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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

The Bald, Brazen Selling of Ambassadorships

BY WILLARD A. DE PREE


Those who haven't yet read the Oct. 30 article in *The Washington Post*, "The Nixon Tapes: Ambassadorships for Sale," should do so. In the piece, excerpted in the "Clippings" section of this magazine, *Post* journalists Walter Pineus and George Lardner Jr. relate a 1971 conversation on ambassadorial appointments between President Richard Nixon and White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman.

Nixon is quoted as telling Haldeman "... that anybody who wants to be an ambassador must at least give \$250,000." The story goes on to mention two of the U.S. embassies then up for sale, Brussels and Madrid. No surprises there. When apprised by secretary Rose Mary Woods that a New York socialite and high-stakes contributor had been offered the embassy in Madrid, of which Nixon appeared to be unaware, he indicated he would acquiesce, making this choice comment: "Hell, if we did it, it was a great sale. He gave a quarter of a million dollars," according to the article. How bald and brazen has this practice become?

Alas, there is little evidence that the selling of ambassadorships is

Willard A. De Pree, a retired FSO who served as ambassador to Mozambique and Bangladesh, is interim president of the American Foreign Service Association.

*Selling an
ambassadorship to
the highest bidder
is an egregious
example of campaign
finance abuse.*



any different 25 years later. Today, whether a Democrat or Republican is in the White House doesn't seem to matter. It's the money — and the more, the better — that counts. What else is the public to make of press reports that President Clinton has offered ambassadorships to five Texans, all major contributors to the Democratic Party and his 1996 reelection campaign? What further evidence do we need that the spoils system is still rampant? It is an insult to the American Foreign Service!

The American Foreign Service has long spoken out against the practice of rewarding political campaign contributors with ambassadorial appointments. Unfortunately, AFSA hasn't had much success in rousing interest on Capitol Hill or with incumbents in the White House to curtail or

halt this practice. With the American public having had its fill of campaign finance abuses, maybe now something will be done about this unseemly practice.

Before Congress recessed last month, AFSA sent letters to members asking for their help in curbing what must certainly be one of the most egregious examples of campaign finance abuse. A good first step would be to put a legislative cap on the number of non-career ambassadors, which now represent about 30 percent of all top envoys. A cap of 10 percent would still leave 17 of 170 ambassadorial posts for non-career candidates with the experience, talent or personal relationship with the president that qualify them to make their unique stamp on the nation's foreign policy. This should be ample. At the same time, a cap would eliminate between 30 and 35 ambassadorial posts from political patronage.

With the Senate deciding to put campaign finance reform to a vote in March, this may be the best opportunity in a long time for the Foreign Service to persuade the American public, the Congress and the administration to curtail, if not stop, the appalling practice of selling ambassadorships. Let's seize that opportunity. Let's let our senators and representatives know that if they are serious about campaign finance reform, a cap on non-career ambassadors is an excellent place to begin. ■

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DESPATCH

Swan Song From a Lame Duck

BY KAREN KREBSBACH

It is with some sadness that I leave the *Journal* this month, after nearly four years at its helm. I have greatly enjoyed learning about this fascinating, complex organism called the Foreign Service.

I have been witness to a number of milestones: the redesign of the magazine; the winning of numerous awards for editorial and design excellence; the celebrating of the *Journal's* 75th anniversary; and the selling of the magazine on national newsstands.

The outside world is beginning to pay attention. In the last year, the *Journal* has received a record number of reprint requests for pieces penned by retired FSOs such as Monteagle Stearns, W. Kenneth Thompson, Harry W. Shlaudeman, Frederick Z. Brown and Herman J. Cohen. Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman of the House Committee on International Relations, asked the *Journal's* lead writer of its September issue on organized crime, Louise Shelley, for permission to read her piece into the *Congressional Record*. She followed up by testifying before the group on "the threat from international organized crime and global terrorism." These are people whose voices should continue to be heard.

It is perhaps fortuitous that my last issue includes a collection of articles —

Karen Krebsbach, the outgoing editor of the Journal, is a New York-based copy editor for the European and Asian editions of The Wall Street Journal.

*Eternal vigilance
is the price of
editorial integrity.*



in particular, the controversial Howard Shapiro piece — that sparked spirited dissent among members of the Editorial Board. Several people did not agree with Shapiro's message.

Mr. Shapiro's piece is, indeed, critical of the agency he'll soon be leaving, but his courage in speaking his mind should not go unnoticed.

Unfortunately, the issue of "controlling the *Journal's* message" has become an increasingly divisive one over the years, particularly for a small but vocal group of Governing Board members who believe that only positive pieces about the Foreign Service should be published. Is this group representative of all readers?

Complaints surfaced, for example, when a recent piece in the "Clippings" section reported on the controversy surrounding a *Harper's* magazine article lambasting the handling of a USAID project in Kazakstan. Others didn't believe that a letter blasting AFSA's decision to award a U.S. embassy official in Rwanda for his work should have been published.

I disagree. If not in the *Journal*, where? If this is not a forum for Foreign Service peers to exchange

constructive criticism — as well as deserved applause — what is?

There's no question that the founding fathers of the *Journal* understood the importance of eternal vigilance in maintaining editorial integrity. There's good reason why the bylaws of this magazine, founded in 1919, say, "The *Journal* is the independent magazine of professionals in foreign affairs." It should not be the voice of the State Department, the voice of the Governing Board, the voice of the Editorial Board. It is the voice of the Foreign Service, the voice of its readers.

The *Journal* should remain an outlet for retired and active FS professionals to speak out on professional issues, to instruct by historical example, to delight with tales from abroad, to inspire *esprit de corps*.







The Editorial Board chairmen with whom I've worked — Edward Marks, Sheldon Krysz and Brandon Grove — have accomplished the extraordinarily difficult task of maintaining the magazine's editorial integrity. But I fear it is a fragile peace.

Once censorship rears its ugly head, no opinion can be trusted. As one of Pierre de Beaumarchais's characters pointed out in *The Marriage of Figaro*: "If censorship reigns, there cannot be sincere flattery, and only small men are afraid of small writings." This should not be a magazine of happy propaganda, but one that thoughtfully and provocatively explores the important issues before the Foreign Service today — to ensure it will be a stronger Foreign Service tomorrow. ■



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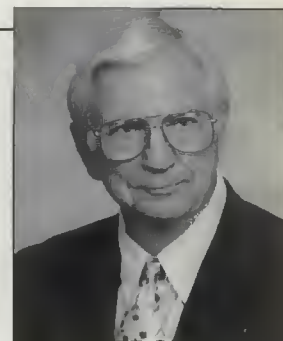
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LETTERS

To the Editor:

I found Jim Anderson's article, "Where've the Arabists Gone?" (October *Journal*) to be well-written and provocative. It would be of service to readers to have an article from those who sought to overturn the juggernaut allegedly held for the Arabists in directing U.S. policy in the Middle East until what Anderson perceives as their being supplanted by Israelists.

I note that in no instance were "non-Arabists" charged with Middle East policy interviewed as to the positions taken. This clearly would have been helpful to avoid what I perceive to be a skewed and one-sided presentation.

Michael S. Zak
Retired FSO
Annandale, Va.



To the Editor:

Jim Anderson's piece provides a number of quotes from sensible people, but unfortunately the overall effect of the article is to perpetuate the myth that the presence or absence of Arabists at senior levels of the State Department makes an important dif-

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ference in U.S. Arab-Israel policy. May one of those "sand-mad" Arabists of the past offer a comment?

It is good to have Arabists around. Like language and area specialists on other parts of the world, their input is needed to construct informed and accurate policy. Sometimes their contribution will be important, often marginal, and not infrequently irrelevant, but they are always worth listening to. On some aspects of the Middle East, such as the interconnectedness of events and trends among Arab countries, their input is important because policy makers who are fresh to the area are insufficiently aware of this feature of the political landscape.

But anyone who believes that the replacement of Bob Pelletreau, an Arabist, by Martin Indyk, a non-Arabist, or the fact that Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller are not Arabists, has had a major impact on Arab-Israel policy, is living in a world of illusion. More than any other foreign policy issue, the Arab-Israel problem has always been driven by domestic politics. That means that it is the president, and only the president, who can set the course for U.S. policy. When there are leaders on the Arab side who are committed to peace, such as Anwar Sadat, King Hussain and Yasser Arafat, and when Israel is led by men like Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, the American role can afford to be minimal. But when, as in the present situation, Israel is led by a government that cannot make up its mind that peace is worth relinquishing the West Bank for, U.S. policy has to be

more vigorous if it is to be effective. Bill Clinton has achieved very little in the Middle East because at no point during his administration has he decided that it was worth the domestic political pain of confronting the Netanyahu government on its unreasonable policies. And now, five years into his second term, it's almost too late: His thoughts, and certainly Al Gore's thoughts, will be on what it takes to continue a Democrat in the presidency and to improve the party's position in Congress in 2000.

Among the Arabists of my generation I knew only one or two — and they did not reach senior levels — who seemed unable to accept the basic construct of U.S. Middle East policy, including America's commitment to the security and well-being of Israel. But we all hope that within that construct, U.S. policy would be as effective as possible. What troubled many Arabists and non-Arabist Middle East specialists alike was the growing gap between what America said its policy was and what it was prepared to do about it. After all, the positions that the United States took in the aftermath of the 1967 war have been either abandoned or watered down in the course of the ensuing 30 years — that Israeli settlements in occupied territory are a violation of the fourth Geneva Convention; that Israel should not be trying to determine the future of Jerusalem through unilateral actions; that the boundaries in any peace settlement should not be greatly different from pre-1967 borders. It's the erosion

LETTERS

of these positions of principle that has enfeebled U.S. policy and weakened the confidence of Arabs and Israelis alike in the U.S. role as mediator.

Finally, it is as offensive to hear it suggested that these men are incapable of working for the American interest because they are Jewish as it was to hear it suggested that I was similarly disqualified because I had studied the Arabic language and lived in Arabic countries.

Michael Sterner
Retired FSO
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

The ink could hardly have been dry on the October *Journal* and its piece by Jim Anderson when retired FSO Parker ("Pete") Hart, the dean and mentor of two generations of Foreign Service Arabists, died in Washington at the age of 87. Mr. Anderson would have found the answer to his questions at the memorial service for Pete in a cathedral-sized church, which was filled to capacity. Every FS Arabist over the age of 40, active or retired, was in the church that day. Others will write tributes to Pete later on, but I wanted to commend the *Journal* and Mr. Anderson on the unmeanly timeliness of the article.

Daniel O. Newberry
Retired FSO
Bethesda, Md.

To the Editor:

The article in the October *Journal* asserting the importance of names for career advancement probably contains as much truth as poetry ("What's In a Name?" by Michael Canning).

In his fascinating autobiography, *The Right Hand of Power*, former

Under Secretary of State for political Affairs and Ambassador to Japan U. Alexis Johnson recounts the advice he was given as a student in the early '30s at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service by James Brown Scott, who for many years had been the State Department's chief lawyer. Mr. Scott advised him that "U. Alexis Johnson" would "ring more impressively in the halls of the State Department" than the odd-sounding "Ural A. Johnson."

Noted Johnson, "I have never regretted taking his advice."

R. Sackett Thompson
Retired FSO
Bethesda, Md.

To the Editor:

Regarding the item in the October "Clippings," titled "U.S., Russia Compete Over Issues," it is hard to believe that a journal dedicated to "foreign affairs professionals" would make light of such a serious issue as traffic violations. Does the *Journal* really believe that "American diplomats in Russia think they can set a record for traffic accidents and parking tickets?"

The *Washington Times* report you cited overlooks that the total of violations for U.S. diplomats in Russia includes a number of "offenses" that most Americans would find incomprehensible. For example, joint registration of a vehicle is not allowed.

Among the five documents I must carry is a power of attorney from my husband granting me permission to drive our car, the same car that I test drove, negotiated the deal for and helped pay for. (I affectionately call this my "Baby, you can drive my car" permit.) Earlier this year, I was cited twice in one day — within two hours and two miles — for not having this piece of paper.

Finally, the cases of U.S. diplomat Matt Bryza and Georgian diplomat

Georgui Makhradze are totally different. Yes, they are both diplomats, and both accidents were serious. There the parallels end, as a call to State for the facts of Bryza's case would have revealed.

The next time you quote news reports on events involving U.S. diplomats, perhaps you can dig a little deeper to get the real stories, not just the sensational headlines.

Sue Mosher
FS Spouse
U.S. Embassy Moscow

To the Editor:

In its October issue the *Journal* published a letter from an anonymous retired FSO in the Slovak Republic about his efforts to help his proteges or clients get visas to study in U.S. high schools. He doesn't say whether he is paid for his services. The letter implied that visa decisions are often made by Foreign Service National staff rather than by visa officers and that decisions are corrupted by friendship or worse.

In support of his assertions, the author offers anecdotal evidence from his clients, and one friend who left to work in the United States. Why did the *Journal* withhold this writer's name? We can assume that he is afraid that if his name is known he will suffer retaliation from the officers and FSN staffs he accuses of not doing their jobs.

I have no knowledge of current conditions at the posts this author speaks of, but why is there no response? It seems to me that in fairness the least the *Journal* could have done was to have asked the Bureau of Consular Affairs to comment on, for starters, the assertion that FSN staff is making visa decisions that are the responsibility of visa officers. Most of us know all too well that sometimes visa sections deserve the criticism they get, but often they don't.

LETTERS

And it does not do the *Journal*, FSOs and FSN staff in the field any good to have unproved and anonymous allegations by a writer who has a vested interest in seeing that visas are issued to his clients.

Ronald R. Tyson
Retired FSO
Falls Church, Va.

Editor's note: The writer, a retired FSO, requested anonymity because he was, indeed, afraid of retaliation by FSOs and FSNs in the aforementioned embassy, which the editors agreed was a sufficient reason to omit his name. In addition, the Journal does not solicit responses to its letters, though if the Bureau of Consular Affairs does submit a letter responding to the writer's allegations, it will be published.

To the Editor:

I wish to make some observations about one of the worst articles I have ever read: George Gedda's "An Eye on Iran" (September *Journal*). The author states that the Iranian revolution was "perhaps the worst strategic defeat for the United States since World War II." Does he really think that event had a greater negative impact on America than Vietnam did?

Why does Mr. Gedda discuss the subject with only one person of Iranian origin: Zalmay Khalilzad? Are there no other experts on Iran with Iranian roots which might help them understand the country better than a handful of "experts" who have never been there? Amos Perlmutter is quoted as saying "there are no moderates in Iran any more than there were moderates in the Soviet Union before Mikhail Gorbachev." Does that mean that Perlmutter would have advocated no contact with and isolation of the Soviet Union?

Two individuals associated with the

Washington Institute of Near East Studies are also cited. WINES has been outspoken in its hostility towards Iran's Islamic regime. Thus, it is only natural that its personnel adhere to the institutional viewpoint. One of the individuals, furthermore, has been a strong advocate of the Clinton administration's "dual containment" policy, which, the article suggests, has limited the effect on Iranian opposition to the Middle East peace process. Iranian opposition to the peace process has been vocal, rather than substantive. The real problems facing the peace process are a direct result of Palestinian and Israeli policies.

Iran's human rights record is reprehensible, as the author notes, but is this really a valid justification for U.S. policies? A poor human rights record has never impaired America's interaction with other countries. Take Georgia, for example. The U.S. Congress, in a report drafted by the State Department, points out that the human rights record of Georgia also is marked with telephone bugging, arbitrary arrests, lengthy imprisonments on unspecified charges and without actual trials, torture and limited press freedom. Security forces are extremely corrupt, exhibit little loyalty to the state, and have been involved in assassination attempts against the elected president. Yet in this case, the Clinton administration has requested \$100 million in aid for the country.

The criticism leveled at Iran for its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, however, is valid. This is one area in which the U.S. government must not waver. Efforts to negate that country's work in this area must be unceasing, not just because the proliferation of such weapons is undesirable, but because Iran's possession of such devices will upset the balance of power in a highly sensitive region. It is not entirely clear how the U.S. government will stop Iran's nuclear efforts, however, since it has

been unable to stop the nuclear efforts of its allies Pakistan and Israel, the latter as one of the largest recipients of U.S. aid. Elimination of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, furthermore, is certainly a strange way of demonstrating commitment to counterproliferation.

Mr. Gedda did cite Stephen Fairbanks, the only individual, other than Khalilzad, who can be considered a true expert on Iran, because he has spent many years there and has been studying the country for almost three decades. Overall, it was very disappointing to read such an article in your otherwise excellent publication.

A. William Samii
Dean of Academic Affairs
Georgian Technical
University
Tbilisi

To the Editor:

I read with great interest Robert Griffiths' article, "Preserve Language Pay Incentives," ("Speaking Out," September *Journal*). However, I would like to clarify several points raised in the piece concerning the suggestion that the recommendations in a report recently issued by the Office of the Inspector General would reduce the language capability of the Foreign Service. To the contrary, the recommendations in the report would improve FS language capability.

In an era of heightened budgetary scrutiny, requiring savings in all programs, this report examined the \$7.7 million language-pay-incentive program to determine if it provides the intended incentives. We found that while the program continues to expand in scope and cost, the program is not meeting its original objectives. The result is a program viewed by employees as a fringe benefit, rather than a deciding factor or incentive to study, use or maintain a language.

LETTERS



I agree with Mr. Griffiths that the department should hire more people who already speak at least one language. Savings could reach \$30,000 or more per student in training costs alone. Additionally, officers would spend less time in language training and more time performing their jobs. Our review found, however, the within-grade increases available to FS entrants with existing foreign language skills are not used effectively as a recruiting tool; rather, in most cases, FS candidates learn about them only after applying for the FS exam. Our report recommends that the department publicize the availability of within-grade step increases for existing language proficiency to entice the application of more individuals with foreign language proficiency.

We are also concerned, as Mr. Griffiths is, with the way the department assigns officers who have existing language proficiency. For example, of the 85 new officers awarded within-grade wage increases for existing language skills from 1992 to 1995, about 47 percent spent their first tour at a post where they could not use their existing language skills or were enrolled in FSI language training in a different language. We suggested that the department make better use of these valuable assets by assigning junior officers to posts where they can use their foreign language skills.

Greater attention to the assignment process could help the department better use and protect its investment in language training, too. First of all, the existing at-post bonuses — for serving in an incentive language designated position or for serving a subsequent tour in a country where the incentive language is spoken — are intended to increase the return on the department's investment by encouraging repeat tours at incentive posts. However, the department often receives only a single tour from an

officer who has completed long-term incentive language training. Of the officers who studied one of four incentive languages at FSI from 1986 through 1988, only 35 percent served a repeat tour in a country speaking the incentive language taught at department expense. We recommended the department ensure that officers enrolled in long-term incentive language training serve more than one tour at a post where that incentive language can be used.

Secondly, in many cases, if a repeat tour is served using that language, it may come after such a delay as to require refresher training because the FSO's language skills have declined from lack of use. Such refresher courses, though not likely to require as long a period as initial training, nevertheless take the officer off-line at full salary and benefits for weeks or even months, in addition to incurring Foreign Service Institute costs. Refresher language training can cost between \$2,900 and \$8,600 for a one- to three-month course, excluding salary, benefits and per-diem costs.

In addition, the ability of the officer to proceed to a post where language skills are urgently needed is inhibited by the need for refresher training. We suggested that every effort be made to ensure that multiple tours are served as close together as possible to prevent the need for additional language training before a follow-on tour. We also recommended the department study the benefits of a language-maintenance incentive program to reward FSOs who successfully maintain incentive language skills while serving at non-incentive posts and who agree to serve a subsequent tour in a language-designated position at an incentive post, but who do not require refresher training.

Mr. Griffiths observed that FSOs, as generalists who change jobs every two or three years, are losing ground to colleagues in the other departments

and agencies of the foreign affairs community who have more experience and longer tours with directed assignments. He also concluded that language skills help FSOs compensate for this lack of expertise. While I do not disagree with this point, evidence does not support the view that the incentive program, as currently constituted, fosters this competitive advantage. We interviewed more than 70 officers at incentive-language posts, and the majority judged the within-grade increases to be of marginal motivational value in determining what posts and positions they bid on. In most cases, the FSOs said that career enhancement, family needs, quality of life, size of post allowances and post differentials were the deciding factors. Very few officers stated that their decision to study an incentive language was influenced by the availability of within-grade increases. We recommended that the department replace the within-grade step increases for incentive language study and proficiency with lump-sum bonuses, equal to the one-year value of the within-grade step increases they would replace. This would better focus the incentive, while cutting costs.

Finally, under the language-incentive pay program, the at-post bonuses are open to all post personnel, providing they meet the qualifications. This includes ambassadors and deputy chiefs of mission. Ambassadors are presidential appointments and DCM positions are highly coveted and fiercely competitive. Therefore, it is unrealistic to believe that language-incentive pay plays a role in deciding whether to accept a position as ambassador or DCM.

*Jacquelyn L. Williams-Bridgers
Inspector General
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.*

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Elizabeth McIntosh quotes Virginia Webbert's letter in her article, "Sisterhood of Spies," (September *Journal*), noting "the new moon lying upside down in this hemisphere," and one concludes that Ms. Webbert fancied herself to be in the Southern Hemisphere. Ceylon — now Sri Lanka — is between 5 and 10 degrees north of the equator. Therefore, because of the observer's relative proximity to the equator, the moon crescent appears to be horizontal — not upside down.

Gerrit J.W. Heyneker
Retired FSO
Pottsville, Texas

To the Editor:

Eric Rudenshiold's "Cycles of Life in Copenhagen," ("Postcard from Abroad," September *Journal*) brought back memories of my own daily seven-mile commute by bike to the American embassy there. That was in the early '70s, but nothing seems to have changed since then — including the clunky but sturdy bikes preferred by the Danes. The same ones I rubbed handlebars with are probably still on the road today. My own bike was a 10-speed Peugeot, actually purchased in Copenhagen and quite modest by American standards, but it evoked the same bemused condescension from the Danes as did Eric's 18-speed a quarter-century later.

One thing I wish he had pointed out, though, is that as a quid pro quo for their right of way over cars, Danish cyclists strictly observe all traffic regulations. They stop at red lights, signal their turns and obey one-way and no-entry signs. At worst, Danes dismount and walk their bikes up a one-way street or through a no-left-turn intersection. There is nothing in Denmark like the rude and dangerous tactics of Washington's bicycle couriers, who

weave in and out of traffic and completely ignore traffic lights and signs.

Harvey I. Leifert
Retired FSO
Bethesda, Md.

To the Editor:

Matt Bivens may have been living high on the "Gravy Train" in Kazakhstan, as he wrote in *Harper's Magazine* ("Clippings," September *Journal*), but he should not be allowed to generalize from his own behavior to soil the entire effort of the U.S. Agency for International Development. His world of willful waste and fraud on the U.S. taxpayer is not the world I knew in the same city at the same time.

As the director of a housing and land-reform program in Kazakhstan from 1993 to 1995, I attended the same embassy meetings, knew the same American contractors and government people, and I believe I've spent a lot more time in the country than Mr. Bivens. I have no doubt he wasted U.S. taxpayers' money and enjoyed his gravy, as he said he did. Bivens' claims about staffers for the [New York-based contractor, the PR firm of Burson-Marsteller] and their involvement with corrupt government officials are something he should have brought to USAID and the embassy officials immediately, and might have if money were not more important to him. I knew people in Burson during and after Bivens was there and it was not the den of thieves he claims it was. Neither were the great majority of people in other USAID contractors' offices in Almaty on the same self-indulgent gravy train Bivens enjoyed at taxpayer expense. His behavior borders on criminal, but in our era of confessional journalism and politics, his admission of guilt seems to excuse him.

Some people I knew in Burson-Marsteller worked hard, and most people in other offices worked long hours and often on weekends. Many did volunteer work in the local community. Long hours and hard work were the rule while Bivens' gravy-train crowd was the exception.

Perhaps the answer to why Bivens wrote as he did is found in his own fears about being corrupted by public relations work. As one of his colleagues at Burson-Marsteller told me, "PR is all about shaping the story. It's all about image. ... It attracts people who already have a lack of character."

Wallace Kaufman
Former USAID
Contractor
Pittsboro, N.C.

To the Editor:

It is unfortunate that the *Journal* rushed to excerpt Matt Bivens' *Harper's Magazine* article "Aboard the Gravy Train" without taking time to check the facts. In his article, Bivens paints a colorful picture of alleged waste, fraud and abuse of U.S. foreign assistance dollars in Kazakhstan. While entertaining reading, his diatribe failed to shed much light on the reality of U.S. assistance to Kazakhstan to help that nation privatize industry.

Through the U.S.-supported program, Kazakhstan has privatized the majority share of 1,800 medium-sized companies, with another 700 expected to sell the majority of public shares to private shareholders by the end of this year. In addition, U.S. programs have helped privatize more than 17,000 small-scale enterprises in Kazakhstan during the last three years. U.S. efforts to help Kazakhstan privatize industry have made a dramatic difference in an economy stagnated by years of central planning and mismanagement.

LETTERS

The excerpt criticizes the U.S. government for offering "cost plus" contracts to firms, although contracts of this sort have not been used by the government for more than 30 years.

Do not underestimate the difficulty of helping nations shed the burden of years of communist rule. However, it is in the U.S. interest to help secure freer markets across the region, which Mr. Bivens' assault does little to alter.

Jill Buckley
Assistant Administrator
USAID
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

I was astonished to find an uncritical review of the Matt Bivens article.

Harper's may have insufficient technical expertise to question Mr. Bivens' claim that Burson-Marsteller collected a 7 percent fee on top of all costs incurred, but for the *Journal* to give credence to such a claim seems irresponsible.

The "cost-plus" contract Bivens refers to was almost certainly a "cost-plus-fixed-fee" contract, because the kind of "cost-plus-percentage-of-cost" contract Bivens describes is illegal. The other abuses Bivens describes, if true, certainly merit a close review by auditors, although the purchase of 5 million pocket calendars for \$69,000, or 1.4 cents per calendar, strikes me as a bargain, even if the money did pay for office rent, road-building fees, etc.

Perhaps the *Journal* can contact USAID's Office of Procurement to determine what the fee basis was on

the Burson-Marsteller contract, and, if Bivens was in error, let your readers know the truth in a future "Clippings" piece.

Brent Schaeffer
Executive Officer
USAID Moscow

To the Editor:

Michael W. Cotter asks that the *Journal* require "partisan identifications" on letters that discuss Turkish-Greek differences ("Letters," September *Journal*). That he then apparently acknowledges his own partisanship by way of citing his years on Turkish affairs does not prove the insinuation that everyone else is similarly afflicted. Must one be pro-Greek

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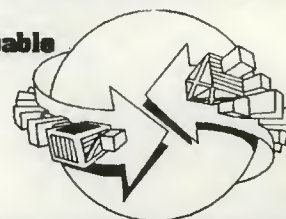
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LETTERS

to question the proposition made by James W. Spain ("America and Turkey: As Key Linchpin in Europe. Turkey Worries West With Moves Eastward" April *Journal*) that a country that more or less permanently occupies 40 percent of the territory of a U.N. member state in defiance of numerous Security Council resolutions can also be called a "pragmatic member of the United Nations" and an "international good citizen?" Does it take partisanship of any kind to note repeated public statements from Brussels and several EU capitals to the clear effect that Turkey is a long way from qualifying for membership, Greek policy and tactics aside?

I would have no objection to the inclusion of my entire resume along with my letter to the *Journal*, but I think

a more useful editorial change would require that rejoinders address the substance of articles or letters challenged. Mr. Cotter might have contributed more positively to the dialogue had he expressed himself on the issues mentioned above rather than the presumed bias of other interlocutors.

*Alan Berlind
Retired FSO
Coulouvre, France*

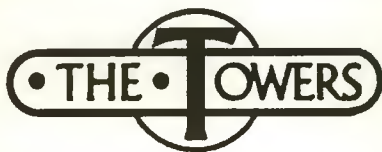
To the Editor:

Here's a ditty to sing to the tune of "Unforgettable," with sincerest apologies to the late Nat "King" Cole:

Unpromotable, that's what you are
Unpromotable, though near or far
Your career is wilting frightfully

All your peers promoted, rightfully
Never before
Was someone more
Unpromotable in every way
You may reach *come Judgment
Day
Never mind, my friend; what's
notable
Is that one so unpromotable
Knows that I am unpromotable, too
*Fill in the blank with the appropriate
rank: O3, O2, O1, OC, MC

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CLIPPINGS



"I hope it would be clear that [the United States] would assume the responsibility for ... [its] decision to send the spy plane to Iraq. ... Iraq expects a military aggression."

— NIZAR HAMDOON,
IRAQ AMBASSADOR TO
THE U.N., THE
WASHINGTON POST,
NOV. 3

WHADDYA BID FOR A POST IN BRUSSELS?

Recently released tape recordings reveal that President Richard M. Nixon regarded ambassadorships as a money-making tool. While the 37th president of the United States may not have invented the practice, he may have been the first chief of state to leave for posterity a record of his bargaining style.

"My point is that anybody who wants to be an ambassador must at least give \$250,000," Nixon told White House Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman on June 23, 1971, according to reporters Walter Pincus and George Lardner in the Oct. 30 issue of *The Washington Post*. Haldeman agreed, saying that anyone who gave less than \$100,000 "shouldn't [bc] consider[ed] for any kind of thing."

Nixon and Haldeman discussed several potential ambassadorial appointees at the same meeting, including Fred J. Russell, a millionaire California real estate magnate and Republican donor slated to be named ambassador to Denmark. The president warned that "from now on, the contributors have got to be ... a big thing and I'm not gonna do it for political friends and all that crap."

When Nixon and Haldeman discussed an ambassadorship to Belgium, the name of former Ambassador to Ireland Raymond Guest surfaced. "I'm sure he's talking about a quarter of a million at least," said Nixon, "cause he gave \$100,000 last time, about 65 [thousand] in one place and 35 [thousand] in another. Now, he could be ambassador to Brussels." Guest, who had first served in the Kennedy administration, was not selected for the Brussels job.

Another recording features Nixon

and his long-time secretary, Rose Mary Woods, discussing the impending appointment of C.V. "Sonny" Whitney as ambassador to Spain. Nixon, who was not aware of the appointment, replied: "Hell, if we did it, it was a great sale. He gave a quarter of a million dollars." Nixon, who was afraid that he couldn't win Senate confirmation for the 72-year-old Whitney at a time when Congress was debating campaign finance reform, eventually withdrew his support from the would-be ambassador, fearing he would be obliged to disclose Whitney's huge campaign contribution. "The 250 [thousand] can go back," he told Haldeman. "I don't want the money. Just say that in view of the present temper — put it on the Senate. But I'd say we just don't want him to be embarrassed. There's no way we can get him confirmed."

MEN STILL DOMINATE DIPLOMACY'S WORLD

When Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright decided to host a dinner for female foreign ministers recently, she didn't have to worry about having enough room at the table. The entire guest list was limited to seven: the foreign ministers of Colombia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Bulgaria, Liechtenstein and Sierra Leone. Two other female foreign ministers, from Barbados and the Bahamas, sent regrets, reported Robin Wright in a Sept. 30 article in the *Los Angeles Times*.

"While women have made progress in some quarters ... female politicians remain on the periphery in major powers such as Russia and China, and in the minority



CLIPPINGS

globally," wrote Wright. "Worldwide, there are just four female heads of government, 10 U.N. ambassadors and 17 speakers of Parliament. ... The number of women in 173 parliaments worldwide has declined from almost 15 percent in 1988 to less than 12 percent today."

The breakdown of former communist states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and the introduction of democracy into those countries has not been helpful to women diplomats, according to Wright. In those places, which had female representation as high as 25 percent and 35 percent during communist rule, today have much less — as low as 4 percent in some countries, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Wright reported.

IS TODAY'S CONGRESS MORE PROVINCIAL?

While most Americans today accept globalization as the wave that will take the United States into the next century, the U.S. Congress and the press remain provincial, opines former White House adviser David Gergen in the Oct. 27 edition of *U.S. News and World Report*. "At the very moment when the most alert Americans recognize that globalization is here to stay and are seeking to master it, we see a totally contrary trend in our political culture," he wrote. "Businessmen and students may be heading overseas, but reporters and politicians are coming home."

Leading U.S. firms such as Microsoft, Exxon, IBM and Coca-Cola now earn more than half their revenue overseas, and on college campuses, more attention is being paid to foreign affairs, says Gergen, now the magazine's editor at large. Still,

one-third of Senate and House members do not even have passports, and in 1995, a year when 200 members of the German Parliament visited Washington, no members of Congress visited Bonn.

"It's disturbing that only 35 percent of the current members of the Senate and the House are military veterans, down significantly from the past," writes Gergen. "More alarming is that today's members constantly refuse opportunities to go abroad and see how the world is changing. While travel is up modestly this year, most members are so scared they will be accused of junketing that they stay home from world capitals."

RICHARDSON DUBBED ENVOY 'FEELGOOD'

U.N. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson, a former Congressman from New Mexico, was dubbed "Ambassador Feelgood," and a "global glad-hander" in the Nov. 24 issue of *The New Republic*. In a profile of Richardson, writer Jacob Heilbrunn examines Richardson's foreign policy experience before and after his current appointment to the United Nations, and concludes: "Richardson's term at the U.N. is, of course, still young. But his handling of the first foreign policy crisis in his watch — the Congo — suggests that the I'm-OK-you're-OK approach that he employed as a congressman and special-duty diplomat may now be a liability."

According to Heilbrunn, Richardson's "preference for accommodation over confrontation in foreign policy" took shape when he served on the House Intelligence Committee and circled the

50 YEARS AGO

"As in many other parts of the world, the Transportation Problem reared its ugly head from the very beginning of the trip," noted a piece entitled "A Vice Consul Visits Okinawa," penned by FSO John B. Burnett in the December 1947 issue of the *Journal*.

"The Army's troop carrier planes are used for the trip to and from the island and any mode of conveyance obtainable — usually a topless jeep — is the rule on the island. Plane schedules from Tokyo are not regular and flights are set up or canceled on short notice, so it is usually necessary to stay in 'flight status' for several days before."

The island, the scene of Japan's last World War II defense, is 960 miles southwest of the main Japanese islands. An increasing demand for certain consular functions made necessary monthly visits to Okinawa.

CLIPPINGS

"Ambassadors must be their nation's chief trade promotion officers in the countries they represent."

—THOMAS JEFFERSON,
U.S. PRESIDENT,
1801 TO 1809

world on various fact-finding missions. These included visits to meet Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi in February 1994 and to North Korea in 1994, where he negotiated the release of an American helicopter pilot and the remains of another pilot who had crashed north of the demilitarized zone.

"What's disturbing about this episode is that even after this lengthy exposure to the Stalinist regime in North Korea, Richardson still seems blind to its true nature," writes Heilbrunn. "Kim Jong Il may be starving his people to keep a massive military machine running, but Richardson's belief that 'Kim Jong Il's success shows a civilian, more pragmatic side' is gaining influence.

"For all his peregrinations as a freelance courier for the Clinton administration [while a congressman], Richardson

was also choosy about his assignments — that is, he was careful to take only assignments where he was likely to come out looking good," writes Heilbrunn. In his first foreign policy crisis since taking the U.N. job, Richardson negotiated with Laurent Kabila, now the president of Congo, to allow U.N. human rights monitors to tour the country, and antagonized South Africa's government by prematurely announcing dictator Joseph Mobutu's departure. In addition, commitments he thought he had won from Kabila and other factional leaders in Congo turned out to be empty promises, according to Heilbrunn.

"Richardson will have none of this," writes Heilbrunn. "He maintains that his missions were a success — yet another vindication of his personalistic approach to diplomacy." ■



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SPEAKING OUT

Can You Trust The New, Improved CAO?

By TERESA C. AND DAVID T. JONES

It was not long ago that the career and assignments officer (CAO), essentially the personnel counselor for FSOs rotating jobs every two to three years at the State Department, was considered the last resort to problem-solving, whether it be trouble with the IRS or a job assignment. The prevailing wisdom was that CAOs, until recently known as career development officers or CDOs, existed primarily to pound square-pegged FSOs into round-shaped assignments. The CAO held the whip, forcing most FSOs to take any assignment offered. Sometimes the job was a lucky gem — say a posting to Prague or Paris — but more often, it was that ubiquitous “hard to fill” position in a difficult post in Latin America or Africa.

If FSOs thought of the Office of Career Development and Assignments at all, it was as a vague group of bureaucrats that doled out plums to favorites, while jerking around the less-than-favored FS masses.

Last year, however, essential changes were made to the assignments system to combine the roles of two functions: career development officers, who represented FSOs, and assignments officers, who represented

CAOs are a Foreign Service mixture of confessor, psychiatrist, career adviser and slave-market manager.



bureaus. This allows the new CAOs to represent both clients and to develop closer ties to the regional bureaus, which control a number of assignments. While the new system has its flaws, it does offer FSOs more opportunities for better assignments. The new, improved CAO can help, that is, if FSOs know what to look for.

Most CAOs, who serve two-year terms, have a continuing caseload of about 300 FSOs, 150 of whom change jobs each year, making them a Foreign Service mixture of confessor, psychiatrist, career adviser and slave-market manager. On a day-to-day basis, he responds to his clients' e-mail, phone messages and drop-ins, while handling the politics and paper work of assignments, retirements and, sometimes, deaths. There are some 35 CAOs at the State Department; the personnel systems

of FSOs at the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Information Agency are different and do not use CAOs.

Usually, a CAO is assigned a group of FSOs either at entry-, mid- or senior-level, plus groups in a specialty, such as diplomatic security or environment, technology and science. At the same time, CAOs are assigned to represent regional and functional bureaus, whose personnel interests they are expected to consider. When this creates conflicts of interest, the CAO must pass the bureau's representational duties to another CAO on the bureau-liaison team. Furthermore, since all CAOs who counsel senior-level FSOs are themselves senior FSOs, a CAO might very well be competing against one or more of his clients for an assignment.

The newly defined CAO acts as a broker between individual FSOs seeking good assignments and the geographical and functional bureaus seeking good employees. Though he represents FSOs' interests, he also has to consider bureau preferences for specific FSOs. This means that each CAO has a potential “in” with several bureaus, but must rely on his colleagues in the Career Development Office for information on bureaus he doesn't represent. That can make for an uneasy relationship, which, at worst leads to a situation where neither bureau nor client trusts the CAO's neutral, honest role as broker. In such cases, recusal on the part of the CAO is an option.

Teresa C. and David T. Jones are senior FSOs. Teresa Jones, who recently completed an assignment as a CAO, is now working in the Information Resources Management Office, and David Jones is working at State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.



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When the rubber meets the road in “panel” meetings — akin to a National Football League draft, with bureau chiefs seeking their choices for jobs — the CAO represents the FSO, most importantly in a struggle, for example, among several candidates for a choice assignment. A CAO is the FSO’s advocate to the 13-member panel of CAOs, which includes representatives of the involved bureaus, CAOs with responsibility for entry-, mid- and senior-level FSOs, and a “continuity” representative, who ensures that “fairness” issues are considered in assignments. The CAO’s skill in presenting the FSO’s case is key. Preparing for a selection panel, which meets weekly, is a painstaking process, particularly if an FSO is making a case against another candidate who is already the bureau’s “preferred” candidate. Occasionally, when the struggle is between several bureaus for one person, the CAO represents the bureau in the “shoot-out” for a candidate. Contested assignments are extensively debated, and the outcome is a constant surprise, often dependent on a wide variety of elements, including the CAO’s personal skill, the strength of a candidate’s case, the status of the bureau opposing him, his career needs — and how strongly the siroccos are blowing.

So, how can an FSO get the most from his CAO? Because of a new customer-service orientation in the bureau, a CAO is more interested in FSOs’ careers because they can affect his own future. FSOs without assignments or unhappy with their jobs who complain to a CAO’s supervisor can translate into poor efficiency reports — and career detriment — for the CAO.

Nevertheless, that doesn’t mean all CAOs automatically have an FSO’s best interests at heart. They may not even know what’s best for a client. FSOs should be self-reliant in keeping

all their bureaucratic paper in order, and not wait to blame their CAO’s indifference after they’ve lost a long-sought assignment. Most FSOs spend hours perfecting reporting cables, but give short shrift to bids for their next jobs, forgetting that using diplomatic skills to campaign for the next assignment is an important element of any diplomat’s career.

Besides their bureaucratic function — such as keeping track of FSOs’ personnel files, helping them extend and curtail in jobs and getting the latest information on openings — CAOs can provide valuable information not available elsewhere at State. A CAO should know who calls the assignment shots in the Personnel Bureau and elsewhere, and can advise on how best to lobby for a position. A CAO should also know what people in charge really think of his FSO client’s work, how he’s fared in applying for other jobs and what, realistically, his chances are for assignment, promotion and career development. The key is feedback. No one likes bad news, of course, but not knowing can lead to career frustration and stagnation.

There are always too few highly sought-after assignments, such as deputy chief of mission, principal officer in a small post or office director in a bureau in Washington, D.C., those neon rungs on the ladder to ambassadorships, but judging from the few assignments offered this year, the number of “average” assignments has also dropped from 1996. FSOs who accepted the first passable offer lucked out more than they realized, leaving their more choosy peers scrounging for leftovers. That doesn’t mean an FSO should grab the first job with a bearable aroma, but recognize that fewer chairs exist this year in this game of musical chairs of appointments.

SPEAKING OUT

This year, the process has become so frenzied that CAOs were pouncing on unexpected openings like hungry wolves, and, in a particularly macabre touch, one FSO's death sent desperate CAOs searching their client lists to locate someone with the right skills to fill the vacated slot.

Some CAOs rank as world-class contortionists for their skills at balancing the competing interests of FSOs and State Department bureaus, but if a relationship isn't working, an FSO can request a new CAO. A CAO is most important to entry-level officers trying to win tenure and to senior-level officers competing for a dwindling number of assignments.

There are, of course, warning signs that a CAO is failing you, such as if he:

- ignores your e-mails, faxes or phone messages and is rarely in his office. No matter how good he may appear to be, he is not effective unless your interests are being fully protected.

- makes sympathetic noises, but doesn't provide objective advice. Friends are for sympathy. CAOs are for counsel. We know one CAO who was so much on the side of the FSO client in a dispute that he exacerbated, rather than alleviated, the conflict so that it required mediation by a high-ranking embassy official.

- gives incorrect information or is persistently clueless. If a CAO's answer seems wrong, get his judgment in writing and research it yourself in the Foreign Affairs Manual.

- gossips and recites names of other FSOs' assignments and problems.

- tries to fill unpopular assignments through pressure tactics. If a CAO is more interested in solving a bureau's assignment problem than making you happy, he's not on your side.

- doesn't respect your views. CAOs have a duty to share current thinking on the best career paths and assignments for FSOs, but that doesn't mean they should refuse to work on an assignment. If you request an assignment below your grade, which you want for its 25 percent pay differential to pay off your tuition bills, that's your business and it's your CAO's duty to accommodate your request.

- is famous for losing even strong candidates in panel "shoot outs," those presentations CAOs make before panels vote to determine which candidate will receive a given assignment. This officer is the CAO equivalent of an incompetent lawyer representing a client in a capital murder case.

- has a bad "corridor" reputation among his peers.

- is competing against you for an assignment.

Counseling and assignments work would be pretty dull if it were only a matter of rotating people among posts. Clients, especially those overseas, need someone to call upon for guidance in the assignments maze and to act as sounding boards in considering career moves. A strong, effective CAO is even more important now that all State Department personnel are facing a morale crisis in the face of shrinking budgets, downgraded jobs, limited careers and stressed-out and overworked employees. Many FSOs are unhappy, not so much because their career prospects appear dimmer, but because they believe their skills are no longer valued.

CAOs exist to help FSOs with their careers, so they should be used wisely. CAOs may be limited in their powers and some may need to do a better job for their clients, but ignoring them is not in FSOs' best career interests. ■

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LEARNING FROM INSIDERS

Forty-six years after the U.S. Information Agency was founded, it appears the agency will cease to exist on Oct. 1, 1999, when it will be integrated into the Department of State.

However, it is unclear how quickly — or whether — integration will move, since House Republican conservatives stripped authorization for the foreign affairs agencies' reorganization from the \$13.1 billion Foreign Operations Bill, before its Nov. 13 approval by Congress. House Republicans removed the item — as well as U.N. and I.M.F. funding measures — reportedly in frustration when the White House declined to compromise on its threat to veto any bill that includes antiabortion language. Congress will convene again in January.

After the Clinton administration's April 18 decision to reorganize the foreign affairs agencies, a reorganization proposal was prepared last August by representatives from State, USIA, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Though the team's proposal found consensus on many issues and was presented to Secretary of State Madeline K. Albright, her views are not yet known, since she has not announced her final plan. The team's proposal has not been made public, but speculation is pos-

sible on the general shape of a new State Department.

The reorganization team's proposal on integrating USIA includes recommending the naming of an under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs, who would oversee three new bureaus: international information programs, international education and cultural affairs, and public affairs.

The agency's E Bureau, which would be renamed the Bureau of International Educational and Cultural Affairs, would continue its current mission of managing a variety of exchange programs. The International Information Bureau would consist of the current I Bureau — except for the Foreign Press Centers, which will move to the

Bureau of Public Affairs. The new International Information Bureau's main function would be to provide quick response to the field through programs such as the Washington File, the Information Resource Centers and expert speakers.

However, team representatives from State and USIA disagree over which bureau should manage USIA's current multimedia programs, Internet services and print publications. State proposes these functions be transferred to the new Bureau of Public Affairs, while USIA representatives believe they should be included in the Bureau of International Information. The team proposes that the Bureau of Public Affairs include State's Public Affairs Bureau and the press relations staffs from USIA, ACDA and USAID. This new bureau would also include the Foreign Press Centers.



DOUGLAS CHIZEM

**PROPOSAL RECOMMENDS
NEW UNDER SECRETARY,
3 BUREAUS, NEW CONE**

By J. RILEY SEVER

F O C U S

*The reorganization team found consensus on many issues,
but Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright's views
are not yet known, since she has not announced her plan.*

USIA area offices would be integrated into State's regional and functional bureaus, to be responsible for regional and global issues. Programs proposed by posts would be evaluated by these groups and the under secretary. The new under secretary would also supervise the Office of Strategic Communications and Program Coordination, whose staff would have thematic and regional expertise to develop public diplomacy strategies abroad.

A significant change being considered involves turning the International Broadcasting Bureau into an independent agency. IBB now oversees the Voice of America, the WorldNet television and film service, the Office of Cuban Broadcasting and grantees Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Radio Free Asia.

USIA's staff would be integrated into State's Civil Service and Foreign Service ranks. There seems to be agreement by both USIA and State organization team representatives that USIA personnel would be moved at the same grade, salary and tenure into State, according to authorization legislation for the reorganization, which is still pending. This means any required downsizing would be shared equally by all agencies. However, since budget savings were not the goal of the reorganization, personnel reductions are expected to be achieved through attrition and early-departure incentives.

In addition, a fifth cone — public diplomacy — would be added to State's four existing ones of political, economic, consular and administrative. USIA's administrative officers would be integrated into State's administrative cone and USIA secretaries would join State's secretarial specialty. Since there are no comparable specialist categories at State, the three USIA specialist groups — librarians, English teachers and printers — would be added to the State Department as new specialist groups.

The proposed structure would be advantageous for public diplomacy because only one organization would be

responsible for all aspects of presenting and interpreting U.S. foreign policy to broad public audiences. The new structure would also help strengthen the Public Affairs Bureau at the State Department, as well as help enhance the role of public diplomacy in the foreign policy formulation process. The integration of USIA into State seeks to ensure that the policy content of State's domestic and international outreach programs is consistent and coordinated, yet tailored to target specific audiences.

This proposed plan maintains separate public affairs and public diplomacy functions and resources, as mandated by the Smith-Mundt Act and the Zorinsky Amendment. The Smith-Mundt Act, passed in 1948, banned the distribution of any USIA product within the United States. The Zorinsky Amendment, passed in 1985, widened the ban to include any activity or employee whose funding or salary came from USIA monies.

This proposed structure would also allow for the innovative work of the I Bureau to continue. Launched nearly three years ago as a "government-reinvention laboratory" under Gore's National Performance Review, the I Bureau incorporates the best practices of private industry, such as cross-functional teams, technical expertise and less bureaucratic hierarchy — essentially, fewer management layers and more teamwork — to achieve faster, more effective responses to policy issues. Placing public diplomacy staff at State's regional and functional bureaus also will provide a new mechanism for identifying high-priority issues, both regional and thematic, by using Washington staff to help resolve problems in the field.

Several important issues remain to be resolved, such as whether funding for public diplomacy, excluding exchanges, should be absorbed within State's current appropriations, or whether — as USIA believes — a need exists for separate appropriations for public diplomacy salaries and programs, the latter of which USIA defines more broadly than does State. USIA is also concerned that public affairs officers retain control of staff and resources required to conduct public diplomacy programs. ■

J. Riley Sever, an FSO with USIA, is on a two-year assignment as vice president of the USIA constituency of the American Foreign Service Association.

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

A

brief historical journey provides a revealing backdrop to today's integration of the U.S. Information Agency into the State Department, with lessons for the future.

The United States was the last of the great powers to shed the tradition that diplomacy included only formal relationships between governments. So it was not until 1938 that President Franklin D. Roosevelt created a small cultural section in the State Department to counter Nazi propaganda in Latin America. And it was not until 1942, six weeks after Pearl Harbor was bombed, that the Voice of America was formed to support wartime aims and policies. Its first broadcast on Feb. 24, 1942, was transmitted in English, German, Italian and French. Today, VOA today transmits in 52 languages.

After World War II ended and with the Cold War on the horizon, President Harry S Truman created in 1946 an Office of Information and Cultural Affairs at State. Truman's stated objective was "to see to it that other peoples receive a full and fair picture of American life and the aims and policies of the U.S. government."

Thus the first official peacetime program of information and cultural affairs began, aimed at other peoples. A new era of American diplomacy was under way; never again would America's conduct of foreign affairs occur solely between governments.

In 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower decided that international information, educational and cultural programs did not belong in the State Department. He believed that few U.S. diplomats were trained for — or excelled in — public communications, and such programs worked better outside the State Department. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles agreed. For "more efficient and economical administration," Eisenhower moved the information program from State into an independent information agency, which he created by executive order.

Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, now in charge of reconsolidating USIA and State, was 16 years old when Eisenhower founded the agency. In

doing so, he stipulated that although USIA would receive policy guidance from the State Department, it would report to the president on the overseas impact of U.S. policies. Eisenhower also gave USIA a place at the table of the National Security Council because he wanted it to consider the opinions of foreign publics. He would have also moved educational exchanges and cultural programs into USIA, too, but Sen. William Fulbright insisted they remain at State. It would be President Jimmy Carter who transferred them to USIA, in 1978, after yielding to the agency's request.

It's true that at the height of the Cold War, Eisenhower used USIA to strengthen America's "voice of



DOUGLAS CHEZEM

USIA CONSOLIDATION INTO STATE: GOING BACK TO THE FUTURE

BY MARK B. LEWIS AND
EUGENE ROSENFELD

F O C U S

In the 44 years since USIA's birth, there have been more than 65 government studies on reorganizing the foreign affairs agencies. Some 31 focused on USIA's role.

truth" against Soviet communist propaganda. He saw the work of USIA as important to demonstrating the advantages of democracy and freedom. But it is not true that he regarded USIA solely as an instrument of the Cold War, since he viewed the latter as an aberration.

He was very aware of the long history of the exchange programs, which began in 1946 with the Fulbright Program; of the overseas libraries, with the first one started in 1942 in Mexico City, named the Benjamin Franklin Library; and of the well-trusted Voice of America. All of these programs had preceded the Cold War.

"If Eisenhower were here today, he would regard the abolition of USIA as a mistake and would view the reintegration into the State Department as a step backwards," noted Abbott Washburn, the agency's first deputy director from 1953 to 1961, in a recent interview. Washburn had worked with Eisenhower to build the agency exactly as the president had wanted.

Retired FSO David I. Hitchcock, who in 1953 was working for Republican Sen. H. Alexander Smith, a co-author of the legislation that created USIA, agrees the agency is not a Cold War relic. USIA was "never primarily intended to articulate what the American people are against but what we are for, what we hold dear and what we wish to share with the rest of the world," he wrote in a May 28 letter to *The Washington Post*. Indeed, the White House's claim last April that abolishing USIA "brings to an end" a bureaucracy "originally designed for the Cold War" challenges historical accuracy.

Sen. Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had been pushing for the consolidation of USIA, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Arms Control and Disarmament

Agency into a restructured State Department since 1995. The White House's April 18 decision to integrate USIA and ACDA into State appeared sudden.

The Clinton administration-Helms agreement was brokered after the senator agreed to allow a Senate vote on the long-delayed, high-priority Chemical Weapons Convention. For two years, Vice President Gore had held off Helms, arguing that fusing USIA and State would only spawn a larger, more cumbersome bureaucracy and that presidents ought to have at their disposal a distinct and structurally independent information agency with special skills for the special mission of public diplomacy. Indeed, that's exactly what Eisenhower had had in mind when it was created.

In the 44 years since USIA's birth, there have been more than 65 government studies on the reorganization of the foreign affairs agencies. Of these, an astonishing half — 31, to be exact — were focused on the role of the information and cultural programs.

The first one, which preceded USIA's 1953 creation, was a six-month project ordered by Eisenhower. The Jackson Commission recommended the agency's mission be "to submit evidence to peoples of other nations ... that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress and peace." The Eisenhower directive also called for explaining and interpreting U.S. government objectives and policies; unmasking and countering hostile attempts to frustrate U.S. policies; and delineating aspects of American life and culture that improve foreigners' understanding of U.S. policies.

When John F. Kennedy became president in 1961, he retained much of Eisenhower's directives for the agency but refocused its mandate on influencing public opinion abroad. His order became: Persuade, not just inform. However, "to influence public attitudes" was a long way from Eisenhower's more objective directive of "to submit evidence to people of other nations."

Mark B. Lewis and Eugene Rosenfeld, retired FSOs, are both former assistant directors of USIA. Lewis served in the Middle East, India and Africa, as well in Washington, D.C., as director of State's Office of Cultural Presentations. Rosenfeld served in Europe, Asia and Africa.

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When Lyndon Johnson became president in 1963, he underscored USIA's mission of truth-telling over propaganda. "The United States has no propaganda to peddle," he said. "We are neither advocates nor defenders of any dogma so fragile or doctrine so frightened as to require it." By the time the Johnson era came to a close in 1969 and the presidency of Richard Nixon began, USIA had become the most scrutinized, studied, reviewed and evaluated foreign affairs agency of the government.

The same questions recurred in reorganization proposals and reports. Where is the right home for U.S. information and cultural programs? Should these programs present only favorable information about the United States? Should they be designed for long-range strategic goals of "mutual understanding," as the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 prescribed, or for more specific, tactical objectives? Are these objectives compatible or contradictory within the same organization?

In the fall of 1967 the American Foreign Service Association asked ambassador Graham Martin, a senior FSO, to consider the future of America's foreign affairs agencies. The Martin Committee recommended that President Johnson put USIA back into the State Department. A year later, during the 1968 elections, the Republican Coordinating Committee produced a report, "The American Image Abroad," which Sen. Howard Baker introduced into the Congressional Record. It recommended the transfer of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs from the State Department to USIA, landing the issue of information, educational and cultural programs in a national political campaign.

The role of educational and cultural affairs and whether they should be conducted by the State Department or USIA dominated almost every study and reorganization plan from Truman to Carter. James Keogh, USIA director from 1973 to 1976, advocated transferring education and culture programs from State to USIA because he thought the separation of information and cultural affairs was artificial, arguing the two were complementary parts of a communications effort and had "common objectives."

Between 1973 and 1977, during the Ford and Carter administrations, seven studies on reorganization of the foreign affairs agencies produced conflicting recommendations on the objectives of educational exchanges and cultural affairs and where these programs should be housed.

President Carter, as noted, transferred these programs

from State to USIA in 1978 and even briefly changed the name of USIA to the International Communications Agency. He also changed its mission to "the sharing of ideas and cultural activities among the people of the United States and the peoples of other nations." That year, Albright was a staff member on the NSC.

When Ronald Reagan became president in 1981, one of his first moves was to restore the agency's original name. More substantively, however, USIA's mission under Director Charles Wick took a more hard-line, anti-communist tone, reflecting the spirit of administration policy.

The most exhaustive study, some 2,000 pages worth, was issued by the SFRC in 1954. Later that decade, a Brookings Institution study directed by H. Field Haviland Jr., then-director of the think tank's Foreign Policy Studies Program, called for a complete overhaul of the foreign affairs agencies and the creation of an expanded Department of Foreign Affairs including State, Foreign Economic Operations and Information and Cultural Affairs. Ironically, this was pretty much the same recommendation proposed by Helms in his Foreign Relations Revitalization Act of 1995.

What emerges from this historical excursion is a variety of different conceptual ideas about official information and cultural programs in a democratic society and some suggestions on semantics. "Public affairs' should be the terminology to distinguish information from cultural affairs," one report touted. "Cultural diplomacy" was the concept recommended by the Stanton Report of 1975. "Substitute the phrase 'cultural exchange' for 'educational exchange,'" another study recommended. Today USIA uses "public diplomacy," a phrase coined in 1965 to cover both official and non-governmental programs at USIA by Edmund A. Gullion, who had just returned from a tour as ambassador to the Congo.

And through all the studies are the overarching, but conflicting, recommendations about USIA as a whole: Abolish it. No, put it back into the State Department. No, keep it as an independent agency. Against this background, it's really a wonder that U.S. information and cultural programs have accomplished as much as they have.

Now a new reorganization is under way: The remarkable and virtually unprecedented thing about today's USIA-State Department consolidation is that it's proceeding without a serious study of the issues or the feasibility of integration and, so far, without spirited debate. With the

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While it's true that Eisenhower created USIA at the height of the Cold War, he did not regard the agency solely as a Cold War instrument.

Cold War over and the new Information Age expanding worldwide, there is no question that the role of information, education and cultural programs has changed in today's more complex world.

Secretary of State Albright's support of the USIA functions that State will inherit is now the key to making the consolidation effective. It will be a challenge to match deeds to the sweeping White House claim that "public diplomacy is now more central than ever to American foreign policy." Albright has said she believes overseas information and cultural programs are a central part of her responsibilities. Her appointment of the first under secretary for public diplomacy will be a bellwether. Ideally, he will have a communications background, proven managerial skills and hands-on foreign affairs experience. Senior Albright aides are confident the under secretary will be part of her inner circle, and public diplomacy will be a higher priority in the policy-making process.

But former USIA Director Carl Rowan, now a syndicated columnist, says that is unlikely. A former deputy assistant secretary for public affairs and ambassador to Finland, Rowan penned a column in 1977 saying that the State Department "hierarchy ... is chronically opposed to public diplomacy, fearful of public information. If USIA is returned to State, a crippling timidity will become the hallmark of public communications with the world." Asked recently if he believes opposition to public diplomacy is still strong at State, he replied, "It will never go away." We shall see.

There has never been a more important time for public diplomacy. Worldwide, diplomacy is becoming more a matter of persuading publics, not just governments, in an increasingly democratic world. With foreign publics flooded with information, the external projection of U.S. policies cannot be left solely to the private market, such as CNN, Hollywood and other promoters of American pop culture. They have their own commercial axes to grind. In today's impersonal era of the electronic Information Age, the role of

USIS specialists overseas is more important than ever: Human sensitivity is needed to sort fact from fiction.

"The real art in this business is not so much moving information or guidance or policy five or 10,000 miles," former USIA director Edward R. Murrow once said. "That is an electronics problem. The real art is moving it the last three feet in face-to-face communication." This is what USIA's experienced information specialists do best and credibly around the world.

David D. Newsom, a former under secretary for political affairs, USIS field officer and three-time ambassador, offers additional advice: "USIS personnel abroad have a different status in the eyes of foreigners and it gives [the officers] credibility, access and *entree*," he said in a recent interview. "Local people find USIS a more acceptable presence, especially when the United States is seen on the wrong side of an issue and especially in the Third World where people are suspicious of the official establishment." He urges State to continue USIS's separate field identity. "Combining functions in Washington should not lead to a diminution of this asset abroad," he said.

It is important to apply the lessons of history to today's reintegration of USIA and State. If clarity replaces the conceptual and semantic mosaic of the past and the tangle of good intentions over desires and expectations from the overseas information and cultural programs, that will augur well for the new consolidation of the organizations.

In his last speech to a USIA audience in 1963, Murrow said, "We cannot know what the future holds. We do know, however, that change is the only constant in world affairs. And we know our agency is charged with helping to fashion that change. ... The president expects us to do the things that diplomacy and force alone cannot: to change the minds of [people] in their best interests and ours." These words spoken 35 years ago by Murrow, who rarely indulged in superlatives and hyperbole, still sum up the importance of public diplomacy in a new, improved State Department. ■

LEARNING FROM BUSINESS

When the Ford Motor Co. acquired controlling interest in Jaguar several years ago, it made a substantial capital investment to upgrade its aging plant and introduce new manufacturing

techniques. Jaguar's engineering had failed to keep up with its image. Although the U.S. Information Agency continues to be held in high regard in most of the countries where it operates, the Department of State, too, will soon discover that after decades of program and staff reductions, USIA will require an infusion of new capital if its engine is to match its luster.

While the integration plan suggests that State and USIA achieved a compromise that will do minimal damage to both organizations' structures, it also appears the deal was excessively driven by issues of territory and history. If the Smith-Mundt Act, which prohibits USIA funds from being spent on domestic information programs, is an artifact of a different age, shouldn't the administration propose its repeal rather than continue the awkward division between programs prepared for foreign and American audiences? International borders, particularly in the digital age, are too porous to respect that artificial distinction.

It is understood that many of the discussions leading to the compromise concerned traditional questions of organizational structure, budget authority, personnel management and program efficiency. They are all legitimate questions, but should come after a bottom-up agreement on vision, mission and strategy — and should be guided by the best practices of industry and government.

Of the several questions that should be asked, surely one of the first is proposed by former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski in his insightful 1993 book, *Out of*

Control: "What is the likely doctrinal and geopolitical shape of the world as it enters the 21st century?" While one cannot expect agreement on an answer, few would disagree that international relations in the 21st century will differ significantly from those of the past half century.

Indeed, as Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich noted in a recent Georgetown University speech, "Over the next two generations we will have a scale of rethinking and reorganizing how we engage in international relations, which ... will be comparable to the early 16th century, in terms of the rise of what we now call diplomacy." Brzezinski, concerned that global change is out of control, warns that American influence will wane unless guided by a globally relevant set of values.



DOUGLAS CHEZEM

NEW, 'IMPROVED' STATE
SHOULD BE CREATIVE,
DYNAMIC, DECENTRALIZED

BY BARRY FULTON

Government is seldom blessed with the entrepreneurial spirit. The new State should encourage risk-taking and creativity in conducting public diplomacy.

A year after Brzezinski's book was issued, *Wired* magazine Executive Editor Kevin Kelly published a book of the same title, *Out of Control*, in which he describes the distributed, decentralized network — a process more than a thing — that underlies the business model of modern corporations from Federal Express to Microsoft. Rigid hierarchies with multiple layers have been replaced by dynamic, flat structures with little regard for conventional command and control procedures. There is no better example of a richly-connected network than democracy in action. And there's no better example of yesterday's model than that of an assistant secretary who tries to control from the top.

Kelly suggests that success in the network economy requires sustaining perpetual disequilibrium. From a state of near chaos emerges the creativity required to deal with complexity. But, as Kelly writes, "The difference between chaos and the edge of chaos is subtle."

The paradox of control is evident in the failure of centrally-controlled command economies. As more direction came from the top and controls became tighter, individuality was squashed and production suffered. From General Electric to General Motors, corporate America reengineered to reduce the burden of excessive control. Reinvention of the federal government, led by Vice President Al Gore, has yielded uneven results but numerous successful models, ranging from the Department of Agriculture to

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the Department of Defense, as well as elements of State and USIA.

However, government is seldom blessed with the entrepreneurial spirit, nor can it act responsibly, in some cases, if it assumes new risks. For example, one would hardly encourage creativity at the expense of control at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission or the Centers for Disease Control.

Which manager will relinquish the control of a classic bureaucracy and risk chaos? And who has the subtlety of leadership to ensure that the near-chaos that nurtures creativity doesn't slide into the chaos that means disaster?

While I do not mean to argue for a universal solution that applies uncritically to the conduct of international relations, I am suggesting that State's new structure should encourage the decentralization and risk-taking that will lead to creativity in conducting public diplomacy.

If a mission requiring the trust derived from face-to-face communication is to be successful, what is also required is the reach of a network of communicators and a yielding of bureaucratic control at the top to maximize control of the outcome. It requires, for example, that ambassadors be free to speak to the press without Washington clearance, particularly on delicate and timely matters. If that appears counterintuitive, it is because the central micro-management of international relations has become more common, when the center should be giving broad direction.

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas R. Pickering's recent instruction on *démarches* was more than a symbolic step in the right direction in communicating with governments abroad. Embassies were urged to abandon the stale practice of delivering Washington-crafted *démarch-*

F O C U S

es to foreign ministries, instead using embassy judgment on the best way to communicate the message. A similar instruction on dealing with public issues is long overdue. The risk of repeating only approved statements from Washington is much higher than an occasional misstatement. If public diplomacy only delivers Washington's mail, reducing the number of field personnel may as well continue.

The 21st century will be characterized by richness, complexity, diversity and transparency. Nations will be arrayed in a space bound by integration and fragmentation, by participation and centralization, by resource abundance and resource scarcity. The simple political model of the Cold War will be replaced by those reflecting the growing complexity of international affairs.

Not only will a successful organization in the 21st century have to be flexible and smart, it will have to continually reinvent itself to mirror the rapid changes of society. No organization understands this better than the U.S. military, which prides itself on both its organizational and technological innovation. Reporting from Fort Leavenworth for *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1996, Robert Kaplan wrote that "Foreign policy will be increasingly influenced by the military, because war, peacekeeping, famine relief, and the like are becoming too complex for civilian managers. ... More and more information has to be processed with less and less time to reflect." Because the State Department lacks the tools and training of the Pentagon, he suggests that embassies may not survive beyond a few more decades.

Kaplan is comparing an institution that has grown up on technology to one that has prided itself on its skills of representation, reportage, negotiation and advocacy. While he is right in reporting on the Pentagon's ascendancy — confirmed by its role in Haiti and Bosnia and even Somalia — he is wrong in suggesting that issues are too complex for civilian managers, and he is wrong in suggesting that embassy links will be less important. In a complex world, there is no substitute for the role of the cultural and political interpreter between states.

Even though Brzezinski's question about the shape of the 21st century cannot be answered, State's new Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs cluster should be expressly designated as a "learning organization," one that functions best today by preparing for tomorrow. That means an organization that rewards learning by its employees, that honors their achievements, that considers their diverse views, that respects their talents, and that welcomes their curiosity and the wisdom of their experience. That means an organization that, while openly and fairly administered, is not bound by personnel rules written for another era or by practices developed for another technology. That means an organization that takes prudent risks. That means an organization that spends less time justifying its existence and more time communicating with publics here and abroad. That means an organization not content to simply change labels or adopt slogans, but to change its culture, to reinvent and redefine itself as often as the external environment demands.

Aristotle taught it 2,500 years ago. Every successful politician and educator recognizes it today. Trust is the bedrock of successful communication. Establishing trust across cultures is particularly challenging. And maintaining trust while addressing complex issues is equally difficult. As historian William Polk has observed, diplomats are not only distrusted by those to whose countries they are accredited, but also by their own governments. Witness Sen. Phil Gramm's 1995 description of diplomats as federal employees who "rent long coats and high hats" and are more interested in "building marble palaces" than substantive issues.

Even as trust is lacking on the outside, State's caste system within erodes mutual trust among employees still further. While every organization welcomes internal competition, few have a pecking order as stratified as that of State. Is there any evidence that the Brahmins of the State Department will welcome the Foreign Service and Civil Service professionals of USIA as col-

F O C U S

*An organization functions best by preparing for tomorrow,
by rewarding learning by employees, by honoring their
achievements, and talents and by welcoming their experience.*

leagues? It is an issue that the Department of State must confront.

State appears to have accepted USIA's brief but ambitious mission statement: "To understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions and their counterparts abroad." Yet with declining resources, there can be little expectation that this dialogue can be broadened. In USIA's 45 years, the number of nations with U.S. representation has doubled, the world population has doubled, and America's wealth has increased manyfold — yet the overseas staff of USIA has been halved. If USIA's technological base had increased proportionately during this period, the situation might not be as foreboding, but that, too, has suffered as budgets have eroded.

Serving twice as many countries with only half the staff, the number of USIS personnel at a post is, on average, one fourth of that of nearly a half century ago. America's potential for influencing foreign publics and broadening the dialogue is significantly less than it was, absent new technologies or processes. Neither is evident in the reorganization plan. Even if the new structure rearranged the furniture, the architecture remains unchanged.

For most of the first half of this century, as with several centuries before, the model of communications with other countries was simple: state to state. With the advent of international broadcasting and official exchanges in the '40s, a new dimension was added: state to publics. In the last several years, a third dimension has emerged as a quasi-official channel of communication: public to public. In this category are includ-

ed not only non-government organizations and multinational companies, but also individuals who exercise enormous influence on international issues through the new media.

Who are the publics with which State will communicate after integration? The unexamined answer to the question is to continue USIA's recent practices. However, as resources have shrunk, attention has been increasingly focused on governments at the very time their publics are becoming more important in decision making. To continue these trends, to be increasingly exclusionary, is to have it backwards for the demands of the next century.

Embassies must reach out again to opinion leaders, even at the expense of traditional government-to-government contact. While this may be contrary to bureaucratic instincts in an era of cost-cutting, to revert to the practices of 50 years ago is to ensure the marginality of diplomacy in the 21st century.

It will not suffice to say that the new organization requires smarter people and better technology. It needs, first of all, better appreciation of the people already employed, and a reward structure that encourages learning. On the question of technology, there is scarcely anyone in the foreign affairs community who doesn't recognize that State's computer system is an artifact of an earlier generation. Of course, it must be replaced. But so too must the department's culture of control and secrecy; otherwise, it will be using Pentiums, rather than Wangs, as expensive typewriters.

If the problem were as simple as upgrading State's computers, the solution would be simple. Instead, the issue is to tap into the power of net-

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worked computers, as well as the Internet, but also closed intranets among personnel, within regions and across functions. Here the risks are twofold. To do nothing is to guarantee that State will become increasingly monastic in its communication. As writer Adam Gopnik noted in a recent issue of *The New Yorker*, "The French ideal of a world in which everyone has a *métier* but no eustomers to trouble him is more practical than it might seem. It has been achieved, for instance, by the diplomats inside the Quai d'Orsay, who create foreign policy of enormous subtlety and refinement which has absolutely no effect on anyone outside the building."

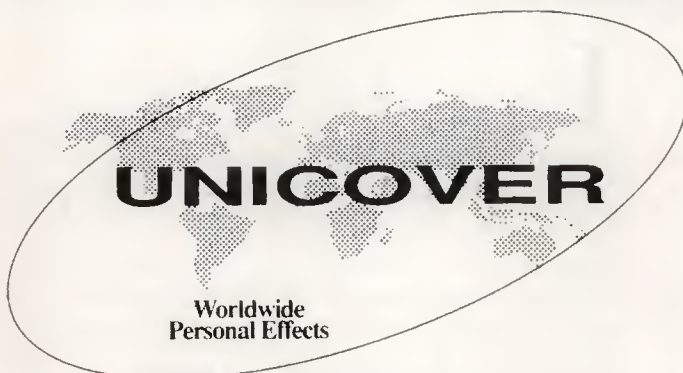
On the other hand, to join, to build the communication networks that will predominate in the next century will take not only imagination and talent, but will also run the risk of failure. There is no blueprint that will guarantee success.

There are two models now available to help imagine the future. The first is American leadership in developing international guidelines for electronic commerce. Heading an interagency task force, White House adviser Ira Magaziner took the unusual step of posting a draft of proposed guidelines on the Web and seeking domestic and international comments. The electronic exchange not only substantially improved the final product, but also prompted several other governments to develop compatible guidelines. It worked so well, to the satisfaction of so many in and out of government, in and out of the United States, that its success made barely a ripple in the press.

The other model is the U.S. position on greenhouse gas reduction for this month's conference in Kyoto, Japan. Stakes are high for diverse U.S. constituencies: Business groups oppose stronger industry restrictions and environmental groups

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argue the limits are too weak: Relatively little has been done to engage either group in decision making. Now, lacking a domestic consensus, the Clinton administration finds itself urging other nations to join a position that lacks support at home. It may even work, but it is not a model for the future. Collaboration, not the application of force, will be increasingly required. To the extent it is done with skill, diplomacy will be increasingly valued.

In a recent interview, former State Department counselor and ambassador Max Kampelman said, "What we have been observing in this century, particularly the last part of this century, is probably greater in its significance than any act since the discovery of fire by primitive man." If this was heard from almost anyone else, it would be easy to dismiss as hyperbole. It may be, instead, the reality of an age when communication is instantaneous, when information is

infinite, when patterns of diplomacy honed in the industrial age are rendered irrelevant by new actors, new issues and new technologies.

If the integration of USIA into the State Department diminishes the function of public diplomacy in the years ahead, the nation will have lost an opportunity to communicate effectively in a complex environment. If today's model of public diplomacy continues unchanged, so, too, will America have lost an opportunity to strengthen its international engagement. If the talents of both State and USIA can be combined to develop a new public diplomacy that recognizes the possibilities of the emerging global network, consolidation will be recognized as a success. While the notion of control remains elusive, the U.S. goal in using communications effectively should be no less than an international system characterized by dynamic stability. ■

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LEARNING FROM SUCCESS

In the 1860s, as the world was adjusting to the invention of the telegraph, a British diplomat was heard to remark that the new era of instantaneous international communication heralded the demise of the diplomat's role. What, after all, would be the role of envoys when governments could communicate directly? As an analysis of governments' needs of the day, the remark was reasonable enough. And yet, it could not have been further off the mark. What that diplomat had failed to anticipate was that the telegraph — and the communications revolution it presaged — was the beginning of a revolution in the scope and intensity of how nations interact. As a result, the diplomat's role a century later may have changed, becoming simultaneously more mundane and more complex, but it has hardly gone away.

Today, however, the American foreign affairs community risks repeating the same analytical error about public diplomacy — the tools governments use to engage foreign publics in a dialogue — about both specific policy objectives and larger national values. In the last decade, funding for public diplomacy activities has dropped dramatically — the budget for the U.S. Information Agency has been halved and its staffing cut by a third.

Furthermore, despite official insistence that the purpose of the foreign affairs agencies' consoli-

dation is to enhance the effectiveness of public diplomacy, the actual merger process has focused largely on administrative issues. Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of USIA's demise is precisely how little debate there has been about the role public diplomacy should play in national security strategy.

Why has there been no debate? Certainly the problem is not a lack of recognition that post-Cold War America needs new approaches to foreign policy. Indeed, there is general understanding of the basic dilemma facing national security strategists today. On the one hand, because American prosperity increasingly depends on the smooth functioning of a far-flung trading system, the end of super-power rivalry has not reduced the need for U.S. involvement abroad, even in regions where America's direct interests are few. On the other hand, the steady shrinking of foreign policy and military resources — combined with the American public's antipathy for overseas adventures — limits U.S. flexibility in funding crises. Indeed, although America remains the world's preeminent military power, this decade's frenetic and costly series of humanitarian interventions suggests that military dominance in a fractious world is as much a burden as a benefit.

These constraints played into the Clinton administration's 1996 national security policy of "engagement and enlargement," a policy that reflected not so much a



DOUGLAS CHEZEM

TRUE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY
CAN PREVENT CONFLICT
BEFORE IT EVEN BEGINS

BY LARRY WOHLERS

AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association



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AFSA News Editor: Polly Gilbert

FS Written Examination: New Date, New Exam

By Mitchell Cohn, FSO
Department of State
Office of Recruitment

Sharpen your wits and stock up on those high-energy snack bars: The next Foreign Service Written Examination is at hand! The exam will be given February 28, 1998, at more than 200 locations across the country and at embassies and consulates overseas. As in previous years, the FSWE will consist of: job-related knowledge, including U.S. and world history, American and foreign systems of government and basic principles of economics; a test of English grammar and usage; and a biographic questionnaire. It is not, however, a clone of its predecessors.

One major difference is that the applicants will be required to write an essay at the test site. In the past, applicants wrote this essay as part of the oral assessment. This year they will have one hour to choose one topic from a group of ten questions and write the essay. Those candidates who receive a passing score on the first three portions

of their written exams will have their essays scored. Candidates will need passing scores on both the written exam and the essay to receive an invitation to the oral assessment.

The 1998 FSWE will take about six hours to complete and differs in two important ways from previous tests. First, it comes early in the year, rather than in November or December. This change allows for more effective public outreach during the fall - especially important for students who, in the past, had to learn about, study for and take the exam all within the space of one semester.

The written examination most current FSOs underwent was, mercifully, not the four-day marathons given in the first half of this century (see sidebar). Even so, as the test has become shorter, the numbers taking it have burgeoned: 11,587 applicants registered to take the 1996 written examination; 9,595 actually took it and 2,988 passed.

With its own Web site, State has brought
Continued on page 4

• AFSA Dateline •

• The Governing Board elected Willard DePree interim AFSA president. DePree, who took office October 21 following Alfonse La Porta's Senate confirmation as ambassador to Mongolia, will lead AFSA until State Vice President Dan Geisler takes over on Jan. 1. Geisler was unanimously elected AFSA president by the Governing Board October 20.

• Elisabeth Love More left a \$50,000 bequest to the AFSA Scholarship Fund in the name of her late husband, James Balard Mare. This scholarship will become a part of AFSA's Financial Aid Scholarship Program whereby the interest from this bequest will be awarded to a needy Foreign Service student to meet college expenses.

• Stacy Williams, one of the two 1996 AFSA/Thursday Luncheon Group-sponsored interns, was sworn in on October 9 as one of 23 Presidential Management Interns (PMI) working at the State Department. Williams was selected from a pool of 1,400 applicants for this prestigious two-year program sponsored by the Clinton administration. Stacy is assigned to the Office of the Inspector General and, as part of the PMI program, will be offered a full-time position upon completion of the internship.

• AFSA welcomes Perri Green as interim Scholarship Administrator. Green will replace Lori Dec while she is on maternity leave. A

Continued on page 6

STATE
V.P. VOICE

• BY DAN GEISLER •

The Broad-Gauged Officer of the Future

At the risk of playing a one-note song, I solicit AFSA members' input in virtually every article I put in this space. Lately I have been encouraged by an increase in the e-mails and faxes that have come in on a variety of issues facing both generalists and specialists. (I note that those using cables are in the decided minority. It's not that we don't read them; it's just that cables are a fading technology.)

One issue in particular generated several dozen comments: multifunctionality. The notion that we can use the promotion system to develop a cadre of "broad-gauged officers" capable of dealing with the full range of policy and resource management challenges ahead has been in use for about a decade. For the past two years AFSA has maintained that the program is flawed in its execution and needs to be revised.

An October AFSA cable to the field (State 202946) asked for reactions to a proposed approach to and definition of multifunctionality. Does the issue matter? You bet. This year, for instance, 40 percent of promotions across the senior threshold were multifunctional. That gives an enormous edge to multifunctional generalists. The fraction of mid-level promotions awarded classwide (i.e., multifunctionally) is determined in large part by the number of positions with a multifunctional designator. But the logic behind conferring the designator is cloudy at best. As a result, the system sets up a perverse set of incentives.

The cable generated several dozen replies. That's more than we get for most of our appeals for comment, a sign that people take the issue seriously. Most were thoughtful and carefully argued. A

few were cynical and one or two were abusive. They contained recommendations that spanned the gamut and contradictory statements of "fact." For example, some respondents felt that the current system actually works rather well and should be left alone. Others felt that it

was seriously flawed, opaque and inequitable. Remedies varied widely. Several members stated that the best course of action is to dismantle the canal system entirely and have all officers compete classwide. Others felt that some adjustments to the position base would bring the program into better alignment with its goals. The comments betrayed a disheartening division between

political/economic and administrative/consular officers. Members of each group claimed that the multifunctional program worked to the advantage of the other group. Policy officers claimed that while resource officers could easily obtain policy assignments, they were essentially barred from resource jobs. Resource officers claimed the opposite was true.

The number and diversity of replies reflect the wide variety of experiences we have had with the promotion system and show how challenging it will be to reform this program.

GETTING AFSA INFORMATION:
If you can access the world-beyond-State by e-mail (either commercially or via DOSNET), you can receive regular updates, including media comments and legislative news, via AFSANET. To sign up, visit AFSA's homepage at afsa.org or send me an e-mail. AFSANET has a spam content guaranteed to be less than 1 percent.

"AFSA has maintained that the program is flawed ..."

Discretion of speech is more than eloquence; and to speak agreeably to him with whom we deal is more than to speak in good words or in good order.

— Francis Bacon

AFSA Enhances Value of Membership

The Governing Board recently approved several measures to enhance the value of AFSA membership. On October 8, the Board voted to restrict individual AFSA grievance and legal services to dues-paying members. In the past, AFSA provided individual assistance to all Foreign Service employees, regardless of membership. Recent court rulings and guidance from the Federal Labor Relations Authority now allow AFSA to restrict its grievance and legal services to dues-paying members. AFSA's policy change is supported by dues-paying members who were surprised to learn that AFSA had offered its services to all employees, regardless of membership.

The legal and grievance staff will continue to provide written guidance to non-members on the grievance, equal employment opportunity (EEO), Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and Diplomatic Security (DS) investigatory processes. They will also be available to meet briefly with members to explain in general terms procedural issues. However, AFSA will only provide substantive, ongoing assistance in grievances, EEO cases and OIG or DS investigation to members. This change does not impact AFSA's rights as exclusive representative and AFSA will continue to represent all members of the bargaining unit in collective bargaining negotiations.

The Board also voted to restrict eligibility for AFSA's merit scholarships to children of employees, spouses or retirees who are members of AFSA and/or the Association of American Foreign Service Women (AAFSW). AAFSW co-sponsors the merit award competition which is open to Foreign Service high school seniors. Finally, as discussed in the November issue of AFSA News, the Hirshorn Company is offering comprehensive professional liability insurance for AFSA members.

Show AFSA Pride

Proudly demonstrate your AFSA membership by wearing the AFSA lanyard. Use this blue elastic lanyard imprinted with the AFSA logo to display your building pass. You may receive your free lanyard from any of the AFSA offices: Main State, Rm. 3644; USIA, Rm. 368; and AFSA Headquarters, 2101 E Street, NW, Washington, DC.

DACOR Bacon House Foundation Announces Dreyfus Fellowship Awards

Several scholarships and fellowships will be available in academic year 1997-98 for children of FSOs for study at the Hotchkiss School and Yale University through DACOR Bacon House Foundation. Awards are made possible by and limited to the income from a generous bequest of the late Ambassador Louis G. Dreyfus Jr.

Hotchkiss will select one qualified enrolled student for a \$5,000 scholarship. Applicants should contact the Director of Admissions, The Hotchkiss School, Lakeville, CT 06039-0800, providing evidence of their parents' FS status.

Awards to Yale students, based on merit, will be made by the DACOR Bacon House Foundation in consultation with Yale University. At Yale, the fellowships are coordinated by the Yale Center for International and Area Studies, Henry R. Luce Hall, 34 Hillhouse Ave., New Haven, CT 06520. Awards will be applicable to university-billed expenses only. Aspirants may apply for the Dreyfus awards at the time of their application for admission to Yale University. Any Dreyfus award would be contingent upon confirmation by Yale University that the student has been admitted or is in good standing. Awards to undergraduates may be up to \$5,000. Awards to graduate and professional students may be up to \$10,000. Preference will be given to students in a field related to foreign affairs and for study toward a master's degree and only second year award will be at half stipend.

To apply for Dreyfus awards at Yale University, send the following to DACOR Bacon House Foundation, 1801 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006: • a copy of the most recent appointment/promotion document of the applicant's parent who is an FSO, active or retired • a brief letter of interest with full contact information • applicant's resumé • copies of most recent transcripts • a one-page statement of academic goals, work experience, awards and non-academic achievements. Applicants for graduate fellowships should add a second page outlining career goals as presently perceived. Applicants must complete all necessary admissions and enrollment procedures with Yale University separately. Deadline for applications is March 15. For further information, contact William C. Homilton at (202) 682-0500, (800) 344-9127 or by fax at (202) 842-3295.

FAS V.P. VOICE • BY MAGGIE DOWLING •

A Fair Race

For most FAS Foreign Service officers, no time of the year is as full of hopeful anticipation as the days before Selection Boards convene. Conversely, few days in the year are as full of disappointment and disillusionment as the days after the Boards' announcements. While we all will readily acknowledge when the faster horse wins, we are less ready to do so when the race track is foggy and the for curve imperceptible.

With two or fewer promotions in each class, career planning becomes more daunting and the consequences starker. Eleven FSOs now face TICs in 1999. With such high stakes in our personal and professional lives, clarity and objectivity in our merit system promotion process are imperative. AFSA is currently working on several initiatives to lift the fog from the race track.

The new AFSA/FAS safeguard proposal, which will require management to determine the number of promotions per class - based on budget and staffing patterns - before the Board meets, is an important step in that direction. Management's numbers do remain confidential until after the Boards have completed their rankings. In addition, management will be asked to provide a five-year projection for promotions so Foreign Service officers can better plan their careers. Ensuring that only career FSOs are eligible for Foreign Service promotions will be another step.

Your union is working on several fronts to ensure: that FSOs receive honest, usable feedback on performance; that members' concerns regarding the Board's composition are reviewed; that there is continual improvement in performance evaluation tools such as end

user comments and supervisory visits; that the grievance process is streamlined; and, perhaps most importantly, that merit and experience are always the primary considerations for promotions and assignments.

The recent Foreign Service Grievance Board's ruling on a Senior Foreign Service assignment in USAID further evidences rejection of the "closed door process." The Board ruled that the lack of transparency had denied FSOs opportunities for assignments necessary to exhibit required proficiencies for advancement (October Foreign Service Journal, AFSA News).

In a recent letter to the Acting Administrator, AFSA/FAS once again reminded management of the importance of assignments, including TDYs, to the careers of our members. We will remain ever vigilant in ensuring fair and equitable competition in all assignments for FSOs.

Despite the individual competitiveness of the Board process, we must not forget it is still a win-win situation. By working to help our colleagues achieve their optimum performance, we too are inevitably elevated; our own professional stature and that of the Agency are enhanced. Working together with AFSA, we can lift that fog and enjoy the race.

Increased participation by AFSA members in the development and discussion of personnel and professional issues demonstrates that things are changing. Working together we seek to clarify and enhance the Agency's responsiveness on policy and process, including the promotion system. Our voices are not only heard. They are key to change.

*"... it is still
a
win-win
situation."*

USIA
V.P. VOICE
• RILEY SEVER •

Zorinsky Limits Career Opportunities

I would like to follow up on an issue I feel is crucial to the survival of the public diplomacy cone and the public diplomacy function in State: Congress's intent to continue Section 208 of PL 99-93, Bon on Domestic Activities by the USIA, in its authorization for the reorganization. As currently proposed, this legislation - popularly known as the Zorinsky Amendment - and the Smith-Mundt prohibitions shall not apply to public affairs and other information dissemination functions of the Secretary of State as carried out prior to any transfer of functions but **will continue to apply** to overseas public diplomacy programs.

As the merger of the foreign affairs agencies takes place, AFSA is developing recommendations for management to ease the integration of USIA FSOs into State. It is AFSA's view that in order to be provided a viable career option, officers in a new public diplomacy cone should have access to both public diplomacy and public affairs positions, without barriers to the work they do or are called upon to do. Unfortunately, the proposed legislation will unduly complicate assignments to public affairs positions for public diplomacy officers.

GAO's interpretation of the Zorinsky Amendment is that USIA funding cannot be used to pay salaries for USIA officers to work in public affairs positions in State. This limitation would continue after the reorganization, meaning that **former USIA officers**, although members of the public diplomacy cone, would be limited to positions with international constituencies of State. While public diplomacy cone officers could be paid out of Zorinsky-limited funds when overseas or when assigned to a domestic position dealing with cultural and educational exchange or international information, they would have to be paid from the State salary fund when doing public affairs work or filling any other position with a domestic component. While this distinction appears to be easily made through a simple switch in accounting procedures, in actual practice it has proven difficult and unsuccessful.

Two issues complicate the implementation of the Zorinsky Amendment. First, not all FS positions are clearly divided between domestic and international audiences. For instance, a Web page intended for foreign audiences is also accessible to a US audience. A press release or a speech translation can be disseminated here and abroad. Likewise, USIS officers' support to US journalists abroad - especially those accompanying USG officials - might be seen as conflicting with Zorinsky limitations. Further, many new management techniques require considerable flexibility in staffing which might be absent in the new Department of State when such attention must be paid to audience and salary source for all public diplomacy officers.

Second, Zorinsky may limit career opportunities. In the past, State public affairs positions were not consistently filled by USIA officers because of problems associated with the complexity of reimbursable details required by Zorinsky. In a bureaucracy, minor distinctions like these can have significant ramifications in establishing priority of a cone for a particular position. If this legislation continues after reorganization, opportunities may be closed to a public diplomacy officer if management has to be concerned about additional paperwork related to restrictions on an officer's work. If public affairs jobs in Washington are not clearly identified as ones for which public diplomacy cone officers have priority, these career enhancing positions will be very limited for public diplomacy officers and this cone will not be viewed as a viable career option.

Congress wants to limit the use of public diplomacy products created for foreign audiences. The continuation of Smith/Mundt would do that. While AFSA can appreciate Congressional interest in maintaining the prohibitions of the Smith/Mundt Act, we request that the Zorinsky Amendment be repealed since it creates an unduly complex and potentially career-limiting distinction for us.

Written Examination

Continued from page 1

diplomacy into the electronic age and, in the process, made it vastly easier for prospective applicants to obtain up-to-date information about the written exam, as well as other topics at State (see sidebar). The written examination is, of course, only the initial stage in qualifying for appointment as an FSO with State or USIA. The next step, the oral assessment process, has undergone tremendous changes over the years, as well. In an effort to be as impartial as possible, the new orals assess candidates across twelve competencies (e.g., oral communication, cultural adaptability, judgment) on a scale of one to seven with each assessor measuring a candidate's performance on each competency. Likewise, candidates are examined by two pairs of examiners - one in the morning, another in the afternoon - covering the same competencies. Gone are the days of the infamous in-basket exercise, which was phased out in the early 1990s. In the current orals, candidates present mock *démarche* to examiners who role-play host country officials. The candidates are given a choice of one out of four *démarche* topics and have up to 45 minutes to prepare. During the 15-minute discussion, candidates cannot take notes, but afterwards candidates have five minutes to jot down notes to help them write a report (350 word maximum) on the meeting. Candidates also respond to a series of three "hypotheticals," or exercises, involving issues FSOs encounter in their day-to-day activities. Candidates no longer have to wait for weeks to learn whether they passed the oral assessment. Now candidates are told the results the same day. In recent years, the pass rate has averaged around ten percent. Those who pass are briefed on how the process will continue. First, candidates must submit a letter confirming their choice of cone within one week of the oral assessment. They are then placed on a rank-order list of eligible hires in that cone. At this point, candidates may choose to take a telephonic foreign language test conducted by the Foreign Service Institute which may improve their position in the rank-order list of eligible hires.

Veteran FSOs need not feel completely out of touch with the current exam procedures. The famous negotiation session - in which examiners observe a discussion among candidates on funding for individual projects in a simulated country team setting - remains a major part of the assessment process. Of course, candidates still have to wait for that security clearance before joining the State Department.

Foreign Service Exam Has a Long History

THE FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES (BUREAU OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS HISTORICAL OFFICE, 1961), RECOUNTS HOW AN EXECUTIVE ORDER ISSUED BY PRESIDENT CLEVELAND ON SEPTEMBER 20, 1895, AIMED TO REGULATE THE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR THOSE CONSULAR POSITIONS WHOSE CANDIDATES WERE APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT. THE EXAMS WERE BOTH WRITTEN (COVERING CONSULAR REGULATIONS) AND ORAL (TESTING THE CANDIDATE'S COMMAND OF FRENCH OR THE LANGUAGE OF THE HOST COUNTRY, AND HIGHLIGHTING THE CANDIDATE'S PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS). OF THE 13 CANDIDATES EXAMINED BEFORE MARCH 4, 1896, EIGHT PASSED.

PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT ISSUED AN EXECUTIVE ORDER ON NOVEMBER 10, 1905, REQUIRING VACANCIES IN THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF EMBASSY OR LEGATION TO BE FILLED EITHER BY TRANSFER OR PROMOTION OR APPOINTMENT AFTER EXAMINATION. SECRETARY OF STATE ELIHU ROOT SET UP AN EXAMINING BOARD TO REVIEW APPLICANTS DESIGNATED BY THE PRESIDENT, BASED ON ORAL AND WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW, DIPLOMATIC USAGE AND MODERN LANGUAGES. THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS CONSISTED OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE, THE SOLICITOR OF THE DEPARTMENT, THE CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF APPOINTMENTS AND THE CHIEF EXAMINER OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION OR HIS DELEGATE - A BUREAUCRATIC LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT UNTHINKABLE TODAY!

BY THE SECOND WORLD WAR, THE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION HAD BECOME A FOUR-DAY PROCESS. HAD YOU TAKEN THE EXAMINATION IN 1941, YOU WOULD HAVE SPENT SEPTEMBER 8 TO 11 WITH A GENERAL EXAMINATION ON THE FIRST DAY AND A HALF, FOLLOWED BY SPECIALIZED EXAMINATIONS IN LANGUAGES; COMMERCIAL, MARITIME AND INTERNATIONAL LAW AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS; HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT; AND ECONOMICS. THE 1941 STUDY GUIDE ASKED FOR DEFINITIONS OF PANTAGRUELIAN AND PHANARIOT. WHICH OFFICERS TODAY COULD, WITHOUT HESITATION, LOCATE VIIPURI OR SUDA OR SFAX ON A MAP? WHO TODAY COULD CORRECTLY IDENTIFY THE LOCARNO TREATIES OR THOMAS PARRAN?

RETIREES

V.P. VOICE

• BY EDWARD DILLERY •

First Impressions

My first impressions on replacing Ed Rawell as Retiree Vice President in October were how busy and productive AFSA is in service to our members and how important retirees are to the organization. We make up a significant part of AFSA. Retirees are active in many of the organization's committees and activities. And with our wide geographic coverage, we retirees can be the most effective spokespersons for the Foreign Service beyond the beltway.

In this regard, I want to commend Willard DePree, Petey Mullin and their colleagues in the Elderhostel project. Many of you are familiar with this nationwide program for senior citizens. Working with AFSA - and utilizing many retirees from several agencies - Bill has developed a program in the Foreign Service that exposes senior citizens to our culture and work. He has been doing this for two years and the sessions are always oversubscribed and receive rave reviews. I hope that any of you who are involved in Elderhostel will recommend these sessions to your friends around the country. Also please consider helping us develop similar programs outside Washington.

It seems early, but I want to mention **Foreign Service Day**, coming up on May 8, 1998. In response to members' comments on the publicity and content of last year's event, AFSA is working with the

Department of State to ensure that all members of our community have an opportunity to receive invitations and to enjoy a solid program in 1998. The Department's form for requesting invitations can be found in the November/December State Magazine and December AFSA Letter for retirees. In order to receive a formal invitation, send the form to: **Foreign Service Day, PER/EX - Room 3811, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-2810.** We hope as many as possible will attend. So please complete and return the form and let us in AFSA know what you would like to see in the program. I personally look forward to welcoming you back on Foreign Service Day.

Finally, I want to note that with reorganization and consolidation of the foreign affairs community coming - although no legislation has been passed at press time - it is vital for alumni to stay in touch with their agencies. Our input has been welcomed by the agencies. We can help the process culminate in a positive way.

I have heard from many retirees around the country via e-mail (cedillery@juna.com). Once again, I invite you to let me know of your concerns and ideas on the status of retirees and on issues affecting the FS and our various agencies in general.

How to apply for the FSWE: Registrants must be US citizens and at least 20 years of age. Application booklets have been sent to college and university career placement centers across the United States and will also be available through the Office of Personnel Management. They can also be obtained by sending a postcard to: FSWE, US Department of State, P.O. Box 12226, Arlington, VA 22219. Registration materials include the registration form, describe the examination format and provide sample questions and essay topics. Deadline for completed applications: for overseas test sites, January 16 and for US test locations, January 30. Additional information

about the Department of State and the upcoming written examination, as well as information on student internships and other employment opportunities, is available at www.state.gov by clicking on The Department, Careers, Foreign Service Officer, Outreach, Foreign Service Written Exam. The Department also has an employment hotline at (703) 875-7490.

A State Department-authorized study guide is available for \$11.95 from the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. The guide may be ordered using the form in the FSWE registration booklet or by calling (609) 771-7243. The guide is not available directly from the Department of State.

Dateline

Continued from page 1

resident of McLean, Va., Green is the chair of the Family Committee of Hospitality Information Services. Previously she was administrator of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3D in Washington, DC.

• Based on discussions during the AAFSW FORUM held Oct. 4, AAFSW members will be developing position papers on a number of subjects: membership, eldercare, childcare, spousal employment overseas, language training for spouses and support for the retired FS community. Contact Mette Beecroft at (301) 320-7698 or Peggy McMahon at (202) 966-8247 for more information.

• Scott Flipse, a University of Notre Dame doctoral student in American history, is seeking to interview active and retired FS personnel who worked for STEM, USOM, FOA, ICA and AID in South Vietnam from 1954 through 1975. He may be reached by e-mail at Scott.E.Flipse.1@nd.edu or at 2010 Kalorama Rd., NW, #43, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 462-2194.

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F O C U S

Many cannot appreciate what well-conceived public diplomacy can do, such as its unique ability to mitigate sources of conflict before crisis erupts.

particular ideological bent as the recognition of the new global realities. If America can neither ignore the world nor absorb the costs of policing it, then it must leverage limited resources by working closely with its allies and trying harder in the developing world to prevent conflict before it arises.

Engagement, however, demands first and foremost a process for communicating abroad. Obtaining the cooperation of others implies a mutual dialogue — with other governments, of course, but no less with their publics. For in this era of growing political pluralism, inexorable economic integration, and near real-time information diffusion, governments can no longer isolate the conduct of international relations from the publics they serve.

Why, then, has this general recognition of the changed requirements of global leadership not translated into a serious debate on the resources and strategies needed for American public diplomacy? One reason is that many in the foreign affairs community cannot appreciate what well-conceived public diplomacy can do. Many foreign affairs specialists — and in particular those who frequent Washington think tanks and write for the major foreign affairs journals — are typically trained in realism, a school of academic thought that views international relations as an incessant competition for relative power, prestige and survival. Realists, not surprisingly, find it hard to take public diplomacy seriously, viewing it as little more than high school exchanges and scholarships. Pleasant little programs, but not very relevant to national security.

For others, public diplomacy has never lost its image as an instrument of the Cold War: a useful tool

Larry Wohlers, an FSO, is public affairs officer at USIS Brussels.

for psychologically out-maneuvering the Soviets, but of limited importance now that the United States has no competition for world leadership. As a result, interest in public diplomacy has declined precipitously in the community of “strategic thinkers.” Major journals, despite having devoted thousands of pages in recent years to America’s role in the new world order, rarely mention communicating abroad. Indeed, the director of one think tank interviewed for this article, despite having just completed a major analysis of national security strategy, confessed that he hadn’t considered the role of public diplomacy.

Another vein of criticism argues that the globalization of human enterprise, and the spread of the international media in particular, have rendered government information programs superfluous. Argues the Cato Institute in its 1994 *Handbook for Congress*, “If it is important to publicize American perspectives on such issues, private media outlets are more than adequate: A government-run propaganda apparatus is unnecessary.” A more widely-accepted variant of that theme is the notion that the globalization of information has rendered meaningless the distinction between domestic and foreign audiences. With information beamed abroad in near real time, so the thinking goes, it is neither possible nor necessary to tailor America’s message for a foreign audience.

Although each of these arguments is seductive at first glance, they derive from a fundamental misunderstanding of what governments are trying to accomplish by communicating with foreign publics. Realists fail to grasp that the nature of international relations has changed dramatically since the days of academic Hans Morgenthau’s neo-realist theory. The emergence of information and technology-based economies, the convergence in political values among developed nations, and the development of international institutions and quasi-legal norms have transformed international rela-

tions. In an era when national power and prosperity are based less on control of land and population than on technology and access to markets, then, the role of diplomacy is more often to achieve agreements among friends than gain advantage over adversaries.

What the disciples of information globalization theories miss, on the other hand, is that public diplomacy is rarely intended to provide facts alone — such information is generally available elsewhere — but rather to frame the dialogue in a way that promotes understanding, influences and persuades. Whether explaining trade policies to skeptical Japanese journalists or Iraqi sanctions to an angry Middle East public, the goal is always to provide context, cut through cultural barriers, and establish, if not agreement, at least the mutual understanding that can make continued dialogue possible.

Of course modern technology allows the beaming of the noon press briefing worldwide in real time. But do information flows yield in and of themselves greater understanding? The evidence suggests otherwise. For example, the final stages of the Uruguay Round in 1992 and 1993 engendered enormous passions, becoming headline news as interest groups worldwide fought for advantage. The proliferation of interests was not the only obstacle to an agreement, however. No less important was the xenophobia that characterized each country's media coverage of the process.

Indeed, it was often easy to miss that the American, French and Japanese press were actually covering the same negotiations. Not only did each nation's press portray the key issues in different terms, but they made only the feeblest of attempts to present other viewpoints. Their "expert commentators" remained resolutely national — and nationalistic. It was not surprising, therefore, that the Japanese public perceived the round as a surreptitious Western attack on its sacred rice market, while many French suspected America of undermining French cultural defenses in order to promote Hollywood exports. Nor did the much-discussed emergence of the "international" media do much to promote common understanding. Yes, CNN can be found in hotel rooms around the world. However, the discussion of policy issues and the business of opinion-molding is, and will remain, a decidedly local process.

Ultimately, then, economic and technological globalization tends to make political cooperation more difficult, not less. Not understanding this nuance can dramatically reduce America's ability to exercise leadership in an inter-connected world. Despite the commonality of interests among developed nations, differing interpretations of the rules of the game, disagreements over priorities, and disputes over who shoulders the burden of maintaining global stability inevitably bring America into conflict with its allies. Amplified by the media, such conflicts can quickly polarize public opinion and make government-to-government accord more difficult. Although many in the foreign affairs community understand this point in principle, in practice the way foreign affairs is conducted fails time and again to take that fact into account.

One such example was the failure of the U.S. Trade Representative's campaign to open up the Japan auto market in 1995. Though the U.S. position could have been couched in terms of offering benefits to Japanese consumers an argument to which the Japanese public had been receptive in the past — the negotiations were instead billed as an American demand to end "unfair" Japanese business practices. That tactic may have been popular in the short term with American voters, but it not surprisingly aroused strong xenophobic emotions in Japan, making it impossible for Tokyo to cede ground, even if it had wished to.

The Japanese government, meanwhile, successfully found common ground with import auto dealers in America, who vociferously argued the Japanese case for "free markets." In the end, USTR was forced to walk away with considerably less than requested. Having ignored the importance of Japanese public opinion, the U.S. negotiating position was doomed from the start.

The greatest impediment to using public diplomacy effectively, however, is the difficulty of thinking about it as an instrument of long-term strategy. Most national security strategists, when they consider public diplomacy at all, perceive it as a short-term, tactical tool. The use of spirited public advocacy to support immediate U.S. policy objectives — for example, the exposure of the Soviet downing of a Korean airliner or radio broadcasts into China at the time of Tiananmen square — is the public diplomacy tool that attracts high-level interest.

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In an era when national power is based less on control of land and population than on technology and market access, diplomacy's role is to achieve agreement among friends.

Unfortunately, America's most difficult foreign policy challenges are generally long-term in nature, in part because they relate directly to how foreign audiences perceive our values and intentions. Because policy makers rarely think about public diplomacy in such terms, they do not take full advantage of its unique ability to mitigate the sources of conflict before they reach the crisis stage.

For example, one of the most difficult problems for American foreign policy is the need to balance short-term pressures to maintain friendly relations with authoritarian regimes with the long-term imperative to manage change in a stable manner. This tension is particularly in evidence in America's Persian Gulf policy, based heavily on the deployment of military forces to protect friendly regimes from external threat.

While the United States clearly has an interest in the region's stability, the greater long-term challenge to friendly states is likely to be internal instability, should those regimes fail either to deliver economic growth or countenance political dissent. Stability, in short, is not simply the absence of change. On the contrary, exploding demographics alone make change unavoidable in this region. Thus, the greatest danger for U.S. interests may be a repeat of the Iranian debacle, in which America became so closely identified with the Shah that the State Department restricted diplomatic contact with the Iranian opposition.

A public diplomacy-based strategy for the Gulf region, therefore, would recognize that the United States has relations with regimes — but interests with nations. It would use libraries, exchanges, cultural programs, embassy speakers, etc. to reach far beyond the traditional elite. In reality, USIS's centers have often served this function: Because of their cultural image, those who are afraid to visit an embassy are more accessible to USIS personnel. A public diplomacy strategy would systematize and expand this work, moving beyond "opinion gate-keepers" to target younger audiences. At the same time, it would aggressively promote the rule of law and

anti-corruption campaigns in these countries, thereby sharply distinguishing between the practices of local elites and American values.

None of the above is meant to imply that public diplomacy is a panacea. It is only one arrow in the foreign policy quiver. What these examples do illustrate, however, is that purposeful communication with foreign audiences can be far more effective, over a far greater range of situations, than the foreign affairs community commonly realizes. Indeed, America's emergence as the world's sole superpower has tended to obscure the reality that ideas are still important in international relations. Despite the demise of communism as a serious ideological competitor, the ability to explain American policies and values is still critical to U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Indeed, although American concepts of political and economic pluralism dominate the world today, their influence is already fading in countries where their adoption — however imperfect — has not materially improved people's lives. A telling example of this process comes from a recent USIA focus group study in the Ukraine, in which the respondents not only equated private enterprise with theft, but suspected the West of using economic reform to strip the country of its natural wealth. Left untended, such popular misunderstanding does not augur well for future East-West relations.

Secondly, the exchanges, scholarships and speaker programs that USIA nurtures are as important for what Americans learn from foreigners as what foreigners teach others about Americans. The many thousands of Americans who have traveled abroad on such programs are professionals, skilled in analyzing foreign societies, and their work offers them great entree and insight. Furthermore, experts who travel abroad under USIA auspices frequently have unparalleled opportunities to

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meet opinion leaders in those countries. Such contacts give invaluable feedback on how American policy is perceived abroad.

Moreover, exchange programs nurture American experts on foreign countries and cultures — many leading U.S. scholars on international affairs began their work under these programs. It is ironic, therefore, that at a time when the U.S. government spends nearly \$30 billion a year on covert information collection, it spends a relative pittance on the exchange programs that provide not just facts, but the context necessary to understand the larger world.

Although public diplomacy may be cheap, it is not free. Yet in recent years, large portions of those assets necessary for communicating abroad have been dismantled. This makes little sense. Public diplomacy programs are a minuscule line item in the Federal budget, but they can provide a vital link to elites of other nations. In many posts in the Third World, for example, the USIS library is one of the few sources of information about the outside world. Of

course, it is often argued that such countries are not important to American interests. However, one of the ironies of the most costly American interventions of recent years — Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda — is that in no case was a vital American interest deemed to be at stake prior to the outbreak of violence. If the United States is prepared to spend billions of dollars after the onset of violence, why not spend a few million dollars on preventive public diplomacy before the crisis begins?

At the same time, increasing the monies allocated will matter little so long as public diplomacy is not fully incorporated into policy planning. For example, a policy of engagement with China would suggest that America think systematically about just which exchange resources, applied to which sectors of Chinese society, and over what time frame, are needed to move China towards a fuller integration with the Western world.

Similarly, if the United States is truly worried about the prospects of authoritarianism reasserting itself in Russia, then it would make good strategic sense to attempt to sys-

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tematically improve the quality of Russia's political and legal institutions. Yet, in neither case have U.S. efforts over time been particularly well-financed, particularly given the size of those two countries. Indeed, despite the widely-recognized obstacles that the former communist world faces in changing public attitudes about political and economic pluralism, America devotes relatively few resources to making that transition easier.

Instead of thinking innovatively about how to stabilize the current situation, therefore, the foreign affairs community devotes far more planning and resources to worrying about how to deter Russia and China after they turn hostile.

Clearly, then, using public diplomacy more effectively will not be easy. Certainly, it would require greater coordination among the many agencies that have joined the game — indeed, the Pentagon now devotes more resources to communicating with foreign audiences than does USIA. Secondly, it is essential that the concept of public diplomacy that survives the foreign affairs agencies' consolidation be something larger than merely media reaction. State's culture has

never paid much attention to non-government communication, and has historically equated communicating with foreign publics with clearing press guidance. Deciding on the message, however, is not the same as transmitting it.

Ultimately, then, any organizational change that would actually enhance America's ability to communicate abroad will not occur as long as the larger foreign affairs community does not believe in public diplomacy as a strategic tool. It is not, after all, organizational savvy that underpins the military, but rather the consensus among opinion leaders that a strong military is a good thing.

Similarly, public diplomacy will not become an effective strategic asset until the foreign affairs community — those who think, speak and write about national security — begin to conceptualize it in their strategic framework. As long as public diplomacy remains largely an afterthought — to paraphrase Edward R. Murrow, as part of the crash landings of foreign policy, but not part of the take-offs — America will have trouble realizing its public diplomacy's potential. ■

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LEARNING FROM FAILURE

As the U.S. Information Agency moves closer to consolidation into the State Department, I edge closer to retirement, which permits me to view this event less as someone affected by the change and more as a concerned taxpayer. As such, I welcome the demise of USIA. It is an organization that has far outlived even its modest cost to the American public. Over the last several years I've given much thought as to what went wrong with this agency and how it became so divorced from the real world. As a means of introduction, let me cite a figure or two from my last overseas post at U.S. Embassy Caracas, which is by no means an atypical operation.

A look at USIS Caracas's Country Plan for fiscal 1997 shows the intention to encourage the government of Venezuela to create a more receptive environment for domestic and foreign investors; to enlist Venezuela's support for a hemispheric — and global — agreement to protect intellectual property rights and for a bilateral investment treaty; to prevent drug money from entering political campaigns; to support citizen participation in civil society; to link judicial and political reform to Venezuela's economic well-being; to communicate the dangers posed by illicit drugs and money laundering; to curb drug influence in society; to support efforts to negotiate a more effective

extradition treaty; to facilitate the transfer of modern ecological science and technology; to promote sustainable, environmentally-friendly development; and to demonstrate the variety of American society and the importance technology plays in its culture. While each of these issues may seem worthwhile, with what resources can they be addressed?

USIS Caracas had four generalist officers and 21 Foreign Service nationals, none of whom had expertise in any issue mentioned above. Of the post's \$1.3 million USIS budget, only \$148,000 — or about one-ninth — could be used for programs, representation, travel and equipment purchases, or in short, discretionary spend-

ing. This was, almost to the dollar, the sum budgeted for the annual rental of the four FSOs' apartments. Both figures also were dwarfed by the \$334,000 spent on FSN salaries — just under one-fourth of the total budget — and the whopping \$447,000 — more than one-third of the budget — for the four FSOs' salaries and allowances. In other words, most of the money was spent on overhead costs, not programs. Could a handful of non-specialists wielding \$148,000 have made any significant difference in even one of the areas cited above? How could anyone have hoped to accomplish them all simultaneously?

I conceptualize the agency as a fantasy land, played out on a stage bearing little resemblance to the real world. This stage



DORCIAS CHIZEM

**FSO SAYS AGENCY HAS
'IMPLAUSIBLE' GOALS,
& WASTES TIME, MONEY**

By HOWARD SHAPIRO

F O C U S

USIA is an organization that has far outlived even its modest cost to the American public. I've given much thought to how it became so divorced from the real world.

rests upon a tripod with three mutually-reinforcing legs, each providing strength to support the fantasy world but ultimately not grounded in objective reality. One leg, as outlined above, is thoroughly unrealistic goals. Let me illustrate this problem with an example from my Venezuela tour.

When I arrived in fiseal 1994, I learned that in addition to the post's budget, there were several months remaining of an 18-month period in which to use funds from a \$25,000 grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development to support activities strengthening the country's justice system. This was an enormous amount of money to use on just one Country Plan theme. With that \$25,000, a couple of American speakers were brought to the country and a couple of Venezuelans were sent to the United States to view the U.S. justice system in action. What struck me was the following coincidence: During the same period, the government of Venezuela had signed an agreement with the World Bank to address the country's administration of justice problems. The two parties agreed what was needed first was an accurate account of the country's legal and penal systems nationwide. Under the accord, each party agreed to contribute \$30 million over a five-year period to pay for a computerized listing of the court cases and dispositions, the prison population, etc. In other words, the people who presumably knew the most about this issue decided that \$60 million and five years were required to organize the information before tackling the justice system's enormous problems. What could a small band of non-professionals hope to accomplish with four one-hundredths of 1 percent of that sum?

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The second leg of the tripod is the lack of objective evaluation of USIA activities. Appraisal of the success or usefulness of programs has always posed a problem, since officers assumed any effected changes on audiences abroad were only obvious in the long term. To be sure, the agency made no attempt to develop more appropriate techniques of immediate evaluation; it just assumed that its programs were having an effect. This is not to say that USIA activities are not appraised, just that these evaluations are done by those responsible for the activity. It should come as no surprise that they are rated, almost without exception, as "highly successful."

In truth, after the dissolution of the Soviet empire, with the agency scrambling to justify its existence (a perceived need magnified by the threat, followed by the realization, of consolidation into the State Department), confirming success stories became increasingly more important. Reporting became ever more linked to results until the point was reached that, for all practical purposes, reporting became synonymous with results.

I would note that during my first two tours abroad in Italy and Brazil, from 1979 to 1985, these large posts, each with six branch posts, reported their highlights to the appropriate area office at headquarters every two months. Nowadays even one-person posts are expected to report highlights weekly. This illustrates the degree to which reporting success has gone from being merely a subjective evaluation of output to being the output itself — from the ridiculous to the sublime.

To illustrate this problem, let me return to Venezuela, this time in fiseal 1995. The public affairs officer wanted to do something splashy to emphasize his interest in the administration of justice and a program like one he had done with great success in Panama. The League of Women Voters had put togeth-

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er a group to stage a mock trial, using local law students and professors to play some of the roles. In both countries, oral argument was not practiced in the legal system and a mock trial was considered an excellent way to show how an oral trial works. I soon learned that the same year the Panama post had staged this program, USIS Caracas had staged an identical one. Needless to say, several years later the judicial system had remained unchanged. The point is that while these programs were unusual in their cost and complexity and considered "extraordinarily successful" by USIS posts, they made not one whit of difference in the legal procedures of either Panama or Venezuela. By USIS standards they were highly praised monuments to "public diplomacy" to be richly embellished in reporting and in their performance evaluations. In the real world, they were educational and entertaining ways for a group of local students to spend a day or two off from school.

The final leg of the tripod is the system used to evaluate and promote officers. The evaluation of officers, too, is completely subjective. It relies upon an annual written report, which, in truth, is merely a compilation of opinions and unsubstantiated claims. There is nothing to prevent the rater from claiming that any subordinate is uniquely gifted or, conversely, wallows in mediocrity. Little wonder that, human nature being what it is, most officers are given rather high marks and those who achieve promotion need the enthusiastic, hyperbolic prose of a rating officer who wishes to see them move up the career ladder, while a mere lack of superlatives — the dreaded "damning with faint praise" — is viewed as the gentleperson's way to indicate the recipient does not warrant upward career mobility. The most problematic aspect of the reward system is that since it is so thoroughly subjective, the subordinate has no intrinsic value to the organization. One is as good as his supervisor claims, no more, no less. In such a system, everyone quickly learns that the greatest threat to one's career is a superior who's not willing to use the superlatives necessary to remain competitive for promotion.

Fear of offending higher-ups translates into an unwillingness to voice opinions, lest they be at odds with those of the rating officer, and even an inability to suggest changes or recognize failures. Either could be interpreted

ed by one's supervisor as a threat: that the subordinate thinks he knows as much as the boss. Not that all supervisors would react negatively, but how can one be sure about his and why would he take the chance? Thus all action and ideas flow from the top down, and the possibility of a course correction when things go astray is lost.

An area director would never think of telling the front office that a pet idea stemming from some political appointee's previous experience in nursing homes, feed lots, academia, or whatever, simply won't play in Peru, even if it did in Peoria. After all, there's no objective way he can prove his worth to the organization ("Say what you will about me, but last year I was the company's second-leading salesman," or "I hit .325," or "I brought \$6 million of business into the firm"). No, the area director knows he could be replaced tomorrow without the agency missing a beat. In turn, those in the area office or the field know better than to risk a negative opinion about that which has their boss's approval, and so it goes down the food chain. This underutilizes the formidable human resources of the organization, because subordinates are discouraged from thinking about how to improve agency practices and procedures, trying instead to only please the rating officer.

The legs of the tripod are mutually supportive. That the agency's goals are implausible discourages objective assessment of products and services as well as personnel. If one can't possibly achieve a goal, one is unlikely to measure the progress in meeting it. One example of how this works is media placement. Typically, when a post succeeds in placing a USIA-sponsored piece in the local media, the post searches its file for the most inflated circulation or viewership figures for that outlet and reports that figure to Washington, as if it has some meaning. No one attempts even the most minimal study as to how many actually read the article and what effect it had on their thinking, or even if it was accurate or, dare I say it, helpful.

The most obvious example of the problem that I've seen occurred when I was stationed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. When a speaker on affirmative action came through Brazil, she seemed far more intent on lambasting the United States for its racism than in discussing her assigned topic, an aspect of American life still unknown to

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USIA targets opinion-makers abroad, but by the time these worthies reach the opinion-forming elite, they have reached a stage in their lives when their beliefs are unlikely to change.

Brazilians at the time. Even an interview set up with a local daily to publicize her visit became a vehicle for her to complain about America's virulent racism, which she likened to that of South Africa. The local paper was only too happy to feature the piece prominently. I was appalled. My report on her activities was not passed on to Washington by U.S. Embassy Brasilia, however. It seems it was at odds with the kudos she had received from the other posts she had visited. When I asked Brasilia for the press clippings of the interviews the other posts had raved about, it was obvious they were just as counterproductive as the interview she had granted in Rio. In this case we actually see the confluence, and thus the interrelationship, of two phenomena: USIS has nothing but great successes and it makes no attempt at objective assessment. In agency newspeak, by now universal, the term "press placement" ironically has been supplanted by "evidence of effectiveness."

This lack of assessment certainly reinforces the other legs of the tripod. Without assessment there is no evidence, if I might use that word, that the agency's missions are not being accomplished, and if one makes no attempt to objectively assess the programs, how can one measure meaningfully the performance of those who execute them? Absent the evaluation of changes in perceptions and actions that result from USIS's efforts, is it significant that this year an officer did three of one kind of program where last year there had been but one?

The proof that the base formed by this tripod is rock-solid is the absence of questions about agency practices, despite the incongruity that exists between the resources USIA commands and its objectives. Part of this acceptance is because Americans tend to be believers. Collectively, and in most cases, individually, we wish to believe in our society, our government, and, yes, our agency. As professionals, a good deal of the self-worth of

USIA personnel comes from our work. We wish to believe that what we're doing is important and that we do it well. In that regard, we are no different from the members of any other professional group. While we may accept the world is not a perfect place, we would be loathe to believe there are systemic problems with our agency. We work for a monopoly; we're lifers. For that reason, we are more loyal and less critical of our employer than those in the private sector.

It is this willingness to believe that makes the tripod even more solid. And solid it is. If one looks with a clear eye at the very way USIA officers have been taught to practice their trade abroad, it's easy to question the logic of what we do. The theory is that because USIA doesn't have sufficient resources to reach the great heaving masses in a given country, it must concentrate on opinion-makers, whose writing, speaking or teaching is assumed to reach a wider audience. These are the people who tend to be at the upper levels of the hierarchies of those organizations that are the most important in dealing with the issues being addressed. The problem is that by the time these worthies reach top positions and become members of the opinion-forming elite, they've reached a stage in their lives in which their beliefs are unlikely to change. After all, opinion leaders, by definition, have well-formed opinions. So they're the wrong people to address.

USIA is also talking about the wrong things. Remember my description of the objectives of Venezuela's Country Plan? USIS officers were supposed to be dealing with Venezuelan experts on trade and investment, drug awareness and law enforcement, the administration of justice, ecology, developmental economics, etc. In the days of "telling America's story to the world," officers were dealing with familiar subjects: American people, culture, government and institutions. Nowadays USIS officers are asked to deal with special-

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ized topics about which we know little compared to our foreign contacts. When I visited the chairpersons of economics at Brazilian or Venezuelan universities and think tanks, I was schmoozing with Ph.D. economists, many of whom held doctorates from some of America's finest universities. What did I have to offer them intellectually? USIA officers are thus expected to carry out our work with the people least likely to listen to us. Further, we're expected to deal with issues about which we are far from expert. Is it any wonder that we officers now see our role exclusively in terms of the programs we run to put foreign audiences in touch with American views, as opposed to transmitting those views ourselves?

Thus officers have become relegated to administering programs and supervising FSNs. Indeed, the USIA FSO is becoming ever more a supergrade FSN, since he is not any more likely to be the information communicator than is the local hire. This raises the question: Why doesn't USIA hire its impresarios locally? International firms do not bring in middle managers from the home country, since it's too

expensive. In fact, given the logie of all that the modern agency claims to wish to do in a given country, it makes far more sense to hire local specialists with backgrounds in law, law enforcement, ecology, international trade and the like, than to attempt to do the work with American generalists — who each costs taxpayers an average of \$200,000-plus per year while abroad. Local hires presumably would have complete bilingual fluency, know the country and the issues, and, in most countries, cost but a fraction of what it takes to maintain an American officer and his family abroad.

Were American officers themselves the communicators, it would not be fair to consider them mere overhead. Their dealings with foreign audiences would be the output of the post. In truth, as they are merely impresarios who administer programs and services and supervise FSNs who do the bulk of the day-to-day work, they should be considered an input cost, or overhead. Few in USIA, however, would admit their primary output is reporting.

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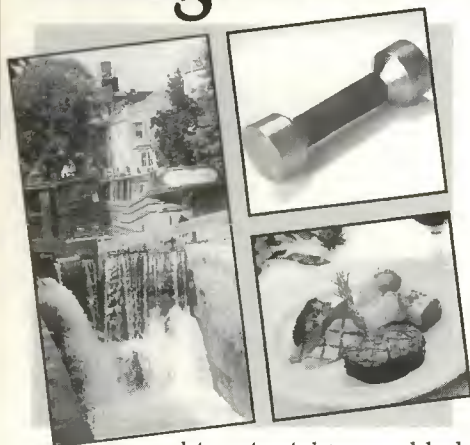
By concentrating on merely managing programs and writing glowing reports about them, USIA officers have not developed strong public affairs skills, leading to the Kafkaesque situation of the trumpeting of that oxymoron, "public diplomacy." There's not a single officer in the entire USIA headquarters whose job it is to develop strategies to help officers in the field solve basic public affairs problems. Nor does USIA train new officers, few of whom have academic or professional background in this field, in how to address difficult public affairs questions.

I noticed an obvious illustration of this lack of preparedness in fiscal 1993, while I was in Rio. It shouldn't have taken a public affairs genius watching televised reports of the Rodney King verdict and its aftermath to see that it was a potential public affairs nightmare: yet another indication that the United States was an incredibly racist society where different standards of justice exist for whites and non-whites. What was the response of the agency to these events? Absolutely nothing.

The same can be said for explaining other public relations problems, such as the Helms-Burton law, which allows U.S. citizens who lost property in Cuba in 1959 to sue international firms doing business in the United States that are making a profit on that Cuban property. Those who actually do deal with foreign audiences are left to explain what's behind the headlines and images, but since few officers see this as their job nowadays, obtaining and distributing a press release from some executive branch agency is considered "public diplomacy."

Thus the agency finds itself dealing with those least likely to listen about that which officers can have little influence, while ignoring that which should be their primary concern. And all of this is done without the slightest dissent. As USIA prepares to be integrated into the State Department, it is certainly an apt moment to dispense with meaningless phrases like "public diplomacy" and give thoughtful consideration to the nature of America's public affairs abroad. ■

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THE EDGE OF TERRORISM

SHIFTING BALANCE OF POWER IN ISRAEL
SPAWNS AN INCREASINGLY FRAGILE PEACE

By ROBERT G. NEUMANN

Renewed U.S. and Israeli demands that the Palestine Liberation Organization crack down on Arab terrorist groups as part of the Middle East peace process have once again put terrorism in the spotlight. Presumably, negotiators assume independent Arab terrorist groups will take their orders from the PLO. However, an historical look at the root causes of terrorism in the Middle East shows this reasoning to be overly simplistic. Terrorism will not be crushed until the conditions for its existence have been eliminated.

Terrorism is by no means a new phenomenon. The ancient Greek historian Xenophon wrote about the effectiveness of psychological warfare, and terrorism was openly advocated by French revolutionary Robespierre during the French Revolution's Reign of Terror in 1793. And when the American Civil War ended in 1865, defeated Southerners formed the Ku Klux Klan and brandished their special kind of terrorism to intimidate blacks and supporters of Reconstruction.

In the latter half of the 19th century and into the 20th, anarchists in Western Europe adopted terror as a legitimate means to achieve political power. By 1937,

Robert G. Neumann, a retired academic, was U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan from 1967 to 1973; to Morocco from 1973 to 1976 and to Saudi Arabia in 1981.

terrorism had become so common in Western Europe that the League of Nations attempted to draft an international resolution that would have attempted the suppression of political violence. A resolution was adopted after the widespread revulsion prompted by Croatian terrorists' assassinations of King Alexander II of Yugoslavia and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou in Marseilles. The thinking behind the resolution was that while violence against autocratic regimes was possibly tolerable — and hence the extradition of perpetrators should be excluded — it could not be allowed against democratic regimes if other methods of political protest were available. The measure failed to be ratified largely because World War II was already looming on the horizon. However, it remained an important step in the international pursuit to outlaw terrorism.

Nowhere in the modern world has terrorism created more havoc than in Israel, a tiny nation the size of Albania that has known nothing but civil war among resident terrorist groups since its birth five decades ago.

The roots of the country's terrorism were deeply buried in post-World War II Palestine, then a British colony. From 1944 to 1947, Jewish settlers used terrorism in their struggle to expel Britain and form the independent state of Israel. The opposition had two factions — Irgun Zvai Leumi, led by Menachem Begin, who would become Israel's prime minister from 1977 to 1983, and Lechi, led by Yitzhak Shamir,

who would become prime minister from 1983 to 1992. Both factions used assassination and bombing tactics unwittingly taught to Arab and Israeli civilians by resident British soldiers. However, both factions were dissolved once their objectives had been achieved.

Today, the Israelis find themselves and their government facing terrorism from another resistance group with claims to its territory. Recognizing their inability to defeat Israeli police and military, the Palestinian resistance has resorted to terrorist acts, usually against civilians, to demonstrate their resistance to Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The most active factions are the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Lebanese-based Hezbollah. Like all terrorist situations, the unrest grew from vast domestic inequality between parties.

Terrorist acts of the PLO, who enjoy an anonymity not shared by Israeli soldiers, have been particularly deadly in the last decade. And the Israeli government's alleged mistreatment of captured terrorists has drawn criticism from all quarters of the human rights movement, only helping to legitimize the Palestinians' cause.

Earlier this year, Shai Nitzan, senior deputy to Israel's state attorney general, testified before a U.N. panel about his government's torture tactics during interrogation proceedings of PLO terrorists or sympathizers. He admitted only that soldiers used "moderate physical pressure." But he also showed no remorse. "There is a case of necessity in our eyes. We thought [physical threats are] essential to reveal [various pieces of information]. I don't know how many people would have been killed otherwise." This "moderate physical pressure," which includes violently shaking prisoners and shackling them in painful positions, was legalized by Israel in 1987. Similar accusations have been leveled against Palestinian security forces in regard to Arab prisoners. According to a recent Amnesty International report, the Palestinian Authority has often tortured and killed suspected Israeli sympathizers. Even Palestinians who sell portions of their property to Israelis are subject to the death penalty. These incidents on both sides in Israel underscore how vio-

lence on one side is inextricably linked to violence on the other. They are sisters under the skin.

It is not possible to devise generally acceptable standards or even benchmarks of what is "tolerable" terrorism. Nor is it possible to objectively judge restrictions that Israeli occupation forces have imposed on the West Bank because military occupation by definition is unequal and undemocratic. Also, almost all wars against Israel were started by the Arab side; there is a price to be paid for sparking a war — especially for losing it.

Nor are there any answers to terrorism in Israel in the innumerable scholarly books and articles in which both Israelis and Palestinians claim historical or biblical "rights" to certain territories. When a people's security is threatened, its livelihood and dignity are also threatened, and nothing is more futile than insisting that one side abandon forceful action while the other continues.

Nor is there much use in arguing whether Israel's attempts to create new Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem are permissible under the Oslo Accord and previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements. Attempts to modify the agreements after their negotiation are usually bitterly resented as only further widening of the gap between the two sides. In his memoirs, Shamir has openly admitted that he never intended to return land to the Palestinians, a point that underscores the lack of integrity inherent in many Palestinian-Israeli agreements. Though Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not been as frank publicly, the similarity of his actions on Jewish settlements leaves few in doubt about his intentions.

He did say in his 1996 campaign, however, that Israel had the right to build settlements in East Jerusalem. But in September, when Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert — supported by American Jewish philanthropist Irving Moskowitz — sought to

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further enlarge these settlements, he was halted by Netanyahu, who acknowledged the Palestinians would see expansion as provocative.

The interrelationship of political situations and terrorism, as well as the reverse flow, can be illustrated by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's shifting position on the issue. Like other resistance leaders, he began as a terrorist, at least in the eyes of his opponents, but as his legitimacy as a political leader grew, he found his past a hindrance in negotiating with people who press him, quite naturally, to renounce terrorism. Nonetheless, both Americans and Israelis have stressed that Arafat must do so to prove his trustworthiness.

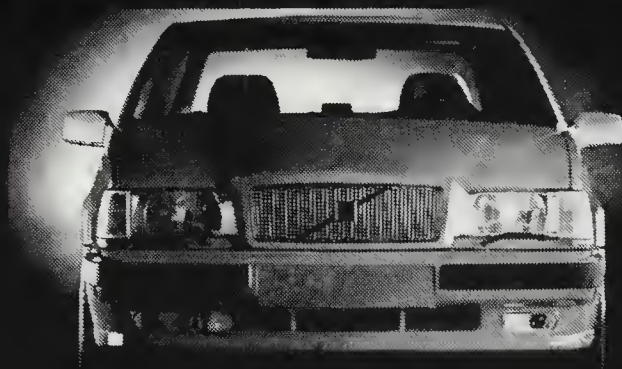
For Arafat, terrorism is not just a tactical military move. Whether he genuinely condemns terrorism is not as important as whether he believes the political balance has shifted sufficiently so that he can achieve his objectives through other politically legitimate means.

During the Rabin-Peres regime, this formula made progress. But Netanyahu's abrupt and unilateral moves, such as the September 1996 opening of the tunnel near one of Islam's holiest sites and the construction of more Jewish settlements on the West Bank, have made this formula much less effective. If Arafat is unsure whether he can trust Netanyahu, Arafat's own followers are likely to be even more ambivalent, further reinforcing Netanyahu's argument that Arafat and the Palestinians are not trustworthy. As Netanyahu pressures Arafat even more to renounce terrorism, the Palestinian leader is finding it increasingly difficult to escape the criticism that he simply executes Israelis' commands.

This is clearly a no-win situation for both sides. Netanyahu's demand for total security only enhances the power

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of Arab extremists, who have never wanted peace with Israel. Arafat has shown nothing but weakness in dealing with these radicals. Jewish terrorist acts, like the November 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Rabin by an Israeli student and the February 1995 killing of 48 praying Muslims at the Hebron Ibrahimi Mosque by a Jewish physician, follow the same pattern.

In the very difficult, complex Arab-Israeli situation, no single measure or combination of measures will succeed in halting terrorism. But popular support for terrorism, be it Arab or Jewish, is likely to diminish when the peace process begins moving forward again with support from both governments.

A strong and determined American policy that emphasizes rejection of terrorist tactics and mutual respect between parties is essential for progress. Consistently resorting to short-term political considerations, particularly those that lead to no new significant resolutions, will do the Clinton administration little good.

The continued dissatisfaction of the Palestinian population under Israeli occupation is a serious destabilizing factor capable of severely damaging America's regional and worldwide interests. By no stretch of the imagination can America's interests lie with extreme Israeli rightists who believe peace can only be achieved through use of force.

America's objective national interests have pushed the U.S. government, be it Democratic or Republican, toward those who preach dialogue but prefer none. Eventually, it will become clear that the answer to the Israeli-Palestinian question lies in the ability of the two communities to live side by side, perhaps not exactly equal yet, but certainly more equal than conditions of previous years. Clearly, a majority of both Palestinians and Israelis still yearns for peace. ■



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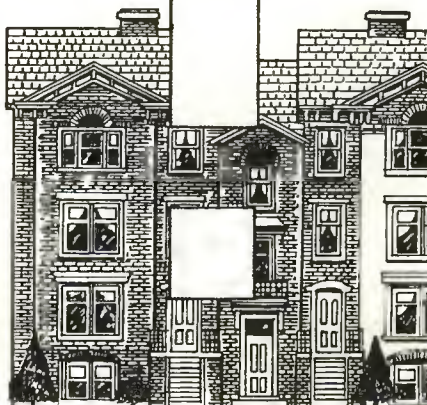
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A HOLIDAY MEMOIR

HOW ONE GROUCHY GRINCH LEARNED THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

BY MICHAEL J. IRELAND

U ntil one special Christmas in Cameroon, my wife, Inge, and our children, Ian and Heather, always referred to me as Scrooge. Perhaps they had good reason. Billed as a period of Christian charity and gift giving, Christmas for me had always been a season of neither, a day that smacked of commercial opportunity cloaked in a spiritual facade. Every year, as I counted the days until the holiday ended on Dec. 26, I found myself becoming more depressed and grouchy. I would often hear the words, "Bah, humbug!" echoing in my head.

Then, in 1974, something happened that would forever temper the way I viewed the holiday season. My family and I had been living in Yaounde, where I was deputy administrative officer for the U.S. Agency for International Development, for about a year and a half. It was about 8 a.m. on Dec. 23, and I was planning my day at my desk and dreading the approaching holiday when the embassy receptionist, Francois, called. In the reception area were two boys with a lost wallet, who said they

had found it on a street near the embassy and wanted to know what they should do.

Although I was annoyed at the interruption in my work routine, I walked down a flight of wide stairs to meet the boys. I guessed that they were about 9 years old, both so short they could barely see over Francois' 4-foot-high desk. They were well-groomed, but shabbily dressed in flip-flops, tattered khaki pants and faded, open-necked shirts.

One gripped the small brown leather wallet, the type favored by international travelers because it can comfortably accommodate a passport, plane tickets, visas and cash. The other boy, the taller of the two, said they had not seen who had dropped the wallet. Taking it, I thanked them and told them I would try to find its owner, and invited them to wait outside near a stone wall by the embassy while I made some phone calls.

Still grumpy about the interruption in my work day, I walked back to my office and examined the wallet more closely. Inside I found a Cameroon Airlines ticket for a flight leaving in only two hours to Donala, with a connection to a continuing flight that evening to Paris. I also found a French passport, a photograph of a woman and two young children — a boy and a girl slightly older than my own son and daughter — and about \$1,000 in French and Swiss Francs, U.S. dollars and British pounds. Examining the owner's other personal papers, I

Michael Ireland is a retired FSO for USAID who served in Dakar, Bamako, Lusaka, Khartoum, Yaounde, Kampala, Lagos and Quang-Tri Province, Vietnam.

learned he was a French technical assistance worker sponsored by his government to work on a project in Cameroon. Presumably, he was returning to France to spend the holidays with his family, and I guessed he was desperate to find his wallet. I glanced again at the photograph of his family, and found myself empathizing with this man who might not see his wife and children this Christmas.

I realized that the man would not make his flight unless he turned up in the next hour at U.S. Embassy Yaounde, and how could that possibly happen? Hadn't the boys said he had dropped the wallet on the street? How would he even know where to look?

I first phoned the French Embassy, but no one there had heard of him. I called every other embassy, international organization and foreign contractor I knew. Still, no one recognized his name, nor could suggest how to find him. After leaving messages at every logical place in town, I reluctantly returned to the day's business.

Through the rest of the morning and afternoon, I had numerous occasions to leave and return to the embassy and, each time I came and went, I spied the boys patiently waiting on the low brick wall near the front door. Each time I approached the embassy door, they would look at me expectantly and begin to stand, but when I shook my head no, they would sit back down and take up their long, silent vigil. Through the heat of the December day, when Yaounde's temperature can reach 90 degrees, the pair waited, turning their hopeful faces up to me each time I passed.

Finally, at about 4 that afternoon, Francois called to tell me that the owner of the wallet had come to claim his property. I took the stairs down to the reception desk, where I met the man whose picture I had first seen eight hours earlier. I recognized him immediately from his passport: 5'9", sandy-haired, clean-shaven, in his 30s. I still don't know how he knew the wallet was at the embassy.

He was relieved to have recovered his ticket and papers and was profusely thankful. "Merci, merci," he said repeatedly, telling me I had "saved him." He had changed his airline reservation and was happy he would still be able to make that afternoon's flight to Douala and his onward connection to Paris, where he would spend the holidays with his family.

As I walked him to the door of the embassy, I told him how the wallet had come to my attention. We stepped into the street, and the two boys saw me with the Frenchman and jumped to their feet. As I presented the boys to him, he brought out the now-familiar wallet, opened it and pulled out a handful of currency. Thanking the boys again, and, without counting the bills, he handed them a wad, turned and stepped into a taxi waiting to take him to the airport. I don't know for sure, but I would guess that he had given them about \$200, a small fortune in their eyes.

Their faces, lit up with bright eyes, told me the gift was beyond their wildest expectations, and their smiles were so large I thought their faces might split open. Their honesty and patience had been rewarded.

And then they were off, the Frenchman to the airport and Christmas with his family and the boys down the street, shouting "merci, merci" with their newfound wealth, a sum that may well have represented a year's earnings for their families.

That day of generosity and happiness will always be with me, especially during the Christmas season. Needless to say, I became much less grouchy about the holiday that year — and every December of the 23 years since that day, the grouch in me again recedes. ■

*I glanced at the
photograph of the
Frenchman's family;
and found myself
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and children
this Christmas.*

BOARDING SCHOOL LIFE

BY HEARLY G. MAYR

When I think of nomads, three types jump quickly to my mind: the Tuaregs of Mali, the gypsies of Europe, and expatriate students of disparate nations. Though each group has its own set of problems, the biggest one for expatriates is finding suitable schools.

The nomadic life of overseas families, which requires members to regularly leave their homeland, never proved as psychologically wrenching for me as it was for others. For me, in fact, the lifestyle produced the opposite effect: It was emotionally liberating. Leaving my native Chile in 1984 for the exotic land of Madagascar, my family and I found the move less chaotic than did my friends and extended family. Raised on Tarzan-movie stereotypes about canni-

bals and man-eating lions, they worried that my parents, brother and I would never return. But for us, it was a time of adventure and wonder.

I was 12 and my brother, Siegwart, was 14 when we left our northern hometown of Antofagasta, Chile, in June of that year. We would attend language training for a few months, before moving on to Madagascar, which was the first missionary assignment for my mother, Ellen, and father, Siegfried, an ordained minister of the South American Division of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

My brother and I were thereafter educated in international schools in France and Kenya, as well as a short stint of home schooling. I treasure most fondly those memories of warm camaraderie among my friends at the international schools.

In France, my brother and I attended an elementary school for three months in the sleepy French community of Collonges-sous-Salève, a stone's throw from the posh city of Geneva. Against my wishes, I was tossed into a regular class of 20 enthusiastic French children. But for a Spanish-speaking 12-year-old, it was difficult to decipher instruction in rapid-fire French. Occasionally, my history teacher, a broad-smiling Spaniard, would look my way and mumble a phrase or two in Spanish, but he would inevitably return to the torture of French. No one was more surprised than I when I scored an almost perfect score in a fill-in-the-blank geography test, missing only the question about Mt. Everest's height. I could have sworn it measured 12,000 meters — not 8,847.

Hearly G. Mayr is the Journal's intern this semester.



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Three months later, my brother and I were sent to a nearby international school, but now our fellow students were from all over the world: Brazil, the United States, Germany, Italy and Portugal, among others. Through my classmates, my understanding of the world expanded; my personal tolerance of those unlike myself also grew broader. Soon, I didn't see myself as Chilean, but as just another international student.

This school's standards were much higher, and I was expected to do several hours of daily homework, as well as considerable time in the language lab. The woman's voice from my dreaded French audio tapes pounded non-stop in my brain, "Répétez! Répétez!" Soon, my French was understandable, though not flawless.

In March of 1985, we arrived in Antananarivo, the lush, hilly capital of Madagascar that is surrounded by rice fields. My mother home schooled me for a couple of years, and in 1987, my

parents decided I should follow my brother to boarding school in Kenya. I was more than ready; my feet were aching to run somewhere else.

That September, when I first glimpsed Maxwell Adventist Academy, a small school about 15 miles south of Nairobi, my first thought was that it looked more like a covert terrorist training camp than a Christian secondary school. Spread over a few acres between the towns of Kiserian and Ongata Rongai, the sprawling campus for 90 students included a half dozen barrack-style rectangles randomly spread across a patch of savanna.

For three years, however, the school would be my home away from home. It became a place of diverse intellectual debate, as my classmates challenged my political, religious and social beliefs. It was here I learned to support my ideas with logical, rather than emotional, arguments. Despite the daily monotony of attending classes, choir practice and soccer matches,

spending 24 hours a day with so many people my own age was a novelty. The social experience didn't come without certain bumps and bruises — arguments, rejections and deceptions, but it certainly did help mold me into who I am today. There were those who preferred to be in boarding school just to avoid their parents, who never wrote anyway. But for me, it was the opposite. I missed my parents, who wrote me three times a week.

When I graduated in June 1990, I moved to Ohio to pursue a degree at Kettering College. Later, I attended Andrews University in Michigan, where I received a bachelor's degree in medical technology. I was surprised when my classmates were actually interested in my travels and international education. It was only then that I came to appreciate the rich, varied experiences of an international education. It's difficult for me to imagine my life without them, which helped create the nomad that will always be a part of me. ■

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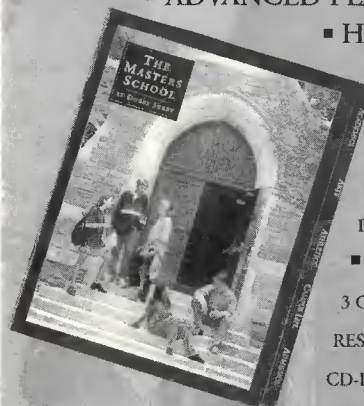
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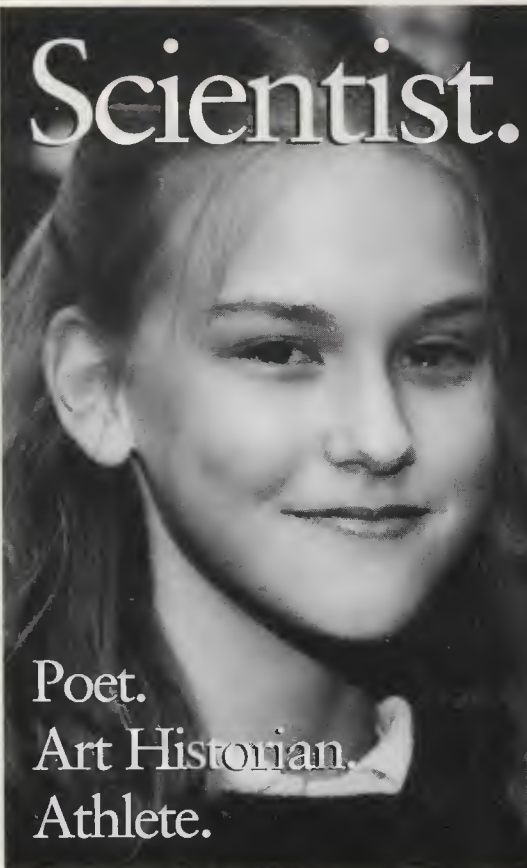
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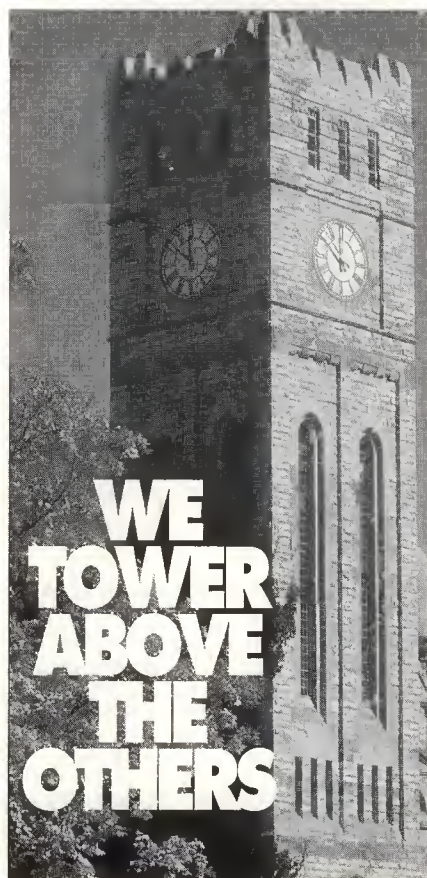
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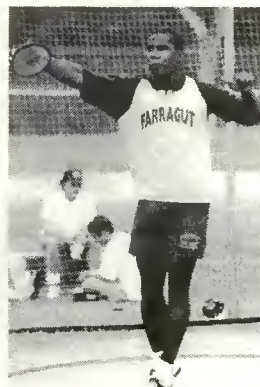
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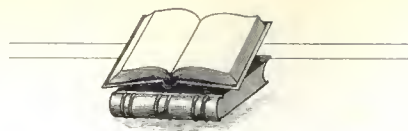


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BOOKS

LIFE OF A REBEL: REMEMBERING CHE

The Fall of Che Guevara

Henry Butterfield Ryan, Oxford University Press, 1996, softcover, \$27.50, 216 pages.

By JAMES FORD COOPER

This past October marked the 30th anniversary of the capture and summary execution of the legendary revolutionary and guerrilla leader Ernesto "Che" Guevara in the mountain jungles of Bolivia. It is thus particularly timely that former FSO Henry Butterfield Ryan's fascinating and well-researched book about the famous guerrilla fighter's last and most quixotic revolutionary campaign was published this year.

The Argentina-born Che Guevara was already the object of adulation by restless youths and leftist romantics when he was fomenting revolution in Cuba, Africa and Bolivia in the 1950s and '60s. Thirty years after his death, he remains a symbol of heroism, against-the-odds revolutionary struggle, armed idealism and selfless sacrifice. More than 300,000 Web references to articles and books about Guevara and a number of commemorative events around the world on the anniversary of his Oct. 9, 1967 death attest to the world's enduring fascination with Guevara's legacy.

Most of what has been written about him is admiring, pro-revolution and highly critical of the United States for its

connection to Guevara's capture and demise. Usually ignored is his role in sending Batista regime supporters to *el paredon* after Fidel Castro's successful 1959 revolution in Cuba, in which Guevara played a major part. Ryan's stated purpose is "to tell the story of the U.S. government's response to Che Guevara during his insurgency in Bolivia in 1967." He achieves this objective in this highly authoritative account, which draws on hitherto secret U.S. diplomatic and intelligence documents released under the Freedom of Information Act. Ryan also illuminates events of that period with citations from interviews he conducted with numerous key participants in the Guevara episode in Bolivia, including the then-U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia Douglas Henderson and U.S. Major Ralph "Pappy" Shelton, commanding officer of the Green Beret detachment sent to Bolivia to train its army in counter-insurgency operations.

The book weaves effectively back and forth between accounts in Guevara's diaries and other sources about the evolution and tribulations of his Bolivian campaign and official U.S. embassy political, military and intelligence reports during the crisis. As might be expected in an isolated guerrilla campaign in a remote region, neither side had an accurate understanding of events as they unfolded. Ryan pieces together what might be considered a tragi-comic succession of misconceptions on both sides, were not the stakes — the lives of the soldiers and guerrillas — so high.

While Ryan emerges from his research with admiration for Guevara's courage, self-sacrifice and dedication to his ideals — however misguided they may appear — he points out the horrendous flaws in his revolutionary strategy in Bolivia. Not the least of Guevara's errors were his ignorance of the Bolivian political reality, his dependence on non-Bolivian guerrilla fighters and, above all, his failure to factor in the implacable opposition to the insurgency by the Bolivian Communist Party. Ryan also is unapologetic about the U.S. ideological commitment to opposing vigorously Cuban-supported revolutionary efforts in Latin America. He credits Henderson with consistently fending off exaggerated Bolivian requests for large sums of U.S. military assistance and keeping a nervous Washington from overacting in ways that might have unwisely deepened U.S. participation in Bolivia's guerrilla war.

In short this book is a great read for those interested in the ideological and revolutionary challenges to U.S. policy in Latin America in the 1960s, as well as for those interested in the differences in revolutionary strategy between the Cuban school represented by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro and the Soviet school pushed by Moscow and Moscow-affiliated communist parties in various countries of Latin America.

A retired FSO, James Ford Cooper served from 1960 to 1994, working in Latin America, the Caribbean and Northern Europe.

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BOOKS

**DUELING THEORIES
ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

The Culture of National Security
*Edited by Peter Katzenstein, Columbia
University Press, 1996, softcover, price
unavailable, 562 pages.*

BY WILLIAM JORDAN

In *Culture of National Security*, Peter Katzenstein, a professor of international studies at Cornell University, and more than a dozen of his colleagues address their perceptions of the "realist" and "liberal" theories of international relations in the post-Cold War era. Their solution is to balance prevailing hard-nosed analytical methods based on "objective" factors like GNP, military force and trade to include "normative" or "cultural and institutional" aspects more commonly studied by historians and sociologists. As the authors of one essay explain, "What emerges is not a 'theory' of national security so much as an orienting framework that highlights ... effects and mechanisms ... neglected in mainstream security studies."

In 13 essays, different authors test this free-form methodology with varying degrees of success. As the editor puts it, this "rummaging in the 'graveyard'" of sociological studies by scholars of international relations is the culmination of many workshops involving a number of universities. Be forewarned that, as such, many of the pieces suffer from a heavy-handed style meant not for a broad audience, but for other academics—and students obliged to read the book as part of their course work. Buzz words, flow charts and meandering explanations of methodological fine points abound. The four introductory and concluding essays are particularly abstruse and, frankly, the most dispensable.

Tough as parts of the book may be to wade through, it does offer rewards to

those who make the investment. For example, Richard Price and Nina Tannenwald convincingly argue that "prohibitory norms" in the form of strongly held taboos by the major powers have done more to prevent or restrict the use of chemical and nuclear weapons in major conflicts this century than deterrence based on the traditional balance of military power. Martha Finnemore similarly takes a useful historical look at humanitarian interventions since the 19th century, highlighting the virtual imperative in the post-Cold War era that such missions be multilateral and conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. Another essay on conventional weapons proliferation in the developing world, penned by Dana Eyre and Mark Suchman, comes close to providing a helpful theoretical schema until the very end, when a practical demonstration of their methodology virtually obliges one to pull out a pocket calculator to understand it.

Country-specific analyses tend to be more backward than forward-looking in this volume, limiting their appeal to specialists. Elizabeth Kier's piece on culture and French military doctrine between the world wars is a finely-written case study, though one wonders how she would view the current military debate in France. Alastair Johnston's essay on Maoist Chinese foreign policy and Robert Herman's essay on the Gorbachev revolution offer insights that carry over to the present, but both authors lapse occasionally into deadening academic prose or, in Johnston's case, to distracting diagrams to make analytical points.

Thomas Berger's examination of post-war national security policy in Germany and Japan and Thomas Risse-Knappen's similar look at NATO are exceptionally strong. By recounting the transformation in Germany and Japan from a heavily militaristic political culture to one in which the military is constitutionally subordinated to a democratic civilian politi-

cal establishment, Berger transcends conventional legal and political-economic analyses to explain the reluctance of each country to expand the operations of their respective armed forces. Risse-Kappen, meanwhile, stresses the liberal-democratic nature of NATO's member states to answer the question of why NATO, formed in response to a no-longer-existing Soviet military threat, endures. Michael Barnett's contribution on identity and alliances in the Middle East, split into a discussion of inter-Arab relations and the U.S.-Israeli strategic relationship, provides a good overview but suffers slightly by attempting to cover too much territory. Still, he makes many helpful points for those who may not be familiar with the region's seemingly contradictory political dynamics.

William Jordan, now the labor officer at U.S. Embassy Paris, has also been assigned to several Mideast posts, including Amman and Damascus.

ART INTERSECTING WITH LIFE IN ASIA

Art and Life in Bangladesh

Henry Glassie, Indiana University Press, 1997, hardcover, \$49.95, 520 pages.

BY DANIEL O. NEWBERRY

It's something of a stretch for the endemically skeptical FSO to move from the concept of Bangladesh as the basket case of 25 years ago — densely overpopulated and subsisting on the lone crop of jute — to the Bangladesh of today — vibrant and economically diverse and self-assured. When one reads along with Henry Glassie, all thought of this contrast is lost. One of America's leading authorities on folk art, he wants readers to understand that Bangladeshi artists and artisans, even the poorest of the poor, can

articulate an understanding of the metaphysics of their vocation.

Glassie went deep inside the Dantesque reaches of Dhaka's Shankari Bazaar, to the workshop of Haripada Pal, locally renowned as a sculptor of *murtis* — those gaudy, grotesque clay statues featured in Hindu *puja* festivals. An American art historian accompanying Glassie quickly judged Haripada as one of the finest sculptors in the modern world.

Glassie plumbs Haripada's mystical approach to his work, from the spiritual to the technical, explaining that the sculptor believes he communicates with God in creating his *murti*.

Glassie naturally gives a lot of attention to clay, the most abundant material for folk artists, and its place in Bangladeshi culture. Another long chapter covers the making and marketing of the utilitarian *tanduri* ovens. Elsewhere is explained the making of the common cane mats produced by women in the Chittagong area, designed as prayer mats for the Muslims who make up 80 percent of Bangladesh's population. He also describes the carpenters who decorate the trawlers plying the coastal waters. The author persuades the reader that the building of these homely boats is an act of creation. Likewise with the making of brass pots and the decorating of rickshaws and baby taxis.

To call *Art and Life in Bangladesh* comprehensive would be an understatement; it is encyclopedic, carrying 457 photographs in 520 pages. That the Dhaka-based Bangla Academy recruited Glassie to produce this book bespeaks a level of sophistication that would have surprised Foreign Service professionals who witnessed the country's birth pains just a generation ago. ■

Daniel O. Newberry, a retired FSO, was charge d'affaires in Bangladesh from 1972 to 1974.

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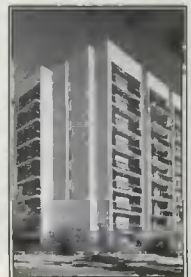
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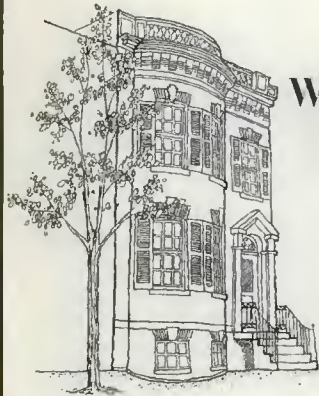
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POSTCARD FROM ABROAD

Phoning Home from the Marshall Islands

BY JOHNNIE PRATHER

The post office on Majuro Atoll, the capital of the Marshall Islands, is a small room whose once-beige walls thirst for a fresh coat of paint with a bulletin board whose protective glass has been long clouded by coral dust and humidity. The only adornment is the dazzling display of postage stamps for sale. Here, a gorgeous tropical bird looking for a snack. There, an exotic flower looking simply beautiful. Everywhere, pre-glued icons depicting vessels that transport people or cargo across a huge expanse of water: outriggers, motor boats, cargo ships, passenger planes, fighter jets. The Marshallese depend on such transportation to close the vast distances that separate them from the rest of the world.

The Marshalls include some 70 square miles of 1,225 islands, actually a series of coral reefs, scattered over 75,000 square miles of Pacific Ocean. It took the deadly demands of the atomic era to turn these isolated dots of land into a major attraction for the U.S. government. In 1946, the Defense Department was searching for an isolated, sparsely-populated land mass, surrounded by water, to test its atomic weapons. This tiny island chain leapt to the top of a very short list. First colonized by

Johnnie Prather, an editor for the American Association of Retired Persons, recently vacationed in Micronesia. The stamp is courtesy of AFSW Bookfair "Stamp Corner."

*The cell phone
limits the
islanders' isolation
from civilization
without risking
their way of life.*

Germany in the 1800s, the Marshall Islands were occupied by the Japanese after World War I, but were given to the United States in 1947 as a U.S. trusteeship under the Allies' settlement after World War II.

The U.S. government evacuated the northwest group of islands, called Bikini Atoll, and conducted 23 atom and hydrogen bomb tests between 1947 and 1958, a steady onslaught that destroyed two islands and so thoroughly polluted the main island's soil that it remains uninhabitable today, despite three decades of clean-up efforts.

This encounter with technology at its worst, however, did not sour the Marshallese on the outside world. Today, the islands' 55,000 people are embracing the telecommunications revolution to help limit their isolation, without giving up their island way of life. One entrepreneur is using the Internet to redefine his

once-local business as an international operation and shopkeepers are now using e-mail to request supplies. No one has solved the problem of overnight delivery, however, and the regularly scheduled flight from Honolulu, 2,200 miles away, still arrives only three times a week.

Cellular phones are everywhere. Drivers carry on long conversations, while negotiating potholes on the lone road that links the five busiest islands. Phones bulge from the shirt and pants pockets of businesspeople and government officials. And what but a cell phone could be in that soft black case on the bar beside the cold beer? These heralds of the electronic age even tag along for a Sunday picnic to the wide beaches at Enemwanot, a name that sounds like "in a minute" in the lovely, lilting Marshallese language. Lured by pollution-free water and above-average snorkeling, tout Majuro spend Sundays here, though their cell phones make them anything but isolated from civilization.

If it weren't for the beauty of the stamps in the Majuro post office, it's unlikely the Marshallese would even bother with mail. Those with an eye for something lovely will always find a use for them — a telephone bill, perhaps, or a Christmas card going to the States.

But young Marshallese eager for news of friends and family as close as the next island or as far away as Paris turn first to the cell phone. They have learned that it delivers news in a minute, even at Enemwanot. ■

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