SEMIANNUAL SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT

FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

$4.50 / DECEMBER 2011

THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

WHEN THE USSR FELL

The Foreign Service on the Front Lines

When a hotel isn't the answer.

Superbly located residences with full kitchens, spacious living rooms and hotel amenities, available by the week or month.

We accept government per diem.

aka.

AKA HOTEL RESIDENCES
Best Extended Stay Inc. Magazine

WASHINGTON DC
WHITE HOUSE WALKING DISTANCE TO EMBASSIES · 1710 H STREET NW · (+1) 202.480.2840
Don't miss our spectacular new residents' lounge, café, bar and common area

ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA SQUARE WALKING DISTANCE TO FSI CENTER · 3409 WILSON BLVD · (+1) 703.791.1099

NEW YORK
UNITED NATIONS ONE BLOCK TO UN PLAZA · 234 EAST 46TH ST · (+1) 646.525.4820
CENTRAL PARK · SUTTON PLACE · TIMES SQUARE · WHITE PLAINS

PHILADELPHIA RITTENHOUSE SQUARE

STAYAKA.COM 888.457.2110

J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST

AN INVITATION TO PROPOSE PROJECTS FOR FUNDING BY THE J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST IN 2012

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is a charitable fund established in the memory of J. Kirby Simon, a Foreign Service officer who died in 1995 while serving in Taiwan. The Trust is committed to expanding the opportunities for professional fulfillment and community service 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 on an entirely unofficial, voluntary basis by Foreign Service personnel or members of their families, wherever located. The Trust will also consider projects of the same nature proposed by other U.S. government employees or members of their families, regardless of nationality, who are located at American diplomatic posts abroad. Only the foregoing persons are eligible applicants.

In 2011 the Trust made its fifteenth round of awards, approving a total of 52 grants that ranged from $500 to $4,500 (averaging $2,040) for a total of $106,094. These grants support the involvement of Foreign Service personnel in the projects described in the Trust announcement titled "Grants Awarded in 2011" and available at www.kirbysimontrust.org. To indicate the range of Trust grants, the following paragraphs set forth a sampling of projects supported by the Trust in recent years.

• **Education Projects:** School supplies for refugee and other conflict-afflicted children and for orphanages; English-language learning materials for high school students; day-care facilities for children of underprivileged women learning marketable skills; specialized education equipment for the disabled; kitchen and other equipment for occupational training programs.

• **Additional Projects for Young People:** Playground and sports training equipment, educational toys, furnishings, household appliances, toilet and shower facilities for special-needs schools and orphanages; cleanups to improve sanitation and create play spaces; school fees and food for abandoned children; materials for a re-entry program for returning Foreign Service teens.

• **Health and Safety-Related Projects:** Dental care for impoverished children; staff training for crisis shelters; health care equipment, security equipment and improved sanitation for maternity clinics and orphanages; a visual impairment survey among HIV-positive children; rebuilding homes of earthquake victims; photo documentation of murdered women set on fire by husbands or in-laws.

• **Revenue-Producing Projects:** Machines and materials for income-generating programs for sick and disadvantaged children and adults, including abused women, migrant workers, refugees, Roma and victims of sex-trafficking; a cooperative for deaf carpenters.

The Trust now invites the submission of proposals for support in 2012. It is anticipated that few of the new grants will exceed the average size of the 2011 awards, and that projects assisted by the Trust will reflect a variety of interests and approaches, as illustrated by the foregoing paragraphs and by the Web site description of 2011 grants.

Certain restrictions apply: (a) Funds from the Trust cannot be used to pay salaries or other compensation to U.S. Government employees or their family members. (b) The Trust does not support projects that have reasonable prospects of obtaining full funding from other sources. (c) The Trust will provide support for a project operated by a charitable or educational organization only where the individual applicant(s) play an active part in initiating and carrying out the project, apart from fundraising. (d) The Trust will support only projects in which each applicant's role is clearly separate from the applicant's official responsibilities.

A proposal should include a description of the project, its aims 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). Please follow the application format available at www.kirbysimontrust.org/format_for_proposals.html or by communicating with the Trust (see below).

Proposals for projects to be funded during calendar year 2012 must be received by the Trust no later than March 1, 2012.

Proposals can be submitted by mail, by fax or (preferably) by e-mail to:

J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust
93 Edgehill Road
New Haven CT 06511
FAX: (203) 432-0063

E-mail: Send to both (1) info@kirbysimontrust.org and (2) john.simon@yale.edu
Further information about the Trust can be found at www.kirbysimontrust.org.

FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

CONTENTS

December 2011 Volume 88, No. 12

Cover illustration by Jeff Lau

Contents

Foreign Service Journal

Editor
Steven Alan Honley

Senior Editor
Susan B. Maitra

Associate Editor
Shawn Dorman

AFSA News *Editor*
Donna Ayerst

Ad & Circulation Manager
Ed Miltenberger

Art Director
Caryn Suko Smith

Editorial Intern
Laura Pettinelli

Advertising Intern
Minh-Nhat (Leo) Tran

The Magazine for Foreign Affairs Professionals

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 (AFSA), a private, nonprofit 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. Indexed by Public Affairs Information Services (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.

TELEPHONE: (202) 338-4045
FAX: (202) 338-8244 or (202) 338-6820
E-MAIL: journal@afsa.org
WEB: www.afsa.org; www.fsjournal.org

Printed in the U.S.A.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to –
AFSA
Attn: Address Change
2101 E Street N.W.
Washington DC 20037-2990
Printed on 50-percent recycled paper, of which 10 percent is post-consumer waste.

Strategic Planning, Part II

By Susan R. Johnson

Last month I described the process by which the 2011-2013 AFSA Governing Board identified five priority strategic areas, and discussed the first, strengthening AFSA governance. This time I'd like to highlight the other four priority areas: enhancing image, outreach and communications; strengthening professionalism and effectiveness (of the Foreign Service and AFSA); expanding core advocacy; and growing membership and development.

Enhancing Image, Outreach and Communications. Vision: increased member participation and feedback, higher voter turnout, more targeted AFSA communications, greater use of the *FSJ* and AFSA's *Inside a U.S. Embassy* to promote the Foreign Service and AFSA, increased retiree membership, and a more active role for post representatives in raising AFSA's profile within the Foreign Service.

Main potential obstacles: institutional resistance to change, apathy, information overload and competing demands on time. Specific goals: a 30-percent increase in voter turnout, one or more GB candidates with outreach experience, development and launch of three new outreach modalities (webinar, trifold brochure, teleconference/DVC) and creation of an AFSA Hometown Diplomat program.

Strengthening Professionalism and Effectiveness. Vision: an AFSA consultative role with the Foreign Service Institute, management commitment to the use of retired FS personnel over contractors, a revitalized AFSA dissent program, the removal of pay caps for FS retirees hired back to federal government agencies, recognition of the importance of continuing professional education and training, a sustained and adequate training float, reinstatement of the senior seminar, formal encouragement of publication of articles on professional issues by FS authors, and an AFSA mentor system to strengthen tradecraft skills.

Obstacles: unwillingness of management to collaborate, image issues, lack of time and money. Specific goals: an AFSA "body shop" to serve members as well as government and private organizations seeking Foreign Service experience, a long-term outreach strategy to Congress and political parties, and creation of an AFSA member professional development fund.

Expanding Core Advocacy. Vision: the career Foreign Service acknowledged and respected as a unique profession, a well-trained, well-funded and well-compensated Service, diplomacy broadly viewed as a first resort, AFSA as an equal partner with management and as an expert resource on diplomacy and development.

Obstacles: no significant domestic constituency, small size of FS and AFSA membership, misinformation and disinformation, limited time and resources, political misperceptions, management reluctance. Specific goals: international affairs budget maintained at current levels, no mid-level hiring or further Foreign Service Limited (USAID) hiring not negotiated with AFSA, no pay cuts (loss of Washington locality pay) for FS personnel when assigned abroad, central funding for specialist training, additional AFSA staff member for Labor Management and for retirees, management agreement to allocate personnel drawdowns in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan to the training float.

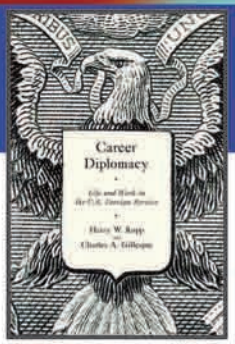
Growing Membership and Development. Vision: expanded membership with more differentiated tiers or categories, greater awareness of membership benefits, an inclusive association of career professionals. Obstacles: inadequate contact information, resource constraints, retiree disinterest, preoccupation with individual career, increased use of excepted hires.

Specific goals: feasibility study on retiree consulting, multitier membership/dues policy, survey of non-members on reasons for not joining.

Your input on these five priorities will help AFSA staff and the Governing Board to develop an action plan to implement them over the coming months. This will strengthen AFSA, both as a professional association and a union.

As always, you can contact me at Johnson@afsa.org. ■

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION



Career Diplomacy

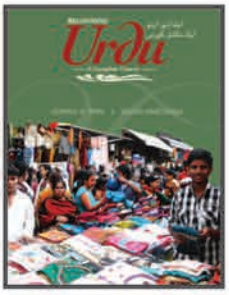
Life and Work in the U.S. Foreign Service
Second Edition

Harry W. Kopp and Charles A. Gillespie

"Current, dispassionate, and accurate, *Career Diplomacy* is the must-read book for those seeking understanding of today's Foreign Service. From traditional diplomacy to work in the provinces of Afghanistan and Iraq, it is all here."

—Ronald E. Neumann, former ambassador and president, American Academy of Diplomacy

978-1-58901-740-5, paper, $29.95



Beginning Urdu

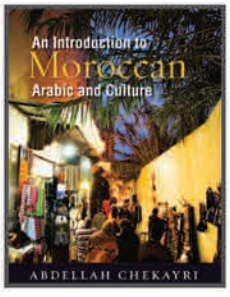
A Complete Course

Joshua H. Pien and Fauzia Farooqui

"*Beginning Urdu* is a welcome addition to the study of South Asian languages. I commend this book for its accuracy, thoroughness, and usefulness. Going through the book, one can clearly see that the authors have a meticulous understanding of language pedagogy principles and a knack of presenting materials with great sensitivity to learners' needs. One feels a fresh breeze in the selection of content and methodology here."

—Surendra Gambhir, University of Pennsylvania

978-1-58901-778-8, paper w/MP3 CD, $69.95



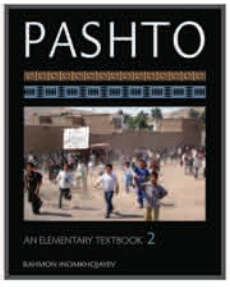
An Introduction to Moroccan Arabic and Culture

Abdellah Chekayri

"It is my hope that *An Introduction to Moroccan Arabic and Culture* will be the harbinger of effective dialect learning and teaching materials to come. That is to say, ones like these that are replete with communicative activities adroitly set in their cultural context, and it is particularly useful for anyone who has studied Modern Standard Arabic."

—Gerald Lampe, University of Maryland

978-1-58901-693-4, paper w/1 DVD-ROM, $59.95



Pashto

An Elementary Textbook

Rahmon Inomkhojayev

"This text combines language and culture into a four-skills approach for learning Pashto that is sorely needed. Its versatility is its strength, and it appeals to students in both traditional language classrooms and independent language programs."

—Elizabeth H.D. Mazzocco, director, Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Volume 1:
978-1-58901-773-3, paper w/CD-ROM, $69.95
Volume 2
978-1-58901-774-0, paper w/CD-ROM, $69.95

Uzbek

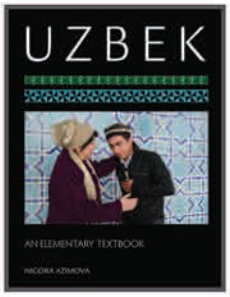
An Elementary Textbook

Nigora Azimova

"This long-awaited textbook is quite special. It is one of the first published books on a Turkic language that uses the communicative approach. It teaches the culture as well as the language. It is user friendly with lots of colorful pictures. It familiarizes students to the spoken language by presenting real-life dialogues and video clips. It has clear and precise grammar explanations and provides the student with exercises and situations for using the language in context. Overall, it is fun to use. I would recommend it to all teachers of Uzbek. Not only will they have an interesting time and experience, their students will as well."

—Güliz Kuruoğlu, University of California, Los Angeles

978-1-58901-706-1, paper w/CD-ROM, $69.95



Tajiki

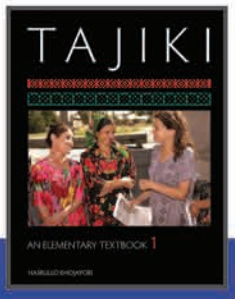
An Elementary Textbook

Nasrullo Khojayori

"In visual appeal, realistic language situations, authentic texts, and up-to-date methodology, and with its illustrations and audio and video materials, T*ajiki: An Elementary Textbook* is the most engaging, rich, and efficient classroom textbook yet for beginning students of Dari, Farsi, and Tajiki dialects of Persian."

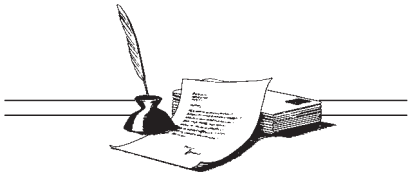
—Michael C. Hillman, The University of Texas

Volume 1:
978-1-58901-263-9, paper w/CD-ROM, $69.95
Volume 2:
978-1-58901-264-6, paper w/ CD-ROM, $69.95



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY PRESS LANGUAGES

www.press.georgetown.edu
800.537.5487



Letters

Thanks for the Books

I want to join what I'm sure will be a host of *Journal* readers in celebrating your October cover story, "In Their Own Write: Books by Foreign Service Authors." I know this is an annual event, but the number and the quality of the books this year surely make this edition remarkable.

Like other former diplomats, I'm often asked by Foreign Service aspirants to suggest a book or two that might help equip them in their career hopes. Now I've got the answer: almost anywhere in that terrific collection, be it in the colonels of Greek lore, the wars of Afghanistan, the U.S. annexation of Hawaii, how Pakistan negotiates with the U.S., or — best of all — AFSA's own *Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work.*

Still looking? It would be hard to find a better can-do book than Ray Smith's *The Craft of Political Analysis for Diplomats* (2011, Potomac Books). It's all there.

Bruce Laingen
Ambassador, retired
Bethesda, Md.

Organizational Personality and Management

As the Foreign Service continues to emphasize training for management, particularly now that so much overseas service is done cheek by jowl with the military, it might be useful to remind ourselves of differences in organizational culture that are reflected in the personalities of the individuals who choose those organizations.

During the Senior (Executive) Seminar (discontinued several years ago, we were told for budgetary reasons), one management game that we played stands out in my memory for its highly educative results. Many of us are familiar with the questionnaires that divide a class into personality types such as "lions," "Saint Bernards," etc.

On this particular occasion, one of the two main groups in our class consisted almost entirely of members of the military and paramilitary (e.g., Coast Guard), and most of the FSOs were in the other.

When the seminar leader assigned the first set of questions, we in the largely FS group pondered and argued various options. Meanwhile, the mainly military group finished the exercise and started to laugh and rib us on our indecisiveness and worse.

That round over, we were given a second set of problems. As I recall, these included such puzzles as: What was the meaning of a drawing Victor Hugo had left behind? How could a dwarf who lived on the top floor of his apartment building reach the top elevator button? (Years earlier, during my interview for entrance into USIA and assignment to Indochina, I had been asked a similar type of question: How would I get the U.S. message over to people who were largely illiterate?)

As our group delighted in speculating on possible answers, moans were heard from the military group. One of them even shouted that these were ridiculous questions, and he refused to bother with them.

The (hired professional) seminar leader then told us that the majority of people in government who had played this game responded like the military group, while two-thirds of State Department FSOs fell into the second category.

Maybe this is something to remember as we think about annual rating reports, with rating and rated officers perhaps falling into different personality groups — particularly now that so many FSOs come to State from the military. Promotion panels, as well as rating and reviewing officers, could be explicitly alerted to the possibility of such differences and their potential effects on performance.

At the same time, we should recall such differences when trying to manage missions abroad with large numbers of personnel from the military and domestic U.S. government departments. Senior FSOs assigned to various war colleges and senior military officers assigned to university international relations programs are

supposed to notice such differences of emphasis, though the clues are not really very evident. The more explicitly FSOs (and hopefully the military) are made aware of these differences, the better.

George B. Lambrakis
FSO, retired
London

Unwarranted Criticism of the TIP Report

The column in your September issue by Editorial Intern Asa Maclay Horner criticizing the 2011 Trafficking in Persons Report pays woefully short shrift to the report, the methodology used to compile it, and the overall public reception of this year's installment.

Quoting one critical academic, Mr. Horner alleges that TIP Report rankings "align more closely with U.S. foreign policy considerations than actual trafficking problems," but then cites a senator who feels the report is "compromising diplomatic relationships."

Neither of these contradictory criticisms is accurate. The report is a thorough and honest assessment of what governments are doing to fight trafficking, one that our counterparts around the world have cited as an impetus to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts.

The TIP Report reflects a yearlong collaboration within the State Department, with civil society worldwide and with foreign governments. TIP reporting officers and trafficking office staff craft a product that sometimes occasions criticism because it contains hard truths. It is unfortunate that Mr. Horner's piece did not reflect that.

Luis CdeBaca
Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
Washington, D.C. ■

CYBERNOTES

U.S.-Russia Policy: Reset 2.0

As Prime Minister Vladimir Putin plans his return to the Kremlin this May, many observers are speculating on the direction U.S.-Russia relations may take. President Dmitry Medvedev has frequently collaborated with President Barack Obama, but there is concern that Putin may try to assert Russia's independence at the expense of cooperation with U.S. diplomatic efforts.

The recently named U.S. ambassador to the Russian Federation, Michael McFaul, one of the authors of the Obama administration's Russia policy "reset," defended the reset during his Oct. 12 nomination hearing. "Rather than framing all interactions between the United States and Russia as zero-sum contests for power and influence, Pres. Obama has proposed that we look to produce win-win outcomes," McFaul told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Senate Republican Policy Committee members characterized the reset policy as "more a change in tone than in substance." Their questions focused on the 2008 Russian-Georgian War and continued Russian occupation of Georgian territory, alleged Russian complicity in a plot to blow up the U.S. embassy in Tbilisi, Moscow's continued protection of the current Syrian regime and alleged nuclear cooperation with Iran, and Moscow's abysmal human rights record, among many other complaints.

Defenders of the reset assert that it has motivated Russia to allow NATO troops to use its territory to supply its troops in Afghanistan, an initiative first pursued by the George W. Bush administration. Other benefits include an updated Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty; closer coordination of policy toward Iran, North Korea and Libya; cooperation on weapons of mass destruction issues; a nuclear agreement; and improved bilateral trade and investment relations.

However, Russia has yet to join the World Trade Organization, primarily due to Georgian opposition and the Jackson-Vanik Amendment of 1974, which denies Russia most-favored-nation status because of human rights concerns. Under WTO trade law, all members grant MFN status to one another by consensus, so even one member-state's opposition is enough to prevent Moscow's accession.

As we went to press, Russian accession appeared more likely. But in the meantime, Moscow has focused on relations with China, which joined it in vetoing United Nations sanctions on

SITE OF THE MONTH: http://persn.com/en/pages/faq

Personal Security Network is a system that allows people traveling or working in unfamiliar or risky areas to know that if they go missing, friends, family and colleagues will be notified immediately.

The way it works is that the PerSN account holder sets up a schedule for when he or she will "check in" to the account — not checking in at the scheduled time triggers an alert, which automatically e-mails the account holder's emergency contacts to let them know he or she has failed to check in. The account holder can deactivate the system or change the check-in schedule as needed. And there is no need for a fancy smart phone: it works on any SMS-capable cell phone.

Emergency contacts can also communicate via a forum and are given each other's contact information to allow for a collaborative response.

Development is under way to allow check-in via a phone call and touch-tone menu, and to facilitate integration with Facebook. In the near future, applications for iPhone and Android systems will permit live tracking of individuals following their failure to check in.

For journalists, dissidents, tourists, lawyers, students and businesspeople, *Personal Security Network* could be a crucial link in assuring quick, efficient responses to emergency situations.

— Laura Pettinelli, Editorial Intern

Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad (for which Beijing has begun to receive Russian oil via a direct pipeline). Moscow had also cozied up to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, signing a contract that will supply arms to Venezuela.

Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Michael Posner visited Moscow, Nizhniy Novgorod and Kazan from Oct. 10 to 15 to discuss a range of human rights and democracy issues. "The so-called 'reset' has been effective in arms control, security issues and stronger economic ties, but I don't think there's been any meaningful progress on human rights and democracy issues," he stated afterward, according to the *Moscow Times*.

But, Posner added, "I don't think there's [only] one way to push the Russian government harder. Some of it's private diplomacy, some of it's public. Some of it's reconstituting the McFaul-Surkov Civil society Working Group." The bilateral working group is headed by McFaul and Russian Presidential Administration First Deputy Chief of Staff Vladislav Surkov. Topics in its portfolio include migration, prisons, child protection and corruption.

Although most Republicans reject the idea of a Russian "reset," support for McFaul's nomination was bipartisan. Even hawkish Republicans like Robert Kagan have expressed their approval.

In an op-ed published prior to McFaul's hearing, Kagan argued for a waiver of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and implementation of the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2011, sponsored by Sen. Benjamin Cardin, D-Md. The act would impose a visa ban and asset freeze on Russian officials responsible for serious human rights abuses.

While many conservatives dispute the feasibility of continuing a reset policy that they argue never existed in the first place, the Obama administration continues to defend its hopes that the return of Putin will not mean a cooling of U.S.-Russia relations. Commenting on the impending leadership change, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney noted: "The fact is that the president has pursued a reset in our relations with Russia not with a particular leader but the government of Russia. And the progress that we've made, which has been well recognized, has come with the entire Russian leadership. That includes President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin."

For their part, liberals such as Matthew A. Rojansky of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace acknowledge that, while "far from the democratic ideal," Putin's return to the presidency does not doom the reset.

— Laura Pettinelli, Editorial Intern

Good (Government) Guys Do Win, Sometimes

Writing in the Oct. 11 *New York Times*, Adam Nossiter reports that Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires, the former president of Cape Verde, has won this year's Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leader-ship (**www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en**).

Beginning in 2007, the Ibrahim Foundation has given the annual award, worth $5 million, to democratically elected African presidents who have stayed "within the limits set by the country's constitution, left office in the last three years, and demonstrated excellence in office."

Announcing the selection, Mr. Ibrahim — a Sudan-born telecommunications mogul whose goal is to promote

50 Years Ago…

Those of you who work for the State Department may frequently feel relatively unappreciated. I must say presidents sometimes have that feeling also.

— President John F. Kennedy, speaking to staff at Embassy Ottawa; *FSJ*, December 1961.

good governance in Africa — commented: "It is wonderful to see an African leader who has served his country from the time of colonial rule through to multiparty democracy, all the time retaining the interests of his people as his guiding principle. The fact that Cape Verde, with few natural resources, can become a middle-income country is an example not just to the continent but to the world."

Diplomatically, Ibrahim refrained from noting that his foundation has decided *not* to award the prize for the past two years because so many African leaders have refused to leave office after losing elections, tried to alter constitutions to ensure their continued tenure, or gone back on pledges not to run for re-election.

By contrast, President Pires served two terms, 10 years, and then stepped down in September. During that period, the foundation notes, Cape Verde became the second African nation to move up from the United Nations' "least developed" category.

Mr. Ibrahim also publishes an annual index scoring African countries on how well they govern. This year's assessment, the fifth, is widely considered one of the continent's leading tools for citizens, public authorities and partners to assess progress in governance.

It compiles 86 indicators that are grouped into 14 subcategories and four overarching categories to measure the effective delivery of public goods and services to African citizens. The index brings together more than 40,000 raw data points drawn from 23 providers.

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor

Calling All Moscow Veterans!

All individuals who served at Embassy Moscow, Consulate General Leningrad or Consulate General Kyiv during the Soviet period, as well as members of their families and other members of the American community in the USSR (e.g., journalists and exchange scholars), are invited to share memories and impressions on the Web site **www.moscowveteran.org**.

The site is still under development as we go to press and needs volunteers to act as authors and moderators to document the history of U.S. missions in the Soviet Union. There will also be forums to discuss recent developments there.

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor

United Nations, United Support

At a time when fierce partisanship dominates the headlines and funding for many foreign assistance projects and organizations is in jeopardy, a group of 30 eminent U.S. foreign policy and national security leaders from both political parties have joined forces to declare that the work of the United Nations provides real national security benefits to the United States.

A full-page ad signed by George Shultz, Madeleine Albright, John Whitehead, Strobe Talbott, John Negroponte and Thomas Pickering, to name but a few, appeared in the Oct. 4 editions of *Politico, Roll Call, CQ Today* and *The Hill*. It contained the following statement:

"Today's national security challenges are global in nature. Threats like terrorism, nuclear proliferation and pandemic disease respect no borders. The United Nations can help provide the global reach and influence required to respond to, or ultimately help prevent, these threats from becoming crises. A truly unique body, the U.N. offers us the ability to communicate and collaborate with nearly 200 countries on a breadth of issues.

"Whether providing famine relief, staunching nuclear proliferation, creating arms embargoes, blocking the travel and financial support of rogue actors, establishing global standards to prevent money laundering, or curbing the spread of pandemics like avian flu, the U.N.'s work enables the United States to reap real national security benefits that advance American interests and make us safer and stronger here at home. Our economy also benefits, as the U.N. procures goods and services from more than 3,000 businesses across the U.S.

"No doubt, U.S. contributions to the U.N. must be judicious and prudent: accountability, transparency and effectiveness are essential for any organization, including the U.N. At the same time, our ability to burden share with other nations helps defray costs, promote stability and enhance the impact of our resources. Withholding U.S. funding weakens both our influence and support for our national priorities, while strengthening the hands of our adversaries.

"By actively using all of the real foreign policy, national security and economic tools at our disposal, we help develop the international knowledge, capability and capacity required to help address challenges that, if left to fester, land on our doorstep. We, the undersigned Republicans and Democrats, believe that support of the U.N. is one of the most cost-effective ways for the U.S. to successfully address global challenges and leverage our global leadership."

The statement was developed and released by Partnership for a Secure America, a nonprofit organization founded by former Representative Lee Hamilton, D-Ind., and Senator Warren Rudman, R-Maine, to advance bipartisanship on critical national security and foreign policy challenges.

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor

Your Oct. 4 front-page article, "Foreign Aid Faces Major Cutbacks in Budget Crisis," worried me because, in my eight years as a global health ambassador, I have learned that we live in an interconnected world.

In 13 trips around the world, I have personally seen that defeating public health threats like malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and empowering reproductive health, do not just enrich lives abroad, but also have a direct impact on the quality of American lives at home.

At less than 1 percent of the federal budget, investments in foreign aid strengthen the United States economy. Nearly 50 percent of American exports go to the developing world. One in three domestic manufacturing jobs depends on these exports. Such statistics are critical when, in my home state of Tennessee alone, unemployment is nearly 10 percent.

By investing in public health, American taxpayers are giving men and women the chance to live more productive lives and participate in the global economy. And when that happens, everyone — from Mombasa to Manhattan — benefits.

— Ashley Judd, actress and board member of PSI, a global health organization, in an Oct. 6 letter to the *New York Times*.

Remembering Michael Hart

On Sept. 6, not long after Project Gutenberg (**www.gutenberg.org**) celebrated its 40th anniversary — and we featured it as our September Site of the Month — its founder, Michael Stern Hart, died at the age of 64 from a heart attack.

We noted in September that Hart developed the site, the oldest and largest collection of free e-books on the Web, in 1971 to make literature free and accessible to all.

Fittingly, Project Gutenberg and go-to site Wikipedia (**www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Michael_S._Hart**) both offer a memorial page featuring an obituary, eulogy, message from his family, links to some of his recent writings and numerous tributes. The site also pledges to continue.

In July, Hart wrote these words, which summarize his goals and his lasting legacy: "One thing about e-books that most people haven't thought much is that e-books are the very first thing that we're all able to have as much of as we want other than air. Think about that for a moment and you realize we are in the right job."

Michael Hart was, indeed, in the right job. ■

— Steven Alan Honley, Editor

Speaking Out

FS Blogging: An Opportunity, Not a Threat

By Matt Keene

In his 1964 opinion in the case of *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart delivered a quote that lives in infamy — or at least a fragment of it does. Unable to formulate a specific definition of pornography, Stewart asserted that "I know it when I see it."

The Department of State currently follows this conveniently vague approach in regard to Foreign Service blogs and the use of social media by employees and family members. William Bent's letter in the September *Foreign Service Journal* ("Bloggers Beware!") expresses a similarly ambivalent stance on the private use of social media by Foreign Service personnel.

Bent begins by assuring us that he supports social media for professional and personal use, noting that he is on Facebook and Twitter, and has written in the *Journal* about using social media for consular outreach. It is "the mixing of the two uses that concerns me," says Bent.

I think we can all agree that identifying yourself as a Foreign Service officer, particularly by name, when openly challenging or even defying official U.S. government policy is absolutely inappropriate.

But the specific examples of material Bent describes as "troubling" do very little to clarify the department's position on what is objectionable.

> *State should give FS bloggers and users of social media clear guidance, not make them afraid to post anything.*

We've all at one time or another had to represent policies with which we did not agree. But as Foreign Service members, we all have an obligation to do our utmost to promote the success of that policy to the greatest extent possible. For those who cannot do so, both the Dissent Channel and resignation are options.

On the other hand, most of us would consider some of the examples Bent cites to be simply cases of poor taste or exercises in bad judgment. But between the extremes of the silly and the subversive exists a vast gray area that, to date, the department has seemed unable to navigate.

As Bent does in his commentary, State raps the knuckles of those who pen entries it feels cross the line. Yet when asked for a clear definition of where that line is, the department flounders.

Damned If You Do

Anyone who has been called on the carpet for blogging — especially those who have been summoned more than once — can tell you that the only consistent aspect of the department's feedback is inconsistency.

Blogging is encouraged by some elements within the department and is even discussed on the official page, www.careers.state.gov, complete with a substantial set of links to popular Foreign Service-related blogs. Yet even bloggers listed there are sometimes targeted for official harassment by other elements within the department for having a blog in the first place.

One colleague informs me that an A-100 orientation instructor warned his class of new FSOs not to blog — but turned out to be doing so himself. Some individuals have been warned that their careers could be harmed by their or their spouse's blog — but when they press on this in subsequent meetings, their hair is blown back by the force of the wind generated by the back-pedaling. Others have asked whether it would be better to shut down their blogs entirely, only to be told that they would never be asked to do that. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, after all, is a big supporter of social media.

As usual, the department is about a century behind the times. Its decidedly

schizophrenic approach to social media would be comical if it weren't so serious. During the Arab Spring, as authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa pulled the plug on the Internet, the U.S. government was the most vocal champion of the right of the people of the region to communicate and severely upbraided the regimes of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for clipping Twitter's wings and masking Facebook.

At the same time, State is so nervous about the relatively unregulated use of social media by its own employees that it has created an official blog, "DipNote," and a Facebook knock-off for employees called "The Corridor," in an attempt to co-opt the phenomena. (DipNote, in my view, is excellent, by the way. I haven't found "The Corridor" particularly useful.)

State is so nervous about the use of social media by its own employees that it has created an official blog and a Facebook knock-off.

Official social media outlets serve a purpose — as far as they go. But no one who wants the real skinny on a company goes to its monthly newsletter. Instead, they grab a beer with a few of the employees. Not only is the feedback there more candid, but it covers subjects that are simply inappropriate for official communication.

This is the type of benefit private Foreign Service blogs offer, one that the department itself has done a woefully inadequate job of providing to date: communicating to the American people what it is we actually do and why it matters, thus putting a human face on the diplomatic corps. No wonder Overseas Comparability Pay is so difficult to secure. The average American doesn't have the first clue of who we are or what we do.

Social media are here to stay, and the generation of officers who have grown up with Twitter, Facebook, Blogger and Wordpress are not going to abandon what they see as a First Amendment right.

Not the Enemy

State should embrace this reality and work robustly and actively to ensure that the Foreign Affairs Manual contains specific, practical guidance to officers on how public speaking and communication regulations apply to private blogs — and spells out what is inappropriate, and why. The current guidance found in the 5 FAM 700 series and its myriad cross-references is neither effectively codified nor well understood.

I also urge the department to establish a high-level committee that can formulate firm, specific guidelines on private use of social media by State personnel. That committee should invite and welcome current bloggers and AFSA into the discussion. Then, based on the findings and recommendations of that committee, the department should incorporate a short seminar on the use of social media into the A-100 curriculum. This course should include real-life examples of Web pages from past and current Foreign Service blogs that cross the line.

Foreign Service bloggers and users of social media should not be left cowering in fear, bewildered as to what might get them into trouble, and made to feel like dissidents. Instead, their creativity should be harnessed, and the adversarial relationship between bloggers and department management should be mended.

Foreign Service blogging isn't a problem to be managed. It is an opportunity to be seized. ■

Matt Keene, a Foreign Service consular officer since 1999, is currently a special assistant in the Bureau of Human Resources. In addition to overseas assignments in Jerusalem, Dubai and Sofia, he was deputy director of the Office of Maghreb Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs from 2009 to 2011.

TETRA TECH

complex world | CLEAR SOLUTIONS™

TETRA TECH

Sound science, innovation, and stakeholder participation

Working from more than 330 offices worldwide, Tetra Tech's 13,000 professionals provide multi-disciplinary technical consulting and professional services to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives. Our approach is based on sound science, principles of partnership, and best practices in capacity building to achieve measureable and sustained impact. **www.tetratech.com**

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE

All-New Third Edition

Visit www.afsa.org/inside for details.

Inside a U.S. Embassy

DIPLOMACY AT WORK

Shawn Dorman, EDITOR

AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Charting a Path through Global Change

An Interview with President George H.W. Bush

Editor's Note: As President Ronald Reagan's vice president from 1981 to 1989 and then as president from 1989 to 1993, George H.W. Bush played a leading role in formulating and executing U.S. foreign policy during the last years of the Cold War, the breakup of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Newly Independent States. AFSA honored President Bush with its Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy in 1997. For this special issue of the Foreign Service Journal*, he was kind enough to provide his reflections on a series of questions related to his role in the historic events leading up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.*

FSJ: *During your presidency, what priority did relations with the Soviet Union have on your foreign policy agenda? And what were the chief concerns shaping your policy decisions?*

GHWB: Even before I assumed the presidency, I was determined to come up with something dramatic to help move U.S.-USSR relations forward. I didn't want us simply to react to Mikhail Gorbachev and his latest ideas, but rather I wanted something bold and innovative that would reaffirm the United States as the key player shaping the international agenda.

FSJ: *When and where did you first meet Mikhail Gorbachev? What were your initial impressions, and how did they evolve as you dealt with him?*

GHWB: I first met Mikhail on March 13, 1985, when [as vice president] I was attending yet another state funeral in Moscow — this one for General Secretary Konstantin Chernenko. I communicated my initial impressions of Mikhail in a cable I sent to President [Ronald] Reagan that same day: "Gorbachev will package the Soviet line for Western consumption much more effectively than any (I repeat any) of his predecessors. He has a disarming smile, warm eyes and an engaging way of making an unpleasant point and then bouncing back to establish real communication with his interlocutors.

"He can be firm. Example: When I raised human rights questions with specificity, he interrupted my presentation to come back with the same rhetorical excess we have heard before. Quote: 'Within the borders of the U.S. you don't respect human rights' or [referring to African-Americans], 'you brutally repress their rights.' But along with this the following: 'We will be prepared to think it over,' and 'Let's appoint rapporteurs and discuss it.' The gist being as follows: 'Don't lecture us on human rights, don't attack socialism, but let's each take our case to discussion!'"

In sum, I could sense that Mikhail was different — someone with whom we could work on a host of issues.

FSJ: *Do you think Gorbachev had any sense that his policies and reforms might ultimately lead to the breakup of the Soviet Union?*

GHWB: On Christmas Day 1991, Mikhail resigned as president of the Soviet Union. That morning, I received word that he wanted to talk with me, a "final phone call."

The stakes were high and the outcome far from certain.

During our conversation, Mikhail acknowledged that "the debate in our Union on what kind of state to create took a different tack from what I thought right." I think he had hoped to reform socialism in a way that would preserve its viability as a means of governing going forward, but such designs were not to be, for a host of reasons.

FSJ: *While in the White House, did you ever read reporting coming out of Embassy Moscow or other U.S. diplomatic missions? If so, do you recall seeing any cables that surprised you or shaped your thinking about the unfolding situation?*

GHWB: I do recall being an avid reader of intelligence and cables of all kinds, but today — some 20 years on, at age 87 — you will have to forgive me if I confess that none stand out at this time. This is also known as playing "the old guy card."

FSJ: *Which analysts or agencies did you find to be the most reliable sources of information on developments in the Soviet Union? Were there any individuals at the State Department or elsewhere you regularly turned to for advice on the Soviet Union? How about former U.S. presidents or senior policymakers?*

GHWB: A few years back, a foreign policy journal noted that the men and women who made up our national security team were the finest assembled by any president since the Truman administration. Whether or

I was inordinately blessed with superb career diplomats.

not that was the case is up to historians to decide, but I was inordinately blessed with superb career diplomats — Larry Eagleburger comes to mind, who eventually became Secretary of State — and my own appointees, people like Jim Baker and Brent Scowcroft. People like Bob Gates and Condi Rice were also on the team, and many others.

To the extent that we helped leave our world a safer place than we found it, it was a team effort.

FSJ: *From what you recall, did any U.S. analyst or agency predict the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, the reunification of Germany or the fall of Soviet communism? If so, who was most on the mark in anticipating what would happen?*

GHWB: As we were going into office, developments in Central and Eastern Europe raised the possibility of our being able to continue moving, prodding, coaxing events in a positive direction. But even as we were embarking on the path and process in late 1989 that ultimately led to the unification of Germany in October 1990, we dared not engage in provocative or fanciful prognostications. The stakes were too high, and the outcome was far from certain or preordained, as some commentators described it after the fact.

FSJ: *In hindsight, do you feel that your administration was mainly reacting to fast-moving events in the USSR and Eastern Europe, or anticipating them?*

GHWB: Probably both. We did "pause" at the beginning of my administration as we were assessing our policy and where we ultimately wanted to move our relations, and no doubt some of our initiatives and decisions were influenced by current events. But we knew we wanted to help make our world safer, and to help the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe escape the tyrannies of the past and gain their freedom and rights. Many of our objectives were codified in official U.S. policy, so we had a road map of sorts to guide us as we charted our way through the turbulent straits of global change.

FSJ: *Do you recall your immediate reaction to the August 1991 coup attempt against Gorbachev?*

GHWB: My first reaction was one of concern for a friend — for President Gorbachev and his family.

FSJ: *What is your impression of U.S.-Russian relations today, 20 years after the Soviet Union dissolved? Have you been surprised in any way by the course of subsequent developments?*

GHWB: See my comment above about the "old guy card." I will leave this weighty question for those who still grapple with these serious issues on a more regular basis than yours truly.

When I see the patriotism, courage and ability that our Foreign Service men and women demonstrate on a daily basis — well, let's just say my optimism in our future is undiminished.

FSJ: *Do you have any advice for policymakers in Washington or diplomats in the field today, particularly those dealing with Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union?*

GHWB: No advice, but rather a word of profound gratitude for those who serve our country and the cause of freedom with honor and integrity. We face many difficult and even deadly challenges in our world today, but when I see the patriotism, courage and ability that our Foreign Service men and women, like Ryan Crocker, demonstrate on a daily basis — well, let's just say my optimism in our future is undiminished.

FSJ: *Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with us, President Bush.* ■

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

BY SHAWN DORMAN

Conventional wisdom has it that the United States was caught off guard by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. "No one saw it coming" is a common refrain. But it is false.

I came of age during the last years of the Soviet regime and had the great privilege to be introduced to the world of diplomacy by a cohort of outstanding FSOs — what we'll call Team SOV. Following a high school visit to Embassy Moscow in 1983, I worked in Moscow, Leningrad and the Office of Soviet Affairs in the State Department between 1987 and 1990 in various low-level capacities. In all these places, I witnessed U.S. diplomats understanding, analyzing and reporting on the realities of what was going on in the Soviet Union in the years leading up to its collapse. The diplomats who made up Team SOV (in the European Bureau and at Embassy Moscow and ConGen Leningrad) helped pave the way for the opening up of a closed world.

Jeff Lau

In this case, as with so many others, State has done a lousy job of telling its own story. The department rarely gets credit for being smart. So we're here to take a look back 20 years and shine a light on an amazing time in U.S. diplomatic history during a period of momentous change. From high-level negotiations on nuclear weapons reductions and human rights to street-level reporting on political awakening and a crumbling economy, U.S. diplomats were at work behind the Iron Curtain covering the real Soviet Union and the historic change it was undergoing.

This is not a tale of Kremlinology (though that type of old-style reading of tea leaves and leadership lineups was practiced by Western diplomats at the time). It is the story of a time when the "diplomacy" in the Three Ds of defense, diplomacy and development was truly the *Big D* — a time when military efforts supported U.S. diplomacy and not the other way around.

Complementing our coverage, we are fortunate to have reflections from the man who was president when the Soviet Union broke up: George H.W. Bush. In the interview on p. 17, "Charting a Course Through Global Change," he offers a fascinating glimpse of Mikhail Gorbachev as an up-and-coming world leader in 1985, someone with whom the U.S. could work.

Diplomacy Backed by Strength

Our story begins with the man who was Secretary of State during the years preceding the end of the USSR,

Shawn Dorman, a former Foreign Service officer, is associate editor of the Journal *and editor of* Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work *(FS Books, 2011).*

George Shultz, a favorite among Foreign Service veterans for his concern for both the highest-level diplomacy and the working-level, everyday functions of the Foreign Service. In "Cold War Lessons" (p. 23), Secretary Shultz discusses the foreign policy strategies of the time, President Ronald Reagan's successful efforts to engage with the Soviets and, in particular, with General Secretary Gorbachev. In reviewing the effective way that containment along with intense diplomacy, backed by strength, worked at that time, he reveals potential lessons for international engagement today.

It was a time when military efforts supported U.S. diplomacy and not the other way around.

Next up is Ambassador Jack Matlock, who ran Embassy Moscow from 1987 to 1991 and had perhaps the best seat in the house, both to witness the historic events on the ground and to participate in high-level U.S.-Soviet talks. In "Embassy Moscow: On the Front Lines of History" (p. 27), he tells us how the embassy team got the story and helped inform U.S. policy as the Soviet Union was opening up and then coming apart under Gorbachev.

A Generation of Soviet Hands

In "The View from the Trenches" (p. 34), Tom Graham describes the firetrap chancery, KGB surveillance, writing cables longhand, attending Communist Party congresses and the other everyday challenges for diplomats in Moscow. We see that political work just doesn't get any better than Moscow during the sea change that came along with glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring). And we get a closer look at Embassy Moscow's prescient "Abyss" cable, "The Possible Collapse of the Soviet Union and What We Should Be Doing About It."

James Schumaker brings the story home with "In the Eye of the Storm" (p. 39), highlighting Team SOV and describing how a generation of Soviet hands came together at Embassy Moscow. He also takes us into the secure conference room where Amb. Matlock and Tom Graham were discussing the impending dissolution of the Soviet Union, in 1989.

In "Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War" (p. 42), U.S. Information Service veteran Yale Richmond provides the people-to-people diplomacy angle with the story of the cultural exchanges that changed perceptions on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

For a look at what came after the collapse, we start with commercial officer Michael Lally, who puts the economic reporting and commercial diplomacy of the early 1990s into perspective. In "Picking Up the Pieces" (p. 46), he describes Washington's insatiable appetite for information on the economic situation in the Newly Independent States and the sad narrative of food shortages and hyperinflation throughout the former Soviet Union.

After the Collapse

Next we have a compilation of short pieces, "Setting Up Shop in the Newly Independent States" (p. 49), from FSOs and Foreign Service Nationals who helped set up 14 new embassies and get them running. Mike Tully writes about supporting the NIS post openings from the New Post Support Unit in Bonn (a lifeline office that NIS newcomers would pass through for orientation on the way to post). We then hear from three Embassy Bishkek veterans (including Foreign Service Nationals Tamara Burkovskaia and Isken Sydykov). I can safely say that the Kyrgyzstan experiences have much in common with those of other NIS posts, all struggling with the excitement and mess of establishing an embassy in a fallen empire.

Julie Ruterbories was the first vice consul/general services officer to be assigned to Bishkek. She faced the never-ending complications of running a warehouse at the end of supply and communication lines, procuring everything from electricity to vehicles, fixing frozen pipes and constructing walls to create offices. My own arrival one year later to take up the GSO duties left Julie free to focus on the equally challenging task of building (quite literally) a real consular section from scratch. Public Affairs Officer Mary Kruger describes how she went to Kiev (now Kyiv) to help open a new consulate in the USSR, only to find herself in a brand-new, high-priority country (think nuclear weapons) setting up an embassy.

The focus concludes with "Eurasia's Troubled Frontiers" (p. 56), by Robert McMahon, which looks beyond the dissolution of the USSR at the disputed territories within the region that emerged out of the collapse and remain unresolved to this day.

We hope you will enjoy this retrospective. If you feel inspired to write up and share your own story from this era, please send it over to us (dorman@afsa.org). ■

Cold War Lessons

The Reagan administration's strategy of diplomacy backed by strength holds lessons for today.

By George P. Shultz

"General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

So spoke President Ronald Reagan in 1987. In the background was the Brandenburg Gate, all too visible behind the Berlin Wall. Reagan's stirring words, though noted at the time, came dramatically alive when the wall was literally and joyously torn down in 1989. It was a gripping episode in the events that led to the end of the Cold War.

Why did the wall come down and what can be learned from that historic event? The disappearance of the wall is a metaphor for the end of the Cold War, which occurred largely without bloodshed. And the lessons we should learn are potentially useful because security concerns once again threaten the freedom and prosperity of our world.

One of the most important reasons for success in ending the Cold War was that we in the West had a strategy that we sustained for almost a half-century. The basic architecture was put in place and solidified in the Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower years, and that architecture, particularly the NATO alliance, served us well throughout the Cold War.

George P. Shultz was Secretary of State under President Ronald Reagan from 1982 to 1989. He is currently the Thomas W. and Susan B. Ford Distinguished Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Containment

The strategy of containment was central. The West undertook to resist any expansion of the Soviet empire with the expectation that, sooner or later, its internal contradictions would cause it to look inward and, in the end, to change. As time went on, this guiding idea shifted into what was called détente — we're here, you're there, and that's life — so the name of the game is peaceful coexistence. That's a lot better than war, especially nuclear war.

But Ronald Reagan preferred the initial idea. He denounced détente and stood by his belief that the Soviet Union would change because, as he said in his "Tear Down This Wall" speech, "In the West today, we see a free world that has achieved a level of prosperity and well-being unprecedented in all human history. In the communist world, we see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards of health, even want of the most basic kind — too little food."

He made some people nervous with his views and his rhetoric, but the idea that change is possible turned out to be an energizing and motivating stimulant, true to the original concept of containment.

The End of Linkage

A second idea, the concept of "linkage," characterized the pre-Reagan approach to our relationship with the Soviet Union. The Reagan administration inherited the result of the application of this idea. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, President Jimmy Carter was surprised, distressed and angered. In reaction, he shut down everything from participation by U.S. athletes in the Moscow Olympics to negotiations on arms control — even the annual visit of Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko to Washington, D.C., prior to the opening of the United Nations General Assembly.

As I took office, my friend West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt counseled me: "George, the situation is dangerous; there is no human contact." To put it another way, linkage had been vastly overdone. President Reagan understood that linkage could work against the right outcome. Linkage could encourage the Soviets to do something bad just so they could agree to give it up in order to get something else they wanted. And if the Soviets did something good, linkage put pressure on us to go along with something else they were doing wrong. Above all, Ronald Reagan was determined to pursue freedom and make an effort to reduce nuclear armaments no matter what else was going on.

We confronted this issue dramatically in September 1983, when the Soviets shot down a Korean airliner. The Boeing 747, with its unique profile, was carrying 269 passengers and crew. We obtained and released a recording of the fighter pilot's ground controller authorizing him to fire. Of course, we and the rest of the world were outraged.

But rather than cut ties, as his predecessor had done, and over the objections of a great many members of his administration, Pres. Reagan authorized me to go ahead with a scheduled meeting with Foreign Minister Gromyko. The talk at the meeting was harsh and blunt, and, at one point, Gromyko started to leave but then came back. Our longtime interpreter told me that it was the most difficult and tumultuous meeting he had ever observed. I thought it was good for Gromyko to hear directly how appalled we were, like people throughout the world.

Even more important, and, once again, over many objections, Pres. Reagan sent our arms control negotiators back to Geneva to continue their quest for an agreement. Meeting with your counterpart is not evidence of weakness. The important point is what you say.

Meeting with your counterpart is not evidence of weakness. The important point is what you say.

The Dimensions of Strength

We in the West also understood the importance of strength and its many dimensions. Free societies and free economies, with some help from the Marshall Plan, produced prosperity. These successes, in turn, produced confidence. The achievements could be made known through organizations such as Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, along with the British Broadcasting Corporation and Voice of America.

Strength has many dimensions, including, of course, military capability. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed and held together despite many difficult moments. Who can forget the Berlin Airlift and the resolute Berliners, as we in the NATO countries stood with them?

I believe the turning point was the deployment of Pershing missiles in Germany in late 1983. That deployment did not come easily, even though it was the implementation of a long-known NATO agreement. The runup to deployment was accompanied by a drumbeat of threats from the Soviet Union. War, they implied, was in the offing.

Those threats from the Soviet Union had an effect on the West. The 1983 nuclear freeze protest in New York City's Central Park still stands as one of the largest public demonstrations in American history, while massive and repeated demonstrations took place throughout the United Kingdom. Protesters filled the streets.

Some politicians went wobbly, but NATO remained cohesive. If that deployment had not gone forward, the outcome of the Cold War might well have been different.

But the strength we put on display was never used. What preceded the deployment was intense diplomacy with the Soviets, and a continuing and even more intense consultative process among our allies. In the end, that process made the deployment possible and the deployment — a magnificent display of the strength, determination and cohesion of NATO — in turn made possible the diplomacy that followed and, in the end, tore down that wall. By containing the Soviets — by making it clear that we would not permit them to isolate Berlin — NATO established the conditions in which brave people throughout the Warsaw Pact countries could bring the Cold War to a peaceful end.

Lessons Learned

So here we see on display a set of important ideas:

- Change toward freedom and openness is possible.
- Economic development goes hand in hand with political openness.
- Strength of purpose and capability are essential.
- Strength works in tandem with diplomacy.
- A deep and continuing consultative process among like-minded people creates the understanding necessary to make hard choices.
- A successful strategy must be based on realism and sustainability.

The Cold War is over, but lessons learned from the way it ended are important to remember as we confront the serious threats facing the world today.

The threat posed by Islamic extremists using the weapon of terror is all too real. We have seen the face of terror in the Americas, in Asia, in Europe, in the Middle East — in every corner of the world. There are Islamists who would build a kind of wall of ideology in an effort to shut in vast multitudes of believers in Islam who wish for a better life consistent with the teachings of their religion. These radical jihadists promulgate a culture of hate and division.

What lessons can we draw from our earlier experiences as we combat and seek to isolate these destructive forces of division? First, the notion of containment can work against terrorism as it did against the Soviet Union. If we can prevent the spread of hateful ideology, then we have taken the first essential step.

If you look at Indonesia and Malaysia, countries with large numbers of Muslims, you will see some signs that the strategy of containment can work. Remember that it includes the idea that change is possible. Consider Algeria, where women constitute the majority of that country's university students, lawyers and judges.

Strength is always key: the military capability, willpower and self-confidence to act when necessary. But consultation and diplomatic engagement are equally essential. To paraphrase Helmut Schmidt, there is no

substitute for human contact. Just be careful about what you say, and be sure your diplomacy is supported by strength.

The Pursuit of Big Ideas

Perhaps we can also gain some momentum for this agenda of strength, cooperation, containment and diplomacy from the pursuit of two big ideas on a global scale. Each is drawn from the Ronald Reagan playbook used during the Cold War.

First, can we find our way to a world free of nuclear weapons? At their 1986 summit in Reykjavik, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev came close to an agreement that would have led to the abolition of most kinds of nuclear weapons. As I told Pres. Reagan following the summit, Reykjavik was a success, not a failure, because it demonstrated the possibility of a world free of the nuclear threat. Today Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, Bill Perry and I, along with many others, are working hard toward the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Second, can we reach a broad consensus to attack the issue of global warming? The Montreal Protocol, developed during the Reagan period, was the 1987 international agreement to phase out the production of materials that were depleting the ozone layer of the atmosphere. The agreement has been implemented so widely that former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan called it "perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date." Pres. Reagan called it a "magnificent achievement." It worked, in part, because every state was part of the problem and took part in the solution. We need to put ideas that work into play once again to deal with climate change.

The pursuit of big ideas on a world scale might well generate just the sense of cohesion that would help like-minded nations face down other problems that threaten our peace and our prosperity. Heeding the important lessons from the end of the Cold War will help us as we work to solve today's most urgent problems. ■

Embassy Moscow: On the Front Lines of History

As the Soviet empire self-destructed, an intrepid Foreign Service team played a vital role in informing U.S. policy.

By Jack F. Matlock Jr.

One of the many unfounded myths about the collapse of the Soviet Union is that the American government was taken by surprise. Not so! Embassy Moscow advised Washington 18 months before the Russian tricolor was raised over the Kremlin that contingency plans should be laid for that eventuality. And in the year and a half that followed that report — the July 1990 embassy cable, "Looking into the Abyss: The Possible Collapse of the Soviet Union and What We Should Be Doing About It" — the embassy carefully reported the stages of unraveling, based on extensive contacts with government officials and opposition leaders on the one hand and, on the other, the insights derived from deepening involvement with the broader public, Russian and non-Russian alike, in and outside the capital.

Though it conflicted with prevailing opinion in Washington, the embassy's July 1990 message was not a bolt out of the blue. We had been reporting on the rise of nationalist movements in many Soviet republics, the growing problems in the economy, the weakening of Communist Party control over the country, and competition and disarray among supporters of reform and within the party itself.

Moreover, Embassy Moscow and its associated posts covered political and economic developments in the Soviet Union during the years leading up to and through the breakup without the assistance of a single clandestine source. By 1987, every "human intelligence" source in the Soviet Union had been exposed to the KGB, not through lack of security at Embassy Moscow, as many in Washington once suspected, but — as we learned years later — by moles in the CIA (Aldrich Ames) and the FBI (Robert Hanssen). The most serious security lapses by

---

Jack Matlock, FSO-CM, retired, was ambassador to the USSR from April 1987 to August 1991. He first served in Moscow from 1961 to 1963, again from 1974 to 1978, and once more in 1981 as chargé d'affaires before his appointment as ambassador to Czechoslovakia (1981-1983). During his 35-year career in the Foreign Service, he also served in Vienna, Munich, Accra, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam and Washington, D.C.

He is the author of Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union *(Random House, 1995),* Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended *(Random House, 2005) and* Superpower Illusions: How Myths and False Ideologies Led America Astray — and How to Return to Reality *(Yale University Press, 2010). Comments on his books and an occasional blog post can be found at www.jackmatlock.com.*

far occurred in Washington, not in Moscow.

As for the embassy, we got our information the old-fashioned way, going out on the street, to people's offices and into society, traveling as much as possible beyond the capital, talking and listening to people, using our eyes, ears, voices and — not least — our wits.

From 1987, Soviet society was gradually but rapidly opened to contacts with the outside world.

Opening Up

Before 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Soviet authorities had, for decades, attempted to isolate the American embassy in Moscow from normal contact with Soviet citizens — and with Soviet officials other than those specifically designated to deal with the embassy. Some American administrations, particularly those of Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, unwisely facilitated Soviet efforts to isolate the embassy by doing most of its business through the Soviet ambassador in Washington.

In his fascinating *Tchaikovsky 19, A Diplomatic Life Behind the Iron Curtain*, retired FSO Robert Ober describes the atmosphere in the embassy in the mid-1980s and previously. If these conditions had persisted, the embassy's ability to follow and interpret developments in a vast empire convulsed by change would have been crippled.

Fortunately, developments encouraged by U.S. policy and supported by Gorbachev altered the environment in which our embassy operated. Beginning in 1987, Soviet society was gradually but rapidly opened to contacts with the outside world. Equally important, Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush and Secretaries of State George Shultz and James A. Baker III managed to establish trusted personal relationships with Gorbachev and Foreign Ministers Eduard Shevardnadze and Alexander Bessmertnykh. Both American and Soviet leaders encouraged their subordinates to follow suit and work out the problems brought on by the Cold War. In the late 1980s, a win-win spirit rapidly replaced the destructive "zero-sum" attitude that had burdened negotiations during most of the Cold War.

In the summer of 1989, groups of Lithuanians, Estonians and Latvians made appointments with me to explain their plans for a restoration of the independence Stalin had extinguished as World War II began. The fact that they could do so with impunity was evidence that the Soviet authorities had eased restrictions on contact with foreign diplomats. Before Gorbachev's reforms, such behavior would have been considered tantamount to treason and punished accordingly.

When the Soviet government refused their demands for more autonomy, the newly elected Baltic leaders intensified the pressure for their own independence and began to support independence movements in the other non-Russian union republics. Resistance to Communist Party rule from Moscow was not dependent on Baltic inspiration, however, but arose spontaneously, particularly in those areas in western Ukraine and Moldova seized by Stalin following the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, and in the South Caucasus.

The Baltic Independence Push

By 1990, Consul General Richard Miles in Leningrad (as St. Petersburg was then known) maintained an almost continuous presence in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius, aided by Embassy Moscow and U.S. embassies in nearby Scandinavia. (One of the key officers in this effort, Latvian-speaking FSO Ints Silins, subsequently became U.S. ambassador to Latvia.) An advance party to open a consulate general was sent to Kiev (now known as Kyiv) and thus able to keep abreast of developments there and visit Moscow frequently to file reports.

Embassy Moscow's political and economic reporting officers were given assignments to follow developments in specific non-Russian republics. Opposition leaders usually knew who on the embassy staff had responsibility for their republic and would frequently alert our diplomats to planned demonstrations and other significant events. All reporting officers in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev spoke and understood Russian. Some were competent in a second language used in the Soviet Union, such as Latvian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Uzbek or Tajik. This was an invaluable asset in developing rapport with persons of those nationalities even though most were fluent in Russian.

In March 1990 the decision of the Lithuanian parliament to declare a restoration of the country's independ-

ence brought the USSR close to crisis. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze met with me privately on the eve of that decision to enlist my help to persuade the Lithuanians to delay their decision until Gorbachev was secure in the newly created office of president. Shevardnadze did not seek an abandonment of the declaration, but only a delay of 10 days or so. When I informed him the following day that the Lithuanians were determined to proceed immediately, he remarked, as he saw me out of his office, "If I see a dictatorship coming, I will resign. I will not be part of a government with blood on its hands." The Lithuanian declaration proceeded, as did Gorbachev's appointment to the post of president.

Important as the independence movements in the three Baltic republics were, it was not their activities, or the growing assertiveness by nationalists in other non-Russian republics, that persuaded us to advise Washington that the Soviet Union could collapse. In 1989 the world had witnessed the slaughter of protesters in Tiananmen Square by Chinese Communist leaders. And the Soviet government still had the same capability to crush any opposition if there were a decision at the top to do so.

Although by 1990 we in the embassy were convinced that Gorbachev would make every effort to avoid violence — any widespread application would reverse his entire policy of perestroika (restructuring) — we could not be sure that he would not be suddenly removed from power, as one of his predecessors, Nikita Khrushchev, had been in 1964.

The Beginning of the End

What persuaded us to alert Washington to the possibility that the hitherto unthinkable might happen was the development of separatist opinion in the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, the largest and most populous of the 15 union republics. By the summer of 1990, we found more and more Russian leaders referring to the non-Russian republics as a burden and speaking of a future in which the USSR would resemble the European Union, not a unitary state. In effect, many key Russian

leaders viewed the USSR as a communist empire, not a Russian empire. Without strong Russian political support for preservation of the Soviet Union, it was difficult to see how Gorbachev could continue his reforms and keep the country together.

Embassy Moscow's political counselor, Raymond Smith, drafted the July 1990 warning message, with the subject line: "Looking into the Abyss: The Possible Collapse of the Soviet Union and What We Should Be Doing About It" (for an excerpt, see p. 37). Smith has used this and other cables from Embassy Moscow, now declassified, as examples in his valuable new book on the art of political reporting, *The Craft of Political Analysis for Diplomats*, 2011.

We were never told directly what, if any, impact the "Abyss" message had on thinking in Washington, but I noted that the CIA circulated it. The last thing we wanted, then or later, was a formal agency determination that a break-up of the Soviet Union was possible or likely. Such finding would inevitably have leaked, possibly precipitating a successful hard-line coup against Gorbachev. There would have been a widespread assumption that we not only desired, but had engineered the Soviet collapse.

In fact, while the U.S. government was steadfast in its support for the restoration of independence of the three Baltic countries, it was convinced that American interests, and those of the Soviet peoples themselves, would be better served by the sort of voluntary federation Gorbachev was trying to create than by the sudden independence of all union republics.

In the fall of 1990, Gorbachev made what seemed a sharp turn to the "right." (At the time, hardline communists were considered the "right wing," a reversal of the usual left-right paradigm.) He reshuffled his cabinet to include ministers reputed to support repression, and economic reform stalled even as the economy continued to deteriorate. There appeared to be preparations for a crackdown in the Baltics. In December 1990, Shevardnadze suddenly resigned, declaring: "A dictatorship is coming."

On the Brink

The embassy was confronted with several questions: Had Gorbachev altered his reformist agenda? If not, could he manage to keep power and resume his reforms? Would he fend off efforts to remove him by acceding to demands to use force? Or, could his recent behavior be a feint to the right with a left hook to follow?

An attack on the television tower in Vilnius in January 1991 left the questions open. Gorbachev immediately denied that he had authorized it, but he did nothing to punish those who perpetrated the outrage. A few days later, when I met with him privately to deliver a message from President Bush, he asked me to explain to "my friend George" that he had not changed his objectives, but that the country was on the brink of a civil war.

As president, Gorbachev continued to do everything to avoid one, and that would require him to tack with the wind at times. And then he added that no matter what decisions Pres. Bush might make — the U.S. had threatened to terminate some cooperative programs if violence continued in the Baltic area — he would faithfully carry out all his previous agreements.

It was already apparent to the embassy that the KGB was feeding Gorbachev distorted and sometimes totally fabricated reports about conditions in the USSR. In 1989 and 1990 he had been convinced that the independence movements in the Baltic countries represented small minorities, while it was obvious to us that they had overwhelming support. By 1991, we could see that the KGB was fabricating "evidence" that Boris Yeltsin and the democratic leaders were planning to seize power "unconstitutionally."

Absurd as such claims were, Gorbachev seems to have taken them seriously. When specific false reports came to our attention and we informed him that they were baseless, Gorbachev would believe us rather than the KGB. Unfortunately, however, most of these reports did not come to our attention.

Events in the spring and summer of 1991 moved with kaleidoscopic rapidity and complexity. In April, there were attempts to remove Gorbachev as general secretary of the Communist Party, but he managed to repulse them. Cable News Network at one point reported that he had resigned as CPSU general secretary. When Secretary Baker telephoned me directly for clarification, I was able to quickly correct the false information, because the embassy's political section had sources within the closed meeting.

Negotiations between Gorbachev and republic leaders would make some apparent progress, then stall. The KGB chairman, prime minister and minister of defense all thought Gorbachev was conceding too much to the republics, but key republic leaders became more and more demanding. Underneath it all a de facto independence of

all the union republics was developing rapidly, most importantly in Russia.

By summer, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic had an elected president, Boris Yeltsin, while the USSR had a president who had been selected by the legislature, not the people as a whole. To make matters worse, Gorbachev and Yeltsin were acting more like sworn enemies than political leaders who understood the need to cooperate for the good of the country.

Events in the spring and summer of 1991 moved with kaleidoscopic rapidity and complexity.

The Coup Attempt and Its Aftermath

When President Bush visited Moscow at the end of July 1991, it appeared that Gorbachev had the agreement of at least eight of the 15 Soviet republics to adhere to a new union treaty, and a date for signing was set for Aug. 21. Pres. Bush tried to support Gorbachev with a speech in Kiev on Aug. 1, in which he urged the non-Russian republics to accept Gorbachev's proposals. But whatever prospect that draft treaty might have had was shattered when a cabal of Gorbachev's most senior associates attempted to seize power on Aug. 19, 1991, while he was vacationing in the Crimea.

The identity of the conspirators should not have been a surprise to Pres. Bush or Sec. Baker, for I had sent them a message in June reporting that Moscow Mayor Gavriil Popov had asked us to inform Boris Yeltsin, then visiting Washington, that KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov, Defense Minister Dmitry Yazov and Parliament Chairman Anatoly Lukyanov were conspiring to take power from Gorbachev. In response, the department instructed me to warn him, which I tried to do without naming the individuals since we could not confirm the information. But Gorbachev failed to grasp the seriousness of his position.

The first three persons Mayor Popov named did, in fact, lead the junta that tried to take power on Aug. 19, 1991. Lukyanov seems to have supported their efforts, but tried to cover his tracks by not becoming a formal member of the junta.

The Aug. 19 attempted coup failed in less than three days. The country was no longer the Soviet Union of old. Boris Yeltsin, the elected president of Russia, was able to rally Muscovites to come to Gorbachev's protection, and key military units refused to attack him. I left Moscow a week before the coup attempt, having told American journalists there, in reply to a direct question, that there could be an attempt to "reverse perestroika" — but, if so, I thought it would fail. To the best of my recollection, none of the several dozen journalists present reported my statement even though it was on the record.

When the coup occurred, Deputy Chief of Mission (later Ambassador) James Collins was in charge of the embassy. Under his guidance, American diplomats kept constant contact with Yeltsin, who was barricaded in the Russian parliament building not far from our embassy. This access provided unique insight into the Yeltsin government's reaction to the spectacular events taking place outside that building, events that were well and thoroughly reported by Western journalists.

My successor, Robert Strauss, arrived in Moscow just after the coup attempt failed. He inherited an experienced embassy staff that had successfully embedded itself in Moscow's political and intellectual elite and had developed contacts throughout the vast empire. This proved to be an irreplaceable asset for the George H.W. Bush administration as it coped with the fallout from the disintegration of a previously hostile but by then friendly superpower.

Everyday Work Increases

So far in this account, the reader might infer that Embassy Moscow had little to do in the late Soviet period but report on the unprecedented and — for most specialists — unexpected developments in the USSR. Nothing could be further from the truth. Every section of the embassy was inundated with what seemed an exponential increase in its workload.

For instance, scores of U.S.-Soviet negotiations were under way. At one point we counted 86 negotiations being conducted simultaneously, on topics ranging from strategic arms reductions to the safety of nuclear power plants, intellectual property rights, the sale of grain, civil airline routes, maritime boundaries in the Bering Sea and human rights abuses. Although many negotiations were conducted by special delegations, all had to be supported by the embassy.

The work of the defense attaché's office evolved from mainly intelligence collection to genuine liaison with the Soviet military and support of round-the-clock monitoring of Soviet missile facilities. The consular section faced a sudden flood of applications for visas of all types. Waiting lists for immigrant or refugee status reached a half million by late 1990. Within the space of a few months, the number of visas issued, all of which had to be explicitly approved by Washington, went from a few thousand a year to more than 100,000.

The embassy was also involved in negotiating the final touches on the Soviet agreement to withdraw from Afghanistan and settlements regarding Cambodia, Nicaragua and Angola, as well as German unification and the diplomacy that preceded the first Persian Gulf War. In that case, for the first time, the Soviet Union was persuaded to vote in the United Nations Security Council to authorize military action against an erstwhile ally.

With the opening of the Soviet media, embassy public affairs took on a new dimension: television appearances of Russian-speaking embassy officers and visiting Americans became almost a daily occurrence. By 1990, Spaso House, the ambassador's residence, was the locus of some 12 to 16 official functions a week. Some days saw as many as four events: working breakfasts, lunches, a press conference or briefing, then an evening reception or seated dinner.

In 1989 we initiated a series of "Spaso Seminars" involving American specialists discussing Soviet domestic issues ranging from demographic problems to the operation of the black market, to unanswered questions about Josef Stalin. Russian academic specialists and legislators were invited to lectures, followed by dinner and discussion. Condoleezza Rice, then a staffer at the National Security Council, gave a well-attended lecture in Russian on the Soviet military.

When the Soviet legislature was considering a law on press freedoms, we had an American lawyer specializing in First Amendment rights speak to a group that included the members of the relevant Supreme Soviet committee. Subsequently, they used the arguments they had heard at Spaso House (without attribution, of course) to strengthen press freedoms in the Soviet law under consideration.

The number of official and important unofficial dele-

gations also increased rapidly, so most embassy officers had to spend much of their time accompanying or briefing visitors. This had the advantage of bringing them into contact with Soviet officials and Soviet society, but left little time for reflective reporting. Nevertheless, the embassy's reporting officers managed not only to keep Washington promptly and accurately informed of events, but to place the reports in an interpretive context with key judgments that have stood the test of time. Workweeks of 60 and 70 hours were typical.

Meanwhile, every section of the embassy was inundated with what seemed an exponential increase in its workload.

Extreme Working Conditions

This work would have stressed to the utmost diplomats working in a totally supportive environment, but the staff of Embassy Moscow had to operate under conditions that would have incapacitated less capable and dedicated persons. In the fall of 1986, Soviet authorities withdrew all local employees from the mission. It took the State Department more than a year to replace the "locals" with a much smaller number of Americans; in the meantime, the embassy staff struggled without maintenance, repair and cleaning personnel, as well as assistance with unclassified clerical functions. Once the Americans arrived, however, support functions improved greatly.

Simultaneously, the embassy was prevented from completing construction of a new chancery by charges that it had been made unusable by Soviet bugging. The charges were grossly exaggerated — in fact, the plans for finishing construction would have provided a secure facility — but the issue became a political football between the House and Senate. As a result, most embassy officers had to work in overcrowded conditions in a firetrap. In March 1991, a fire made much of the old chancery uninhabitable for months. Key embassy operations moved into what had been planned for the garage and consular section of the new chancery.

After that, the embassy did not even have space for a desk for every reporting officer. So we tried to make a virtue out of necessity by keeping the majority of officers traveling outside Moscow at any given time, at least to the degree our limited travel funds permitted. Increased in-country travel enhanced our ability to follow the rapidly deteriorating conditions throughout the country.

Although President George H.W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker had, as early as the spring of 1989, approved establishing a network of small consulates in the Soviet republics, State Department management delayed implementing the decision. (When I pressed the under secretary for management, a political appointee, in 1990 for prompt implementation of the presidential decision to open small consulates in union republics, he told me to relax. He had two — Tbilisi and Tashkent — in the 1993 budget, but he couldn't move the date up because he had to open Leipzig and Bratislava first!)

Among the capitals of union republics, only Kiev, where plans for a consulate general had been under way for more than a decade, had American diplomats in place (still as an "advance party") when the Soviet Union collapsed. At the end of December 1991 there was a sudden requirement not just for a few additional consulates, but for 14 new embassies.

Although it seemed to us that Washington (especially Congress, but at times the State Department) was not as supportive as it might have been, all agencies and officials were operating under novel conditions, with many unpredictable events and stakes about as high as stakes can get. In the end, American policy coped well with the problems and opportunities stemming from the Soviet collapse.

As for Embassy Moscow, Consulate General Leningrad and our diplomats in Kiev, we can be proud of the job they did. They supported the negotiations that ended the Cold War, established productive contacts in all 15 successor states, encouraged democratic changes in the Soviet Union, and kept the U.S. government well informed about developments and their implications. In fact, it seems clear that the American government was better informed about conditions in the Soviet Union than was President Gorbachev, the victim of tendentious and misleading intelligence about conditions in his own country.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the United States was by far the most respected and liked foreign country among the people of the entire former Soviet Union. In Russia alone, approval ratings of the United States in opinion polls ran above 80 percent. Many events and factors contributed to this, but Embassy Moscow's outreach was not the least of them. ■

The View from the Trenches

Service in Moscow was a heady experience that is the stuff of every diplomat's dreams.

By Thomas Graham

The dream of every ambitious Foreign Service officer is to serve in a country that is making history with far-reaching consequences for American national interests. Fortunate are those now serving in North Africa and the Middle East in the midst of an historic upheaval. Fortunate also were those who served at the embassy in Moscow — under the able leadership of Ambassador Jack Matlock — during the last years of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

I was one of them, having arrived in Moscow as a second-tour officer in the spring of 1987, shortly before Amb. Matlock did, for a short stint in the consular section before taking up my regular assignment in the political-internal unit.

The end of the Cold War lay only a few short years in the future, but it was still on in Moscow, especially for the Soviet special services.

A Hardy, Dedicated Community

In this war, the embassy was a small outpost on enemy territory. We were under constant KGB surveillance, at the embassy and our residences, as we moved around Moscow or traveled to the few provincial cities that were not off limits to Americans. At times, microwaves bombarded the embassy; there were rumors of "spy dust" and other secret means to track our movements.

We thought the KGB had turned one or two of our Marine guards and through them gained access to the most sensitive parts of the embassy (the Lonetree-Bracy affair). We also feared that our communications systems had been compromised. As a precaution, we wrote our cables out on pads of paper and sent a secretary to Frankfurt once a week to type them up and transmit them to Washington.

Slowly, over many months, we rebuilt our capacity to send classified traffic directly from Moscow. (A few years later, the U.S. government concluded that our communications systems had not been compromised at all. Rather, the alleged compromise had been part of an elaborate

Thomas Graham served as a political officer at Embassy Moscow from 1987 to 1990. From 1994 to 1998, he returned to Moscow as head of the political-internal unit and then acting political counselor. After leaving the Foreign Service in 1998, he joined the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace as a senior associate. Later he served as director for Russian affairs on the National Security Council from 2002 to 2004, and special assistant to the president and senior director for Russian affairs on the NSC from 2004 to 2007. He is currently a managing director at Kissinger Associates.

KGB ruse to shield their infamous moles at CIA headquarters, Aldrich Ames, and at the FBI, Robert Hanssen.)

The embassy itself was housed in a rundown former Soviet apartment building in the center of Moscow — something that only enhanced its aura as an outpost on hostile territory. For several years major repairs had been delayed because we hoped to move into a new building under construction nearby. By 1987, however, construction had ground to a halt.

Everyone from the ambassador on down took turns at performing custodial services to keep the embassy functioning.

The KGB, we discovered, using Soviet workers we had hired, had ingeniously bugged the building in a way that negated our usual countermeasures. As a debate raged in Washington on how to proceed (and whom to blame) — and as delegation after delegation from Washington came to investigate — we began some serious renovation work on our current premises.

That turned the embassy into a construction site, with all the attendant dangers. A serious fire broke out in 1988, forcing a total evacuation of the building. (We noted the alacrity with which Soviet "firefighters" arrived on the scene, eager to rush in to help douse the flames, particularly on the upper floors and roof that housed some of our most sensitive equipment.) The embassy would not move into the new building until 12 years later, in 2000.

The unremitting surveillance and harsh physical environment alone would have made Moscow the hardship post it was. But the Soviet authorities tried to make it even harder, to stretch our resources and test our resolve. In 1986, several months before I arrived, in the midst of a diplomatic war with Washington, they had withdrawn the entire Foreign Service National staff from the embassy and capped the number of accredited diplomats we could have there.

In response, the embassy community pulled together in a show of spirited defiance. Everyone from the ambassador on down took turns at performing custodial services to keep the embassy functioning until Washington could recruit its first tranche of "PAEers" (contractors hired by Pacific Architects and Engineers, primarily energetic young American post-graduate students) to take over those duties. Even then, FS personnel continued to perform duties outside the normal job descriptions of their colleagues serving elsewhere in the world. We drove ourselves to official appointments, delivered packages and cleaned our offices.

These circumstances nurtured a hardy, dedicated community on the front lines in the battle against Soviet communism. We were not only the eyes and ears, but the analytical mind, of Washington on the ground. Ironically, the withdrawal of our FSN staff turned out to be a blessing. It pushed us out into Soviet society, where we gained a keener sense of the strains and stresses — and hopes — that arose as Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev tried to reform his country so that it could remain a major power into the 21st century.

Most important, we knew that Washington took our reporting and views seriously. With the Internet, cell phones and the universal 24-hour news cycle still some years away, we could report on events as quickly as any news organization and with greater analytical depth. The Western press corps was first-rate during this period, and we routinely exchanged information with them, as we tried to understand the often-obscure politics behind fast-moving events.

The Challenge of Political Reporting

Even then, political reporting presented its own special challenges. Strong networks of contacts are critical, and building them was problematical when I arrived in 1987. Although Gorbachev's reforms were loosening political controls, Soviet society remained fairly closed to foreigners, especially American diplomats.

We dealt with a narrow range of contacts: dissidents (their ranks swollen by political prisoners returning from labor camps as a result of Gorbachev's reforms); some Russian government officials (largely from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs); institutchiki (scholars at institutes connected with the Soviet Academy of Sciences, who generally worked on international affairs); East European and Chinese diplomats (who, as fellow communists, we believed had better insights into Soviet Communist Party developments than we did); some writers and other artists, and a few party and state newspaper and journal editors (officially approved, we presumed, for contacts with foreigners).

We supplemented those contacts by getting out into society as much as possible. We attended public lectures

(the All-Union Znaniye [Knowledge] Society offered a regular series of lectures on socioeconomic and political topics) and artistic performances, walked around town and traveled to provincial centers, and organized events at the embassy to create as many opportunities as we could to mix with the locals.

We were not only the eyes and ears, but the analytical mind, of Washington on the ground.

Because our contacts were limited, we spent a great deal of time reading newspapers and journals and watching television, looking — in the venerable tradition of Kremlinology — for subtle clues to changes in power at the top (who was standing where on the Lenin Mausoleum?) and broader policy directions (what change in policy was suggested by that change in phrasing in a Communist Party document?) This task had grown more exciting — and more time-consuming and exacting — as Gorbachev pressed his policy of glasnost (transparency) and called for filling in the blank spots in Soviet history.

A flood of articles critical of the Soviet past was pouring out. The challenge was to determine what those articles portended for the direction, dimensions and ultimate goals of reform and what they revealed about the possible battles inside the Soviet leadership over Gorbachev's policies. We asked the same questions that many Soviet citizens did — but largely in parallel with, not together with them, because of the wall that still divided us from most of Soviet society.

Glasnost and Perestroika: A Sea Change

That wall fell in 1988. First, a substantial part of politics moved from the closed chambers of the Communist Party and government ministries into more public venues, ultimately into the streets.

Mass public demonstrations erupted in the Caucasus over the fate of Nargorno-Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave inside Azerbaijan, and in the Baltic states over their annexation by the Soviet Union during World War II (which the United States never recognized). In Moscow, informal groups sprung up at various locations to discuss the issues of the day, the most prominent group being the one that met regularly on Pushkin Square in front of the offices of the pro-reform *Moscow News*, just a short distance from the Kremlin.

Second, President Ronald Reagan traveled to Moscow in May 1988 for a summit meeting with Gorbachev. The amicable atmosphere, symbolized by the two leaders' friendly walk on Red Square and encounters with more or less average Soviet citizens, sent an unmistakable sign that meeting with Americans was now acceptable behavior. Doors that had once been tightly closed to us swung open; our regular contacts began to talk more freely.

In this changed environment, there was much work to be done as we tried to keep up with the events rapidly unfolding around us.

In 1989, for example, the Soviet Union held the first competitive, secret and surprisingly free (if not wholly fair) elections in its 70-plus years' history for the newly-created Congress of People's Deputies. The reporting opportunities were myriad during the long campaign. We attended political rallies, conferences on current politics, and other campaign-related events in Moscow and various provincial centers. To cover election day itself, some two dozen embassy teams fanned out across the country.

The day was festive everywhere, as Soviets exercised their right to a meaningful vote for the first time. We visited polling stations, talked to voters and observed the vote count. And we were as surprised by the results as most other observers were: Scores of leading Communist Party officials lost (as a majority voted against them by crossing out their names on the ballot — with great relish, one imagined) and hundreds of anticommunist and nationalist candidates were elected.

The drama only thickened with the first two-week session of the Congress, which the political-internal unit bore the main responsibility for covering. The proceedings were broadcast in their entirety, and Soviet citizens remained glued to their TV sets as they witnessed the first open public debate at the highest levels of the political system. Each day one of us sat in the diplomats' lounge of the Congress, and during the intermissions we mingled with the deputies, including senior Communist Party officials, military officers and the heads of security organizations — all targets of opportunity for brief chats.

But the real story was inside the hall itself. Each day brought its own fireworks: scathing denunciations of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (which had led to the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic states, Moldova and what became parts of Belarus and Ukraine), of the brutal

Excerpt from the Abyss Cable

By Ray Smith

90 Moscow 23603 of July 13, 1990, originally SECRET/Exdis, now declassified by the State Department.

SUBJECT: Looking into the Abyss — The Possible Collapse of the Soviet Union and What We Should Be Doing About It

SUMMARY: Gorbachev, or even more progressive reformers, may triumph and the Soviet Union may move rapidly into full and productive interaction with the rest of the world. But they also may not, and it appears to us that the potentially less happy outcomes are the ones that require more forethought. The prospects of the Gorbachev regime have deteriorated over the past year and Soviets themselves are increasingly talking in apocalyptic terms. Some Republics will leave the Soviet Union and there will be a substantial redefinition of the remaining Republics' relationship to the center and to each other unless massive repression is used to prevent it. Truly dangerous scenarios — ranging from civil war and the loss of control over nuclear weapons to a truncated, belligerent, nuclear-armed Soviet or Russian state — cannot be excluded, even if they are not as likely as less apocalyptic scenarios. We need to take a close look at our policy to make certain that it minimizes the probability of extreme outcomes, and minimizes the risks to the U.S. if they should occur despite our best efforts.

We should move now to establish a permanent presence in each of the Soviet Republics. A major expansion of our exchange programs, both governmental and private, is essential. We need to keep our focus, and that of the Gorbachev regime, on moving forward on economic reform. Our arms control negotiations are in serious danger of being a day late and a dollar short. We need to rethink our objectives and how we are going to get there, from war-fighting strategy to modernization to how we organize ourselves as a government to conduct arms control negotiations. We need to move beyond ad hoc-isms in civil conflicts to the establishment of international principles and mechanisms for dealing with them. END SUMMARY.

Source: Raymond F. Smith, The Craft of Political Analysis for Diplomats*, Potomac Books, 2011.*

suppression of a peaceful demonstration in Tbilisi (that left 19 dead), of the KGB as a criminal organization and of Soviet operations in Afghanistan.

One session, in particular, remains seared in my memory. Andrei Sakharov, the moral leader of the dissident community, approaching his 90th birthday, rose to condemn Soviet operations in Afghanistan and repeated charges that Soviet generals had at times ordered their own troops to be killed so that they would not be captured by the mujahedeen. A disabled Afghan veteran then took the floor and, with raw emotion before a hushed hall, denounced Sakharov and spoke of the valor of his fellow soldiers in service to their country.

"Today," he ended, "I will say three words that I believe we should fight for with all we have: State, Motherland, Communism!" With that, the hall rose as one in a prolonged ovation; everyone in the diplomats' lounge leapt to his feet to join in, save me. The menace to Gorbachev's reforms hung in the air. But in retrospect it is now clear that it arose not only from cynics and time-servers but also from those who believed in their country and had served it in good faith. The case for reform was not as straightforward as we would have hoped.

Reporting and the New Realities

Massive street demonstrations finally arrived in Moscow in 1990. Tens of thousands of Muscovites regularly marched to the designated rally site — and at least once to Manish Square in the shadows of the Kremlin — where orators would denounce the Soviet government for an hour or more. The security services, in full riot gear and reinforced by heavy equipment, were always out in force, blocking side streets and channeling demonstrators to the rally site.

We walked along the margins, talking to the participants, and listened to the speeches at the rallies. It was a heady experience. In such an environment, it was hard not to be carried away by the marchers' enthusiasm and en-

ergy — their sense of wonder that they had finally lost their fear of the authorities and were prepared to say in public what they had long reserved only for the intimacy of the kitchen table with their trusted friends.

It was another small sign that a regime based on terror and intimidation was coming to an end. Indeed, for many of us — and for many of the demonstrators — the great mystery was that the Soviet authorities had seemingly lost the will and ability to defend themselves, to strike back and restore that fear.

As a result of the elections and the demonstrations, of the opening up of Soviet society, our task shifted from the search for subtle clues in the press to sorting out the meaning in a tidal wave of information for the Soviet Union's future and American interests. Looking back 20 to 25 years, I am bemused by the topics that so riveted our attention then. Many seem inconsequential now, but at the time offered valuable clues to the Soviet Union's trajectory.

Would Nicolay Bukharin, a comrade of Lenin and an advocate of a "softer" communism who was executed by Stalin as an enemy of the people, be rehabilitated? (He was, and that decision lent greater force to Gorbachev's reforms.) What was the meaning of the first positive use in a published article of the locution "private property" by a senior Communist Party leader? (More radical economic reform was on its way.)

How far would the Kremlin-approved effort to "fill the blank spots in history" go in unmasking the crimes of Josef Stalin? (They ultimately reinforced some of the most negative Western assessments.) Would it lead to questions about the true character of Vladimir Lenin and the founding myths of the Great October Revolution of 1917? (It did both, thereby dangerously eroding the regime's legitimacy.)

Foreseeing the Collapse

There was much excitement and much to report. But just how good was our reporting? In particular, did we foresee the collapse of the Soviet Union? The answer is "yes, in broad outline." In July 1990, the embassy sent a cable titled "Looking into the Abyss: The Possible Collapse of the Soviet Union and What We Should be Doing about It," drafted by political counselor Ray Smith (see p. 37).

It recommended that the United States set up "a physical presence in each of the Soviet republics and several additional locations in Russia. It is increasingly evident as these regions evolve toward greater independence that our ties with them should not be funneled through Moscow."

Likewise, one of the first memos I drafted after leaving the embassy and taking up a position in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in August 1990, argued that the breakup of the Soviet Union was a scenario we needed to take seriously. That thought did not just come to me suddenly on the plane back from Moscow.

Indeed, the embassy had been alluding to that possibility in its cables since at least the middle of 1989, when a delegation of Lithuanians from the Congress of People's Deputies met with Amb. Matlock to outline their own strategy for regaining their independence within a year. They then implemented that strategy step by step, and a newly elected Lithuanian parliament voted for independence in March 1990.

Genuine independence for the three Baltic states, to be sure, would hardly qualify as the collapse of the Soviet Union. But other developments were pushing in that direction, particularly the rapidly escalating power struggle between Gorbachev as the Soviet leader and Yeltsin as his Russian counterpart. As each sought to enlist the support of the leaders of the Union's constituent republics to address the balance at the center, those leaders enhanced their autonomy and took control of resources within their territories.

Eventually, Gorbachev initiated negotiations to transform the Soviet Union from a unitary state into a genuine federation or confederation. Fear of this new arrangement drove the conservative forces in the Soviet leadership to launch the putsch of August 1991. Its ignominious collapse in three short days was a clear sign that the Soviet Union was bankrupt, and ignited a series of events that quickly led to the country's breakup into 15 sovereign states by the end of the year.

With its dense network of contacts in Moscow, Leningrad and the Russian provinces, reaching out through the constituent republics, the embassy kept abreast of all these developments and provided Washington with a continuous stream of reporting.

As the embassy reporting from this period is eventually declassified and made public, I am confident it will reveal how well a dedicated group of Foreign Service officers and their colleagues from other agencies, often in adverse conditions, served their country at a time of historic change.

It was, indeed, a good time to be an American diplomat in Moscow. ■

In the Eye of the Storm: Team SOV

At a critical moment, a generation of experienced Soviet hands came together at Embassy Moscow.

By James Schumaker

From the far remove of 20 years, and with the benefit of hindsight, the decline and disintegration of the Soviet Union now seem inevitable — developments which nearly all commentators now claim to have predicted. Conservative pundits view the collapse of Soviet power as the result of the wise policies pursued by President Ronald Reagan. Most liberals believe the internal contradictions of the Soviet system made its collapse a foregone conclusion. And for most intelligence analysts, the signs of disintegration were there all along, even if no one actually came out and made the bold prediction.

For those of us who were in Moscow in the years leading up to the collapse of Soviet power, however, there was no such certainty. Standing at the eye of a growing storm, we could only grasp at the various bits of evidence that came our way to make some sense of what we saw and heard. Our conclusions, at first tentative, became stronger with the passage of time. But neither we, nor anyone else, saw exactly what was coming.

We were fortunate during this period to have an entire generation of experienced Soviet hands working on the problem.

A Snapshot of the Team

Our ambassador was Jack Matlock, perhaps the most experienced and skilled political officer of his generation, and a person with deep contacts both among his Soviet hosts and the foreign policy leadership of the Reagan and Bush administrations. As U.S. ambassador in Moscow, Matlock had a very tough job. He had inherited an embassy that was in deep disarray, and was just recovering from a series of setbacks, some of its own making, others not.

Matlock was assisted by two very talented deputy chiefs of mission: first, Mike Joyce, and then Jim Collins, himself a future ambassador to Moscow. Joyce and Collins were pivotal in recruiting the best political and economic officers that could be found, and succeeded in assembling one of the most powerful reporting teams

James Schumaker, a retired Foreign Service officer, has served the United States government in various capacities over the past four decades, with professional experience in the Soviet Union, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. He is currently working on his memoirs, draft excerpts of which are posted on his blog at http://shoeone.blogspot.com/.

that had ever existed at the embassy.

Ray Smith, a veteran Soviet hand in his own right, was recruited as political counselor. The political-internal section, the core of the political reporting operation, was headed first by Shaun Byrnes, and later by John Parker of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

We were fortunate to have a whole generation of experienced Soviet hands working on the problem.

They supervised more than a dozen other reporting officers, nearly all of whom possessed superlative reporting talents. Among them were Tom Graham, who focused on the Baltic states and the Caucasus, and Rosemarie Forsythe who covered nationalities issues. I was recruited to head the political-external section, which covered Soviet foreign relations, and was fortunate to have a number of superb officers there, including Dick Norland and Carey Cavanaugh.

The economic section was headed by John Blaney. He oversaw an outstandingly talented section, including Mike Gfoeller and Ross Wilson. The debates between pol and econ, as we were called, were often highly contentious, but in the end, we generally ended up reporting the correct story to Washington.

Outside the embassy, we were also lucky to have an excellent group at our consulate general in Leningrad, led by Consul General Dick Miles, and reporting officers Jon Purnell and George Krol. We also received the strong support of the Soviet desk back in Washington, which at the time was led by Sandy Vershbow and John Evans. Most of these officers eventually became ambassadors to one or more of the New Independent States that succeeded the Soviet Union.

An Unusual Environment

I had arrived in Moscow rather unexpectedly in April 1989, fresh from Embassy Kabul, where, as acting deputy chief of mission, I had overseen that embassy's own modest reporting effort in verifying the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The unexpected part came when, as the Soviet withdrawal was nearly complete, I suddenly had to organize the withdrawal of our own diplomatic staff from Kabul. A few months later, I found myself in Moscow.

I was surprised to find that the chancery looked much the same as it had when I had worked there in the 1970s. But to the west of the Old Office Building, a New Embassy Compound was nearly completed — all except for the New Office Building, which was still under construction due to various security fiascoes over the previous decade. The NEC conveniently housed extensive underground facilities, including meeting rooms, parking garages, a commissary, cafeteria, sports complex, swimming pool, bowling alley and assorted shops.

Less convenient, it was surrounded by a multilayered ring of KGB surveillance, overshadowed as it was on three sides by taller buildings. Across Konyushkovskaya Ulitsa was the newly-completed Supreme Soviet building, also known as the White House. The northern end of the compound was bounded by one of the "Seven Sisters" wedding-cake skyscrapers and the southern end by the Mir Hotel, the 1950s-era skyscraper complex that once housed Moscow City Hall. And directly across the street stood a non-working church dubbed "Our Lady of Telemetry" due to the obvious presence of KGB and other unwelcome guests. (After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Church of the Nine Martyrs of Kizik was reopened.)

There was a "No Man's Land" between the old and new office buildings occupied by structures not under embassy control, including the Ginzberg, a decrepit apartment building from the early Soviet era. And there was the so-called "Change Building," a small, three-story, temporary facility put up by Soviet authorities for the workers who had been "constructing" the New Office Building for the past decade. There were even persistent rumors of a large network of tunnels under the New Embassy Compound itself. If true, it meant the NEC was surrounded not just on all sides, but in three dimensions as well. It was an unsettling thought.

Apart from the general environment of constant surveillance and the dilapidated state of the chancery, working conditions were adversely affected by a number of new and oppressive security requirements in the wake of the Lonetree-Bracy security scandal of 1987.

At the Center of the Revolution

Serving my third tour in the Soviet Union, and my fourth in Soviet affairs, I suppose I also qualified as a So-

viet hand of a sort. But I soon realized just how out of my depth I was in comparison with many of my colleagues. This was brought home to me during one of my first meetings with Ambassador Matlock in the secure conference room, also known as the "tank."

At that meeting, I was astonished to hear the ambassador and Tom Graham calmly discussing the impending dissolution of the USSR, as if it were already a fait accompli. This was in early 1989, when official Washington was predicting nothing of the sort, and was instead in the position of reacting to events as they occurred.

As the signs of disarray in the Soviet leadership increased, so had rumors of a possible coup.

I didn't quite know what to think about this, but it soon became obvious to me that the ambassador and Graham were on to something. Other officers were picking up similar signs, as well. Using his own contacts with the Soviet leadership, and drawing on the reporting of his officers, Amb. Matlock was able to put together a coherent vision of the impending Soviet collapse long before it was accepted wisdom.

As the head of political-external affairs, I often felt a little at sea when it came to talking about the future of the Soviet Union, but there were occasions when I was able to help. For example, just a couple of months after I had arrived, Amb. Matlock was tasked with finding out what the Soviets intended to do if Solidarity won the August 1989 elections in Poland and took the country on a more independent course. The ambassador and I did a series of calls on Soviet officials, ending up at the Polish embassy, and I asked Carey Cavanaugh to take soundings among his own sources.

The tea leaves were rather difficult to read, but at the working level Carey was getting signals that were more definite. So we ended up going with his appraisal that Mikhail Gorbachev would not react in a hostile manner to Solidarity's coming to power. This evaluation proved to be correct, and presaged the momentous events that occurred later in the year, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the peaceful overthrow of all the Soviet satellite governments in Eastern Europe.

Carey was just one middle-grade officer among many at Embassy Moscow, but his superlative reporting was typical of the effort everyone put in during this crucial period. Carey, in particular, was able to get his Soviet contacts to say the most interesting things. For example, his quick analysis of the resignation of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze on Dec. 20, 1990, and his skillful use of Supreme Soviet contacts were particularly helpful in signaling the impending Soviet crackup.

Coup Rumors

Interestingly, one of the last tasks of my tour in Moscow was to help organize the Bush-Gorbachev Summit, which took place from July 30 to Aug. 1, 1991. Earlier in the year, as the signs of disarray in the Soviet leadership increased, so had rumors of a possible coup.

Yet as bad as the situation was between Gorbachev and the hardliners on the Politburo, preparations for the visit proceeded almost without a hitch. The experience of numerous visits by Secretary of State James Baker over the previous two years served as good practice for the summit, and the embassy operated as a well-oiled machine. All of us knew our tasks almost by rote, and the Soviets could not have been more cooperative.

I had an unexpectedly easy job as the scheduling officer, as nearly everything fell into place — until one of the last events on the schedule, the Kremlin state dinner. All the invitees had arrived and were seated except for one person: newly-elected Russian President Boris Yeltsin. He and Gorbachev were in a running fight for political dominance, and Yeltsin was doing everything he could to attract attention to himself and make Gorbachev look awkward.

Those of us in charge of organizing the affair became increasingly nervous until Yeltsin finally arrived, half an hour late, dressed in an elegant blue suit and bright red tie. He greeted Gorbachev with a knowing smile, a firm handshake and a look that a snake might have given a mouse.

Gorbachev was surrounded: on one side by Politburo hardliners, on the other by people like Yeltsin. I wondered idly how long he would last. It was just a passing thought, however. Following the summit, I packed my bags and set off for Washington.

The coup was only a few days away. ■

Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War

Three decades of U.S.-Soviet cultural exchanges helped pave the way for the end of the Cold War.

By Yale Richmond

Over 50,000 Russians and other Soviets came to the United States between 1958, when the first U.S.-Soviet cultural agreement was signed, and 1988, when communication became more open and an agreement was no longer needed.

They came as students and scholars, scientists and engineers, journalists and writers, party and government officials, musicians, dancers and athletes (and more than a few KGB officers). They came, they saw, they were conquered — and the Soviet Union was changed.

Though Moscow insisted on having the agreement detail exactly who and what would be exchanged, in what numbers, and who would pay costs, it never spelled out its reasons for participating. Presumably, though, it wanted to gain access to U.S. science and technology; have the Soviet Union seen as equal to the United States; seek cooperation with the U.S.; demonstrate Soviet achievements; ease the pent-up demand of Soviet scholars, scientists, performing artists, intellectuals and athletes for foreign travel; and earn foreign currency through performances abroad of Soviet performing artists and athletes.

U.S. objectives were set forth in a National Security Council directive (NSC 5607): to broaden and deepen relations with the Soviet Union by expanding contacts between people and institutions; involve Soviets in joint activities and develop habits of cooperation with the U.S.; end the Soviet Union's isolation and inward orientation by giving it a broader view of the world and itself; improve U.S. understanding of Soviet society through access to its institutions and people; and obtain the benefits of cooperation in culture, education, science and technology.

Youthful Outreach

The cornerstone of the program was the Graduate Student/Young Faculty Exchange, which enabled a limited number of scholars from each country to spend an academic year in the other. The agreed number was never higher than 50 a year, but over the next 30 years more than a thousand would take part. They enriched universities in both countries and provided a network of informed people who had lived in the other country, spoke its language, and could separate fact from fiction.

While there was numerical reciprocity in the numbers of scholars exchanged each year, most Americans were in

Yale Richmond, a retired Foreign Service Officer, is the author of Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain *(Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).*

their mid-20s and doing research for doctorates in humanities and social sciences, mainly in Russian history, language and literature. The Soviet participants were mostly in their 30s, already had their Candidate degree (roughly equivalent to a Ph.D.), and worked predominantly in science and technology.

Moreover, the Americans, in accordance with U.S. academic tradition, were selected in open competition, while for the Soviets, fields of study were determined according to the needs of the state. Authorities canvassed universities and research institutes to find the best talent in each field, and told participants that they were being sent abroad on a komandirovka, the Russian term for official trip.

Aleksandr Yakovlev was one of four Soviet graduate students enrolled at Columbia University from 1958 to 1959. After studying American history and politics, he returned to Moscow still a convinced communist, but was greatly influenced by his year in New York. He later described it as more important than the decade he subsequently spent as Soviet ambassador to Canada.

When asked in 1998 what had impressed him most at Columbia, Yakovlev said it was the more than 200 books he read there, works he could not have read in the Soviet Union. Today Yakovlev is known as the intellectual godfather of Gorbachev's glasnost (openness) initiative, and was at his side during five summit meetings with Ronald Reagan.

Another Soviet attending Columbia that year was Oleg Kalugin, a young KGB officer who, in his first campaign for public office, was elected to the university student council. He eventually rose to become a KGB major general and chief of counterintelligence during a 32-year career, before joining the Democratic Platform of the Communist Party and being elected to the Soviet parliament.

In a 1997 interview with me, Kalugin said: "Exchanges were a Trojan horse in the Soviet Union. They played a tremendous role in the erosion of the Soviet system. They opened up a closed society. They greatly influenced younger people who saw the world with more open eyes, and they kept infecting more and more people over the years."

"Exchanges were a Trojan horse in the Soviet Union. They played a tremendous role in the erosion of the Soviet system."

— Oleg Kalugin

A Breath of Fresh Air

Americans know about the Soviet symphony orchestras, ballet groups, circuses and ice shows that filled our halls and arenas with appreciative audiences during the 30 years of the exchange program, but few recall the American performers who went east. Among the U.S. groups that toured the Soviet Union were symphony orchestras from Philadelphia, New York, Cleveland and San Francisco; jazz greats Benny Goodman, Woody Herman, Earl Hines and Duke Ellington; and dance companies American Ballet Theater, New York City Ballet, Joffrey Ballet and Alvin Ailey Dance Theater.

Russian halls were always full, and tickets hard to get. For Ellington's concerts, tickets sold for as much as 80 rubles each on the black market when the usual price was seldom more than four. But, it might be asked, did such performances help change the Soviet Union?

To Soviet audiences, isolated from the West since the late 1930s, visits by American and European performing artists brought a breath of fresh air to a country where orthodoxy and conservatism had long dominated. As one Russian musician put it, "There came to the Soviet Union truly great symphony orchestras with sounds that were electrifying, and they came year after year. 'How could the decadent West produce such great orchestras?' we asked ourselves. Cultural exchanges were another opening to the West and more proof that our media were not telling the truth."

The cultural agreement called for exhibitions "on various topics of mutual interest" to be shown for one month in various cities in the two countries. The U.S. displays featured new American developments in such fields as agriculture, architecture, hand tools, medicine, outdoor recreation, photography and technology for the home.

Produced by the U.S. Information Agency, the exhibits drew huge crowds, with lines stretching for blocks, and were seen, on average, by some 250,000 visitors per city. All told, some 20 million Soviet citizens saw the 23 U.S. exhibitions over the 30-year period.

As a bonus, the USIA exhibitions were staffed by 20 Russian-speaking Americans who demonstrated the

items and engaged in spirited conversations with Soviet visitors. For most Russians, it was their first and only opportunity to speak with an American.

Cinema Verité

Vladimir Lenin described cinema as the most important art, but he could not have foreseen the influence that foreign films would have on the Soviet public.

The cost of those exchanges was minuscule in comparison with U.S. expenditures for defense and intelligence over the same period.

The cultural agreement provided for exchange of motion pictures through commercial channels, and over the life of the agreement four or five American films were purchased by the Soviets each year from the major Hollywood studios. Most were comedies, adventures and musicals that met the interests of Soviet audiences. Among the more popular were "Some Like it Hot," "The Apartment," "The Chase" and "Tootsie."

But they were much more than entertainment. Audiences carefully watched the characters in the films and their homes, stores, streets, clothes and cars. When refrigerators were opened in American films, they were full of food. Such details were very revealing for Soviet audiences.

Films screened by the Soviet authorities but not deemed fit for purchase still reached key audiences: high officials and their spouses and other privileged Soviets — scientists, journalists, writers — who saw the films at "members only" clubs.

Rocking the Boat

Rock 'n' roll and jazz also helped open up the Soviet Union. But did they, as many Russians claim, play a role in ending Soviet ideology? To answer that question, we need to go back to the Sixth World Youth Festival, held in Moscow in 1957.

When the Soviet Union made plans to host the festival, its intent was to demonstrate the changes that had taken place since Stalin's death four years earlier. Previous festivals had been held in other countries where they were well-managed by local communists and produced propaganda successes. The results of the Moscow festival, however, were quite different, with unintended consequences. The tens of thousands of Soviet youth who attended quickly adopted the styles of their Western peers, and the Soviet Union would never again be the same.

For two weeks in July and August 1957, 34,000 foreign and 60,000 Soviet delegates came to Moscow for what Max Frankel of the *New York Times* described in an Aug. 12, 1957, report as "...a dizzying round of games, conferences, parties and carnivals." Some five million Moscow residents and thousands of other Soviet citizens witnessed these events. Also attending was a British delegation of more than 1,600, and some 160 Americans of various political persuasions who had come against the misguided advice of the State Department.

"There is no doubt," reported Frankel, "that the total effect of the festival pleased the Soviet government. It has been armed with months' worth of propaganda about the friendship and fellowship demonstrated in Moscow by the visitors." But seeds of protest were planted that would plague the Soviets in future years. As Frankel wrote, "There is erratic debate, polyglot conversation and heated argument everywhere as Soviet youth surrounded foreign visitors and peppered them with questions about their home countries and lifestyles."

Along with jazz groups from Eastern and Western Europe, there were also a few of the early rock 'n' roll groups from Britain with their electric guitars. Such music was unknown in the Soviet Union, and Russians were surprised when it took the festival by storm and withstood later efforts to stem the tide, with devastating consequences for Soviet ideologists.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the music of the Beatles swept the Soviet Union. As Pavel Palazchenko, Gorbachev's aide, put it: "We knew their songs by heart. In the dusky years of the Brezhnev regime they were not only a source of musical relief. They helped us create a world of our own, a world different from the dull and senseless ideological liturgy that increasingly reminded one of Stalinism. ... The Beatles were our quiet way of rejecting 'the system' while conforming to most of its demands."

Rock, moreover, taught Russians to speak more freely, to express their innermost thoughts, as singers Vladimir Vysotsky and Bulat Okudzhava, and poets Andrei Voznesensky and Yevgeny Yevtushenko, had done a generation

earlier. It should therefore be seen as another reason for communism's collapse.

This is not as farfetched as it may seem. It's a claim made by many Russians, and by Andras Simonyi, a former Hungarian ambassador to the United States who led a rock band in Budapest during the Cold War. In a 2003 talk titled "How Rock Music Helped Bring Down the Iron Curtain," delivered at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Simonyi said "Rock 'n' roll, culturally speaking, was a decisive element in loosening up communist societies and bringing them closer to the world of freedom."

Rock 'n' roll and jazz also helped open up the Soviet Union.

The Beatles never performed in the Soviet Union, but they had fans at the highest levels of Russian society. When Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife Raisa met in 1987 with Yoko Ono, John Lennon's widow, they acknowledged that they, too, were Beatles fans. Gorbachev's public endorsement ended three decades of official Soviet anti-rock policy.

Cultural Exchanges: A Powerful Investment

The end of the Cold War and collapse of communism came after more than 30 years of exchanges between the West and the Soviet Union. The Soviet elite who traveled to the West, as well as many who remained at home, came to realize how far behind their country lagged and how Marxism-Leninism had failed them, and they began to expect more than the communist system could provide.

The resulting widespread discontent provided fuel for Gorbachev's reforms, the eventual rejection of the Soviet system, and the end of the Cold War. It is worth noting that the cost of those exchanges was minuscule in comparison with U.S. expenditures for defense and intelligence over the same period. ■

PICKING UP THE PIECES

WITH THE CRUMBLING OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE, THE DEMAND FOR ECONOMIC REPORTING AND COMMERCIAL DIPLOMACY IN THE NIS SOARED.

BY MICHAEL A. LALLY

In the annals of world events, the lowering of the Soviet flag over the Kremlin on Dec. 25, 1991, was a pivotal moment. On that snowy evening in Moscow, nearly 75 years of authoritarian rule, Cold War brinksmanship and economic autarky came to an anticlimatic end.

Just months later, 15 republics had declared independence from the Soviet Union, and suddenly had to create new political systems, establish independent judiciaries, write constitutions, and forge diplomatic links with each other and the "far abroad." Developing functioning, sustainable economies was a core interest of the United States in all the Newly Independent States to ensure longer-term stability in the region, bring new partners into the global economic community and, in some cases, to prevent humanitarian disaster.

Michael A. Lally, a Foreign Commercial Service officer since 1993, is currently commercial counselor in Ankara. In addition to private-sector experience in Moscow, he has served in Kiev (now Kyiv) (1993-1996), Almaty (1996-1999), Baku (2000-2003) and Mexico City (2006-2009). *He thanks public- and private-sector colleagues who commented on this article. The views expressed within are solely his own.*

Washington scurried to establish 14 new embassies around the former Soviet empire and bolster staff in Moscow in response to the surge in demand for economic reporting and American business activity. From Minsk to Dushanbe to Vladivostok, U.S. policymakers engaged with these new capitals through bilateral negotiations, the international financial institutions and multilateral fora, such as the World Trade Organization then being established.

Given the dearth of information on the situation "on the ground" in the NIS, U.S. embassies and consulates played a vital role in both informing the Washington policy process and explaining American perspectives on global economic developments to host-country governments.

The Demands of the New World (Dis)Order

Just as the Arab Spring has gripped us in recent months, the birth of the NIS in 1991-1992 brought wall-to-wall news coverage throughout the United States and Europe. Coming on the heels of then-President George H.W. Bush's declaration of a "new world order" following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany, U.S. policy faced a massive challenge in the ex-USSR. Securing nuclear weapons across four successor states was an early policy goal of the Bill Clinton administration and a

major, if still incomplete, success. Politically, the United States engaged on concluding arms control and conventional forces agreements and bringing these new nations into the tent of global institutions.

Beyond superpower high politics, however, a sad, volatile narrative was unfolding. The vast majority of Soviet citizens were slammed with hyperinflation and suffered from spot food shortages, price hikes and a surge in corruption. This brought many into the streets — some to protest, some to sell their meager belongings to keep the lights on. So-called shock therapy was derided by many Russian decision-makers and the man on the street, who bitterly commented that it was "all shock and no therapy."

Probably the best example of the value-added role of economic reporting from this period is seen in U.S. efforts to develop an East-West energy bridge.

Constant coverage of demonstrations in various capitals, civil war in the Caucasus and Tajikistan, and an economic freefall spawned a voracious appetite for U.S. mission reporting and generation of policy options. Washington's interest in economic developments in Russia and Ukraine was particularly intense.

As a junior officer in Kiev (now Kyiv) in the early 1990s, I saw unending streams of high-level delegations from the U.S. interagency community, sometimes coordinated on key messages, sometimes not. The parade of bilateral, multilateral and nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders strained the capacity of Ukrainian decision-makers to meet with and digest the reams of economic policy advice being offered.

The quality of economic management in the NIS also varied wildly, from Western-educated central bank governors to Soviet-trained bureaucrats still waiting for publication of the next five-year plan. The lack of institutions and trained people to staff them became the Achilles' heel of our policy dialogue and required a long-term approach to economic policy development.

The international financial institutions and the U.S. Agency for International Development played important and largely positive roles in advising post-Soviet governments on matters of urgency, including exchange rate controls (bad), privatization (good, if handled transparently) and money supply. While the quality of USAID-funded contractors varied, the agency's economic reform programs of the 1990s provided a concrete, practical way to channel economic policy advice, and gave focus to host-government efforts to escape a downward economic spiral.

Back to Basics

As a consumer of, and contributor to, economic reporting at the time, I saw the constant press for more information on the economies of the NIS countries. In that pre-Internet era, the creaky Soviet phone system proved unreliable and e-mail was still over the horizon.

At the same time, the paucity of Russian-speaking, country-savvy specialists in Washington afforded U.S. missions in the region an opportunity to influence the policy development process. Given the lack of reliable economic and trade statistics in the NIS, the best economic reporting often came from good old shoe-leather, "walk the beat," research.

In my experience, the best officers took the time to build personal relationships with key opinion- and decision-makers, as well as talking to the "man on the street." Whether bumping along bad roads in Uzbekistan or flying into a Siberian winter, such officers would obtain first-hand observations on the breakdown of the Soviet coal distribution system or the lack of spare parts supplied by a factory in Lithuania to a power substation in Kyrgyzstan.

During one memorable road trip in a Central Asian country, my economic officer colleague and I got stuck in a very cold airport due to fuel shortages. Making the best of it, we called on the airport director to get a sense of what was happening far beyond the capital. While initially a bit puzzled as to why two Russian-speaking Americans would want to meet him, he opened up over time (and more quickly over a bottle of vodka) to bemoan his inability to pay for fuel from the refinery given the state airlines' functional bankruptcy. He boasted of his valiant efforts to pay his airport staff their $45 per month wages before he would take a kopek, but his slick leather office furniture suggested otherwise.

Given the breakdown in the Gossnab (state supply) system and falling production around the former Soviet states, good old-fashioned capitalism first appeared in the rynoks — the produce and consumer goods markets in major cities. In Kiev, open-air markets sold everything

from fruits and vegetables to imported TVs, children's shoes, winter coats, used cars, kittens and the occasional semiautomatic weapon. These markets were a Disneyland for economic reporting, as they showed where buyer, seller and society met.

Many post-Soviet biznesmeny (businessmen) flew to Turkey to buy up thousands of dollars worth of products, and then had to negotiate their shipment past greedy host-country customs officials. Good economic reporting also gave a sharper picture of the available income of the population, and what they were spending it on. On the darker side, because of their ability to generate cash quickly, criminal elements often owned and managed the markets, providing a further reporting dimension.

Value-Added Economic Reporting

This cascade of reporting material was often used to vividly explain larger internal and external dimensions of the post-Soviet economy. White House-level engagement often produced short-fuse requests for information to "feed the beast." But as many of us know, reporting is only as good as your consumers' views on the given subject. In a humorous case where analyst and policy consumer did not see eye to eye, then-Vice President Al Gore emphatically disagreed with an intelligence community assessment on high-level corruption, carefully marking "Horse(manure)!" on the margins to ensure clear and timely feedback.

Probably the best example of the value-added role of economic reporting from this period is seen in U.S. efforts to develop an East-West energy bridge. Traditional, face-to-face discussions, combined with a strong communications network throughout the region, significantly advanced American interests. Intensive shuttle diplomacy from Washington developed long-term relationships to build trust on key matters such as oil and gas development, pipeline options and large-scale investment. Perceived as honest brokers, American officials would often facilitate Cabinet-level communications between various NIS governments that for domestic political reasons could not or would not do so directly.

This effort not only informed the policy process in Washington and European capitals, but also provided practical advice to American firms in the NIS. Especially in the energy sector, American companies would maintain a discreet dialogue with U.S. missions on insights into key decision-makers, political rivalries and the like. The private sector would also look to ambassadors and mission officials for advice on host-government officials to work with (or stay away from), the larger economic picture and regional politics.

The FSO's Comparative Advantage

As we take stock of economic developments in the former Soviet Union 20 years later, it is easy to forget the tough times that a vast majority of the population suffered. The glitz of Moscow's Tverskaia Street today and the rise of Kazakhstan's new capital on the blustery Central Asian steppe illustrate the new wealth that some in these countries so conspicuously consume. While one can argue that the region's oil wealth drives much of its economic success, it is also clear that U.S. and international economic policy engagement helped bring many (but hardly all) of the Soviet successor states into global trade institutions.

Long before "expeditionary" and "transformational" diplomacy became buzzwords, Foreign Service officers were working shoulder-to-shoulder with decision-makers in the NIS to advocate American perspectives on the global economy while pressing for policy reforms and commercial deals that later became the shoots of a (sometimes) free market. With the notable exception of Turkmenistan, all are now members of or observers to the WTO. Major energy routes link several countries to export markets, creating wealth in their home countries while feeding the global appetite for hydrocarbons. International institutional investors now seek out sovereign wealth funds established by several ex-Soviet states.

Today's reporting challenges are many. To quote American scholar Warren Bennis: "We have more information now than we can use, and less knowledge and understanding than we need." With the terabytes of information now at our fingertips, the unending stream of e-mail taskers from Washington and front-office memo demands, it is easy to forget that the best reporting still comes from direct human interaction. To have an effect on the policy process in Washington, talking with and understanding host-country decision-makers, as well as "Ivan Six-Pack," is the true comparative advantage all Foreign Service officers provide.

One can easily discern the depth and texture of reporting that "presses the flesh" and probes key opinion makers on an issue compared to "reporting from the cubicle" that uses Internet translations of local press articles. As the Soviet successor states turn 20 and become young adults, such understanding will be in even greater demand. ■

SETTING UP SHOP IN THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT STATES

VETERANS OF THE 1991-1993 ERA OF POST OPENINGS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION TELL THEIR STORIES.

"Normalizing" the New Posts

New Post Support Unit, Embassy Bonn

By Mike Tulley

Most Foreign Service people today will give you a puzzled look if you mention the New Post Support Unit, or NPSU. It was set up by the European Bureau's executive office in 1992 to provide administrative support for the 14 new posts that blossomed overnight in the former Soviet Union. As unbelievable as it may seem to us today, these posts —Tallinn, Vilnius, Riga, Minsk, Kiev (now Kyiv), Chisinau, Tbilisi, Yerevan, Baku, Ashgabat, Dushanbe, Tashkent, Bishkek and Alma Ata (now Consulate General Almaty, after the embassy moved to the new capital, Astana) — were originally envisioned to be a "new model" for U.S. embassies. Total staff for each embassy, we were told, would not exceed 25 people: 10 Americans and 15 locally engaged staff.

NPSU was supposed to be the management SWAT team.

All 14 posts became part of the European Bureau, and the State Department made the decision not to ask Congress for any more funds to open and operate them because they were to be small, bargain-basement operations. NPSU was supposed to be the management SWAT team that could help these posts function administratively with limited resources. Of course, it quickly dawned on us that a few of those countries had nuclear weapons and a significant Soviet military presence parked inside their borders and might need a little more attention than we had originally planned. The figure of 25 held for perhaps six months, and then the stampede began.

I was the first chief of the NPSU Human Resources Unit, joining Director Cliff Tighe, Financial Manager Ron Miller, Information Management Officer Steve Lauderdale and General Services Officer John Helm in Bonn in January 1992. Our mission was simple: help get these 14 small and new posts "normalized." Jim Paravonian, Joanne Armor, Louis Hebert and Boyd Doty were among the other Foreign Service pioneers in the unit. Among the locally engaged staff, I am once again working with Steve Wilkins and Mike Stephen today in NPSU's successor organization, the Regional Support Unit, which relocated to Frankfurt when Embassy Bonn moved to Berlin in the mid-1990s.

You can probably guess what our biggest problems were. The first was communication, the second was communication and the third was communication. None of these posts had particularly reliable telephone infrastructure. Remember, in 1992 cellular technology was still in its infancy (although by the time I left Bonn three years later, most of these posts were relying more on their cell-phone systems than their landlines).

We also used telexes extensively (I'm not making that up) and faxes — sometimes by patiently feeding a document into a fax machine several dozen times over a pe-

riod of a couple of days, we were actually able to get it to Baku, Minsk, or elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. We also sent a lot of "Official-Informal" cables back then. I'm not sure those even exist today.

The State Department made a lot of half-steps and missteps in those early days, but one excellent decision was not to send Wang computers to the new posts. Instead, Steve Lauderdale and his team sent personal computers and, over the next 18 months or so, patiently invented the department's first overseas Microsoft-based wide area network (called the WAN). While the rest of Embassy Bonn was sending text-only e-mails by the green cursor flicker of the old Wang system, we were starting to send entire Word and Excel documents (gasp!) via this revolutionary new technology. (Again, I'm not making this up.)

The support flights were our lifeline. They brought everything from Post-it notes to Mosler safes.

I wish I had space here to tell you about the time I spent 24 hours on the tarmac in Sochi, Georgia, with Jim Paravonian and about 100 inebriated Georgian friends, with $40,000 in cash needed for embassy operations stashed under our seats. And Louis Hebert could tell you about a "hard landing" in Moscow while coming in on a flight from Dushanbe, which pinned him in his seat during the evacuation of the plane. The plane was totaled, but he walked away unscathed. (By the way, Louie, most of us would call *that* a "crash.")

The bottom line was this: The assignment was a hugely satisfying experience. We traveled, trained and got our hands dirty in the day-to-day work of setting up an embassy, and then got up the next day and started all over again. In the early days we spent 70 to 80 percent of our time on the road.

NPSU created and mentored the first generation of administrative locally engaged staff, and provided support, advice and sometimes a shoulder to cry on to that first group of Foreign Service management officers and general services officers who went out to these posts to do what was essentially a ridiculously impossible job.

A lot of people have cycled through these "new" posts since the early 1990s, but there is a bond among those of us who were there in the pioneer days — before Hilton hotels, oil wealth, NATO and even the Eurozone.

Mike Tulley was the first chief of human resources for the New Post Support Unit in Bonn from 1992 to 1995. He is currently director of the Regional Support Center in Frankfurt, which evolved out of the original NPSU and supports small U.S. missions in Europe. He has served in Yaoundé, Belgrade, London, Tallinn, Rome, Warsaw and Washington, D.C. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Mr. Tulley worked for the Campbell Soup Company for five years and served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Honduras.

Shawn Dorman

Julie Ruterbories at Bishkek Airport, 1993.

Handing Over the Keys

Embassy Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

By Julie Ruterbories

There were no direct flights to Bishkek in October 1992. Having completed A-100 orientation, general services officer training, consular training, and consultations with the New Post Support Unit in Bonn, I flew from Frankfurt to Alma Ata (now Almaty). A driver hired by the embassy met me on arrival and we set off on the four-plus hour drive to Bishkek, my first Foreign Service posting. Within a few minutes, we were driving across the open steppes of Central Asia. There wasn't much to see for miles and miles, reminding me of the line: "It's not the middle of nowhere, but I can see it from here" (from the movie "Thelma and Louise").

I was the first permanently assigned general services officer/vice consul in Bishkek. A temporary GSO who had

been at post a few weeks met me at the entrance to the embassy. The building could best be described as a one-room schoolhouse. She almost gleefully handed me a key ring with what seemed like a hundred keys on it and said, "Here, these are now yours." There were keys for the front and back door of the embassy, every office, some sheds, a few storage lockers and the warehouses (which were inside the Kyrgyz president's compound).

Once we finally received official cars, a problem arose: high-octane gasoline was lacking in Bishkek.

White House Photographer

Visit of then-Vice President Al Gore to Bishkek, 1993. From right: Gore, Admin Officer Tim Harley, Julie Ruterbories and GSO/Vice Consul Shawn Dorman.

I had just a few minutes to drop my bags at the hotel before we headed off to Manas Airport to meet the U.S. government "support flight" out of Germany that was delivering supplies, vehicles and equipment for the embassy. The support flights were our lifeline in the early days. They brought everything from Post-it notes to Mosler safes.

At the time, there wasn't a forklift to be had anywhere in the country, so our laborers unloaded dozens of pallets of supplies and equipment by hand, including a couple of safes. We also drove a bright-blue, used Dodge pickup truck that the NPSU had procured for us down the ramp of the C-140 transport plane. Driving that truck some 20 miles to the warehouse, I drew a lot of stares. Not too many young women drove cars in Bishkek at that time, let alone an oversized pickup truck.

From October until May the following year, I stayed at the Hotel Pishpek. I recall that we paid $5 per day, and I think we were overcharged. The room was so drafty the curtains would billow in the breeze all night long. On several occasions, snow accumulated inside as well as outside the windows.

Suitable housing was not easy to find, let alone make ready. Convincing landlords to sign a standard U.S. government housing contract required a lot of patience and copious amounts of dark chai tea. Every time I thought back on the days spent in GSO training studying the Paris housing market guidelines, I shook my head.

I'll never forget my first days in Bishkek. My assignment there truly was the beginning of an adventure of a lifetime.

Julie A. Ruterbories began her Foreign Service career with a consular/general services officer tour in Bishkek from 1992 to 1994. She is now a senior Foreign Service officer who has also served in Baku, London, Skopje, Pristina and Washington, D.C. In Washington, Ms. Ruterbories served in the State Department Operations Center and as a congressional liaison officer, where she received the Secretary's Award for Public Outreach. She is currently serving as consul general in Amsterdam.

Going to Work for the Americans

Embassy Bishkek

By Tamara Burkovskaia

The experience of the collapse of the Soviet Union and "the parade of sovereignties" of the 15 new independent states was like a hurricane that lasted several months. Even though by then people were longing for change, like many others I had no idea what was going to happen to us.

Reading an evening newspaper on Feb. 1, 1992, I came

across an article about the opening of U.S. Embassy Bishkek. "Looks like a job opportunity to me," I thought to myself (at the time I was contemplating a career change). But because I'd worked at the same place for 12 years, I had no clue how to apply for a job, much less how to apply for one at a brand-new foreign embassy.

A couple of days later, I went to the embassy, and just walked in off the street. Inside, I saw a group of Americans. One of them invited me to her office to talk. Then I spoke with another officer about my skills, and he asked when I could start. (Can you believe that there was once a time when you could land a job without going through an online application process or even sending a hard-copy application?) A week later, I started my job at the embassy. After living behind "the Iron Curtain," it seemed surreal that I was spending eight hours a day on what was formally U.S. territory.

Tamara Burkovskaia translates during meeting between then-Rep. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., and Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev.

The first months were like a kaleidoscope: temporary staffers coming and going every other month or so; two chargé d'affaires before the first U.S. ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, Edward Hurwitz, arrived. There were just a few other Foreign Service Nationals, none with any experience working for a diplomatic mission or an international organization.

A group of us called "interpreters" were really assistants-at-large, doing whatever needed to be done. Later, our roles were defined, and I became the personnel/administrative assistant. Seven temporary admin officers replaced one another before the first permanent one arrived at the end of the year.

We were a small post, which meant that both FSOs and FSNs had to multitask. For example, the areas covered by the admin officer (and, hence, by the admin assistant) included, but were not limited to, personnel, payroll, security, facilities and medical care.

The embassy was temporarily housed in a building provided by the government, which was located on Erkindik ("Freedom" in Kyrgyz) Boulevard, just one building away from KGB headquarters. It was an old, one-story building, sitting right at the sidewalk. But as the saying goes, there is nothing more permanent than temporary: the embassy stayed in this building for six years.

There were no international flights to Bishkek at the time, and most visitors came through Moscow.

We were all on a steep learning curve: FSNs were learning how to work for the embassy; FSOs were learning how to build relations with a post-Soviet country; and host-country officials were learning how to act as the government of an independent nation. Lacking experience, the Kyrgyz officials tried to replicate Soviet-era policies and practices, including the UPDK — the Main Administration for Service to the Diplomatic Corps — a Ministry of Foreign Affairs office and a set of rules designed to control diplomatic mission operations.

I participated in numerous meetings between embassy officers and Washington visitors and host-government officials, including the Kyrgyz president and foreign minister, aiming to lay the foundation for bilateral relations that would be free from the Soviet legacy. Signing a memorandum allowed, among other things, unrestricted travel by the U.S. diplomatic staff in Kyrgyzstan was one of the victories over this "legacy."

Until the embassy opened a bank account in a local bank, which happened several months down the road, the cash to pay embassy expenses and FSN salaries was carried over from Moscow. There were no international flights to Bishkek at the time, and most visitors came through Moscow — some with a briefcase of rubles (Kyrgyzstan was still using the old Soviet currency) for the embassy payroll.

I remember the very first party that we had for the embassy staff. The FSOs wanted to treat us to something very special from American cuisine. At that time, many staple goods and food products were not available in Kyrgyzstan, so the admin officer arranged for a Butterball turkey to be brought in on a support flight. Since FSOs lived at a hotel and there was no oven at the embassy, we cooked the bird in my little kitchen and brought it over to the embassy. We had a real feast!

If in the early 1990s someone had told me that Kyrgyzstan would become an independent country and I would work for the U.S. embassy there, I would have laughed. Now, 20 years later, I can only thank the turn of

history and the very first Embassy Bishkek team of Ed McWilliams, Boyd Doty, Jennifer Scotti, Dan Bolsinger and Dennis Buck for opening a new world to me.

Tamara Burkovskaia worked as a Foreign Service National at Embassy Bishkek from 1992 to 2008. She started as a personnel/administrative assistant, was promoted to political assistant, and later, to senior political specialist. She received numerous awards, including the State Department's Foreign Service National of the Year award in 1995 and FSN of the Year for the embassy in 2005. In 2008, she immigrated to the United States on a special immigrant visa and settled in Portland, Ore., where she works for the Oregon Public Health Division.

The Big Family House

Embassy Bishkek

By Isken Sydykov

In late January 1992, I saw a newspaper announcement that an American embassy would be opening in Bishkek on Feb. 1. On Jan. 31, my family took a ride to check out the one-story, six-room building where the future U.S. embassy would be. Late that summer, a friend who worked at the embassy asked me to drive embassy staff member George Witt to Lake Issyk Kul for the weekend. He liked my car and my driving skills, and I liked the smell of his non-filter Camels, so I became his driver for Issyk Kul journeys.

For about a year, the embassy didn't have any guards.

On Aug. 27, 1992, I received a phone call from the embassy. The woman on the phone told me the embassy had a vacancy in the procurement section, and I should come in for an interview. I arrived at the chancery and was met by the woman who had called me, Tynara Shaildayeva, a Foreign Service National accountant for the embassy, and Frankie Saddlemyer, the head of the general services office.

After introductions and an explanation of procurement duties, Mrs. Saddlemyer, looking at me over the top of her glasses, spoke strictly about the importance of working diligently and asked if I agreed to work that way. I did, and my stint at the U.S. embassy began.

The embassy was only supposed to be in this tiny house at 66 Erkindik for about six months, so we kept boxes, bags and other items in the main chancery. However, we ended up staying there a little longer — six years! At the beginning, the embassy was like a big family house: there were only two phones in the building. If there was a support flight to be unloaded, half of the embassy staff went to the airport. Staff from all sections, be it political/economic or general services, helped unload. There weren't any official cars yet, so we drove our own vehicles. The first U.S. ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, Edward Hurwitz, often walked to work and lived in a drab Soviet-style apartment.

Toward the end of 1992, the number of staff grew and there was a sudden shortage of space. Three of us shared

Photos: Shawn Dorman

Embassy Bishkek laborer Yuri Andreyev (left) with Isken Sydykov.

Embassy Bishkek staff show off the renovation work in the courtyard of the temporary chancery.

one desk, and I was lucky enough to have priority usage. We eagerly anticipated the move to more spacious quarters, but the State Department rejected the proposed building.

For about a year, the embassy didn't have any guards — anyone could just walk in. All the Foreign Service officers were frequently together, but at that time it was quite safe. The country brimmed with enthusiasm and hope, and we felt that America's interest in Kyrgyzstan was sincere.

The country brimmed with enthusiasm and hope, and we felt that America's interest in Kyrgyzstan was sincere.

Once we finally received official cars, a problem arose: high-octane gasoline was lacking in Bishkek. I did my utmost to procure it, and when I found a supply to purchase, we would store it in canisters kept in the warehouse along with propane cylinders. A small spark would have caused a powerful explosion.

To find suitable accommodations for the staff was a huge problem during the first year. Many stayed in hotels, which at that time featured Soviet-era services: in other words, practically no services. There were, however, many cockroaches.

In December 1993, U.S. Vice President Al Gore came to Bishkek on an official visit. He was touring Russia and Central Asia, and prior to Bishkek he was supposed to go to Alma Ata. Due to weather conditions in the Kazakh capital, Air Force Two had to land in Bishkek instead, 24 hours ahead of schedule. Though this possibility had been envisaged, the embassy and the advance team were still surprised by the 30-minute notice (especially since we were located 40 minutes from the airport!).

It was already dark by the time nearly the entire embassy staff rushed to the airport. The tarmac was covered with thin ice and one advance team member (and future U.S. ambassador) took a bad fall that required a medical evacuation. The plane carrying the vice president's limousines was already in Alma Ata, so Mr. Gore rode through Bishkek in Soviet-made limousines from the Kyrgyz government garage.

We had a groundbreaking ceremony for a new embassy building and compound in 1997. And in 1998, the embassy moved to its new home on Prospect Mira (Peace Avenue) close to the mountains outside town.

The new building has many interesting stories of its own, but those will have to wait for another day.

Isken Sydykov started working at Embassy Bishkek on Sept. 1, 1992, as a Foreign Service National procurement clerk. From 1998 through 2006 he served as general services office assistant. He now works for the International Resources Group in Bishkek.

Turning a Consulate into an Embassy

Embassy Kiev, Ukraine

By Mary Kruger

The year 1991 was a roller coaster. When the attempted putsch in Moscow began in August, I was sure that my impending assignment to Kiev (now Kyiv) was doomed. Within days, though, the situation turned around, and Ukraine took its first steps toward independence. Several months later, I arrived there to help open our small consulate — only to see the USSR disintegrate and our fledgling post become an embassy in

In 1998, Embassy Bishkek moved to this new chancery from its temporary building.

a brand-new country. Every day brought historical firsts for Ukraine and for our rapidly growing mission.

On the diplomatic front, Ukraine suddenly emerged as a priority state. Secretary of State James Baker made an immediate visit to assess stability in the nuclear-armed nation. As a newly arrived public affairs officer with no staff, I mobilized two volunteer expatriates and set up a makeshift press center for the media entourage, including Wolf Blitzer and Tom Friedman.

Meanwhile, Ukrainians were clamoring for contact with the United States. I literally received my first official call within an hour of stepping on Ukrainian soil, and the minister of culture telephoned me at home a few days later to introduce herself. How on earth did she find me in a country with no phone book and no public information, I wondered? Answer: an amazingly efficient grapevine, a resource that I soon learned to use to good advantage.

While opportunities to build public diplomacy programs seemed boundless, working and living conditions absorbed a great deal of energy. The consulate's first office was the management officer's living room. Eight of us shared four desks and four chairs, so we had to take turns sitting down. We had one reliable vehicle and one clunker, but still often had to hitchhike on the deserted streets because there was no gas. When food became scarce, we gratefully accepted donations of potatoes from Ukrainian well-wishers. We hoped, but could not be certain, that local products were safe only five years after Chernobyl.

Perhaps the most comical aspect of the job was my living situation. I would come home at night to find my elderly landlady, who never really understood the need to vacate her residence, sitting on her couch watching TV and making herself at home in "my" apartment. It was painful for both of us when I finally had to insist on some privacy — a concept completely foreign to her.

Formal diplomatic recognition led to major advancements. Ukraine allocated a building for our embassy: a former precinct headquarters of the Communist Party. When we entered, it was clear that the previous occupants had left in a hurry. Calendars were frozen in time, papers were strewn on the floor, and busts of Lenin and the complete works of Stalin reigned from their usual places.

The consulate's first office was the management officer's living room.

The few rooms with heat became our offices and the chargé claimed space next to the big vertushka, a primitive Soviet phone that connected party bigwigs but continued to click and whir even after we supplanted the communists.

Our public diplomacy work took off with the announcement of major new educational exchange programs. As the public affairs officer, I had the pleasure of negotiating the details with an old-school deputy minister, who invariably began our talks with a bottle of cognac. How many toasts did I drink in the service of my country? Suffice it to say that fending off his suggestions to circumvent merit-based selection principles and clearing away bureaucratic obstacles required persistence and a few unorthodox maneuvers on my part.

Those early days were a true adventure, but my colleagues showed incredible good humor in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties. Many Ukrainians I met 20 years ago are still friends to this day. Most importantly, we built the mission together. I will refrain from naming names because so many people played a vital role, but one person particularly stands out in my memory. That was the first local employee in our U.S. Information Service office, the late Oleg Shaforost.

It took courage to work for us then, but Oleg, who had experienced political harassment himself, was not easily cowed. Thanks to him, our decrepit vehicle stayed on the road during the harsh winter and USIS acquired cutting-edge innovations of the day like a computer network and e-mail. Oleg embodied the spirit of all of our first Ukrainian colleagues: creative, incredibly hard-working and dedicated to building productive bilateral relations.

Twenty years have now passed with many ups and downs between our countries, but the foundation we established remains firm.

It was a privilege to be part of that special moment in U.S. diplomatic history. ■

Mary A. Kruger was the third branch public affairs officer to be assigned to Kiev while it was still part of the Soviet Union, and opened the U.S. Information Service post in the new embassy. She went on to serve a series of tours in Russia and Ukraine and is now with the Foreign Service Board of Examiners.

Eurasia's Troubled Frontiers

Unresolved conflicts haunting former Soviet states could hold clues to how the region develops in the decades ahead — or doesn't.

By Robert McMahon

On the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet Union's dissolution, attention has focused on the unsettled nature of the region. In most of the non-Baltic successor states, economic progress has lagged, political reforms have fizzled and Russia — itself caught up in a dodgy transition — has often played conflicted, controversial roles.

The cases of four unrecognized statelets that emerged from the Soviet collapse typify this rocky path and could hold clues to how the former Soviet space develops in the decades ahead. Conflicts over Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniester have all defied efforts by the United Nations Security Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (including the "Minsk Group" co-chaired by France, Russia and the United States), and the European Union to resolve them.

Failure to resolve "frozen conflicts" over these territories has contributed to halting economic and political reforms in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova — countries seen as far behind their development potential. They also pose a security risk. Georgia's breakaway provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia figured centrally in its 2008 war with Russia, which resulted in Moscow's deployment of thousands of peacekeepers in both entities, recognition of their independence, and a spike in friction with Washington. Now some analysts express concern that Azerbaijan, regaining confidence as a petrostate, will seek to reclaim by force its lost territory from Armenia following the failure of efforts to conclude an agreement on Karabakh.

For the international community, the conflict zones present a diplomatic thicket in which issues of national and ethnic identity, ancient territorial grudges and Russian ambitions remain intertwined. Outside peacebrokers, then as now, still struggle to find a path, and the stamina, to reach a lasting settlement, according to Peter Rutland, a professor of government at Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

The civil wars "created a new set of grievances, tens of thousands of people dead, hundreds of thousands of refugees, borders asserted," Rutland says. "Nobody in Moscow or the international community had a program for what to do about this."

Robert McMahon is editor of CFR.org, the Web site of the Council on Foreign Relations. He worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty from 1992 to 2005 in a range of senior editorial jobs, including terms as director of central news and United Nations correspondent.

Artificial Soviet Borders

The 15 Soviet republics seceded in largely peaceful fashion in 1991 but more than one-third of them convulsed in messy internal conflicts. In four of these civil wars ethnic minorities, with outside backing, defeated state forces, only to drift into international legal limbo for two decades. The new entities are derided as bandit-ridden "black holes" by the states they have seceded from. Few countries recognize them. All are poor and most rely on Russia for economic and political support.

Failure to resolve "frozen conflicts" over these territories has impeded economic and political reforms in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova.

Stalin-era nationalities policies imposed artificial borders throughout the Soviet Union, setting the stage for clashes between self-determination movements and new governments. The four main frozen conflicts from that era have followed a familiar pattern.

• **Nagorno-Karabakh**. (Population about 100,000) Stalin put this primarily ethnic Armenian enclave under Azerbaijani jurisdiction in 1921. War broke out in 1988, which Soviet and later international mediators struggled to contain. A cease-fire was reached in 1994 after ethnic Armenian forces gained control of the province and seven nearby Azerbaijani districts. The conflict killed an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people and displaced more than one million people, most of them Azerbaijanis.

An international process led by the OSCE's Minsk Group has sought to broker an accord; the latest formula centers on withdrawing Armenian forces from Azerbaijani territory and according formal status to the unrecognized republic of Nagorno-Karabakh following a local plebiscite. There was anticipation the sides were ready to move forward with a draft agreement at a June meeting in Kazan, but it ended inconclusively.

• **Abkhazia**. (Population about 100,000) A wedge of land between the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea, this province initially enjoyed a degree of sovereignty in the Soviet Union. It was reduced to the status of autonomous republic within Georgia in 1931 and authorities there promoted a policy of Georgian immigration into the province. Soon after the Soviet dissolution, independent Georgia sought to assert control of Abkhaz institutions in 1992 and faced a popular uprising. The war killed between 10,000 and 15,000 ethnic Georgians and Abkhaz and displaced about 250,000 people, most of them Georgians.

Russia reportedly supported both sides at different junctures and its backing ultimately helped Abkhaz fighters push out Georgian troops in late 1993. United Nations peacekeepers monitored a cease-fire in the border zone between the two entities until the 2008 Russian-Georgia conflict. Abkhaz leaders have repeatedly refused Tbilisi's offers of expanded autonomy within Georgia and the peace process has remained stalled ever since Russian recognition of Abkhazia's independence in 2008.

• **South Ossetia**. (Population about 20,000 to 30,000) Granted the status of autonomous region within Georgia during the early Soviet period, South Ossetia's leaders pressed for independence in the waning days of the Soviet Union. Despite opposition by the president of newly independent Georgia in 1991, South Ossetia declared independence and engaged in a running conflict with Georgian irregular forces until mid-1992, when Russian, Ossetian and Georgian peacekeepers deployed in the province. More than 2,000 people were reportedly killed.

Prior to the 2008 Russia-Georgia War, triggered by hostilities in South Ossetia, Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili had pressed for acceptance of a plan offering expanded South Ossetian autonomy within Georgia, which had been repeatedly rejected. Russia also recognized South Ossetia's independence in 2008 and prospects are dim for renewed peace talks in the near term.

• **Transdniester**. (Population about 600,000) Separated from the rest of Moldova by the Dniester River, some 60 percent of the republic's inhabitants are ethnic Russians and Ukrainians. In 1990 Slavic nationalists declared independence and went to war with forces from the new nation of Moldova in early 1992 over issues including language laws (the majority of Moldovans speak Romanian) and other assertions of Moldovan nationalism. The war ended in the summer of 1992, after about 300 people were killed, with an agreement for peacekeeping patrols to be carried out by Russian, Moldovan and Transdniestrian forces. Some 1,400 Russian forces

continue to be based in the region.

Moscow has endorsed an agreement that would allow for enhanced autonomy for Transdniester within Moldova and a continuing Russian military presence in the region, but Moldova has resisted. Separatist leaders reject any return to Moldova and oppose the expansion of the peace process, known as the "5+2 format" (grouping representatives from Moldova, Transdniester, the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine as primary brokers and the European Union and United States as observers).

The Obama administration's "reset" with Russia has smoothed over rough bilateral spots, but the two sides are still at odds over Georgia.

In the case of secessionists in Georgia and Moldova, the United States and its European partners have consistently supported a solution that maintains the territorial integrity of the two states. Washington has sought to bolster the two states economically and diplomatically, and has expanded military contacts with both, as well.

Still, some experts maintain that the United States and its partners should do more to cultivate contacts with the unrecognized states. Charles King, an expert on the frozen conflicts who teaches international affairs at Georgetown University, faults the international community for ignoring the legitimacy of the separatists' claims. "Twenty years ago the secessionists won militarily, and that's a basic point we forget," says King. "When we look at problems of secession, we overly romanticize the claims of groups we are predisposed to view positively and demonize those we view negatively."

'Black Holes' and Instability

Lacking international recognition aside from Russia, these poor, would-be states have developed reputations as havens for smuggling, corruption and trafficking in everything from drugs to people. Georgian Foreign Minister Gregory Vashadze, addressing a disarmament conference in Geneva earlier this year, repeated Tbilisi's accusation that Abkhazia and South Ossetia are "black holes" for illegal arms smuggling. He cited eight nuclear smuggling attempts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and faulted the Russian military presence in both republics for impeding inspections. Russia's envoy, Victor Vasiliev, responded that all smuggling incidents took place on territory Georgia controls.

Moldova makes similar claims about Transdniester, backed up by international observers. Nadia Diuk of the National Endowment for Democracy, which works with civil society groups in the enclave, told a congressional panel in July that the region is a "haven for arms trading and illicit business interests. The authoritarian regime of Igor Smirnov continues to stifle independent media and persecute civil groups."

Ethnic-Armenian dominated Nagorno-Karabakh, too, is tarred with the "black hole" label by authorities in Azerbaijan. Deputy Prime Minister Ali Hasanov told Turkish reporters in July that Armenia was using Nagorno-Karabakh for drug plantations and as a transit route from Afghanistan, as well. Hasanov also echoed Baku's concerns that, rather than being on the cusp of agreement, Armenia and Azerbaijan are enmeshed in a deepening crisis.

Some outside experts worry about parallels between Baku and the situation in Georgia prior to its 2008 war, in which the post-Rose Revolution President Mikhail Saakashvili enjoyed populist support that emboldened him to press to end secessionist problems.

"[There's a] modernization of the military and a conceptual belief that through oil and gas money Azerbaijan will create a military that could grab back Karabakh from the Armenians," King says.

Other regional specialists do not expect imminent conflict. Thomas De Waal, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, wrote in a July 28 online piece for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that Azerbaijani officials are signaling time is on their side. "They believe the Caucasus arms race is bankrupting Armenia and that in a few years' time, the Armenian side will be much weaker and more inclined to compromise over the status of Karabakh," he wrote.

Most experts agree, however, that the frozen conflicts have impeded economic growth for most of the states directly involved. Aside from Azerbaijan, which is riding an oil boom, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova have lagged in development due to a variety of factors, including budgets strained by care for refugees and arms spending, and trade routes constrained by the unresolved wars. Even

after implementing some of the region's greatest market reforms, Georgia registers a per capita gross domestic product of only $2,620. Armenia's per capita GDP is about $3,000 and Moldova, Europe's poorest country, has a per capita GDP of slightly more than $1,600.

These unresolved conflicts also pose economic costs for Russia. For example, its relationships with Abkhazia and South Ossetia have already complicated Moscow's long-sought accession to the World Trade Organization. Georgia, a WTO member, can block the admission of any new members and has conditioned approval of Russia on the placement of international observers on the border checkpoints in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. But as we went to press in early November, Tbilisi and Moscow announced a breakthrough that could lead to Russia's joining the WTO by year's end.

Some experts maintain that the United States and its partners should do more to cultivate contacts with the unrecognized states.

The Kremlin and the 'Near Abroad'

Russia remains a critical player in the frozen conflicts, but its influence can vary from spoiler to stabilizer depending on the conflict zone. Its most troublesome role is in Georgia's breakaway states. This is seen as reflecting concerns, especially those that existed prior to the 2005 war, about the wave of democratic reforms ushered in by the Rose Revolution, Georgia's growing ties with NATO and the inauguration of a major oil pipeline (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) that bypassed Russia.

After that conflict, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev referred to Abkhazia and South Ossetia as "zones

of privileged interest." Some observers expect Russia's eventual annexation of the poor, dependent statelets or at least maintaining a status quo that will keep the Georgia's leadership off guard.

Russia's actions vis-à-vis Georgia also brought about one of its most serious rhetorical clashes with Washington in the post-Soviet era. The Bush administration responded to the Russian invasion of Georgia with sharp language, branding Moscow an "outlaw" and vowing that Washington would rally free nations to defend Georgia. In response, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin accused the United States of arming the Georgians ahead of the conflict with South Ossetians that precipitated the war, and of directing the attack.

Russia remains a critical player in the frozen conflicts, but its influence can vary from spoiler to stabilizer depending on the conflict zone.

The Obama administration's "reset" with Russia has smoothed over rough bilateral spots, but the two sides are still at odds over Georgia. The December 2010 OSCE summit, in particular, was marked by clashes over the country's territorial integrity, Moscow's proposal for a new European security treaty, and U.S. calls for an OSCE mission in Georgia with oversight over the separatist regions.

In the case of Moldova, the unresolved Transdniester conflict threatens an expansion of its relations with the European Union. Moscow has sought a solution that maintains its military forces in the region, but Moldovan and Western interlocutors have resisted this. Russia, meanwhile, has reneged on its agreement at the 1999 OSCE summit to withdraw its forces from Moldova, as well as Georgia.

In response, the United States has declined to ratify the adapted Conventional Forces in Europe treaty until Russian troops withdraw from Moldova, among other conditions. That, in turn, has caused Russia to suspend its observance of the CFE treaty.

These disputes, and Russia's control of military bases and military industrial facilities in Armenia, Ukraine, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, raise deep suspicions in some quarters about Moscow's regional aims. A July Heritage Foundation paper asserted that Moscow's moves amount to a policy of pressuring these countries to "turn their backs on Europe and preserve Russian leverage over its neighbors' politics and economics."

But on the economic front, Russia's behavior towards its near abroad seems to indicate otherwise, says Dmitri Trenin, who heads the Moscow Center of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He points to weakening economic ties with former Soviet republics since the end of the ruble zone in 1993 and says that today, these countries account for just a fraction of Russia's foreign trade.

The emergence of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin as Medvedev's likely successor as president next year adds a new wrinkle. In his first foreign policy initiative since announcing his candidacy, Putin emphasized regional integration and outlined plans for expanding the country's existing customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan further into Central Asia.

The Path to Resolution

Despite these seemingly intractable disputes, opportunities remain for progress in the frozen conflict zones. In addition to ongoing international efforts for a final settlement — particularly Russian-German efforts on Moldova and the Minsk Group process on Karabakh — experts point to the following initiatives:

• **Engaging the weak states.** The United States has already approved hundreds of millions of dollars in aid from its highly regarded Millennium Challenge grant program for Georgia, Moldova and Armenia, and should continue to develop trade ties with all four states confronting frozen conflicts.

Washington should also ramp up political contacts, through formal diplomacy and civil society groups, with these three states and Azerbaijan. Of particular importance is steady dialogue with political elites in Moldova and Georgia as they seek to shore up their fragile democracies.

Europe can also direct more sustained attention to its two-year-old Eastern Partnership program, which includes Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan (as well as Ukraine and Belarus). Carnegie's de Waal, addressing a panel on Georgia's transition in July, said that in this period ahead of the 2012 parliamentary and 2013 presidential elections, it is crucial for European partners to lend a guiding hand to Tbilisi's governance and eco-

nomic development.

"Greater prosperity, greater stability for Georgia and greater E.U. approximation could stabilize [the country] in a way that the conflict zones of Abkhazia and South Ossetia would, first of all, want to have more economic links with Georgia that would re-establish people-to-people contact," said de Waal.

• **Engaging the secessionists**. All four unrecognized statelets could benefit from regular, consistent contacts outside Russia's orbit with Western governments, nongovernmental organizations and private-sector partners, all of which can help introduce norms of governance to rid them of their "black hole" reputation. Civil society and media contacts across the frozen conflict borders — for example, increasing contacts between NGOs in Georgia and Abkhazia — have long been identified as possible confidence-building channels but remain underdeveloped.

These conflict zones present a diplomatic thicket in which issues of national and ethnic identity, ancient territorial grudges, and Russian ambitions are intertwined.

Some experts regard the current moment as especially ripe for domestic problem-solving, with populations in most of the frozen conflict zones signaling less interest in nationalist saber rattling. "When you ask people in Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan what are the critical issues, the secessionist issue comes from the middle of the list," says Georgetown University's King.

"It's good in that you don't have a lot of popular animosity on grabbing territories back. But it's bad in that there is not a lot of political will to solve it. In some ways that's both the hope and tragedy of these secessionist zones." ■

this is your insurance plan.

The "all-risk" AFSA Insurance Plan

With the coverage you get under the U.S. Government Claims Act, if your furniture or personal items are lost or destroyed, you could find yourself overseas and under covered. In fact, the government encourages employees to buy private insurance. If you rely solely on the Claims Act, you may not adequately protect personal articles such as jewelry, furs, and fine arts. You'll have no coverage if you're not on government business. And you'll have no coverage for personal liability.

Through the AFSA plan, your goods at post, in transit and in storage will be covered up to the limit of your choice, whether on business or pleasure. They will be covered up to their replacement cost, and you can include personal liability coverage. The same low rate applies worldwide wherever you're assigned. Can you afford to travel overseas without this low-cost protection?

Contact The Hirshorn Company at 800-242-8221 or visit hirshorn.com for information about your best option: the AFSA Overseas Personal Property and Liability Plan.

Specifically designed for members
of the American Foreign Service Association
on active duty abroad.

AFSA Sponsored Overseas
Personal Property, Transit & Liability Plan
The Very Best in Personal Insurance

AFSA Desk The Hirshorn Company
telephone 800 242 8221 | www.hirshorn.com | afsainfo@hirshorn.com

Overseas Personal Property & Liability • Group Accident • Professional Liability • Long Term Care • Transit

AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • December 2011

AFSA Book Notes Event Features Afghanistan Expert

BY LIRON FELDMAN, AFSA STAFF

On Oct. 19, Ambassador Peter Tomsen appeared at an AFSA Book Notes event to speak about his book, *The Wars of Afghanistan: Messianic Terrorism, Tribal Conflicts and the Failures of Great Powers*, published by Public Affairs in July.

Armed with a deep, personal familiarity with the Afghanistan imbroglio as a special envoy that was enriched by nearly eight years of research for the book, the retired FSO delivered a trenchant and timely review of the failed U.S. policy and laid out a practical way forward.

ASGEIR SIGFUSSON

Amb. Peter Tomsen, speaking on the wars of Afghanistan during AFSA's Book Notes program on Wednesday, Oct. 19.

The event carried on the tradition of the AFSA Book Notes series, highlighting pressing foreign policy issues as well as the vital contributions by members of the Foreign Service. More than 80 active-duty and retired Foreign Service personnel, journalists and students were in attendance.

Why He Wrote the Book

A Foreign Service officer since 1967, Amb. Tomsen's involvement in Afghanistan began when he was assigned to Moscow from 1977 to 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. He was already well acquainted with the region, having served earlier in both India and China.

In 1989, President George H.W. Bush sent Tomsen out as U.S. special envoy to the Afghan resistance, with the rank of ambassador, a month after the Soviets had withdrawn, defeated, from Afghanistan. The U.S. expectation was that the Afghan resistance would overthrow the communist leadership in Kabul within months, declare a new government and proceed to democratize and rebuild the country.

Instead, Tomsen found himself confronting "mission impossible." Washington, as he came to understand, was simultaneously pursuing two contradictory policy tracks: one tied to the Pakistani military's plans to install one of its own clients in power in Kabul, and the other devoted to bringing about a political settlement to unify and rebuild Afghanistan.

Neither track offered a clear direction for the future of the Afghan people, Tomsen notes. It was a recipe for failure, as history has since shown and, tragically, continues to show.

An Exhaustive Study

Despite his own efforts to encourage a course correction from within over the years, U.S. policy in Afghanistan remained contradictory and self-defeating — essentially unchanged from 1989. So, after retiring from the Foreign Service as U.S. ambassador to Armenia in 1998, Tomsen began work on this book in an effort to break the cycle of failed wars and policies in Afghanistan.

Divided into 25 chapters, *The Wars of Afghanistan* is a thorough examination of the process by which we got to the present stage.

Continued on page 70

Dissent: A Job Requirement

BY AMBASSADOR JOHN W. LIMBERT

Dissent is not a luxury — it is a necessity of our job. Our work requirements statement should include the phrase "bring attention to problems, contradictions and unproductive policies." What kind of Foreign Service do we have if employees say nothing when they see something that wastes money, endangers health and safety, or damages the nation's foreign relations?

Dissent should be put alongside our Service's core values of duty, honor and country. The question for each of us should be, "Why am I not expressing my disagreement?" instead of, "Will I hurt my career if I dissent?

Will dissent hurt your career? Many past dissent award winners — such as Ambassadors Craig Johnstone, Tom Boyatt and

Continued on page 67

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

AFSA SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FS CHILDREN APPLY BY FEB. 6, 2012

High school seniors and college undergraduates of Foreign Service employees (active-duty, retired and deceased) 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 $500 to $4,000. The submission deadline is Feb. 6, 2012. Visit www.afsa.org/scholar/ for complete details or contact Lori Dec at dec@afsa.org or (202) 944-5504.

To find other scholarship resources, visit online scholarship search engines www.fastweb.com, www.wiredscholar.com, www.srnexpress.com and www.brokescholar.com

MAKE A CFC PLEDGE TO #11759 AND SUPPORT THE AFSA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Designate "Foreign Service Youth Scholarships – AFSA" (CFC #11759) in the 2011 Combined Federal Campaign. With your help, the AFSA Scholarship Fund provides more than $40,000 in academic and art merit awards to high school seniors, and $180,000 to undergraduate college students in need-based aid scholarships to as many as 95 children of Foreign Service employees annually. Keep your support in the Foreign Service community. Go to www.afsa.org/scholar to watch our video.

THANKS AND FAREWELL TO BERNIE ALTER

After three years at the helm of AFSA's Road Scholar programs, Bernie Alter has decided to retire at the end of the year. AFSA thanks Bernie for his excellent work and dedication to the programs, which remain one of our most successful national outreach efforts. Under his tenure, the program was rebranded as Road Scholar, dropping the old Elderhostel name.

Before coming to AFSA, Bernie spent 31 years in the Foreign Service as a consular officer, mostly in South and Southeast Asia. He and his wife, Pat, are the authors of, *Gather the Fruit One by One: 50 Years of Amazing Peace Corps Stories, Volume Two — The Americas* (Travelers' Tales, 2011). Bernie intends to spend much of his time traveling and with their grandkids. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

The Road Scholar work will now be overseen by AFSA's Marketing and Outreach Manager Ásgeir Sigfússon, who has been involved with the program since 2005.

TRANSITION CENTER SCHEDULE OF COURSES
January 2012

Jan. 6	MQ950	High-Stress Assignment Outbrief
Jan. 9-10	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Jan. 11	MQ853	Managing Rental Property Overseas
Jan. 21	MQ116	Protocol
Jan. 23-24	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar
Jan. 30-31	MQ911	Security Overseas Seminar

To register or for further information, please e-mail the FSI Transition Center at FSITCTraining@state.gov.

SUPPORT THE FUND FOR AMERICAN DIPLOMACY WITH A CFC DONATION

AFSA's 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the Fund for American Diplomacy, is a participant in the annual Combined Federal Campaign. We are listed under "Diplomacy Matters – AFSA," with the designation CFC #10646.

Please consider supporting this worthy organization, which has a threefold mission: educating the American public about the importance of diplomacy and development; encouraging interest in the Foreign Service among students and young professionals; and honoring sacrifice and achievement within the Foreign Service community. You can learn more at www.afsa.org/fad. ❑

How to Contact Us:

AFSA HEADQUARTERS: (202) 338-4045; Fax: (202) 338-6820
STATE DEPARTMENT AFSA OFFICE: (202) 647-8160; Fax: (202) 647-0265
USAID AFSA OFFICE: (202) 712-1941; Fax: (202) 216-3710
FCS AFSA OFFICE: (202) 482-9088; Fax: (202) 482-9087

PRESIDENT: johnson@afsa.org
STATE VP: hirschdm@state.gov
RETIREE VP: rghoudek@aol.com
USAID VP: fzamora@usaid.gov
FAS VP: david.mergen@fas.usda.gov
FCS VP: keith.curtis@mail.doc.gov

AFSA News
Editor Donna Ayerst: ayerst@afsa.org
(202) 944-5516; Fax: (202) 338-6820

Foreign Service Journal
FSJ: journal@afsa.org
Editor Steven Alan Honley: honley@afsa.org
Senior Editor Susan Maitra: maitra@afsa.org
Associate Editor Shawn Dorman: dorman@afsa.org
Ad & Circulation Manager Ed Miltenberger: miltenberger@afsa.org
Art Director Caryn Suko Smith: journaldesign@comcast.net

On the Web
AFSA WEB SITE: www.afsa.org
FSJ: www.afsa.org/fsj

Staff:
Executive Director Ian Houston: houston@afsa.org
Business Department
Director of Finance Femi Oshobukola: oshobukola@afsa.org
Controller Kalpna Srimal: srimal@afsa.org
Assistant Controller Cory Nishi: cnishi@afsa.org
Labor Management
General Counsel Sharon Papp: papps@state.gov
Deputy General Counsel Zlatana Badrich: badrichz@state.gov
Labor Management Specialist James Yorke: yorkej@state.gov
Labor Management Counselor Janet Weber: weber@afsa.org
Senior Staff Attorney Neera Parikh: parikhna@state.gov
Staff Attorney Raeka Safai: safair@state.gov
Staff Attorney Andrew Large: largea@state.gov
Office Manager Christine Warren: warrenc@state.gov
USAID Senior Labor Management Adviser Douglas Broome: dbroome@usaid.gov
USAID Staff Assistant Stefan Geyer: geyer@afsa.org
Member Services
Member Services Director Janet Hedrick: hedrick@afsa.org
Member Services Representative Kristy Pomes: pomes@afsa.org
Administrative Assistant and Office Manager Ana Lopez: lopez@afsa.org
Communications, Marketing and Outreach
Retiree Counseling & Legislation Coordinator Bonnie Brown: brown@afsa.org
Director of Communications Thomas Switzer: switzer@afsa.org
Director of Policy Edward Dickens: dickens@afsa.org
Legislative Assistant Clint Lohse: lohse@afsa.org
Executive Assistant to the President Patrick Bradley: bradley@afsa.org
Scholarship Director Lori Dec: dec@afsa.org
Scholarship Program Assistant Jonathan Crawford: crawford@afsa.org
Road Scholar Administrator Bernard Alter: alter@afsa.org
Marketing & Outreach Manager Asgeir Sigfusson: sigfusson@afsa.org
Special Awards & Outreach Coordinator Perri Green: green@afsa.org
Web and IT Assistant Jeff Lau: lau@afsa.org

V.P. VOICE: **STATE** ■ BY DANIEL HIRSCH

Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA State VP.

Outstanding Medical Programs, But Still No Guarantee of Safety

The State Department's Office of Medical Services has been working steadily to improve its handling of mental health issues, including workplace and trauma-induced stress disorders and substance abuse problems. AFSA has been kept apprised of new programs and improvements, and consulted as they are developed. We are very favorably impressed by both the quality and the intent behind these increasingly excellent programs and urge employees who feel they need help to seek it.

AFSA has been asked to help spread the word within the Foreign Service that using these programs will not affect employees' security clearances. While we consider that the probable consequences of seeking needed treatment are better than those of not seeking it — and strongly recommend that those who need help take advantage of these outstanding programs — we cannot confidently assert that a security clearance will not be affected. Nobody can.

The governmentwide guidelines quoted in the Foreign Affairs Manual contain a unique mechanism that, used properly, should prevent an unreliable or improper factor from leading to a security clearance revocation. They require that mandatory questions be asked about every factor considered, that all available information be weighed and that information used in a decision is reliable and proper. However, AFSA continues to see and hear of cases indicating that this "whole person analysis" is not always conducted or is based on highly questionable information, including cases involving Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms and substance abuse.

For years, AFSA has recommended the adoption of basic management controls that would indicate whether "adverse action" decisions by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's clearance office complied with State's own FAM regulations and governmentwide procedures. These controls could serve not only as reference tools for attorneys working on the cases of the employees involved, but would also allow the department — and AFSA — to certify that issues like PTSD treatment were not leading to clearance revocations.

To our knowledge, such controls have not been implemented. Without procedures in place to ensure compliance with regulations, adverse action security clearance adjudications are, for all intents and purposes, unregulated. Currently, there is no mechanism in place to ensure that mental health treatment, or any other prohibited factor, will not improperly form the sole basis for a security clearance revocation at State.

In the absence of management controls to demonstrate compliance with its own rules and promises, the department relies on the memory of the adjudicators, and points to a September 2006 Office of the Inspector General Review (ISP-I-06-43). That review looked only at closed files already massaged by lawyers and purged of notes, at theoretical timelines, and at whether or not rules were actually on the books. It ignored every lead provided by AFSA, and did not involve any of the procedures described by the basic governmentwide recommendations for quality control in security clearance cases. An investigation into the conduct of that inspection by the President's Council on Integrity & Efficiency — which investigates claims of wrongdoing by inspectors general — ended with the untimely departure of the State Department inspector general who ordered it.

AFSA would like to see the following controls implemented:

• DS/PSS should use the same standard used by the Office of Personnel Management and other agencies to verify the reliability of information used in a clearance determination. That standard requires that any allegation be supported by at least one piece of evidence that a reasonable person would consider plausible, and that information which does not pass a "reasonable person test" not be used as the basis for a revocation.

• DS/PSS should use a form or template to demonstrate that the whole-person evaluation described above was performed. This would list the required questions, indicate which information in DS's files was applied to those questions, and summarize the answer to each question. Where an initial investigation did not obtain information needed to address all of the mandatory whole-person questions, additional investigation or interviews for the sole purpose of answering those questions should be performed. Documenting a whole-person review would make the basis of any decision clearer and more verifiable.

• The FAM should include the Quality Control mechanisms described in government-wide directives and used by other agencies.

• There should be a clarification of procedures in the FAM, to make all involved understand that the purpose of the exercise is a fair and complete evaluation, not merely a successful adverse outcome.

All of these suggestions are based on governmentwide guidelines and are used by other agencies that conduct security clearance adjudications. Implementing them would go a long way towards enabling AFSA (or anyone) to say with certainty that rules are being followed, and whether employees who need help can get that help without fear of losing their livelihood. ❑

V.P. VOICE: **FCS** ■ BY KEITH CURTIS

Views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the AFSA FCS VP.

Struggles of the DDG

In the past, this column has advocated strongly for the appointment of a Foreign Service officer to the deputy director general position at the Foreign Commercial Service. We have had a long history of successful FSOs in the position, and some notable problems when some other choice was made.

All other foreign affairs agencies appoint FSOs to their senior, stateside management jobs. At the State Department, the director general and the principal deputy assistant secretary are both Foreign Service officers. The U.S. Agency for International Development appoints FSOs to 12 deputy administrator positions. At the Foreign Agricultural Service, the deputy administrator job for human resources policy is always held by an FSO.

Fortunately for FCS, Director General Suresh Kumar picked Ambassador Charles A. Ford — the best, brightest and most distinguished of our officers — to serve in the DDG job. Having been on board for a year during a very difficult period, Amb. Ford has done much to put FCS back on an even keel. He is dynamic and active and we are lucky to have him.

However, we have some real concerns that changes proposed in the "Phoenix" reorganization and regionalization strategy will damage the long-term prospects of the Foreign Commercial Service. While some of the changes are good, they call into question the Foreign Service priorities of the organization.

Before Amb. Ford was appointed, the international deputy assistant secretary position (the senior FSO position in FCS) had been significantly reduced in influence by removal of much of the budgetary function. Under his tenure, it has been further reduced by removal of the Office of Foreign Service Human Resources and assignments management, which includes everything of value to FSOs — from promotion mechanics and assignments to how our families are cared for. Apparently, this is the price we pay for having the function elevated to the DDG level.

I am sure that Amb. Ford will work hard to turn these changes into a real plus, by increasing attention on our organization's resources, systems and personnel. He quickly demonstrated this with his choice of Jeff Tomczak, who is committed to the welfare of FSOs, to run OFSHR.

It seems to be hard for Washington to appreciate how the denigration of an FS presence here erodes the effectiveness of the organization. The deputy regional directors, the DDG, the director of the Office of Strategic Planning, the West Coast regional director in San Francisco, and the U.S. Export Assistance Center director in Denver were all FS positions, but no longer. And now FCS positions — London, for example — are being downgraded in the field. The thinking seems to be that FSOs should all be out in the field; that we don't need them back here. But this means experience with how things work in the field becomes shallow in Washington, while the invaluable experience of learning how Washington works is lost to FSOs.

We know that Amb. Ford is diligently looking after the interests of the Service. What worries us is what will happen when he leaves? This is not just an irrational fear; it is based on what has happened previously in the absence of field expertise. We cannot afford to repeat these mistakes. As I write this column, the decision to cancel awards is shaking the organization.

If FCS wants to continue to be recognized as a Foreign Service organization, its leadership and management should have substantial Foreign Service experience. ❑

CLO Coordinators: Covering All the Bases

BY DONNA AYERST

How many jobs have you had that required you to cover eight diverse, distinct portfolios? At U.S. embassies and consulates, Community Liaison Office Coordinators — a position held by a U.S. citizen spouse or partner of a direct-hire employee assigned to post — must juggle crisis management and support services; education liaison; employment liaison; event planning; community liaison; guidance and referral; information and resource management; and welcoming and orientation.

Depending on the post, any one of these areas could be a full-time job. It is no wonder that many family members have been heard to say, "You couldn't pay me enough to be a CLO!" Yet more than 300 individuals currently serve as CLOs or CLO assistants worldwide.

Each year, AFSA bestows the M. Juanita Guess Award on an individual who brings energy, passion and empathy to the CLO position. Despite the hard work performed by many in the CLO cadre, in 2011 AFSA received only 12 nominations for CLO of the Year. Just 12.

The Community Liaison Office program was established more than 30 years ago by the State Department's Family Liaison Office. Today, FLO provides support, resources and guidance to the CLO program at more than 200 posts, including Baghdad, Kabul and Islamabad.

FLO's commitment to ensuring a vibrant CLO program is evident by their goal of providing a five-day training course in professional skills development for all new CLOs. In 2011, FLO has trained 138 CLOs and CLO assistants in six overseas regional sessions.

On any given day, CLOs are helping their community deal with an evacuation from post; answering a myriad of questions from bidders, newly assigned employees and new arrivals to post; providing guid-

Continued on page 70

A Year-End Message

FROM AFSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IAN HOUSTON

The close of a year, along with the holiday season, always offers an opportunity to reflect. First, I want to sincerely thank the many individuals who offer their time, talents and resources to make our organization function at a high level.

In 2011, we moved forward on several new initiatives. AFSA's highest priority is to serve the needs of our membership. This is a tone that the former AFSA Governing Board (which left office in July) and the new Governing Board (which assumed office that same month) have established.

As executive director, service is a critical driver, but it's also a personal value that I hold in high regard. Profit is not measured in dollars, but in the satisfaction that a customer, member or individual has been assisted or served.

This year AFSA has deepened our staff capacity by adding several new positions on the advocacy, legislative and labor management fronts. We have created new teams of staff and reorganized our business and service model. Our Web site has been completely redesigned. We have brought in new technology, which has resulted in significant improvements in our ability to communicate with our members and a larger audience.

We continue to move forward with new programming, which has received wide coverage in several newspapers. For the first time, C-SPAN covered two of our events held at AFSA headquarters.

Of the many programs we presented, two stand out. In January, we commemorated the 30th anniversary of the release of the U.S. hostages from Iran by tying yellow ribbons around trees in Washington, D.C., dedicating a wreath in front of AFSA and bringing together former hostages to participate in a panel discussion. It was a memorable week that truly honored the patriotism of the Foreign Service — and was a moment for AFSA to honor the former hostages and salute all those in the Foreign Service who serve and sacrifice.

The other highlight was our "Rally to Serve America." AFSA organized this positive and patriotic rally when the prospect of a government shutdown loomed. Members of the AFSA Governing Board — including AFSA President Susan Johnson, State VP Daniel Hirsch, FCS VP Keith Curtis, USAID VP Francisco Zamora and Tex Harris — spoke eloquently at the event. I even had the thrill of using a bullhorn to announce to all who could hear that the Foreign Service honors America and that we are working for the American people! It doesn't get much better than this. The event was widely covered in the media and was an historic moment.

I know firsthand that AFSA professional staff members are committed to serving our members. You and your families deserve that, and I can assure you of their real dedication and the value we all place on serving you.

I thank you for all the support you provide to AFSA. Best wishes to you for the holidays and to AFSA in 2012. As always, please feel free to e-mail me at Houston@afsa.org. ❑

Dissent • Continued from page 63

Ron Schlicher — have had very distinguished careers. Taking a contrary position can be uncomfortable in an organization that values consensus and collegiality. It can damage friendships and divide family members. Dissent can force us to confront facts that we would prefer to ignore.

So why dissent? We have goals beyond advancing our careers. We have a conscience; we care about our country's fortunes and about the fate of our Service. We have a duty to point out misguided policies — be they in Iraq or elsewhere — and to provide a constructive solution.

We are the people on the ground with the training, knowledge, judgment and experience to advise the president and the Secretary of State.

We are the people on the ground with the training, knowledge, judgment and experience to advise the president and the Secretary of State. We owe it to our country to use what we know and to give our honest views, even when they may differ with current orthodoxy. For if not us, who?

AFSA honors those who dissent with our annual awards for constructive dissent. Please consider nominating a deserving colleague — or even yourself — for one of these unique awards. For more information, please visit www.afsa.org/awards or contact AFSA's Coordinator for Special Awards and Outreach Perri Green at green@afsa.org. The deadline for nominations is Feb. 29, 2012. ❑

Amb. John Limbert, who served as AFSA's president from 2003 to 2005, is currently chairman of AFSA's Awards and Plaques Committee.

AFSA Welcomes New Foreign Service Employees

BY JANET HEDRICK, DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP

AFSA has been welcoming incoming classes to the Foreign Service for more than 25 years. In fact, more than 10,000 FS employees have attended AFSA's luncheons for new entrants.

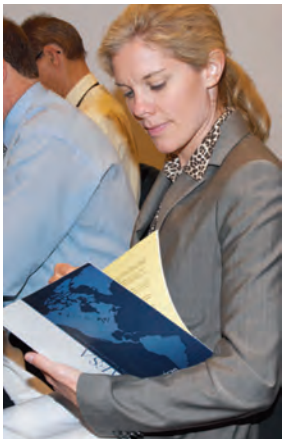
So far this year, AFSA headquarters has hosted 20 of these events, with more scheduled before the end of the year. The incoming classes typically join us for lunch toward the end of their orientation session.

Over the course of the meal, the association has the opportunity to congratulate the new members of the FS on their career choice and successful completion of the stringent entrance requirements. In addition to providing participants with valuable career information, we answer their questions, address their concerns and note their experiences with the new entry process.

PHOTOS BY DONNA AYERST

Greeted at AFSA headquarters are (L to R) Hector Orellana, Justin Yuda, Edith Vargas, Matthew Frazier, Leila Medelovici, Gaylord Swaby, Virginia Lindberg, AFSA Executive Director Ian Houston, Noel Dietrich, Andrew Calvin and Narinder Kumar.

They are introduced to AFSA President Susan Johnson, the constituency vice presidents, Governing Board members and AFSA staffers, before we offer them the opportunity to join our ranks.



Virginia Lindberg looks through AFSA's information folder.

AFSA Deputy General Counsel Zlatana Badrich is a frequent speaker and table host at the luncheons. During her presentation, she identifies some of the pitfalls employees may face during their career in the Foreign Service and answers questions. When an employee asks what he should do if confronted with a Diplomatic Security or Office of the Inspector General investigation, Badrich advises: "Call, e-mail or drop by AFSA's offices first! You likely will have to participate in the interview, but you have the right to have us there and it's best to have us with you from the beginning."

AFSA staff members discuss current issues facing the Foreign Service as a whole, as well as specific factors that may affect the attendees' career paths. Legislative updates, public outreach activities and current labor-management negotiations top the list of items of importance to new members.

During the event held on Oct. 13 for the 123rd Specialist Class, one employee said she joined because "We are so new, and AFSA gives us the opportunity to be a part of an organization that has our back — that advocates for us on all the unknown issues."

New members not only bring new strengths and abilities to the Foreign Service, but give AFSA a fresh look at the concerns of the next generation of Foreign Service employees. If you missed signing up at your own new member luncheon — or if your membership has lapsed — please visit us at www.afsa.org/become_a_member.aspx to see what membership can offer you.

Please note that AFSA's first-floor reception room is available to all members for private events, free of charge. For more information, please contact Ana Lopez at (202) 338-4045, ext. 520, or e-mail lopez@afsa.org. ❑

Brian Runzel asks AFSA staff a question.

(L to R) Jillian Stirling, Rachel Watson and Edward Partridge converse over lunch with AFSA State VP Daniel Hirsch.

Signing up to become a member of AFSA.

... And Congratulates Retirees

At the end of each retirement seminar at the Foreign Service Institute, AFSA and DACOR co-host a reception in honor of the "graduating" class. This festive occasion takes place in the Woody Lobby at FSI and is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate many outstanding public servants and their career achievements. It also gives us the chance to thank the FSI Transition Center staff for their important work.

These photos show the most recent class at the reception held on Oct. 28. Members of AFSA's Governing Board and professional staff were on hand to participate in the festivities, including AFSA President Susan Johnson; Ambassador Robert Houdek, the retiree constituency vice president; and Janet Hedrick and Kristy Pomes from AFSA's membership department.

AFSA is honored to participate in these events and we look forward to celebrating future "graduates." Of course, we hope that those transitioning into retirement will continue their AFSA memberships. There is strength in numbers and we rely on our retiree members to continue their advocacy for diplomacy and development. Find out more about AFSA retiree membership at www.afsa.org/retiree_services.aspx. ❑

PHOTOS BY DONNA AYERST

CLOs • Continued from page 70

ance on education options for a special needs child; facilitating workshops on family member employment; participating in their post's country team; and coordinating events and activities aimed at facilitating adaptation to post or celebrating seasonal holidays. In between, CLOs develop programs, disperse information and administer guidance designed to bring about robust morale at post.

CLOs have the ability to transform a post from a bleak outpost to an assignment rich with adventure, discovery and personal growth. They support individuals having a hard time coping with isolation, homesickness or the Foreign Service lifestyle. They gauge the concerns of the community and alert post management to those concerns.

In short, CLOs make a difference by bringing people together, advocating on their behalf, offering solutions and managing expectations. It's not an easy job, but it is an important one.

Nominations for the M. Juanita Guess Award for an outstanding Community Liaison Office Coordinator will be accepted through Feb. 29, 2012. For information on nomination procedures, please see www.afsa.org/performance_awards.aspx. ❑

Book Notes • Continued from page 67

From the "great games" of Russia and Great Britain, to the Soviet invasion and America's intervention, nearly every war in the region failed to go as planned.

More recently, Tomsen suggests, U.S. policy in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks failed due both to early neglect (the switch in focus once the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003) and a lack of understanding of the region's history.

Tomsen notes that during the first half of the 20th century, when Afghanistan was free of pressure from its neighbors or other outside forces, it enjoyed peace, significant economic development and modernization — powerful evidence of the capacity of Afghans to manage their own affairs.

The Way Ahead

In offering a strategy for the way ahead, Tomsen identifies three major tasks. First, we must refrain from getting involved in what he calls the Afghan political "cauldron." Foreigners, he says, can only penetrate the first or second layer of the Afghan political mentality, whereas "the most crucial decisions are made at the fifth or sixth level."

Second, he calls for accelerating "Afghanization" and decreasing American visibility to reduce the moderate majority's hostility to American principles.

Finally, Tomsen insists, the U.S. must decouple its Afghanistan policy from Pakistan and persuade Islamabad to change its policy of harboring multiple terrorist organizations that exploit the border between the countries, prolong the war and act as a fountainhead for the spread of fundamentalist terror throughout the region and the world.

> Tomsen suggests that U.S. policy in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks failed due both to early neglect and a lack of understanding of the region's history.

The lively Q&A session that followed concluded with Amb. Tomsen expressing optimism that if changes take place in our approach to Afghanistan, we can, indeed, see promising results in the future.

Book Notes events are made possible by donations to the Fund for American Diplomacy, AFSA's 501(c)(3) charitable organization. For more information, and to make a secure online contribution, please visit www.afsa.org/fad. ❑

■ TAX & FINANCIAL SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL TAX RETURN PREPARATION: Forty years in public tax practice. Arthur A. Granberg, EA, ATA, ATP. Our charge is $95 per hour. Most FS returns take 3 to 4 hours. Our office is 100 feet from Virginia Square Metro Station. Tax Matters Associates PC, 3601 North Fairfax Dr., Arlington VA 22201.
Tel: (703) 522-3828. Fax: (703) 522-5726. E-mail: aag8686@aol.com

ATTORNEY, FORMER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER: Extensive experience with tax problems unique to the Foreign Service. Available for consultation, tax planning and preparation of returns:
M. Bruce Hirshorn, Boring & Pilger, P.C.
307 Maple Ave. W, Suite D, Vienna VA 22180.
Tel: (703) 281-2161. Fax: (703) 281-9464.
E-mail: mbhirshorn@boringandpilger.com

FREE TAX CONSULTATION for overseas personnel. We process returns as received, without delay. Preparation and representation by Enrolled Agents. Federal and all states prepared. Includes "TAX TRAX" unique mini-financial planning review with recommendations. Full planning available. Get the most from your financial dollar! Financial Forecasts Inc., Barry B. DeMarr, CFP, EA, 3918 Prosperity Ave. #230, Fairfax VA 22031.
Tel: (703) 289-1167. Fax: (703) 289-1178. E-mail: finfore@aol.com

TAX & FINANCIAL PLANNING SERVICES: Brenner & Elsea-Mandojana, LLC is a professional services firm that specializes in the tax, financial planning and business advisory needs of U.S. expatriates. Managing Member Christine Elsea-Mandojana, CPA, CFP®, is a Foreign Service spouse and understands the unique tax and financial planning challenges faced by FS professionals and their families. She provides U.S. individual tax planning, tax preparation and individual financial planning services tailored to the needs of U.S. expatriates, and offers e-filing for most federal and state returns.
Tel: (202) 657-4875. Fax: (301) 576-4415.
E-mail: christine@globaltaxconsult.com
Web site: www.globaltaxconsult.com

■ TEMPORARY HOUSING

ENJOY YOUR STAY IN WASHINGTON in historic guest rooms just blocks from the White House! Rooms available to DACOR members and their guests, $109/night/single, $125/night/double, all taxes and continental breakfast (M-F) included.
For reservations call: (202) 682-0500, ext. 11.
E-mail: intern@dacorbacon.org
Web site: www.dacorbacon.org

PIED-A-TERRE PROPERTIES, LTD: Select from our unique inventory of completely furnished & tastefully decorated apartments & townhouses, all located in D.C.'s best in-town neighborhoods: Dupont, Georgetown, Foggy Bottom and the West End. Two-month minimum. Mother-Daughter Owned and Operated.
Tel: (202) 462-0200. Fax: (202) 332-1406.
E-mail: info@piedaterredc.com
Web site: www.piedaterredc.com

FIND PERFECT HOUSING by using the free Reservation Service Agency, Accommodations 4 U. Tel: (843) 238-2490.
E-mail: vicki@accommodations4u.net
Web site: www.accommodations4u.net

SHORT-TERM RENTALS • TEMPORARY HOUSING

WASHINGTON, D.C. OR NFATC TOUR? EXECUTIVE HOUSING CONSULTANTS offers Metropolitan Washington, D.C.'s finest portfolio of short-term, fully furnished and equipped apartments, townhomes and single-family residences in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia.

In Virginia: "River Place's Finest" is steps to Rosslyn Metro and Georgetown, and 15 minutes on Metro bus or State Department shuttle to NFATC. For more info, please call (301) 951-4111, or visit our Web site at www.executivehousing.com.

DC FURNISHED EXTENDED STAY in Penn Quarter/Chinatown. The Lansburgh, 425 8th Street NW. 1-BR and 2-BR apartments w/fully equipped kitchens, CAC & heat, high-speed Internet, digital cable TV w/ HBO, fitness center w/indoor pool, resident business center, 24-hour reception desk, full concierge service, secure parking available, controlled-entry building, 30-day minimum stay. Walk to Metro, FBI, DOJ, EPA, IRS, DOE, DHH, U.S. Capitol. Rates within government per diem. Discount for government, diplomats. Visit our Web site at: www.TheLansburgh.com or call the leasing office at (888) 313-6240.

FURNISHED LUXURY APARTMENTS: Short/long-term. Best locations: Dupont Circle, Georgetown. Utilities included. All price ranges/sizes. Parking available.
Tel: (202) 296-4989. E-mail: michaelsussman@starpower.net

CAPITOL HILL, FURNISHED HOUSING: 1-3 blocks to Capitol. Nice places, great location. Well below per diem. Short-term OK. GSA small business and veteran-owned.
Tel: (202) 544-4419.
Web site: www.capitolhillstay.com

DC GUEST APARTMENTS: Not your typical "corporate" apartments — we're different! Located in Dupont Circle, we designed our apartments as places where we'd like to live and work — beautifully furnished and fully equipped (including Internet and satellite TV). Most importantly, we understand that needs change occasionally, so we never penalize you if you leave early. You only pay for the nights you stay, even if your plans change at the last minute. We don't believe in minimum stays or extra charges like application or cleaning fees, either. And we always work with you on per diem.
Tel: (202) 536-2500.
E-mail: info@dcguestapartments.com
Visit: www.dcguestapartments.com

ARLINGTON FLATS: 1-BR, 2-BR, and 4-BR flats in two beautiful buildings 3 blks from Clarendon Metro. Newly renovated, completely furnished, incl. all utilities/Internet/HDTV w/DVR. Parking, maid service, gym, rental car available. Rates start at $2,600/month. Per diem OK. Min. 30 days.
Tel: (571) 235-4289. E-mail: ClaireWaters826@gmail.com
See 2-BR at Web site: www.postlets.com/rts/1908292

SERVING FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL FOR 23 YEARS, especially those with pets. Selection of condos, townhouses and single-family homes accommodates most breeds and sizes. All within a short walk of Metro stations in Arlington. Fully furnished and equipped 1-4 bedrooms, within per diem rates.
EXECUTIVE LODGING ALTERNATIVES.
E-mail: Finder5@ix.netcom.com

TEMPORARY HOUSING

CORPORATE APARTMENT SPECIALISTS: Abundant experience working with Foreign Service professionals and the locations to best serve you: Foggy Bottom, Woodley Park, Cleveland Park, Chevy Chase, Rosslyn, Ballston, Pentagon City. Our office is a short walk from NFATC. One-month minimum. All furnishings, housewares, utilities, telephone and cable included.
Tel: (703) 979-2830 or (800) 914-2802. Fax: (703) 979-2813.
E-mail: sales@corporateapartments.com
Web site: www.corporateapartments.com

STUNNING CLEVELAND PARK single detached house with gorgeous yard immediately available for six-month or yearlong rental. Furnished or unfurnished (negotiable); $3,600/month. Property is on Rodman Street, a quiet, tree-lined neighborhood with parking everywhere. Large master bedroom plus one bedroom for 1-2 children that could serve as an office; one bathroom. Built in 1925, house maintains charm with radiators, fireplace, windows everywhere, sitting room, living room, dining room, central air, dishwasher and kitchen. Basement laundry room next to your storage room, driveway and garage. Downstairs tenant shares laundry room but has own entrance. Walking up side of house, you pass bushes and trees before coming to the iron back gate. Stone path to back yard that includes ivy incline, large wooden porch, permanent stone grill, several trees and a bamboo-delineating yard, plus hot tub. Ten-minute walk to Cleveland Park and Van Ness Metro stations, and to Wisconsin Avenue; plentiful bus service. Across street from Sidwell Friends High School; just 200 feet from Hearst Community Center with soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds for different ages.
E-mail ross@dcinternationals.com

REAL ESTATE

PROFESSIONAL REAL ESTATE services provided by John Kozyn of Coldwell Banker in Arlington, Va. Need to buy or sell? My expertise will serve your specific needs and timeframe. FSO references gladly provided. Licensed in Va. and D.C.
Tel: (202) 288-6026.
E-mail: jkozyn@cbmove.com
Web site: www.cbmove.com/johnkozyn

SARASOTA, FL. PAUL BYRNES, FSO retired, and Loretta Friedman, Coldwell Banker, offer vast real estate experience in assisting diplomats. Enjoy gracious living, no state income tax, and a current "buyer's market."
Tel: (941) 377-8181.
E-mail: byrnes68@gmail.com (Paul) or lorbfried@gmail.com (Loretta).

HEADED TO MAIN STATE? Strategize now to buy a home in Northern Virginia. Tap into my 24+ years of experience providing FS personnel with exclusive representation. My effective approach to home buying/selling makes the transition easier for you and your family. References gladly provided.
Contact Marilyn Cantrel, Associate Broker (licensed in Va and D.C.), McEnearney Associates, McLean, Va.
Tel: (703) 860-2096.
Fax (703) 717-5923.
E-mail: Marilyn@MarilynCantrell.com
Web site: www.MarilynCantrell.com

LOOKING TO BUY, sell or rent property in Northern Virginia? This former FSO understands your needs and can help. References available. David Olinger, GRI Long & Foster, Realtors.
Tel: (703) 864-3196. E-mail: david.olinger@LNF.com
Web site: www.davidolinger.lnf.com

STATESIDE ASSIGNMENT ON THE HORIZON? Why rent when you can own! Two-bedroom condo in upscale Fairwood Community in Bowie, Md. Den, private garage, laundry room with washer and dryer, and two balconies (one off master bedroom, the other off living room and second bedroom). Excellent condition; includes all appliances. Only 5.1 miles from New Carrollton Metro (Orange Line); no need to change trains to Foggy Bottom, Main State stop. Great deal @ $199K; excellent investment. Contact Ken Hooks.
Tel: (301) 985-5816 (evenings); (301) 985-8358 or (703) 278-1258 (daytime). E-mail: hookske@attglobal.net.
Web site: www.myhomesdb.com (search for MLS# PG7407360)

SPECIAL INTEREST

BRITISH FEATURE ON IRAN LOOKING TO INTERVIEW RETIRED U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE STAFF FROM 1950-1954. I'm conducting background research for a feature based in 1950s Iran developed with Film4 ("Slumdog Millionaire") focusing on events leading to the 1953 coup. We would like to meet anyone who was in Tehran during 1950-1954. Would you talk informally about your experiences? If so, please contact Faisal Qureshi.
Cellphone: +44(0)7747604814.
E-mail: faisal_a_qureshi@hotmail.com

VACATION

SKI BRETTON WOODS, N.H. Spacious 2-BR condo available for rent. Reasonable rates. For more info/pics, e-mail: chisholmfm@yahoo.com

TRANSPORTATION

PET MOVING MADE EASY. Club Pet International is a full-service animal shipper specializing in domestic and international trips. Club Pet is the ultimate pet-care boarding facility in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
Tel: (703) 471-7818 or (800) 871-2535.
E-mail: dogman@clubpet.com Web site: clubpet.com

SHOPPING

CRAVING GROCERIES FROM HOME? We ship non-perishable groceries to you via the Dulles mail-sorting facility or your choice of U.S. shipping facility.
www.lowesfoodstogo.com
- Choose the Reynolda Rd store in Winston-Salem, N.C.
- Choose Delivery
- Pay through PayPal

SHOP IN AN AMERICAN DRUG STORE BY MAIL!
Morgan Pharmacy
3001 P St NW
Washington, DC 20007
Tel: (202) 337-4100. Fax: (202) 337-4102.
E-mail: care@morganRx.com
Web site: www.carepharmacies.com

SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL SERVICE. Atlas Corps, a nonprofit founded by an FSO spouse, promotes international cooperation by sending rising international leaders to the U.S. on one-year, J-1 visas for a training program. Support us by designating CFC #35006 or donating. Visit www.atlascorps.org for more info.

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS CHECKLIST FOR 11TH-GRADERS

HERE IS A NO-NONSENSE GUIDE TO GETTING A JUMP-START ON THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS.

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

When it comes to college admissions, junior year of high school is crunch time. This is when you're expected to take the most challenging courses, get the best grades and start racking up those SAT or ACT scores. Junior year is the last full academic year that factors into acceptance decisions from colleges. It also provides an opportunity to bring up a mediocre grade point average and polish your resumé.

In addition, you can finish — yes, finish — a whole swath of the application process in 11th grade so that you do not get hit with a ton of pressure the next fall. Of course, what you're really doing is moving some of that pressure to junior year, well before the stress of guidance office and college deadlines. If you accomplish everything on the to-do list below by August 2012, you will sail through your senior year.

So, here's your 11th-grade U.S. college application checklist. Start right now, in December, and you will be on a sound footing at the start of 12th grade.

DECEMBER (OVER THE WINTER BREAK)

• **Compile a list of potential colleges.** Use college guidebooks, Web sites (see list under Online Resources on p. 82) and, if your high school offers it, the Naviance Family Connection Web site to come up with a list of colleges that fit your needs. Include at least one "reach" school (a college that will be hard to get into, but wonderful to attend), several "match" schools (ones whose admitted students have transcripts similar to yours) and at least one "safety" school (where you are sure you will get in). Be certain you actually like all of the choices on your list, even the safety. And try to have a mix of different schools, varying in size, location and atmosphere.

• **Start investigating merit scholarship opportunities.** If you are interested in obtaining merit aid awards (as opposed to financial aid awards, for which you will apply during senior year), you might want to start with Foreign Service-related scholarships such as those offered by AFSA (see Online Resources, p. 82). Some people have had good luck with the scholarship contest site www.fastweb.com, but others feel overwhelmed by too many e-mail reminders. You also should check for special, even quirky scholarships offered by individual colleges. For example, you can get an Evans Scholarship at 14 schools — but only if you've worked as a golf caddy.

• **Plan to visit colleges when you can.** Keep in mind that your gut reaction to a college may be affected by whether or not school is in session. During vacations (which, admittedly, may be the only free time you have to visit), a college has a very different atmosphere than when it is bustling with students. Some overseas students decide to visit only those colleges to which they've been accepted, during spring break of senior year. Others need

Francesca Huemer Kelly, a Foreign Service spouse, is a college application essay tutor and writes frequently on educational issues. She sends this from Vienna, Austria.

to see schools first, before applying.

• **Use virtual tour Web sites when you can't visit.** There was a time when few high school seniors visited colleges at all, and simply chose a college sight-unseen. Now, there are virtual tours and student reviews all over the Web, including on www.youtube.com, to help you get a real sense of the college environment when you aren't able to visit. Of course, if anyone is prepared to live in a completely unfamiliar place, it's the Foreign Service student!

• **Continue to take the most advanced classes you can handle.** If you are planning to apply to the most selective colleges, you need to take as many Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes as you can manage and accept that stress is the price you pay for wanting to go to Harvard. But if you're like most of the population, and won't be applying to the Ivy League and other top-tier schools, relax and just do your best. There are plenty of fine colleges out there that will appreciate your As and Bs in, say, standard-level math courses as long as they see that you've taken a number of higher-level courses in history or English.

You also should check for special, even quirky scholarships offered by individual colleges.

• **Start creating a resumé** that lists all extracurricular activities, volunteer work, jobs and awards.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY

• **Plan dates for taking standardized tests** such as the SAT and ACT (see Testing Dates, p. 76). Allow enough time to take the SAT twice, as well as up to three SAT subject tests. Or you may decide that the ACT, not the SAT, is a better test for you. Try sample questions and tutorials from both tests online to learn about the differences. Most colleges accept scores from either test, and a growing number of colleges do not require standardized test scores at all.

• **Take a SAT or ACT prep course, if possible.** These vary greatly, both in structure and in price — from a Saturday practice test series or an online course to working one-on-one with a tutor. If "live" sessions are unavailable where you live, the College Board, which administers the SAT test, offers a low-cost online course, as well as free online practice

Continued on p. 78

Darrow School

A Coed, College-Preparatory, Boarding and Day School for Grades 9–12

Open House Dates!

- October 22, 2011
- November 11, 2011
- January 16, 2012
- February 20, 2012
- March 10, 2012
- April 27, 2012
- 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

authenticity | achievement
community | sustainability
creativity | teamwork

What makes Darrow unique?

The unique contributions of each one of our students and the special values we espouse. These include academic achievement, authentic and meaningful relationships, creativity in the arts and other endeavors, teamwork in athletics and service activities, sustainability on our campus and in our worldview, and the value that unites us most strongly: community. Darrow is where people's diverse talents and perspectives strengthen our community, and where shared values and common goals bring us together. Darrow values community. Darrow values you.

110 Darrow Road, New Lebanon, NY 12125
Tel: 518.794.6000 Toll Free: 877.432.7769 or (877.4DARROW)
admissions@darrowschool.org

SAT/ACT
Testing Dates 2012

SAT (register online at www.collegeboard.com)

Jan. 28 — register by Dec. 30

(March 10 — not offered overseas; register by Feb. 10)

May 5 — register by April 6)

June 2 — (register by May 8)

Please note that in some countries, you must register for an SAT test date — about 10 days earlier than the above registration dates — through an international representative. Check the College Board Web site for more details.

ACT (register online at www.act.org)

February 11 (without the writing component) — register by Jan. 13

April 14 — register by March 9

June 9 — register by May 4

Only some of the ACT test dates offer an optional writing test. Whether you take this test or not depends on the requirements of the colleges you are interested in. If you are a good writer, it's advisable to take the ACT that offers the writing test.

Please note that the ACT is not offered on all dates in all countries. Plan well ahead of time!

Country Day School Guanacaste

The American Boarding School in Costa Rica

The COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL GUANACASTE, founded in 2000, is a private, English-language, non-sectarian school providing a structured and challenging education in grades PK-12. The purposes and standards of the school are comparable to selective U.S. independent and college preparatory schools.

The school is located on 15 acres of dry tropical forest, steps from pristine beaches along Costa Rica's Pacific coast. While only 19,730 square miles, or about the size of West Virginia, Costa Rica has been likened to Hawaii for its incredible diversity and beauty of natural environments, habitats, and climates. We take full advantage of the learning opportunities found in our ecologically rich location, the Guanacaste culture and the Spanish language.

The school hosts Central America's only boarding program in a US-accredited school, enrolling approximately 150 students in Preschool through Grade 12. There are approximately 80 students in the high school, coming from North America, Europe, Latin American, and Asia. School facilities are entirely purpose-built with high speed wireless internet available throughout campus.

The area is rural with sparsely populated stretches of open savannahs and jungle-like mountainous terrain peppered with higher-populated and colorful towns, mostly along the beaches, containing diverse international and local populations. A number of nationalities are represented and a diversity of languages spoken by our students and parents.

2011-2012 Boarding Tuition and Fees:

Matriculation:	$2,500
Tuition, Room & Board:	$30,000
Total:	$32,500

Accredited by Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the Costa Rican Ministry of Education • Modern, purpose-built facilities • Unique eco-adventure learning opportunities • Broad extra-curricular, community service, environmental and cultural immersion opportunities • Competitive sports • Advanced Placement courses • Semester, summer and year abroad programs available

Email Contact: info@cds.ed.cr

We warmly invite you to learn more about us at: www.cdsgte.com

Continued from p. 74

tests. You may also purchase SAT and ACT workbooks that teach strategy and contain practice tests (see Books on p. 90).

• **Don't suddenly add a slew of extracurricular activities to your resumé**. College admissions officers will see right through that. On the other hand, unless you've got a good reason, don't suddenly drop all of your activities, either. Keep doing the things you love. Colleges generally like to see fewer, but more long-term passions, rather than membership in a lot of shallow, "show up for the yearbook photo" clubs.

MARCH-APRIL

• **Take your first standardized tests.** That would be the March SAT and/or the April ACT, if offered in your area (see Testing Dates, p. 76).

• **If you are able to visit colleges during spring break, make sure to do so.** Make sure to contact each college before your visit to reserve a place on the tour. If you schedule an interview, make sure you do your homework. Find out as much about the college as possible, and ask specific and intelligent questions. For example, "How many students are enrolled here?" shows you didn't even look at the school's Web site to check statistics.

Summer is the ideal time to finalize your list of colleges, finish your resumé and write your application essay.

But, "Can I do a semester abroad at a school where there's an observatory, in order to supplement my physics major with an astronomy component?" shows that you are researching ways to make this college work for you.

• **Create a comparison sheet to make notes on each school** you visit, and be sure to take photos, especially if you visit several colleges in a short period of time. You'll be surprised how quickly details start to blur.

• **Meet with your guidance counselor, if you haven't done so already.** You should go over your list of colleges and offer to write an "autobiography" to help your counselor write his or her letter of recommendation, which will be a part of your application. Some counselors also appreciate a "brag sheet" from your parents.

MAY-JUNE

• **Retake standardized tests**, if necessary.

You do not need to wait to see the application for your specific college before writing an essay.

• **Take SAT 2 subject tests**, especially those in subjects in which you are studying for the AP or IB exam. You may take up to three subject tests on the test day. You may not take both the SAT and the SAT subject tests on the same day.

• **Ask two teachers for letters of recommendation to go into your file**. By asking for these in the spring, when teachers are not as rushed, you should end up with more thoughtful letters in your file. The most popular teachers sometimes have to turn down student requests in the fall because they are swamped. Be sure to send a thank-you note after the teachers have written your letters.

JULY-AUGUST

Sorry, but you don't get the summer off! Summer is the ideal time to finalize your list of colleges, finish your resumé and write your application essay.

• **Now is the time to write your personal essay**, if you weren't lucky enough to have an English teacher who assigned a rough draft of it in the spring. Aim for about 500 words, and try to write about something that will illuminate your character and not just repeat what's on your resumé.

You have a real advantage by having lived overseas, so be sure to work in a reference to where you've lived or, better yet, write about an unusual overseas experience that will set you apart from the crowd.

By the way, every year, the Common Application, and many other college applications, will give you the

Continued on p. 88

College Applications: Online Resources

www.collegeboard.com — register and prep here for the SAT. The site also features CollegeMatchMaker to help you choose the right college.

www.act.org — register and prep here for the ACT.

www.princetonreview.com — find information about the top 10-percent institutions, a good basic overview of application process and test prep advice.

www.collegeconfidential.com — play with fun interactive features such as Ask the Dean and College Vibe.

www.mycollegeguide.org — submit questions to "Ask the Guru."

www.unigo.com — see feedback from students on their own colleges, in written and video form.

www.studentreview.com — read reviews, survey results and advice.

nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator — get tools for finding the right college, including interactive spreadsheets.

www.collegegold.com/applydecide/staterequirements — check on state residency requirements (for in-state tuition) at a glance.

www.naviance.com/index.php — if your high school has this program, find out how to use it from your guidance counselor. This is a wonderful free resource that can help you plan your future.

www.afsa.org/scholarships — get all you need to know on AFSA's merit and financial aid.

www.expatyouthscholarship.com — apply for Clements Worldwide scholarships for expatriate students.

www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21963.htm — visit the State Department's comprehensive list of FS-related scholarships.

www.collegeconfidential.com — the discussion boards on this site are helpful during the admissions process.

GRADES 6 -12 SUCCESS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DISABILITIES

"Brehm has helped me become more aware. I've gotten to know myself, my learning disabilities and my processing issues. If I have a problem, I now feel comfortable talking with someone about it. After making so many friends here, it's the first time in my life that I feel that I'm not alone."

— Anna

Brehm School is a unique family style boarding school for students with complex learning disabilities, grades 6-12.

Brehm is a forerunner in serving students with dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, auditory processing disorders, NVLD, aspergers and language-based learning disabilities.

Brehm students go on to college, find fulfilling careers and become successful entrepreneurs.

The one of a kind Brehm experience offers:

- A fully accredited high school
- A unique holistic program (Fulfilling our students academic, social and emotional needs)
- 4:1 student-to-teacher ratio
- Individualized academic curriculum
- Team recreational programs & Interscholastic sports
- Supervised dorm living
- 24/7 Health Services, Nursing staff and support
- 5 full-time Speech Language Pathologists on staff

OPTIONS Transitions to Independence is a comprehensive transitional program, with structured apartment living, for post high school students with complex learning disabilities.

OPTIONS helps young adult students find independent adulthood.

The OPTIONS Program offers:

- Structured living with Independent Living Counselors
- Social skills training & implementation
- Academic instruction
- Speech language therapy
- Two instructional tracks:
  - College Transition Track
    College class participation with academic support
  - Certificate of Completion Track
    Certificates include:
    Business
    Retail
    Health Services
    Computer
    Animal Care
    Social Services
    Food Services
    Janitorial Services
- Nursing staff and support
- Internship participation
- Employment readiness

POST HIGH SCHOOL SUCCESS WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DISABILITIES

"OPTIONS helped change my life.

After struggling with parochial school, I was diagnosed with ADD and OCD. Soon after, I began attending Brehm and OPTIONS, which helped me through community college and then Southern Illinois University. Thanks to the lessons I've learned from Brehm, I'm only the second person in my family to graduate from college."

— Pete

BREHM

Call Brehm today: 618.457.0371

Empowering students grades 6 through 12 with complex learning disabilities to recognize and achieve their full potential.

Brehm School 1245 E. Grand Avenue Carbondale, IL 62901 www.Brehm.org

OPTIONS
TRANSITIONS TO INDEPENDENCE

Call OPTIONS today: 618.549.4201

Empowering post high school students with complex learning disabilities to recognize and achieve their full potential.

OPTIONS 101 S. Lewis Lane Carbondale, IL 62901 www.experienceoptions.org

SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

Go to our webpage at www.afsa.org/fsj and search on "Schools"

ELEMENTARY/JUNIOR

School Name	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	TABS Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD and/or LD	Miles to Int'l Airport	Int'l Students Orientation	Dorms w/E-mail & Phones	Holiday Break Coverage	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
Fay School	103	450	50/50	25	17	PK-9	Y	N	25	Y	Y	N	47,800
Hampshire Country School	100	25	All boys	100	NA	3-12	N	Y	65	NA	N	N	48,000
Langley School, The	96	506	51/49	NA	NA	PS-8	N	N	15	NA	NA	NA	13,980-28,350
North Country School	98	92	49/43	88	23	4-9	Y	Y	125	N	Y/N	N	52,500

JUNIOR HIGH/SENIOR HIGH

Andrews Osborne Academy	81	225	50/50	50	30	7-12	Y	N	30	Y	Y	N	39,250
Grier School	88	265	All girls	95	50	7-12	Y	Y	120	Y	Y	Y	46,800
Knox School, The	88	145	55/45	87	60	6-12, PG	N	Limited	40	Y	Y	Y	45,017
New York Military Academy	101	125	75/25	88	10	7-12	NA	N	10	Y	N	N	35,210
Saint John's Preparatory School	89	313	53/47	28	25	6-12, PG	Y	N	90	Y	Y	N	32,348
Southwestern Academy	97	160	70/30	60	50	6-12, PG	Y	Limited	29	Y	Y	Y	30,700
Stoneleigh-Burnham School	92	140	All girls	74	38	7-12, PG	Y	Y	100	Y	Y	N	48,443
Thomas Jefferson School	80	91	50/50	60	25	7-12, PG	Y	N	12	Y	Y	N	38,000

SENIOR HIGH

Darrow School	75	118	50/50	80	25	9-12	Y	Y	40	Y	Y	Y	47,400*
Hebron Academy	80	233	66/34	70	30	9-12, PG	Y	Y	45	Y	Y	Y	47,900
Interlochen Arts Academy	78	474	37/63	96	21	9-12, PG	N	N	16	Y	Y	N	46,540
Madeira School, The	76	313	All girls	55	20	9-12	Y	Y	12	Y	Y	Limited	48,497**
Marine Military Academy	99	250	All boys	100	20	8-12, PG	N	Limited	1	Y	Y	N	33,000
Purnell School	96	110	All girls	85	19	9-12	Y	Y	35	Y	Y	N	50,000
St. Johnsbury Academy	95	950	54/46	27	17	9-12, PG	Y	Y	75	Y	Y	Y	42,800
St. Timothy's School	97	157	All girls	70	20	9-12	Y	Limited	19	Y	Y	Limited	45,200
Storm King School, The	88	135	55/45	80	45	8-12	Y	Y	60	Y	Y	N	40,100
Wasatch Academy	101	285	55/45	85	40	7-12, PG	N	Limited	90	Y	Y	Y	43,000
West Nottingham Academy	99	120	48/52	60	33	9-12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	N	40,750
Worcester Academy	91	497	51/49	33	21	9-12, PG	Y	Y	45	Y	Y	Y***	49,420

SPECIAL NEEDS

Benedictine School, The	98	92	73/27	85	5	ages 5-21	NA	Y	60	Y	Y	N	Call
Brehm School	84	80	54/46	98	7	6-12	N	Y	118	Y	Y	N	64,900
Gow School, The	74	140	All boys	100	31	7-12, PG	N	Y	20	Y	Y	N	55,400
Landmark School	90	460	60/40	35	3	2-12	N	Y	25	N	Y	N	46,575-62,000
Oakland School	94	86	60/40	50	10	1-9	N	Y	45	Y	Y	N	44,975
Riverview School	93	180	50/50	96	4	6-12, PG	N	Y	75	Y	Y	N	69,750

OTHER

Foreign Service Youth Foundation	p. 94	A support network for U.S. Foreign Service Youth worldwide. Go to www.fsyf.org
Family Liaison Office/State Department	p. 93	Information and resources for Foreign Service families. Contact FLOAskEducation@state.gov

*Tutorial program additional. **$48,497 boarding - $36,824 day. *** Thanksgiving only.

Schools at a Glance

Go to our webpage at www.afsa.org/fsj and search on "Schools"

Continued from page 85

School Name	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	TABS Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD and/or LD	Miles to Int'l Airport	Int'l Students Orientation	Dorms w/E-mail & Phones	Holiday Break Coverage	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
MILITARY													
Chamberlain-Hunt Academy	79	100	All boys	95	2	7-12	Y	NA	68	Y	N	N	20,500
OVERSEAS													
Berlin Brandenburg International School	97	240	50/50	15	65	9-12	N	Y	15	Y	Y	N	45,000*
Carlucci American International School of Lisbon	81	540	50/50	NA	50	PK-12	N	Limited	22	Y	NA	NA	7,205-16,810
Country Day School Guanacaste	77	150	50/50	15	80	PK-12	N	N	40	Y	Y	N	32,500
Escuela Campo Alegre	100	600	50/50	NA	80	N-12	NA	Limited	20	Y	NA	N	20,492
International School of Berne Online	103	250	57/43	NA	93	PK-12	N	NA	NA	Y	NA	NA	15,106-29,953
John F. Kennedy School Berlin	79	1702	50/50	NA	70	K-12	N	Limited	15	Y	NA	N	None
Leysin American School in Switzerland	83	360	53/47	100	75	8-12, PG	Y	Limited	75	Y	Y	N	45,000
St. John's International School	87	905	50/50	NA	NA	PK-13	Y	Y	5	NA	NA	NA	9,000-32,000
St. Stephen's School	94	258	53/47	14	64	9-12, PG	N	N	12	NA	Y	N	44,380*
TASIS, The American School in England	89	750	50/50	25	45	PK-12	Y	Limited	8	Y	Y	N	51,000*
POST-SECONDARY													
Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences	108	1600	40/60	80	10	B.S., M.S.	Y	Call	10	Y	Y	Y	35,950
Bryant University	106	3,606	59/41	85	6	B.A., M.A.	N	Y	18	Y	Y	Y	45,248
St. John's College	105	858	492/366	NA	9	B.A., M.A.	Y	NA	25	Y	Y	Y	53,580
St. Mary's University	107	3893	40/60	55	3.1	B.A., M.A., Ph.D.	NA	Y	13	Y	Y	N	30,120

DISTANCE LEARNING

Indiana University High School	83	Accredited, online high school courses and AP courses. College prep and academic honors diploma. Visit iuhighschool.iu.edu
North Dakota Center for Distance Education	92	Accredited online/print courses for grades 6-12. High school diploma; full-time teachers; enroll anytime. Visit ndcde.org
Mizzou Online – University of Missouri	107	Online: High school. Bachelor's and master's degrees. Individual courses. Certificates. Visit online.missouri.edu/mu/global
Stanford University Online High School	82	Accredited, diploma-granting independent school (grades 7-12). Advanced academic program (AP and university-level courses). Real-time seminars. Epgy.stanford.edu/ohs
Walden University	78	Walden is an accredited institution offering bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees online. Visit Global.WaldenU.edu

Schools at a Glance
can be found online at
www.afsa.org/schools_supplement.aspx

* Dollar value is subject to exchange rate.

Continued from p. 80

option to "write on a topic of your choice." So you do not need to wait to see the application for your specific college before writing an essay.

• **Be prepared to write additional essays** on a specific topic and/or short, 100-to-250-word answers to sometimes offbeat questions for some institutions. Do not think these are unimportant — they may be short answers, but the way you write them can make or break an application.

• **Avoid overused words and phrases** that pop up in college application essays: for instance, "awesome," "amazing," and "I truly want to make a difference."

• **Finish your resumé**; you will need it when filling out the college application form.

• **In mid-to-late summer, college Web sites will post application forms for Fall 2013.** Take a look at these application forms as soon as they pop up, so that you

College Applications: Books

Barron's Profiles of American Colleges with CD-Rom. Barron's Educational Series, 2010. Comprehensive reference book with statistics on all four-year accredited institutions in the United States.

The Best 373 Colleges, 2011 Edition. Princeton Review, 2011. Excellent all-around guide that weeds out the top ten percent universities for you, including humorous best-and-worst lists.

Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges. Pope, Loren. Penguin, 2006. Although it has not been revised since the author's death, this book is still a good resource for those interested in small liberal arts colleges that don't necessarily have "big name status" but offer an excellent education.

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges, 2012: Students on Campus Tell You What You Really Want to Know, 38th Edition. Yale Daily News Staff, ed. St. Martins Griffin, 2011. One of the most interesting college admissions books out there because of its emphasis on student feedback quotes about their colleges.

Cracking the SAT with DVD, 2012 Edition. Princeton Review, 2011.

The Official SAT Study Guide, 2nd edition. The College Board, 2009.

Crash Course for the ACT, 3rd edition. Princeton Review, 2007.

Create a comparison sheet to make notes on each school you visit, and be sure to take photos.

know exactly what is required from each of your schools. As soon as you can, begin filling them out. You do not have to send them now (you will want to check in with your guidance counselor in the fall before submitting). Almost all online applications can be saved and revised later.

• **Create a system for tracking your college applications**. This can be an online chart or app, a notebook, a big whiteboard on the wall, the Naviance Family Connection Web site (if your school offers it) or any one of a number of suggested systems on college sites. Even before submitting your application, there are other deadlines and tasks to track, such as transcript requests.

• **If you can, visit any colleges that you haven't had a chance to visit previously**, or that you want to see again. For overseas students, visiting may not be an option.

In the fall of senior year, you will put together your application with your essays and your list of extracurricular activities, and your high school guidance counselor and teachers will send their letters of recommendation, along with your transcript, to your colleges. While your classmates are scrambling to write an essay or find their busy teachers for recommendations, you'll be done with these tasks and able to concentrate on classes.

Last word: try to look at the process as fun. With each college or university you consider, you are "trying out" different possible futures — and that's pretty exciting. ■

ARCHIVE OF FSJ EDUCATION ARTICLES
Go to www.afsa.org/educationarticles

The ABCs of Education Allowances by Pamela Ward

Online Education: Unprecedented Opportunities by Kristi Streiffert

Flying Solo — Going to College from Overseas: A Guide for Parents by Rebecca Grappo

The Boarding School Option: A Tent for a Global Nomad by Pamela Ward

Applying to U.S. Colleges: A Primer for FS Teens by Francesca Huemer Kelly

FROM THE JUNE 2010 *FSJ* SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT

Online Education: Unprecedented Opportunities

Just as today's Foreign Service families cannot imagine how their predecessors lived without the Internet, we may soon be wondering how we ever got along without online education. Distance learning, as it is sometimes called, offers an unparalleled opportunity for FS family members to target and tailor their educational needs to their circumstances.

Last year nearly five million students took at least one online course from a degree-granting institution of higher education in the United States. The technology for delivering online courses and degree programs is rapidly growing more sophisticated. Professors are becoming more adept at teaching online. And most propitious of all, postsecondary institutions are passionate about the opportunity to present educational opportunities to a global "campus."

Universities offer online undergraduate degrees in nearly every possible topic — from interior design to accounting. Online master's degrees cover the fields of business, health care, management, government, human services, legal studies, education and information technology. Online doctorate programs include education, public policy, business administration, religion — and more.

One leader in the field, University of Maryland University College, offers undergraduate programs in everything from psychology to emergency management. Another, Boston University, offers both master's degrees and doctorates in music education, among other online programs. And Stanford University offers a computer science master's degree that can be completed online.

Initially, educators approached online education sceptically. Could students stay motivated without face-to-face contact? Would online students cheat more? How do you measure knowledge gained by students when they are not present for testing? But with millions of students now online — and with more than a decade of experience — numerous strategies have evolved to address these issues. And among those who benefit the most are Foreign Service families.

There is no one set of programs that works best for Foreign Service families — to suggest otherwise would be to ignore the wide array of circumstances of family members (age, educational level, English-language abilities, and interests and talents, to name a few). It would also ignore the fact that there are now thousands of options available to choose from.

The plethora of opportunities for online students means that the student must identify his or her educational goals clearly.

In fact, the plethora of opportunities for online students means that the buyer must beware. The online student must identify his or her educational goals clearly — a degree? a postgraduate degree? a certificate? continuing education credits? — and then carefully choose the appropriate institution and program.

This is excerpted from the article of the same title by Kristi Streiffert, a Foreign Service spouse and freelance writer, that was published in the June 2010 issue of the Foreign Service Journal. *The complete article can be accessed online at www.afsa.org/fsj.*

FROM THE DECEMBER 2009 *FSJ* SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT

The ABCs of Education Allowances

Employees of government agencies assigned overseas are granted allowances to help defray the cost of education for their children in kindergarten through 12th grade, one equivalent to that provided by public school systems in the United States.

The allowances for a specific post are determined by the fees charged by a school identified as providing a basic U.S.-type education. Parents may use this allowance to send their children to a different school of their choice, say a parochial or foreign-language institution, as long as the cost does not exceed that of the "base" school. If the alternative school is more expensive than the "base" model, the difference would be an out-of-pocket expense for the parents.

Fees for lunches, trips, computers and school uniforms are not covered.

An allowance covers only expenses for those services usually available without cost in American public schools, including tuition, transportation and textbooks. Fees for lunches, trips, computers and school uniforms are not covered, even if required by the school.

If a foreign post does not have a secular, English-language school with an American curriculum, or has such a school that goes only through certain grades, an away-from-post or "boarding school" allowance is provided.

There are several offices in the Department of State prepared to help you understand how the educational allowances work, and what choices you have for your children. These include the Office of Overseas Schools (www.state.gov/m/a/os), the Office of Allowances (http://aoprals.state.gov) and the Family Liaison Office (www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm).

Although these offices are part of the Department of State, the same allowances apply to most civilian federal employees under chief-of-mission authority overseas.

For information or assistance, e-mail FLOAskEducation@state.gov or call (202) 647-1076.

These are excerpts from the article by Pamela Ward, a regional education officer in the State Department's Office of Overseas Schools, that was published in the December 2009 Foreign Service Journal. *The complete article can be accessed online at www.afsa.org/fsj.*

WHEN BOARDING SCHOOLS ARE AN OPTION

BOARDING SCHOOLS OFTEN PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED CONTINUITY FOR FOREIGN SERVICE FAMILIES.

BY LEAH WALLACE

A new Foreign Service family has just been assigned to a small embassy in South America. The parents quickly contact the international school that most of the embassy and other expatriate students attend. When they describe their daughter's special needs, they are told that the program at that school cannot accommodate her. What can they do?

One option they can consider is boarding school. While the Department of State and other foreign affairs agencies do not provide any education allowances for families assigned to the United States, they do offer an "Away-from-Post Education Allowance" for Foreign Service families assigned overseas.

In recent years, the Family Liaison Office has fielded an increasing number of inquiries about boarding school options, especially for high school students. This education choice often provides much-needed continuity for students, both academically and socially.

Boarding school is also an attractive alternative when students are looking for special programs (e.g., sports, arts, or music) that may not be available at international schools overseas. And quite often, the boarding school option works

The allowance at a given post may not cover all of the expenses.

well for children with special needs when there are not adequate educational programs overseas.

What about Cost?

The Away-from-Post Education Allowance, sometimes referred to as the Boarding School Allowance, varies from post to post. This means that parents must consider the actual allowance available at the assigned post when deciding to send their child to boarding school. The allowance at a given post may not cover all of the expenses associated with sending a

Boarding Schools: Useful Tips

1. **Start Early**. Most boarding schools fill up quickly by spring of the previous school year.
2. **Go online and start researching.** The Family Liaison Office has found the following websites to be particularly useful:

   www.boardingschoolreview.com/
   www.boardingschools.com/
   www.boardingschoolsinfo.com/
3. **Keep your child involved in the decision** process right from the start! If they've been part of the process, they'll be invested in making it work.
4. Contact FLO for guidance at FLOAskEducation@state.gov
5. **Contact schools directly** to find out about their admissions process and requirements. Some boarding schools have fixed dates for applications and some have rolling application dates.
6. **Schedule** the Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT) or the Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE) if either is a requirement for admission.
7. **Visit schools**, if possible.

FROM THE JUNE 2009 *FSJ* SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT

A Vital Point of Contact: The Office of Overseas Schools

Established in 1964, the Office of Overseas Schools coordinates and administers the Department of State's Overseas Schools Assistance Program. A/OPR/OS works to ensure that the best possible educational opportunities are available for dependents of U.S. government personnel while stationed abroad.

While the office's primary goal in supporting schools abroad is to promote quality, American-style educational opportunities, it also increases mutual understanding between the people of the United States and those from other countries through its assistance to overseas schools by demonstrating American educational ideas, principles and methods.

The schools A/OPR/OS assists are independent, nonprofit and nondenominational. In most cases, they were established on a cooperative basis by U.S. citizens residing in foreign communities. The schools vary widely in historical background, size and complexity, ranging from tiny primary schools with fewer than a dozen students to large K-12 schools with enrollments approaching 4,000.

The Department of State does not operate these schools; instead, ownership and policy control are typically in the hands of parent associations that elect school boards. The boards then develop school policies and select administrators, who oversee day-to-day operations.

In the 2008-2009 academic year, the State Department assisted 196 schools, and A/OPR/OS publishes a one-page fact sheet on each of them. The office also compiles a CD-ROM of detailed reports on more than 500 preschools, elementary schools and secondary schools. These backgrounders bring together information on course offerings, special programs, programs for children with special needs, extracurricular activities, graduation requirements, etc.

This information is available from the Community Liaison Officer at each post and on the A/OPR/OS intranet site. Copies of the CD-ROM are also available to individuals upon request. In addition, A/OPR/OS maintains a resource center on schools at each post including yearbooks, newsletters, school profiles and a few videotapes.

As all Foreign Service parents know, the quality of education available is a major factor they consider in the bidding process for overseas assignments. Foreign Service personnel being posted overseas who have school-age children should therefore make A/OPR/OS one of their first points of contact.

The schools A/OPR/OS assists are independent, nonprofit and nondenominational.

To reach the Office of Overseas Schools, you can use any of the following methods:

Tel:	(202) 261-8200
Fax:	(202) 261-8224
E-Mail:	overseasschools@state.gov
Internet:	www.state.gov/m/a/os (Contains the list of REOs and their regions)
Intranet:	http://aopros.a.state.gov (Contains the list of REOs and their regions)
Address:	2401 E Street NW (SA-1) Room H328 Washington DC 20241-0003
Resource Center Hours:	Monday thru Friday, 8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

This is excerpted from the article of the same title by Kristin Grasso and Carol Sutherland of the Office of Overseas Schools. The article was published in the June 2009 issue of the Foreign Service Journal. *The complete article may be accessed online at www.afsa.org/fsj.*

The FLO team has a wealth of information and resources available to help guide Foreign Service families.

child to a particular boarding school.

The current Away-from-Post Education Allowances are shown in the table of allowances for grades K-12 on the Office of Allowances Web page: http://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/edzucation_all.asp.

Many Schools, Many Options

There are more than 500 boarding schools in the United States and Canada, many strong international boarding schools in Europe, and a few excellent ones in Africa and Asia. With so many choices, nearly every student can find a school that is a good fit.

For students with special needs, there are many boarding schools that provide strong learning support. FLO and the Employee Consultation Service (MEDECS@state.gov) work with families to provide advice on special needs boarding school options. There are all levels of support available, from learning resource assistance to therapeutic services.

When contacting prospective schools, parents should advise them of their children's educational strengths and weaknesses as clearly as possible.

The FLO Education and Youth team has a wealth of information and resources available to help guide Foreign Service families in researching boarding schools that may be good matches for their children.

For more information, visit the FLO Web site at www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm or e-mail FLO at FLOAskEducation@state.gov. ■

WHAT'S IN A COLLEGE RANKING?

WITH ITS UNIQUE APPROACH TO COLLEGE RANKINGS, *WASHINGTON MONTHLY* POINTS TO A NEW FAULT LINE IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION.

BY LAURA PETTINELLI AND SUSAN MAITRA

Beyond the typical college rankings of *U.S. News & World Report*, *Princeton Review*, and *Newsweek* is a lesser-known yet innovative ranking system: that of *Washington Monthly* magazine (www.washingtonmonthly.com). Its online College Guide includes research articles and blogs on education in addition to lists of the top 100 liberal arts colleges and the top 100 national universities, as well as rankings of master's universities and baccalaureate colleges.

Washington Monthly asks not what a school can do for its students, but what the school does for the country. The rationale is that higher education should benefit the community by driving economic growth and technological development, creating social mobility though education, and providing the upcoming working force with a solid academic grounding.

To serve this purpose, a school must not only maintain a quality curriculum that is relevant and admit significant numbers of disadvantaged students. It must ensure that they all graduate. And here, *WM* has found, surprisingly large numbers of institutions fail.

A Different Approach

While the big-name schools such as Princeton, Harvard, Yale and Columbia top the list of *U.S. News & World Report*, *Washington Monthly*'s College Guide tells a vastly different story. There three University of California schools, Stanford, Case Western and Jackson State University are at the top of the list, and Yale ranks just 39th. Jackson State didn't even make the *U.S. News* ratings, and Case Western was ranked number 38. Notably, Stanford makes the top five of both lists.

Public universities have historically topped the *WM* list, with the University of California schools taking four out of the five top positions on the national university list (in spite of the sharp rise in tuition prompted by the state's budget crisis). By contrast, the public option is usually absent or low on the traditional rankings of *U.S. News & World Report*, *Princeton Review* and *Newsweek*.

WM also highlights liberal arts colleges that offer great education, yet are often overlooked in the high school college search and consigned to the *U.S. News* "third tier." For instance, Morehouse College ranked number one this year on the *WM* liberal arts colleges list, in part due to the fact that it enrolls a large number of low-income men and maintains a high graduation rate. Yet Morehouse was ranked 127 on the *U.S. News* liberal arts colleges list.

Among the important factors that *WM* considers when determining rankings are: the number of Pell Grant recipients admitted, the level of student participation in community service, the amount an institution spends on research — and, the graduation rate.

Graduation Rates

A school's graduation rate, often a good overall indicator of both the quality of a school's educators and its quality of life, is a key factor in *Washington Monthly*'s evaluation. An institution that enrolls large numbers of low-income students but only graduates a small fraction of them is of little help to the community — or worse.

In a series of thought-provoking articles on "College Dropout Factories," the magazine took aim at this problem, which is startlingly pervasive yet mostly unacknowledged. "The American higher education system shunts striving low-income students into a class of schools invisible to the elite," write Ben Miller and Phuong Ly. "The only thing these schools do well is drive their students to quit." Millions of disadvantaged students continue to have their dreams of college education shattered by these institutions.

The articles are based on a study by *Washington Monthly* and Education Sector, an independent think-tank, in which researchers looked at the 15 percent of colleges and universities with the worst graduation records — about 200 schools in all — and found that the average graduation rate at these schools is 26 percent. The worst, Southern University at New Orleans, graduates a mere 5 percent of its students.

While these schools accept pretty much anyone who applies, they do not maintain their responsibility to the stu-

Laura Pettinelli is the Journal*'s editorial intern. Susan Maitra is senior editor.*

dent in providing him or her with the tools and support needed to graduate on time, if at all.

A School's Responsibility

Most students who drop out of college don't fail out, researchers have found. They leave because they don't perceive that the educational benefit of college exceeds the substantial expense of time and money — especially not when it's coupled with indifferent bureaucracies that pride themselves more on inane complexities than actually helping students.

In fact, of the millions of new students who stream into colleges each year, barely half will graduate on time. Many won't graduate at all. According to the 2010 census, nearly 34 million Americans over the age of 25 list their highest level of education as "some college, no degree."

Why have we accepted extremely high dropout rates at some colleges and unimpressive graduation rates throughout much of higher education? *Washington Monthly* suggests we do so because we lack a broadly shared sense of what an acceptable graduation rate would be.

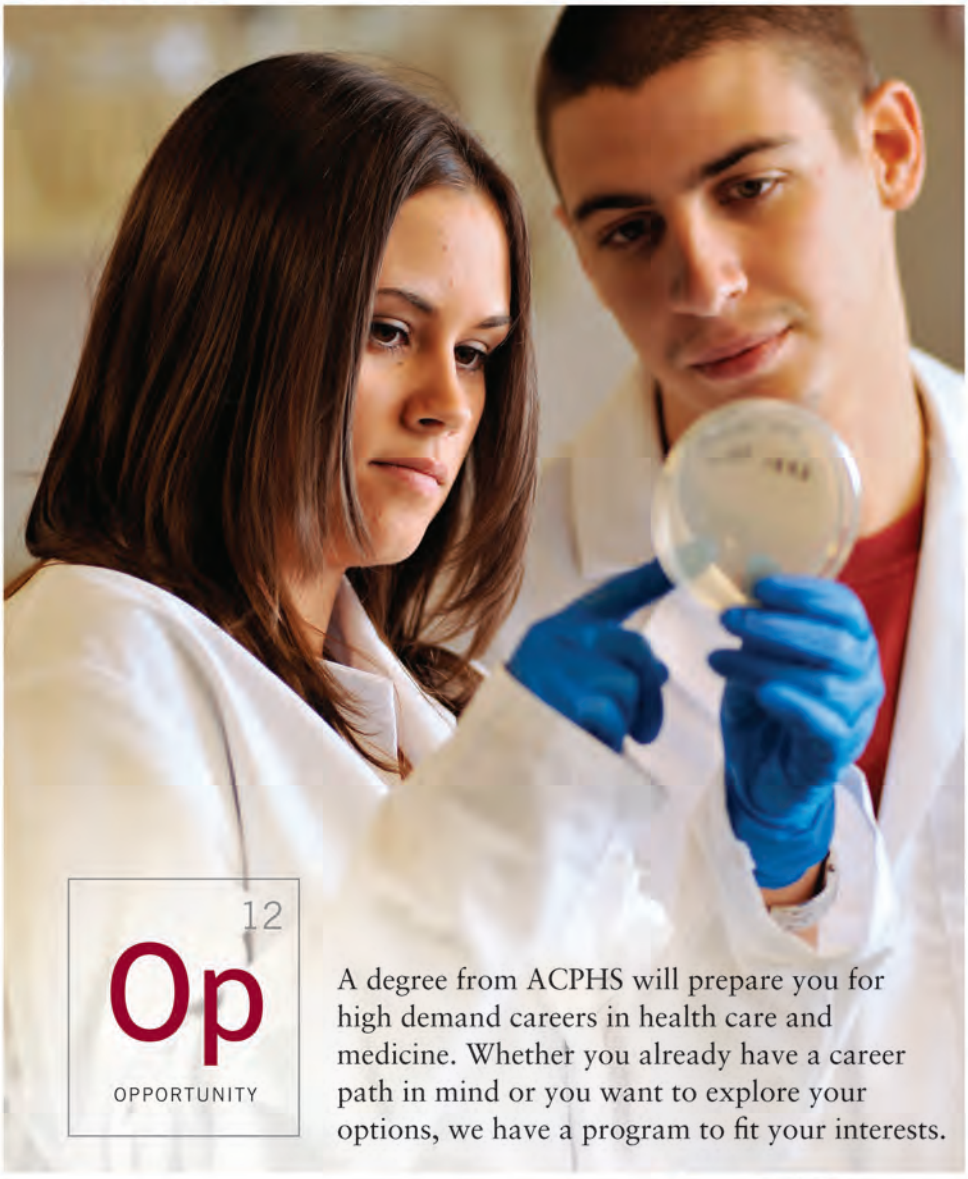
A College Degree's Value

Everyone agrees that all children need a high school diploma. That's why high school dropout factories are condemned without question. College, by contrast, isn't for everyone. "So it's easy to see college dropouts as people who didn't get what they probably didn't deserve," as Miller and Ly put it.

But while some people don't, in fact, need college, most do, they note. Forty years ago, the majority of high school graduates went no further with their education. Today, three-quarters of high school graduates go after a college degree, because they know that a career paying a middle-class wage almost always requires one.

Efforts to raise graduation rates could give a real boost not just to American higher education, but to society at large. ■

Albany College of Pharmacy
AND HEALTH SCIENCES



12
Op
OPPORTUNITY

A degree from ACPHS will prepare you for high demand careers in health care and medicine. Whether you already have a career path in mind or you want to explore your options, we have a program to fit your interests.

Degree Programs

- B.S in Pharmaceutical Sciences
- B.S in Biomedical Technology – Concentration in Clinical Laboratory Sciences
- B.S in Chemistry
- B.S in Health and Human Sciences
- Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.)
- M.S in Biotechnology
- M.S in Biotechnology-Cytotechnology
- M.S in Cytotechnology and Molecular Cytology
- M.S in Pharmaceutical Sciences
- M.S in Health Outcomes Research
- M.S in Pharmacy Administration
- Joint Degree Programs—Graduate degrees in medicine, law and business (P.A., M.D., J.D., M.S., M.B.A.)

Career Opportunities

- Biochemist
- Biostatistician
- Clinical Laboratory Scientist
- Cytotechnologist
- Drug Information Specialist
- Forensic Scientist
- Health Policy Analyst
- Hospital Administrator
- Medical Technologist
- Microbiologist
- Pharmacist
- Physician Assistant
- Public Health Attorney
- Research Scientist

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK > www.fsj.acphs.edu

106 New Scotland Avenue, Albany, New York 12208-3492 > 1-888-203-8010

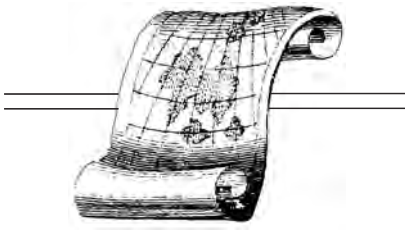
Real Estate

Real Estate

Advertising Index

When contacting one of our advertisers, kindly mention you saw their advertisement in the *Foreign Service Journal*.

Real Estate



REFLECTIONS

Too Far Away from Everything

BY C. ROBERT (BOB) DICKERMAN

Over the course of my Foreign Service career, I lived in quite a few places most folks have never heard of. I'd never heard of some of them either, before being told that such-and-such would be my home for the next two or three years.

I would arrive there, knowing no one … and eventually come to feel that it was the very center of the world.

There was loneliness at first, of course. Viewed objectively, some of these places *were* strange and off the beaten track — even, perhaps, fully deserving of the obscurity in which they existed and, in some cases, continue to exist.

But I had heard a story soon after arriving at my first Foreign Service post, Helsinki, that seemed to fit my own experience at each successive post.

A few months before my arrival in April 1962, the Finnish capital had celebrated a great anniversary of its founding. There was a week of celebrations, to which notables and dignitaries from throughout Finland, Scandinavia, Europe and the world were invited.

Among the guests was a white-haired Lapp chieftain from a nomadic, reindeer-herding family in northernmost Finnish Lapland. He had never even been to Rovaneimi, the capital of Lapland, before going to that city's airport en route to the festivities in Helsinki, I was told.

He stayed in Helsinki throughout the week, and appeared to enjoy himself immensely (although it is said that it is sometimes a bit hard to tell with a Lapp, since they are supposedly even less expressive than the Finns).

He stayed in Helsinki throughout the week, and appeared to enjoy himself immensely.

iStockphoto.com/PaulAnthonyWilson

Be that as it may, a reporter from Finnish Radio interviewed the chief while he was waiting for the plane that would fly him back north.

"How was the week?" asked the reporter.

"Not bad," said the chieftain.

"How were the festivities?"

"Not bad."

"And the food?"

"Not bad."

"And the drinks?"

"Not bad."

"And the women?"

"Not bad."

"And the city itself?"

"Not bad."

"So would you like to live here?" asked the reporter.

"No!" the chieftain answered emphatically.

"But why not?"

"Too far away from everything," he replied.

Through the ensuing decades, such cities as My Tho, Mogadishu, Reykjavík, Bridgewater and Port-of-Spain — as well as Arlington and Buffalo Gap, Va. — each became the center of my world for a few years at a time. And as a consequence, everything else during those years was "too far away from everything."

I remember my frustration, for example, while vacationing in Europe one summer, at not being able to find any news of what was going on in Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Antigua, Dominica or St. Kitts/Nevis — countries which, while working in Barbados, I was following daily.

Every place, my friends, is someone's center of the world. And everywhere else is simply "too far away from everything." ■

C. Robert (Bob) Dickerman was a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Information Agency from 1962 to 1992. Among many assignments, he was deputy chief of mission in Port-of-Spain. This story is one of many recollections in My Daddy Fought the Cold War: Not Entirely Serious Tales of a Foreign Service Career *(Augusta Free Press, 2011).*

Give Him A FUTURE.

Make a planned gift to AFSA and help Foreign Service families make college more affordable for their children.

The AFSA Scholarship Fund has helped deserving students every year since 1926 receive a college education by providing need-based financial aid scholarships and merit achievement awards. With a scholarship in your name, or in memory of a loved one, your family becomes an integral part of the AFSA Scholarship Program, and student recipients will learn about your connection to the Foreign Service.

With your financial support, you are helping the children of your Foreign Service colleagues achieve their dreams. Give back to the profession that has served you well. Leave a legacy with an AFSA planned gift and take advantage of the many tax savings and benefits.

For more information on AFSA planned giving, contact Lori Dec toll-free at (800) 704-2372, ext. 504, or at dec@afsa.org.

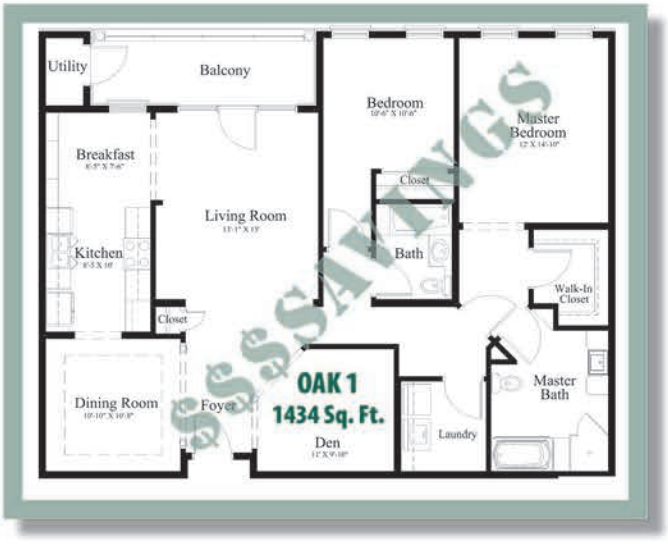
AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION
2101 E STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037
WWW.AFSA.ORG

Ask For Details About Our 100% Refundable Entrance Fee

Welcome Home to Luxury.

Welcome to ***The Woodlands*** – a luxury continuing care retirement community designed for individuals 62 and greater. Ideally located in Fairfax, Virginia, these spectacular luxury apartment homes are convenient to shopping, restaurants, doctors, Dulles Airport and so much more.

Please call **703-667-9801** to arrange for complimentary luncheon and tour.



Call 703-667-9801

4320 Forest Hill Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030-5651
email: marketing@thewoodlandsccrc.com
web: www.thewoodlandsccrc.com

The Woodlands
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

All floor plan dimensions are approximate. The Woodlands is an Equal Housing Opportunity.