FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

Personnel System Shakeup?

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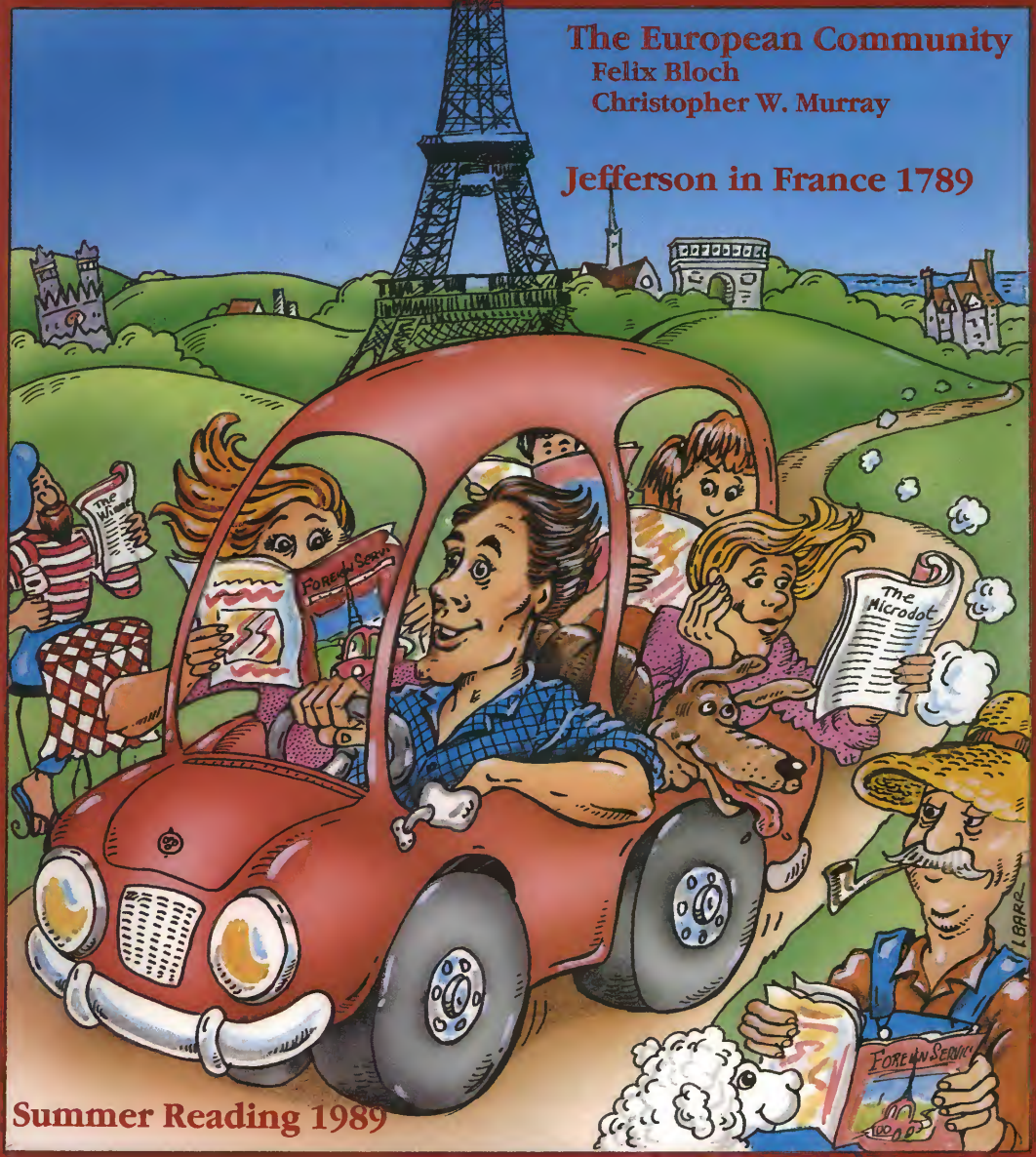
July/August 1989

The European Community

Felix Bloch
Christopher W. Murray

Jefferson in France 1789



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Status Report

The term of this Governing Board is drawing to a close. The Renewal Team has had its two years in office. How did we do? What remains to be done?

Two years ago AFSA was deeply divided over what to do about the personnel crisis gripping the State Department. As a result AFSA was losing its voice. The FS-1s who were being forced out of the Service had given up on AFSA and were pursuing their interests on their own. The senior officers had done the same and split off and formed their own organization. AFSA had lost its zest for professional issues and, rightly or wrongly, was seen both by the membership and management as irrelevant. All this to the background music of an unprecedented budget crisis, post closings, and threats of massive reductions in force.

Much has happened over the past two years—some good, some bad. We immediately established a professional issues office in AFSA and hired a retired Foreign Service officer to design and implement a program. When then-Secretary Shultz publicly said that the department was broke, and reducing the size of the Foreign Service by 10 percent was proposed as a remedy, AFSA and others went to the Hill for help. Congress responded with enough funding to avert decimation. A scandal involving the Marine guards in Moscow set off a firestorm of reaction, with the public perceiving the Foreign Service as bumbling incompetents, unable to protect our nation's secrets. Out of that came unworkable notions of psychological testing, lie detectors, and a security hysteria reminiscent of the 1950s. Again, common sense prevailed, but not without hard work by AFSA.

Our relations with Congress continue to be difficult. Many members and staff do not view us as hard-working professionals. Unfortunately, many on the Hill agree with Senator Helms's views about us. We must work harder and use every opportunity to convince Congress that we are worthy of support and that a strong, properly funded Foreign Service is indeed in the national interest. AFSA believes the department should open an office on the Hill, and the new leadership appears to agree with us on this.

Administration of our personnel system is still a most vexing problem and as a result two more personnel studies have been done. Good people, yet in their prime, are being retired involuntarily while important Foreign Service positions go vacant due to a lack of people to fill them. Others go unassigned while political fundraisers without other visible job qualifications become ambassadors. AFSA and all of us in the Service must stay vigilant and continue to express vigorously our concern about these serious problems. We should send only the best overseas. It should not be left to commissions mandated by Congress, such as the Thomas Commission, to come up with solutions to our personnel problems. We know best what reforms are needed and should come up with our own solutions.

Readers of history know that one must be specially committed to choose a career in the Foreign Service and stay with it. But we all know that it is a wonderful career. We are proud to be in the Foreign Service, to serve our country, and be a part of major world events, no matter the risks or hardships. We know it is worthwhile even if others don't. Personally, I would not trade one minute of it, including these past two exciting years as president of this great organization.

—Perry Shankle

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Letters

Growing up overseas

As a former "Foreign Service brat" like Kitty Thuermer ("Fast Times at Hindi High," JOURNAL, April 1989) and present AID Foreign Service officer, I enjoyed reading her well written and amusing piece on the pluses and minuses of growing up overseas. With the exception of two years in Washington, D.C., I spent my entire youth in overseas posts (Rome, Athens, Karachi, Saigon, Bangkok, and Nairobi). Therefore, I related heavily to many of her anecdotes.

However, as an American kid raised overseas, you shouldn't have to "fake being an American." If you do, then in all your travels—from Kashmir to the Serengeti, Bombay to Patagonia—you might have done well to have made at least one stop in Kansas City for a reality check. The vast majority of Americans don't have the opportunity we have to visit the four corners of the globe. A kid growing up overseas may easily overlook this fact and simply assume that compatriots back home are either lazy or plain stupid when it comes to world knowledge. Worse, Foreign Service kids may begin to think that their own culture, because it is not "unusual," is a bore.

Parents of overseas kids: teach your children a) to be humble about their travels and b) to respect their own culture and country, even if they can't keep up with David Letterman. They don't have to fake it; the kids back home will forgive them, as long as they don't bore them with too many tales about their adventures.

Clinton L. Doggett, Jr.
Cairo, Egypt

Microwave expats, who watch MTV in Bangui, appear to Kitty Thuermer a less satisfactory product of a Foreign Service childhood. She advocates slower roasting and more marination in local cultures. May I voice a dissenting opinion? My kitchen has both conventional and microwave ovens—I hope I'm bringing up children who can take advantage of both to offer a choice of menus.

From the evidence of Ms. Thuermer's article, she lost touch with aspects of American culture as she immersed herself in the places of her childhood. She reports she needed to acquire U.S. cultural literacy before she could share her own knowledge of Africa and Asia with students in Michigan. If she had had access to U.S. cultural highlights, even overseas, via microwave [U.S. entertainment exports], the integration of her own valuable overseas experience into U.S. international studies might have been accelerated.

I hope overseas living can also help our children acquire additional languages, contrasting social behaviors, and international experiences. My hope is that our children will enrich American culture by bringing back from overseas knowledge and experience that can change American society and internationalize our curricula.

Our children are culture-carriers and perception-changers. They can change both the sending and the receiving societies. I hope they can maintain connections with the American scene to facilitate re-entry. The United States needs to have the benefit of their overseas experience—and they need to have some sense of both their cultural heritage and national experience.

Mike Benefiel
Osaka, Japan

I hope Kitty Thuermer is pulling the legs of her readers when she says a 30-year veteran FSO didn't know who David Letterman is. To reach such a state the FSO would have had to have been denied exposure to *The International Herald Tribune, Time, Newsweek,* USIS publications, and TV news videotapes.

If the purpose of home leave is to re-orient the FSO to the American way of life, then it was wasted on Kitty's friend. If this is an actual incident, it is an indication that FSOs are becoming too sequestered. I hope it was fictional, making her very interesting story even a little more so.

Harry H. Houck
Bombay, India

Talking tough

In reading Ambassador David Newsom's discussion of the desire of Washington and others for the diplomat to talk tough and lay down the line to foreign officials ("Are Diplomats Patriotic?," JOURNAL, March 1989), I was reminded of a true story about my Ozark uncle.

That uncle became angry with a man in the neighborhood, and said he was just going down there and beat hell out of that guy. The man with whom my uncle was talking responded, "Remember, that guy is going to be there, too." I often found that story useful in defusing criticism of diplomats for not laying down the law to foreigners and foreign countries.

Hoyt Price
Benton, Arkansas

Reader query

I am researching whether Peace Corps volunteers have had a significant impact on AID.

Readers with Peace Corp/AID experience, please contact me at the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, 1319 F Street, NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20004, (202) 393-5501. Specify whether or not you wish to be quoted by name.

Kitty Thuermer

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Books

A Gathering at the River: Stories from a Life in the Foreign Service

By Fred Godsey. Markgraf Publishing, PO Box 936, Menlo Park, CA, 94026, 1988.

The memory of one who is pursuing or has retired from a career in the Foreign Service is special. Indelibly etched upon it are recollections of one-of-a-kind (for better or worse) individuals and of events which could have happened only when and where they did. These recollections, further, reveal more about points in the course of history and the nature of cultural differences than could any sociological treatise or official dispatch. Happily, Fred Godsey has chosen to share a selections of his recollections in *A Gathering at the River,* a book in which he disguises actual events as stories and real people as fictional characters.

These stories run the gamut from the downright funny ("Simon MacDougal—In Jail") to the truly tragic ("Request for Asylum"). All are brief but meaty, making the book an ideal beside companion, to be read over the course of a couple of nights.

Godsey easily passes the only applicable test of a good storyteller. As one reads any of the stories, one keeps wanting to find out what happens next, and one does remember the characters who populate the tales. I did find some of the personal revelations in "Retirement Day" superfluous, but this was personal reaction; other readers may find these passages interesting.

I did not know Fred Godsey during my own career, but, having read this book, I wish I had. I recommend it as enjoyable reading for present and former Foreign Service employees. I also suggest it be considered as a gift from FSOs to family members and friends who do not really understand what life in the Foreign Service is all about.

S. I. Nadler

West Africa, A Travel Survival Kit

Alex Newton, Lonely Planet Publications, 1988.

In a region where tourist facilities are generally scarce, Alex Newton (an AID employee who spent seven years in West African countries and is now stationed in Ecuador), dissipates much of the mist surrounding travel in West Africa. Written for all classes of travelers, but of special interest to the adventuresome, the book emphasizes

how to get around (and survive) on the local economy. His description of the three "classes" of bush taxis is delightful. He offers sage advice on what to do (and not do) if you plan to cross the Sahara by road. Newton has a flare for the practical and his tips on health precautions, including a section on AIDS, should be reviewed by even the veteran traveler.

Many folks return from West Africa with horror stories of hassle and harassment because their reception did not fit with their expectations. The underlying theme, which Newton so skillfully develops, is that travel in West Africa is a unique and fulfilling experience which can be thoroughly enjoyed if one will just "stop and smell the roses" (or better yet, the soup pot in Conakry's Marché du Niger). His book is a valued contribution to the West African traveler.

Edward Costello

Reforming the Soviet Economy: Equality vs. Efficiency

Edited by A. Hewitt, The Brookings Institution, 1988.

The Distorted World of Soviet-Type Economies

Jan Winiecki, University of Pittsburg Press, 1988.

The current Soviet regime's fate will be influenced by its success in revitalizing the economy. These new volumes by economist Ed Hewett and Polish expert Jan Winiecki, though not light reading, are highly informative. Hewitt's volume, which reviews the history of past Soviet attempts at reform, is particularly valuable for its insight on how the system actually works and the endemic obstacles to change. He reminds us that the Soviet economic system is neither about to collapse nor devoid of all attractions in its present form, particularly in job security and relative equality. Paradoxically, these benefits, which have helped deprive the system of dynamism, may be among the impediments to reform.

These books remind the reader that the odds are long against successful basic reform, at least at any early date. Winiecki is the more skeptical, arguing that Soviet-style economies are doomed to decline: tinkering can "accelerate or slow down the decline somewhat, but they will be unable to change the course." Hewitt acknowledges that the "uninspired record" of attempts at reform serves as a cautionary note to inflated claims of what Gorbachev can accomplish. Yet he concludes that Gorbachev just might be the first leader in the post-Stalin era to succeed in *beginning* "the long arduous task of transforming the So-

Books

viet economy and Soviet society."

Both Hewitt and Winiecki focus on a fundamental obstacle to any meaningful reform, the persistent unwillingness to face up to the need for market pricing. Under these circumstances the best chance for stimulating the Soviet economy seems to be by the transfer of productive resources from military to civilian purposes. Unfortunately, the evidence to date indicates that Gorbachev, while doubtlessly aware of the fact, is still unready to address it in earnest.

Kenneth N. Skoug, Jr.

Peace, Politics and Economics in Asia

Robert A. Scalapino and Masataka Kosaka, Pergamon-Brassey, 1988.

This is a collection of interesting and useful papers, limited only by the rapid passage of events. The diverse authorship is both a virture and a shortcoming. The diversity means that the book is not tightly integrated. The papers that make up this collection cover a wide range of subjects and address all aspects of regional cooperation. Nevertheless, while some authors address the relationship between economics and domestic politics and others deal with international peace and domestic prosperity, there is no overall approach to questions about the relationship between prosperity and democracy, economic growth and domestic stability, or economic cooperation and international security.

Some of the more provocative papers are those that discuss issues that go beyond what is happening at the moment they were written. Jesus Estanislao's article on the Philippines contains very insightful observations of the abiding sociocultural factors that affect economic recovery. Hongkoo Lee looks at economic success and democracy in Korea. One would like to see if the relationship that he discusses carries over to other Asian countries that have seen recent changes

in government. The experiences of Burma and the Philippines suggest that economic mismanagement can lead to the overthrow of oppressive regimes. Taiwan and South Korea might imply that economic prosperity can also lead to increased democratization. Unfortunately, this broad analysis is missing, although Lawrence Kraupe and William Gleysteen do an excellent job of examining specific aspects of the question.

As the title suggests, the book covers a vast territory. The sections cover strategic, economic, and political issues and then turn to the key question—the prospect for cooperation in the region. Evelyn Colbert and Richard Sneider, in separate articles, do an excellent job of summing up what has gone before and trying to look ahead. Not surprisingly, they come up with a cautious, balanced view of the possibilities for greater regionalism. The editors have produced a carefully selected and well edited volume that manages to strike a balance between analyzing the past and speculating on the future.

Charles Silver

By Our Readers

Civilian POW

By Winnie Wagaman and Norman J. Brookens. Warm Welcomes Publications, 428 W. Washington St., Hagerstown, MD, 21740, 1989.

This is the true story of AID employee Norman Brookens's five-year captivity under the Viet Cong. During his captivity, 1968-73, he traveled from one South Vietnam prison camp to another with a chain around his leg, almost dying on several occasions. In 1973, Brookens received AID's Award for Valor for outstanding courage while a POW.

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Foreign Service salute

Las Vegas Sun, May 5

U.S. Foreign Service employees provide a vital service in this troubled world of bloody wars and brutal terrorism. Many of them put their lives on the line each day to make sure Americans and American interests are protected in foreign countries.

Senator Harry Reid, D-NV, expressed his appreciation for the Foreign Service's efforts in keeping him and others safe and well informed while in the 162 countries with which the United States maintains diplomatic relations.

"In my involvement in government I have never been exposed to a more dedicated group of people than our Foreign Service employees," Reid said.

Architectural diplomacy

Washington Post, May 20

What constitutes the ideal embassy, the best architectural presentation of the United States in foreign lands? In today's world the obvious answer—that it should be a dignified, welcoming place fitting the highest standards of the democracy—no longer is so obvious.

Quite the contrary. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on our facilities in Beirut and Kuwait six years ago, and the disclosure three years later of the monumental security violations of our new high-rise chancery building in Moscow, tremendous political pressure was created to make fortresses of our embassies, closed compounds to protect all who work and live in them.

It is clear, of course, that in a debate between esthetics and security, the responsibility to protect human lives comes first. But it is also clear that in the exposed environment of a foreign country, total protection is an impossible goal. . . .

A positive sign is that, as the crisis atmosphere of the mid-decade has abated somewhat, so too has the hysteria that accompanied it on Capitol Hill and within the State Department. . . . "We're now looking at the specific threat levels," affirmed Richard Dertadian of the Foreign Buildings Office (FBO), "instead of applying the same standards to all." . . .

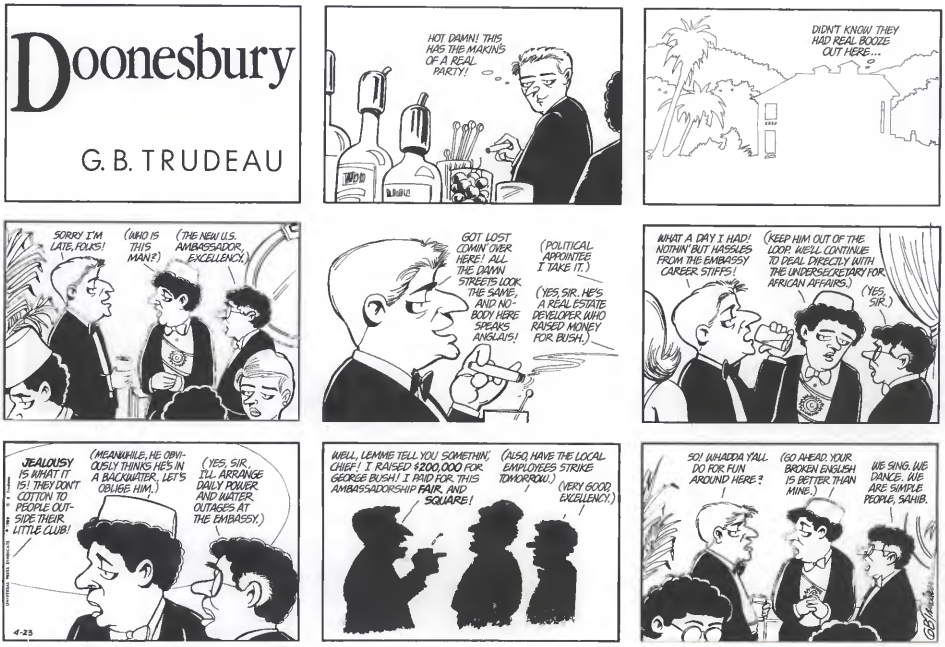
Benjamin Forgey

1990 authorization bill

Washington Post, May 31

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Claiborne Pell (D-RI) has a soft spot in his heart for Bratislava, Benjamin Franklin, elephants, and Tibet. Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), ranking minority member of the committee, takes a dim view of Ivy Leaguers in the Foreign Service and Henry Kissinger in government, but he too likes Tibet.

As a result, the committee's tentative draft of the State Department authorization bill for fiscal 1990 calls for reopening the U.S. consulate in the old Slovak capital of Bratislava, Czechoslovakia (where Pell served as a consular officer 40 years ago), puts in a plug for preservation of Franklin's house in London, seeks to protect elephants with new import controls on ivory, calls for "regional diversity" in recruiting diplomats, and



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tries to nudge Kissinger off the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. It also makes Tibet a kind of committee protectorate. . . .

An aide to one disgruntled senator describes [the bill] as a "global grab bag" of committee members' pet projects—a collection of "hobby horses," in the words of another. . . . "It is a good example of why the State Department doesn't really pay much attention to the Foreign Relations Committee," said one Senate aide.

Helen Dewar

Defense vs. State

Evans & Novak Political Report
May 9

It's far too early to start making book on the two traditionally most feudfed jobs in town—State and Defense—but we have a few pertinent observations: 1) Cheney is far tougher than anyone thinks. He will *not* cave (witness his repetition of the Gorbachev-will-fail forecast after [Bush's] attempted surgery). 2) He knows far more about the ins and outs of foreign/national security policymaking than Baker, and he is closer today (personally and ideologically) to Scowcroft than to Baker. 3) Baker may have an intelligent and hard-working staff, but except for Deputy Secretary Lawrence Eagleburger, it is not highly experienced. Cheney is putting together a staff that is tough, ideological, and experienced, headed by his policy chief, Paul Wolfowitz.

Security clearances

Common Cause Magazine
May/June 1989

The [security clearance] situation is no better for State Department employees [than it is in other government agencies], particularly those in the Foreign Service, says Susan Holik of the American Foreign Service Association. "They can keep your clearance suspended indefinitely, and meanwhile you're paralyzed," she says.

Careers can simply stall. One officer's clearance, for example, has been "temporarily" suspended for more than two years now, making him unassignable abroad. New officers come up for review after four years, and without a certain amount of time logged in foreign assignments they do not get tenure. In addition, says Holik, the panel making the clearance decisions is culled from Foreign Service officials—"not exactly independent," she says. "If they don't like you, they can get rid of you."

Viveca Novak

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Speaking Out

Up or out: resurrecting the 1946 principles

MALCOLM CHURCHILL

In an Open Forum speech some three years ago, Ambassador Alfred Atherton extolled the original principle of promotion up or selection out, as found in the 1946 Foreign Service Act. The original principle, he suggested, was eroded over the years, so that the 1980 act "introduced mechanisms to reimplement the concept of 'up or out'."

'Up or out' as it functioned in 1946 would appear to be an ideal model for a competitive Foreign Service. Unfortunately, what the 1980 act has produced takes us even further from the 1946 act.

Selection out in the early years had two elements: bottom-ranking and time-in-class. However, the Foreign Service has always been loath to make extensive use of bottom-ranking. Any officer who has passed the rigorous Foreign Service entrance examination will have laudatory qualities. Only rarely will hidden negative qualities so outweigh those positive characteristics as to give a selection board confidence that selection out is merited. Today, this has become even more the case. Efficiency reports, formerly unavailable to the rated officer, have become declassified, reducing candor considerably.

The other element of selection out, time-in-class (TIC), operated in the 1950s and 1960s in a fashion that is not well understood today. The impact of TIC limits was not measured in numbers of officers selected out, but in terms of differentiation. TIC limits were short enough to be a meaningful constraint, but long enough to permit all qualified officers to be promoted. In 1961, for example, only two officers were selected out through time-in-class.

Officers who performed well were promoted rapidly; "tombstone" promotions did not clog the promotion channels. Officers who performed poorly, on the other hand, could fall behind, conveying a message to themselves and to others. This falling behind was possible because the boards could make a number of decisions not to promote before having to decide whether to allow selection out through time-in-class.

Of those who fell behind, some ultimately left the service of their own volition. Some recovered from bad ratings to have normal careers, others were eventually selected out on time-in-class. Those capable enough to perform well but not destined for top management were, because of slower upward progress, less likely to be elevated beyond their level of competence.

In the early 1960s, several changes were made with far-reaching, detrimental consequences. Previously, all officers had been brought in at what would now be the FS-6 level. However, the department became concerned at a falling behind in pay comparability with the private sector, particularly at the junior grades. To redress the imbalance, the department began bringing in those candidates who had more experience at a higher rank; it also increased the pace of promotions at the lower ranks.

As these two changes worked through the system, the percentage of officers in the upper ranks inevitably increased. This is the origin of much of the "bulge" or senior surplus that the Foreign Service has struggled with for the past 20 years. In addition, of course, intake increased, to fill the entering positions being vacated more rapidly by promotion.

With increased intake and promotions, it became necessary to increase outflow. Consequently, in the early 1960s the department introduced automatic bottom-ranking selection out by formula, with up to 10 percent of the Service each year identified as being in the selection-out zone.

The deficiency of this approach rapidly became apparent. Sub-standard officers were not sufficiently numerous to support the percentages required, and competent recent promotees, competing against officers with more experience, often fell to the bottom of their new class. Officers generally recognized as competent were being selected out.

Various formulae for automatic bottom-ranking selection out were tried almost annually. Finally, in 1967 the effort was partially abandoned when an equally ill-conceived initiative was introduced, effective in mid-1968. Allowable time-in-class limits were drastically shortened. Overnight, it became mathematically impossible for all competent officers to be promoted in the time available. Almost immediately, pressures built up in the system, causing tombstone promotions to become routine as selection boards sought to save officers they knew to be competent. A reform movement

developed as awareness of the perversity of the system spread. The suicide of Charles Thomas, selected out under this system, was the catalyst which finally brought about reform.

The department's reform defused the reform movement but destroyed the system. It extended time-in-class limits in the middle grades to 15 years, rendering them meaningless. But the 20-year limit was introduced for promotion from present FS-3 to present OC. Such a multi-class limit had never before been a feature of the Foreign Service up-or-out mechanism.

The reform eliminated the threat of imminent selection out that in 1971 hung over officers at all grade levels. It substituted the equally inevitable but dimly perceived certainty that large numbers of qualified officers would be selected out in their prime years, at the 0-1 level. It could not be otherwise with a 20-year limit in a pyramidal system.

With most officers reaching 0-3 by age 35 or earlier, the typical officer by age 50-55 must either be a senior officer or be selected out. The steeper the pyramid, the greater the number to be selected out. The longer the tenure of senior officers, the greater the number to be selected out.

The internal strains and distortions created by this system have been devastating. The attention currently riveted on the six-year window obscures a bitter reality: the senior ranks can't accommodate today's junior and middle grade officers within 20 years any more than they can accommodate today's 0-1s.

The focus on crossing the senior threshhold obscures an equally bitter reality for senior officers. Every senior officer ousted is an 0-1 saved. Swayed by this reality, and seeking to accommodate irreconcilable pressures, the department has created a system that subjects senior officers to premature retirement and an unconscionable degree of uncertainty.

In a competitive service such as ours, the top ranks have always been reserved for those whose experience, talents, and wisdom distinguish them from their colleagues. This group represents an investment in human capital of perhaps 30 years' duration. They are an irreplaceable resource. In recognition of this, and of the young age at which a "walker-on-water" might attain senior status, time-in-class limits until 1967 were 15 years at the MC level and 12 years at the OC level.

Yet now, for many qualified FS-1s, admission to the senior ranks depends not on merit, but on how many senior officers management decides to move out. For many senior officers, whether a long career is capped by honored retirement or abrupt dismissal depends on the same management decision. For more junior officers, including 0-1s who have not yet opened their "windows," whether one's career ends sooner or later depends on how many careers of more senior officers have been terminated. Those promoted under the 1980 act may be no more capable and will certainly be less experienced than those more senior who are displaced to make way for them. Survival is not based primarily on merit, though those promoted are meritorious. Rather, survival depends on a gambler's luck of the draw.

It need not be this way. It is possible to have a competitive service with selection out and full careers.

Foreign Service personnel reform should be guided by three basic principles, derived from the original 1946 model of the Foreign Service:

1. At *every* level of the Foreign Service an adequate time period must be allowed to promote all capable officers.

2. Promotions always ought to be of the most qualified performers (undistorted by pressures for tombstone promotions), thereby allowing substandard performers to lag noticeably behind their peers.

3. *Competent* officers should be able to expect a full career of approximately 35 years *regardless of the grade at which they conclude that career.*

The following specific proposals, incorporating these principles, would re-establish the type of fair, competitive personnel system that the Foreign Service requires and deserves.

- Establish TIC limits for each class that are approximately 75 percent greater than the average time-in-class of promotees. The objective is to provide a period long enough for all competent officers to be promoted yet short enough to ensure that a promote or no-promote decision will be made within a meaningful period. While the system is adjusting, this may result in variations from year to year in TIC limits.
- Provide that *reductions* in TIC limits would not be applied to those already in the class in question.
- Abolish the 20-year limit for promotion from 0-3 to OC.
- Limit the use of LCEs (limited career extensions) to truly exceptional circumstances since the OC and MC classes would have normal career expectations.
- Designate one-half of one percent of all officers in each class for bottom-ranking selection out. This would select out roughly 15 percent of an entering class over a full career, a considerable number when one considers the caliber of those entering the Foreign Service. Though the one-half-of-one-percent figure may appear insignificant to some, it is not, and though a lower number could be used, a higher one should not be.
- Those who are bottom-ranked would be allowed to serve out the remaining TIC time in their current class.
- Modify the "window" for promotion to the Senior Foreign Service by extending it to eight years and by allowing those not promoted to serve to the end of their class 0-1 TIC limit. Without this reform, the "window" will be pointless, as officers will delay competing for promotion until the last years of their time-in-class.

Good officers should not be penalized for seeking earlier promotion.

• Restore stretch assignments as a normal aspect of the Foreign Service. This, in conjunction with the other proposed reforms, will ensure that superior performers enjoy every opportunity to demonstrate and be rewarded for their competence.

With the foregoing package of reforms, one person's gain will cease to be another person's loss. Like any change, there are trade-offs, of course, the major one being a slower average promotion rate. However, superior performers will move just as fast or even faster, while the typical competent performer will enjoy a longer, more productive career in exchange for his or her slower rate of progression. For both the individual and the Foreign Service, such an outcome can be nothing but positive. □

Focus

World Affairs Councils

GEORGE C. MITCHELL

To paraphrase Voltaire, if world affairs councils did not exist it would be necessary to invent them. Certainly the Department of State would agree, as the councils provide a valuable forum for explaining U.S. foreign policy to the American people.

Independent, non-profit, nonpartisan, and financed locally by membership dues and grants, world affairs councils were organized by citizens who perceived a need to alter the insular and isolationist views of Americans and to increase knowledge of foreign affairs. Today, youth education in foreign affairs in high schools, colleges, and universities is a principal endeavor of most councils.

In 1964, the world affairs councils formed an umbrella organization, the National Council of World Affairs Organizations (NCWAO). Today, it comprises 87 member councils, 34 associate member organizations and 20 councils in formation, for a total of 141 active and prospective foreign affairs organizations in the United States, Guam, Japan, England, and West Germany. No other country in the world has such a network of citizen groups that meet regularly to consider global issues.

NCWAO sponsors three-day meetings in the spring and autumn for the professional enhancement of council staffs. Seminar participants attend briefings by foreign affairs specialists, visit think tanks, government agencies, embassies, and military installations, and take part in workshops on programming, long-range planning, membership promotion, and fund-raising.

To put council executives in touch with foreign leaders and to familiarize them with on-the-spot conditions, NCWAO regularly sponsors study tours abroad especially designed for them. This past summer, for example, a delegation of council executive directors went on a study tour of Taiwan and the Philippines, where interviews were held with top officials on political, economic, and security affairs. Executive directors returned better equipped to plan substantive programing on East Asia for their councils.

Three years ago, NCWAO opened an office in Washington to improve and expand the activities of all world affairs councils. The Department of State assigns a diplomat-in-residence to operate the office until permanent staff can be hired. Ambassador Julius W. Walker, Jr. is serving as the office

director for the second year.

As nonpartisan educational organizations, world affairs councils are nonadvocacy groups, espousing no cause and making no recommendations on foreign policy. Rather, they strive to present all sides to foreign issues as objectively as they can and leave it to their members to arrive at their own decisions.

A natural symbiotic relationship exists between world affairs councils and the Foreign Service, as well as with other departments and agencies involved in foreign and military affairs and congressional foreign affairs committees. World affairs councils turn to the Department of State seeking knowledgeable speakers for lectures, seminars, conferences, and round table discussions.

On the other hand, U.S. government agencies need good platforms to inform the public about foreign affairs. Government speaker bureaus find the world affairs councils to be their best clients, as they have the programming know-how and interested audiences for assuring successful speaking engagements.

FSOs returning to Washington can call the Office of Public Programs of the Bureau of Public Affairs before their departure from post to request that a day's activities be scheduled for them with a world affairs council nearest their home. The council will arrange a program of radio, television, and press interviews, talks before service organizations, chambers of commerce, economic clubs, high schools, colleges, and universities, and other opportunities to explain Foreign Service careers to students of international relations.

In return for the information they impart to their listeners, Foreign Service personnel will gain a genuine grassroots education on American public opinion regarding foreign affairs and domestic issues.

Additionally, FSOs might inform officials of their host countries who are visiting the United States that world affairs councils can offer them speaking platforms across the country. Speaking engagements would best be made in advance by having the country's embassy in Washington contact NCWAO's office.

Finally, Foreign Service personnel should regard world affairs councils as potential second career employment possibilities. Their training and experience make them ideally qualified to run these organizations. Already many retired FSOs are serving as executive directors of councils from coast to coast.

If a council does not exist in the city in which an FSO has retired or plans to retire, he or she could establish one. Ambassador Lannon Walker has prepared a publication, "How to Start a World Affairs Council." It can be purchased by sending a check or money order in the amount of $20 to the National Council of World Affairs Organizations, 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 509, Washington D.C. 20036. □

George C. Mitchell is a retired FSO who is serving as president of the National Council of World Affairs Organizations and executive director of the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh.

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FSJ, August 1979:

The adolescent, going through this time of great change [at re-entry], may well be the one whose pain can be most readily seen. While the pseudo-sophisticated Foreign Service child may appear to be knowledgeable and able and bright, this same child may not have the necessary skills to fit easily into the new environment. The teenager may know how to take a plane from Bangkok to Cairo but not know how to take a bus to Tysons Corner. The children are often good conversationalists with adults, but they may not speak the language of their peers. They may have lived in countries where teenagers could not learn to drive or use a car. . . . These adolescents have usually lived in a fairly restricted social environment with a period of dependency upon their families. . . . Obviously Foreign Service adolescents have been through the moving experience before, but they may find their return to the United States is far more difficult than the initial breaking-in, getting-acquainted stage in a new country and in a new school overseas.

At most posts, there are other American teenagers going through the same experience . . . In contrast, when the adolescent arrives back in the United States, the established students are already locked into groups and there is often little interest in someone with a different background.

"Adolescent Re-Entry to the U.S."
by Kay Branaman Eakin

Note: For current brochures on re-entry and information on AWAL (Around the World in a Lifetime) contact your CLO at post or FLO in Washington.

FSJ, August 1964:

The responses from a nationwide cross-section of 2,900 Americans who were asked their "personal opinion" of the general standing of 90 occupations show that the diplomat rated very high in prestige. "Diplomat in U.S. Foreign Service" was outranked only by the medical profession and by Supreme Court justices and was tied by state governors and cabinet members. Ranked below diplomat was mayor, college professor, representative of U.S. Congress, dentist, and lawyer.

"The Foreign Service as a Profession"
by Donald E. Smith

FSJ, July 1939:

Editorial comment in the American press has been unanimous in its expression of approval of that part of the president's Reorganization Plan No. II which effects the transfer of the Foreign Commercial Service and the Foreign Agricultural Service to the Department of State, and the consolidation of those two services with the Foreign Service of the United States.

The Washington Post in a leading editorial says, "Nobody in government service is better trained for its exacting duties, more capable or more zealous in serving the nation and the people" than the Foreign Service. . . . "The president thus has reason and logic on his side when he recommends the absorption by the Department of State's Foreign Service of the parallel agencies now under the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture. Obviously the Department of State is the logical authority under whose supervision the combined body should come."

Studies aim at personnel reform

ANN LUPPI

The long-awaited report of the Commission on the Foreign Service Personnel System, known as the Thomas Commission, made its appearance in mid-June 1989. With the concurrent release of the Bremer Study Group report, it appears that with so much advice available to the Foreign Service personnel system, there will be changes soon.

The 1988-89 foreign affairs authorization act initiated the Thomas Commission.[1] Congress perceived that in many ways the Foreign Service Act of 1980 had not achieved the kind of personnel system intended by it. The commission was charged to design a system that would better provide career stability, while producing the kind of diplomats the United States needs. The five commissioners met over a period of a year, gained intimate knowledge of the 1980 Foreign Service Act, solicited many views, and concluded that the Foreign Service requires fundamental restructuring.

The Bremer Study Group[2] focused on improvements needed specifically in the State Department's Foreign Service officer corps or generalist system. While Thomas was congressionally mandated, Bremer's task arrived with the Bush administration and the naming of Ivan Selin to be under secretary for management. According to department officials, Selin believes that State needs to look at all management functions more systematically. In the personnel world, that means understanding the work that needs to be done, the work that individual officers are qualified to do, and better meshing the two to improve work results. The Bremer report is intended to be a start in that direction.

Comparing Thomas and Bremer, officials said that both gave a good try at making serious recommendations, but when dealing with tough issues, both offer more normative descriptions of needs than innovative plans. Nevertheless, because the Bremer recommendations do not require legislation, the State Department will undoubtably see some results. Of the Thomas Commission, much depends on Congress.

One of the basic concerns, according to AFSA General Counsel Susan Holik, is that these reports don't describe how new personnel guidelines would be put into effect for people who have been developing their careers under the current system. "AFSA won't be resistant to constructive change. But any transition must be gradual and reasonable. Neither report describes how a new personnel system will be put into effect for people already in," she noted.

This is a legitimate concern for the roster of 4,200 Foreign Service officers moving through the personnel system. How the promotion system envisioned by Bremer would decide what specialized personnel are needed at each level of the State Department's Foreign Service is already being questioned. One State Department officer noted, "I'm on my way to my third continent in 10 years. Under the current system, you're supposed to look for diverse experience. But will a future promotion board think that my career has given me a mish-mash of experience that the Service doesn't need? I think a lot of State FSOs will begin to ask how these reports will affect them." If any of the wide-ranging conclusions in the Thomas report get off the ground, employees throughout the foreign affairs agencies will have similar questions.

The comparison chart on pages 31-32 and the following review, compiled from State Department and AFSA officials' comments, look at specific points in the two reports.

Waning of Cone System

Bremer and Thomas differed fundamentally on how the current organization of the Foreign Service should be modified. Both want to revamp the present "cone" system, offering changes that premise many of their other suggestions. Their ideas in this area are the most diametrically opposed. While Thomas sees the Foreign Service as a comprehensive source of talent for virtually any skilled position within the U.S. foreign affairs agencies, Bremer sees the Foreign Service as generally oriented to the staffing requirements of the Department of State.

Bremer suggests the traditional four cones should be grouped into two disciplines, policy and operations. Policy would absorb the political and economic cones, operations would encompass the administrative and consular cones. Specialist categories, such as communicators, secretaries, and support staff, were outside the scope of the study.

The rationale for Bremer was that cone divisions are artificial; there are really only two distinctions in what generalists do—develop policy or manage operations and resources. In effect, the former would reassert area specialization, as one would stay within

[1]The commission was chaired by John M. Thomas (former assistant secretary of state for administration), and included Alfred L. Atherton, Jr. (former director general of the Foreign Service), Pat L. Schittulli (current director of civilian personnel for the Air Force), Ersa H. Poston (retired vice chair of the Merit Systems Protection Board of the Civil Service), and M. Graeme Bannerman (staff director, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1985-86).

[2]Chaired by now-retired Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, III, and included Ambassador Hume Horan, James Winnefeld of the RAND Corporation, and former or active FSOs David Burns, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Leslie Gerson, Ronald Main, and June Carter Perry.

the policy development field throughout a career and acquire expertise in a geographic area or particular subject, such as politico-military affairs. Bremer further qualified this recommendation by stating that a functional needs study must be done to identify how each FSO job would fall into either discipline and what expert skills are required for each job.

Thomas, on the other hand, advocates that the Foreign Service be divided into 14 functional categories. Put all Foreign Service personnel into one corps—encompassing almost all current Foreign Service employment, including diplomatic security, administrative support, and generalists (Thomas did not include secretaries in his generalist corps concept)—all part of the same umbrella system. Emphasize functional expertise throughout one's career, beginning at recruitment, through hiring on the basis of worldwide needs, to tenuring and assignments. One must have broad general experience, throughout the foreign affairs agencies, but specialized knowledge in several categories for career advancement.

The Exam Process

Both reports expressed concern that the Foreign Service is not competing with the American private sector in attracting qualified and capable recent college graduates. Part of the problem is the lengthy processing time of the exams. Thomas suggests offering an appointment within six months of application; the candidate would be offered an appointment at the time of the oral, contingent on the results of the security clearance process. Bremer believes that moving the exam to October, from early December, would aid efficiency, allowing appointments within seven months after the exam.

Under Thomas, the exam would test for expertise in the 14 Service-function categories, eliminating cone-related questions. This would affect USIA and the Foreign Commercial Service, which also use the present exam to find their candidates. In the oral stage of the exam process, a candidate's resume would be reviewed to search further for relevant experience needed by the Service.

The exam as currently written would be retained under the Bremer recommendations, though modified as necessary to comply with the results of the women's class action suit. In fact, Bremer felt that discrimination suit to be of such importance that it recommended a full-time attorney be added to the Board of Examiners (BEX) and that an outside firm review the adequacy of the exam in relation to the charges the court made about the current exam's biases. It further suggested initiating graduate level fellowships to aid minority candidates' competitiveness. Bremer also accepted the corridor scuttlebutt that serving in the BEX is a career-disadvantaging assignment, and urged that more recognition be given for BEX service so that top-notch officers have a role in seeing their like enter the Service.

Both reports asserted that more emphasis must be placed on interpersonal skills in the oral exam.

Career Expectations

The emotionally charged personnel climate of the past several years—the FS-1 cohort grievance, the high rate of forced retirements to reduce personnel numbers, the contention by many that the Foreign Service Act of 1980 has been incorrectly implemented in the State Department's Foreign Service—had a big influence on the direction and outcome of the studies.

Congress directed the Thomas Commission to develop "a system that provides adequate career stability." The commissioners took pains to explain that they had not equated stability with "lifetime career security." Rather, they sought predictability and fairness. Bremer recognized that the Service has "experienced continual change over the last 20 years," and that the report should contribute to "a period of stability and continuity."

Both groups had to deal with the questions of what degree of job security the Foreign Service must provide to attract and retain capable diplomats; whether security should be greater or less for senior officers; and whether mechanisms can be found to better identify poor performers.

In general, the joint tenor of the conclusions on how to begin to achieve stability and consistency was select younger junior officers (JOs) and provide for longer careers by lengthening durations of time-in-class (TIC).

Target recruits at age 22-28, Thomas specifically advocates, and appoint them at the FS-6 or lowest officer level. The Bremer group also preferred recent college graduates and had no hiring grade preferences, but shared the commissioners' criticism about current tenuring of junior officers. The common perception was that something is wrong with a system in which 90-95 percent of those hired get tenure. Commissioning and Tenure Boards (CTB) overwhelmingly say "good enough" when asked to judge whether officers qualify for the career track. Both reports recommended tougher practices to make the Foreign Service a more rigorous qualifying organization.

Bremer had the most stringent recommendation: enforce a 15 percent denial rate among junior officers. But some question this optional suggestion's legality—it may be an "arbitrary and capricious" quota. Thomas recommended quotas based on current personnel requirements. In keeping with Thomas's more function-specific approach, a recommendation was also made to award tenure relative to skill qualifications concurrently sought throughout the Service. Both would slot the individual into a career functional category (Thomas) or occupational speciality (Bremer) at time of tenure.

Under the present system, the junior officer period averages three to four years before tenure qualifies one to move up to begin the mid-level ladder. Thomas would stretch the wait to six years, Bremer to five years.

Bremer and Thomas were not far apart on making selection out more palatable at a later age. The Thomas Commission, in its quest to provide career stability, recognized that it is unfortunate for officers to rise through the system and then be forced to cash in their years of service at age 50-51,

Thomas Commission vs. Bremer Group

—Source: Department of State

Subject	Thomas Recommendation	Bremer Recommendation
Selection		
FSO Written Exam	Eliminate functional field tests.	Retain written exam as is.
Other assessment Techniques	Have resume review before oral assessment, as part of initial screening. Use qualitative standards to target recruits aged 22-28.	More assessment of inter-personal skills. Assign better officers as BEX examiners.
Processing Time	Offer appointment within 6 months of application.	Offer appointments within 7 months, move exam to October.
Competitiveness	Offer appointment at time of oral, contingent on obtaining clearances.	Foreign Service Fellowships for minority graduate students, with service/repayment provision.
Tenuring		
Grade at Hire	Appoint all at FS-06.	No change recommended (hires now made at 04, 05 or 06).
Length of Pre-Tenure Period	Mandatory 6 years.**	Mandatory 5 years.
Promotion—Pre-Tenure Period	From 06 to 05 at 3 years; from 05 to 04 at 6 years as consequence of winning tenure.	No change recommended. (Now, 06 to 05 in one year, 05 to 04 in 18 months.)
Selection Out (Pre-Tenure)	Numerical limits on tenure grants by CTB; individual awards to be guided by needs for skills at higher levels.	Fixed tenure denial rate of 15%.
Occupational Designation	CTB confers functional category at time of tenure.	Occupational speciality conferred at time of tenure.
Assignments		
Cones	14 functional categories (would bring admin specialists, security, and others into FSO corps.	Two disciplines—policy and operations. No discussion of specialists.
PER Role	Central system control of SFS and JO assignments.	Star assignments (100 per cycle) centrally designated and filled first.
Bureau Role	Direct bureau participation in mid-level assignments.	No comparable recommendation.
Stretches	Fill 10% of 01, OC jobs as stretches.	No comparable recommendation.
Counseling	Better trained CDOs, longer CDO tours, combine CDO/AO functions, more career planning, mediated by CDOs.	Better trained CDOs, with professional counselor backup, more career planning, mediated by CDOs.
Length of Tour of Duty	3 or 4 years, except for JOs and hardship posts.	No comparable recommendation.
Open Assignment Bidding	Eliminate formal system, officers work one on one with CDOs.	De-emphasize bidding, no second bid lists, speed up cycle.
Mentoring	No comparable recommendation.	Emphasize.

Training		
Skills Training	More training time for FSOs, more job-specific.	More training. Require training for some assignments.
Training Resources	No comparable recommendation No comparable recommendation.	Monetary awards to encourage training Add 50 positions to FSI.
Promotions		
Form of Competition	Classwide at all ranks, boards to promote to occupational needs at next higher rank.	No changes recommended. (Now promotion may be class-wide or in-cone)
Mid-Level Promotions	3 or 4 year time-in-grade requirements at each grade.	Longer time-in-grade requirements.
SFS Eligibility	Eliminate window by having it coincide with midlevel TIC expiration.	Eliminate window. Must serve 12 years in mid-grades to compete for SFS.
Special SFS Requirements	Require one out-of-category tour.	Require one out-of-discipline tour. Require 3/3 in two languages, or 4/4 in one.
Selection Out		
Time-in-Class	Single class TICs tied to total career service, with 20-and-out retirement regardless of age for TICee.** 12-year OC/MC TIC.	Single class TIC of 10 years in grade at 03 and 02. 20 year mid-level multi-class TIC. 7 year OC TIC, 15 year OC/MC TIC.
Poor Performance	No comparable recommendation.	Board must refer 5% of class to PSB for selection out consideration.
Board Membership	Only SFS on 03 to 02 and higher level boards.	No comparable recommendation.
Management Information		
Position Structure & Management	Stable position base, tapering pyramidal structure, annual review by Congress.**	Functional needs study. Centrally managed structure and hiring pipeline.
Personnel Data Base	Better automated more responsive personnel data base, including automation of OPF.	Better automated more responsive personnel data base.
Grievances	Make employee responsible for OPF accuracy, refer OPF/EER complaints to new Records Correction Board.** Legislation to limit prescriptive relief, impose time limits on hearings & decisions.**	Make employee responsible for OPF accuracy. No comparable recommendation.
Other Recommendations	Allow specialists to seek FSO commissioning by CTB.	No comparable recommendation.
	Make DG policy head of FS on an inter-agency basis; agency personnel directors purely operational.	No comparable recommendation.
	Take FAS and FCS out of FS personnel system.	Not in scope of study.
	Fill overseas jobs first in assignment cycles.	No comparable recommendation.
	Link promotion & overseas service at each grade.	No comparable recommendation.
	Promotion files include CDO statements.	No comparable recommendations.
	DG commission a study looking at long range societal change and its impact on the FS.	

** *indicates that Thomas Commission proposes legislation to achieve objective.*

because they have fulfilled the mandatory time-in-class (TIC) at each grade and there aren't enough jobs open at the top. The problem would be solved by stretching career length, resulting in later retirement. And pensions would be bigger by then, which might also ease the sting.

For mid-level officers, a 20-year TIC rule has more or less been in effect since 1975. In fact, the 1980 Act is silent as to what the actual length of a TIC at each mid-level grade must be; the secretary of state has wide discretion to establish the actual periods of TIC. Currently, an individual has 22 years from tenuring (26 years from appointment) to achieve promotion into the Senior Foreign Service (SFS), beginning at Class FS-4. Bremer guarantees 25 years, Thomas a maximum of 28 years after tenure, until failure to advance to the SFS would lead to involuntary retirement.

For individuals entering the mid-grade levels now, the average is 14 years before promotion into the SFS, for a total average of about 18 years of cumulative service. Both studies think that officers should spend more time in the mid-levels. Thomas recommends a three-year mandatory waiting period at each level, akin to the military's policy of considering officers for promotion only every three or four years. Bremer also suggested that a minimum of three to five years in the mid-career grades would provide a more predictable career path, as well as time for training and out-of-agency assignments.

What may be good news to many is that each report seemed to call for the elimination of the "window." The concept requires officers to signal to Personnel one's readiness to compete for entry into the SFS—under the present interpretation of the 1980 Act, one then has six years to "make one's window" or achieve promotion from the top mid-level grade, FS-1, into the SFS. Eliminating the window would make employees compete under the same rubric—out when time at the mid-level has expired, unless promoted up. Competition would be class-wide across the SFS threshold, according to Bremer.

Both reports guarantee more years of service to fast-rising SFS officers. Thomas says combine the OC and MC durations for a total allowance of 12 years at this senior level. Bremer believes 15 years should be the rule.

Assignments

The mechanisms of tenure and promotion are important, but what really drives the Foreign Service is the assignments process. This dictum was reflected in the two studies. Both felt the present system is too driven by employee preferences and want management to exert greater control. They also accept the real or perceived idea that certain jobs are not attracting enough bidders. Traditionally attractive jobs such as political or economic counselorships in key embassies have received few bidders in recent years, because of the intense promotion-related pressure to obtain experience as a DCM or in other management positions.

Thomas's solution is to create central system control of senior and junior assignments. Bremer would also centralize the solution in Personnel, which would earmark 100 "star" positions during every assignment cycle to be filled first and limit the employee's ability to continue to negotiate for preferred jobs. Personnel would assign jobs with little employee involvement if the initial "bid list" did not produce an assignment.

Torrey Whitman, a personnel management specialist at State, confirmed that the "corridor wisdom" on how assignments aid in promotion is not borne out by the available data. For example, fewer than five FSOs might bid for the political counselor position in some major posts, while up to 35 will attempt to go to a small African country as DCM. However, records show that the former is at least as significant to promotion boards. "These reports agreed that false signals are pervading the system. Basically, an awful lot of people aren't pursuing their own best interests with their assignment bids," Whitman explained.

In their mutual hope to de-emphasize the importance of the current bidding process, Thomas and Bremer place great weight on new ways to develop careers. Bremer suggests a mentoring program, what one State Department official referred to, tongue-in-cheek, as "an organized old-boy system," which would address the concern that not enough FSOs know how to network, and it's hurting their assignment possibilities. Thomas solves the problem by encouraging better planning between employee and Career Development Officer (CDO).

CDOs got detailed attention from both groups. The potential utility of counseling and career planning was recognized to the extent that State Department FSOs should begin to involve their CDOs in their career plans now, because management will certainly put them there anyway.

Other probably definite outcomes of these studies include bringing the department's personnel data base into the computer age. Both advocated better management information so that more informed decisions can be made about jobs needing to be filled and individuals qualified to be assigned to them. Personal Audit Reports (PARs) will become much more comprehensive, recording more information on individual skills and experience to better inform the personnel system.

Congressional Initiatives

Bremer judged the 1980 Act to be "a useful and flexible tool for managing the personnel system," and as such—except for legislation to put an end to the window concept—the recommendations require no statutory modifications to the act.

Thomas, on the other hand, proposed 11 specific amendments to the 1980 Act to achieve some of its aims. These amendments were considered "relatively minor" to the State Department officials interviewed for this article, since none affects the fundamental premises of the Foreign Service personnel system. But AFSA officials considered some of them to be quite significant.

Advance briefing by the Thomas

commissioners to members of Congress in May enabled Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) to move swiftly to attempt to push through these amendments, even though the Thomas report wasn't finalized. A major consequence to AFSA of such hasty action would come if Helms succeeded with the suggestion in the Thomas report to redefine the bargaining unit, AFSA, so that management would be excluded from membership. "Such an amendment is unnecessary, conflicts with existing provisions of the Act, and is unconstitutional," an AFSA Hill briefing report noted.

The Thomas Commission suggestions on modifying employee grievance rights appeared to be the most controversial on the Hill. Thomas recommended deleting Section 1106(8) of the Act, which would eliminate the Foreign Service Grievance Board's authority to grant prescriptive relief. "Congress is nervous about restricting employee grievance rights," one State Department official contended. "They won't diminish prescriptive relief rights. Congress knows Foreign Service employees are exposed to so many unusual risks and endeavors overseas, it would be unpardonable if management could utilize unusually large powers against them."

AFSA suggested an alternate solution. Leave to the Grievance Board the discretion to grant prescriptive relief, but urge it to decide each case on the basis of the standards the courts have adopted in preliminary injunction determinations: the likelihood of eventual success on the merits; irreparable harm to the grievant; the degree of harm to the agency if the stay is granted; and the public interest.

AFSA also opposed a recommendation to require a grievance hearing within 30 days, which would be untenable given that witnesses and documents might be located in far-flung corners of the world.

Another amendment submitted by Helms would, according to AFSA State Vice President Charles Schmitz, "virtually destroy the Foreign Service grievance system" by removing from the processs grievances concerning information in the employee's personnel files. It would require that a new bureaucracy be created, a "Record Correction Board," to which an employee's complaints would be referred. There would be no redress and no appeal mechanisms in place to protect an employee.

"You'd have to carry your file with you from post to post to guarantee it was maintained in perfect order," said Perry Shankle, AFSA president. He added, "We appreciate the *focus* on record correction, but not the methods proposed—you can't put the onus on the employee, when it's the system that's making the mistakes." AFSA's response to these initiatives is for Congress to demand better record-keeping by the department, which should significantly reduce the number of personnel-file grievance cases.

The employee bargaining unit agreed with one Thomas recommendation, that the grievance process must be expedited. "Right now the system sometimes encourages gamesmanship; for example, spinning out prescriptive relief for far longer and for different purposes than originally intended," Schmitz acknowledged. "The danger in this is the likely backlash from management and Congress that could ruin the grievance system for others. For that reason, AFSA wants to cooperate in refining the process, to reduce exploitation but to keep it effective and fair."

Other proposals from Thomas could alter the Foreign Service. One would take the director general of the Foreign Service out of the State Department, where he now serves as both the personnel chief of State's Foreign Service and the figurative leader of all the U.S. government's Foreign Services. Under the recommendation, the DG would become solely the policy head of the Service, for all agencies. Personnel directors would be purely operational within each foreign affairs agency. However, whether such an independent DG would have any clout in relation to policy is questionable, and even Senator Helms didn't bother to bring the recommendation before Congress.

But he did propose several of the other questionable-value alterations the Thomas commissioners conceived. Most people take for granted that the proposal to limit to 12 percent the number of political appointee positions available in the Senior Foreign Service won't be legislated. The executive branch apparently signaled Congress that it would view such an amendment as unconstitutional interference with the president's power of appointment.

Although the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce's management wasn't consulted, Thomas also recommended that these two agencies' Foreign Services be removed from the Foreign Service personnel system. Interestingly, this amendment conflicts with one of the fundamental underpinnings of the 1980 Act, i.e., a unified Foreign Service. "If they're attempting to redress a perceived personnel imbalance between the Civil and Foreign Services in these two departments," AFSA's Schmitz elaborated, "They're throwing the baby out with the bathwater, destroying the system rather than reforming it." Susan Holik added, "You can't grant employees Foreign Service benefits while overseas but deny them while in the United States—the differences in the Civil and Foreign Service retirement systems make this proposition unworkable."

Finally, the Thomas Commission reflected the influence of the military representative, Pat Schittulli, in particular by recommending that Congress annually authorize a maximum number of employees for each grade in the Service. "Congress could use the 2402 Reports that State Department management is required to submit each year to monitor personnel levels," Holik said. "It's a form of congressional micro-management, when Congress has delegated to the department the authority to manage its personnel system."

Officials advised a "wait-and-see" approach when considering the potential fall-out of these two reports. But the names, Bremer and Thomas, will undoubtably become bywords to the Foreign Service as their ideas take concrete form. □

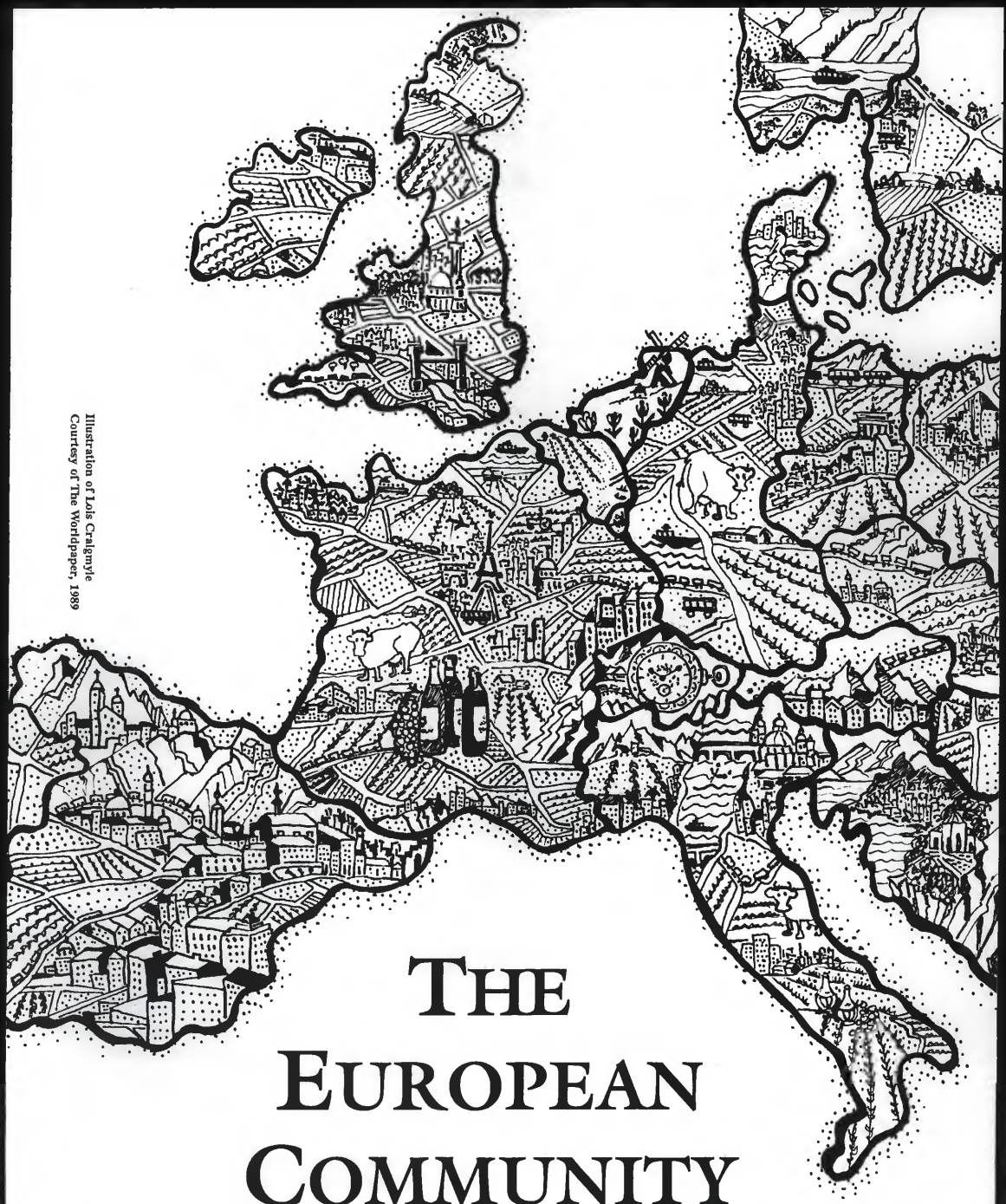

Illustration of Lois Craigmyle
Courtesy of The Worldpaper, 1989

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

FELIX S. BLOCH

Managing the U.S.-EC Relationship:

A measured approach by U.S. policymakers will pave the way to smooth dealings with Europe's new governmental institutions.

The State Department's Office of European Regional Political-Economic Affairs (EUR/RPE) deals with paradoxes every day: Western Europe is among the real estate most familiar to the Foreign Service, but the Western European institutions are among the least understood governmental structures. The United States and Western Europe are the closest of allies, but our trade disputes are habitually acrimonious. Western Europe is considered slow-moving, predictable, and staid; but we find ourselves dealing with dynamic change there—and neither the United States nor the Europeans can predict with accuracy the shape of Europe 15 or 20 years hence.

Relations between the United States and the European Community (EC) consequently are intricate and enigmatic. The intricacy comes from the tremendous range of the EC's activities and the ad hoc relationships that have grown over time between pockets of experts within the EC structure and our specialized bureaus and agencies. It would be an interesting, but probably unproductive exercise to try to inventory the interactions that exist between the United States and the EC; any attempt to make such a list would only provide a snapshot of an evolving network. The enigmatic part of the relationship is the fundamental level of difficulty that each side has in understanding the other.

The European Community is an embodiment of some of the loftiest ideals of the 20th century, but the nature of the EC is something beyond the American experience. As much as we like to speak of an interdependent world, the United States has little experience, or interest, in the concept of shared sovereignty among nation states. The United States is among the most sovereign of countries. If our working definition of sovereignty is freedom from external control, the EC member states have already moved a very long way from that. The member states properly prefer to speak of "shared sovereignty" rather than "lost sovereignty" when discussing the community; but in practical, day-to-day terms, the EC has become a supranational body—and one with which the United States must deal.

One French government official has calculated that more than 30 percent of the governmental decisions that affect the life of an average French citizen are now made in Brussels—which is not technically the EC capital but is widely considered as such because it is the headquarters of the European Community Commission. As another example of the community's influence, the majority of legislation dealing with environmental matters considered in the British Parliament in 1988 concerned implementation of EC regulations. Veto powers are limited;member states are obliged to conform to regulations over which they were in the minority when the measures came to a vote in the EC Council. In addition, the member states are obliged to accept the rulings of the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. Finally, the member states cannot individually enter into trade agreements with other countries and, if they have a trade complaint against another country, they must rely on the commission to represent them.

To grasp the conceptual problem Americans have when thinking about the EC, try this exercise: imagine the United States as an EC member state. Our cabinet officers would spend several days each month meeting with equivalent cabinet officers from other countries and participating in votes over specific, technical regulations; the proposed regulations would originate from a supranational authority, the EC Commission, not from our domestic agencies. If our secretary of transportation voted against a regulation concerning air fares, for example, but was in the minority, Congress would nevertheless be compelled to pass legislation

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implementing the regulation. If Congress were slow to act, or if the administration delayed in implementing the new regulation, the U.S. government would likely find itself at the losing end of a binding legal action initiated by the commission or by a fellow member country. It is difficult if not impossible to picture the U.S. government operating in such an environment.

Following upon the difficulties in grasping the foundation of shared sovereignty, the next problem comes in understanding the nature of the European Community's institutions. Attempts to equate the EC Commission to our executive branch or the European Parliament to our Congress are so inaccurate as to be misleading. The EC institutional structure does not conform to any model familiar to Americans.

In outline, the EC Commission is a permanent bureaucracy headed by 17 commissioners, two each from big member states and one from small member states, appointed to four-year terms and led by a president who is chosen from among the commissioners. The commission proposes legislation, is responsible for seeing that it is carried out, and represents the EC in bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

In the EC Council, member states meet to approve or disapprove commission proposals by weighted majority vote: the council cannot initiate proposals on its own. The European Parliament is directly elected, and its members sit by party blocs, not by country; it has a limited but growing ability to influence legislation. Finally, the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg ensures that the commission, council, and member states operate properly within the framework of the founding treaties.

That sounds complicated enough, but does not begin to convey the actual ebb and flow of the EC legislative process and the subtle maneuvering that goes on among the institutions and the member states. The founders of the community did a remarkable job in creating an institutional framework solid enough to function efficiently but flexible enough to adapt to change.

Clearing Up Misconceptions

The idea of European integration has existed for centuries; one might even say that Charlemagne and Napoleon were proponents, but today's community is a post-World War II development. After the war, Europeans decided that integration would reduce the risk of future wars on the continent and would ensure Europe's place on the world stage. The founders of the European Community started with a very narrow goal—common control of European coal and steel production (industries necessary to wage war).- The institutions—commission, council, parliament, court—created to manage coal and steel production have changed very little as the community has grown to encompass a very broad range of economic, political, and social policies.

The United States strongly supported these developments; the Marshall Plan was premised on European economic integration. We have consistently supported all movement toward European unification, including steps that proved too ambitious for the Europeans themselves, such as the European Defense Community that was stillborn in the 1950s.

It is not reasonable to expect many people to be versed in the esoterica of the EC institutions. Nevertheless, the community is increasingly in the news and misunderstanding of the EC has led to misconceptions in the United States. To cite three:

—***Europe will unite in 1992.*** A program is underway to remove barriers to the movements of people, goods, and capital within the EC by January 1, 1993. This is nothing more radical than what has been required by the EC treaties for the past 30 years—and falls far short of true integration. The 1992 program does not address company law and labor relations, education, monetary policy, telecommunications policy, and a large array of other issues. Although 1992 is important as an embodiment of the community's political will to increase the pace of integration, the process of integration has gone on for a long time and will continue long past 1992.

—***We only need to deal with the member states; the EC is just a place where they meet.*** There is some truth in this, but it is also a misleading way of thinking. The EC is more than the sum of the member states. The language of the treaties, to which the member states have committed themselves, restricts the member states' freedom of maneuver and gives the commission and court independent powers in some areas. In the case of airline deregulation, the commission was able to use the treaties as leverage against a majority of member states not keen on deregulation or increased competition.

—***The EC is impressive as a customs union but it doesn't have a role in political policy.***

Because the EC has focused most of its energies on economic integration, and because U.S.-EC relations appear to be dominated by trade disputes, people mistakenly believe that the EC's *only* role is economic. The corollary to this is the widely held belief that there is a "national security clause" somewhere in the treaties that prevents the community from dealing with security issues. On the contrary, the community is specifically committed to cooperation in the "political and economic aspects of security." The *only* policy area specifically outside the community's competence is the military aspect of security.

Given this background, just how does the U.S. government deal with the EC? First, the EC is a unique entity, and we deal with it in a unique way; it is the only multilateral organization to which we are represented but do not belong. There is a U.S. mission to the EC in Brussels and an EC delegation in Washington to carry on normal diplomatic exchange. We negotiate trade and other agreements with the commission in much the same way that we would negotiate with a country, and we sign agreements with the community as if it were a government—which it is.

The problems lie in areas where responsibility/sovereignty is shifting from member states to the commission. Should we anticipate change by dealing with the commission in areas where it is gaining competence and, therefore, is more malleable? Or, should we only turn to the commission when it has established its responsibility for an area—and its policies are established? The problem is far from theoretical; EUR/RPE spends considerable time grappling with it on an issue-by-issue basis.

Just as it would be very difficult to list all of the U.S.-EC contacts that exist because of their diversity, it would be difficult to count the number of people in the U.S. government who deal with the EC. They range from technical experts who have only a vague notion of the EC institutional apparatus, but know very well the specific EC regulatory or research activity with which they deal, to a small number of analysts who concern themselves daily with the overall political and economic direction of the community. In between lie the trade policy committees that have to conduct very complex negotiations with the community. The U.S.-EC trade dialogue, which is an intensely interagency process, not infrequently directly involves the secretaries of state, treasury, commerce, agriculture, and the U.S. trade representative.

There are two disturbing problems in U.S.-EC trade negotiations. First, we have fallen into the habit of advancing negotiations through the use of ultimata and deadlines. It seems that we are unable to reach agreement on important issues unless something terrible is going to happen at some specific date; this certainly lends urgency and weight to our negotiations, but also conveys to the public that our relationship is inherently hostile and adversarial. Additionally, both sides find themselves trapped by their threats. It seems as if U.S.-EC trade policy consists of each side holding a gun to its head and threatening to pull the trigger unless each gets its way. We need to do better.

The second problem is created by the EC's lack of initiative. Because it is difficult to get the 12 member states to agree on an initiative or a common opening position, both sides have come to expect the United States to always be the initiator of trade negotiations, the first to make a proposal, and the one expected to make the last concession. Such uneven dealing puts the United States in the position of always being the *demandeur* ("What do the Americans want now, aren't they ever satisfied?") and makes the EC seem very inflexible ("Dealing with the Europeans is like negotiating with a brick wall."). There may be no short-term solution to this problem, but it makes happy U.S.-EC trade negotiators extremely difficult to find.

A few years ago, one set of negotiations on trade in a steel product reached such an impasse that it seemed pointless to continue to meet, despite the dire consequences of failure for both sides. The negotiators finally adjourned for the day and agreed to meet informally that evening in a pub on the Grand Place in Brussels, where they worked out the numbers on the backs of coasters, passing hand calculators back and forth and periodically checking in with Washington via a pay telephone. The next day, in formal session, the agreement fell into place neatly. We can applaud the negotiators' flexibility while at the same time wonder why it is usually so difficult to reach mutually beneficial agreements.

Should there be a central coordination of U.S.-EC contacts? Although EUR/RPE is always interested in U.S.-EC contacts of any sort, it is not reasonable to expect, for example, U.S. government officials, meeting with

their EC counterparts on the fringes of multilateral meetings, to clear or report their contacts. Similarly, we would not expect to transmit every document or report that is sent from U.S. agencies to their counterpart directorates-general in Brussels—particularly in this day of the fax machine. Unnecessary bureaucratic layers should not encumber contacts among friends and allies.

Rather than serve as a master coordinator, EUR/RPE hopes to avoid unnecessary friction brought about by misunderstanding; to maximize U.S.-EC cooperation when it is in our mutual interest; to raise issues to senior levels when that is appropriate; and to dispel the idea that there is incompatibility between defending U.S. interests and supporting the development of the European Community. We have had fractious trade disputes and probably always will. We should always seek the best deal we can get in trade negotiations—as they will—without losing sight of the importance and depth of the overall partnership.

The 1990s

What do we expect from U.S.-EC relations in the future? It must be recognized that the nature of our relations is to a large extent dictated by the state of the evolving community. We can neither force nor delay the pace of European unification and can deal with EC institutions only to the extent that the community agrees that they should deal with us. Decisions being made in Europe are very important to the United States, but our ability to influence them is small.

The two great issues for the EC in the 1990s will involve the eventual size of the community and the amount of support among the European publics for the community. There is no clear definition of the "natural" size of the European Community. Opinions vary from the current 12 to 23 members and beyond. Should the community try to be as representative of all of Europe as possible or should it intensify its efforts to create a European Union, with much more advanced political and economic integration? Admission of neutral countries would naturally make it difficult for the community to assume a greater political or, eventually, a security role. On the other hand, can the community be true to itself and exclude Western European democracies which wish to become members? Is the community a stepping stone toward Gorbachev's "common European house," or is it a counterbalance? Does the community serve to promote reunification of an unnaturally divided Europe or does it increase the barrier between Western and Eastern Europe? What is Europe? —"Europe to the Urals"? "Europe to San Francisco"? "Europe from Brest to Brest-Litovsk"? or some other formula?

The second question involves the link between Europeans and the European Community. Public opinion polls show that there is deep and consistent support among the European public for unification. Many Europeans expect to vote for a "president of Europe" in their lifetime and look forward to the opportunity. However, support for the bloodless and boring EC institutions is not nearly as broad. There is a widespread perception among Europeans that they have little influence over the anonymous machinery in Brussels that is grinding out regulations that affect their lives. Again, there are many questions but no clear-cut answers. Can the European Parliament become a popular link between voters and the EC? Should the commission or council members be directly elected? Should there be common postage stamps, currency, athletic teams? The questions are, at root, psychological. Is there such a thing as a "European" identity? Can the European Community command allegiance, or even affection, among Europeans?

This, the intangible nature of Europe, brings us back to the paradoxes with which we began. Western Europe should be nearly as easy for us to understand as our own country; there is no other part of the world to which we are more historically and culturally attuned—how can it be so difficult for us to predict Europe's future? How can the Europeans themselves be so uncertain about the path that lies before them?

The answer must be that we are observing something new on the European continent. Pre-World War I Europe can never return; it is an era of history as remote as the Peloponnesian War. Cold War Europe was too hostile and dangerous to exist indefinitely. Rather than returning to some bygone era, a new Europe is assuming its place on the world stage along with the emerging Pacific rim and, perhaps, with radically altered Communist countries. What we are observing may be a world finally recovering from the shocks of the two world wars. If so, it is proper that Europe, the staging point of both wars, should now be the scene of the boldest experiments in interdependence. □

1992:

CHRISTOPHER W. MURRAY

Flashpoints in American diplomacy, be they Grenada, Libya, the Persian Gulf, or Nicaraguan contras, bring instant press and rapid analysis. Those who make the analysis soon ask, "And how do the Europeans see all of this?" European reaction, or more pointedly, "What the Europeans think," usually hits the news first as a colorful remark from a famous name. While these catchy phrases pass for European views on world events, in reality, there is an emerging and sophisticated system for coordinating foreign policy among the 12 members of the European Community (EC).

Europe's well publicized march toward a single economic market in 1992 has its foreign policy companion in European Political Cooperation. This process, informally called EPC, is in fact a common, if limited, foreign policy agreed upon and respected by all 12 member states. EPC promises to be a constructive partner for the United States. But, like Europe's integrated economic market, EPC also presents challenges.

Because Charles de Gaulle was adamantly opposed to the EC developing a political role, EPC developed along a separate track, through the coordination of EC member states' foreign ministries. When the foreign ministers of the then six EC nations met in Luxembourg in 1970 to link European political unity with cooperation on foreign policy, they sketched out the basic means for political cooperation. European foreign policy would be guided from the chair of the EC presidency, which rotates every six months among the member states. Foreign ministers would meet at least once during each presidency. A political committee was set up, composed of member states' political directors (who are equivalent to the Department of State's under secretary for political affairs).

Three years later, after the EC had grown to nine members, foreign ministers met in Copenhagen and refined the early rudiments of Luxembourg. New dimensions of a European foreign policy—by now commonly called EPC—included at least four annual meetings of foreign ministers and the designation of "European correspondents" who would serve as liaisons at each national foreign ministry. The Copenhagen report also authorized working groups of senior foreign ministry experts who could address specific international issues on behalf of all member states.

EPC got its third major boost from the European Single Act, approved in 1986 by the current 12 member states of the European Community. The Single Act remains best known for committing the 12 to a unified economic market by 1992. But the act also elevated EPC to treaty status for the first time, surpassing the less authoritative reports which were merely approved by foreign ministers.

Christopher W. Murray is currently posted in Brussels.

Europe Moves Toward Foreign Policy Cooperation

The Single Act's EPC provisions extended foreign policy coordination even further. The rotating EC presidency would represent the 12 in dealings with third countries. Decisions reached through the EPC process became truly binding on the national foreign policies of the 12 member states. The Single Act confirmed the EC Commission (the Brussels-based executive branch) as a player in EPC deliberations. Finally, the act provided for a lean but effective EPC secretariat, located in Brussels and set up to support the current presidency.

Today, the EPC process shows many traits of a foreign affairs bureaucracy. There are some 20 working groups, divided into geographical and functional areas, comparable to the bureaus of the Department of State. Each working group meets six to eight times per year, on short notice if a high-profile issue, such as chemical weapons, comes to the fore. Political directors of the 12 member states meet monthly in the presidency capital; their agenda tracks major events occurring around the world. Much of this agenda is developed through messages sent via a classified telex network, known by the acronym COREU. More and more frequently, diplomats of EC missions are meeting in third country capitals to review local affairs, and at the UN and other international bodies to shape common positions.

Foreign ministers of the 12 now get together at least a dozen times a year. They can act swiftly and decisively when events warrant; the Salman Rushdie affair offers a recent example. Foreign ministers, in three-days time, circulated proposed responses to the Iranian death threat, reviewed alternatives, met in person, and agreed to a four-point action plan, which included the immediate recall of all 12 ambassadors from Tehran. Otherwise, recurring subjects for ministerial review are about what one would expect: East-West relations and dialogue with the Soviet Union, the Middle East peace process, terrorism, Central America, and apartheid and conflict in southern Africa.

EPC has evolved markedly during the past 20 years. Certain constraints, however, act as a brake on further progress toward a common European foreign policy. Perhaps the most notable is the consensus principle. No EPC decision can be reached unless the 12 foreign ministries agree unanimously. As a result, the policy statements often come too late to garner much attention, since it takes far longer for 12 sovereign governments to reach a common view than for a single government to do so on its own and announce its views. Moreover, the consensus principle leads to a "lowest common denominator" effect—no statement can go any further than the least enthusiastic advocate of the proposed policy.

We are just now starting to see the 12 break down a longstanding barrier between EPC and formal action by the EC Commission. An early, and very welcome, instance occurred in February 1989, when the com-

mission issued a regulation concerning the export of chemical weapons precursors at the behest of EC foreign ministers, who had talked about chemical weapons during a meeting a few weeks earlier. The commission, in like response to EPC action, found funds for humanitarian aid in Lebanon. Perhaps the most potent promise of EPC lies in this ability to mobilize the EC Commission, which does indeed possess powerful assets, especially in the spheres of trade policy and foreign aid.

The EPC "product" comes in various packages. The most common and conspicuous (but perhaps least meaningful) are declarations of the 12 on global events. More than 60 were issued in 1988. Substantively, they ranged from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty, through free elections in Chile, to apartheid in South Africa. These statements usually run to a few paragraphs, and are marked by stilted language, which requires some reading between the lines to discern what internal debate might have occurred in arriving at consensus.

A second course of EPC action lies in private démarches to third country governments. Démarches, like the public declarations, usually come in reaction to some objectionable event or situation, such as Chinese challenges to human rights in Tibet in early 1989.

EC diplomatic travels are a third area of EPC action. In late 1988, EC foreign ministers announced an ambitious itinerary which took foreign ministers of the "Troika" (the past, present, and future presidency countries) to leading Middle East capitals. Their travels were ultimately billed as a fact-finding mission. The Troika efforts were, however, a much more systematic effort to establish a European role in the Middle East peace process and press for more flexibility by Israel, the PLO, and leading Arab governments.

Under the most pressing conditions, the 12 will use EPC to enact economic or military sanctions. Two examples stand out: bans on the export of arms to Libya and Syria in the wake of several 1986 terrorist incidents, and anti-apartheid measures consisting of a ban on new investment in South Africa as well as on the import of South African iron, steel, and gold coins. Both terrorism and South African measures found the force of events and public opinion overcoming the community's traditional reluctance to use economic sanctions as a means of achieving political ends. The only other comparable sanctions came during the Falklands war, when the 12 temporarily banned imports of Argentinian goods. Again, overwhelming public pressure to "do something" can lead to atypical EPC action.

As for who "runs" EPC, one could plausibly assume that the larger member states of the community, with their sizable diplomatic services and more specialized foreign ministries, play a dominant role. Somewhat paradoxically, it is the smaller members of the community that actually have the most at stake in promoting EPC. The consensus principle gives equal weight to views of all member governments, regardless of whether that government represents only a few million people or more than 50 million people. More importantly, the rotating six-month EC presidency offers smaller states a ready means for amplifying their voices on the world stage. Their role as spokesperson for a grouping of 320 million people confers influence beyond what they would otherwise have. Accordingly, the smaller nations have the greatest incentive to run an active EPC program. This incentive was especially evident during Belgium's enthusiastic presidency in 1987. Similarly, the Greek presidency in 1988 brought forth more EPC declarations than any previous presidency.

What, then, does EPC mean to the United States? Broadly speaking, the 12 see the world as the United States does. Such a happy coincidence of views is wholly logical given our common cultural traditions, Atlantic security interests, and a panoply of such other commitments as human rights. Collaboration across the Atlantic has been important to both Europe and the United States. Neither European nor U.S. officials have any incentive to work at cross-purposes, and there are extensive consultations between the two.

The commitment to work together was first formalized by EC partners at the 1974 "Gymnich" meeting in West Germany. Not only did they agree to present themselves to the outside world as a coherent foreign policy entity, but special provisions were set up for engaging third countries, including the United States. As a result, the EC presidency foreign minister traditionally visits Washington early in the six-month term, EC foreign ministers meet with the secretary of state on the margins of the UN General Assembly, and Troika political directors share views with State Department regional and functional experts once during each presidency in private talks that alternate between

Washington and European capitals. The U.S. embassy in the presidency capital includes EPC issues in contactswith the host nation's foreign ministry. The U.S. mission to the European Community follows EPC questions through a broad selection of contacts in Brussels.

The dialogue has proven quite effective. There is, in fact, little "daylight" between global positions taken by the 12 and corresponding U.S. policies. In recent years, the notable differences between EPC and U.S. views have been matters of tactics rather than basic goals. American military assistance to the Nicaraguan contras was not widely supported in Europe, though our European partners were certainly anxious to see real democratic reform in Nicaragua. Concerning the Middle East, the 12 have long supported an international peace conference as a means of reaching a final settlement among the conflicting parties. The United States also seeks a just and lasting settlement, but has not designated an international conference as the preferred means of reaching such a settlement.

There are also concerns about a possible EPC role in the domain of Atlantic security. NATO's success in preserving the peace in the postwar period is without historical precedent. There is an obvious and compelling argument in favor of maintaining the NATO alliance. In some European quarters, however, one senses a drive for a separate European defense identity, conceived and developed within European-only circles. EPC is one candidate for this function. A revitalized Western European Union is another.

However, the prospect of EPC taking on military functions remains rather slight. The Single Act of 1986 limits EPC security discussion to "political and economic" aspects of security while excluding "military and defense" aspects. Furthermore, the Single Act specifically takes note of NATO's unique and continuing role by stating that nothing in the act "shall impede close cooperation . . . within the framework . . . of the Atlantic Alliance." But perhaps most importantly, one is hard pressed to identify divergences between the security interests of the 12 and those of the entire NATO alliance. On the contrary, these converging interests, combined with military assets of the 16 NATO partners, should ensure the preeminence of the Atlantic alliance on security issues.

As in almost every other aspect of foreign policy, in matters of security the 12 and the United States have every incentive to collaborate rather than compete. Collaboration calls for frequent contact, and it bears noting that senior European foreign ministry officials see each other far more often than they see their American counterparts. Within EPC councils, literally dozens of meetings are held each year, and the 12 no doubt disagree among themselves on how to approach various issues. They are, however, in the same room together seeking to find common ground. Despite their presumably frequent disagreements, the very process of seeing each other so often can only lead, over the long term, to more similar views than would otherwise have emerged.

One senior American diplomat has said that the most important development within the European Community is not any specific treaty, nor any organizational mechanism, but rather "the habit of cooperation." EPC is a prime example of this. It increasingly offers an effective vehicle for engaging the 12. It is in U.S. interests to work with this evolving structure to the maximum extent.□

Country	Population (thousands)	Area (1000 km2)
Germany	60,162	249
Italy	57,439	301
UK	56,648	244
France	55,813	544
Spain	39,784	505
Netherlands	14,689	42
Portugal	10,240	92
Greece	10,048	132
Belgium	9,897	31
Denmark	5,074	43
Ireland	3,734	69
Luxembourg	369	3
EC12	**322,000**	**2,253**
USSR	278,015	22,402
USA	247,498	9,372

source:Eurostat

Jefferson in France 1789

STEPHEN EDWARD CONNORS

"With all of his extraordinary versatility of character and opinion, he seemed during his entire lifetime to breathe with perfect satisfaction nowhere except in the liberal, literary, and scientific air of Paris in 1789." —Henry Adams

Two hundred years ago, the author of the American Declaration of Independence witnessed the beginning of a new era in France. Looking back through the eyes of Thomas Jefferson provides a fascinating glimpse of the events leading to and during the French Revolution.

In May 1784, Congress appointedJefferson to be American minister plenipotentiary in Paris. His task was to collaborate with Ben Franklin and John Adams in negotiating commercial treaties with European nations. He set sail from Boston with his daughter Martha on July 5, 1784 on the ship *Ceres*. The voyage lasted 19 days.

Paris, and France as a whole, had much to offer a man as learned and as curious as Jefferson. Paris was a swirl of hustle and bustle, a city of super-refined living, perfected manners, artistic achievements, and restaurants and salons where men and women debated freely on highly intellectual subjects.

Jefferson's presence was quickly felt. His way had been luxuriantly paved by the eminent and popular Ben Franklin. The Marquis de Lafayette, in a letter to President George Washington one year after Jefferson's arrival in France, sums up his reception by the French people: "Words cannot express to you how much we are pleased with Mr. Jefferson's conduct. He unites every ability that can recommend him with the ministers and at the same time possesses accomplishments of the mind and of the heart which cannot but give many friends."

Similarly, the Countess d'Houdetot, a leading socialite, wrote, "he is one of a very small number of persons whom one is happy to see and to know, and who makes one content with one's species and with society."

Although Jefferson was held in high regard, as the American representative he had no itch for publicity. In his own words: "My great wish is to go on in a strict but silent performance of my duty; to avoid attracting notice and to keep my name out of the newspapers, because I find the pain of a little censure, even when it is unfounded, is more acute than the pleasure of much praise. The attaching circumstances of my present office is that I can do its duties unseen by those for whom they are done."

Stephen Edward Connors is in the graduate program at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Arising early, Jefferson would embark on long walks from Paris, marvelling at the lush farms and sheer beauty of the French countryside. As he traveled about, he was aware of certain tactics which were useful in ascertaining the nature of a people. In his *Objects for the Attention of an American*, he provided general advice on getting to know France: "The politics of a country are well worth studying so far as respects their internal affairs. Examine their influences on the happiness of the people. Take every possible occasion for entering into the houses of the laborers, and especially at the moments of their repast; see what they eat, how they are clothed, whether they are obliged to work too hard . . . and on what footing stands their personal liberty."

In time, he began to see all too clearly the sad gap between "this highly cultivated land" and the misery of the poverty-stricken masses. In a letter to James Madison, he wrote how one day, traveling to Fontainebleau, he had met a peasant woman: "Wishing to know the condition of the laboring poor I entered into a conversation with her. . . . This led me into a train of reflections on that unequal division of property which occasions the numberless instances of wretchedness which I have observed [here] and all over Europe."

It was upon these experiences and conversations that Jefferson based his vision of French society—a view that praised the French for their magnificent achievements, but which more often than not found only misery and inequality in the supposed gem of civilization. After a year of similiar sights, Jefferson wrote: "The people are ground to powder by the vices of the form of their government. Of 20 millions of people supposed to be in France, I am of opinion that there are 19 millions more wretched, most accursed in every circumstance of human existence than the most auspiciously wretched individual of the whole United States."

Through his frequent correspondence with John Adams, James Madison, George Washington, and many others at home, Jefferson followed developments in the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787, and in the following two years repeatedly wrote from afar on his hope that the new Constitution would be adopted, stressing the need for a bill of rights.

During this period, he also watched and reported on the growing political strife in France: "The King, long in the habit of drowning his cares in wine, plunges deeper and deeper; the Queen cries but sins on." The unusually cold winter of 1788-89, following a succession of bad harvests, caused even more misery among the French people and led to increasing outbreaks of violence directed against the government.

In May 1789, trying to stem the tide of public opinion against him, King Louis XVI convened the Estates General, comprised of representatives of the nobility, the clergy, and the "Third Estate," representing the rest of the population. Jefferson attended the sessions for weeks, observing the stalemate caused by the nobles' refusal to accept the Third Estate's proposal for the three representative groups to merge into one national assembly.

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation.

Jefferson's calling card.

His friend Lafayette sought out his views, leading Jefferson outside his diplomatic role by collaborating with him on a draft proposal for France's Declaration of the Rights of Man, which was ultimately adopted in August 1789, a full month before the First Congress of the United States passed the Bill of Rights. He gave his suggestions, which included laws on a free press and habeas corpus, he told his French associates, because he had "an unmeasurable devotion for your nation and a painful anxiety lest despotism, after an unaccepted offer to bind its hands, should seize you again with tenfold fury."

In the meantime, Jefferson had witnessed the clashes between soldiery and citizenry; on July 14, an eyewitness described the taking of the Bastille to him: people "rushed forward, and almost in an instant were in possession . . . they took all the arms, discharged the prisoners . . . carried the governor and lieutenant governor to the place de Grève, cut off their heads, and sent them through the city, in triumph, to the Palais Royal." The king attempted to reconcile with his subjects by entering Paris three days later; Jefferson believed that some order had been restored, though the possibility of further violence still existed.

Jefferson realized that the code of diplomatic conduct required that he not become directly involved in the internal affairs of

"They are enlightened, their lights are spreading, and France will not retrograde"

France, but he acceded to Lafayette's request that he advise, once again, members of the assembly on the drafting of a constitution in the aftermath of Bastille Day. He informed Minister of Foreign Affairs Comte de Montmorin of the meeting: far from disapproving of this undiplomatic participation, the comte actually encouraged him, saying Jefferson would be "useful in moderating the warmer spirits, and promoting a wholesome and practical reformation only."

By September, however, Jefferson had come to the opinion that civil war was a strong possibility. He wrote John Jay, head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, forerunner of the Department of State, that "the patience of a people who have less of that quality than any other nation in the world is worn threadbare."

But he believed France was not quite ready for what would follow from the first bloodshed of the French Revolution: "They are not yet ripe for the blessing to which they are entitled," he felt, but added that France "has been awakened by our revolution, they feel their strength, they are enlightened, their lights are spreading, and they will not retrograde."

On October 7, 1789, Jefferson left Paris for America. He had been away for five years and new responsibilities awaited him in the United States. On September 26, President Washington had commissioned Jefferson to be his first secretary of state with the establishment of government under the Constitution. Jefferson accepted and took office on March 22, 1790, with the hope of returning to France, but he never did.

In retrospect, what can be said about Thomas Jefferson in France? First, Jefferson was no proselyter. He did not go to France with the express purpose of preaching the values of the American way of life or the tenets of the Declaration of Independence. He represented America by example—people were impressed with this "savage from the mountains," as Jefferson described himself, because he was a down-to-earth intellectual who appeared to be very much at home in France.

Second, he had no blinding prejudices. He arrived in France with no preconceived notions: what he saw was all personally observed. His years in France taught him the horrors of bad government and the miseries associated with gross inequality. Nevertheless, he thoroughly enjoyed traveling around and learning about the people of France. For Jefferson, it was the people who mattered. What he saw in France no doubt increased his devotion to America.

Third, as a diplomatist, he was adroit and resourceful. He realized that his main task was to promote the liberalization of trade between Europe and America. As such, he was a broker between the Old World and the New. Although his five years in France brought about no spectacular successes, he did help to open up new trade routes and strengthened U.S.-Franco ties by bringing in the important elements of trust and openness so vital for the success of diplomatic and commercial interaction.

Finally, Jefferson was an amazing student of comparative political culture. Throughout all of his writings and correspondence, numerous comparisons are made between France and America. At times, he found France "to be full of misery at the bottom and mischief at the top"; America was superior because of its "permanent felicity that governs its domestic society." He admired French arts, manners, music, and architecture, yet paradoxically, he wished that no American would go to Europe, because, he said, it would cause one to lose one's health, knowledge, morals, and happiness. For Jefferson, true happiness was only to be found in America. It would take Jefferson 30 years after his departure from Paris finally to resolve this ambivalent view of France and everything that France stood for.

In his *Autobiography*, Jefferson captures that essence—that "something" that was France when he looks back on his five years there. "And here I cannot leave this great and good country without expressing my sense of its preeminence of character among the nations of the earth. A more benevolent people, I have never known, nor greater warmth and devotedness in their select friendships. Their kindness and accommodation to strangers is unparalleled and the hospitality of Paris beyond anything I conceived to be practical in a large city. Their eminence, too, in the sciences, the communicative dispositions of their scientific men, the politeness of the general manners, the ease and vivacity of their conversation, give a charm to their society to be found nowhere else. . . . So ask the traveled inhabitant of any nation, In what country on earth would you rather live? Certainly in my own, where are all my friends, my relations, and the earliest and sweetest recollections of my life. Which would be your second choice? France." □

Summer Reading 1989

The Bank Robber
by Franklyn E. Stevens

The Microdot
by Curtis F. Jones

The Winner Is . . .
by Bette J. Cruit

Niger Rain
by Alice Slatterly

The Bank Robber

FRANKLYN E. STEVENS

She was a small, tidy, very proper-looking lady of mature years. Perhaps I should say of advanced years. Her air of fragility was pointed up by a slight quaver in her voice. Sitting primly in my office, she seemed to be studying the flags behind me as she explained that she wanted an immigrant visa so she could spend her "declining years," as she put it, with her sister in California. Fine, so far. Then she confided that there might be just one little problem: she had been deported back to Canada after serving 20 years in federal prisons in the United States for conspiracy to rob a bank.

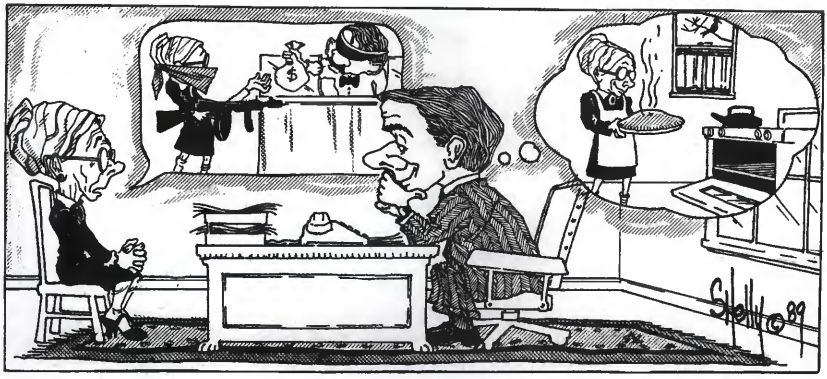
Mrs. Willows had been referred to me by the consul general. An economic specialist, he didn't trust consular officers and sternly cautioned me to treat Mrs. Willows gently and courteously, as she was a delicate widow lady of fine background and a dear friend of one of his best contacts.

So when Mrs. Willows told me, "Mr. Stevens, I feel that you should know from the beginning that I served 20 years of a 50-year sentence," my first thought was that the poor soul had been watching too many gangster movies on television and had developed some sort of Bonnie and Clyde complex. My second thought was that it was going to be difficult to explain the problem to the consul general without his thinking that I had somehow caused it.

In any case, it remained my responsibility to determine the true facts. Mrs. Willows told me that she had been convicted in Los Angeles in the 1930s. She said, "You see, Mr. Stevens, they had just passed a federal law covering crimes against banks. Since I was the first person convicted under the new law, I suppose they wanted to make an example of me."

Surprised by the coherence of her fantasy, I suggested that since she said she had been convicted in California, the fastest way to get her record was to send her fingerprints to the Division of Criminal Identification in Sacramento. I felt certain that when the answer came back negative, she would drop her story of a criminal past, and we could get on with her visa application. It occurred to me that when I called her back into the office a few weeks later, I would have to be very careful how I introduced the subject of the record check. She might by then have totally forgotten her delusions of a lurid past. I feared that she might faint, or even collapse moribund on my office floor—the result of shock.

For the present, however, she was quite cooperative, even enthusiastic, about getting her record from the authorities in California. As the fingerprint card was being prepared, she reminded me, "Don't forget my aliases, Mr. Stevens; I used so many." The fingerprint card was duly sent upon its mission, complete with aliases.



When the report finally came back after some time, it naturally showed no record of Mrs. Willows, her aliases, or her fingerprints. Calling her back to my office, I was surprised that her first words were, "What did the report from Sacramento say, Mr. Stevens?" I hadn't really expected her hallucination to survive the several weeks' wait. I gently suggested to her that perhaps, just perhaps, her memory of events in the distant past was erroneous in some small detail, like maybe she hadn't ever been a bank robber.

Her reply, with a faint smile, was "That would be very nice, wouldn't it, Mr. Stevens? But no, it all really happened. What should we do now that we know the California police have no record?"

I reminded her that she had said she was convicted under federal law. Therefore, if her memory was correct, the Federal Bureau of Investigation would surely have a record. The FBI never misses. Again the fingerprints, the aliases. Of course, I knew what the answer would be. After a markedly longer wait than the previous one, the answer came back from Washington. The FBI had no record.

Another interview ensued. Mrs. Willows clung stubbornly to her story that she had been a bank robber and a convict. By this time some months had gone by and the elderly lady's visa application was no closer to resolution than when she had first walked a trifle unsteadily into my office. Then Mrs. Willows came up with a suggestion. Why not write to the federal prison from which she had been paroled? I hated to string out the matter; it didn't seem likely that Mrs. Willows had all that much time to spare before settling down to her "declining years." Nevertheless, as long as she continued to insist on her imaginary felonious past, I had no choice but to turn over all stones. Besides, she told me, "I'm sure they'll have a record of me, Mr. Stevens, it was a lovely prison." So I wrote to the warden of the federal prison, knowing that once again there would surely be no record.

The answer came back promptly. I opened it with scant interest, sure of what the message would be.

"Dear Consul Stevens,", it began, "Thank you for your interest in former inmate Willows. Although I wasn't here when she was a resident in this institution, we have a fairly extensive record of her passage through the federal

prison system. I can assure you that her good behavior was a determining factor in the parole board's decision to release her after completion of only 20 years of her 50-year sentence.

"I note from your letter that Mrs. Willows believes that she was convicted of conspiracy to rob a bank. Her memory may be faulty, given the passage of time; our records indicate that she was convicted not of conspiracy, but of the actual robbery of several banks. She was captured by the police after a high-speed shootout in which she was the driver of the get-away car. The file further shows that although the prosecutor believed Mrs. Willows was the 'brains' of the gang, this was never satisfactorily established in court.

"I am sure that any help you can give Mrs. Willows in realizing her plans for her declining years will be well merited."

Again Mrs. Willows was invited to my office, but this time the interview was a little different. "Mrs. Willows," I began, "I'm terribly sorry to have to tell you this, but the warden at the federal prison has confirmed that you do indeed have a criminal record."

Her expression turned from apprehensive to jubilant. "Oh, Mr. Stevens," she exclaimed, "I'm so glad we finally got that settled. Now we can go ahead with my visa application and I can spend my declining years in California!"

I explained sadly that since it was now established that she had truly been convicted of crimes involving moral turpitude, I would not be able to issue her a visa to live in the United States; she was permanently ineligible by law.

Mrs. Willows' demeanor remained cheerful. "Mr. Stevens," she asked, "what about waiver of excludability in accordance with section 212(h) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended?"

There was a moment of silence, astounded on my part and expectant on hers. When I found my tongue, I informed her that although 212(h) provided for waiver of excludability for certain relatives of United States citizens, the relatives specified did not include sisters.

This did not discourage Mrs. Willows at all. "Yes, yes, I understand that, Mr. Stevens," she said, "but spouses qualify, don't they?"

When I assured her that spouses did, in fact, qualify for waiver at the discretion of the attorney general, she smiled sweetly and promised, "I'll be back, Mr. Stevens."

Almost two months later, Mrs. Willows came to see me again. She opened her knitting bag and extracted a manila envelope. In it was a fresh, crisp marriage certificate from nearby Washington state, showing that she was now the lawful wife of one Billy Dodd, a U.S. citizen.

With my help the bride applied for waiver of excludability and it was eventually approved. I issued her a visa and wished her every happiness.

The following Christmas I was surprised to receive a card from her in California. Penned in a neat, prim, very ladylike hand was the message, "You'll never know how grateful I am, to you, Mr. Stevens. Being in California again is so much like old times." □

Franklyn Stevens is a retired consular officer who recalls this true story from his days in Vancouver.

The Microdot

CURTIS F. JONES

The four gathered at the Norandaga Tennis Club, joined by a camaraderie that overrode the most heated line disputes and the most diametric differences of opinion. They were linked by mutual respect and their common good fortune to have won out over the hazards and stresses of demanding careers with physique and intellect sufficiently intact to meet the acrobatic demands on the court and the rhetorical challenges at the clubhouse. Bowman, the Foreign Service officer, was the newest member of the group.

"Bowman," declared McDonald, as they unwound one afternoon, "It occurs to me that the rest of us have been taking advantage of your professional good nature and taking over your time. I've told every story I know at least twice, and I'm just a hard-hat geologist who was paid to dig holes in the ground. I've also heard stories of countless medical marvels from Forsythe and legal tours de force from Chandler. Every Foreign Service officer has got to be brimming over with tales of intrigue and seductive enemy agents—unless you were CIA and can't talk about it."

"That's O.K.," replied Bowman amiably. "I'm used to being the audience. FSOs spend their lives learning to listen. I used to come back on home leave bursting with stories of life in foreign climes. But I found people's eyes rapidly glazing over. Americans—present company excluded—are an insular race. Anything outside their immediate experience has to be pretty dramatic to hold their interest. No temptress ever accosted me. Want to hear how we negotiated the sugar treaty with Belize?"

"You can't put us off that easily," demurred McDonald. "We all know about spy satellites and microdots, so cast back into that store of hair-raising experiences."

"Well," said Bowman, "funny you should mention microdots." He narrowed his eyes in recollection.

"This happened in a small embassy in the Middle East. I was the newest man on the staff, just in as DCM, charged with the day-to-day management of the office. I found the usual mix of talent and mediocrity. The most mediocre of all was the ambassador. He'd gotten the post as the reward for years of service in some obscure division in the department. Everyone else knew he was on his last assignment, but he clung to the fantasy of moving on to something bigger and better. In his insecurity, he craved reinforcement, and no one performed this role better than the political officer—I'll call him Hatcher."

"I thought Foreign Service officers were supposed to concentrate on making contacts with the local population," interjected McDonald.

"Supposed to," replied Bowman. "But we all had the higher calling of protecting our own careers. Winning over your colleagues in the embassy was often a more delicate process than cultivating contacts in the host country. Hatcher was a particularly smooth operator in the office, but when I arrived his political-reporting effort was floundering. The country was in ferment. The people at large despised U.S. policy and tried not to be seen with Americans. The CIA's sources had dried up. Of course we had the conventional liaisons with the government and its licensed embassy-watchers, but all we got from them was the government's point of view. Washington was on our backs to explain all the activity that was obviously going on beneath the surface and behind the official facade.

"Then Hatcher's operation began to catch fire. In the daily staff meeting he began to display a new-found intimacy with the latest political developments. His briefings became incandescent, and the embassy's political reporting flared accordingly. We flooded the department with penetrating analyses of the fast-breaking situation. The ambassador was dancing on air. Hatcher's stock could not have been higher."

"So who was his mysterious source?" asked Forsythe. "Was he married?"

"Very shrewd question," rejoined Bowman. "I've seen an in-country romance turned to political advantage more than once. But that wasn't it. We were all mystified. It wasn't plausible that the old regime hangers-on he had picked up from his predecessor could have had the necessary access to the opposition, no matter how much duty-free booze and cigarettes he slipped them.

"Then I caught on. Hatcher's rise to eminence had coincided with the transfer to his section of a young officer I'll call Johnson. He was an eager, unassuming chap whose diffidence kept him in the background in embassy circles, but he had a knack for winning the confidence of foreigners, plus a rare gift for languages. Johnson was engaging enough and junior enough to move around the country without drawing hostile fire from the authorities. He'd come back from a visit to some mountain village or a séance in some scruffy café with fresh information from the turbulent political arena, and the next day, Hatcher would star in staff meeting and then draft a cable the ambassador was only too happy to sign."

"Any organization I had anything to do with," noted McDonald, "every contributor got his name on the draft."

"Sure," replied Bowman, "Hatcher wasn't that stupid. Johnson's name went onto every file copy, and Hatcher occasionally cited him in staff meetings, but he had a way of sounding generous when he did it, as if Hatcher were the principal contributor and Johnson the fortunate beneficiary of Hatcher's ripe experience. As for the Washington end, the only names to appear were those of Hatcher and the ambassador. Of course the ambassador's contribution was nil, but Hatcher had mastered the device of dragging him into the text by phrases like 'a highly placed source told me in strictest confidence at a small dinner last night.'"

"But you were the ambassador's number two," objected the lawyer. "Didn't you have an obligation to ensure that Johnson got due credit?"

Bowman threw up his hands. "It was my word against Hatcher's. I was new. I didn't speak three words of Arabic. And I was senior enough to constitute a threat to a chief of mission with an inferiority complex. I was up against a consummate bureaucrat whose cables were bringing the ambassador's name to the attention of people in Washington who had never known he existed."

"Tough on Johnson," commented Forsythe. "The experience must have embittered him."

"That was the strangest part of it," responded Bowman with a bemused expression. "Johnson never lost his cheerful enthusiasm. The thicker the cables flew to Washington, the harder he worked to bring in the data that were making his superiors' reputations. Finally, it came time for efficiency reports. It was Hatcher's job to write Johnson's report and mine to review it. I read it the minute it hit my desk, and I was appalled. It was the slickest knife job I've ever seen. Lots of bland acknowledgement of Johnson's diligence, loyalty, and enthusiasm, but all of it completely nullified by patronizing passages like 'as he gains in sophistication and seasoning, he will undoubtedly overcome the social awkwardness and superficiality of analysis that presently impair his performance.'"

"Good God," Chandler expostulated. "What did Hatcher have against the kid?"

"Nothing, as far as I knew. Hatcher's one objective was to nail down the personal credit for the output of his section. If he had told the truth about Johnson's contribution, Hatcher's share would have been exposed for the cipher it really was. Finally, after agonizing about what to do, I had a blunt talk with Johnson. If he wanted to challenge the rating, I was prepared to back him up.

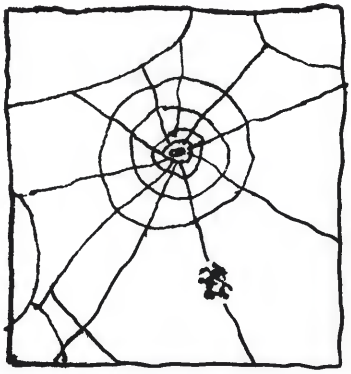
"But here comes the next surprise. Johnson had no complaint about the report. He had the greatest admiration for his section chief, and he would do his best to profit from the valuable advice contained in the rating. My hands were tied.

"I was still brooding over the business three days later, when the ambassador gave a big dinner party in honor of the minister of culture, who was leaving on an official visit to the States. The guest list was the most prominent we could assemble. The affair was to conclude with an exchange of toasts between the ambassador and the guest of honor. The ambassador would deliver his remarks in English, and then Hatcher, on the strength of his claim to be an accomplished Arabist, was to deliver the translation in Arabic. He had our local translator type up the Arabic text. That was understandable; Arabic is not the easiest of languages.

"But it came out later that he wasn't as confident of his reading ability as he had led us to believe, so he had asked Johnson to type up the same text in phonetics—the special orthography adopted by the Foreign Service Institute for teaching Arabic. It uses periods, apostrophes, and the like to indicate consonants that don't exist in English.

"The party was a rousing success—until it came time for the toasts. The ambassador's remarks were greeted with appropriate applause, and then

Hatcher took over. Everything went fine—he had a good accent—until the last few words. Then everything fell apart.



"Dead silence fell over the assembly. The guest of honor's expression flicked from amiability to shock to fury. The other guests sat frozen for a moment. Then some woman giggled, and suddenly they were all convulsed with laughter. The minister clutched the arms of his chair, glared at the ambassador, and then lurched to his feet and stormed out of the residence, followed by his distracted wife and his two aides. Success had suddenly collapsed into fiasco.

"It came out later that the problem was linguistic. The ambassador's toast wound up by hailing the minister as 'the most illustrious scholar in the country.' The Arabic for scholar is simple enough: *adeeb*, spelled with a *dal* in Arabic. Now here's where your microdot comes in. In FSI's esoteric orthography, a dot under the 'd' converts it to a *Daad*, a totally different consonant. Hatcher knew his phonetics. He pronounced the *Daad* to perfection. What he didn't know is that by changing consonants, he changed the word from "scholar' to—well, let me say that the word he pronounced with such clarion clarity is a very vulgar term used to mean a crucial part of the male anatomy. Its use in polite society was a shocker, and the minister wasn't very popular. Hence the rude outburst of laughter."

"I assume the ambassador called for an investigation?" asked Chandler, curiosity overriding amusement.

"I was the one who examined the phonetic text," said Bowman. "It was letter perfect down to the last diacritic. What Hatcher had read as a period under the "d' was the remains of a tiny spider, which might well have ventured onto the typewriter and gotten itself embedded in the paper."

"Hatcher's utility in that country had expired. He was transferred out in disgrace. Johnson became acting chief of the section and never looked back. You've probably seen his real name in the news. Some cynics had their suspicions, but there was no way on earth to prove whether the unfortunate spider expired in the course of a personal act of retribution, or—as you lawyers would say—it was an act of God. □

Curtis F. Jones is a retired Foreign Service officer who writes from North Carolina.

The Winner is . . .

BETTE J. CRUIT

Barely daybreak, Mike had already been on the road a half hour. Clever planning, he thought, feeling his face relax into a comfortable smile as he pushed his cruising speed from the safer 50 kilometers an hour during darkness toward a more daring 65. He couldn't lose, he thought. No way. Tom was probably still sound asleep. Or, if he'd alerted a servant, perhaps sipping his first cup of wake-up tea. True, Mike told himself, a '66 Volkswagen can't compete with the speed of a brand new BMW. But like the tortoise, slow but sure, with a bit of luck it would get there first. And luckily, nobody had mentioned a starting time.

It was a silly sort of bet, the kind you make at a diplomatic cocktail party, when you've run out of things to say to the same people you'd run out of things to say to just the night before. That happens when VIPs fly in from Washington, D.C. and everyone feels obliged to have dinner parties every night of their visit. Heaven forbid that they should be left on their own for an evening and feel lonely. Or worse—think too long and hard about the programs they'd come to check on.

Mike and his colleague, Tom Sedgewick, had already scheduled a trip to Lashkar Gar, in Afghanistan's Helmand Valley, to evaluate progress on an AID irrigation project. Since all official vehicles had been pressed into service for the visiting entourage, they decided to take their own cars. Going together was ruled out, as Tom had to remain an extra day for a meeting in Kandahar.

"I'll of course be in Lashkar first," Tom had said, grinning broadly, "and get the room at the staff house without the lumpy bed. But, don't worry, I'll save you a cool beer, old buddy."

"Wanna bet who gets there first?" Mike asked, irritated with his friend's air of fast-car superiority and smug generosity.

"Sure," Tom said. "What are the stakes?"

"Just that. Four New York strip deluxe dinners—next Saturday night at the International Club."

"You're on." Tom shoved his hand out for a brisk shake of approval. "See you tomorrow in Lash." And off he went to mingle with the other guests.

The 300-mile, two-lane, Kabul-to-Kandahar road was a good one—its construction was a joint U.S.-Soviet effort. No heavy traffic. No hazardous hairpin curves like the Kabul Gorge and the Khyber Pass. Just smooth sailing through a broad desert that formed the dry and barren belly of Afghanistan. Unfortunately, Lashkar Gar was on a partially unpaved road 30 miles off the highway.

To the right, Mike could see the cooking fires in the city of Ghazni and its surrounding villages. He pictured the bustling teahouses—*chaikhanas*—their samovars bubbling forth the scent of hot, spiced tea, the patrons sitting cross-legged on cotton *kelims* saying their *salaams*, gesturing politely, and exchanging the news of the day: whose goat was stolen last night; the high cost of sugar; would the rains finally come in time to save the wheat crop. "Ah, praise be to Allah," they'd murmur, bowing their heads in humility.

Mike also pictured the farmers cutting up apricots and cool, sweet, white melons to entice the early marketers. His mouth and throat felt dry, and he was tempted to stop for a slice or two. But he thought of the bet, and the succulent "stakes," and resisted the temptation. Only five hours more now, go for it, he told himself, speeding up to an exhilarating 75 kilometers, and with the road all to himself, he pressed to 85.

On both sides of the road only flat, uninhabited reaches of sand could be seen. Side roads for transporting goods from farms to markets were sorely needed. Another project to propose and budget for soon, he decided, making a mental note. Meantime, what a great place for speed testing automobiles. Wonder if Ford, Honda, and Mercedes-Benz would be interested, he mused. Or hold a rally—the Kabul-to-Kandahar Grand Prix. Chuckling, he compared this deserted highway to the bumper-to-bumper beltway around Washington.

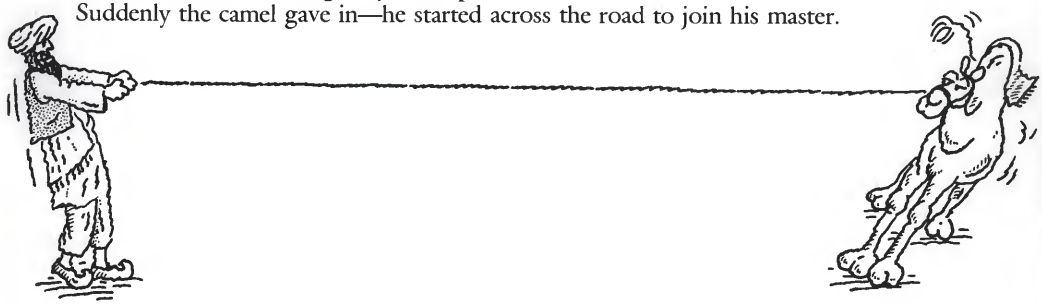
In the distance, he saw what looked like two moving specks, paralleling the road. *Kuchies,* perhaps—Afghan nomads on their way back to camp, after trading a baby lamb for flour and cooking oil. But as he sped closer, he saw that it was just one man, more likely a villager, and behind him one of those mighty "ships of the desert"—a camel.

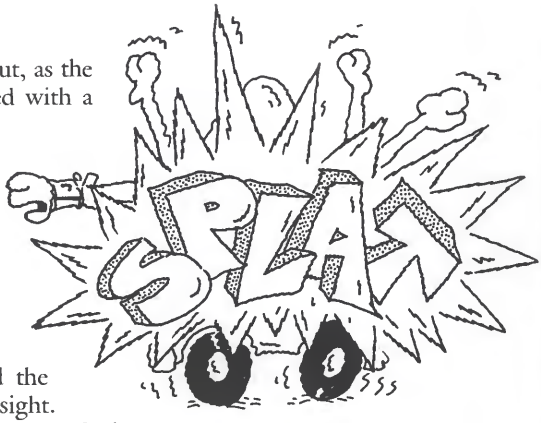
Soon it was clear that the man was leading the camel by a rope tied around its neck. Strange. Mike wondered where they were heading—no sign of a village or farm anywhere. But then, Afghan communities are built behind mud walls, not easy to spot against a desert landscape.

Mike's gaze wandered off, and when he again looked at the road ahead, he realized, to his horror, that the man had crossed the highway, and was pulling hard on the rope to force the camel to follow. Sensing danger, the camel had refused and stopped beside the road, digging in with all his might.

Mike pressed down on the brakes, easing just enough to keep the car upright. "Freeze, camel," he prayed, knowing he could not stop in time. If he swerved left, he'd get the guy; right, the animal. His best chance was to plow right between them, hitting only the rope.

Suddenly the camel gave in—he started across the road to join his master.





"No!" Mike heard himself shout, as the screeching car and camel collided with a hell of a thud. He saw camel legs and hooves flail against the windscreen, then slide up and over the roof in a flash. Stinging bits of broken glass flew everywhere. Then silence.

Forcing his mind out of dream-like slow motion and back to reality, Mike staggered out of the driver's seat to look behind the car, expecting the worst possible sight. There on the pavement lay the camel, unfolding itself from a pretzel-like position. It finally stood up, shook its head, and loped off toward the man, still in the same spot, waiting with rope in hand—unharmed.

Mike felt relief, then nothing—blackness engulfed him.

Those New York strip steaks had never been juicier, more tender, or more delectable than on the following Saturday night at the International Club, where Mike, Tom, and their wives were celebrating in good spirits. Mike, looking a bit like a mummy, related once again how he had been picked up by a bus driver. The passengers laid him across the long back seat beside the chicken crates and cleansed his wounds as best they could until they reached the medical clinic in Kandahar. He was fortunate in that his injuries were mainly cuts and bruises. The next day he had returned to Kabul in a makeshift ambulance.

The Volkswagen, also battered and bruised, but not terminal, was towed home two days later.

"A toast," Mike said, raising his glass of Lebanese red wine. "I may have lost the bet, but I didn't lose my you-know-what, and it's my absolute pleasure to treat you all to this very special back-to-life dinner."

Tom, after a moment's hesitation, stood up, raising his glass. "Mike," he began in serious tones, "it hurts to tell you this, but I must, in good conscience, say that you came closer to winning than I did. You see, on that same day I got roped into taking a few of the VIPs to Mazar-i-Sharif to see the *Buzkashi* games. I never made it to Lash."

Then he put on his most charming smile. "So, good buddy, what say we just go Dutch?" □

Bette J. Cruit is working on a book for children. This true story took place in 1968.

Niger Storm

ALICE SLATTERLY

We were scheduled to depart that night shortly after midnight. I had spent the morning packing. The phone startled me.

"There's a big storm coming your way," my husband said. "Can you see it yet? Make sure everything's closed up."

Out the front window I glimpsed the brown smudge in the sky. We rarely kept the windows open and now I could hear the cook closing the metal-shuttered kitchen door.

"We're in the middle of it here. It's incredible. You should have seen how it came at us. One big huge brown cloud from the ground up into the sky."

I could picture him standing at the large windows in his sixth-floor office.

After I hung up, the air began to turn orange. Then, without warning, blackness descended, darker than night, more sudden and more complete than a total eclipse of the sun. Dust seeped in through cracks in windows and doors. I could feel the gritty sand in my mouth, on my teeth. I stumbled from window to window, watching. Out there was movement, a creature buffeted by sand and wind. The terrace lights blinked on. Holding a cloth to his face, the guard struggled back toward the gate.

The darkness endured. Finally it lifted, giving way to orange again as if a giant fire burned in the heavens. The fading flame left an angry overcast sky. Wind tossed the trees, their backboneless branches as floppy as feather boas. A tall young eucalyptus became a tempermental girl bent over, wildly shaking her wet hair.

The rain began its stampede on the metal roof. The wind shook it and it rumbled as if possessed by spirits. Abruptly the lights on the terrace went out. The hum of the air conditioner ceased. Soon, the still air was heavy. The tattooing of the rain grew louder.

With a flashlight, I checked in dark bedrooms for leaks. Finding none, I went to the kitchen, where brown water poured down the back wall into the sink, onto the counters. Other leaks appeared, one above a light. Issifou, the houseman, put the plastic bucket under it and began to wipe up the floor with a cloth already sopping. The more he wiped, the more new leaks erupted in the ceiling.

"Our own automatic sprinkler system," I said to him in English when water began to drip on my head. He looked up at me, not understanding a word, then continued his futile efforts.

I knew what he was going to be doing while we were in the States if the rain continued. I hoped to God it did. People's lives depended on it. An inconvenience to us was a necessity to the people of Niger. □

Alice Slatterly is a member of the AAFSW Writers' Group.

People

Life after retirement

By Elizabeth Lee Fitzgerald

The "up or out" policy embodied in the Foreign Service Act of 1980 has sparked many a bitter argument, but officers who have retired in its wake—voluntarily or involuntarily—agree on one thing: there is life after the Foreign Service. And although FSOs face some unique challenges in changing careers, they also have some unique strengths in facing those challenges.

"There are a lot of people who have found meaningful and rewarding jobs," says Ed Peck, former director of the State Department's Office of Career Transition (OCT). But finding a second career is not easy, given the peculiarities of a Foreign Service career. Foreign Service personnel, unlike their peers in the private sector, may never have worked in another job, never interviewed or even prepared a resume. These requirements of the job search, plus the pervasive uncertainty and insecurity that accompany it, can be daunting.

"There's a learning exercise involved," Peck explains. A career in the Foreign Service prepares you for changes, for moves, and theoretically prepares you for dealing with seniors, with juniors. But as part of the "learning exercise," retiring FSOs need to define what it is they actually know how to do and translate this knowledge from Foreign Service jargon into laymens' terms. Beyond that, they also need to decide what it is they really want to do.

The results of the latter question can be surprising, as they were for Thor Kuniholm, who retired in September 1987. As a political analyst, he could have gone back to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research as a Civil Service employee, or worked on a contract basis with the inspection corps, but instead, he said to himself, "What a foolish thing. If you're given the opportunity to retire with a pension, why not do something really different?"

He had become interested in painting and drawing while he was on the road with the inspection corps. "Wherever I would go I would draw and sketch in my free time," he recalls. So he decided to give it a go full-time, and is now leading "a whole new life" as an artist. He recently completed a year and a half at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and is doing further art study in his studio at home. "It's like being born again," he says jubilantly.

Another former FSO now leading a completely different life is Robert Schuler, who also retired in the Fall of 1987. "I'm not doing anything interesting right now," he says modestly, just "working on old cars in my garage." The old cars are actually antiques. He's also building an addition to his house. "I have a 'do things' type interest," he explains. Shuler, who was in the economic cone, has also done some consulting work. Shuler found adapting to his new life style fairly easy. "It's the surprises and the changes that come along that make life interesting."FSOs, he believes, are uniquely suited to rolling with those changes because they have chosen careers which involve constant change. "The Foreign Service has so many ups and downs for most of us that when we see a down, we know there's an up coming along. It makes for a more adaptable, flexible, and resilient person."

But not all retiring FSOs face the change with such equanimity, says Don Woodward, current director of the OCT. The first large group of officers to retire in the wake of the 1980 Act left in September 1987. Of those 117 officers, 85 participated in OCT's job search program. Woodward remembers their reactions. They ranged from "delight—'they're going to give me an immediate annuity and I can go out and find something else,' to anger—people were terribly upset, denied that it was happening to them."

The OCT program tries to dispel that anxiety. The 90-day course is divided into two sections. In the first, which runs from three to five weeks, participants go through a soul-searching process in which they ask themselves what they really want to do, whether it's full-time, part-time, or volunteer, and where they want to do it. Once they've determined what they want, they learn how to go about getting it: how to write resumes, network, and interview.

Then they begin their search. The OCT offices have work stations equipped with Wang machines, typewriters, telephones, and a library of resource books, as well as a compendium of job announcements compiled from newspapers and other sources. "It's a place to call home during the job search," Woodward says.

Woodward boasts that 80 percent of OCT graduates have found another job. "It may not be the job of a lifetime, it may be less than they hoped for, but basically there are lots of jobs out there and I would say that most of our folks are making between $30,000-50,000 per year. There are those that are making $100,000," but, he admits, "there are not very many."

Those who place in the higher range generally continue in foreign affairs. "I'm much better paid than I was with the department," says John Sylvester, who retired in August 1980 and now is director of the North Carolina Japan Center. Part of North Carolina University, the center creates academic and economic ties be-

Elizabeth Lee Fitzgerald writes frequently on Foreign Service issues.

tween North Carolina and Japan. Sylvester, who's last post was consul general in Okinawa, seemed like a natural for the job. "I had strong Japan credentials and a fairly broad background."

But it still wasn't an easy transition. Sylvester says he was "looking quite hard" in the 10 months between his retirement and July 1981, when he was hired at the Japan Center. He was pressured to find something quickly because his family was facing upcoming college expenses. He looked at a variety of options, including international banks and other government jobs. He also did some contract work but found that he didn't enjoy that type of work. "It's somewhat dispiriting after you've held a senior position and then you're basically doing work without much responsibility."

But he persevered, and finally heard of the job at the Japan Center. "It was a great relief" when it came through, he says.

Once Sylvester learned of this opening, it was easy to apply his background to the requirements of the job. But for others the relationship between their government experience and private sector jobs is harder to establish.

"It's a little hard to walk in the door and tell them what you can do for them when you don't know what it is they do," laments Carl Cunningham, who retired in 1987 at the age of 46. When the 1980 Act was implemented, he says, "we were told that there was going to be an aggressive and sweeping selection out of the people above us," allowing for promotion. So he opened his window as early as possible, hoping to fulfill one of his two goals: "to go up, and to go up rapidly, or to find a second career where I wouldn't be dragging the family all over the world." He thought he "couldn't lose."

When he came home from Santa Domingo four years after opening his window, "it became increasingly obvious that there was not as much room at the top" as he had initially believed, so he started looking around in the field of hospital administration. When he found nothing encouraging in hospital management, he applied for other things in the private sector, from city management to marketing to State Department contracting. "I applied for anything that moved," he recalls.

He figures he sent out about 155 resumes during a year and a half. Some 15 substantive interviews resulted, which led to about five possibilities. One of those five, which started from a "little postage stamp-sized advertisement" in the Washington Post, was for an executive director for a medical practice called the Neurology Center, which needed a manager, but couldn't afford a high-priced candidate. "I filled the void," Cunningham explains, "I had good management credentials and a high level of maturity," but still needed to learn about the medical world. "It has all worked out very well for me," Cunningham says, "but if it was difficult for me (even with a Harvard MBA and management experience), you have to worry about the guy who had dedicated his whole life to the Foreign Service, has a degree in political science, is a political officer, and has to explain what he has to offer to the outside world."

'Well, you've never been an ambassador, what's this chief of mission stuff?'

Of all the cones, says Woodward, "people with straight political backgrounds have a greater problem transitioning unless they possess an area expertise or language skill that's in demand: Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Russian."

It is especially important to translate job skills into private sector terms, Woodward says. He tells a story about a former ambassador who applied for a job with a corporation. "He put on his resume that he'd been chief of mission. He didn't get the job and was told, 'Well, you've never been an ambassador. What's this chief of mission stuff?'" The title of minister counselor can also be problematic, as it often fetches the response, "Oh, what denomination?"

Administrative officers generally fare well, Woodward says, because they have an easily "transferable" skill. Patrick O'Brien, an administrative officer who retired in September 1988 after serving as supervisory general services officer in London says, "I started thinking about what I would do if the promotion didn't come through." While in London he took courses and received a basic certificate at the Wine and Spirit Education Trust. He is now in the second year of a two-year diploma course and serving as director of governmental relations for Stag's Leap Wine Cellars in Napa, California. He deals with county and state agencies concerning such issues as zoning actions and efforts to protect agricultural preserve in Napa County. "Knowing how government works has been helpful," O'Brien says. "It's not something people in the private sector understand too well: how to get somebody at the right bureaucratic level, particularly if you want to forestall an action."

For consular officers the difficulty of the transition "depends on what they've done," Woodward says. The department is always looking for skilled consular officers to come back in and

work part-time to go off to areas that have consular needs on a cyclical basis. Many consular officers want to work as foreign student advisers at a university or assist people applying for visas. Raymond Stefeldt took the latter path. Retired in December 1987, Stefeldt now works at the Smithsonian International Center as the responsible officer for the exchange visitor program. "I wanted to do something in the immigration field," he recalls, "but I wasn't sure exactly what. Whatever I did I wanted to be able to go to an office in the morning and come home at the end of the day." During the OCT job search program he came across the announcement for the Smithsonian job. He describes his new career as "looking at immigration from the beginning rather than the end of the process. I have found it to be perhaps even more stimulating than being a consular officer."

For economic officers, the situation can be hard. As Peck, the former OCT director, puts it, "no one on the outside does the kind of political/economic forecasting, reporting, and negotiating that we do." One former economic officer who has been able to translate his skills into bits and pieces of jobs is Tony Wallace, who retired in September 1988. Wallace calls himself a trade consultant, and works with international trade issues. He has consulted with the State Department, George Mason University, and with an association; he has had speaking engagements at local universities, the National War College, and other organizations that provide briefings for international visitors. "Put it all together and it keeps me busy," he says of his 30-plus-hour work week, "but I'm looking for a little bit more."

When Wallace first considered his retirement options, he began looking for a university teaching job, "but without three things," he advises, "it's not easy: a doctorate, teaching experience, and publications." FSOs write a lot, but "not the kind of things that get published," he says.

Another obstacle in his job search was the fact that "the economist at State has not had the kind of economics that is most demanded in the private sector—hard, number-crunching econometrics, including considerable computer literacy." Also, he adds, companies are looking for that Ph.D. "It's a struggle to show your worth to one of these firms," he warns.

Wallace is still in the market for a full-time job, but he says, "I'm very happy with the way things are shaping up with consulting. I've been taking courses in consultancy techniques, reading books, and mastering my computer."

Tony Kochanek, another former economic officer who was actually "reconed" as political before he retired in January 1988, also has defined his own job. He works as a personal financial planner, employed by IDS Financial Services, a company owned by American Express. "I did this after a lot of soul-searching," he says, "in the sense that I was looking for something that interested me. I'd always been interested in the stock market and finance. I wanted something that had a bit more freedom to it. And frankly I found that trying to get jobs in the foreign affairs business was pretty difficult."

Sometimes having the right connections helps. Jim Morton, who retired in June 1987 as a political officer, is now director of the Micronesian Diplomatic Training Center. After retirement, he recalls, "some people I knew at the Foreign Service Institute called me up to see if I would be interested, so I put in an application." Morton had just the right background for the job, having served in New Zealand

Report from the Third Age

Six years ago, I voluntarily retired from AID's Foreign Service and thereby qualified for what the French felicitously call the "Third Age." I prefer that expression over the American "Senior Citizen," because a third age could well be followed by a fourth, fifth, and so forth, while senior citizenry seems so final.

Reinforcing this optimistic outlook has been my experience regarding retiree identification cards. I have actuarily survived what is apparently the U.S. government's bleak longevity expectations for its retiring personnel: my initial retiree identification card issued by the State Department was good for only a two-year period. Happily, my renewal card was made valid for three years, presumably because the government was privy to some data indicating that life spans increase as retirement takes hold.

It wouldn't surprise me if that were actually the case, given the clear advantages of Third Age living. For example, whereas I used to spend 50 percent of my working hours listening or talking to others, and the other 50 percent (more productively?) reading and writing, the situation is now improved to the point where I spend practically all my "working" time just reading and writing. And what is it that I am reading and writing about? Diplomatic history. Yes, I have become a scholar, of sorts. Having left one meritrocracy, and I consider AID just that, I have found another, to my pleasant surprise. Only intending to read history in depth for the fun of it, I have unexpectedly felt myself drawn to examining unpublished or primary source material, to comparing views and strengths and weaknesses of established "authorities," to filling in gaps in the literature, and to writing about these things as a way to share my views and to confirm their reasonableness.

Frank W. Brecher

for three years. He used to travel to the Marshall Islands frequently and "actually got to know some of the people I'm dealing with now," he says. He also had run the FSO junior training program at FSI.

But having the right connections isn't a guarantee of success, according to Cunningham. "A lot of people found that in networking they were chasing their own tail," he says. "A lot of people they got sent around to see were in the same position—government career people." Cunningham recommends scanning the help wanted section in newspapers. "They're obviously looking for something they don't have," he explains, unlike networking, "where you spend a lot of time talking to people who don't necessarily have a need to fill."

Others also believe in newspaper ads, but caution that the important thing is to take a look at what the ad says. If they're looking for a writer, stress your writing. Whatever else you can add to it is a plus, but you don't want to cloud your basic eligibility.

In addition to networking and newspaper ads, Tony Wallace suggests, it's also important to be visible. "Let people know you're there," he urges; "join things so that people can see who you are and find out what you do. The guy who's been sitting next to you at a trade association for the last six months may turn to you and offer you a job one day.

"The biggest mistake we make," he adds, "is crawling into a shell and not telling people we're on the search for a new job."

Everyone interviewed emphasized two factors in finding a second career: equal parts of luck and hard work. As for luck, Cunningham likens the job search to "looking for a needle in a haystack. You have to be prepared to do an awful lot of looking until you find that unique need that happens to match your experience."

Woodward underlines the necessity for hard work, advising workshop participants: "Do not get into that lethargic stage where you can say 'Well, I'm going to put it off for six months.' If you want a full-time job, the job search is a full-time search."

It also demands a degree of flexibility, Woodward says. He tells a story of one workshop participant—a former administrative officer—who was looking for full-time work. Woodward heard of a job with a non-profit organization on Capitol Hill and called him up to tell him about it. The participant responded with, "Well, you know, I live in Alexandria and I don't want to make that commute across the bridge. If you find something around the Virginia side of the Beltway, let me know."

That flexibility also extends to the level of responsibility one is willing to accept. It's sometimes wise to take a lower-level job just to get a foot in the door. However, for those who have often reached the peak of their career at the time of retirement, that's not easy advice to accept.

"It's not easy starting from the bottom again," says Tony Kochanek. "That's where the Foreign Service training comes into play. The fact that as a Foreign Service employee you're always moving, always changing, always having to deal with something new, helps one adjust." Changing careers, he says, is "like getting transferred from Bogota to Tel Aviv. You forget what's happened in the past and start learning what you have to learn. You become confident that you can do it because you've done it a half a dozen times already." □

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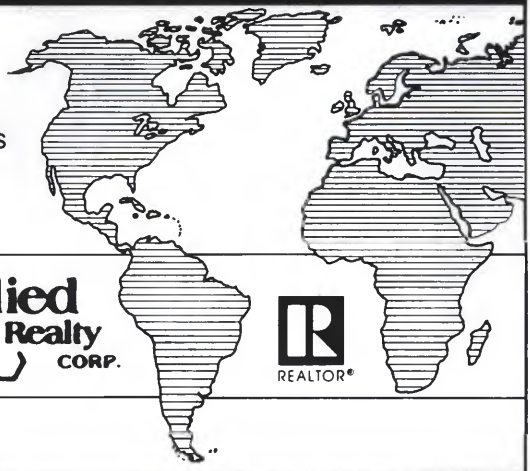

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TAX PREPARATION BY AN ATTORNEY who is a retired Foreign Service officer and is familiar with Foreign Service problems. M. Bruce Hirshorn, Esquire, Suite E, 307 Maple Ave. West, Vienna, VA 22180. (703)281-2161.

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Foreign Service Day

The Marine Color Guard, Secretary of State James A. Baker III, and AFSA President Perry Shankle rededicate the memorial plaque on Foreign Service Day, May 5.

Award winners honored at AFSA luncheon

At a luncheon honoring the AFSA award winners held in the Foreign Service Club on May 5, AFSA President Perry Shankle reminded guests that the AFSA awards encourage and recognize excellence in the Foreign Service.

Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, speaking to the honorees and guests, stressed the need for creative dissent and leadership in dealing with the new world of the 21st century. He pointed out that the days after World War II, when the United States and the Soviet Union dominated the international agenda, are gone. Today the world is polycentered with Japan, Western Europe, and Third World countries setting the agenda.

A host of environmental problems such as the ozone hole and global warming must be addressed. These problems will require collective action and a new inventiveness to bring countries together.

Eagleburger charged the Foreign Service to take an active and imaginative role in the next century. Tradition and a sense of history is not sufficient as we move into the 21st century. The Foreign Service must take the lead in convincing the leadership and the American people that it is a new world.

Foreign Service Day brunch

AFSA's traditional Foreign Service Day brunch was held at the Foreign Service Club on Saturday, May 6, with a capacity crowd in attendance. AFSA President Perry Shankle briefly summarized the issues currently affecting the Foreign Service and Robert Beers, AFSA's congressional liaison officer, spoke on the status of legislation of concern to the Foreign Service retiree community.

Scholarship support sought

Soliciting support for AFSA's scholarship program, now in its 63rd year, Jack Lydman, chairman of the Committee on Education, reminded retirees of their special responsibility to safeguard the unity and appeal of the Foreign Service by assisting parents in meeting the ever-rising costs of educating their children. Costs of higher education have escalated by 7-10 percent per annum in recent years, while Foreign Service salaries have remained relatively stagnant.

The scholarship program, on its current resources, cannot keep up with inflation, cannot increase the level of its scholarship awards, and therefore finds itself losing the ability to make a meaningful contribution. It needs all the support it can get.

Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger (right) spoke at the AFSA lunch in honor of the AFSA Award recipients; John W. Shearburn (left) received the Averell Harriman Award for junior officers. Center, outgoing AFSA President Perry Shankle.

Chairman of the AFSA Awards committee, L. Bruce Laingen, with Mrs. John Sterry Long, who presented the William A. Rivkin Award for mid-level officers to Thomas A. Lynch in abstentia, and Mr. Charles Rivkin.

Christian A. Herter Award recipient, Robert V. Keeley, with Mrs. Susan Baker.

Jennifer and Christine Johnson (center left and right), who represented the 20 AFSA/AAFSW Merit Scholarship Award winners at Foreign Service Day ceremonies, stand with Anne Kauzlorich, president of AAFSW, Dawn Cuthell, former scholarship administrator, and Jack W. Lydman, chairman of the Education Committee.

Lucille McLean Chaveas, the Avis Bohlen Award recipient, posted to Johannesburg, was represented by her parents. Left to right: Mrs. Mary Fisk, daughter of Averell Harriman; Mr. Richard McLean; Edward J. Perkins, director general designate of the Foreign Service; Mrs. McLean.

AFSA ♦ NEWS

AFSA acts to block amendments

A number of extremely disruptive amendments to the Foreign Service Act have been averted for now.

The amendments, which were proposed as part of the Foreign Relations Authorization Bill, resulted from an early draft of recommendations by the Commission to Study the Foreign Service Personnel System.

This commission was established by Congress in the authorization act for fiscal year '88 and '89 to determine ways to create greater Foreign Service career stability.

Thanks, in part, to strong opposition from AFSA before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, none of the amendments was approved during recent committee mark up. AFSA opposed all of the amendments on the grounds that the commission's recommendations were still in draft form and should not have been considered by the Foreign Relations Committee until finalized. Based upon past experience, AFSA expects that some of these amendments may be introduced on the floor of the Senate by Senator Helms.

AFSA is working with senators and staff members to defeat these amendments on the Senate floor, should this be necessary. It is also working with House members and staff to defeat any such proposed legislation that reaches House-Senate conference.

Plan penalizes review panel chairs

AFSA is filing an institutional grievance on the State Department's decision to implement a management proposal to place letters of criticism in the files of review panel chairs.

The department's proposal originated during negotiations in the first half of 1988 over the 1988 selection board precepts; AFSA and the department could not reach agreement on the proposal prior to the issuance of the precepts, so it was segregated from the rest of the package.

On July 5, 1988, AFSA sent a cable to the field soliciting comments on the department's proposal; every one of the responses was negative. The input was unanimous in asserting that it is unjust to criticize an employee for work that is done on a voluntary basis and is out of the scope of the employee's normal workload. It was noted that while review panels at post are not specifically trained to scrutinize EERs (employee evaluation reviews), those reviewing them in Washington are so trained, and might therefore catch comments that could legimately be overlooked by even the most conscientious review panel volunteers. Also noted was the fact that the inadmissibility of comments in EERs is often a matter of interpretation, and that selection boards in Washington could very well second-guess post reviewers who had done their jobs dili-

continued on page 75

State refuses to make policy retroactive

The Department of State has denied AFSA's request to retroactively apply a new tour-of-duty policy for untenured first-tour secretaries and communicators.

This policy, which will become effective in the 1989 assignment cycle, reduces the length of assignment for all untenured first-tour employees to two years, thus offering new employees opportunity for a broader base of experience.

While AFSA applauded this policy change, it asked the department to make the directive retroactive to apply to those employees who had been assigned to three-year tours in 1987 and 1988. This would ensure that these employees have the opportunity to compete equally in tenuring and promotion boards with employees assigned in 1989 and subsequent years. Unfortunately, the department refused to make the policy retroactive, stating that doing so would be "unnecessarily disruptive and unjustified."

AFSA had to accept the department's response, as AFSA has no bargaining rights with respect to tour-of-duty policy and therefore cannot force management to negotiate the proposal.

AFSA files suit regarding background investigation forms

The State Department has recently begun requiring employees to complete a revised background investigation form for security updates. Employees must complete the form, SF-86, for continued security clearance.

It requires employees to answer questions regarding personal associations, private financial matters, involvement with drugs, extent of alcohol use, and medical information; to authorize virtually unlimited access to medical and personal records held by third parties; and to sign a release from liability for individuals providing information, even those who negligently or willfully provide misinformation resulting in revocation of the employee's security clearance.

Because AFSA believes that this form is a violation of employees' constitutional rights and the Privacy Act, AFSA is filing suit against the department in federal district court. AFSA is seeking a declaration from the court that SF-86 violates both the Constitution and the Privacy Act.

AFSA is also seeking an injunction preventing the State Department from using the form in the future, and invalidating all forms already completed by employees.

AFSA settles institutional grievance concerning tandem couples

In May 1987, a Foreign Service officer filed a grievance based upon discrimination she experienced as a member of a tandem couple.

The employee accompanied her spouse to post as a dependent, because an appropriate position was not available for her at the time. She remained on leave without pay for several months, until she was panelled into a position at post. The employee grieved the State Department's refusal to issue travel orders to authorize payment of allowances to which she was entitled when she returned to active duty. As a result, the employee had to pay for the shipment of her consumables, and did not receive the Miscellaneous Transfer Allowance to which she was entitled under department regulations.

AFSA represented the employee and intervened in the grievance in May 1988, on behalf of all similarly situated tandem employees to ensure that tandem employees returning from leave without pay will receive allowances to which they are entitled.

AFSA is pleased to announce that an agreement with the department was recently signed, following extensive negotiations concerning the proper interpretation of the department's tandem couple policy.

The department has agreed to issue a notice to clarify its tandem policy. The new notice will make clear that a tandem employee on leave without pay who is panelled into a funded position will be issued travel orders authorizing appropriate allowances, as long as the position will be for more than 12 months. The department's notice is designed to guarantee that all tandem employees will receive the allowances to which they are entitled under department regulations.

State rejects AFSA cable

The Department of State has refused to clear for distribution an AFSA cable to overseas members. The cable provides an update regarding the status of the FS-1 cohort grievance and solicits contributions to a special fund that has been established to offset the substantial costs associated with the legal case.

The FS-1 cohort grievance resulted from the belief by a large number of FS-1s that the department led them to prematurely open their six-year windows into the Senior Foreign Service by creating a perception that more individuals would be promoted into the senior ranks than actually were.

AFSA has opposed all department efforts to censor or restrict communication with its membership, and will continue to fight any attempts to do so.

The department's grievance staff will rule on the case in the near future. Due to the time-sensitive nature of this issue, AFSA has requested that the grievance staff decide this matter expeditiously.

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State Standing Committee

Is the Foreign Service up to 'persuasion diplomacy'?

Charles A. Schmitz
State Vice President

The world of American diplomacy is changing—quickly. The question of the day is not whether the Foreign Service is going to be able to change quickly enough to adapt to the new world (it is changing already), it is whether the Foreign Service is going to make its own changes or be changed by others.

Let's review where the Foreign Service is:

First, America's relative position in the world is vastly different now from 10 years ago. Now, U.S. leadership in all things in the West is no longer self-evident.

Second, steadfast adversaries are becoming less predictably threatening and therefore provide less of a reliable rallying point for U.S. allies, who also are becoming less predictable.

Third, the major foreign policy objective has shifted, from one of producing a world politically secure for democracy, to one of producing a world economically equitable for enterprise.

The U.S. will be discovering the various effects of these three shifts for some time to come; but one effect, on the way in which the U.S. conducts its business with foreigners, is already abundantly clear. It is increasingly necessary for Americans to persuade foreigners to think the way Americans want them to.

Now, who is it who is supposed to do the persuading? It is the Foreign Service. Oh, if the president has a special message for someone important overseas, the job will be done by a special emissary or two, winging off on military aircraft for a whirlwind of "consultations." But these consultations are usually confirmations of messages previously sent, of persuasions already completed. The groundwork is done by the people on the ground; and their job, the Foreign Service's job, is more necessary now than any time in the post-war era.

Is the Foreign Service up to its modern challenge? The answer, of course, is yes and no. The people seem to be as good as ever, but somehow the sum of the parts continues to disappoint us, and to gratify the Foreign Service's critics. Even though Foreign Service personnel are working hard, often under adverse conditions, with short deadlines and mounds of administrivia, with frozen pay and with declining administrative support, somehow parts of the public (the administration, Congress, the press) think that we are career-centered, pampered bureaucrats. Clearly, the Service has to do a great deal to correct its image.

Now, let's look at what others are planning. The Bremer Committee, reporting for us to the new under secretary for management, Ivan Selin, has proposed some changes in structure, recruitment, promotion, training, and assignments of the FSO corps, without altering the Foreign Service Act of 1980. As reported last month, AFSA agrees with most of the purposes and goals of the committee's report, while remaining skeptical of arriving at those goals without doing great, perhaps unacceptable, damage along the way.

The Thomas Commission, reporting to Congress on how the Foreign Service Act of 1980 is being carried out, is recommending 11 changes to the act, one of which would end the notion that the United States has a unified Foreign Service by splitting off the departments of Commerce and Agriculture, and some of which would do grievous harm to the grievance system, in the name of making things more efficient. Meanwhile, without waiting for the recommendations of either commission, some parts of Congress are setting about to fix things up by big-time macro-management.

The current legislative vehicle is the State-AID-USIA authorization bill. Some of the proposed measures would make it harder to get work done or gratuitously injure Foreign Service employees. In the latter category, examples are 1) prohibiting assignments of naturalized Foreign Service employees to the country of their origin, 2) arbitrarily limiting USUN housing allowances to $1,500 per month, and, 3) prohibiting Foreign Service employees from working in the Civil Service in the State Department.

AFSA is on the Hill, opposing these sorts of measures, as well as working to reinstate the overseas medical insurance option.

Of the various proposals to "improve" the Foreign Service, AFSA thinks that those in the Bremer Committee report deserve the most serious consideration. Those proposals focus on upgrading Foreign Service employees. Some of the Bremer proposals would be a bit tough on those now in the system; but, if they are carried out carefully, the burden of the improvements would fall more or less equally. The big payoff would be that the Foreign Service would be seen to be active in dealing with its own problems. If the Foreign Service is to serve the country well in the new era of "persuasion diplomacy," it must deal with its own problems, and not leave that supremely important job to others.

Professional Issues

Reflections on the AFSA awards nominations of 1989

Richard S. Thompson
Professional Issues Coordinator

The AFSA awards were conferred on Foreign Service Day, and the tumult and shouting have died away. Yet, like a dog gnawing on an old bone, I have found some food for thought in the nominations this year which I would like to share with you before the files are retired.

One of the pleasures of this job is reading all the nominations for all the awards. They represent a tremendous record of achievement and support the thesis that the Foreign Service is an institution worth preserving.

They also support the impression that the awards are dominated by the State Department, which provided all the winners this year. Looking only at the Herter, Rivkin, and Harriman nominees (for senior, mid-level, and junior officers), 14 of 15 nominees and 14 of 15 nominators were from State. The happy exceptions, both at the senior level, were the nomination of an officer of the Foreign Agricultural Service by a State officer, and the nomination of a State officer by a USIA officer.

The Avis Bohlen awards, for exceptional achievement by a family member of a Foreign Service employee, offered much more variety. Going by the agency of the employee to categorize the nominees, two were State, and one each were AID, USIA, and Peace Corps (last year the Bohlen winner was a USIA spouse). Four of the five nominators were from State.

Some of you by now have alertly added the numbers and see that we had a total of 20 nominations for these four awards. Respectable, but surely there were more individuals worthy of consideration by the judges for these meaningful honors, although we can all be proud of the outstanding winners.

The bottom line is that, without sacrificing quality, there are many Foreign Service members whose accomplishments merit nomination, and while State dominance through sheer numbers is probably a fact of life, we should ensure accomplishments involving intellectual courage and creative dissent by officers of other agencies are recognized.

Continued

gently.

Most posts felt that the best way to ensure that no inadmissible comments slip past a review panel would be to better educate those who serve on the panels. It was also suggested that the department utilize the carrot rather than the stick—that is, provide positive incentives for employees to serve on review panels rather than establish a system in which such service can only cause harm to one's career. The consensus was that the threat of punitive action will make employees reluctant to serve, and will not improve the quality of review panel performance.

AFSA conveyed these views to management during negotiating sessions, but the department was not willing to alter its original proposal. In an effort to address management's concerns while protecting responsible employees from undeserved career damage, AFSA offered a counterproposal which would allow selection boards to criticize review panel chairmen, but only if they had been clearly negligent in their duties. AFSA proposed a two-tiered system, which would distinguish between egregious cases of negligence and less clear-cut cases in which a review panel was faced with more ambiguous or subtle references. The counterproposal was also designed so that selection boards would have specific instructions on evaluating review panels' performances, allowing the boards to base their decisions on objective guidelines rather than a vague and subjective departmental mandate.

On April 5, the department rejected AFSA's counterproposal, adhering strictly to its original proposal and offering no alternate solutions. The department further stated that it would unilaterally implement its own proposal by April 24. AFSA then supplemented its original counterproposal with several other possible approaches to the problem, but management simply reiterated its intent to proceed with implementation. AFSA informed management that it would take legal steps should the department attempt to implement its proposal prior to the conclusion of negotiations. On May 2, the department sent a cable to all posts which removed any remaining doubt about management's intentions. (For the record, AFSA was not provided with a copy of this cable by the department; we learned of it only after we had received word from AFSA representatives in the field.)

AFSA is now filing an institutional grievance against the department for bad-faith negotiations, in violation of both the law and the collective bargaining agreement between AFSA and the department.

Advice to AFSA members and other State Department employees: if asked to serve as chair of any EER review panel, be careful to evaluate the risks. Unless and until AFSA wins its institutional grievance, review panel chairs are open to possible critical documentation in their personnel files.

Scholarship

Committee praised by chairman

Cristin Springet
Scholarship Coordinator

No one person can fulfill the work of the scholarship programs and during my first year I have had the support of a dedicated Committee on Education. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the following letter from Ambassador Jack W. Lydman, chairman of the AFSA Committee on Education:

"This summer, William Weinhold (USIA) and Charles Johnson (AID) will be leaving the AFSA Committee on Education. The occasion of losing two of our long-term members prompts me to register not only my deep gratitude for the service these two outstanding committee members have rendered, but also to note how terribly important the volunteer work of each committee member is to the continuity of the scholarship programs.

"All committee members have worked enthusiastically as a group and as individuals to forward the objectives of the programs, and to assist Foreign Service families in meeting the ever-rising costs of educating their children. I take great pride in sharing and acknowledging the ongoing work of Janet Biggs (AAFSW), David Jones (State), and David Smith (State)."

Membership

Membership continues to grow

Mari Radford
Membership Coordinator

AFSA's membership has been steadily growing over the past year. As of May 1989 we have more than 9,400 members, representing the five Foreign Service agencies, retired and associate constituencies. The current breakdown is:

State	4,695
Retired	2,627
AID	1,175
Associate	427
Lifetime	187
USIA	180
Commerce	45
Agriculture	13
Honorary/Jubilee	55

We'll be boosting these numbers over the next several months with a direct mail campaign and other membership promotion. But we need your help. You know how important AFSA's work is, so help us get the message out to your friends and colleagues who aren't AFSA members. Drop us a line with their names and addresses and we'll see they get membership applications and information. The stronger our membership is, the better our representation and services will be. Many members may not be aware that AFSA offers a lifetime membership for only $1,500. If you consider that membership for active Foreign Service personnel averages over $100 per year (rate is based on grade), lifetime membership can be a good investment that pays for itself in a few years (and you get a tax break by claiming it as a miscellaneous business expense while the deduction is still available). Lock in on tomorrow's services at today's membership rates. There is a yellow return card bound into this issue of the JOURNAL. Simply fill out your name and address, and we'll sign you up or send you further information on lifetime membership.

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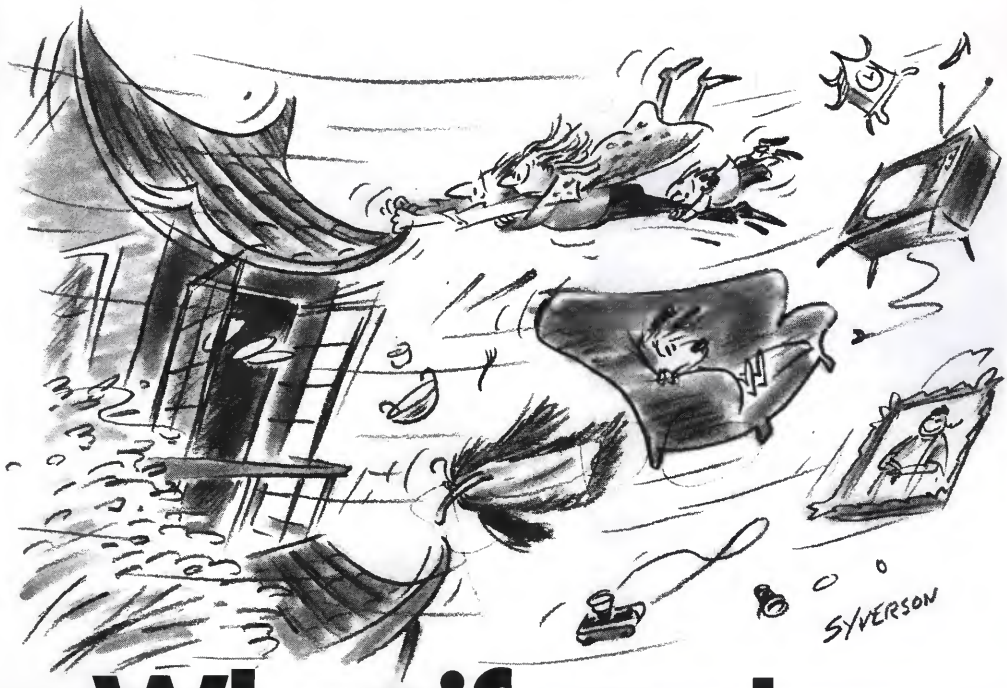

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