies themselves have plenty of adjustments*

ahead. New computer science graduates with fresh business management skills are replacing the old “communicators.” But like their predecessors, information management personnel are often taken aback by their second-class status at embassies. At the same time, they are needed less in the computer room, where the system hums along on autopilot, and more around the embassy keeping IT-savvy customers satisfied. Accounting for system security is another task that is expanding overseas.

In 2003, the Gartner Group, a technology advisory service, declared that the State Department had transformed itself from a technology laggard to a relatively “early adopter.” Yet five years after Secretary Powell doubled the budget, IT spending is expected to begin a decline this fiscal year. The inheritors of the Powell-era investment boom are wondering how to ensure that State does not fall behind, as it did in the 1980s. One thing seems clear: for the foreseeable future, progress will depend less on new equipment, and more on good management and collaboration between technologists and diplomats. ■

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THE SUN, THE WORLD, AND RFID



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THE TECHNOLOGY BEHIND E-PASSPORTS PROMISES TO DRAMATICALLY STREAMLINE THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND PEOPLE.

By EMILY SOPENSKY

Perhaps it is an exaggeration to say that radio frequency identification is a broad, all-encompassing technology that has the capacity for influencing our daily lives around the world, much as the sun does now. But it is only a slight overstatement.

First used in World War II to identify airplanes, RFID has quietly expanded over the past 60 years to several important applications we now take for granted, such as remote keyless entry to our cars. Last year, it was spiced up and moved to the

front burner when two giants in the logistics industry — the U.S. Department of Defense and Wal-Mart — mandated its use in their operations.

Today RFID tags are already used to speed transactions at the point of sale, track livestock and pets, increase highway throughput, label shipping containers and gain entrance to buildings, to name just a few applications. Pharmaceutical companies are beginning to adopt the technology to prevent counterfeiting of drugs. With the introduction of biometric passports, the State Department, too, is beginning to use RFID.

Understanding how the technology works is important to Foreign Service officers as well as to the general public (see “How It Works,” p. 32). Adoption and implementation of the new e-passports, or “electronic passports,” though important in its own right, presage debates and projects to come, where technology breakthroughs will both challenge and facilitate the delicate balance between individual privacy and state security.

The Biometric Passport

U.S. passports are a valuable commodity to many around the world. Deputy Secretary for Consular Affairs Frank Moss testified on June 22 that 8.8 million applications were processed in the last fiscal year — up 22 percent from the year before. He stated that his office expects 10 million to be processed by the end of FY 2005.

To provide enhanced security in the post-9/11 era, the U.S. passport has been undergoing changes. To prevent fraud, new artwork is visible only under ultraviolet light. Additionally, this next generation of the U.S. passport includes biometric technology that will further support border security goals.

Without question, biometrics will strengthen U.S. border security by ensuring that the person carrying a U.S. passport is the person to whom the Department of State issued that passport. The biographic data page, which includes the bearer’s digitized photo, has been moved to an interior page, and the data is replicated in a contactless chip implanted in the back cover. The data in

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the integrated circuit is checked by an inspector with an RFID reader. If the data page and the chip data are not the same, the individual bearing the passport is subjected to further ID checks.

Traditionally, facial recognition has been used to differentiate among humans. Other human physiological or behavioral characteristics that scientists and technologists have been studying include the unique pattern of the iris, the retina, ear, voice, gait, palm and finger tip. In the first generation of the e-passport, which Congress ordered to be fully implemented by October 2006, the biometric data is limited to the bearer’s photo. It is quite likely that second-generation U.S. e-passports will add iris scans (but not fingerprints, primarily because the iris scans have a higher accuracy rate and require less storage space).

The specifications for the new U.S. e-passports are governed to some extent by the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002, which requires border entry documents to be machine-readable “containing biometric identifiers” and to be in compliance with the International Civil Aeronautics Organization standards. ICAO determined in 2002 that facial features, fingerprints and iris recognition are all applicable to machine-readable travel documents. The European-based agency designated facial recognition as the preferred biometric, and characterized the latter two as additional options. ICAO also selected contactless integrated circuits as the best means of implementing the biometrics data standard.

Pilot Testing

Tests began in mid-2005 on the first generation of biometric passports. Partnering with Department of Homeland Security border officials, the State Department conducted a field test with Australia and New Zealand, issuing approximately 250 of the new U.S. passports to a few airline crews (United Airlines, Qantas and Air New Zealand). The test compared the e-passports of all three countries. In January 2006, Singapore plans to test one thousand of its e-passports issued to Singapore Airlines crews at U.S. borders and in Changi Airport. In the next step of the pilot program, beginning in early 2006, diplomatic and government employee passports will receive the chips.

Both the midpoint report during the first phase of the trilateral test and the final report at its conclusion found

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that improvements are needed in the technology, that human factors must be thoroughly analyzed and that focused training must be implemented.

In keeping with requirements adopted by ICAO and directives from the Department of Homeland Security, the new passports are to be issued domestically to all applicants by the end of FY 2006. All 27 nations in the Visa Waiver Program must begin issuing e-passports by Oct. 26, 2006, in order for their citizens to be able to continue to enter the U.S. without first obtaining a visa.

According to final regulations issued by the State Department this past Oct. 25, the chips in the new e-passports will have enough memory to accommodate additional biometric information. Moss says that Consular Affairs is already investigating adding additional biometrics (e.g., iris scans). Among the general parameters specified by ICAO to determine the standard for biometric passports, were the requirements that the technology had to support 32 kilobytes of storage, and that stored data needed to be easily accessible and trans-

mitted quickly.

Because RFID allows data to be collected inconspicuously and at a distance, privacy and security advocates are wary of its use in many applications, including e-passports. In response to such concerns, the State Department's Oct. 25 ruling mandates that the new e-passports be equipped with "anti-skimming" technology. The department is testing the feasibility of sandwiching a metallic mesh within the front cover and spine to prevent RF reads until the e-passport is opened and read at close range by an official. In June 22 congressional testimony, Deputy Secretary Moss made clear that the e-passports would not be rolled out until security issues were fully dealt with: "The bottom line is that we will not issue biometric passports to the general public until we have successfully addressed these concerns."

Although very challenging technological hurdles have already been overcome in the development of the e-passport, there are still a few other issues. Not the least of these is that the technologies incorporated in the new

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How It Works

RFID is a generic term for technologies that use radio waves to automatically identify people or objects. Radio frequency identification technology uses the same electromagnetic radiation spectrum that radios use to transmit.

A Brief Primer on the RF Spectrum

To make radio waves, an alternating current is sent to an antenna, creating an electromagnetic field.

The portion of the electromagnetic radiation spectrum used for wireless broadcasting and communications is from nine kilohertz to thousands of gigahertz. Still higher frequencies make infrared, visible light, ultraviolet, X-rays and gamma rays possible.

To see the full-spread spectrum-usage allocation for the U.S., the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (U.S. Department of Commerce) has a nifty chart at <http://www.sss-mag.com/pdf/freqchrt.pdf>.

Other countries allocate the use of spread spectrum differently. For the ultra-high-frequency RFID tags being used for supply chain applications, the U.S. uses 915 megahertz. Japan prohibits the use of this frequency. Europe prefers 868 MHz. Consequently, the chance of reading these tags from one port to the next is not quite as easy as RFID advocates in the supply chain business would like. This is one reason why RFID is still considered an emerging technology.

China, as with many issues in today's commerce, holds the trump card. With so many products coming from China, RFID tags must be applied that will meet frequency allocation regulations there and elsewhere around the world.

Biometric passports do not encounter this problem as they are subject to standards set by an international organization, the International Civil Aeronautics Organization.

The basic RFID system comprises a transponder, a reader and an antenna. Data are stored in a transponder device called a tag. Current tags, depending on application, can hold up to two kilobits of data. Tags can be read-only or read/write.

A radio frequency signal is transmitted from the reader to a transponder that passes within range of the reader's antenna.

Unlike the ubiquitous bar code or the magnetic strip on a credit card, the RFID tag does not need a clear line of sight in order to be read. Instead, data in the tag is communicated via a radio signal. The signal is stimulated by a reader, which triggers the data in the tag to "ride" the radio wave back to the reader, where the data is captured and authenticated by a backend computer system. This tag is called a "passive" tag as the data is plucked by an external force. By contrast, an "active" tag relies on its own internal battery to supply energy and send the data to the reader. Active tags are more expensive than passive tags. The Department of Defense is planning on incorporating global positioning technology with active transponders to be able to track in real-time where shipping containers of supplies are around the world.

The type of RFID tag helps determine the read range, or how far away the data on the tag can be read. The source of power is another factor. Antenna size, too, is part of this determination, but the size and type of antenna are mostly functions of the operating frequency used.

Frequency range	Frequency type	Read range	Memory	Comments
2.45 GHz	Microwave	2 meters max	Less than 1 kilobit	Silicon technology is in its infancy for this frequency.
300 MHz to 3 GHz (typically 866 to 960 MHz)	UHF or more Ultra High Frequency	Can be 6 meters	1 kilobit	Sends faster and further than lower frequencies. Spectrum use varies by country. (Europe uses 868 MHz for UHF; the U.S. uses 915 MHz. Japan prohibits the use of UHF spectrum for RFID, but may open the 960MHz portion.)
3 to 30 MHz (usually 13.56 MHz)	HF High Frequency	1.5 meters at best for high-end readers	256 bits but additional data memory available today	Used for smart cards. Sometimes called "proximity" cards.
30 kHz to 300 kHz	LF Low Frequency	1 meter at best	64 bits to 1,360 bits; larger possible.	Globally available frequency. Low frequency allows tags to be read through watery substances — the only technology that allows for this.

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passports do not come cheap. Initial U.S. yearly cost estimates range between \$1.6 billion and \$2.4 billion.

Further, as the new passports are only in a limited trial, reliability has yet to be proven. And, transmission times have been too long. In the midway report on the trials with Australia, New Zealand and the U.S., the average time to read the chip varied from a low of 1.7 seconds with a New Zealand passport to a high of 6.3 seconds with a U.S. passport.

It remains to be seen whether the planned implementation schedule can be maintained. Given the complex nature of the technology, and the amount of training that will go into a full rollout of the new passports, Congress should be prepared to extend the October 2006 deadline, itself an extension of the original October 2004 deadline.

The Logistics of Globalization

Independently, the U.S. Department of Defense and Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, are now requiring their primary suppliers to tag each of their products with

RFID tags. It's hard to say no to such behemoths. For many suppliers, no matter how large or small, these mandates will change the way they do business.

Both DoD and Wal-Mart are interested in maintaining a flow of goods and products from and to points around the globe. For Wal-Mart and other corporations invested in assembling and moving goods globally, being able to guarantee genuine parts manufactured in China, assembled in Japan, shipped through Europe, and distributed in the United States adds value to the finished product. Being able to track assets throughout the manufacturing and distribution process — the supply chain — is also a counterbalance to counterfeit and theft. At the beginning of 2005, Wal-Mart started holding trials with its top suppliers.

The key to why RFID is so seductive to those in the business of moving products around the world is the fact that digital data remains in its native digital format. Once encoded into the tag, identifying information such as serial number, manufacturer's code and product line is



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A GLOBAL IMPACT: OTHER APPLICATIONS

Airline baggage. Some airlines, like British Airways, have been studying the use of RFID in baggage tagging, hoping to decrease operational costs. Misdirected or lost baggage can cost as much as \$200 per bag on average, some analysts estimate. In 2004, the International Air Transport Association conducted a pilot study of RFID technology. They concluded that: 1) RFID must be concurrently integrated with bar-code technology; 2) only a systemic, integrated approach will be successful in the long run; and 3) tag costs are still too high. Eventually though, U.S. domestic airlines may be forced to adopt RFID luggage tracking for security reasons.

Shipping containers. Shipping is another area where RFID tagging has a future. Some analysts estimate that of the 18-20 million shipping containers moving around the world on any given day, less than 400,000 are ever inspected. To address this, containers that range in length from 20 to 45 feet are being retrofitted with external seals that include RFID technology. Sophisticated harbors, like Singapore, are already equipped to handle RFID-tagged containers.

Livestock. One longtime practical and successful application of RFID tagging has been to identify and track livestock. By encoding the type of breed, diet and breeder's information into a tag implanted under the skin of a pig, for exam-

ple, the entire hog industry has much more control over its market and consumers benefit from increased quality control.

Already used to track valuable migratory wildlife and fish whose geographical boundaries rarely respect political boundaries, RFID tagging could also be used as a tool to aid in containing dangerous, life-threatening contagions and viruses that jump from livestock to humans, such as avian influenza, SARS and mad cow disease.

Airplane parts. The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration recently decided to authorize using RFID tagging on airplane parts. Once the supporting system is in place, airplane manufacturers and airlines can incorporate into routine maintenance practices a scan of the airplane's parts. The tags will store data on each part's age and service record, for example, thereby expediting maintenance and improving overall quality control.

Pharmaceuticals. The Food and Drug Administration expects that counterfeiting drugs will be "extremely difficult or unprofitable" with reliable RFID in place. By the end of 2005, one of the first pharmaceutical companies to ship with RFID tagging to thwart counterfeiting is Pfizer. The drug giant is expected to begin shipping packages of Viagra, one of the most counterfeited drugs, with RFID chips.

transferred electronically. Having to manually re-enter the data upon shipping, on the manifest and bill of lading, at the customs house, in the retailer's warehouse, in the stockroom and at the checkout can be eliminated in a complete end-to-end distribution system supported by an RFID infrastructure.

In addition, each item can have its own unique identifier, thereby permitting each item to be tracked and traced. Tracking product usage, returns and even recalls gives nearly complete control over product distribution and development, making the detection of counterfeiting and thefts much easier and quicker.

But, as with any technology that is mouthwatering to some, the issues surrounding its development and application warrant a clear-eyed look.

Disruptive, Discordant Technology

The infrastructure to support RFID technology is not yet in place globally. Issues range from interoperability of systems to the lack of globally recognized standards, testing and reliability. Four challenges, however, stand out.

First, the real-time nature of RFID data creates concerns for privacy and security experts. Eliminating

paperwork and removing the human element may speed goods through the supply chain, but those advances also threaten traditional laws, regulations and procedures established to maintain the flow of goods and people across borders. The biggest challenges of RFID arise from the proliferation of data, the sharing of the data and databases, and from the possibility of snooping via radio.

With few standards or common patterns of behavior yet established on a global basis, RFID watchdogs suggest that the following information practices must be accepted in order for the technology to thrive:

- Users must be provided notice that the technology is in use with the intent of collecting personal data limited to the purposes for which it is collected.
- Collected data is accurate, complete and timely.
- Personal data are protected by reasonable security safeguards against risk of loss, unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification or disclosure.
- Users can view all information collected about them.
- Compliance with these guidelines is mandated and a system is maintained to implement compliance.

Second, there are no laws yet to provide warranty protection on systems, readers and antenna RFID products.

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There is little recourse for malfunctioning RFID equipment.

Third, and equally important, is the fact that there is no certification or registry recognizing approved system integrators, RFID consultants and trainers. Some companies do train on their own equipment, but a vendor-neutral solution to certifying providers is not yet available. Especially because RFID technology is remotely readable, invisible and capturing data in real time, trust that the data are being captured and transmitted safely and securely is essential for its spread.

Finally, there is the challenge of misinformation and confusion about RFID that is more pervasive than the technology's advocates want to believe. Education is key to defusing misinformation. RFID is a generic technology with many possible applications, each of which has its own benefits and limitations. Currently, however, each industry using RFID has mounted its own informational campaign, and the resulting consumer confusion is

echoed in the press, thus confounding any inherent misunderstandings about the technology. Establishment of recognized, certified courses in its fundamentals is still a work in progress.

Acceptance of any disruptive technology — and RFID is one — takes time. We take bar-code technology for granted now, but it took at least 20 years for it to be incorporated as a mainstay of commerce. RFID technology presents a similar challenge to the way we live and work around the world.

Thanks to G. Matthew Ezovski, a senior engineering student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., and a 2005 Washington Internships for Students of Engineering (WISE) intern, whose paper summarizing the e-passport policy, "Biometric Passports: Policy for International and Domestic Deployment" (Journal of Engineering and Public Policy, Vol. 9, 2005), was helpful in preparing this article. It is available at <http://www.wiseintern.org>. ■

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IT COMES OF AGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



Valerie Sinclair

THE INFORMATION REVOLUTION IS CREATING A NEW GENERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST THAT WILL LIKELY, BUT NOT NECESSARILY, BE MORE DEMOCRATIC.

By JON B. ALTERMAN

In the United States and in much of the developed world, new information and communications technologies have created a universe in which information is unimaginably plentiful and accessible. This abundance has shaped a new generation of youth, fundamentally different than their elders. Many of them cannot imagine research without the Internet, or communication without cell phones, e-mail and instant messaging. The idea of terrestrial television — showing just a handful of programs, often at awkward times and with imperfect reception — has

yielded to a limitless world with hundreds of crystal-clear channels, hundreds of thousands of DVDs, and digital video recorders that render broadcast schedules irrelevant. Potential audiences are huge, but they are fickle, and beyond the control of any single individual, group or movement. What once had been arcane is now commonplace.

The Middle East is going through a similar transition. Although access to media and information remains far more restricted than it is in Western Europe and the United States, in relative terms the change is just as revolutionary. There, too, a new generation is emerging. They share with their Western counterparts the creativity that follows from an exponentially freer media environment, and the growing sense of individualism that such an environment creates. What is confounding to many in the United States is that this new generation does not feel an instant kinship with the media-rich Western culture. If anything, a growing menu of Arab media offerings has accentuated divisions between the Arab world and the West, and made more raw the feelings of anger, injustice and unfairness that many Arabs feel toward the non-Arab world.

In the near term, the primary effects of the information revolution in the Arab world are likely to be domestic. Old categories will be challenged, and a richer spectrum of thought and belief will spring up. Governments that relied on familiar tools to mobilize the public and censor undesirable views will find themselves stripped of the capacity to do either; nongovernmental groups and individual personalities will have a reach within and between countries that would have been unimaginable only a few years ago.

The world this new generation creates will likely — but not necessarily — be more democratic, but it may be even less liberal than its predecessors. Most important to remember is that information and communications technology will reshape the task of governance in the Middle East, and governments who fail to respond to the new environment will do so at their peril.

The second half of the 20th century in the Middle East

was the age of mass media. Government newspapers reached out to the newly literate, and government television reached out to those suddenly wealthy enough to own a television. In places like Cairo and Baghdad, elite politics gave way to populist politics, and the children of the newly urbanized became the newly politicized.

An Age of Media Plenty

Now, in the first half of the 21st century, Middle Eastern governments are losing their strangleholds on their publics. It is an age of media plenty. Any notion that there is a single “Arab line” on a matter of interest is demolished nightly on Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya and a host of other stations. It is fascinating to see how different the new generations growing up in this environment are from their elders: so much more questioning of their identities, so much more individualistic, so much more impatient.

Much has been written about the relative youth of Middle Eastern societies. Forty-six percent of Yemenis and 45 percent of Palestinians are under 15, according to U.N. numbers. Half of Saudis are under 18. Many Arab countries are among the youngest societies in the world.

What is often forgotten in the mix, however, is how much more literate young people in the region are than their parents’ generation. In just the last 15 years, UNESCO estimates, adult literacy in Yemen has shot up from 50 to 68 percent, and in Syria from 80 to 95 percent. Egypt’s overall literacy rate among those 15 and older is 55 percent; its literacy rate among youth aged 15 to 24 is 73 percent. Jordanians, Palestinians and even Omanis now enjoy youth literacy rates above 95 percent, suggesting that complex information can pass hands far more easily than even a generation ago.

Feeding into this more literate population is a smorgasbord of information platforms that barely existed a decade ago. First off is the publishing revolution that computers created. The ability to publish not only books, but, even more importantly, pamphlets and fliers, has become a great equalizer for those with limited resources. Marginal tracts can be produced with great skill, and the key challenge is no longer to get something in print. The challenge, instead, is convincing someone to read one’s work instead of a myriad of other articles, pamphlets, tracts and books that can be found on any street corner in the region and outside every mosque.

In the same way, local newspapers have a harder time staying relevant. Elite regional papers — often edited in

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London and distributed to satellite-linked printing facilities throughout the region — cover the news more authoritatively than national papers, and domestic audiences increasingly turn to a wide variety of television news programs for information and analysis. Local papers often respond by playing up their “local-ness,” accentuating nationalist concerns and day-to-day interests. For elite readers, the local press in many places has become merely a way to keep track of where the government stands on many issues; it has lost its role as either a leader or shaper of opinions.

The Birth of MBC

The greatest change in the regional information environment has been the rise of Arab satellite television. Its roots lay in Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 — an invasion that went unremarked on Saudi domestic television because news editors were unsure how to report the events. An urgent desire to understand what was happening next door gave rise not only to Saudi and Egyptian rebroadcasts of CNN on their terrestrial network, but it breathed life into the idea for a small Saudi-owned station called the Middle East Broadcast Center.

MBC was launched as a subscription-free satellite service in 1991, with a mix of news, entertainment and movies. The revolutionary idea behind MBC’s news programming was that a truly Arab channel could cover developments in the Arab world better than any of its Western competitors. The correspondents and editors would know the context, they could do away with a cumbersome apparatus of translators and fixers, and they would have the advantage of speaking to an informed Arab audience instead of a fickle Western one.

There were two problems. First, no one had ever done it before. Equally daunting, how could such a daring experiment flourish in an environment as restrictive as Saudi Arabia? Owners located the station in London, which simultaneously gave it access to top-flight technical talent and distance from the stultifying hand of Saudi censors.

Now, just 15 years later, more than 150 Arab satellite

The Internet is not yet a mass medium in most countries in the region.

Among young elites, however, it is a totally different story.

channels fill the airwaves. Most are available at no charge and, contrary to popular belief in the West, most focus on entertainment rather than news. U.S. government officials often complain bitterly about the latest outrage on Al-Jazeera, which continues to garner the highest marks in the region for the trustworthiness of its coverage. Yet the bulk of Arab audiences — and especially young ones — are not Al-Jazeera junkies. Instead, they tune in to a daily diet of game shows, music videos and reality television.

The audience for the Arab channels is impossible to estimate precisely, but upwards of 50 million Arabs — about 17 percent — have access in their own homes. Combined with the number who watch in public places like coffeehouses and those who watch videotapes of particularly newsworthy programming, the number of Arabs who are touched by satellite broadcasting begins to approach the number who have an interest in it.

The Internet’s Reach

Internet access is far less common than satellite television access. The International Telecommunications Union’s 2004 figures put Internet access rates in two key Arab countries, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, at just 6.3 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively. While most surveys suggest somewhat higher numbers, the Internet is not yet a mass medium in most countries in the region, with the exception of the oil-rich United Arab Emirates.

Among young elites, however, it is a totally different story. E-mail offers further opportunities for communication, especially for those with friends or relatives overseas. Chat rooms abound, many of which are password-protected and all but inaccessible to outsiders. Arab pop stars maintain impressive sites, often in multiple languages. A variety of sites provide religious guidance from all points of view and, for readers who are only comfortable in Arabic, such sites provide the bulk of what many turn to for research on the Internet.

Surveys suggest Al-Jazeera’s Arabic Web site is by far the most popular for those seeking news, generating more than a million hits per day. Among Western sites, those from sources as diverse as the *New York Times*, the *Jerusalem Post* and the BBC are popular in newsrooms,

and local newspapers sometimes lift their articles in their entirety. That constant of Internet use, pornography, is as popular in the Arab world as elsewhere, if not more so. Governments in many parts of the region throw up firewalls and filters, but they scarcely inhibit thrill-seeking young people. As a prominent Saudi editor told me a few years ago, "They have created a nation of hackers. They try to keep us from looking at anything related to politics, religion or sex. What else is there in the world?"

The Internet has also been a boon to the volatile mix of politics and religion that helps sustain the modern Islamist militancy. Although dramatically reduced since law enforcement stepped up efforts to control it after the 9/11 attacks, Web sites feature dramatic pictures of dead and mutilated Muslims, religious edicts, appeals to group solidarity and calls for vengeance. Western and Arab intelligence services have used electronic sleuthing to swoop in and shut down servers hosting such sites on the one hand, while monitoring those seeking to access them on the other.

The Internet's role is not limited to rallying the masses. Terrorists, including the 9/11 hijackers, have found the vastness of the Internet an inviting and anonymous ocean in which to swim. They use anonymous e-mail accounts, send coded messages and converse in password-protected chat rooms that are often beyond intelligence services' ability to penetrate. For movements engaged in global jihad, the Internet's global character, size and indifference to distance make it an increasingly valuable tool. Such users are few in number, but they have a huge impact.

The Rise of Game Shows and Reality TV

Terrestrial television, led first by satellite programming, has sought to go where the audiences are. Confronting the threat of irrelevancy as audiences flee the mundane for something new and edgy, programmers have revolutionized coverage. News is much more watchable, and much less heavy-handed, than it was even a decade ago. Debate shows have flourished. Celebrity

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profiles abound. Slick televangelists like the Egyptian-born Amr Khaled implore audiences to sanctify their daily lives.

The greatest change, however, has been the rise of game shows and reality television. For several years in the early part of this decade, the most popular show in the Arab world was not a news broadcast or a debate show, not a religious program or a drama. It was the Arab version of “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” Contestants from throughout the Arab world wracked their brains, quivered, and called friends and relatives for help. On Tuesday nights in many cities, life would seemingly grind to a halt as viewers raced for their TVs — many to watch Al-Jazeera’s signature debate show, “The Opposite Direction,” and even more to watch “Millionaire” on MBC.

This all seems horribly mundane, but it is vitally important. The reason is that game shows are culturally specific; they rely on questions to which a contestant should know the answer. There are 22 member states in the Arab League, each with its own dialects, history and culture; yet a successful regional show cannot ask questions that neither the contestant nor the audience could be expected to know if he or she were not from a specific country. The questions have to be somehow universal, and a viewer in Yemen has to feel he has the same chance of competing successfully as one from Lebanon. In this way, pan-Arab game shows serve to build a body of information that people are expected to know as Arabs; in the same way, it helps accentuate common identities. Such shows do more to nurture a shared Arab identity than decades of government-sponsored regional radio broadcasts that urged Arab unity. They foster Arabism from the grass roots, rather than from above.

Reality television is the other new arrival on the regional scene. Building on the same models as Western television, popular Western shows like “The Simple Life,” “The Apprentice” and “Fear Factor” are hits in the Arab world as well. No show has been quite as popular, however, as “Star Academy.” Produced for two years running by the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, the program featured 16 young Arabs from around the region competing for a \$50,000 recording contract. Similar to the American show, “American Idol,” viewers voted weekly to eliminate contestants. In addition to Friday night shows with extended performances, LBC ran one-hour updates each night, and dedicated a separate 24-

hour channel to document contestants’ weekly preparations. Accurate audience estimates are impossible to come by, but some studies put the proportion of Lebanese 18- to 25-year-olds watching at 80 percent; estimates of close to 50 percent in many other Arab countries would be reasonable.

When Western commentators first heard about “Star Academy,” some, such as the *New York Times*’ Thomas Friedman, leapt on the idea that this was nascent democracy at work. Friedman argued that the “Star Academy” competitions were the first free elections in which many Arabs had been allowed to vote, and that it would create a hunger for democracy.

Rising Aspirations, Individual Choices

Yet Friedman missed the core of the phenomenon. What the rise of game shows and reality television has captured is the aspirational aspect of popular culture among young Arabs. Youth in the region suffer through rote memorization in school and poor job prospects upon graduation. Infrastructure is often crumbling around them, and they struggle to define a future for themselves that is better than the life they knew growing up. Game shows and reality television not only provide a note of escapism, but they help build models — however unrealistic — of how their peers can be happy, successful and modern. The sets are modern, the people well-dressed, and they are surrounded by luxury.

Television has led (and other forms of media picked up on the trend) in presenting the set of choices that young people in the Middle East have to make every day. How should they talk, and what should they believe? More crassly, how should they consume? How should they dress, and what should they have in their homes? Technology has made the array of choices ever more vivid, and seemingly attainable.

Of course, tantalizing and often liberal Western models are not the only ones available for emulation. Neo-traditional (or some argue, pseudotraditional) figures seek to wrap themselves in the language and dress of a simpler time, offering reassuring responses to a world full of temptation and uncertainty. At the extreme of this group are people like Osama bin Laden, whose core message is a rejection of the status quo. Most, however, represent not so much a rejection of modernity as an effort to be selective about it. In fact, many Islamic institutions in the Middle East actively seek to be more modern than

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their secular counterparts, thereby arguing for the fundamental compatibility of faith and progress.

The most fertile ground in the Middle East is worked by those who navigate between these extremes. They argue that Arabs should keep their feet rooted firmly in tradition while reaching for a better future. Some wear jeans, others the veil, and many women wear both. Each emphasizes a different mix of innovations and traditions, and each appeals to a different group. In a world characterized by choice, audiences determine who is popular and who is ignored. While it is often jarring to the uninitiated when apparently traditional young people embrace liberal pop stars, and apparently modern people embrace conservative clerics, it is precisely these individual choices of young Arabs that make the current environment so interesting.

Of course, information plenty is not an unalloyed good. From our own experience, we know that information simultaneously brings people together and drives them apart. Technology helps create mass audiences in

the middle — the tens of millions of people who are linked by their love of “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire,” “Star Academy” and the like. At the same time, however, it also helps extremist groups find like-minded members and flourish.

But what is important here is the way in which information plenty drives choices down to the individual level. Increasingly in the Arab world, individuals maintain multiple identities, and the identities they embrace are increasingly a function of choice. Such overlapping identities are one characteristic of smoothly functioning democracies, and they are commonplace in Western societies. Individuals typically feel a part of a large number of unwieldy interest- and identity-based coalitions, and politicians seek to assemble groups of them to secure victory. When individuals think of themselves as an amalgam of economic, educational, social, religious, ethnic and regional backgrounds, it is easier for them to feel that at least some of their needs are met through the political system, even if all of them are not met.

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Near-term Democracy?

Does that mean information will bring democracy to the Arab world? The answer is probably not, at least in the short term. Political systems take time to grow, and ideas about identity change slowly. In addition, increased flows of information facilitate the rise of demagogues, promising easy answers to complex problems. Osama bin Laden is a skilled user of television, but a more mainstream figure could gain even greater support. Increased flows of information can also serve to reinforce the deep feelings of injury, injustice and discrimination that many Arabs feel toward the outside world. Television has taken the plight of the Palestinians from a talking point in formal speeches to being daily fare in people's living rooms, and Web sites feature pictures of atrocities committed against Muslim populations around the globe.

Over time, though, it is clear that the sheer volume of information available to people in the Middle East, and especially eagerly consumed by young people, will transform politics. Over the last half-century, information

control has been a vital tool in the political arsenal of Arab governments. They have relied on the mass media to mobilize their populations, and they have used censorship to restrain them. Now, both tools are losing their bite. The digitalization of content, the ease of duplicating and transporting videocassettes, and the sheer volume of information swirling in the region make effective censorship a fool's errand. Information simply cannot be held back. The only solace censors can take is that technology eases surveillance; while governments cannot keep people from knowing things, they can more easily trace how information is passed.

Arabs will move into the 21st century, and the process by which they do so will be messy, confusing and slow. It will almost certainly have its setbacks. What is most exciting, however, is the creativity that these changes are unleashing. There is no guarantee that young Arabs' future will be better than their past, but the tools at their disposal to help make it so are more powerful than those of their parents, and their grandparents before them. ■

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W

A COMPLETE SECURITY STRATEGY MUST EMBRACE NOT ONLY ROBUST PHYSICAL SAFEGUARDS BUT ALSO COMPLEMENTARY CYBERSECURITY MEASURES.

BY STEVEN E. ROBERTS

hen terrorists detonated a car bomb near the American embassy in Lima, Peru, in March 2002, killing nine people including an embassy guard, it was a stark reminder of the constant threat facing U.S. diplomatic facilities operating overseas. Bombings, shootings and even kidnappings for ransom are the tools of the enemy's trade. However, for the ultra-sensitive computer systems used by the State Department and other federal government agencies, the rise of computer-literate terrorists, nation-states and criminals is a virtual shot across the bow: U.S. embassies and con-

ulates can be vulnerable to cyber-exploitation. As physical security measures continue to improve — first after the 1998 embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam and then again following the 9/11 attacks — cyber-attacks may be a preferred modus operandi for those bent on causing harm, stealing information or gaining access.

The armed guards, ballistic glass and vehicle set-backs found in virtually every U.S. diplomatic facility are of little value if the attacker's weapons are ones and zeros. Combination attacks are now a legitimate concern. A suicide attack on an embassy, combined with a simultaneous cyber-attack, could incapacitate communications, impair the emergency response and even prime the facility for a follow-on assault minutes later. Thus, a complete security strategy must embrace not only robust physical safeguards but also complementary cybersecurity measures, ranging from password management to intrusion detection systems.

Not Just for Crooks

Cyberthreats to State Department systems originate from three primary sources: terrorists, criminals and foreign governments. While their motivations may be different, all three groups view State's computers as treasure troves of information about personnel, policy, intelligence and local operations. Adversaries value such information both for its specific value and as a complement to data gleaned from open-source surveillance and reconnaissance. And all three types of opponents use well-known hacking methods to tap into U.S. government computers. Consequently, distinguishing the criminal hacker seeking economic gain from a terrorist or foreign government bent on attack or espionage is a challenge.

Steven Roberts writes and speaks frequently on homeland security issues, with a special emphasis on critical infrastructure protection, cybersecurity and terrorism. His recent audiences have included the Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security.

The armed guards, ballistic glass and vehicle set-backs found in virtually every U.S. diplomatic facility are of little value if the attacker's weapons are ones and zeros.

Commenting that terrorists are now using many of the same techniques as hackers, a branch chief from the State Department's Anti-terrorism Assistance Program recently stated that "the same technique that a hacker would use ... will be utilized by somebody with a different political motivation." The inference is that common hacking tools are not simply for high-tech crooks but are also used by more potent adversaries for a variety of nefarious ends.

For example, when terrorists struck in Bali, Indonesia, in October 2002, killing over 200 people, authorities traced the attacks — which targeted nightclubs packed with foreign tourists — to the South Asian terrorist group Jemaah Islamiya, linked to al-Qaida and designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department. JI is also believed to be responsible for the Bali bombings that killed more than two dozen people this past October.

Although some of JI's terrorist-members, including 2002 bombing mastermind Samudra (like some Indonesians, he only uses one name), have been arrested and sentenced to death by Indonesian courts, the danger posed by such figures extends beyond the physical world and into cyberspace. From his prison cell, Samudra has authored an autobiography in which one chapter encourages followers to use the Internet to commit fraud and money laundering as a means to finance terror operations. The chapter titled "Hacking, Why Not?" underscores the growing threat of terrorists who are as adept with a mouse and keyboard as they are with a satchel of plastic explosives.

As a user of the Internet, the State Department is also vulnerable to the "normal" perils of the World Wide Web. Spam, phishing schemes, viruses and worms circulate in cyberspace, indiscriminately targeting unprotected systems. In September 2003, the Welchia worm infected some State Department networks. The infections forced technicians to shut down some computers, temporarily disrupting the functionality of the department's Consular Lookout and Support System, a database used to screen visa applicants for potential criminal or terror-related ties.

F O C U S

A Complex Threat

Indeed, there appears to be no letup in the volume of cyber-threats facing the State Department. According to an August 2005 press briefing, State had already blocked approximately 3.8 million computer viruses so far this year. But while the department's arsenal of cybersecurity technologies and practices — firewalls, anti-virus software, patch management and the like — have helped to fend off electronic attacks, significant questions persist regarding the effectiveness of its overall cybersecurity posture.

There is certainly no lack of awareness about the magnitude of the threat. As far back as 1998, a Government Accountability Office report found that “State’s information systems and the information contained with-

According to an August 2005 press briefing, State had already blocked approximately 3.8 million computer viruses so far this year.

in them are vulnerable to access, change, disclosure, disruption or even denial of services [attacks] by unauthorized individuals.”

But six years later, in a 2004 cybersecurity report card for 24 federal agencies, the Government Reform Committee — a key oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives — gave the State Department a “D+” for cybersecurity. Though it represents an improvement over the “F”

the department received in 2003, the low score suggests that it is having trouble implementing the cybersecurity mandates of the Federal Information Security Management Act. Passed as part of the E-Government Act of 2002, FISMA builds upon prior federal law and requires agencies to implement policies and procedures covering a range of cybersecurity issues.

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As State works to shore up cybersecurity in anticipation of next year's congressional report card, the cyberthreats it confronts are growing more complex. Chief among them is the danger posed by foreign government hackers. Unlike terrorists or criminals, hackers trained and aided by a foreign government have the technical and institutional resources offered by a formal and established host, typically the foreign nation's military. In testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in February 2005, FBI Director Robert Mueller warned of state-sponsored hackers. Director Mueller told the panel that "state actors continue to be a threat to both our national security as well as our economic security because they have the technical and financial resources to support advanced network exploitation and attack. The greatest cyberthreat is posed by countries that continue to openly conduct computer network attacks and exploitations on American systems."

Information Warfare Units

There is little doubt that real or potential adversaries — likely including Russia, Iran, North Korea and China — consider hacking a part of their arsenal. These nations may have formal "information warfare" programs that train and equip hackers to conduct activities far beyond cyber-espionage and data mining: state-sponsored information warfare includes the development of offensive capabilities to disrupt an enemy's civilian and defense critical infrastructure, such as electric power grids, communications networks, and military command and control.

Reflecting the significance of this threat, the National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace — released by the Bush administration in 2003 as a national blueprint for cybersecurity — included an implicit recognition that future attacks against the United States could include a cyberspace component. A section tucked into the appendix warns that "when a nation, terrorist group or other adversary attacks the United States through cyberspace, the U.S. response need not be limited to criminal prosecution. The United States reserves the right to respond

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security recognizes that terrorists are now using many of the same techniques as hackers.

in an appropriate manner." While an "appropriate manner" could include a commensurate cyber-offensive initiated by the Department of Defense, the ambiguities of the language suggest that the U.S. response to a virtual attack need not be limited to cyberspace. Arguably, bombs and bullets could constitute part or even all of an American counterattack.

Given the growing threat posed by state-sponsored cyber-operations against the United States, this is far from insignificant or purely theoretical. In this context, China stands out among potential cyber-adversaries. As the Chinese government continues to modernize its military forces, the development of a robust cyberspace component is emerging as part of Beijing's strategic vision. The Department of Defense's annual report to Congress on the People's Liberation Army for 2005 — aptly titled "The Military Power of the People's Republic of China" — asserts that "the PLA has likely established information-warfare units to develop viruses to attack enemy computer systems and networks, and tactics to protect friendly computer systems and networks."

Focusing increasingly on offensive cyber-operations rather than purely defensive ones, the report further posits that "... recent [cyber] exercises have incorporated offensive operations, primarily as first strikes against enemy networks." The implications of such a statement are clear: the PLA views cyberwarfare capabilities as a critical component of a modern military force that is prepared to fight on both traditional and virtual battlefields.

Titan Rain

China's cyberspace ambitions may already be moving from planning to practice. Some U.S. government officials believe the Chinese government is behind a series of sophisticated hacking incidents targeting sensitive U.S. computer systems, including those operated by federal departments and defense contractors. Dubbed "Titan Rain" by U.S. authorities, the investigation has been the subject of recent public inquiry at the State Department. When asked specifically whether it had been "targeted or successfully penetrated by the

F O C U S

China-origin computer hacking effort known as Titan Rain," the department's response was carefully worded. It acknowledged that "attempts to intrude on Web sites are a fact of life on the Internet," but stated that State has "... had no successful intrusions on our public Web sites, either in the U.S. or abroad." State then directed further inquiries to the Department of Homeland Security.

This answer begs two questions. First, the fact that there were no "successful intrusions" does not foreclose the possibility that there were unsuccessful intrusions. Second, and perhaps more significantly, Titan Rain hackers have targeted sensitive networks and databases, not merely public Web sites. Thus, it remains unclear whether the State Department's more sensitive networks and databases were targeted. According to one unnamed official cited in an August 2005 story in *The Washington Post*, however, State was among the government agencies "...that have been hit" by Titan Rain hackers.

Titan Rain represents an external threat to government computers. Additional cyberthreats may originate from State Department employees who abuse their positions of trust and access. The department has not been immune from insider-perpetrated crime. In late 2004, two former State employees were sentenced to federal prison terms for their roles in a visa fraud scheme. Former Foreign Service officer Long N. Lee and her husband, Acey R. Johnson, a former consular associate, used their positions to issue approximately 200 illegal visas in return for bribes while stationed at posts in Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Fiji. While this conspiracy does not involve hacking or cybercrime, it is instructive: cyberdefenses are mostly aimed outward. Yet, just as Lee and Johnson used their trusted status to commit visa fraud, there may be little to stop a rogue employee — or consultant or contractor — from downloading sensitive diplomatic information or even dropping a time-delay virus into a computer system from the inside.

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The Need to Remain Vigilant

As DS already recognizes, preventing such a scenario requires a comprehensive policy that combines personnel security with cybersecurity. Traditional background investigations evaluate a potential employee's character and lifestyle. Despite their ability to weed out many unsuitable applicants, background investigations are not perfect, especially with longtime employees. However, subsequent background investigations — required for those who hold certain security clearance classifications — may uncover evidence that suggests wrongdoing or raises questions regarding loyalty. Follow-up investigations, as well as initial screenings, need to be “tuned” to pick up indicators of criminal intent or practice. Only through good personnel and physical security practices can the insider threat to computer systems be man-

***Even as State works
to shore up cybersecurity,
the threats it confronts are
growing more complex.***

aged, if never fully controlled.

For the State Department, maintaining strong defenses against the insider threat is especially acute at its hundreds of embassies and consulates around the world. From security to janitorial services, the host country provides the labor pool from which posts hire or contract in-country staff support.

Despite the efforts of the department to validate background information, their potential impact on facility security generally, and cybersecurity in particular, cannot be overlooked.

Because foreign nationals may have significant access to and knowledge of security operations, foreign intelligence services or terrorist organizations could use the cover of legitimate employment for operational surveillance and intelligence gathering, and certainly might do so to conduct a cyber- or physical attack. However, it is



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difficult to quantify that risk, and it must be balanced against the important functions they perform at posts around the world.

Ultimately, technologically enabled solutions — including, but not limited to, firewalls, anti-virus software, patch management, password control, encryption, intrusion detection systems and penetration testing — form the core elements of a robust cybersecurity umbrella. Most of these technologies are increasingly used throughout government to prevent, and when necessary, identify and correct electronic vulnerabilities. Advances in cybersecurity hardware and software — such as biometric readers to replace easily compromised alphanumeric passwords as well as analytical software that helps predict cyber-attack patterns — now provide additional capabilities to protect

There is little doubt that real or potential adversaries — likely including Russia, Iran, North Korea and China — consider hacking a part of their arsenal.

perils of cyberspace. Whether in the sights of a nation-state, a terrorist cell or a lone-wolf hacker, the computer systems of the federal government will remain targets of choice. Like the river, the tactics employed by attackers are in constant motion. The defenses necessary to counter them must continue to evolve with equal vigor. ■

computer systems. These and other state-of-the-art tools have raised the level of protection beyond what was available or practical just a few years ago.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said that a person cannot step into the same river twice. The river, he observed, changes from moment to moment. More than two thousand years later, that observation could not be more relevant when applied to the

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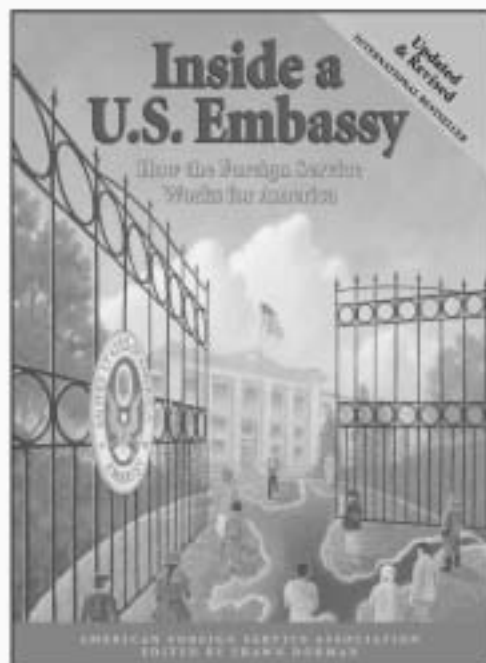
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AFGHANISTAN'S TROUBLED PAST AND UNCERTAIN FUTURE

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TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE WEST, AND TO HELP IT GET BACK ON ITS FEET, WE NEED
TO KNOW SOMETHING OF ITS BLOODY HISTORY.

BY ARTHUR LEZIN

In the introduction to one of his engrossing histories of relations between Russia and the West, George Kennan suggested that the reader was in a better position to understand the complexity of the events he was describing — the actions and reactions of the key actors — than they themselves were at the time. The reader, after all, could benefit from detailed studies of what had happened and why, written from the perspectives of all the parties involved.

I had reason to reflect on Kennan's observation while reading *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden from the Soviet Invasion to Sept. 10, 2001* by Steven Coll (Penguin Books, 2004). It is an insightful analysis of events in that part of the world over the last quarter-century: invasion and occupation by the Soviet Union, followed by civil war, rule by the Taliban, the presence of al-Qaida and the U.S. invasion in the fall of 2001. Near the end of his book, Coll writes:

"The pollsters' fever charts from America, Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia depict an impassioned,

Arthur Lezin was a USAID Foreign Service officer from 1962 to 1988, serving in Central America, South America, Asia and Africa. Over the years he has contributed a number of articles and photographs to the Foreign Service Journal and the Washington Post. In addition to writing, he skis with the "Over the Hill Gang" in Bend, Ore.

sharply divided world, in which, among other things, the standing of the U.S. in popular opinion has plummeted in a very short time. Holding their flag-draped ceremonies in secret, American military transport crews unload dead and wounded in twos and threes from Iraq and Afghanistan. In such a tempestuous present, an examination of the past seems a relative luxury."

Speaking as someone who has served in the region and who continues to follow developments there, I would respectfully submit that, far from being a luxury, examining Afghanistan's history is a necessity. Few countries have suffered as much, or as visibly, as it has in the last quarter-century. The toll in lives and materiel is staggering: one million dead, six million displaced (one-third of the population at the time), and an infrastructure — dams, roads, irrigation systems — largely bombed into rubble. Mines are everywhere. The International Red Cross estimates that 200,000 Afghans have been killed by explosive devices since 1979, and that Soviet mines, along with unexploded ordnance from the U.S. invasion, kill or injure hundreds every month, including American soldiers.

So it comes as no surprise that the 2003 United Nations' Human Development Index, based on such factors as literacy, health services, malnutrition and access to potable water, ranks Afghanistan 173rd out of 175 countries surveyed. Life expectancy for males there is 46 years. The infant mortality rate, roughly 160 per thousand live births, is exceeded only by Angola's. And to compound the diffi-

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culty of pulling Afghanistan out of poverty, about half the population is 14 or younger.

To understand how the country was transformed into a breeding ground for terrorist attacks on the West, and to help it to get back on its feet, we need to know something of its bloody history. We need to examine the decisions and actions of the major participants in Afghanistan's most recent conflicts: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Isolation and Invasion

It is said that geography goes a long way to define a country's politics, culture and history. This is certainly true of Afghanistan. A strategic crossroad for warriors, traders and pilgrims traveling between Europe, Persia and Asia, it endured a series of invasions by Alexander the Great (4th century B.C.), Muslims (7th century A.D.) and Mongols (13th century), among many others. This history created a complex mix of cultures, religions, ethnicities and languages that made it difficult for any central government to unify the country. Instead, the mountain ranges and isolated valleys ensured that loyalty went to local chieftains, a pattern that, regrettably, continues today.

Tajiks and Hazaras dominate the west of the country, Uzbeks in the north, and Pashtuns in the south and east. Pashtun is the official language, although sizable portions of the population consider Dari (Persian) or Turkoman their mother tongue. Pashtuns are not only the dominant tribe in Afghanistan (about 12 million out of a total population of 28 million) but the key ethnic group in Pakistan as well, concentrated along the areas bordering Afghanistan. Equally important, Pashtuns dominate the senior Pakistani Army officer class. Their values are relevant on both sides of the border: a strict honor code that sanc-

*The country's history
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government to unify it.*

tions revenge in cases of shame, treats women as property, and puts clan and family above nation.

In the 19th century, Great Britain and Russia fought and maneuvered for control of what both powers considered a desirable piece of real estate. Britain even invaded Afghanistan twice, but both campaigns ended in disaster. Afghanistan staggered into the 20th century relatively untouched by civilization outside of the Hindu Kush mountains region.

Little changed until the 1960s, when the Cold War superpowers once again became interested in Afghanistan because of its strategic location. In 1973, King Zahir Shah was ousted by his cousin, Mohammed Daoud, a shifty character who played off the Soviets against the Americans, seeking economic and military aid from both. What he did *not* allow was Islamic fundamentalism, so large numbers of devout Afghans (including the warlords who would be the main protagonists in the ensuing civil war) fled to Pakistan.

In April 1978, Daoud was overthrown in a bloody coup. Plotters dive-bombed and then overran the presidential palace, murdering him

and his entire family. Based in neighboring Pakistan, my wife and I had more than an academic interest in the fighting: our 14-year-old daughter was in Kabul that weekend, and unknown to us, was separated from her classmates. During most of the fighting she found herself isolated in a house next to the palace — all the while aware that the Afghan Air Force was not a world leader in bombing accuracy. One good thing came out of it, however: when school resumed she had no trouble with the assigned topic for an essay in English class: "What did you do during spring vacation?"

The Enemy of My Enemy

Even with Soviet backing, Daoud's successors could not maintain control and were themselves victims of savage coups. Increasingly alarmed at the mounting chaos, the Red Army invaded on Christmas Day 1979. This thrust Afghanistan into the forefront of the Cold War, with catastrophic consequences for its citizens.

The Soviet invasion was only one of the momentous, interconnected events of 1979: the fall of the shah and the mob takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, the attack on the Grand Mosque in Mecca, and the burning of the U.S. embassy in Islamabad. Our friends and colleagues there narrowly escaped being burned alive as the Pakistani Army, stationed nearby, chose not to take on the mob.

Zia-ul-Haq was president of Pakistan at the time, having deposed President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in a July 1977 military coup. The general rejected widespread pleas to save Bhutto's life and sent him to the gallows in April 1979.

While President Zia was not a favorite in the Carter White House, Washington urgently needed Pakistan to funnel arms to the Afghan

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mujahedeen (freedom fighters) then taking on our enemy, the Red Army. But there was a steep price to pay for Islamabad's cooperation: it demanded we supply sophisticated weapons to the Pakistan army, as well. We agreed, essentially setting U.S. policy for the next decade. In effect, the CIA and Pentagon subcontracted with the Pakistan army to deliver U.S. weapons to Afghan fighters. The Pakistanis, not we, chose which militias and warlords would get the arms, and a chief consideration was the desire to have a friendly (read Pashtun) government on their border. Neither we nor they were interested in the hearts, minds or welfare of the Afghans, let alone the complex issues of the region.

Riyadh, which considered communism abhorrent, also took an active role in supporting the Afghan resistance, writing checks to various groups. (Reportedly, they matched U.S. congressional appropriations one for one.) In addition, the Saudis saw an opening to fund madrassas (religious schools) for indoctrinating Pakistani youth in Wahhabism, an austere and belligerent interpretation of the Quran based on the ideas of an 18th-century reformer, Ibn al-Wahhab, who celebrated martyrdom and viewed violence as "a means of purifying a corrupt world." Wahhabis believe that those who do not agree with their interpretation of the Quran — even other Muslims — are heathens and enemies, and are prepared to wage holy war against them.

What gave special power to the Saudi brand of fundamentalism is the fact that they control the holiest Islamic sites, Mecca and Medina, and have the oil money to push their ideas throughout the Islamic world. Thus, by the early 1980s, there were some 8,000 religiously-affiliated educational institutions, and thousands more unofficial schools, throughout Pakistan. Soon the madrassas were

*The Soviet invasion
of Afghanistan was just
one of the momentous,
interconnected events
of 1979.*

providing a steady stream of recruits eager to fight the infidels in Afghanistan, not only from Pakistan but Jordan, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries.

There were four main Saudi channels for assistance to Afghan militias and the Pakistani Army during the 1980s: the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Directorate of Intelligence, the Foreign Ministry and private charities. Their combined support amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars each year. As a result, Afghan fighters were swimming in cash; militia commanders routinely received \$25,000 or more as a monthly retainer. This was a huge sum when one considers annual per capita income for the nation as a whole was, and is, measured in the hundreds of dollars.

Despite this support, the Reagan administration that came to power in 1981 was skeptical that the ragtag mujahedeen could defeat the Red Army, one of the most powerful fighting forces in the world. At first, the U.S. was careful to provide only weapons that could not be traced back to this country, worried that the Soviet Union might retaliate by invading Pakistan. But as the "freedom fighters" gained strength (and victories), we threw caution to the winds. The latest U.S. weapons, valued at more

than \$3 billion over the course of the civil war, were carried across the border into Afghanistan on mule back. Included were several thousand shoulder-fired Stinger missiles that turned the tide by taking away air superiority from the Soviets. Now, of course, we are trying to buy them back.

Be Careful What You Wish For

When Mikhail Gorbachev assumed power in 1985, there was growing skepticism in the Politburo that the war in Afghanistan was winnable. It appeared to be turning into a Soviet Vietnam. Gorbachev pressed the military either to devise a plan to win the conflict or admit defeat and cut their losses. With a large Muslim population in the Soviet Union, he also was worried about a fundamentalist takeover in Afghanistan. (If only we had had similar concerns.) As the casualties mounted,

The Saudis and the Pakistan Army gave the Taliban cash, equipment, transport, planes, food, fuel and ammunition as we looked the other way.

the Politburo decided to withdraw. The Soviet foreign minister leaked the decision to the State Department, but no one took him seriously. The Red Army finally left the country (with difficulty) in 1989.

Our foreign policy in those years was a good example of the law of

unintended consequences. Our goal was to defeat the Red Army, and we did. At the same time, we created an environment in which anti-American, anti-Western terrorists thrived. They are still haunting us today.

So why didn't an event as monumental as the Soviet defeat prompt a thorough review of U.S. policy in the region? Simply put, we were not interested in helping to rebuild the country, or even in providing badly-needed humanitarian aid. The incoming George H.W. Bush administration's priorities — all legitimate — were Iranian nuclear proliferation, German unification and the end of the Cold War. Afghanistan was not on the radar screen, a serious mistake.

Filling the resulting power vacuum, local warlords fought savagely for control. The most important of these were Gulbuddin Hekymatyr, a devout Pashtun, and Ahmed Shah Massoud,

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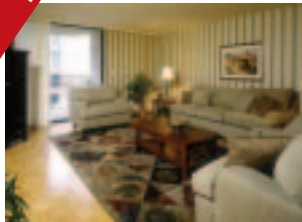
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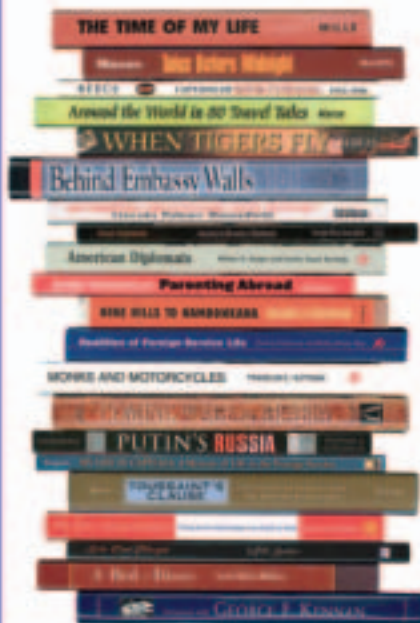
*Our foreign policy
during the 1980s was a
good example of the law
of unintended
consequences.*

a non-religious Tajik who headed the Northern Alliance. The latter offered the best hope for a secular state, but Islamabad and Riyadh preferred Hekymatyr. For the next several years, betrayals and shifts in allegiance were the norm. Rival militias took turns occupying Kabul, which became the scene of continuous shelling and house-to-house fighting.

In the midst of that chaos, a new force began pouring into Afghanistan from Pakistan in the early 1990s: the Taliban. That word simply means "an Islamic student who seeks knowledge," so few U.S. policy-makers understood just how extreme their views were. But steeped in Saudi-type Wahhabism, and dominated by Pashtuns, the Taliban rejected all things modern and non-Islamic.

The Saudis and the Pakistan Army gave the Taliban cash, equipment, transport, planes, food, fuel and ammunition. Those arms and supplies tilted the civil war in their favor and they swept into Kabul in September 1996. By contrast, the Northern Alliance did not receive meaningful, sustained support from Pakistan or the U.S. until after 9/11. And their leader, the charismatic Ahmed Shah Massoud, was assassinated by al-Qaida in a carefully planned operation just a few days before the attack on the World Trade Center.

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Both the Saudis and Pakistanis assured us that the Taliban would moderate their views as they gained experience. This was wishful thinking. The Taliban were determined to rewrite 1,400 years of Islamic history and take Islam back to the 7th century. In their warped world view, Shariah (Islamic law) strictly governed both the state and personal behavior. There was no sense of social justice, openness to foreign ideas, or science — all part of the first centuries of Muslim belief.

Within 24 hours of taking Kabul, the “students” imposed sweeping changes. All women were banned from work, and since they represented one-quarter of the civil service, the majority of Afghan health-care providers, and most teachers, the social impact was devastating. Schools for girls were closed and a strict dress code instituted for women. The U.N. estimated that

***Despite the recent
progress, the country's
prospects are clouded by
four mutually
reinforcing problems.***

50,000 widows with children were unable to work or even walk the streets without being beaten by the religious police. The restrictions on men were less onerous but still real; men without beards, for example, were subject to beatings and imprisonment.

Meanwhile, 1996 was an election

year in the United States. Secretary of State Warren Christopher had barely mentioned Afghanistan in the past four years, and unpopular interventions in Bosnia and Haiti had left the Clinton administration gun shy of any entanglement that the public would not support. The assistant secretary of State in charge of the region went so far as to declare: “We do not favor one faction over another.” The U.S. Agency for International Development had closed its humanitarian aid office in Kabul early in the Clinton presidency. Our interest in the country appeared to be limited to construction of a gas pipeline through it from Turkmenistan to Pakistan under a U.S. consortium headed by Unocal.

In the mid-1990s, the U.S. belatedly came to the conclusion that Osama bin Laden, 17th son of a Saudi billionaire, was a serious threat. We pressed Sudan to expel him. The

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Saudis anticipated problems if he returned to the kingdom, and stripped him of his citizenship. Neither Jordan, Egypt nor Algeria was willing to open its borders to him, so Taliban-controlled Afghanistan was the only option. We missed the chance to intercept his flight to Kandahar in March 1996, where he arrived with two planeloads of wives and children.

In July 1999, a military coup in Pakistan brought General Pervez Musharraf to power. Although not religious (scotch was acceptable according to his reading of the Quran), the new president needed the support of extreme religious parties to bolster military rule. This translated into a sharp increase in aid to the Taliban. An important additional inducement for Pakistan was the opportunity to train their own “freedom fighters” in Taliban-controlled camps in Afghanistan to harass Indian forces in Kashmir. With a minimal investment by Pakistan, these guerrillas kept half a million Indian troops tied down.

As for the U.S., our policy continued to focus on containing Iran and Iraq and on maintaining Saudi cooperation — or, more accurately—cheap oil. We were not about to take on the Saudis for funding Islamic radicals in Afghanistan or anywhere else.

Four Big Problems

This brings us to the current situation in Afghanistan, which in many ways is hopeful. Hamid Karzai was elected president in December 2004 and has proven an adept and moderate leader. Parliamentary and provincial council elections — the first in 30 years — were successfully held this past September, despite Taliban intimidation. About three million refugees have returned from Iran and Pakistan, and over two million girls are in school. A constitution was approved last year that guarantees

*In many ways,
the current
situation in
Afghanistan is
hopeful.*

the rights of religious minorities. However, it also declares that “No law can be contrary to the sacred religion of Islam.” One can only surmise how these provisions would be interpreted by a post-Karzai, hard-line government.

Despite these positive developments, the country’s prospects are clouded by four mutually reinforcing problems: security (or, more accurately, the lack thereof), drug trafficking, the slow pace of reconstruction, and Afghanistan’s historic decentralization.

A start has been made on disarming private militias, but gunholders still control much of the countryside. Most Afghans rank disarming the warlords as a higher priority than eliminating all remnants of the Taliban, even as the latter forces show signs of resurgence four years after having been driven from power. Our decision to siphon off resources to go after Saddam Hussein, before the Taliban were convincingly defeated, is certainly a factor in their ability to regroup. So is the fact that they benefit from staging areas in Pakistan’s Northwest Frontier and Baluchistan. In the lead-up to the fall parliamentary elections they showed they were well-organized and armed with rocket-propelled grenades and other

weapons. They appear to have no shortage of volunteers willing to fight; and, if need be, blow themselves up like their counterparts in Iraq and elsewhere.

A general upturn in violence — bombings, assassinations, rocket attacks and kidnappings — has claimed the lives of more and more NATO and U.S. forces, and Afghan soldiers and civilians. More U.S. soldiers died in 2005 than at any time since 2001, and the cumulative toll is now more than 200. Attacks on civilians are also at a four-year high.

The forces in place to deal with such threats are inadequate. Some 8,000 men under NATO command patrol mainly within the capital, while U.S. forces, currently around 19,000, are scattered around a country the size of Texas with 28 million inhabitants. By comparison, there are 40,000 NATO troops in Bosnia, a country one-tenth the size of Afghanistan and considerably less volatile.

American forces are training an increasingly effective Afghan National Army, with plans for a significant expansion. However, the U.S. is footing most of the bill, raising doubts about how long we will sustain that commitment.

The booming opium trade, the country’s largest economic sector, threatens the stability and viability of the country itself. Where the war on extremists and the war on narcotics intersect, drugs are winning. How could it be otherwise in a poverty-stricken land where the returns from poppy cultivation — which requires little water or care — are 20 times that of wheat, cotton or rice? In the nationwide lawlessness that followed the Taliban’s ouster, acreage devoted to poppies (whose opium is the raw material for heroin) increased dramatically. The U.N. estimates that in 2004, the drug trade was responsible for at least half of Afghanistan’s

gross domestic product. So one senses a serious imbalance in the universe when Afghans need donated American wheat from the World Food Program, while at the same time, heroin originating there is sold on the streets of Europe and the U.S.

President Karzai has not been successful in cutting production, and his leadership in this area has been criticized by the U.S. agencies involved. For the past three years, counternarcotics activities have been beyond the authority of U.S. military personnel. Washington policy-makers now recognize that the U.S. military will have to get involved if the drug traffickers are to be defeated.

In addition, eradication without a feasible alternative source of income — along with supporting roads and rural infrastructure — is a non-starter. About \$4 billion in reconstruction aid has been approved by

*Far from being
a luxury, examining
Afghanistan's history
is a necessity.*

donor countries (up significantly from 2001), but the deteriorating security situation, as well as difficulties in transport and communication nationwide, have put a serious crimp in efforts to rebuild. Corruption and lack of trained government staff have also contributed to the lackluster results. Accordingly, economic expansion remains the key to a viable and stable Afghanistan.

The final factor inhibiting Afghanistan's social, political and economic development is the oldest and perhaps the strongest of all: the country's history as a patchwork of tribal cultures for whom blood ties, ethnic affiliation and religious identity all trump national loyalties.

Will the Karzai government be able to deliver on its promises of a better life, thus winning the trust of the population? For over a generation the citizenry has been lied to by a succession of rulers: the monarchy, communists, Taliban and mujahedeen. There is a limit to their patience, but not to their skepticism.

Few could argue that our relationship with Afghanistan and its neighbors in the recent past represents a high point for U.S. diplomacy. That being said, let us hope we have learned from our mistakes and are now in Afghanistan for the long haul. ■

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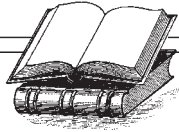
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BOOKS

Close *Does* Count

Cyprus: The Search for a Solution

David Hannay, I.B. Taurus, 2005, \$45, hardcover, 256 pages.

REVIEWED BY DANIEL J. LAWTON

Is it possible — contrary to the old adage that “close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades” — that coming close to solving a longstanding international conflict counts in the world of diplomacy? Lord David Hannay, who served as the British Special Representative for Cyprus from 1996 to 2003, argues that it does in his comprehensive insider’s view of the most recent round of United Nations-led Cyprus negotiations. More promising than any of the many previous international efforts to resolve the conflict since U.N. peacekeepers were originally deployed to the island 41 years ago, last year these sustained efforts nevertheless also ended in failure.

Judging from this account, no one can accuse Hannay of unfairly favoring either the Greek Cypriots or the Turkish Cypriots — he criticizes both sides liberally. In particular, he chronicles the opportunities missed by their aging leaders, Greek Cypriot Glafcos Clerides and Turkish Cypriot Rauf Denktash. And with clinical, hyper-rational precision, Hannay dissects the emotion-laden issues and bargaining positions dividing the two sides, diagnosing their preference for zero-sum and “blame game” negotiating.

Judging from this account, no one can accuse Hannay of unfairly favoring either the Greek Cypriots or the Turkish Cypriots — he criticizes both sides liberally.



The substantive issues are many: How would a reunited Cyprus be governed without leading to the secession of the Turkish Cypriots or to domination by the Greek Cypriots, 80 percent of the island’s population? How would both communities, the Guarantor Powers (Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom) and the United Nations ensure the security of Cyprus? How would the line between the two populations be adjusted to better reflect their relative sizes? How would the property claims of the many persons displaced by the Turkish intervention of 1974 and post-independence intercommunal strife be settled? And how would the Turkish Cypriots’ demand for international recognition/sovereignty prior to negotiating a settlement be handled?

If these difficult questions were not daunting enough, a number of influential, overlapping relationships

in the region forced negotiators to play what Hannay aptly calls “three-dimensional chess.” Hannay documents in detail how relations between Greece and Turkey, Greece and the recognized government of Cyprus, and Turkey and the unrecognized government of northern Cyprus, as well as domestic politics throughout the region, all complicated an already complex issue.

Cyprus’ bid to join the European Union, coupled with Turkey’s own aspirations to start E.U. accession negotiations, however, provided significant new incentives and an action-forcing timetable for all sides. Would Cyprus join the E.U. in 2004 as a divided or reunited island? And to what extent would Turkey use its influence in northern Cyprus to help advance its own E.U. aspirations?

Hannay’s chronological narrative provides ample case study material for conflict-resolution theorists and practitioners. Cyprus’ mediators tried it all: confidence-building measures and track-two diplomacy, indirect proximity talks off-island, and mediated face-to-face talks on the island.

Years of patient preparatory work by United Nations Special Representative Alvaro de Soto culminated in Secretary General Kofi Annan presenting in swift succession three detailed, non-binding U.N. settlement proposals, known informally as Annan I, II and III.

But the constellations over Cyprus — again — did not align. Just prior to Cyprus’ signing the treaty of accession to the E.U. (as a divided island) in



2003, Denktash rejected Annan III. One year later, with pro-settlement/pro-E.U. opinion sweeping northern Cyprus, the U.N. managed to persuade both sides to put Annan III to separate referenda. While the Turkish Cypriots overwhelmingly approved of the U.N. secretary general's plan (despite lingering opposition from Denktash), Clerides' presidential successor and the Greek Cypriots roundly rejected it (despite the retired Clerides' endorsement).

Even though these conflict-resolution efforts did not succeed, Hannay rightly underscores some of the ancillary benefits of conflict management, such as the dramatic relaxation of restrictions on crossing the U.N. buffer zone. In addition, potentially destabilizing military exercises on Cyprus were canceled and the E.U. promised (though it has not yet fully delivered) trade and greater aid to northern Cyprus.

Moreover, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots appear increasingly aware that the division of Cyprus remains a stark anomaly and anachronism in a Europe transformed, whole, free and at peace.

Eschewing both self-doubt and self-pity, Hannay argues persuasively that a Cyprus solution, although not imminent, is still possible, particularly if Turkey's E.U. prospects and Greece-Turkey rapprochement prosper. The strategic and moral imperatives to reach a just and lasting settlement are still valid. Annan III, which continues to enjoys broad international support, remains the most compelling alternative to no solution. The constellations can someday align over Cyprus.

Daniel J. Lawton, a Foreign Service officer since 1990, was the senior Cyprus desk officer from 1999 to 2001. He is currently a political offi-

cer in Copenhagen. This review reflects the author's personal views only.

Spy vs. Spies

Denial and Deception: An Insider's View of the CIA from Iran-Contra to 9/11

*Melissa Mahle, Nation Books, 2005,
\$26.00, hardcover, 403 pages.*

REVIEWED BY DAVID T. JONES

Denial and Deception: An Insider's View of the CIA from Iran-Contra to 9/11 comes on the market as part of a trio of "insider" stories addressing the current CIA. The other titles are *A Spy's Journey: A CIA Memoir* by Floyd L. Paseman and *Blowing My Cover: My Life as a CIA Spy* by Lindsay Moran (which could be subtitled *Sex and the Single CIA Agent*). In a personal comment regarding the latter, Melissa Mahle pre-empts questions by saying that she is "not *that* one." But she does admit encountering what she presumed would be career-limiting, if not career-ending, circumstances at the Central Intelligence Agency — circumstances she suggests would make a great story, but one which under security regulations she is not permitted to disclose. That caveat is relevant and substantial, as it makes it impossible for a reader to determine whether there is an additional agenda beyond what is presented.

Nevertheless, this is not another breathless "tell-all" by the disgruntled. Instead, Mahle has provided a serious — if arguably protracted, at over 400 pages — review of the agency and its problems over the past two decades, from William Casey

through George Tenet. She succeeds in filling a niche between the baseline books of the post-World War II generation — e.g., Sherman Kent's *The CIA and the Craft of Intelligence* — and the exposés that in recent years seem to have been the only material extant on the agency's activities.

Chapter by chapter, and director by director, Mahle walks us through the history of the modern CIA. She describes the agency's effort to reinvent itself in the post-Cold War era, even as force reductions changed the CIA mantra from "global presence" to "global reach;" that is, attempting to cover emergencies in places with no CIA station through hasty TDY efforts to revive old contacts and develop new ones. Mahle spent much of this period as a field operative, but she also provides comprehensive detail of the agency's internal turmoil and its struggles with the executive branch and Congress. She provides engaging capsule summaries of each director, itemizing their strengths and weaknesses and the outcomes of the agency's struggles both with external operational catastrophes (e.g., Iran-Contra, Somalia, the hunt for Osama bin Laden) and a series of internal security disasters, of which Aldrich Ames was only the most public.

Mahle's judgments lead inexorably to the conclusion that the CIA is still groping to find effective ways to manage its new challenges in global terrorism following 9/11 and enhance internal personnel security. Developing capable analysts is a lengthy process, requiring career-long education — for which the new Sherman Kent School for Intelligence Analysis (opened in 2000) is just the beginning. As for beefing up internal security, she suggests that draconian polygraph techniques stemming from the



Aldrich Ames spy case (among others) have destroyed careers and make recruiting new CIA officers other than “white bread” U.S. citizens surprisingly difficult.

Deception and Denial suffers from some semi-ritualistic feminist laments over “glass ceilings” and scattered “look at me” black redactions of text deleted at the last minute by the CIA. Still, this is a solid piece of analysis that should be particularly interesting for those who think that bureaucratic life is uniquely convoluted at State and that diplomats are alone in their professional travails.

Retired Senior Foreign Service officer David T. Jones is a frequent contributor to the Journal.

From Hubris to Leadership

The Opportunity: America’s Moment to Alter History’s Course
Richard N. Haass, Public Affairs (Perseus Books Group), 2005, \$25.00, hardcover, 242 pages.

REVIEWED BY BILL HARROP

This thoughtful, slim volume lays out a new American foreign policy for the 21st century, much different from that of President George W. Bush. A better organized and more coherent opposition political party than we now have in this country might incorporate these recommendations into its platform.

Haass develops the multilateral, consultative, essentially liberal American leadership approach many commentators (e.g., Zbigniew Brzezinski and Joseph Nye) assert is required to address the challenges of the current era, which simply do not lend themselves to unilateral or military solutions. He coins the term “integration” for bringing together the rest of the world, forming coalitions, exerting quiet and consistent American leadership, and setting aside excessive notions of nationalism, pre-emption, military solutions and unilateral power.

Although he strives for a nonpartisan tone, as befits a president of the Council on Foreign Relations, Haass puts down, both explicitly and implicitly, the policies and style of

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the current administration. His analysis and forceful rebuttal of the various rationales for launching a preventive war in Iraq (not a preemptive war, as the White House claimed, says the author) are particularly clear and cogent. So it is perplexing that Haass served for several years as director of policy planning in Colin Powell's State Department while disagreeing utterly, he now reveals, with the neoconservative values that inform the administration.

This paradox also informs an elegant review of the book by former United Nations Under Secretary Brian Urquhart (*The New York Review of Books*, Aug. 11, 2005). As Urquhart explains, Haass defines the policies which the United States

should pursue and which the world desperately needs, but does not address in any way how such a turnaround in U.S. foreign policy could be effected given the domestic political realities of our times.

Urquhart describes these realities as "the firm hold of the big corporations, especially on environmental and energy policy; the neoconservative ideology that rejects international organization and international treaties and conventions and favors unilateral and military ventures; the growing influence of evangelical religion on the White House, on domestic policy and on some aspects of foreign policy, including the administration's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and the relentlessly hostile partisanship of

congressional politics, which can have a paralyzing effect in Washington."

The Opportunity repeatedly argues that diplomacy is the essential tool for the effective projection of United States influence, and implies that the Bush administration has neglected this tool at substantial cost to the nation. But ultimately, this book is about policy, not diplomacy. ■

A former AFSA president, Bill Harrop was an FSO from 1954 to 1993, serving as ambassador to Guinea, Kenya, the Seychelles, Zaire and Israel, and as inspector general of the State Department and Foreign Service. He is on the boards of five diplomacy-related organizations.



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GOING TO COLLEGE IN AMERICA

(OR, HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE
WEIRDEST CULTURE OF ALL: YOUR OWN)

BY FRANCESCA HUEMER KELLY

Ian Haight was born in Kenya, spent the first decade of his life living in Zambia and Zimbabwe, and then moved with his family to Italy for middle school and high school. A self-proclaimed “Europeanized White African-American,” Ian found adjusting to Bowdoin College in small-town Maine a bit rocky.

“Culture shock hit me pretty hard. I realized that I wasn’t just here this time for a few months or relaxation; I was here to live and work in college. I felt really far away from home.”

Almost all college freshmen go through an adjustment period when they head off to school. But the Foreign Service or Third Culture Kid — someone who has spent most or all of his life living in at least one foreign country — gets hit with a double whammy.

“The particularly challenging aspect for this group is that they are so invisible,” says Anne P. Copeland, Ph.D., executive director of the Interchange Institute and co-author of *Understanding American Schools: The Answers to Newcomers’ Most Frequently Asked Questions* (Interchange Institute, 2001, 2005). “They look American, sound American, *are* American. And so, unlike their international student classmates, no one (including them, perhaps) expects them to be having culture shock, or to need cultural information. They are adding this to the normal stresses of moving away from family and encountering the academic and social demands of college, but these cultural issues are harder for being unexpected and invisible.”

Francesca Huemer Kelly, a Foreign Service spouse presently based in Brussels, is a professional freelance writer who is published regularly in American and international magazines. She is a founder of Tales from a Small Planet (talesmag.com), was the Web site’s editor-in-chief from 1999 to 2003, and currently serves in an advisory capacity. Also a trained concert singer, Ms. Kelly has lived in Milan, Leningrad, Moscow, Belgrade, Vienna, Ankara and Rome. She is the mother of four children.

What to Expect

If you’re a Foreign Service or Third Culture Kid who has lived most of your life overseas, what can you expect from your first few months at college in America?

• **You may feel “different.”** Everyone comes to college feeling a bit insecure about how they’ll fit in, but for Third Culture Kids this feeling is likely to be compounded. “It was very easy to feel out of place as a freshman. You just assume that everyone else is more in tune — more American,” says Mark Mozur, a 2005 graduate of Harvard University who has lived in Eastern Europe and South America.

“During the first day of orientation, I listened to many other incoming freshmen bonding over their common New England backgrounds,” recalls Elisabeth Frost, a recent graduate of Bates College. “When people asked me where I was from, I felt like I was telling them my entire life story: Guinea, Mexico, Honduras, and Brazil, with only two elementary school years in the U.S.”

• **You may not know how things work — but you’ll learn quickly.** TCKs can face many of the same adjustment problems as international students. *College of the Overwhelmed* (Jossey-Bass, 2004) authors Richard Kadison and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo posit that international students are “thinking about every move. . . . How do I choose from two dozen different laundry detergents, and how do I turn on this washing machine? Conscious living gets very tiring.”

Some FS kids “can lack the basic skill of taking care of themselves, because they’ve always had a maid to tend to them,” observes Katia Miller, a sophomore at the College of William and Mary, who spent her high school years in Peru. There, as in most developing countries where labor is plentiful and salaries low, domestic help is the norm, even for middle-class families.

Yet TCKs also learn to be self-sufficient very quickly. Along with international students, they’re often left alone on campus for at least one holiday, and while other kids’ parents arrive at end-of-term with the minivan to help their kids

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pack up, TCKs are on their own, vacating their dorm rooms with ticket and passport in hand.

• **Other students may not know — literally — where you are coming from.** “When I tell someone I went to high school in Austria and they say, ‘Oh, where the kangaroos are?’ it makes me think we may not have much in common,” admits Sarah Pettit, a senior at Washington University in St. Louis.

Feeling different is not helped by the fact that other students might not know quite how to categorize TCKs. For one thing, they can’t relate to the TCKs’ life experiences.

“Whenever my friends talked about something, whether it was politics or cars or computer games, all I could add was ‘well, in Italy ...’” says Ian Haight, now in his sophomore year at Bowdoin. “It got to the point where the conversation would die if I said anything.” Happily, Ian reports that his new friends soon “got used to me. And I got more in touch with American culture.”

“There is sometimes resentment from the U.S. kids because of the traveling you have done and the places you have lived,” says Steve Catt, a junior at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, who arrived there from high school in Tokyo. “Just remember that your actions and words can play a big part in helping them understand. And you can always learn something from them, too.”

Chelsea Jensen, a freshman at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, Calif., says, “I came back to the U.S. thinking that everyone would be uncultured. I’ve known countless FS kids who thought the same thing. But in fact there are many American kids who are not the stereotypical ‘proud to be an American because we’re better than everyone else.’”

“Be prepared for a lot of questions,” advises Emily Frost, a sophomore at Hollins University in Roanoke, Va., who has lived in South and Central America as well as in Guinea. “But be watchful of talking too much



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sound American,
are American. And so,
unlike their international
student classmates, no one
(including them, perhaps)
expects them to be having
culture shock.*

about your international background as some people will think you're showing off."


In fact, Steve Catt reports that several students did not believe him when he told them of his experiences abroad.

• **Alternatively, Foreign Service and Third Culture Kids may be perceived as more interesting than the average college student.** "Sometimes when I tell people I've lived overseas my whole life, they react as if I were a god," says Ian Haight. "Sure, it's unique, but it doesn't mean I'm better than someone who's lived in the same town his whole life. I'm just different."

John Taylor, a junior at the University of California, Riverside, who lived for two years in Ankara, finds his international experiences are viewed as almost universally positive by his peers. "People are interested and even envious that I have had experiences people twice my age haven't. I often find myself at the center of attention."

• **You will not believe the food!** Depending on where they were living before they arrived, FS kids' reactions to college food will be as varied as diets around the world. A student coming from the Third World may be

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astonished, even embarrassed, at how much food is offered at the college cafeteria — and how much is wasted. Conversely, a student coming from a country where cuisine is renowned may hate the repetitive daily fare in the dining hall. “Getting used to the processed food at school was a huge adjustment,” says Leah Speckhard, who attended James Madison University for two years before transferring.

“It was funny to have all of the food that I only used to get on vacations, such as Tater Tots and Doritos, available to me all the time,” says Emily Frost.

- **You may be stupefied by things most Americans take for granted.** “It’s really weird to see my classmates driving!” my daughter, Annalisa Kelly, a sophomore at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, exclaimed on her first phone call home from school. Like many TCKs, she was used to urban public transport, and had never learned to drive. Other things international students have mentioned as surreal are seemingly endless strings of shopping malls, gigantic meal portions and polite, orderly lines at checkout counters.

- **You may be frustrated by the legal drinking age — and by the college drinking culture.** Many students who have lived overseas as teens are used to a lower drinking age and have learned how to use alcohol moderately.

“It’s difficult to be allowed to do something and then have that right taken away from you,” admits Sarah Pettit.

Ian Haight adds, “American [students] look at drinking very differently. I don’t think they even see it as pleasurable, just ‘cool’ only because it’s illegal and everyone else is doing it.”

However, most students interviewed have found friends who do not abuse alcohol or drugs. “There are even substance-free floors in some dorms,” reports one student.

- **“Diversity” might not mean “tolerance” or “integration.”** Sarah

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How Can Foreign Service Parents Help?

Melanie Kerber, Ed.D., an educational consultant, has found that FS teens and TCKs vary tremendously in their adjustment to college. "Some kids who have lived their entire lives overseas go off to an American college with little to no difficulty, whereas others struggle with not fitting in and do not relate to the campus activities: drinking parties, carousing, etc. The same can be said for kids who have lived their entire lives in America.

"I always give parents three pieces of advice. Number one is to stay connected with their country. It is important that the child always feel as though he or she has a home country. This is particularly true regarding news, culture and current trends. Second, expect at least one semester of turmoil where kids want to come home or transfer. I urge parents to handle it accordingly, not by bringing them home but helping them through it at a distance. It undercuts kids' confidence to bring them home

*It is important that
the child always feel
as though he or she has
a home country.*

unless they are on the verge of suicide.

"Finally, parents can be influential in steering their kids' college choices based on the type of child they have. For example, if the teen tended to be clingy as a child, he or she might revert back to that under the stress of college life, and it might be wise to select a college close to relatives or close family friends."

Becky Grappo, education and youth officer for the Family Liaison Office, agrees. "Don't be surprised if you get mixed mes-

sages when your kids call home. The idea of college being 'the best four years of your life' is sometimes misleading, and kids expect it to be great all the time. So they might call one time loving it, and the next time bemoaning the fact that they don't click with the other kids, it's not the right place for them, they want to transfer, etc. Sometimes that might be true, but they need to be encouraged to give it time, make the effort to get involved, and realize that their feelings are shared by many others."

She adds: "When selecting a college, Foreign Service kids sometimes have additional factors to consider other than those that are obvious. For example, if the parents are overseas, how easy is it to get to an airport? Where are other family members going to be who can offer help and support? Every student has a different comfort level with distance and their newly-found independence."

— Francesca Huemer Kelly

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Alternatively, Foreign Service and Third Culture Kids may be perceived as more interesting than the average college student.

Pettit was surprised by a less diversified system than she expected. "I found people, especially minorities on campus, to be much more conscious of their differences and, as a result, more segregated. Black students tended to group together, Asians grouped together, and Hispanics grouped together. A lot of clubs of different minorities might detract from diversity more than promote it."

"I feel I understand racial differences and cultures better than the average American," acknowledges Katia Miller. "Everyone has his or her own belief, own tradition, and I've learned more about that overseas."

• **You may end up hanging out with other TCKs and international students.** FS kids and TCKs often feel most comfortable with the kinds of people they went to high school with: international kids, for the most part. Mark Mozur says, "I found kids I could relate to through the International Club. I ended up hanging out mostly with Polish kids because Poland was where I had lived before coming to Harvard."

"Search out the international kids," advises Steve Catt. "Like us, they are also having some difficulty adjusting and will love that you reach out to them. You will find they are probably more compatible with you than other Americans."

Ben Harburg, a senior at Tufts University who grew up in Spain and Switzerland, as well as in the States, reflects, "I've ended up feeling equal-



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ly comfortable with both international and American students among my friends.” But he points out that there can be different subcultures of international kids: students from poor backgrounds/countries on full scholarship, as well as very wealthy international students whose parents have set them up with luxury cars and apartments, and “who are perceived to be snobby.”

“I made it a point to hang out with the American kids as well as the international kids,” says Ian Haight, “because I knew that being friends with them would help me adapt to my new life. Talking to my former high school classmates who had also just moved to the U.S. from overseas was important, too, because they were in exactly the same boat I was in.”

• **Your tolerance and resilience will help you in making friends and finding your niche.** Foreign Service kids have spent their

“In many ways the adjustment to college was the easiest move I ever made, because I was so well-prepared by our moving around during my childhood.”

— Ben Harburg

lives moving to new countries and finding new friends. This adaptability and resilience is one of the many strengths they bring to being college freshmen. “One advantage to being a

Foreign Service kid, when adjusting to college in America, is that I already had a lot of experience dealing with new situations, because of this past history with change, and thus made a smooth transition into college life,” says Janey Symington, a junior at Yale University, who arrived there from Niamey, Niger, West Africa, where there were only five students in the entire high school.

Ben Harburg says, “In many ways the adjustment to college was the easiest move I ever made, because everyone there is new and facing the same thing together, and because I was so well-prepared by our moving around so much during my childhood.”

Top Ten Things They Want You to Know...

Now that their adjustment to college life in America is behind them, what advice do these TCKs give to

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high school students who are now living overseas?

1. In making your college choices, consider carefully the student body makeup and environment — and visit the campus if you can. “A Third Culture Kid might feel completely alien in a rural, homogenous area,” says Ben Harburg. “I love the Boston area because it is so diverse.”

Your decision should also be based on what “just feels right.” My daughter was certain she’d end up in New York or Chicago, but she ultimately chose Wesleyan in rural Connecticut, partially because it reminded her of her overseas high school. Visiting the campus was what made the difference.

Says Leah Speckhard, who is now attending Vesalius University in Brussels, “I went to college in Virginia without ever having visited the campus, and I ended up transferring. Visiting first would have made a big

*Don't think of this as
“coming home.”*

difference.”


2. Don't pack too much stuff, unless it's the green stuff. Yes, you may get a shipment allowance, but, as Michelle Beaudry, a student at George Mason University, points out, “try not to pack absolutely everything, because you will be the one who has to move it all in and out of your dorm room.” (She also advises saving “lots of money” before college, because “it goes really fast.”)

3. Get involved in something fun right away. “Don't be passive. Initiate. Join a club. Get out of the dorm,” urges Mark Mozur.

“I wish that I had gotten involved in more activities from the beginning,” admits Elisabeth Frost. “Think about what you like to do and try to pursue your interests in college. However, be prepared for those academic and extracurricular interests to change, and don't be afraid to try new things.”

4. Don't think of this as “coming home.” Yes, you're returning to your native land, but you may set yourself up for disappointment if you don't lower your expectations. Many Foreign Service kids only know America as “Vacation Land.” So you might want to get in touch with at least some aspects of American popular culture before you head state-side. Read *People* magazine. Get someone to tape some American television shows for you. And even if it's only during home leave, visiting America does help.

“Returning every summer to Missouri, where I was born, also



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helped lessen the culture shock that many Third Culture Kids feel when they return to their 'native' country," remarks Janey Symington.

5. Ask for help. If you find that you are seriously overwhelmed with adjusting to both life in America and the stress of the college workload, do ask for help, whether it be from university counseling services, friends, family or religious community. Look for support groups.

And don't feel that your issues always necessarily have to do with being a Foreign Service kid. Every college student, no matter what his or her background, goes through a rough patch. Sarah Pettit volunteers as a crisis counselor on campus: "If you are having trouble adjusting, don't suffer in silence! Adjustment issues are very common, so take advantage of the resources available to help you."

6. Home is not as far away as it

Accept that you may feel like one person at home with your family, another person at school. In fact, you may have even more than two homes.

seems — or, home needn't seem as far away as it is! Third Culture families tend to be more close-knit than average; they "pull together" during every international move.

"Through all the moves, my family was the main thing that remained constant — and this time I was moving all by myself," reflects Emily

Frost. "You are going to miss your family, so make use of the great technology available: instant messaging, e-mailing and video conferencing with a webcam."

"It's important to realize that you're not all that far away from home," says Ian Haight. "When I'm sitting at my desk with three papers to write and only four hours of sleep, and I'm sick, and my friends won't stop making noise, I reassure myself that soon I will be sitting with my family on the balcony back in Rome."

7. Expect surprises. "People will say, 'Wow, your English is really good!' even though I am an American," laughs Sarah Pettit.

Leah Speckhard claims she went to school with an open mind, and "didn't expect to run into the stereotypical American ... but I did."

Ian Haight's "Carpe Diem" (Seize the Day) tattoo was similar to those of

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his Italian friends. "But when I showed it to my American friends, they looked at me like I was a biker or a prison inmate."

"Everyone around me spoke English!" exclaims Emily Frost.

Here are some other comments that come up in discussions with Foreign Service college students. "Americans always seem to be in a rush." "Everyone dresses the same way." "People are obsessive about diet and weight."

The point of these disparate stories is this: you may not, right now, have any idea what will surprise or even shock you, but you can pretty much count on the fact that something will.


8. Accept that you may have several homes, and that each one may not be perfect. Some students report that coming home for the holidays or for the summer feels just like old times, while others no longer feel as if they are the same person who left just a few months ago. Accept that you may feel like one person at home with your family, another person at school. In fact, you may have even more than two homes.

"When I graduated from high school in Ottawa, Canada, I went off to the University of Virginia and my family moved to Ethiopia," reflects Jimmy Galindo, a senior at U. Va. "The reality of being separated from my family by the width of an ocean and a continent struck hard at times."

If, like Jimmy's family, your family moves while you are at college, you may return home for the holidays and realize that you don't know anyone: all your friends from high school are back at your last post! Consider making special arrangements to visit your "old home" during part of your vacation if at all feasible.

9. Don't forget who you are. "Follow up on and embrace your international background," advises Jimmy Galindo. "Tutor a child from an immigrant family, take classes in international affairs, attend cultural events, study abroad, search out unique living experiences. (U. Va., for

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“Even if you have lived overseas your whole life, go abroad your junior year. It is a different experience to be in a foreign country on your own as opposed to with your parents.”

— Sarah Pettit

example, has an International Residential College where 300 students, about 100 of whom are foreign students, live together in a multicultural community.) All this will make you feel a little more at home.”

“Even if you have lived overseas your whole life, go abroad your junior year,” suggests Sarah Pettit. “It is a different experience to be in a foreign country on your own as opposed to with your parents.”

10. Finally, remember your strengths. You’ve adjusted to new situations all of your life. This is just another one. Chances are you will soon be embracing college life in America and all its wild and crazy roller-coaster turns.

“My advice is not to worry so much,” says Owen McMullen, who grew up in South Africa, Fiji and Burma. “I was concerned about not fitting in to Drake University in Des Moines, but have found it easier than I had feared.”

Says Ian Haight, “At first the going was rough, but now I love it here. Bowdoin is an excellent college and has excellent people. I really feel like I belong here, and I don’t regret a single choice I made. It’s great.” ■

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Resources for Going to College in America

Books:

- Richard Kadison, M.D., and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo, *College of the Overwhelmed: The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What to Do About It*, Jossey-Bass, 2004
Suzette Tyler, *Been There, Should've Done That II: More Tips for Making the Most of College*, Front Porch Press, 2001
Janet Farrar Worthington and Ronald Farrar, *The Ultimate College Survival Guide*, Peterson's Guides, 1998.
David Pollock and Ruth Van Reyken, *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing up Among Worlds*, Nicholas Brealey, 2001
Karen C. McCluskey, *Notes from a Traveling Childhood: Readings for Internationally Mobile Parents and Children*, Foreign Service Youth Foundation, 1994
Carolyn D. Smith, *Strangers At Home: Essays on the Effects of Living Overseas and Coming "Home" to a Strange Land*, Aletheia Publications, 1996
Linda Bell, *Hidden Immigrants: Legacies of Growing Up Abroad*, Cross Cultural Publications, 1997

Web Sites:

- Foreign Service Youth Foundation* — www.fsyf.org (clubs, support, resources, interactive opportunities for FS kids and teenagers)
Third Culture Kid World — www.tckworld.com (resources for TCKs)
The Interchange Institute — www.interchangeinstitute.org (resources for people moving to new cultures)
U Magazine at colleges.com — <http://www.colleges.com/Umagazine/> (college culture)
Co-Ed Magazine — <http://www.co-edmagazine.com> (more college pop culture)


— Francesca Huemer Kelly

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A New Kind of College Guide

U.S. News & World Report's annual ranking of colleges, and others like it, have become very influential in the choices parents and their children make about schools. Understandably, parents want to be assured that the considerable financial outlay for their child's higher education is "worth it," and existing college rankings aim at identifying the "best" schools in terms of academic excellence.

By contrast, the *Washington Monthly College Guide* that debuted this fall sorts schools according to what the schools give to society. "Other guides ask what colleges can do for you," says *Washington Monthly*. "We ask what colleges are doing for the country." In the new college guide, schools are ranked by how well they perform three vital socioeconomic functions: how well they serve as engines of social mobility; how well they serve as producers of the scientific minds and research that develops new knowledge and drives economic growth; and how well they promote an ethic of service.

Not surprisingly, the headline schools routinely found at the top of the *U.S. News* list did not necessarily finish at the top of the *Washington Monthly* list. In fact, only three schools in the 2006 *U.S. News* top ten are in its highest ranks: MIT, Stanford and the University of Pennsylvania. Among the Ivy League schools, only Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania made *Washington Monthly's* top ten. Princeton, tied with Harvard for first place in *U.S. News's* 2005 list, ranks 44 on the *Washington Monthly* list.

Interestingly, MIT earned its overall number-one ranking in the *Washington Monthly* guide not so much because of its ground-breaking research. What made the school number one was its commitment to national service, where it ranked 7, far better than most of its elite peers. Similarly, UCLA, which finished second on the overall list, excelled in research and came in first in the social mobility rating because of its astoundingly high graduation rate given its large number of lower-income students. Overall, the *Washington Monthly* list contains many more first-rate state schools than the *U.S. News* list, which has no public universities within its top ten.

The rankings have had a growing impact on schools, too. College administrators scramble to increase the amount of money given by their alumni or raise the SAT scores of their incoming freshmen to improve their score in the ranking. Competition to improve rankings in the *Washington Monthly* guide could have far-reaching effects as schools start enrolling greater numbers of lower-income students and making sure that they graduate, encourage more of their students to join the Peace Corps or the military, and intensify their focus on producing more Ph.D. graduates in science and engineering.

The *Washington Monthly College Guide*, including an explanation of the methodology behind it, is available online at <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2005/0509.collegeguide.html>.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

Rose

There's a playful, creative quality about Rose. At Miss Hall's, she paints landscapes that live and breathe. She wants to be a Red Cross pediatrician, giving medical aid to children, around the world. Altruism is an art form, too.



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STUDY ABROAD: TAKE THE PLUNGE

IN SOME WAYS, A SEMESTER ABROAD IS LIKE AN EXTENDED VACATION. BUT FOR MOST STUDENTS, IT'S AN EXPERIENCE THAT ENCOMPASSES MUCH MORE.

By BROOKE DEAL

As many Foreign Service families already know, studying abroad is an exciting, challenging plunge into the culture and academic life of another country. There may be other attractions, too, such as enrolling at St. Andrews University in Scotland in hopes of meeting Prince William. Whatever their motivations, over 170,000 American students study abroad each year, according to the Institute of International Education. Cities in Europe remain a hot spot for many, but more and more students are choosing locations off the beaten path, in Asia, Africa and South America. And the numbers increase year by year as more students recognize the importance of studying abroad in a globally interdependent world — and as the understanding these students acquire becomes increasingly valuable in today's society.

People often ask me why I chose to go abroad for a semester of my college career: "Why would you want to leave this wonderful nation to go to some backward country where most people don't even own dishwashers?" I am tempted to respond that the answer is simple: to avoid people with that attitude! But the answer is more complicated.

Study abroad isn't just a carefree semester spent traveling, exploring nightlife and meeting new people. It is an experience you won't find anywhere else. Completely removed from all you've ever known, this is a chance to discover who you really are while exploring a culture and a place completely foreign to you. You'll be amazed at how quickly you will bond with new friends. You will have to budget, take tests and write papers, and still be responsible enough to balance work and play.

It's also about learning how to survive on your own, emotionally, mentally and physically. This is why I call it a life

experience. Sure, you can learn these things in the United States, but living in another country as a young adult will give you the insight to better understand another culture and another people.

Getting Started

So how do you become part of that group of 170,000 overseas students? Here's what you need to do well before you get on that plane.

Start early! Studying abroad takes a great deal of preparation. Most programs require applications at least one semester before you go abroad. But well before that, you must decide where on earth you want to go, which may take longer than you think. Begin by making a list of places you'd like to live. Many students use this as a chance to explore their family roots or to discover new and exotic places. If you can, talk to someone who has studied or lived in these countries. In addition, start saving money now — travel is not cheap! And keep in mind that you can even choose to study at another university in the United States as a visiting student if you don't want to stray far from home.

Narrow your choices. After enough debate, you should be able to weed out some of the choices you are less enthusiastic about, ending up with two or three universities in which you are truly interested, whatever the reason.

Apply early. Get those applications in as far ahead of the deadline as possible. Many programs accept students on rolling admissions, so the earlier the better. You're also likely to receive word of the school's decision sooner that way, so if your first choice falls through, you can still apply to others.

Get all your documentation together. No matter how much time and deliberation you put into making your final decision, you won't make it there without the necessary documents. First and foremost, every person traveling internationally must have a passport, so apply for one as soon as possible; it can take months to receive it. Depending on the country, you'll probably need a student visa and certain inoculations before leaving home. You can

Continued on page 82

Brooke Deal, a senior at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., was the Journal's editorial intern during the summer of 2005. In the fall of 2004, she spent a semester at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

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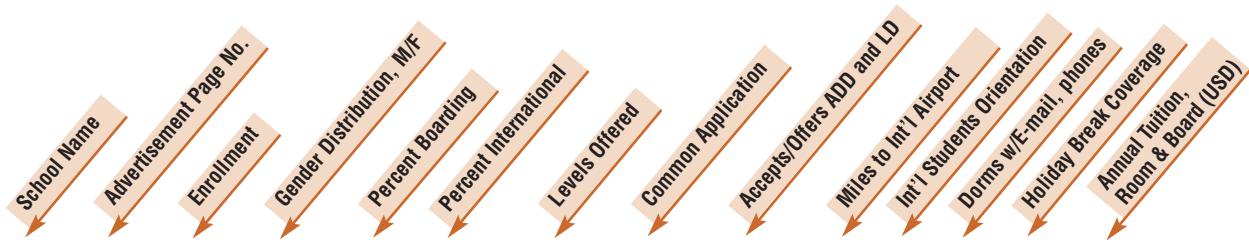
Life in the Foreign Service can be exciting, but also confusing and isolating. You don't have to go it alone. Since 1960, the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) has been bringing the foreign affairs community together to promote a better quality of life through:

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- **Support** We have groups for toddlers and parents, French speakers, foreign-born spouses, medical evacuees, and more.
- **Recognition** AAFSW annually contributes to the Secretary of State's Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad and college scholarships for FS youth.
- **Institutional change** The Family Liaison Office, the Overseas Briefing Center, and the Foreign Service Youth Foundation exist thanks to AAFSW!

Spouses, partners, and employees of U.S. foreign affairs agencies, active or retired, are encouraged to join AAFSW at www.aafsw.org today! Your membership and tax-deductible contributions help AAFSW help all of us.

Schools at a Glance

Go to our Web page at www.fsjournal.org and click on the Marketplace tab for more information.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Alexandria Country Day School	84	240	47/53	NA	NA	K-8	N	N	20	NA	NA	NA	16,800
Browne Academy	89	276	49/51	NA	1	PS-8	N		5	NA	NA	NA	17,502
Langley School	90	466	50/50	NA	0	PK-8	NA	N	15	NA	NA	NA	20,500
Washington International School	75	825	49/51	NA	37	PK-12	N	Limited	8	Y	NA	NA	18,500

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Indian Mountain School	93	260	60/40	27	12	PK-9	N	Y	75	N	Y	N	33,180
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JUNIOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

British School of Washington	72	300	50/50	NA	50	PK-12	N	N	10	Y	NA	NA	19,050
Christ School	73	185	All boys	82	10	8-12	Y	Limited	3	Y	Y	Y	31,500
Dana Hall School	68	465	All girls	50	10	6-12	Y	Limited	12	Y	Y	N	37,000
Hockaday School, The	84	1,010	All girls	9	1	PK-12	Y	Y	30	Y	Y	Y	30,170
Maxwell International Bahá'í School	69	160	49/51	45	38	7-12	Y	Y	30	Y	Y	N	17,360
Oakwood Friends School	91	140	55/45	55	5	6-12	Y	Y	35	N	N	N	25,900
Perkiomen School	76	265	60/40	60	20	5-12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	N	34,300
Shattuck - St. Mary's School	74	335	61/39	70	20	6-12	Y	Y	45	Y	Y	N	29,900
Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart	96	782	All girls	NA	2	JK-12	N	N	15	N	N	N	17,480
Stony Brook School	95	336	55/45	56	20	7-12	Y	Limited	50	N	Y	N	29,600
St Margaret's School	75	150	All girls	75	15	8-12	Y	Limited	50	Yes	Y	N	34,500

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Dublin School	81	124	60/40	78	23	9-12, PG	Y	Y	43	Y	Y	Y	35,400
Emma Willard School	90	312	All girls	60	16	9-12, PG	Y	NA	7	Y	Y	Y	32,750
Foxcroft School	89	170	All girls	66	14	9-12	Y	Limited	18	Y	Y	N	35,700
Idyllwild Arts Academy	79	262	40/60	85	27	9-12, PG	Y	N	120	Y	Y	N	35,800
Kents Hill School	68	215	60/40	70	20	9-12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	Limited	33,900
Madeira School	93	302	All girls	55	13	9-12	Y	Y	15	Y	Y	Limited	34,780
Miss Hall's School	77	175	All girls	75	18	9-12	Y	NA	40	Y	Y	N	35,800
Oregon Episcopal School	70	290	53/47	19	18	9-12	Y	Limited	19	Y	Y	Y	33,445

CONTINUED ON PAGE 86

Notes: NA - Not Applicable. ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder. LD - Learning Disability.


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check the "Travel and Living Abroad" section of the State Department Web site for that information (www.state.gov).

All students should receive a "student validation letter" from their host university prior to leaving home; you will have to present this to the immigration office once you arrive at your destination. Don't forget to obtain an International Student Identity Card (www.isic.org/sisp/index.htm) for emergency assistance as well as discounts on travel, hostels and entertainment abroad. In addition, some study-abroad programs demand proof of financial security. The requirements vary from program to program, so make sure you know them well in advance.

Have back-ups. Make at least two extra copies of all your documents. Leave one set of copies at home with your parents, and keep another with you, in a separate place

Every study abroad program is different, so make sure you know exactly what yours entails.

from the originals.

Do good financial planning. Every study abroad program is different, so make sure you know exactly what your program entails. Some offer housing for their students; others do not. You might need to provide your own transportation to the destination as well as around town. And you'll almost certainly be responsible for covering your own household expenses, personal spending, etc.

Once You're There...

Starting out in a new environment is usually tricky, even for Foreign Service dependents and other seasoned veterans of overseas living. Prepare yourself for an emotional roller coaster ride, usually in three phases. Most students are nothing but excited for the first couple of weeks, when everything is brand-new and calls out to be explored. But brace yourself to crash into homesickness; after a few weeks, most international students begin to miss family, friends and 24-hour supermarkets. There are always a few things that study abroad programs won't tell you. Not only that, but you might even resent things about your host country (like not having constant Internet access in your room or the tedious matriculation process at your university).

But don't worry; this phase won't last long. Soon you'll grow accustomed to the new way of life you are

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leading, and most likely enjoy the rest of your time as you would at your American university. By the end of your term abroad, you'll understand everything that you once considered foreign. You might not even want to return home!

Here are some suggestions to ease the transition:

Reach out. It may seem obvious, but particularly when you're homesick, it can be difficult to befriend local students. Many Americans abroad find themselves stuck in their American bubble, always hanging out with the other students in their program because it can be difficult to go out and meet foreign nationals, particularly if you don't speak the local language. But do it anyway; you'll be glad you did.

Join student clubs. Campus organizations are a good place to start, particularly those that cater to your

Continued on page 84

Five Things I Wish I'd Been Told

Here are some other snippets of advice, things I wish people had told me before I went to Scotland:

Bring shower shoes. This is especially important when you plan on staying in a youth hostel. Believe me, you'll regret it otherwise.

Experience local nightlife for yourself. Of course, be careful and go with a group, but there's just no substitute for seeing "Eurotrash" first-hand!

Take overnight trains to save on hotels when traveling.

Don't be surprised that most people will be able to tell you're American, whether by your accent or your tennis shoes. I once had a stranger in Edinburgh, say to me, "You're American, aren't you?" When I asked him how he knew, he responded, "You just have that cheery look about you."

Similarly, don't be surprised to encounter anti-American sentiment. Almost anywhere you go, you will be expected to defend yourself and U.S. policy on a wide range of issues. To make this easier, brush up on U.S. history and politics before you go abroad, as well as the basics for the location in which you'll be studying. Be honest about how you feel and support your ideas; most people will be glad to listen even if they don't agree.

Brush up on U.S. history and politics before you go abroad, as well as the basics for the location in which you'll be studying.

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Continued from page 83

own interests and hobbies. Besides giving you a connection to life beyond the school, they can be a reason to come back to this city where you lived for a semester or two.

Keep a journal and take lots of photos. You've probably already heard those pieces of advice, but they're both true. When you get back home, you'll have a first-person chronicle and timeless reminders of international adventures, ready to return you to your time abroad.

The Re-entry Process

Believe it or not, coming home might be the hardest part of the entire experience. Returning to the world of midnight fast food and endless supermarkets can trigger a nasty case of reverse culture shock. And whether you fell in love with your host country or not, and even if other friends also studied abroad, you may feel frustrated that no one else can relate to this

amazing experience you just had. What do you say at Christmas when your grandparents ask, "So how was it?" How do you describe this incredible experience?

Studying abroad drops you right into the lifestyle of another corner of the world. Although you might feel like one at first, you are much more than a visitor — you'll need to know the essentials: where to buy groceries, how to use the public transportation, which gestures are offensive ... the list goes on. I found out, for instance, that in the United Kingdom, the word "pants" refers to what we Yanks call "underwear." So you learn to watch what you say (sometimes the hard way!).

The study-abroad experience is unique in that, in the end, you are a tourist and a local, and soon when people ask you for directions, you'll be able to answer them. You can still enjoy the tourist traps of the city and

then join local undergraduates at the student union, which, if you happen to be in Europe, will usually serve cheap alcohol.


Above all, being removed from your normal situation gives you a chance for introspection, so you can learn who you really are. Study abroad gives new meaning to the phrase "discovering different perspectives." You go abroad to learn about another way of life, but end up learning even more about your own identity, and returning to the United States with a new appreciation for life at home.

No matter how much traveling you have done, studying abroad is something every university student should do before graduating. After all, college provides you with this one chance to live abroad that you will most likely never have again. It's easy to dream about it. Now take the next step. Go ahead — take the plunge. ■

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LOST AND FOUND: INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL REUNIONS

ATTENDING AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CAN PROVIDE NOT ONLY
FOND MEMORIES BUT A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE.

By MIKKELA THOMPSON

All over the world, every week, there are impromptu international school reunions. Just last month, I had dinner with former students from my school, and this made me think back to my international high school. I sent out a request for stories on a couple of listservs and talked on the phone with other Foreign Service brats and other internationally raised people. I got responses from more than a score of people and had lively e-mail conversations and phone conversations with most of them.

The reunions seem to fall into several distinct categories: official reunions, alumni clubs and activities, major events (weddings, birthdays and funerals) and casual get-togethers. A recent article on adult Third Culture Kids reports that they maintain regular contact with people from other countries. (A TCK is a child who has his or her parents' culture, the one that they are living in, and his or her own, "third" culture created out of this cultural *mélange*. TCKs can be military brats, missionary kids, Foreign Service and corporate kids, and others who have lived as children in foreign cultures.)

"Whether in professional or volunteer roles, through friendship or family networks, the vast majority (92 percent) have at least yearly contact with people from other countries. Nearly a quarter associate with internationals at least once a month, some daily," state Ann Baker Cottrell and Ruth Hill Useem. "A majority also report some, though often infrequent, contact with people they knew as children abroad. Increasingly popular are school reunions which validate the third culture and TCK identity and maintain contacts."

Searching the World Wide Web

Even if you have lost contact with your old school and

Mikkela Thompson is the Journal's Business Manager and a former FS child.

classmates, it is possible to find them. David Hocking, a former pupil at Lakenheath High School (a U.S. Department of Defense school), set up a Web site, www.libertynet.co.uk/LHS, for his high school. On the site, he included a "brat links" page with useful links. He explains his reason for starting the site: "What you see here is the culmination of an idea. After I left Lakenheath in 1986, I lost touch with a lot of people. With the foolishness of youth, I allowed some good friendships to lapse. In the years since nostalgia set in, I looked back at my years at Lakenheath as some of the best in my life thus far. Then there was this little problem... It suddenly became extremely difficult to find people. People moved, got married or, even worse, got unlisted phone numbers!"

Hocking's brat links include the *All England American High School Virtual Reunion*, which is a weekly chat room; the Department of Defense Dependents Schools home page, *For the Brats* (www.geocities.com/SoHo/7315/); *Global Nomads* (www.worldweave.com/GN.html); *Military Brats International* (<http://www.militarybrat.com>); and *Operation Footlocker*, which leads you to the *TCK World* Web site (www.tckworld.com).

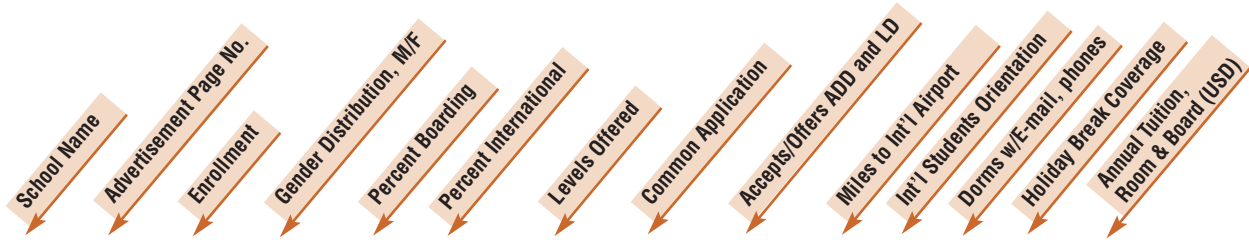
The AFCENT/AFNORTH International High School alumni site, a NATO school located in Brunssum, the Netherlands, has a creative approach to dividing the classes. It segments the students as Flower Children (the 1960s); Village People (the 1970s); New Wavers (the 1980s); Generation X (the 1990s) and Millennials (the 2000s). They then give names, years of attendance and e-mail addresses (including a "bad e-mail" list, where people can check to see if they are still listed under an old e-mail address). They also note the year of graduation, usually meaning from the American 12th grade — though some respondents consider their 13th year their graduation year.

As I trawled the Internet, I found many specialized Web sites for finding and organizing school reunions (see p. 88). Many of these sites include international schools. I also discovered that most international schools have Web sites of

Continued on page 89

Schools at a Glance

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SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CONTINUED

Purnell School	83	110	All girls	85	10	9-12	Y	Y	35	Y	Y	N	34,725
Salem Academy and College	65	200	All girls	52	6	9-12	Y	N	20	N	Y/N	Y	24,600
Sandy Spring Friends School	95	547	49/51	17	12	PK-12	Y	Limited	25	Y	Y	N	25,100-30,680
St. Timothy's School	96	132	All girls	55	22	9-12, PG	Y	N	19	Y	Y	N	34,500
Storm King School	72	135	66/34	60	24	7-12	Y	Y	90	Y	Y	N	31,600

DISTANCE LEARNING/HOMESCHOOLING

University of Missouri (at Columbia)	66	Independent study: 3-12, PG, accredited HS diploma. Go to: www.cdiss.missouri.edu/go/fsd3.asp for more information											21,000
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MILITARY SCHOOLS

Valley Forge Military Academy	87	600	All boys	100	12	7-12, PG	Y	N	15	Y	Y	N	28,550
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SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

Frederic L. Chamberlain School	71	112	61/39	82	2	6-12, PG	N	Y	50	Y	N	Y	116,226
Gow School	73	143	All boys	100	20	7-12, PG	N	Y	20	Y	Y	N	41,900
Riverview School	70	182	50/50	100	Limited	7-12, PG	N	Y	75	Y	N	N	55,643

OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

Leyysin American School in Switzerland	87	350	54/46	100	65	9-12, PG	Y	Limited	75	Y	Y	N	33,000
Marymount International School	66	800	49/51	NA	50	PK-12	N	Limited	15	Y	N	N	19,285
St. Stephens School	76	211	45/55	16	63	9-12, PG	N	N	12	NA	Y	N	31,177*
Prem Tinsulanonda International School	67	431	53/47	24	70	K-12	N	N	15	N	Y	N	9,000

OTHER

AAFSW (Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide)	79	Bringing the FS community together to promote a better quality of life.										Go to www.aafsw.org
FSYF (Foreign Service Youth Foundation)	82	Assists Foreign Service Youth by coordination development programs.										Go to www.fsyf.org
ISS (International Schools Services)	81											Go to www.iss.edu

Notes: NA - Not Applicable. ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder. LD - Learning Disability.

* Euro 26,500 – USD equivalent based on the November 2005 exchange rate.

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Fishing for Friends on the Web

Classmates.com said that I had 313 other classmates registered. You go to their Web site, click on "Overseas American/Canadian schools" at the bottom (or go straight to the Canadian, German or Swedish icons). Then pick your country and city. The site's current directory includes only schools located in the United States and Canada and American or Canadian schools located overseas, and does not support the addition of other schools. When you click on your school, you get to a page that tells you how many from your school are registered. There is a fee, but to avoid it you can click on "basic" to see who is registered from your school. I saw at least 15 names that I recognized. Students from the four years prior to your graduation year are listed, but you can see all the years if you want to. There are e-mail addresses or groups or photo sections. To e-mail someone, you need to pay — it costs \$32.50 for a year.

Graduates.com is free. It also starts with a simple registration including a message space. Then you move on to selecting your school by country. And it's fast. I got an e-mail confirmation and welcome within two minutes of registering. You have to click on the link and activate your account within 15 days. On your profile page you can post all sorts of things, including pictures. The selection of schools includes elementary and high school, and also has a section for colleges and universities. You then add yourself to your school by year that you graduated. Then you can search for classmates. The site allows you to invite people to join, but if they haven't then you can't find them on the search engine. The Web site was started by Jason Classon, and you can donate money to help him maintain and run the site.

Reunion.com also allows for simple info (but include the slashes in your

birth date!). Don't forget to unclick the "Please include me in dating directory" part at the bottom of the registration page (unless you want to use this service as well). It costs \$36 for a year or \$72 for three years to use the site to contact people. "Limited site access" is free, but if you want to e-mail people you will have to pay. You have to download a software program called "GoodContacts," and you must have Outlook installed on your computer for this program to install. Alas.

Alumni.net asks you to sign up, fill in a resume/CV and also provide the e-mail addresses of two friends, so that they can invite them. They then bombard you every step of the way with ads for online dating, pop-ups, etc. I managed to finally get through to the members-only section (I gave up two of my own dead e-mail addresses), and tried one search. Then I gave up as the barrage of ads was so great. All through the process they tell you that it's all necessary to maintain a free site, but I took my freedom elsewhere.

Classreport.com seems a clean site allowing you to donate money via PayPal and to post comments. It has a list of about 20 international high schools. It was started by Tim and Barbara Davis and officially launched on Feb. 5, 2003. On their Web site, they tell with wry humor their tale of why and how they started classreport.com. They set out a clear mission and with a successful background in database management, they have created a Web site that allows for their objectives: "Create a Web site where students could keep their own contact information current. Create a class-based system rather than a school-based system. Rely strictly on volunteers from each class to operate their own class Web site. Rely strictly on voluntary contributions from each class to support the Web site. No advertising, no pop-up ads, no spam! Allow

all class members to have full participation with no membership fees and no dues. Create simple reports for the volunteer class administrators to print mailing labels, track missing students, send bulk e-mails to their class members and to easily back up the data to their personal computer. Create a dynamic online experience which would spark an interest among classmates in the lives of their fellow alumni — not just a huge, overpriced, online directory service." Although a purely voluntary system of donation does allow for free-riding, there will most likely be someone in your class willing to pay the suggested \$15 per year to maintain your class site.

Alumni-find.com is free. You can even search before signing up. Then you sign up and fill in all kinds of information about yourself (if you feel like it). You can also add a school to the site. I added my international high school as I couldn't find it on the list of international schools.

Gradfinder.com has an extensive list of schools in Denmark — near 100. And it's free. It easily guides you through the registration. The only drawback is that you have to know what state your school is located in. Once I had researched which "state" the school was located in, I easily navigated the Web site.

Youralumni.com will help you set up your alumni organization for a fee. They will also train the main contact person.

Other than Web sites solely dedicated to finding old classmates, there are those where you can find out friends and family such as www.friendsreunited.co.uk, a British-based Web site. This one also costs money only if you want to contact people, and sends confirmations. But while the application process was simple, the Web site kept freezing, so I gave up.

— Mikkela Thompson

Continued from page 85

their own started by alumni, and many have alumni clubs that have held successful reunions. All of the sites had a similar set-up: a place to register, class representatives, a way to contact other classmates and a place for you to get involved in the search for other alumni. Many also had a place where you could donate money or time, either in their name, your class's name or your own, for a good cause.

Encounters of the Global Kind — Reunion Tales

When I sent out my cybercall for tales of international school reunions, I heard, as expected, from most of the corners of the globe. The stories were tales of heartache, catharsis, resolution and discovery. As I read and listened to the stories, I realized that there were many common experiences and revelations.

Many of the former students had

I discovered that most international schools had a Web site of their own started by alumni, and many had alumni clubs which had held successful reunions.


been to reunions and many had been back to visit their old school. Some admit to looking back with rose-tinted glasses. I even heard stories of some alumni who have found that they have been living in the same

town as a long-lost friend from decades and continents ago. Some meetings are accidental, but many are planned events. A typical response to the question of what it was like to go back was: "I went back for my five-year reunion at the private school and then my 10-year reunion. Both were odd experiences. This one guy gained about 50 pounds and lost most of his hair in five years, which was alarming. When I've gone to the private school, I've always been in awe of how beautiful it is. The school has a view of the beach, and is really stunning. I don't think I really appreciated it while I was a student there."

Then there are those experiences which are uniquely international. Walteen attended the International School Bangkok in the 1960s and 1970s when her father worked for USAID. Walteen says of her reunion

Continued on page 90

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experiences, "I have attended reunions of my school and class (1969) from the International School Bangkok. It's affirming to see people who shared my peculiar childhood. We can speak about experiences that people in our stateside lives just don't have a clue about. My attendance at reunions goes back to the late 1970s, when I attended one in the D.C. area. I got that invite via snail mail. E-mail has made communications so much easier ... I got to see a number of folks from my class as well as the son of a friend of my dad who worked with him in Saigon during the war. It was really satisfying to talk with him about our fathers, both of whom had passed away by then. He is a person I would have never known in the States had we not had the common experience of living overseas. He is a farmer from Idaho or some far off place in the Midwest. What surprises me is how much the reunions

For the 50th anniversary celebrations, the school hosted a reunion in Bangkok.

seem to be the center of some people's lives, as if the time spent in Bangkok was the best time of our lives. While it was a wonderful two years for me, it was not the best time."

Walteen expressed a common theme, that of having a shared experience and therefore a bond with otherwise disparate people. She also said it helped her sense of identity to

meet with others who were like her, at least in their experience of having lived some of their formative years abroad. She was surprised to find that now, as an adult, she found she had more in common with her classmates than she did when they were in high school. Walteen was involved in many activities at her high school, including serving as editor of the yearbook. Yet she was not part of the party scene and as she says, "I didn't get asked to the prom — because I was one of maybe two black girls in my class ... There were so few blacks at ISB, I felt no racial tension, just isolation. Isolation was an element of being an American overseas; it was just particularly nuanced by race. I was treated as unique, one of a kind, voted most likely to succeed ... It was not a terrible way to be perceived, just not real helpful when I came back to the U.S. in 1969 to the racial climate here and the unfolding



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events. That was overwhelming. I think many of us experienced more culture shock returning to the U.S. than we did when we left. When I returned to the States I entered a nationalist phase — culminating in joining the Nation of Islam. From where I sit now I can see that I did this to find a community with which to identify in the U.S. I just didn't fit in anywhere."

For others it is the double return — going back to a place that one has special memories of — that causes the most stress. Going back for a reunion 14 years later was "a profound but shattering experience" for one woman. "No longer was I cocooned in the international community, but had to live in a hotel (horrors). I felt vulnerable and ill-prepared to take on India," she says. "I wasn't the seasoned veteran of living in developing countries that I had been as a kid. My starry-eyed mem-

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ories of my time in India were rudely shaken by the realities of poverty and pollution and traffic-choked roads, even on the wide boulevards of my beloved New Delhi and the swanky

neighborhood which housed the school and the various embassies and embassy-workers. My coping mechanisms for dealing with this were no longer in place."

Returning to New Delhi for a reunion allowed her to reflect on the life she had led as a teenager. In high school she had managed a balance between the popular and academic kids. She was involved in sports, drama, music and partying. She adds that as teenagers, they had incredible freedom to try and do many "grown-up" activities — "we were not reckless, but we had a great measure of abandon!"

"So it was with some trepidation and much excitement that I returned to a place where I had spent wonderful, even magical years. Where else could you go get yards of pure white silk for a pittance and draw the prom dress of your dreams and have the tai-

Continued on page 92



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lor make it for you for next to nothing? Even down to covering 50 tiny buttons with the same white silk to go down the slit that went up one of your legs? Where else could you walk home at five in the morning through the city with your friends, listening to the exotic squawking and calling of the birds waking up for the day?

“Where else could you hop on a train wearing a cashmere throw and sandals on a cold, fog-enshrouded December morning with your pals and head for a hill station where at night there was no electricity, so you saw every single star in the heavens, and then some? Where else could you go on a tiger safari at a game preserve and feel the large elephant you are riding trembling under you as the beaters corner a tiger in the bushes?

“Where else do you and your best friend discover that the gardener has secretly been growing marijuana plants among the tomatoes in the family garden plot in the back yard? Where else do you observe a solar eclipse one day that has the entire nation paralyzed with fear ... yet you are out gallivanting and climbing water towers in your neighborhood with your best pals? Where else could you jump off the second-story balcony of a luxury hotel into its swimming pool with all your clothes on and not get arrested?”

Although she knew, intellectually, that India had changed in 14 years just as she had, in her heart she wanted to find “home” in a place that had once been just that. After landing, it did seem like the old India with “the same burnt cooking-fire smell in the air ... The airport was the same, teeming with human-kind, noisy and crowded and dingy. The cab ride from the airport to town was the same ... same smells, same trees, same thick acrid air, same ambling cows.” But once she got to her hotel, reality set in and she was saddened to find herself a stranger. Determined to enjoy herself, she changed hotels and joined

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the other reunion attendees. The rest of the trip was filled with sight-seeing, visiting the old school, lunching with former teachers and attending Diwali festivities in the tented VIP section. But she felt a “disconnect ... between being back in Delhi as a tourist versus how it had felt to *live* there. I could never really get over this feeling and I have to say, this was the hardest part ... because I truly realized the old cliché, you can never go back, and the magic would be impossible to recapture.”

Many see that the communities that they once were part of are actually still alive and thriving today, through reunions, alumni clubs and cyberspace. Returning to the country of one’s memories can allow for closure. It allows you to say your final goodbyes as you see that you and the place have moved on. You realize that you are now only a tourist and no longer a “native,” and the country is no longer your home.

Some reunions happen spontaneously for joyous occasions. When Jenny and Richard got married in August 2005, it was the culmination of a truly international tale of romance. In the late 1970s, Jenny’s mother worked for State in what was then Zaire and her father was a Scot with the British High Commission. When

Jenny was born, her family traveled as a British diplomatic family. Later, her parents divorced and her mother rejoined State. Jenny’s father was killed in 1996 after an attempted car-jacking in Kenya. In 1991, Jenny was in the 7th grade at the International School of Islamabad. There she became friends with a sophomore named Peggy. Peggy was also friends with a senior named Richard, whose father worked for USAID. By the end of 1992, they were all friends (Richard came back every summer from college). In 1994, Richard took both Peggy and Jenny to the prom. There was no romance between Richard and Jenny yet.

Jenny and Richard’s paths continued to intertwine as Jenny attended Syracuse University, as had Richard. Then in 2001, Jenny moved to Seattle and she and Richard became god-parents to Peggy’s first-born. Richard couldn’t make it to the baby’s birth, but as they are all part of a group that Jenny describes as “faux family” he made it out for a visit in December 2003. And then, “we stayed up late one night talking, after everyone else had gone to bed, and he suddenly kissed me. ... He returned to New Hampshire a week later ... and then a month later drove across country and moved in.

“In March he informally asked for my hand, and then in July he got down and proposed on a camping trip to Rainier. We were together until August; then, he went to Ohio to get his master’s degree in geography. After years of knowing each other and being apart, it’s easier to live with a couple of months between visits. ... Our wedding is in August and it will end up being mostly a reunion of oversea-ers, of whom most will be friends from Islamabad.”

How to Organize a Reunion

Some reunions are organized in conjunction with the school. One such school is the International School of Manila, which has held

many reunions, both in the U.S. and in the Philippines. The alumni page on the school Web site (alumni.ismanila.com) is well organized. There is also a section for “lost alums” on the Web site, and they seem to make an effort to keep in touch with their graduates. The alumni office produces a newsletter for alumni association members.

They had a reunion for the whole school in 2002 in the Philippines, and another in 2005 in San Jose, Calif. That weekend was well organized, thanks to help from the school counselor who worked with the alumni office and some of the teachers. The first night someone from the current school community gave a talk. The participants paid beforehand for the whole weekend, and had to make their own reservations for the hotels. Payment was done through the school — the registration fee was \$125-150, with a discount for early

*Once the party is over,
it is still possible to keep
the reunion spirit alive.*

registration.

As one alumna said, “Hadn’t had touch with them in 15 years. Fun weekend. You have a different perspective from when you were in the 8th grade. ... You stripped yourself of all the pre-pubescent cliques. ... We had cocktails by the pool: San Miguel beer, and the scenery could have been in Manila.” She added that it was a full weekend with events including a formal dinner, class photos, a group photo and after-hours socializing. The important part of the

weekend was “more like discovery — discovering old friends.” Her class had 150-200 students and she reconnected with some friends.

One of the advantages of talking to others who have shared your experience is that you can say things that would be misinterpreted elsewhere — talking about maids and drivers, which was part of everyday life in the Philippines, and not have people assume you are an elitist. She felt it was a relief to be in a room with others who understand one’s stories for what they actually are.

Often it is an intrepid former student who takes on the task of organizing a reunion. Kathy, who attended a British international school, Greengates (www.greengates.edu.mx), in Mexico City from the second through seventh grades, got roped into doing the heavy lifting for their reunion. She was contacted via the Internet in a

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Yahoo group for Greengates alumni. Someone suggested a reunion; she volunteered to plan the main event, a dinner dance. And from there, she eventually planned the whole weekend.

They used Evite to get the word out. One person organized the financial side of the event, which was held in Las Vegas. One of the alumni negotiated a good deal at the Sahara hotel (\$120 per night for a double), and the organizers charged \$130 for two nights' entertainment. Another person was tasked with finding people; they used word of mouth and the Internet to reach a final tally of 60 attendees, but with many more saying that they wished they could come.

The party got off to a roaring start on Friday night and on Saturday, the committee decorated the room for the buffet dinner. They organized a DJ, speeches, prizes, free gifts, nametags, etc. They asked two people to give speeches on how their Greengates experience had affected their lives; they showed video clips from the teachers; there was a gregarious MC and other spontaneous entertainment. They had display tables where people could share their photos, memorabilia and a guestbook.

In this case, the school did not get involved in the reunion but they did, with some prodding, state a willingness to get involved next time, in Mexico. "It seems to mean different things to people, but everybody there was glad they had come and seems to have a sense of 'coming home' or even healing," Kathy said. "I actually felt that I had done something worthwhile once it was all over with. It was certainly a headache to work on but it all came together in the end."

Some schools like the international school in Bangkok (www.isb.ac.th) have an annual membership fee (around \$35) for the alumni association and a separate fee for the reunions. These gatherings have an exhibit room with sale items, handouts at some of the events, a dinner and a dance. They also organize hos-

*"We are recounting
experiences that we had in
the past ... we enjoy each
other now because we had
this bonding experience.*

— Tony Grady

pitality suites sponsored by different graduating classes, which compete to see who can get the best attendance at the reunions. They have a board made up of eight people, and the board members make a four-year commitment. They do not get paid and they use their own funds to get to the locations to investigate and set up the reunions, which are held in different locations in the U.S. every two years. They created a separate organization, ISB Inc., to run the reunions as a registered nonprofit. The reunions encompass graduates from the late 1950s to 2000; despite Hurricane Charlie, over 500 people made it to the one in Florida. In 2002, for the 50th anniversary celebration, the school hosted a reunion (two years in the making) at the Grand Marriott (owned by a 1967 graduate of ISB). There were fireworks on a barge on the Chao Phraya River and that was a huge success.

Once the party is over, it is still possible to keep the reunion spirit alive. ISB has an online newsletter, a vibrant Web community and an alumni directory. The International School of Manila (www.ismanila.com) Alumni Committee sends out highlights of their reunions, including gossip and verbatim (but anonymous) chatter from the parties. They also send out a link with photos, an invitation to send in more reunion stories and a survey.

Worth the Journey

Most of those who attend international school reunions think they are worthwhile, even if they do not give it a deeper meaning than having a party. For many former students, attending a reunion is best done years later when people are older and have more of an incentive to reminisce and reflect. For some it is the impetus for the future. As Tony, Walteen's brother and fellow alumnus of ISB, says, "We're not living in the past ... we are recounting experiences that we had in the past. ... We enjoy each other now because we had this bonding experience. You can make new friends."

The reunions are likely to grow in popularity. As the *TCK World Web* site (www.tckworld.com) put it before the worldwide reunion in 2003, "Reunion 2003 will be the gathering point for hundreds of TCKs from around the world. It will be a time to celebrate our heritage, to learn, to reminisce, to dream, to reunite with old friends and to make new ones who share similar backgrounds."

There are many alumni who feel they have received so much that they should give back, and are doing just that. The International School Bangkok has an alumni-sponsored scholarship for a Thai student. Some schools reach out even more to their alumni community.

In March 2005, the Woodstock and Kodaikanal schools in India hosted a reunion dinner at Sangam, an Indian restaurant in Arlington, Va. I heard about the reunion through one of the local Global Nomads, and decided to crash the party. Wandering around with chili poppadom in hand, I noticed the majority of the attendees were in their 50s; but there were also several in their 20s. As I stood chatting, who walked in but alumna Norma McCaig, founder and embodiment of the Global Nomads. Growing up global had such a profound effect on her life that she coined that term and started

the organization.

Kodaikanal and Woodstock have a monthly alumni lunch in Washington, but this dinner had an ulterior motive. The guest speaker was Kodaikanal International School interim principal Eleanor Nicholson. She was there to talk about the different alumni-sponsored programs at the schools. Glenn Conrad, who graduated from Woodstock in 1968 and is executive director of the Winterline Foundation, was also in attendance. (The Winterline Foundation was founded by Mahendrajeet "Jeet" Singh, Woodstock class of 1981, and makes grants to Woodstock for special programs at the school.)

The amount of money raised regularly by alumni is impressive. For example, the Kodaikanal class of 1954 raised about \$16,000 one year, which supported a special creative writing project at the school as well as establishment of the Middle Years

*It may be that
the harder the posting,
the closer and
more bonded the
community.*

Program that prepares students for the IB curriculum. Annually, KIS alumni have raised about \$50,000. The Woodstock School alumni have already raised over \$7 million as part of a 3-year capital campaign for the school's 150th anniversary.

Nor does one have to wait to be a graduate to give back. After the Asian tsunami in 2004, students at the

Kodaikanal school, together with a teacher, filled trunks with rice, money and other essentials, and these trunks were distributed to the victims.


It may be that the harder the posting, the closer and more bonded the community. For those who attended school in Kabul during the 1979 Soviet invasion, this is true. They also have strong emotions to work through. As one alumna says, "Kabul was a special place because the school was very small, the international community was very close and the place was an extreme hardship post. So we all tended to be very bonded and close to each other. The second Kabul reunion in 2002 in San Antonio was very intense: lots of emotions and very positive. People want to do something to improve the conditions in Afghanistan and many of them did, in fact, go to Kabul on trips and get involved in NGOs."

Continued on page 96

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Continued from page 95

One alumna, filmmaker Stacia Teele, produced a short film, "Vasila's Heart," after meeting Vasila, a young Afghan girl in need of a heart operation. The film aired on ABC. Teele is now in the process of developing a documentary, "Growing Up in Afghanistan." As she says, Afghanistan is "wonderful. Magical. Childhood memories full of close friendships and exciting adventures. Training for the big soccer tournament, surrounded by the majestic mountains of the Hindu Kush; piling into taxis and heading down to Chicken Street or the Green Door Bazaar for shopping without our parents; playing after school with the Afghan children who lived next door; class trips in our yellow school bus through the Khyber Pass. We had all the elements of a normal childhood: first dates, sleepovers, long summer days at the pool, school plays, proms ... lived out in the bosom of an incredibly exotic, spiritu-

"The desire to give to the communities that I have lived in has been one that started in my youth and continues."

— Dawn Erickson

al and thriving culture ... [We felt welcomed] by our host country, Afghanistan."

The documentary will tell the stories of Afghans who fled to America, those who stayed in Afghanistan, and the alumni of the American International School of Kabul who

lived there during the "Golden Age" of the 1960s and 1970s. The effort includes Advocates for Afghanistan, a grass-roots organization founded by the alumni of the American International School of Kabul (www.aisk.org/portal.php).

Dawn Erickson is a co-founder of Advocates for Afghanistan (www.advocatesforafghanistan.net) with Marnie Gustavson, Anne Payson & Stacia Teele — all AISK alumni. Their projects include the Qarabagh School Project and fundraising for Vasila's heart surgery. Dawn is also involved in the Hayward Ghazni Sister City Formation Committee, organized by Bay Area community members and Afghan-Americans. Their endeavors include sponsoring pen-pal projects; raising funds for a Widow's Literacy project that will help 30 widows and other women in a one-year, 3rd-grade-level education program; and assisting the Afghan

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Women's Association International's literacy project by purchasing sewing machines so that the program can include job training. In May 2004, Erickson returned to Kabul and taught sewing classes. At the same time two former AISK students, a doctor and an EMT, provided first-aid training.

Dawn's altruism seems to stem from her international childhood. As she says, "I lived in Kabul for five years, from 1966 through 1971. The experience of being a student at an International School allowed for forming friendships with students from other countries and encouraged me to interact with people of different cultures throughout my life. My sense of the world being inhabited by one people that are only divided by arbitrary boundaries comes from being an international student and seeing so much of the world at a young age. ... The desire to give to

*"My sense of the
world being inhabited
by one people that are
only divided by arbitrary
boundaries comes
from seeing so much
of the world at a
young age."*

— Dawn Erickson

the communities that I have lived in has been one that started in my youth and continues. When it was possible

to go to Afghanistan again and to be directly involved in projects, I was ready to participate along with many other fellow international students. I hope to return again to work with and for the people of a country that helped to raise me."

Finding Home

My own high school, Copenhagen International School, had a reunion in 2002 (one of my classmates, a TV producer, created a DVD of the reunion festivities), but I did not attend. I figured, with perhaps faulty logic, that I did not need to go dig up the past with people who weren't necessarily close to me (since I am still in touch with my friends). But having heard many international reunion stories, including tales of those who have exponentially improved on their experiences, I think that I will go and see what I can find next time. ■

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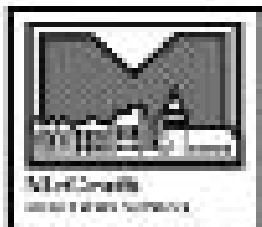


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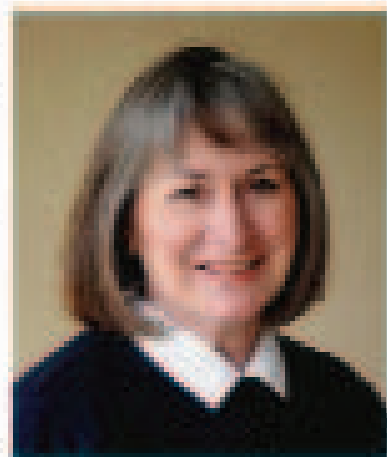
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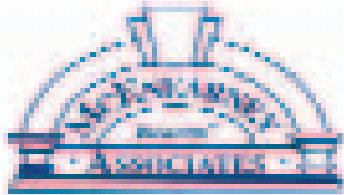


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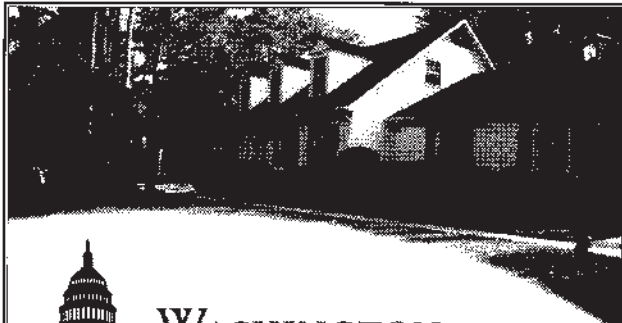

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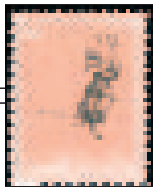
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REFLECTIONS

The Mouse Still Roars

BY JAMES PATTERSON

The Mouse That Roared by Leonard Wibberley was originally serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post* from December 1954 through January 1955 as *The Day New York Was Invaded*, before being published as a novel in 1955. But it is probably best known today as the 1959 screen adaptation starring Peter Sellers in three roles.

From reading the book in the 1960s, I learned even serious subjects like foreign policy could be successfully mined for humor. I suspect many *Journal* readers are already big fans of the work. But for those few unfortunates who have never encountered it, here's a quick plot synopsis.

Despite being famed for its wine, the European Duchy of Grand Fenwick, "five miles long and three miles wide," is in dire economic straits. The two political parties, the Dilutionists and the Anti-Dilutionists (named for their respective positions on watering down the wine to increase sales), propose asking the U.S. for aid to save the duchy from communism. But they are unable to find anyone who'll pretend to be a communist. Instead, the duchy takes another tack: "We declare war on Monday, are vanquished Tuesday,

James Patterson, a retired Foreign Service officer, is Grand Fenwick's ambassador to the U.S. The stamp is courtesy of Mikkela Thompson, noted Fenwickian philatelist.

*Back in the U.S.,
meanwhile, eccentric
Dr. Kokintz,
"a mouse of a man,"
has developed the
Q-bomb for
the Pentagon.*

and rehabilitated beyond our wildest dreams by Friday night."

Duchess Gloriana XII (Sellers) duly sends a declaration of war to the State Department, citing evidence a California winery is pirating Pinot Grand Fenwick. But desk officer Chet Beston, attracted to the Foreign Service because he "didn't have to work very hard or know too much" to work there, assumes the document is a joke. After weeks of silence, Grand Fenwick sends an expeditionary force of 23 men, armed only with longbows, to attack New York City.

Back in the U.S., meanwhile, eccentric Dr. Kokintz, "a mouse of a man," has developed the Q-bomb for the Pentagon. It will incinerate two million square miles when detonated, he tells the president. News of the bomb panics New York City, where Kokintz lives, so a civil defense drill is authorized and nervous New Yorkers

take shelter underground.

Just then the Fenwickians arrive, ready to declare war and surrender, but find only deserted streets and buildings. After reading about the Q-bomb in a newspaper, they march to Kokintz's Columbia University lab and take him, his beautiful daughter and the weapon back to Grand Fenwick. There the duchy declares victory in its war with the U.S., prompting Russia to dispatch troops to "protect" Grand Fenwick and the weapon. That leads to an international peace conference and a happy ending (for most of the characters, anyway).

Irishman Leonard Wibberley (1915–1983), a prolific author and journalist with over 50 children's books and other publications to his credit, lived most of his life in California. He dedicated *The Mouse That Roared*, his most famous work, "To all the little nations who over the centuries have done what they could to attain and preserve their freedom. It is from one of them I am sprung."

The message of *The Mouse That Roared*, a classic tale of mice and men, is as sharp today as it was 50 years ago. Wibberley's world was panicked over weapons of mass destruction. We need look only at Iraq to see the WMD panic is still with us.

Memo to all State Department desk officers: That unopened envelope on your desk could be of Fenwickian importance! ■

AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • December 2005

CALL FOR 2006 AFSA AWARD NOMINATIONS

Honor the Dissenters Among Us

F. Scott Gallo, winner of the 2005 Harris Dissent Award, took a brave (and ultimately successful) stand against a bureaucracy that was pushing the Embassy Nairobi community to move into a new residential compound that Gallo believed was vulnerable to terrorist attack.

Keith Mines, winner of the 2004 Rivkin Dissent Award, was honored for his courage in sending a May 2003 Dissent Channel message, "Let the U.N. Manage the Political Transition in Iraq."

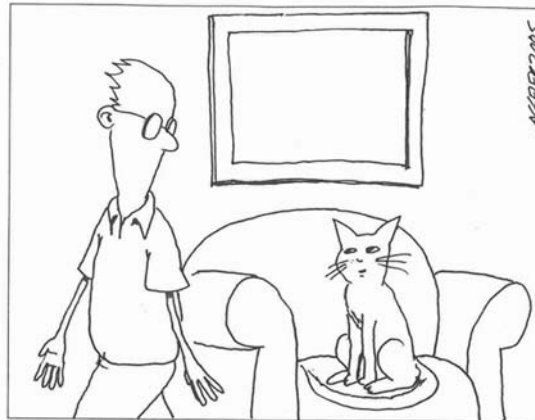
Four of Embassy Moscow's consular officials received the 2003 Herter Dissent Award for their refusal to back down on a visa denial decision. They were honored for their strong commitment to upholding the law and protecting U.S. security interests in the face of strong pressure to disregard both.

This is AFSA's official call for nominations for the 2006 AFSA Constructive Dissent Awards and for the 2006 AFSA Outstanding Performance Awards. While the performance awards speak for themselves, the dissent awards merit special comment, as they are unique in the federal government. The dissent awards seek to recognize and honor those among us who have the courage to offer constructive dissent. The awards are based on integrity and professional courage rather than on performance.

Speaking out against the conventional wisdom and offering a contrary view on policy or operational procedures comes with risk and can even jeopardize a career. AFSA believes that it is vital to continue to honor the constructive and creative dissenters, those who demonstrate the willingness to work *within the system* to bring about change.

"Career professionals are being most loyal when they are being candid with their

bosses about situations and when they press for a serious examination of policy," write Morton Abramowitz and Leslie H. Gelb in their Spring 2005 *National Interest* article "In Defense of Striped Pants." At this time, they go on to say, "the country has a par-



"I'd like to present my dissent as constructively as possible, but if that doesn't work out I could just go back to my standard gesture of peeing in your shoes."

ticular need for preserving candor in the departments and a variety of viewpoints from different agencies."

"We have always needed our dissenters," wrote then-AFSA President John Limbert in December 2004, "and we need

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OVERSEAS COMPARABILITY PAY

AFSA Meets with the Secretary

BY J. ANTHONY HOLMES, AFSA PRESIDENT

During our first meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Oct. 27, AFSA State VP Steve Kashkett and I outlined the primary concerns of the 8,200 State members of AFSA — with a strong emphasis on overseas comparability pay — as well as the professional concerns shared by all of us in the Foreign Service, both active-duty and retired. We noted that our recent survey of active-duty members added credibility to our agenda and provided a strong base for present and upcoming AFSA initiatives and proposals to management.

We had signaled to senior department officials for the past seven weeks that we would use our first meeting with the Secretary to stress that the current 16-percent salary reduction suffered by all FS employees below the senior ranks when

Continued on page 9

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



AFSA Meets with Entry-Level Employees in Africa Posts

AFSA State VP Steve Kashkett participated in the Africa-region entry-level conference that took place in Addis Ababa from Oct. 12-14. This event, which brought together more than 70 entry-level Foreign Service employees from virtually every post in AF — and was organized by the employees themselves — provided an opportunity for a candid exchange of views on the key concerns and problems facing entry-level employees in that region.

Kashkett participated in several panel discussions covering personnel issues and career development in today's Foreign Service. He particularly enjoyed and found useful his private conversations with nearly 50 of the participants on the margins of the conference.

Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER, FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER



“Wallace, I understand your youthful appetite for reckless speculation, but maintain it’s safer if this memo concludes that whatever will be *may* be.”

AFSA Meets with USAID Administrator

On Oct. 31, AFSA President Tony Holmes met with USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios. The meeting was cordial and frank and covered a wide range of topics. Amb. Holmes highlighted AFSA's highest-priority issue: overseas comparability pay. He also expressed AFSA's bafflement at USAID's refusal to abide by the decisions of the Foreign Service Grievance Board and resolve the cases involving the unfair selection out of two employees.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included USAID's extensive use of Foreign Service Limited appointments and using program resources as opposed to the operating expenses budget. AFSA pointed out that these two separate FS systems would inevitably start bumping up against each other and cause the agency problems. Administrator Natsios said that he was preoccupied at the moment with the \$60 million shortfall in the large operating expense budget, but would do all he could to avoid a RIF and mitigate, to the extent possible, rollbacks in employee benefits such as training, student loan repayment and spousal language training.

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RETIREE REPRESENTATIVES: Leonard J.

Baldyga, Roger Dankert, Larry Lesser and

Gilbert Sheinbaum

On Dissent and Disloyalty

“We must never confuse dissent with disloyalty. When the loyal opposition dies, I think the soul of America dies with it.”

— Edward R. Murrow



AFSA’s annual dissent awards are in danger of becoming a thing of the past. These awards, created to encourage those willing to speak out forthrightly, in appropriate channels, to express alternative points of view on policy matters, have attracted a dwindling number of nominees over the past few years. As we again launch the call for nominations in this issue of the *Foreign Service Journal*, we fear that constructive dissent may be disappearing from the landscape of the Foreign Service.

Use of the Department of State’s official Dissent Channel, which was designed to serve the same lofty purpose as AFSA’s dissent awards, has dwindled to a trickle since its heyday in the 1970s. In 1977, the Executive Secretariat logged in some 32 Dissent Channel messages. By contrast, in 2005, you can count on the fingers of one hand the number of Foreign Service professionals who have sent in a Dissent Channel message.

This is a disturbing trend. It tells us that people are reluctant to express any point of view that might be perceived as contrary to the policy line of the administration that happens to be in power. It tells us that internal debate among foreign policy professionals within the department is being stifled. It tells us that our colleagues are afraid of retaliation.

The Foreign Service is full of genuine experts on all regions of the world and on virtually every substantive policy issue, ranging from conflict resolution and counterterrorism to sustainable economic development and the promotion of democracy and human rights. A diplomat who spends years living and working in a foreign country, speaking the language, learning to understand the culture and dealing directly with the foreign government, will

acquire a certain instinctive sense of what will work and what will not in that country and in that part of the world.

Many of our colleagues take great pride in this “hands-on” expertise in foreign affairs and seek to reinforce it constantly during their careers through reading, academic training and involvement in think-tanks. These are people who deserve a special place at the table when U.S. foreign policy decisions are made. These are people worth listening to.

On occasion, Foreign Service careerists might disagree on a particular course of action that the administration of the day has embarked upon and might have an alternative approach to recommend. There must be a place for such constructive dissent in our democratic system of government. There *must* be a place for an open airing of different points of view without fear of reprisal or career damage.

Any administration that equates such constructive dissent with disloyalty is making a serious mistake, and is depriving itself of a valuable resource. Foreign Service careerists are patriots who spend a substantial part of their lives faithfully serving their country in difficult and often dangerous places around the globe. We all care deeply about the United States and its relationship with the rest of the world; after all, most of us in the Foreign Service got into this profession to help shape foreign policies that can effectively advance U.S. interests.

It is a tragedy that so few people in the Foreign Service today feel safe using the Dissent Channel, and it is a sad state of affairs that so few are willing to nominate others — or be nominated themselves — for AFSA dissent awards. U.S. foreign policy only stands to benefit from an open and candid debate that includes our country’s true experts. □

U.S. foreign policy only stands to benefit from an open and candid debate that includes our country’s true experts.

Don't "Overlook" Your Membership

Some 30 years ago I ran for the AFSA Governing Board on the "Radical Slate" and did not make it. I am delighted that this time around, in the 2005 board election, I was selected to be one of the retiree representatives. The slot I now occupy had been previously held for the USIA retiree representative. Although the agency no longer exists, I still consider myself a voice of those ex-USIAers who are now aging annuitants.

Not long after the election results were distributed, I got an e-mail from the widow of a former USIA officer asking me if she should join AFSA and what the benefits would be for her. I told her that the benefits of AFSA membership were considerable for the affordable annual dues she would have to pay as a retiree spouse. I pointed out to her that AFSA is the only organization that is solely dedicated to protecting and catering to her needs as a Foreign Service retiree. I told her that AFSA lobbies Congress to preserve, and hopefully to expand, the retiree benefits she is receiving.

AFSA's ability to lobby Congress is dependent on how strong a voice it has in terms of total membership.

While she did not seem responsive to the mention of AFSA's lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill regarding the Windfall Elimination Provisions and the Government Pension Offset issues, she became very interested when I started talking about AFSA and her health benefits, about Medicare prescriptions and premium conversion and about information regarding various insurance programs available through AFSA. I told her she could also keep up on these personal matters of concern via *AFSA News* and the bimonthly *Retiree Newsletter*. Finally, I pointed out that if she needed counseling or wanted further information, all she had to do was contact Bonnie Brown by phone or e-mail. She then said she would send in her membership dues.

All of you should be aware by now that the Retiree VP and all four retiree representatives will be making a determined effort to recruit new members from the retiree community and to convince "lapsed members" to renew their membership. AFSA's ability to lobby Congress and the foreign affairs agencies is dependent on how strong a voice it has in terms of total membership. I was surprised to learn that of the 3,200-plus retirees in Virginia, where I live, only 878 are AFSA members.

In recent conversations with some of the "lapsed members," I discovered that while they were paying \$100 or more a year to join other social and professional organizations, they had "overlooked" AFSA membership. I challenged them to compare the benefits of being a member of a monthly luncheon group to the benefits that AFSA provides its members, both professionally, as a voice of the Foreign Service, and personally, as an advocate before Congress on issues that affect their own lives and the lives of their spouses. I argued that the choice is a "no-brainer," and said I would expect them to be rejoining AFSA as soon as possible.

As AFSA Retiree VP David Reuther pointed out in his October column, you can expect to hear from us often. At the same time, we want to hear from you and welcome your comments, recommendations or concerns. I can be reached most easily by e-mail at ljbjbb@aol.com.

Your Voice, Your Advocate. □



AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Briefs • Continued from page 2



Austin Tracy

AFSA Send-off for Susan Moorse

During a farewell luncheon on Oct. 25, AFSA President Tony Holmes and AFSA State VP Steve Kashkett presented a plaque to Susan Moorse, the State Department's outgoing labor-management negotiator, to acknowledge the productive and businesslike relationship that AFSA had with her during her tenure.

Call for Writers

Let your voice be heard throughout the Foreign Service community by writing a feature for *AFSA News*. We are now — as always — accepting submissions for a number of features, including:

- "Family Member Matters," a forum for views from Foreign Service family members about issues of concern to the Foreign Service community. (\$100 honorarium upon publication)
- "Of Special(ist) Concern," where specialists can write about issues of particular concern to them.
- "Where to Retire," advice from retirees on the best places to retire.
- "Memo of the Month," where we feature unusual and entertaining memos.
- "The Lighter Side," an opportunity to share Foreign Service humor.

Please submit your 400- to 600-word essay/column to *FSJ* Associate Editor Shawn Dorman at dorman@afsa.org. We cannot guarantee publication of all submissions, but do guarantee that all submissions will be seriously considered.

Money from AFSA for College

Children of Foreign Service employees who are high-school seniors and college undergraduates are eligible to apply for one-time-only AFSA Academic and Art Merit Awards and renewable need-based AFSA Financial Aid Scholarships. Awards range from \$1,000 to \$3,000.



The submission deadline is Feb. 6. Visit AFSA's scholarship programs Web page at www.afsa.org/scholar/index.cfm for complete details, e-mail Lori Dec at dec@afsa.org or phone her at (202) 944-5504 or 1 (800) 704-2372, ext. 504 (toll-free).

In the Journal

Have you ever wondered whether taking your kids along for overseas postings will enhance their long-term educational/career/social prospects? Well, Francesca Kelly addresses this question in her article, "Going to College in America," in this month's *Schools Supplement*. See if her conclusions match your expectations.

In Search of a Symbol and a Slogan for OCP

Active-duty AFSA members have confirmed that overseas comparability pay is the number-one personnel-related issue for them. As part of AFSA's ongoing campaign to gain OCP for all Foreign Service personnel serving overseas, we are seeking a catchy symbol and slogan for the campaign and encourage your input. Send ideas to AFSA Secretary Tex Harris at afsatex@aol.com.

Continued on page 7

Whither the Commercial Service?



On Sept. 13, Will Center and I tabled three midterm proposals for negotiation with management and have been seeking its concurrence for a posting on the AFSA FCS Web site (by the time this is published I expect you should see it there). As I write during this balmy mid-October week in Washington, we are still awaiting an official response from management, but I have indications that we may progress more quickly than in the past on at least one of the issues.

Management, however, has been rightly focused on two much larger priorities. The top concern for Commerce management has been getting confirmed as management so that strategic decisions can be made. The Commerce Department's Under Secretary-designate for International Trade — the head of our agency — had not been confirmed as of this writing. Israel Hernandez, however, was sworn in as Assistant Secretary for Trade Promotion and Director General of the US&FCS in mid-October. Hernandez very promptly requested a meeting with AFSA President Tony Holmes. The meeting took place just two days after his swearing-in.

Indeed, as alluded to in my October column, "strategic disbursement," "right-sizing," cutbacks and realignments and perhaps even the dreaded "R" word (RIF), are issues that have been awaiting those confirmations and should be addressed shortly. As was apparent from the presence of Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, First Lady Laura Bush, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez and OMB Director Josh Bolten at the swearing-in ceremony at USDOD, DG Hernandez has top-notch political connections. He assured AFSA that he would work all angles, both at Commerce and on the Hill, and keep us advised of pending decisions. His swearing-in remarks and other statements indicate that cuts do loom.

In the field, Commercial Service officers are generally quite capable and effective at managing budgets — appropriated and trust funds — to match expenses and income at a post level. CS clients — American exporters — are also generally quite satisfied with our services for the fees paid. As we often say, for every dollar spent on trade promotion generally or assisting an export client specifically, many more dollars accrue to our exports and our economy, as well as to the client company.

Given budget pressures to extend the Commercial Service cost recovery toward 100 percent of indirect as well as direct costs, CS collections and targets remain in doubt. For Fiscal Year 2006, we got a partial reprieve on Oct. 1. CS did not increase pricing to full cost-recovery levels, pending the outcome of House and Senate negotiations in conference for the FY-06 Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill. On a broader scale, even though our total budget is set to increase from \$220 million in FY-05 to \$232 million in FY-06, earmarked amounts for reimbursements to State and other programs set by Congress leave the Commercial Service with a shrinking budget, even without a possible across-the-board 2-percent cut because of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Salaries account for about 57 percent of budget and are considered a "sunk" cost (people are our best resource anyway, right?), so the pay increases from 2005 to 2006, combined with inflation, unfavorable exchange rates and uncertain OMB cost-recovery levels, squeeze the overall budget so much that we cannot escape some action to realign expenses with "income." Whether the actions involve personnel or program cutbacks — or both — remains to be seen. Whither the Commercial Service? □

The Overpayment Cases: A Warning to All

BY JOE SLOTNICK, AFSA GRIEVANCE ATTORNEY

Over the past three years AFSA's State labor management staff have represented a number of retired members in annuity disputes with the State Department. While the specifics of each case are different, a broad pattern has emerged. Early in the spring of 2003 the department began to discover accounting errors by its retirement and payroll offices that resulted in a large number of annuitants being overpaid over a significant period of time (15 years or more).

The department then contacted the affected annuitants with a demand for immediate payment of thousands or tens of thousands of dollars. If they did not pay, their monthly payments would be reduced by hundreds or thousands of dollars. AFSA learned that annuitants could request a waiver of this debt and the labor management staff assisted some annuitants with this process.

After the department denied these requests, AFSA helped members file appeals to the Foreign Service Grievance Board. Some of these cases are ongoing, more have been settled, and one was recently decided by the Foreign Service Grievance Board. The board's decision offers a cautionary tale for annuitants, as well as a broader message to members of AFSA.

In FSGB Case No. 2004-018, the annuitant was seeking a waiver of the more than \$50,000 owed. (*Note:* Due to confidentiality rules, Grievance Board decisions are not available for public review until all confidential information has been excised by the FSGB. Information on the availability of FSGB decisions can be obtained at www.fsgb.gov.) According to the Foreign Service Act and department regulations, overpayments shall be waived when the annuitant proves that he/she was "without fault" and recovery would be "against

equity and good conscience." See Section 807(d) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 USC 4047(d), as amended), 22 CFR Part 17.

Based on these regulations, AFSA argued that the overpayment resulted from a department error, and in light of the scant and often contradictory information provided by the department, it



The individual
can always be held
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would have been impossible for the annuitant to detect the department's error (and thereby avoid the overpayment). With regard to "equity and good conscience," AFSA argued that it would be inequitable to punish the individual for the department's 15-year-old mistake. In addition, we stated that the annuitant had relied to his detriment on the department's erroneous payments in irrevocable legal and financial arrangements and therefore, as provided by regulation, recovery would be against equity and good conscience.

The department dismissed AFSA's

arguments as baseless. The department stated that the annuitant received sufficient information to determine that the overpayment was occurring, and called into question the individual's credibility. The department rejected the argument that the annuitant relied to his detriment and, primarily due to the annuitant's relatively stable financial position, argued that recovery would not be against equity and good conscience.

The Grievance Board unanimously held that the individual was not entitled to a waiver. Despite the undisputed fact that the individual did not know of the department's error, the Grievance Board concluded that the individual was not without fault because he/she could have determined that overpayments were occurring. The board stated, "Casual reading of Annuity Adjustment Notices and an unquestioning confidence in the accuracy of the department's accounting system are not acceptable excuses." (FSGB Case 2004-018).

This decision reinforces two unofficial axioms of Foreign Service life: 1) the individual is presumed to know the governing rules, regulations and standards, no matter how arcane; and 2) the individual Foreign Service officer, specialist, career candidate or retiree can always be held responsible, even in the event of a department mistake.

So what's the lesson? From competent retirement planning and management to storing your HHE, the Grievance Board thinks that you can take care of yourself. So, whether it is your first time overseas or you have retired after 30 consecutive years abroad — never assume you "know the rules" or that the department will "take care of you." If you don't know the rules, ask. And if you do know the rules, ask anyway. Remember, ignorance is no excuse. □

them now more than ever. AFSA believes that the courage to ask 'why' or 'why not' or suggest ideas that may be considered controversial or against popular wisdom is a true indication of loyalty — to our Service, to our oath of office, to our profession and to the American values upon which our country was founded.

"Just as AFSA believes it has a solemn responsibility to advocate for our Foreign Service colleagues," Limbert added, "we also believe that each of us has the responsibility to stand up for our convictions, to give the best possible counsel we are qualified to give, and to recognize those colleagues who stick their necks out, who challenge the status quo, who dare to ask the tough questions."

CONSTRUCTIVE DISSENT AWARDS

- **The Tex Harris Award** for a Foreign Service Specialist
- **The W. Averell Harriman Award** for a Junior Officer (FS-4, 5 or 6)
- **The William R. Rivkin Award** for a Mid-level Officer (FS-1, 2 or 3)
- **The Christian A. Herter Award** for a Senior Officer (FE-CA or OC)

These prestigious awards recognize individuals "who have exhibited extraordinary accomplishment involving initiative, integrity, intellectual courage and constructive dissent." They reward Foreign Service members who have promoted critical and constructive solutions to foreign policy problems, management issues, consular policies or any other area which affects the work of the Foreign Service. The constructive dissent awards are *not* for performance of assigned duties, however exceptional.

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AWARDS

AFSA offers three awards recognizing exemplary performance of assigned duties or voluntary activities at an overseas post, performance that demonstrates extraordinary contributions to effectiveness, professionalism and morale.

The outstanding performance awards are:

- **The Nelson B. Delavan Award** for an



office management specialist. This award recognizes the work of an OMS who has made a significant contribution to post or office effectiveness and morale, beyond the framework of her/his job responsibilities.

- **The M. Juanita Guess Award** for a community liaison officer. This award recognizes a CLO who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, dedication, initiative and imagination in assisting the families of Americans serving at an overseas post.

- **The Avis Bohlen Award** for a Foreign Service family member. This award recognizes the accomplishments of a family member whose relations with the American and foreign communities have done the most to advance the interests of the United States.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Please submit the following information to AFSA by Feb. 24, 2006:

Part I — The name of the award for which the person is being nominated; the nominee's name, grade, agency and position. (For the Bohlen Award, also include the family relationship.)

Part II — The nominator's name, grade, agency and position, and a description of the association with the nominee.

Part III — The justification for the nomination. This narrative should discuss the actions and qualities which the nominator believes qualify the nominee for the award, giving specific examples of accomplishments that fulfill the criteria stated above.

Part III should not exceed 700 words.

All winners receive a monetary award of \$2,500 and a framed certificate and are honored at a reception in late June at the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room. The Secretary of State is invited to participate in the ceremony.

Further details on nomination procedures, additional guidelines and a nomination form can be found on the AFSA Web site at www.afsa.org/awards.cfm. From there, you can also link to articles about the AFSA awards and find a comprehensive listing of past award winners.

Questions should be directed to Barbara Berger, Coordinator for Professional Issues, by e-mail: berger@afsa.org, or phone: (202) 338-4045, ext. 521. For reference on dissent in the Foreign Service, go to the June 2002 *Foreign Service Journal* (www.afsa.org/fsj/2002.cfm), which features several articles on the topic. The deadline for submitting nominations is Feb. 24, 2006.

Perhaps Thomas Jefferson said it best: "Dissent is the highest form of patriotism." Help AFSA honor our fellow patriots, who have stood up for what they think is right, by nominating a worthy candidate for a dissent award. □

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

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AFSA Group Accident Plan

AFSA Group Accidental Death Coverage has been expanded to include Medical Evacuation and Repatriation Costs (up to \$75,000). Terrorism is covered everywhere in the world and at full policy limits. The policy is not expensive, at \$1 per \$1,000 of coverage. Choose limits from \$50,000 to \$500,000. For more information, call toll-free: 1 (800) 242-8221, e-mail afsainfo@hirshorn.com or visit www.hirshorn.com/AFSA-group-accident.html. □

Medicare D: What You Should Know

BY BONNIE BROWN, AFSA RETIREE COORDINATOR

Medicare prescription drug coverage is a voluntary insurance program that will be available to everyone with Medicare coverage in January 2006. Open season began Nov. 15.

The monthly premiums will be \$32.20. After a \$250 deductible, Medicare will pay 75 percent of the cost of each prescription and the beneficiary will pay 25 percent, up to \$2,250 in total costs. (At this point the beneficiary will have paid an out-of-pocket total of \$750.)

Once a beneficiary has \$2,250 in drug costs (a combination of costs paid by the beneficiary and Medicare), he/she hits a coverage gap or “doughnut hole.” At this point Medicare will stop covering drug costs until the beneficiary spends an additional \$2,850. This amount may not be paid by another insurance plan. Once the beneficiary has paid this \$2,850, he/she is eligible for catastrophic coverage.

Because FEHBP plans pay well for prescription drugs, adding Medicare D prescription drug coverage would not make sense for most retirees with these plans. There are exceptions, particularly people with low incomes or those in a health plan with a weak drug benefit. Since any participant in any FEHBP plan has “creditable” drug coverage (coverage deemed as good as or better than Medicare D), he/she can enroll in Part D in later years without pay-

ing a penalty. For more information, call Medicare toll-free at 1 (800) 633-4227 or visit www.medicare.gov.

When considering or comparing Medicare D plan(s):

- Take an inventory of your prescription needs.
- Determine if your present plan meets those needs.
- Find out if a plan lists your prescriptions on its “formulary,” the list of drugs covered by its policy.
- Calculate to see if the plan will save you money, taking into consideration your income level, prescription needs and your present drug coverage.
- Find out if you can use your regular pharmacy under the plan.

Consumer and Medicare groups have expressed concern that consumers will be overwhelmed by the plan choices, and that the open season will be a high-pressured marketing blitz, rather than an effort to genuinely educate seniors about Medicare D options. In addition, these groups caution that unscrupulous people might acquire bank account and Social Security information, or fees, under the guise of registering people for the new drug program.

Here are some tips to help you protect yourself from fraud:

- Register for the national Do-Not-Call registry by calling toll-free, 1 (888) 382-1222.

Companies offering Medicare D plans cannot call you if your home telephone and cell phones are on this registry.

- Do not give out any personal information, particularly your bank account or Social Security number, over the telephone.
- Demand written materials from telephone solicitors before making any decisions.
- Remember, you can hang up on telemarketers.
- Do not allow anyone you do not know and have not invited into your home.
- Do not allow yourself to be pressured into a quick decision.
- Check out Medicare D companies with Medicare by calling (toll-free) 1 (800) 633-4227 or visiting www.medicare.gov.
- Do not pay any money to apply for a plan. Medicare D plans never require an application fee.
- If you become apprehensive about a caller or telephone solicitor, call your local police. □

New Retiree Benefit: Consumer Checkbook Guide

A FSA is pleased to offer a new retiree benefit — online access to the *2006 Consumer Checkbook Guide to Health Plans*. The *Guide* provides 2006 premiums and benefits, as well as information on comparative plan quality and service to help retirees choose the best plan for their needs and pocketbooks.

Retirees can gain access to the *Guide* at AFSA’s Retiree Web page at www.afsa.org/rtvppage.cfm, or go to www.afsa.org and click on the retiree tab at the top of the page. Retirees who do not use the Internet but need assistance with the FEHB open season may write or call our retiree coordinators toll-free at 1 (800) 704-2372: Bonnie Brown (ext. 509) and Norma Reyes (ext. 514).

More on PIT Buyback

The PIT buyback is available to employees who will be eligible for an annuity under the Federal Employees Retirement System and the Foreign Service Pension System, but who were unable to participate in the retirement system from Jan. 1, 1989, to May 23, 1998. They are now able to purchase credit toward retirement by making a deposit equal to the deductions that would have been made from their earnings if they had been eligible, plus interest. Employees under the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System and the Civil Service Retirement System have always been able to purchase credit for their PIT service if it was followed by FSRDS or CSRS service.

they go overseas is unfair, illogical and unacceptable at a time when we need to encourage people to serve in increasingly difficult — and difficult to staff — foreign posts. We informed her that our survey, as well as direct contacts with our members, left no doubt that this is the number-one issue for the Foreign Service. I described the tremendous progress that AFSA has made in lobbying a range of members of Congress to get overseas comparability pay passed in Fiscal Year 2006, including finding a champion in the Senate who was willing to put his support in writing in an important letter to the key appropriations subcommittee chairman.

I told the Secretary that our members have heard her assert her support for the Foreign Service and that her key deputies have told us that obtaining overseas comparability pay for employees at the FS-1 level and below is the department's highest personnel-related priority. I asked her to use her personal influence to make it happen, and to get the White House on board. I asked her to make a phone call to a key member of Congress to show her support of OCP in principle, something that would have greatly improved the chances for its passage this year. Secretary Rice reaffirmed that OCP is in fact a top priority, and said that she had personally spoken to the director of the Office of Management and Budget on several occasions to seek his concurrence.

(We learned later from her chief of staff that she was unable to make the call because OMB would not clear it. However, he affirmed that she supports OCP and will work to get it for Fiscal Year 2007. I told him that her willingness to use her personal political capital and relationship with the president to get OCP is seen as the litmus test of her support for the department's employees.)

Pay for Performance Linked to OCP

As it turns out, department management had long ago given up on OCP in FY-06. The OMB veto in last December's budget request "passback" was definitive. The only way the White House will ever seriously consider it, we've been told, is if it is part of an initiative to convert the entire FS personnel system to "pay for performance." However, it is important to realize that if management goes forward with a conver-

sion to pay for performance, there would be some big tradeoffs in the equation. All FS employees would lose their annual 3-percent step increase in return for a pool of performance-pay money. Whether this tradeoff would be good for FS employees depends on some key assumptions, the most important of which is that Congress would fund the performance-pay line item in the department's future budgets at levels that equaled the lost three percent step increases.

You will probably be hearing much more about all this in coming months. In any case, you can be assured that AFSA will play the legislative game again next year. The fact remains that OCP is in the authorization bill the House passed earlier this year and that is a "two-year bill," which means that it remains valid through the present Congress. To become law, though, we'd need a Senate companion bill. □

OCP Dead for FY-06

Despite a six-week-long full court press by AFSA that generated enough momentum to keep our hopes up until literally the last minute, the House/Senate conferees on the State Department portion of the Fiscal Year 2006 appropriations bill finished their work on Nov. 4, and did not include the provision we'd been seeking granting overseas comparability pay to all FS members (not just the senior FS) overseas this year. At the end of the day, according to people in the meeting, it was the administration's and department's complete lack of support that doomed our efforts. The only way you're realistically going to get this, we were told, is if you bring the administration along with you. The lesson we learned is that when Congress and the White House are controlled by the same party, it is exceedingly difficult to get something passed in the face of that party's opposition.

STATE RECYCLING PAYS FOR CHILD CARE

Recycle for Diplotots

BY PAIGE CHABORA, DIPLLOTOTS BOARD MEMBER

Did you know that you help children and families every time you recycle paper, cans or glass? It's true. State Department recycling helps families cover the cost of quality child care at Diplotots, the department's child-care center.

Child care with Diplotots costs \$700-\$1,000 per month, depending on the age of the child. The Diplotots Board of Directors manages a tuition-assistance program that provides funding each year in tuition assistance for 15 to 20 children. The program is funded primarily by contributions through the Combined Federal Campaign (#7861) and the State Department's recycling program.

Last year, department recycling efforts generated \$63,000. This revenue makes it possible for parents from a wide variety of income levels to send their children to the same high-quality program. In 2005, nearly one-quarter of the families receiving tuition assistance earn less than \$20,000 per year. The Diplotots Board covers about 65 percent of the tuition bills for those families. The average annual income for a family with one child receiving assistance is \$33,000. The average award given to a family is just over \$300 per month.

Funds are also used to permit children who receive tuition assistance to participate in the center's extracurricular activities — such as gymnastics, swimming and field trips — and to provide special learning opportunities for all the children in the center.

So, the next time you need to toss any paper, cans or glass, look for a recycling bin. It's good for the earth, and good for children. □

CLASSIFIEDS



RETIREMENT SERVICES

RETIRING? Don't forget to **transition** your automatic deduction for AFSA membership by filing form SF 1187A for **annuitant deduction** so we keep you on our rolls.

For a copy of SF 1197A call AFSA at (800) 704-2372 or (202) 338-4045, or go to www.afsa.org/mbr/SF1187A.cfm or write us at **AFSA, 2101 E. Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037.**

You can fax the form to (202) 338-6820 or mail it to AFSA. Don't forget to sign it!

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