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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

Economists Versus Economic Officers

BY DAN GEISLER

This month's issue contains several articles on the International Monetary Fund, an institution fundamental to the global economy. The recent economic meltdowns in East Asia, especially Indonesia, make this particularly timely. When "crisis" replaced "miracle" in our economic policy lexicon for East Asia, State Department management also began questioning the Foreign Service's ability to deal with hardball economic issues.

Why didn't our economic officers predict the wild gyrations that rocked Asian currency markets? Can our economic officers deliver serious macroeconomic analysis in a crisis — or even in normal times? Have we let our Foreign Service workforce lose its edge?

One suggestion that I heard from a think-tanker was that we should hire technical talent on a short-term basis to fill needs like the one perceived in Indonesia. Need an economist? Rent an economist by putting him or her on a four-year limited Foreign Service appointment. That's how the private sector deals with short-term technical needs: it contracts out. Can't the Foreign Service do the same, not just with our generalist corps, but maybe with our specialists also?

No, we can't. What we need in any crisis — political, economic, administrative (e.g. an evacuation) or consular — is not another technician. We need a crisis manager. In Jakarta, for exam-

Dan Geisler is president of the American Foreign Service Association.

*When a crisis
erupts, you need a
crisis manager, not
a technician.*



ple, we didn't need more economists. Lord knows there were enough of them. We needed people who could influence economic policy. It's not the same, and the difference is why we have a professional Foreign Service.

Foreign Service officers deal with a breathtaking array of issues. There's population, counter-terrorism, overseas adoptions, trade barriers, military sales, arms treaties, status of diplomatic employees, and U.N. votes, just to name some that spring immediately to mind. Our officers rotate through a series of assignments requiring them to lead interagency teams staffed by people who have been working the details of issues for years. Senior FSO Melinda Kimble's leadership at the December 1997 Kyoto climate change talks is a good example. We neither require nor expect generalist FSOs to have the expertise that comes from years of technical work. We do expect them to provide the vision to translate technical expertise into foreign policy.

Most important, we expect them to

be able to influence people and shape events to further the U.S. national interest. That's our mission, and it's relatively invariant over a spectrum of issues.

Foreign Service specialists, in addition to their specific set of technical skills, also bring a unique ability to function in a wide variety of situations, both domestic and foreign. Especially foreign. Worldwide availability and the capacity to function abroad distinguish, for example, a Foreign Service nurse practitioner from his or her domestic service counterparts.

This is why AFSA has such a protective attitude toward Foreign Service positions. We opposed, for instance, the appointment of a distinguished State Department civil servant to the position of consul general to Sydney, Australia. We believe that such senior positions should be given to the Foreign Service officers who have been training for years to assume senior responsibilities. It is not that we bear some grudge against our Civil Service colleagues. In fact, we were as offended as they by the recent cable from a sitting American ambassador intimating that the Foreign Service holds a monopoly on brains and talent. Moreover, AFSA has negotiated a specific procedure with State Department management that allows for Civil Service excursion tours in certain Foreign Service positions.

But we believe that there's a reason for having a professional Foreign Service. And that reason is what distinguishes an economist from an economic officer. ■

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Lugar: How it Really Works

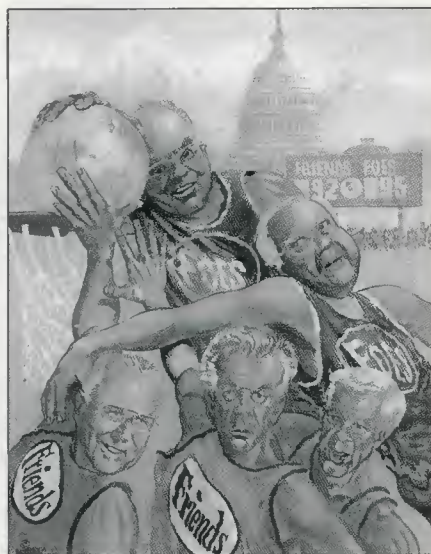
I congratulate the *FSJ* for "Friends, Foes on Capitol Hill: How Diplomats and Foreign Policy Fare in Congress" (January *Journal*). The interaction — sometimes collision — of Congress and the Executive on foreign policy is too often overlooked or examined only in the heat of crises or in the wake of failed foreign policy initiatives.

Your articles were especially timely, given the importance of our foreign policy agenda this year. Iraq, Bosnia, NATO enlargement, IMF and U.N. funding and the Asian financial crises are among the issues requiring attention. As we face this formidable agenda together, I offer a few comments on your authors' observations.

Too often the executive branch regards Congress' role in foreign policy as an obstacle to be overcome. When coordinated properly, however, congressional participation can greatly strengthen executive initiatives. Congress can provide a useful sounding board for executive policies, can enhance the executive expression of nation will and is indispensable in involving the American people in key decisions.

The Foreign Service Journal welcomes your signed letters to the editor. Please mail letters to the Journal, 2101 E St., NW, Washington, D.C., 20037; fax to (202) 338-8244 or send via e-mail to journal@afsa.org. Letters, which are subject to editing, should include full name, title and post, address and daytime telephone number.

The increased importance of the appropriations process is a fact of life, but I caution against overdue emphasis on institutional factors. Knowing committee jurisdictions and influence is important, but in the Senate the rights



Our January 1998 cover illustration showing congressional players. That's Sen. Lugar, lower right.

and prerogatives of even the most junior members are expansive. Power to obstruct foreign policy priorities is not restricted to chairmen or even members of key committees. Increasingly, successful foreign policy legislation requires careful coalition building and a sustained effort to inform less-engaged members of the importance of the initiative in question.

The stereotypes about FSOs and staffers are well-known and contain some truth. However, members and

staff who travel and spend time on international affairs usually have cooperative relations with foreign affairs agencies. We all should seek to increase the number of members and staffs engaged on foreign issues.

There is no good shortcut to getting to know Congress. You have to work with us, if not for us. You may find more friends in Congress than you expect. I encourage foreign affairs agencies to widen their circle of officers with congressional experience. To this end, I strongly endorse two programs which promote executive/congressional cooperation — the Congressional Fellows Program of the American Political Science Association (APSA) and the Pearson program. I am a Senate sponsor of the APSA program and I regularly seek a Congressional Fellow for my own office and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Finally, as Secretary Albright's latest tour d'horizon before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee demonstrated, there is no shortage of tough issues facing us. We owe it to the American people to accept these challenges. We should not let recitations of inevitable problems in executive/congressional relations deter us from striving to make things better.

*Sen. Richard G. Lugar
(R-Ind.)
Washington, D.C.*

The articles by Marguerite Cooper and William Seth Shepard ("Focus on Capitol Hill," January *Journal*) war-

LETTERS

rant thoughtful study by FSOs and others who may appear before a congressional committee, especially one on appropriations.

In part as a result of the "executive wastepaper basket incident," then-Deputy Under Secretary for Administration Loy Henderson established a policy of official/personal relationships based on mutual respect and trust with Chairman John Rooney and members of the appropriations subcommittee. Under the leadership of Isaac "Zeke" Carpenter, a very successful Nebraska businessman who had been appointed assistant secretary for administration, we did our best to implement Ambassador Henderson's policy. It brought us the funds required for the "new" State Department building and reasonable appropriations for State. Time brings changes in people and circumstances, but that policy worked then. It might work again.

Thomas S. Estes
Retired Ambassador
Bradenton, Fla.

Race and Immigration

I was startled by A. Dane Bowen Jr.'s assertion that present-day immigrants, unlike earlier ones, are not heirs to Western civilization, ("Letters," February *Journal*). Although some new immigrant groups do come from countries with different cultural traditions, Bowen appears to have confused race and class with culture.

Poverty and a lack of education among new immigrants make assimilation difficult, but that has always been the case. In the 18th century, such immigrants — primarily English and Scotch-Irish — could be absorbed into the frontier, to the detriment of the Native Americans. Absent a frontier, we now must cope with the problem in our cities.

In a most disturbing remark,

Bowen states "The continued high racial tension between our two oldest immigrant groups, the whites and blacks, illustrates the difficulty of assimilating immigrants of non-Western origins." To suggest that ninth or tenth generation African Americans are not "heirs" to Western civilization is outrageous. Of course they are. Their lack of full assimilation into U.S. society is due to their color, not to their cultural traditions.

As a retired FSO descended from English, Scotch and German ancestors, married to a Nigerian and with a multiracial son, I cannot join Mr.

Bowen in his concern about the economic effects of immigration on "our white children." Immigration makes an easy target. I suggest that he also look at the predominantly white, male, highly paid management of major U.S. corporations, which, to earn the economic rewards of Wall Street, merge, downsize and move U.S. factories overseas where labor costs are lower, leaving fewer jobs for which children of all colors must scramble. This is simply considered "good business practice."

Mary C. Smith
Retired FSO
Arlington, Va.

AN INVITATION



Summer Fiction

The *Foreign Service Journal* is seeking works of fiction of up to 3,000 words for its annual summer fiction issue. Preference will be given for Foreign Service settings, situations and characters. A small honorarium is offered.

Submissions by mail, e-mail or fax may be made by May 1. *Note: this deadline is earlier than previous years!* Send to: Bob Guldin, Editor, *Foreign Service Journal*, 2101 E Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, via e-mail to journal@afsa.org or via fax to (202) 338-8244. No exceptions to the deadline. The top stories, chosen by the Editorial Board, will be published in the July/August issue of the *Journal*.

Surviving Strife in Moscow

While my colleague Hans N. Tuch was seeking shelter under his desk during a violent anti-American demonstration at our legation in Sofia ("Surviving the Cold War," February *Journal*), I had a quite different experience in Moscow a few days later at a similar demonstration at the American Embassy. The spark was the same — the Middle East Six-Day War — as was the profile of the demonstrators in the two countries — Arab students — but there the similarities end.

I had just arrived in Moscow to begin a tour as cultural officer and, it being a beautiful day in June, I decided to take a walk around the town. As I returned to the embassy I noted the marching crowd and, curious about everything Russian, I joined them and was swept along with the marchers as they approached the embassy. The Soviets, intent on avoiding violence, had everything under control. The demonstrators were orderly as they chanted their slogans and hurled projectiles at the upper windows of the embassy, but there was no violence and, forewarned of the demonstration, American embassy officials had removed their cars from the street.

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And so it came about that a newly arrived FSO had an insider's view of a staged anti-American demonstration, which surprised other embassy officers as they spied me among the demonstrators they were surveying from the chancery's upper-floor windows.

From then on I regularly took a break from reading telegrams to get out for a walk around Moscow or a call on a Soviet institution, a practice that never failed to turn up something of interest in that city of secrecy and intrigue.

*Yale Richmond
Retired FSO
Washington, D.C.*

USIA Critic Returns

The reaction to my article in which I point out that USIA has ludicrously unrealistic goals, fails to attempt to assess the effectiveness of its efforts and is staffed by officers whose evaluations are completely subjective, and that these mutually reinforcing problems have led to an organization which has become a waste of taxpayer dollars, has been illuminating ("Learning from Failure," December *Journal*). The editors received all of five letters in response, four of which, including the three containing negative reactions, it published in February.

Claudia Anyaso was "furious" at what I wrote and her passionate but confused letter discussed activities at her last overseas post, Lagos, where the only reported result was that the government shut down USIS programs. John Quintus allowed that the Venezuela Country Plan had problems, but said that it wasn't typical of our posts. Guy Farmer, who had been PAO in Caracas before my tour, cited two accomplishments there: press placement and high-level Venezuelans who were ex-International Visitors. I found his remarks most interesting as

his self-proclaimed press placement success was attributed primarily to a Foreign Service National, thereby supporting my argument that these local hires could do most of the work currently assigned to officers and at a fraction of the cost to the taxpayer. I suspect that the FSN's salary was less than the post's yearly costs for his supervisor's housing and furniture alone. What these three letters have in common is that none offers even the slightest argument against the three mutually reinforcing problems I had outlined. Too, given the fact that the agency was portrayed as all but completely dysfunctional, its leadership is conspicuous in its absence from this debate.

I have been contacted by another 18 USIA employees, two of whom were neutral and sixteen highly complimentary of the article. While I don't presume that three-quarters of agency personnel share my views, it would seem that they are more widely held than Anyaso, Quintus and Farmer (or I, prior to publication) believe. Absent any counter-arguments to my basic premises, I hereby move that they be accepted by acclamation.

*Howard Shapiro
USIA
Washington, D.C.*

Information Age Diplomacy

The contributions of public diplomacy to U.S. interests are obviously not recognized by everyone, including many State Department officials, who never focused on what public diplomacy is, what it has done and its potential in today's multifarious world ("Integrating USIA into State," December *Journal*). Equating "public affairs" with "public diplomacy," as some have done, is a glaring example of a lack of understanding of the latter term.

It was thus, I guess, that Howard Shapiro's article, "Learning from

Failure," was included among more generally positive views. Mr. Shapiro certainly sees things differently than do many of us. He bemoans the fact that the officers he served with were "generalists." Did he expect experts in narcotics, finance, judicial reform and extradition treaties to be among the four USIA officers at his post? He compares USIA expenditures with those of AID and the World Bank. Is that a fair comparison? I think not. He legitimately complains of limited resources available to pursue Country Plan goals, but wonders, "How could anyone have hoped to accomplish them all simultaneously?" Never in my 32 years in USIA did I, nor my colleagues expect to "accomplish all goals." Simultaneously yet! But many were accomplished, as the record will show. He contends that field officers don't risk negative opinions! If that is so, which I doubt, it is a far different Foreign Service than the one I was in. And when he calls the term "public diplomacy," a term now in use for more than thirty years, an oxymoron, what would he substitute? As the recent report entitled "A

Editor Wanted

The Foreign Service Journal seeks to hire a part-time editor and writer, to start late spring/early summer. Will edit and lay out the *AFSA News* section, work on other parts of the *FSJ* as needed. Candidates should have writing and editing experience and knowledge of the Foreign Service. QuarkXpress a plus.

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New Diplomacy for the Information Age” by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy notes, “Traditional diplomacy remains crucial as does [sic] military strength, adequate intelligence, and economic power. Those are what create a Bosnia peace accord or an Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles. But only public support for these agreements will sustain them.”

Mr. Shapiro apparently cannot see the difference between traditional diplomacy and public diplomacy even though that is, or was, his profession. His article presented a completely warped description of public diplomacy as many of us understand that term.

The *Journal* has once again provided a genuine service to its readers by publishing an issue focused on an important subject. May I add that the *FSJ* under Karen Krebsbach’s stewardship has been stimulating, to say the least. I join others in wishing her well.

Allen C. Hansen
Retired FSO
McLean, Va.

For Editorial Openness

I was dismayed to read “Swan Song From a Lame Duck” by Karen Krebsbach (“Despatch,” December *Journal*) which reveals how difficult it has been for the editors to maintain a degree of openness in the pages of the magazine and especially in the letters to the editor. Given the nature of the diplomatic profession and the structure of State, frank expressions of views are rare enough, so when an individual has a view to put forward, it should find space in the *Journal*, no matter how controversial, if it is well conceived.

As a member of the *FSJ* editorial board years ago, I found the board’s method of reviewing articles cumbersome and I hope that more responsi-

bility has now been handed over to the professional staff. The one area where it seems there should be complete freedom for editorial discretion is in choosing the letters to the editor. If all else fails, a foreign affairs professional should be able to express his or her views, misgivings, gripes or attitudes in a well-written article or a letter to the editor that states the case. If the nervous reactions of careerism or the prejudices of the board members are allowed to filter these views, then the value of the *Journal* to its readers is diminished.

Please keep up the quality of the magazine. It has been enlightening and fun to read in recent years because of the degree of controversy that has crept into its pages. For those of us no longer in the Service the *Journal* is a window on the problems our active duty colleagues face and should present us with a balanced discussion of those issues, both substantive and administrative.

Curtis Cutter
Retired FSO
Washington, D.C.

Science Sells in Tokyo

I offer graphic evidence that the value of science officers can be quantified (“Speaking Out,” “Why Is the EST Cone Being Cut?” November *Journal*). When a U.S. aerospace company unexpectedly won a contract with Japan’s national space agency in 1997, the firm explicitly credited this success — an estimated half billion dollars in revenue over 10 years and more than a hundred new high tech U.S. jobs created — to embassy advocacy. Because of their long association with the space agency, Embassy Tokyo science officers Steve Tansky and Kathy Sullivan knew the agency’s leadership, procurement priorities and risk management psychology in great detail. They

LETTERS

knew exactly whom to approach, what to say and when to do it. It was with this input, as well as that of Jonathan McHale of the economic section, that FCS made the approach that resulted in one of the largest U.S. government advocacy success stories ever.

From that experience, I learned how easy and stunningly successful interagency cooperation can be. I would also say that this single business success — as objectively evaluated by the private sector — not only justified the salaries and overhead of two EST officers, but did so many times over.

*Edward Yagi
Commercial Attaché
FCS Tokyo*

FSJ Blew Anonymity

Last spring I submitted a very short piece entitled "The Visa Nightmare: A Few Personal Tales," with a note suggesting anonymity since my purpose was not to embarrass anyone but to contribute to the discussion of reform of the foreign affairs agencies. I wrote the piece because of concern over the quality of service given by the embassies in Bratislava and Prague, something I assumed was at least in part a result of budget problems, but which seemed to reflect also a lack of concern for unimportant customers, be they locals or Americans. What followed was itself a sort of nightmare.

Editor Karen Krebsbach seemed to like the challenging nature of the piece, but said it was too short for an article and would be run as a letter. The anonymity suggestion troubled her, but I left it entirely up to her, simply reminding her that I did not seek to hide but only to avoid directing attention to specific embassies or specific people serving there.

What resulted was rather silly. The

Journal ran excerpts of its own choosing from my submission, saying the writer was a retired FSO in Slovakia who desired anonymity. That hardly provided anonymity, since I expect there is no other retired FSO living in this country. Then, in a December response to a letter from Donald Tyson, the editor lied by inventing the story that I was "afraid of retaliation by FSOs and FSNs in the aforementioned embassy."

To Mr. Tyson I would like to say simply that I have no vested interest and no clients. I am not a visa "pusher," just someone who thinks giving ordinary people good service at American posts abroad is important.

*Art Breisky
Retired FSO
Bardejov, Slovak
Republic*

Dr. Susan Williamson

Foreign Service women who served in Beirut during the years that Dr. Susan Williamson was the head of obstetrics and gynecology at American University in Beirut Hospital will be saddened to learn of her death in 1996 at age 79. I was only one of many who benefitted from her great medical skill and who were heartened and reassured by her warmth, humanity and compassion. As one grateful Foreign Service wife put it, "She was a godmother to all of us!"

Contributions may be made to the Susan Whyte Williamson Memorial Scholarship Fund, The University of the South, 735 University Avenue, Sewanee, TN 37383-1000, or in her name to Women's Health Services of New Haven, Connecticut.

*Helene C. Bullen
Wife of Retired FSO
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Washington, D.C. ■*



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CLIPPINGS



"If you are careful during mine clearance then you are exposed to very little danger. On the other hand, we believe in the destiny written by God."

— NAJBULLAH,
AFGHAN DEMINER,
SPEAKING WITH
SCHOOLS PARTICIPAT-
ING IN THE U.N.-
SPONSORED SCHOOLS
DEMINING PROJECT.
U.N. WEB PAGE,
MARCH 1, 1998.

STRANGER LIFTS STATE SECRETS

During broad daylight, a "mystery man" walked into the State Department and helped himself to top secret documents, reported Adam Zagorin of *Time* magazine. In the middle of an escalating crisis — the likely U.S. bombing of Iraq at the beginning of February — the man got past both main entrance and 7th-floor office security guards. There, he walked into the office of the executive secretary, who manages the flow of paper among the department's top officials, especially documents to and from the office of Secretary Madeleine Albright.

The man, who was dressed in a brown tweed jacket, picked up a "zipped pouch containing the highest-level intelligence secrets of the U.S. government," reported Zagorin March 16. In plain view, he then rifled through the pouch and dumped most of the contents into his briefcase and walked out. Nobody tried to stop him, according to Zagorin. But a couple of secretaries were worried about the man's presence and notified their superiors.

Figuring out what was in the pouch is now a top FBI priority. "Until the facts show otherwise, agents assume the worst — that the material was stolen to be handed over to a foreign power," writes Zagorin.

THE U.S. BILL OF [EXCLUSIVE] RIGHTS

Two recent cases in the federal courts indicate that the Bill of Rights does not apply to noncitizens of the United States, writes David Cole, a Georgetown law professor, in the *Legal Times*.

"Unfortunately," writes Cole in the February 23 article, the U.S. government's position is that the Bill of Rights "set[s] forth a set of ad hoc contractual benefits that we have agreed to extend to ourselves," instead of identifying basic human rights afforded to all.

One of the cases, *U.S. v. Guitterez*, concerns an illegal immigrant of 10 years who refused a Drug Enforcement Agency search of his home, citing the Fourth Amendment. The United States argued that foreigners who live here and who have violated the terms of their visas automatically forfeit Fourth Amendment protection from police search and seizure.

In the other case, *Olsen v. Albright*, the United States argued that a State Department policy relying on racial and other stereotypes when determining who gets issued a visa is perfectly legal.

If the Supreme Court accepts the government's position in *Guitterez*, "that proposition would set government officials loose on all immigrants it believes are out of status," Cole writes. "If a police officer knew or suspected that an individual was an illegal alien, the officer would be free to stop and search him with impunity."

VOTE UNLIKELY FOR GAY AMBASSADOR

It doesn't look like James Hormel will become the U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg. With only about 60 days left of this Congress and other pressing issues on the agenda, Sen. Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) indicated he would not bring Hormel's confirmation up for a vote, Senate staffers told the *Journal* in March.

Hormel, 64, heir to the Hormel Meat



CLIPPINGS

Co. fortune, is a San Francisco philanthropist, who supports gay organizations and other causes. He is a prominent Democratic campaign contributor.

Although the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in November reported Hornel's confirmation out of committee for a vote in the full Senate, it has gone nowhere since then. Three senators — Tim Hutchinson (R-Ark.), James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), and Robert Smith (R-N.H.) — have placed open holds on his confirmation and several other members of Congress have done so anonymously. Some opponents say Hornel would promote a gay life style in Luxembourg.

While the holds technically don't mean Lott could not bring up Hornel's confirmation for a vote, Senate staffers say it is highly unlikely.

NATO EXPANSION SLATED AND DEBATED

The planned expansion of NATO to include Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic has been getting a lot of attention from a small cadre of foreign policy experts, and not many other people. In an attempt to broaden the audience for this issue, two heavy hitters on European and Russian issues conducted an online debate under the auspices of *Slate*, Microsoft's World Wide Web magazine (www.slate.com).

Arguing for NATO expansion was Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott; taking the con side was former ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock.

One interesting twist: an online poll gives readers the opportunity to vote on the topic debated. The latest count: 62 percent for NATO expansion, 38 percent opposed.

CONSUL GENERAL TAKES HIS FIRST TRIP

A former economist who never has been posted overseas has landed the coveted consul general post in Sydney, Australia, reported *The Washington Post's* Al Kamen. Richard L. Greene is currently the Department of State's chief financial officer. Greene got the assignment over 42 career Foreign Service officers. Some career FSOs have protested the move.

Stanley Roth, assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs, pleaded with Director General of the Foreign Service Edward W. "Skip" Gnehm Jr. to change the decision and appoint somebody with more overseas experience, according to the Feb. 18 *Post* article. The *Post* said Roth is worried Greene will not be able to handle effectively responsibilities for the upcoming 2000 Olympics being held in Australia.

SUSPECTED SPY SEEKS PENSION

Suspected spy and former diplomat Felix Bloch is suing the State Department to restore his retirement pension, according to The Associated Press. Bloch, 62, was suspended without pay after he was spotted in 1989 passing a briefcase to a Soviet agent, according to the Feb. 13 article. After the department scheduled a hearing to dismiss him, Bloch in July of 1990 resigned after 31 years in the Foreign Service. Bloch's lawyers claim the former FSO is entitled to retirement benefits because he never was charged or convicted of "crimes of disloyalty to the United States."

50 YEARS AGO

"The impact of great events which have thrust America into an ineluctable role of leadership in world affairs has not escaped the present college generation, but many students reveal by their questions a lack of awareness of the extent to which the Foreign Service has been affected by these changes," wrote William P. Maddox in the April 1948 *Journal*. "Here and there crops up evidence of the popular stereotypes about the Foreign Service which stem from pre-Rogers years when the Service was regarded as a rich-man's club, or from an even earlier era when it was the playground of political spoils-men."

He added: "A vast number are unaware ... it is a consolidated "foreign" service of all the principal civil agencies of government, and that ... it performs functions requiring many varied and technical skills, and an increasingly high level of professional competence."

CLIPPINGS



"Anybody who wants to be an ambassador must at least give \$250,000."

— PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON TO CHIEF OF STAFF H.R. HALDEMAN IN 1971 (FROM RECENTLY RELEASED WHITE HOUSE TAPES).

THE BUSINESS OF DIPLOMACY

The Clinton administration's foreign policy motto could be Calvin Coolidge's line that "the business of America is business." The administration's focus on diplomacy has changed from the traditional focus on geopolitical issues to goeconomic concerns, according to an article by Lawrence Kaplan in the February issue of *Commentary*.

However, this new approach has led to some highly visible embarrassments. "Thus," says the article, "during the first Clinton term, the White House held America's military relationship with a key ally — Japan — hostage to a dispute over car parts, even as it encouraged trade and investment agreements with real or

potential adversaries like Syria, North Korea and China."

Likewise, the 1995 decision to deregulate the export of supercomputers led to Russia's ministry of atomic energy acquiring "four of them for the country's premier nuclear weapons laboratory. Soon it was reported that one of the 47 supercomputers sold to China ... had surfaced at a military research institute." The article cites a 1997 CIA report, which says the Chinese "are now the world's most significant supplier of weapons of mass destruction and related goods and technology."

"The defects of commercial diplomacy ... have been apparent for decades. Security, political liberty and national preeminence are not secondary goals, nor can they be achieved by means of sheer acquisitiveness," the article concluded. ■



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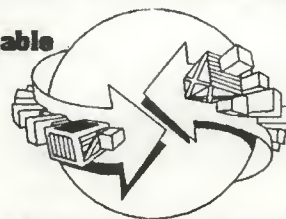
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SPEAKING OUT

What Do Secretaries Want?

BY LINDA EICHBLATT

Last fall and again recently Foreign Service cable traffic has been full of salvos from around the world about the plight of Foreign Service secretaries. Some secretaries wrote measured responses to perceived unfair personnel practices. Others poured out their grievances and frustrations in what at times seemed like tirades. More recently, several ambassadors added their voices to the debate in response to a cable from Director General of the Foreign Service Edward W. Gnehm Jr. outlining his response to "a work force that perceives its talents are poorly utilized by supervisors."

The State Department has a secretarial problem, with morale among Foreign Service Secretaries at an all-time low.

The number one complaint among FS secretaries is lack of promotion opportunities. Only five pay grades are open to secretaries, starting with FS-08, with a pay range of from \$22,338 to \$26,673, through FS-04, with a pay range of from \$38,586 to \$46,074. In addition, secretaries are frequently stuck in a grade for years, leaving them with little hope for climbing the pay ladder. In an attempt to remedy this situation, State explored using a "banding" system from 1991 to 1996. The system would have grouped secretaries into junior, intermediate and senior levels and required that they have pre-

Linda Eichblatt, a political officer at Embassy Lisbon, entered the Foreign Service as a secretary in 1991.

*The State
Department has a
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all-time low.*

scribed levels of training and meet several standards for promotion. The system implied promotions after three to four years in a grade and held out the promise that secretaries could apply for some non-secretarial jobs, but it was never implemented because most secretaries found it too cumbersome; it made them jump through too many hoops. Bugged down in cumbersome rules and amid secretarial grousing, the banding system died a natural death last year. At the same time, for reasons unknown to me, State decided to limit to FS-04 the highest rank to which a secretary could expect to rise during a career. Previously, top secretaries could aspire to reach FS-03 — the same rank as mid-level Foreign Service officers — and a salary of from \$47,619 to \$56,860. The Foreign Service made a mistake when it decid-

ed to eliminate all FS-03 secretarial positions, a point made by several recent cables. Now secretaries who have risen to FS-04 have reached the secretarial glass ceiling.

Giving secretaries more administrative promotions at the beginning of their careers would help break the impasse. Following entry into the Foreign Service, officers and specialists are automatically promoted one grade a year for two years without having to compete for promotions. Secretaries, the only group of employees who must compete for promotions below the grade of FS-05, only receive one administrative promotion. The State Department should offer newly hired secretaries the same playing field offered to other employees by giving them two administrative promotions and the opportunity to reach the FS-06 pay grade in two-and-a-half years before they have to compete for promotions.

In addition to promotion opportunities, secretaries want respect for their professional skills. They sometimes feel unappreciated by their FSO supervisors, whom they describe as "arrogant" and "elitist." Secretaries need to feel they are part of the team; they need to be included in decisions, meetings and policy discussions.

One ambassador's secretary whose responsibility includes supervision of the protocol office, told me that FSOs routinely make use of protocol personnel without informing her. She wonders if she is invisible. In one of the barrage of cables, an innovative deputy chief of mission in Singapore said that not one in ten supervisors knows how

SPEAKING OUT



to make good use of secretarial abilities and suggested that incoming officers and secretaries participate in joint orientation classes, a terrific idea.

Another issue for Foreign Service secretaries is the boring, unchallenging nature of their work. Thanks to computerization, most FSOs now type, proofread, print and transmit their own reporting cables, so traditional secretarial duties have been eliminated. That leaves secretaries with the boring job of covering the phones and filing. Furthermore, as several secretaries pointed out in their cables, there is very little difference in job responsibilities between the lowest ranked FS-08 and highest ranked FS-04 secretary. No matter what is written in job descriptions, work challenges do not increase with promotions.

Equal Pay for Equal Value

The Foreign Service could better utilize its secretaries by broadening its definition of support positions. Two groups make up the specialist cadre in the Foreign Service: predominantly male communicators and information managers, who are trained to operate communications equipment at embassies, and predominantly female secretaries. Although both jobs are support positions, communicators and information managers can be promoted to higher pay grades than secretaries. Why must other positions carry a higher pay grade? Only someone with traditional, sexist attitudes would argue that secretarial skills are worth less than other specialists' skills. Besides, many secretaries have been trained to operate communications equipment at small posts, and one FS

secretary has been trained to install, program and maintain the classified computer system. Others will surely follow. Isn't it time for employees in these support positions to receive equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of sex?

If FSOs could be convinced to use voice mail or answering machines, secretaries could be released from the chains that bind them to their chairs to perform non-traditional duties. For example, secretaries could prepare and deliver routine demarches; serve as control officers for official visits; serve as union, Federal Women's Program or EEO representatives; compile routine economic reports detailing a country's percentage of imports from and exports to the United States; collect biographical data; work in visa sec-

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SPEAKING OUT



tions during peak season; write routine cables and briefing papers and do research for FSOs' cables.

FS secretaries also need more training. When I entered the Foreign Service as a secretary in 1991, it was unheard of to give secretaries the same level of language training as that received by officers. Now many receive 24 weeks of major world languages, training that enables them to read local papers and handle telephone calls intelligently. That's an improvement. It would also help if more secretaries received basic consular and general services courses and were allowed to compete for jobs in the consular and administrative sections.

Last year some excellent secretaries competed for promotions into jobs in budget and finance, general

services and personnel under State's "functional specialization" program designed to move secretaries into these specialties. Many traveled to Washington at their own expense, passed all written and oral examinations for the program and then were not selected because only two positions were designated for secretaries in 1997. Later, the State Department recruited from outside to fill jobs in these same three fields. Under the now defunct "banding" system secretaries could fill some junior FSO assignments, but that program has also gone by the wayside. State Department management is missing a qualified pool of applicants right under its nose and should make more efforts to open up jobs to secretaries, especially in hard-to-fill assignments.

State could also do more to help secretaries become more upwardly mobile. By learning a variety of skills early in their careers, secretaries could move up into other Foreign Service jobs later in their careers. This plan would save State money because not as many employees would have to be recruited from the outside; it would also benefit FSOs, many of whom must leave the Foreign Service when they reach senior levels to make room for the large number of junior officers needed to staff visa lines and administrative sections abroad.

Foreign Service secretaries serve in the same hardship posts with the same degree of loyalty as other FS employees. It is time to recognize their contributions and reward them fairly. ■

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SPEAKING OUT

Swan Songs and Journalistic Integrity

BY TOM BOYATT

In the summer of 1990 I found myself with a group of senior military officers in a secret bunker doing the initial planning for what became Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Intense activity alternated with periods of boring inactivity. To combat the latter, our group began a competition to create the most accurate and amusing oxymoron of our times.

I could not resist opening with that old standby, "military intelligence." My colleagues countered with "State Department action officer." And so the struggle raged intermittently for days. Terrific examples of the genre were produced: "Arab moderate," "Israeli courtesy call" and "European ally" were among my favorites. At the end of our assignment there was a clear and unanimous winner. The Oxymoron of Our Times Award went to "journalistic integrity."

The view of the media embodied in this oxymoron is, for better or worse, widely shared by senior government officials and the public at large. Poll after poll shows the media ranking even well below lawyers and congressmen in public esteem — on a par with the modern version of horse-thieves. Why? Nuanced answers are possible and useful, but I

Ambassador Thomas Boyatt is currently the treasurer of AFSA, and was previously AFSA president and vice president. Since retirement in 1985, he has been active in business and education.

The Governing Board is not in the business of censoring the FSJ.



would sum it up in one word: arrogance. This media arrogance is daily thrust upon us all, misleadingly cloaked in arguments about "truth" and "independence." Both the oxymoron "journalistic integrity" and media arrogance came to mind when I read the "Swan Song of a Lame Duck" by former editor Karen Krebsbach in the December issue of *FSJ*.

Krebsbach argues that the *Journal* belongs to the people of the Foreign Service, who deserve the "truth." No argument there. However, she elaborates by stating her assumption that only journalists and editors know the "truth" and are anointed to present it to the people. The reality is otherwise and the people know it. The real choice is not between the courageous journalist or editor delivering the "truth" as opposed to the meretricious spokesman or publisher delivering the "spin." The reality is that any reader/viewer must make his or her way between the spin of the

journalist and editor driven by their prejudices, job requirements or ambitions and the spin of the spokesperson or the preference of the publisher.

The reciprocal of the "truth" argument is the "independence" argument. Krebsbach strongly implies that the omniscient and benevolent editor of the *Journal* must be totally independent of all evil supervision and guidance from the Editorial Board or the AFSA Governing Board to facilitate an unhindered quest for (guess what?) journalistic integrity, and must be free to edit at subjective will the writings of contributors. That view does not meet the test of reality either. Every reporter and editor of every media outlet in the country works for and receives guidance from a publisher who pays the bills. *The Washington Post* in articles and editorials reflects the left-of-center views of its publisher; *The Princeton Alumni Weekly* does not devote space to the Harvard faculty; and CNN spins it the way Ted Turner wants it spun.

The *Journal* as the official publication of a professional organization is managed in the same fashion as other publications of commercial and professional organizations. There is a publisher — in our case the AFSA Governing Board elected by and responsible to the organization's membership — which sets overall guidance and pays for the publishing of the *Journal*. The Governing Board appoints an

SPEAKING OUT



Editorial Board which oversees the magazine's content. The AFSA Governing Board is required by the bylaws to give general guidance to the *Journal* and to hire the editor, establishing a context for mutual loyalty and respect.

The above issues go to matters of governance, more in the nature of straightforward corporate relations and common sense. More serious are Krebsbach's allegations of censorship by the Governing Board. These charges, which are false, require a clear response reflecting AFSA's values sustained for almost 75 years.

The former editor's swan song asked if readers of the *Journal* agreed with those Governing Board members who want the magazine to publish only positive articles about the Foreign Service. This characterization of Governing Board views is grotesquely false and, therefore, very unfair. Regrettably, letters to the editor in the February *Journal* indicate that some AFSA members were taken in by these phony charges. The truth is otherwise.

First, many members of the Governing Board have participated in dissent and criticism with respect to foreign policy and Foreign Service issues in fora a lot more difficult and dangerous than the AFSA context. We have fought for openness to permit controversy and "informed outrage" and we have the scars (and awards) to prove it. There are no aspirations for blandness on this Board, or any others I have known.

Second, the Governing Board is not involved in any way in accepting, rejecting or changing articles. That is the job of the Editorial Board, which sets its own terms of reference. I have been personally involved in Governing Boards for 10 of the last 30 years and I know of no case — repeat no case — in which the

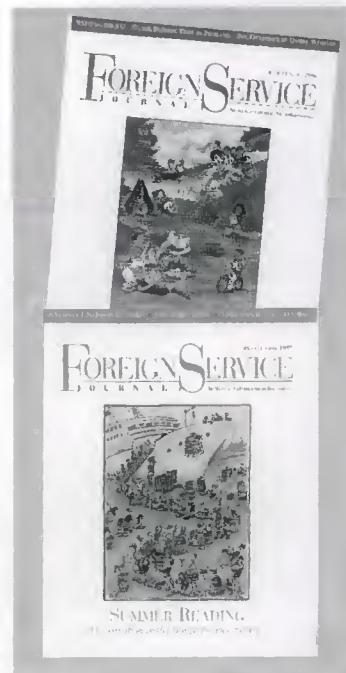
Governing Board has intervened to suppress or alter the content of the *FSJ*. Indeed, the best evidence of this policy is Krebsbach's sour-spirited swan song itself. The attack on AFSA's Governing Board was published without interference; nor was there any consultation with the full Editorial Board. This reality belies the allegation of censorship.

The above is not to say that Board members agree with *Journal* content uncritically. I, and other Board and non-Board members, objected to the reprint in the magazine of a newsletter clipping chiding the secretary of State for non-involvement in her Jewishness. Our view was, and is, considering all the material available on Secretary Albright, that the publication of a gratuitous, mean-spirited, ad feminem attack was unfair, inconsistent with AFSA's professional values and certainly did not establish the *Journal's* journalistic integrity.

Finally, as a practical matter the AFSA Governing Board is not and does not wish to be involved in the day-to-day management of the *Journal*. As long as the Board's general guidance is observed, the magazine is managed within budget, and the basic norms of decency and fairness are met, the *Journal* functions independently. When there are problems in any or all of these areas, the Governing Board makes appropriate changes. In fact, we have a new editor and we wish him well.

Krebsbach made many contributions to the *Journal* during her tenure. As she noted in her swan song, the *Journal* in the end does belong to the people of AFSA. And every two years the members elect a new AFSA Governing Board, which inter alia, is responsible for the *Journal* and must assure that the publication reflects the values and priorities of the organization. ■

An Invitation



For Summer Fiction

The *Foreign Service Journal* is seeking works of fiction of up to 3,000 words for its annual summer fiction issue. Preference will be given for Foreign Service settings, situations and characters. A small honorarium is offered.

Submissions by mail, e-mail or fax may be made by May 1. *Note: this deadline is earlier than previous years!* Send to: Bob Guldin, Editor, *Foreign Service Journal*, 2101 E Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, via e-mail to journal@afsa.org or via fax to (202) 338-8244. No exceptions to the deadline. The top stories, chosen by the Editorial Board, will be published in the July/August issue of the *Journal*.

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS



CHET PHILLIPS

I IN CONGRESS, LEFT AND RIGHT BOTH TARGET THE IMF, BUT FOR RADICALLY DIFFERENT REASONS

By Miles Pomper

It should be easy to dismiss Representatives Ron Paul and Bernie Sanders as aberrations. Paul, a Texas Republican, was the 1988 Libertarian Party candidate for president. He wants to get rid of gun control, return America to the gold standard, and legalize marijuana and prostitution.

Sanders is Congress's only socialist, a Vermont representative who calls for progressive tax reform and a single-payer national health-care system in an era dominated by the conservative politics of House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and President Clinton's declaration that "the era of big government is over."

Indeed, the two lawmakers normally find themselves well outside the congressional mainstream, and on opposite ends

F O C U S

Congress is responding to a grassroots anger at institutions that seem to cater more to bankers than to ordinary citizens.

of debates. But this year, their views are almost run-of-the-mill on a key legislative debate: both believe Congress should not support President Clinton's request to extend an \$18 billion credit line to the International Monetary Fund.

In fact, they represent the ideological bookends of a growing debate in the U.S. Congress, particularly in the House of Representatives, about the value of international institutions, such as the IMF and the United Nations, to America's national interests.

The debate reflects the vast social, political, and economic changes that have occurred in the United States since American leadership helped forge those institutions half a century ago after the Second World War.

While having taken on an increased urgency since Republicans took control of Congress in 1994, the controversy crosses the usual party lines and ideological boundaries, uniting lawmakers as different as Sanders and Paul and even dividing traditionally close allies like House Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri and House Democratic Whip David Bonior.

Virtually all of the participants in the debate, including the Clinton administration, agree that the institutions have not kept pace with a new world order where an increasingly interdependent global economy and the end of the Cold War leave Americans a greater range of choices, but also potential new risks.

Some on Capitol Hill and in the Clinton administration argue that international institutions can be reformed or new ones created to keep pace with the changes in the international order. For example, right now officials at the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Bank are developing proposals for institutions that would force the private sector, rather than the IMF, to accept a greater share of the costs of future bailouts. And centrist lawmakers like House Banking Committee Chairman James Leach (R-Iowa) are calling for the IMF to open up its books and meetings and make a host of changes in the way it does business.

Miles Pomper, a former FSO, is a reporter for Legislative News Service, the online congressional news service of The Washington Post.

But like Sanders and Paul, there are a considerable number of lawmakers on both sides of the aisle who believe that these institutions may be beyond redemption and who rail at their own inability to change these international bodies. Free to imagine the world anew, they say that the current concerns of these institutions are best left to the private sector and national governments to handle.

The proposed \$18 billion in credit for the IMF has become a particular target of criticism from younger and more conservative Republicans. GOP intellectual bastions like the Heritage Foundation and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page regularly decry the proposed money as "corporate welfare."

The criticism comes despite the fact that Congress will not actually be giving any money away to the IMF. Rather, it is investing \$18 billion in the IMF (and earning market rates on its investment), which the IMF, like a commercial bank, can then lend to affected countries. Since putting the money in the IMF is no worse than keeping it in the U.S. Treasury, U.S. officials do not consider the credit line for budgetary purposes and so it will not affect the Clinton administration's hopes of achieving a balanced budget, if not a surplus, in the 1999 Fiscal Year.

Nonetheless, the dominant Republican view is that the IMF distorts the normal functioning of the free market, perpetuates a self-serving bureaucracy and artificially sustains governments that do not pursue appropriate economic policies.

"The market mechanism is dulled by actions of the IMF," said Rep. Tom Campbell (R-Calif.) at a recent Banking Committee session. "If you trust the market, the market will send signals of where capital should flow."

And many Republicans believe that, whatever benefits the IMF provided in previous years, its time has passed.

As Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms put it recently, "The IMF, like many organizations created in the wake of World War II, reflects a bygone era. ... Some of us are wondering whether the IMF is a worn-out jalopy that should be traded in for the free market model."

Both Republicans and Democrats alike have responded to a broad grassroots anger at what Americans see as a government more eager to cater to the needs of bankers and business than of ordinary folk.

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) who represents an inner-city neighborhood in Los Angeles pointed out that "some of these banks do not want to invest in inner-city neighborhoods because there is too much risk. ... Shouldn't these banks have been as diligent in evaluating the risks in East Asian countries as they are in inner-city neighborhoods or rural areas?"

Paul, unveiling legislation in January to abolish the IMF, made a similar point.

"The big bankers and investors quite correctly support the notion of less government and economic liberty when we talk about their profits, but when losses occur they are quick to call for the government to socialize the burden," he said.

Democrats Divided

Liberals, like Sanders and Bonior, the Democratic whip, also have their own concerns about the IMF. They see the increasing integration of the global economy as a threat to some hard-won domestic gains. There's little benefit to high labor standards or strict environmental protections if firms move jobs overseas to avoid them.

Those concerns initially led Bonior to stick to a tack similar to the one that he and other Democratic leaders employed in last year's fast-track trade debate.

During that debate Bonior and Gephardt worked together to stymie President Clinton's bid to win authority to negotiate new trade agreements that would then be subject to an up-or-down vote, without amendment, on Capitol Hill. They insisted that negotiators also be given the authority to address foreign countries' labor practices or environmental laws.

In the IMF debate, Bonior initially said that he would only support IMF aid to countries that agree to not only institute economic reforms but also enhance labor, environmental, and human rights protections.

Democrats, Bonior said, should not support any IMF program that "imposes an economic stranglehold on working people, tramples democratic rights, ignores the underlying cause of instability and then asks the American taxpayer to foot the bill."

By taking that stance, Bonior originally distanced him-

self from Majority Leader Gephardt and President Clinton.

In his State of the Union speech this January, Clinton said that aid for struggling Asian economies was in the U.S. national interest and essentially took priority over other longer-range U.S. goals.

"These countries are our customers — and if Asia sinks into recession they won't be able to buy the goods we want to sell them. They are our competitors — and if their currencies lose their value, the price of their goods will drop, flooding our market and others with cheap goods, making it tough for us to compete," Clinton said.

Using similar logic, Gephardt wrote Rubin in December, saying he supported the administration's policy in Asia.

"Clearly the current crisis demands action," Gephardt wrote. "It is not in our interests to allow the economies in East Asia or elsewhere to be in a free-fall."

In the end, Democrats reached an internal compromise closer to the position of Gephardt and Clinton than to that of Bonior and other liberals.

The administration agreed to call for the IMF to be more accountable to Congress and the American public. For example, the treasury secretary would be required to give annual testimony on the IMF to Congress. Lawmakers also called for the creation of an advisory board — including members of labor unions and environmental groups — to guide U.S. representatives in deciding on IMF loans.

In response, Bonior and other liberals agreed to drop their demand for strictly conditioning the loans on other non-economic issues.

For example, Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) had joined with other liberal lawmakers in sending a letter to Rubin in November opposing aid to Indonesia because of that country's human rights record.

Three months later, Pelosi, an ardent environmentalist who serves as the ranking Democrat on the appropriations panel that handles foreign aid, had toned down her demands on labor, human rights and environmental issues. Following the Clinton administration's lead, she said these issues should be discussed on a separate, bilateral basis, rather than being a condition for IMF assistance.

Pelosi and other lawmakers had been encouraged by the stance taken by the AFL-CIO, which wields considerable power within the Democratic Party.

*Liberals see the
increasing integration
of the global economy
as a threat to hard-
won domestic gains.*

Thomas Palley, assistant director for public policy at the AFL-CIO, said labor groups are concerned that the devaluations called for in the IMF programs will lead Asian countries to export their way out of debt and lead to the loss of hundreds of thousands of U.S. jobs.

So, unlike the fast-track debate where labor launched a high-level lobbying and advertising blitz, he said the AFL-CIO is working with the administration and members of Congress to press the IMF to refashion its policies. The unions want the IMF to place a greater emphasis on workers and environmental rights, slow the flow of international financial transactions, and usher in less drastic austerity programs overseas. But they are not about to hold up the funds.

"It's not the IMF that's wrong, it's the policies that aren't working. We're trying to work that out constructively," Palley said.

While Democrats, relieved of pressure from a key interest group, are more amenable to funding for the IMF, the intraparty politics of the GOP make it less likely that as many Republicans will seek a compromise with the White House on the issue.

On an intellectual level, support for multilateral organizations is out of kilter with the prevailing ideology of the Republican Party.

At a time when Republicans have sought to devolve political power to lower levels of government and increase the role of the private sector, many find anathema the idea of dedicating taxpayer dollars to supranational organizations.

And conservative Republicans like Helms and Paul are concerned by what they view as the ongoing surrender of national sovereignty to international institutions run by unelected foreign bureaucrats.

Influenced by right-wing extremists who have gained new adherents over the Internet and talk radio, Republicans bristle at the smallest sign that American sovereignty could be undermined.

The United Nations is often the focus of these accusations, from claims that the U.N. is seeking to impose taxes on the American public or regulate the use of U.S. federal lands to visions of U.N. black helicopters swooping over America.

For example, House Rules Committee Chairman

Gerald Solomon (R-N.Y.) introduced a bill last year to prevent the United Nations from imposing taxes on U.S. citizens, a prospect regarded by most observers as laughable.

The House last year passed legislation by House Resources Committee Chairman Don Young (R-Alaska) that would prevent UNESCO from designating federal lands as protected World

Heritage or Biosphere reserve sites. Young claimed that the U.N. was usurping Congress's authority over federal lands and harming U.S. property owners.

A Young ally, Rep. Barbara Cubin (R-Wyo.), claimed that research for an environmental impact statement related to a proposed mine outside of Yellowstone National Park stopped dead after U.N. inspectors claimed the mine would damage the park.

In approving the measure, 236-191, GOP lawmakers overrode Democratic objections that the designations would have no legal standing and would not affect land values. Democrats like Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) ridiculed the GOP, which Markey said has "taken its place in the annals of the inexplicably paranoid conspiracy theory."

United Nations peacekeeping operations are even more controversial with right-wing members, who see the strength of the U.S. military to fight conventional conflicts undermined by a series of interminable, expensive, and misguided peacekeeping missions. Fueled by the failure, early in the Clinton administration, of a U.N. mission in Somalia, a hard-core group of conservative GOP lawmakers, primarily from the West and South, have pushed hard against any new commitments to Haiti, Bosnia, and elsewhere.

Among their leaders is Rep. Tom Delay of Texas, the Majority Whip in the House. Several years ago, Delay helped make a cause célèbre out of Michael New, an obscure army specialist who had been court-martialed for refusing to wear a U.N. insignia on his military uniform. With that case in mind, Delay introduced legislation in 1995 to prevent any U.S. soldier from being forced to wear a U.N. uniform. The bill was included in another House measure that passed that body by almost a 2 to 1 margin.

Helms, the quintessential Republican conservative, has played a key role in both articulating and deflecting some of these criticisms of the United Nations.



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In a 1996 article in *Foreign Affairs*, Helms laid out the conservative critique of the United Nations in its clearest exposition to date.

"The United Nations has moved from facilitating diplomacy among nation-states to supplanting them altogether," Helms wrote. "The international elites running the United Nations look at the idea of the nation-state with disdain; they consider it a discredited notion of the past that has been superseded by the idea of United Nations."

Saying that "U.N. reform is about much more than saving money," Helms wrote, "A United Nations that can recognize its limitations — helping sovereign states work together where appropriate and staying out of issues where it has no legitimate role — is worth keeping; a United Nations that insists on imposing its utopian vision on states begs for dismantlement."

Helms was willing to put his money where his mouth was. Last year, incoming Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and incoming Secretary General Kofi Annan pressed him to pay back more than \$1 billion in U.S. dues to the United Nations. Working with Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), the ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, Helms hammered out a proposal to pay back \$819 million in U.S. dues for the organization in return for a series of reforms at the United Nations.

The most obvious change that Helms sought was a drop in the U.S. share of the U.N. budget from one-fourth to one-fifth of the \$2.6 billion total. But Republican sensitivities were most clearly articulated in another section of the bill that prohibited U.N. taxes, the raising of a U.N. standing army, and the protection of U.S. property rights. That provision required the

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secretary of State to certify that "neither the United Nations nor any of its specialized or affiliated agencies has taken any steps that require the United States to cede any sovereignty."

With those restrictions and Helms's backing, the measure cleared the Senate 90-5.

Speaking at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee markup, Biden said the bill's passage marked a watershed in congressional relations towards the United Nations.

"The fact that Mr. Conservative [Helms] is willing to sign onto this is a political statement; we can put behind us a polemic on the United Nations that's diverted us for seven or eight years," Biden said.

But Biden jumped the gun. Just when it appeared that the measure would sail to passage, it ran aground on the opposition of House Republicans.

As Congress raced towards a recess last fall, the administration sought to convince the House that it should approve the U.N. funds as well as a \$3.5 billion credit line for the IMF and a plan reorganizing the foreign affairs bureaucracy.

With Republicans already skeptical of the proposal, Rep. Christopher Smith (R-N.J.), a leading abortion opponent who chairs a House International Relations subcommittee, mobilized House Republicans to insist that the funds only be granted if the administration agreed to swallow anti-abortion legislation that Clinton had previously vetoed.

That legislation would reinstate portions of a Reagan administration policy (called the "Mexico City" policy after a 1984 U.N. conference at which it was unveiled) that bans federal funds from flowing to groups that use their money to per-

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form abortions or lobby for abortion rights overseas.

Ever since Clinton overturned the policy upon taking office in 1993, Smith has been pushing for Mexico City's return. But in what he described as a concession, he narrowed the proposal last year to only require an end to lobbying by the groups. The administration still continued to balk, however, so Republican leaders tied the language to the U.N. and IMF funds.

Pinning the blame on the White House, Michele Davis, press secretary to House Majority Leader Richard Arney, recalled "We said 'You can have Mexico City language and IMF and UN arrearages or you can have none.' They chose none."

Since then Albright, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson, and other administration officials have pleaded for the money, saying that the lack of funding for the U.N. and IMF is damaging American interests.

"Our national security interests are being harmed by not having all of the assets we need—you would not want to go out and represent U.S. interests with one hand tied

behind your back," Albright told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February.

But Republican leaders have continued to insist that the issues are inseparable.

Helms told Albright that he had tried to intercede with Gingrich and Arney to unlink the issue, but had been unsuccessful.

"You're not going to get any United Nations money, you're not going to get any reorganization, you're not going to get any IMF" without the abortion restrictions, Helms said.

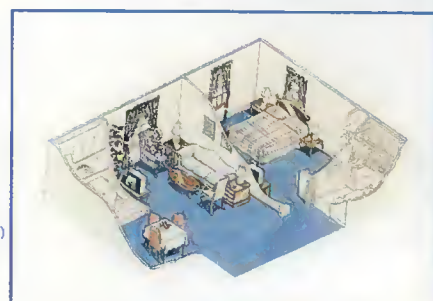
Behind the standoff lies a stark political reality: House Republicans would pay a much higher political price if they budge on the abortion restrictions than if they stand pat.

Pushing to see the Mexico City policy revived are evangelical groups and social conservatives that form the backbone of political support for many House Republicans — especially those elected in the GOP landslide of 1994.

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House Republicans

would pay a high political price if they budge on abortion.

The Christian Coalition, for example, makes a member's vote on the abortion restrictions one of their key votes of the year. Those results are available in the tens of millions of voting guides that the coalition distributes annually around the country. Other socially conservative groups, like the Family Research Council, put a similar emphasis on the legislation.

And social conservatives have a strong legislative champion in Christopher Smith. Rep. Smith, a former head of New Jersey Right to Life, heads a House International Relations subcommittee, and has squeezed Republican leaders to push for the Mexico City policy.

Moreover, the strong evangelistic influence on Republican politics puts a moral emphasis on foreign policy that makes the pragmatic politics required at international organizations like the

United Nations and the IMF seem sleazy to many Republicans.

"There is a difference between being involved in the world and being taken advantage of by the world," says Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), a member of the House International Relations Committee.

"The more interdependent we are, the more tied we are to corrupt regimes."

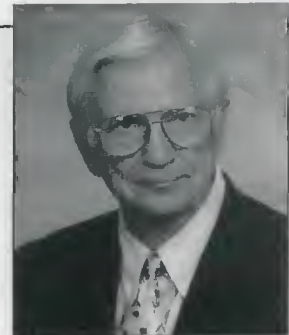
Moreover, support for the multilateral organizations has waned as the political base of congressional Republicans has changed. Ever since Barry Goldwater defeated Nelson Rockefeller for the 1964 Republican presidential nomination, the GOP has lost seats and political appeal in the Northeast and gained seats in the South and Southwest. In the process, old, moderate Establishment Northeasterners have gradually been replaced by newer, more conservative lawmakers from the Sunbelt.



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FOCUS

Many of this new breed of lawmakers, like Delay, are successful entrepreneurs. They are less likely to feel an automatic kinship and identity of interests with Wall Street and large Rust Belt multinationals than did old-line Republicans like Nelson Rockefeller and Bob Dole. And, unshaped by World War II and other international experiences, they are far less likely to think internationally.

Members nowadays are just as likely to listen to the National Federation of Independent Business, which represents companies with few employees and little concern for international issues, as to the National Association of Manufacturers or the Business Roundtable.

Some legislators who pay close attention to global concerns, like Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), have been pushed out of Republican policy-making circles by those like Helms who have more parochial concerns.

Moreover, a failed leadership coup last year left a key globally-minded Republican leader, House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), more concerned with satisfying

restless conservatives and securing his own position than in rounding up votes for controversial bills.

Nonetheless, fearful of being excluded from foreign markets, big business, particularly oil companies and agribusiness, continues to push Republican lawmakers to support contributions to international organizations.

For example, a group of nearly 100 leaders of the nation's largest companies took out two-page advertisements in national newspapers in February, calling for "American Leadership on Key Global Issues." To the business leaders, that, in part, means paying U.S. arrears to the United Nations and extending the \$18 billion credit line to the IMF.

Agricultural exporters are particularly eager to see the IMF funds in place, since Asia represents the single largest foreign market for U.S. farmers, accounting for nearly 40 percent of overseas sales.

On February 12, 40 major agricultural groups, along with the Republican chairman and leading Democrat on

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the House Agriculture Committee, pledged to support the IMF funds.

"IMF funding is extremely important to U.S. agriculture by protecting export markets for agricultural products," said Rep. Charles Stenholm (D-Texas), ranking minority member of the House Agriculture panel. "If we fail to act promptly, we'll stunt the growth in U.S. exports to Asia and start losing the ground we have gained in these markets."

In addition, the Clinton administration has been pushing hard for funds for international organizations. It has sent senior officials like Rubin and Albright to the Hill almost daily to consult with lawmakers. And it has supported changes to please both the left and right, such as opening the IMF to greater public scrutiny, agreeing to push for labor rights in recipient countries, and examining ways to make investors more accountable for their own mistakes.

Big business and agriculture continue to support the multilateral institutions.

Clearly, the Clinton administration will face formidable obstacles in convincing members of both parties to support funds for multilateral organizations. Smith and other Republican leaders have continued to insist that international funds and the abortion

issue are linked "in perpetuity."

But an early March vote in the House Banking Committee indicated that, despite many members' misgivings, support for international institutions was more widespread than many outsiders, and even congressional leaders like Majority Leader Armey, had feared. By a vote of 40-9 the panel voted to authorize the \$18 billion in funds for the IMF, a margin that even exceeded the expectations of committee chairman Leach.

"I think this shows more momentum than our leadership might have expected," a smiling Leach said after that session. ■

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THE IMF SERVES A VITAL
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FROM A GLOBAL MARKET CRASH

By Henry Owen

he current debate on U.S. support of the IMF results, in good part, from the Asian financial crisis. There are lots of things that the Southeast Asian countries and Korea did right, but they also made serious errors, including artificial exchange rates, government aid and contracts to well-connected companies that were losing money, and excessive short-term debt.

These countries' economies were, in short, only half free. And that's not good enough. So confidence in these Asian economies dipped sharply when they encountered misfortune: debtors wanted to be repaid and investors wanted to drop out. In some ways, it seemed reminiscent of 1929.

AFSA NEWS

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AFSA News Editor: Polly Gilbert

Thrift Savings Plan: Perhaps Another Opportunity

By Frank Miller
USAID Vice President

In the mid-1980s, more than a million federal employees in the old retirement system were given a chance to switch into the new retirement system which offers the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), the U.S. Government equivalent of the private sector 401(k) plan. Most chose to stay in the old system. Why? Many reasons. Some were retiring in less than five years. [A person needs five years in the new plan to avoid the government pension offset to retirement annuity. Pension offsets do not affect the TSP account.] Some could not imagine having that discretionary five to ten percent of their salaries to place in the TSP. Some did not believe they would be able to meet the 40 quarters requirement to receive Social

Security benefits. Many did not think that the USG would offer such a good deal and that surely there was a catch.

Through a fortuitous convergence of circumstances, employees who switched to the new system now find themselves with a substantial nest egg to supplement their pensions. For example, those who put all of their contributions in the C-Fund (the stock fund) since the start of the TSP now have accounts worth over \$200,000.

With Congress's legislative action last year, Civil Service employees have another chance to switch retirement plans during an open season from July 1 through the end of the year. Since recognizing that the legislation did not include the Foreign Service, AFSA has been working with legislative staffers to correct this and have the Foreign Service

Continued on AFSA News page 5

• AFSA Dateline •

• PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK WILL BE celebrated May 4-9, with a Civil Service Day on Tuesday and a State Department awards ceremony on Thursday, along with the traditional Foreign Service Day on Friday. The Department of State will also participate in a PSRW Mall Exhibit May 7-9. Watch for announcements of details.

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Since last year's budget agreement suspended the perennial debate over cost of living adjustments and employee retirement contributions, Washington's attention on the retirement front this spring has turned to more basic issues: an open season to switch from the old plan to the new (see AFSA News lead article), legislation to help employees who were placed in the wrong plan and yet another overhaul of the federal retirement system. The aim of this attention is to treat everyone in the system equitably.

AFSA's task as the voice of our active [future retired!] and retired members is not only to join the fight for equity for federal employees and annuitants but also to remind Congress that our separate retirement system must not be overlooked in the process of reform and oversight.

The House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight heard our voice on the corrective legislation issue, included our system in the bill and invited AFSA to testify. AFSA President Don Geisler told Subcommittee Chair Mica in a February hearing that we have colleagues in our agencies who were placed in the wrong system—whether the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System (FSRDS), the FSRDS Offset or the Foreign Service Pension System (FSPS). We support a solution that will not add to the problem for agencies concerned. The main thing, Geisler said, is that any government-wide solution must cover the Foreign Service, in fairness to the affected employees.

The open season legislation, which passed without scrutiny in the last session and was unsuccessfully vetoed by President Clinton (on the grounds of uncertain costs) did not include the Foreign Service. AFSA is working with Congress to correct this oversight.

The Foreign Service Act of 1980, in bringing forward the retirement system under which most of us worked, included language to the effect that future changes in Civil Service retirement should be reflected in our system as well. Indeed, this was the case when Social Security reform led to the new Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and its counterpart,

the Foreign Service Pension System (FSPS). But we cannot take for granted that we will be remembered. We were initially overlooked when Congress did away with the lump sum annuity. And I am sure that the White House never even gave a thought to the special circumstances of Foreign Service spouses when it launched its initiative in the first Clinton administration to reduce survivor benefits.

We joined with other federal employee/retiree organization allies to kill that ill-considered idea. We are working with these same allies now as the administration explores other initiatives. As always, our challenge is two-fold: protect federal retiree benefits and preserve our unique Foreign Service retirement system.

We are one of the smallest organizations. Thanks to our active and retired members, however, we can still be heard.

"We cannot take for granted that we will be remembered."

Remember FOREIGN SERVICE DAY, May 8.

NOTE: Participants should enter the State Department at the 23rd Street entrance rather than at the C Street entrance as stated in the printed invitation.

Any questions about Foreign Service Day can be directed to (202) 647-8115.

Wisner Honored for Distinguished Career



Assistant Secretary for South Asia Karl Inderfurth (left) speaks with Ambassador Wisner (center) and AFSA President Dan Geisler at the FS Club lunch honoring Wisner.

AFSA hosted retiring Career Ambassador Frank G. Wisner March 12 at the Foreign Service Club, a traditional event to honor those who achieve the highest rank in the Foreign Service. Indiscreet anecdotes, along with accounts of some of the outstanding achievements that marked Amb. Wisner's distinguished 36-year career, were provided by Jack Cavey, Special Assistant to the President for Implementation of the Dayton Accords at the NSC, and Ambassador Paul J. Hare, Vice President of the Middle East Institute. Ambassador Wisner was accompanied by his wife, Christine, and a large group of family and friends from as far away as France. Guests included Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering and his wife Alice, USIA Director Joseph Duffey, former CIA Director and Ambassador to Iron Richard Helms, *New York Times* correspondent Johnny Apple, and Mrs. Mary Susan Alsop. In his welcoming remarks AFSA President Dan Geisler recognized Ambassador Brandon Grave for his agreement to spearhead AFSA efforts to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Foreign Service in 1999.

The AFSA lunch followed Amb. Wisner's retirement ceremony in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room at the State Department, where he was praised by Secretary Albright and received the Distinguished Service Award. Mrs. Wisner was recognized with a certificate of appreciation for her years of service, and FS Director General Edward Gnehm presented a U.S. flag to Mrs. Wisner and the ambassadorial flag to Amb. Wisner.

Wisner is now Vice Chairman, External Affairs, of American International Group, Inc., and resides in New York City.

Diplomats Online Expanded

Diplomats Online (DOL) is expanding its Internet Web site to provide educational resources on international affairs and foreign policy for teachers and students. DOL enables diplomats and scholars to share their expertise on the global community more widely. The expanded Web site is scheduled to debut on May 1.

AFSA sponsors the Diplomats Online Web site and initial educational units are funded by the United States-Japan Foundation. The Web site is being developed by Fountain Communications of Oakton, Va., and will include: links to Web sites on American foreign relations, the study of foreign notions, and careers in the Foreign Service; lesson plans and student research activities on U.S.-Japan relations; message boards and online "meeting rooms," for discussions with diplomats and scholars; and a directory of diplomats and scholars with expertise in various countries and aspects of foreign relations.

Interested in Diplomats Online? See the AFSA Web site—www.ofso.org, contact DOL at AFSA headquarters or send e-mail to dol@ofso.org.

NEW ON WWW CLASSIFIEDS

On the AFSA Website

www.afsa.org

Classifieds complete with hyperlinks direct to your most needed services: property management, real estate, attorney, etc.



AFSA responding to your needs

USIA

V.P.

• BY RILEY SEVER •

In the Consolidation Game ... Who's on First?

With so many contradictory messages about consolidation and the Foreign Service, I am reminded of the Abbott and Costello routine, "Who's on First?" Just when we recognize that the foreign affairs agencies consolidation is in limbo—with a plan the secretary won't reveal, Congress won't discuss, and Director Duffey won't have—we are presented with a new angle.

In a letter to Secretary Albright, Sen. Helms wrote that the Foreign Relations Committee would soon "examine the professional behavior of the Foreign Service." This implied threat to review our basic legislation was seconded by Director Duffey Feb. 26

when he proposed on the Hill "the reform of the Foreign Service, the revision or reinvention of the Foreign Service." It seems that they agree that the best way to draw our attention from one stymied reorganization effort is to propose another!

Since last August, Secretary Albright has had a plan for reorganization, but no one knows for sure what it is. The Congressional authorization she wants to implement the plan is tied up with the abortion issue. Though no one in USIA knows what the plan is, we are divided between those who think it will be bad regardless of its form and those who are sure that consolidation couldn't be worse than the current budget hemorrhage for our agency. AFSA is caught in the middle, knowing little about the plan, but being concerned about its potential impact on our membership and institutions and wishing to have a positive influence on the process.

The secretary of State wants congressional authorization for the consolidation of State, ACDA, and USIA without announcing her plans for this reorganization, based on the premise that Congress shouldn't dictate internal operations of State. While I can appreciate her desire to keep Congress from meddling in her

domain, as a USIA officer I do not see reorganization as part of the State Department's "internal affairs." I would appreciate information about the secretary's plan and her proposals for its implementation. It would certainly relieve many anxieties, since several key issues were unresolved in the proposal presented to the secretary in August.

I am still disappointed that there was not more congressional interest in the future of public diplomacy. Unfortunately, there has been little congressional discussion and even less public debate on the merits of consolidation, since most attention is focused on U.N. arrears and abortion language. State explains the

delay in the authorization of consolidation by saying, "It's party politics. If it isn't passed this spring, it'll pass next fall." USIA leadership believes that the delay indicates State's concern about the future of public diplomacy and a growing mood against consolidation on the Hill.

You would think that we could finish with one FS reorganization plan before starting another one. No. Sen. Helms wrote to Secretary Albright on Jan. 26 about "serious ethical, moral and professional misconduct within the Foreign Service" and implied that legislation to reopen the Foreign Service Act might be appropriate. In testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee a month later, Director Duffey said, "I think we need a hard look at the whole Foreign Service." These two cannot agree on the need for consolidation of the foreign affairs agencies, but do agree on the need to consolidate the Foreign Service.

When you are completely confused about who wants what in the consolidation game, just remember that, "Who's on first, What's on second and I Don't Know's on third."

"The best way to draw our attention from one stymied reorganization effort is to propose another!"

Diplomats Find Model U.N. Program the Perfect Medium for Outreach

State Department - District of Columbia International Studies Partnership Benefits Local Students and Volunteers

"TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK."

This is a common response from Department of State employees when asked why they volunteer in the Model United Nations program of Washington, D.C., high schools.

Initiated six years ago by Tom Miller, Special Cyprus Coordinator, and Jock Covey, Special Assistant to the President for Implementation of the Dayton Accords at the National Security Council, this small activity at inner-city, multi-ethnic Cardozo High School involved only a few State Department officials. Quickly, though, it evolved into the International Studies Partnership, an outreach alliance between the Department of State and the District of Columbia Public School System. This partnership, however, extends beyond Foggy Bottom and Clifton Street, N.W., and has involved students and teachers from Coolidge High School, George Mason University and George Washington University. A new entry into the program is Bolou High School in Anacostia. Private sector financial support has been forthcoming to cover the minimal costs associated with the program thus far.

A natural for State officials wishing to contribute to the community, the idea came to Miller when his offer of help from his family of a Washington soup kitchen was turned down because of a surplus of volunteers. Miller and Covey cost about for an effective means of volunteer work that State officers would find engaging and found a perfect match in the Model U.N. program, an internationally recognized program for high school and college students in which they participate in simulated United Nations sessions.

The focal point of this program is local high school students. They are trained in geography, political science, cross-cultural studies, problem solving, conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation, teamwork, and leadership. The culmination of this special instruction is a Model U.N. session in which students play diplomatic roles.

Since the fall of 1992 more than a hundred Department of State employees have worked with District teenagers in this partnership. By mentoring youth in the skills

and art of diplomacy, these State volunteers teach life skills, broaden horizons for the students and motivate youth to consider a future in international affairs. Says one volunteer, "We give these students something quite valuable: a vision of the larger world and of their potential as actors on the world stage." For kids with that latent itch to see the world and go beyond the gritty streets of the District, the International Studies Partnership offers a rich array of skills and stimulation not generally offered to public school students. And who better to coach these students an international diplomacy than real-life diplomats? And what better stage for these youthful wannabe diplomats than the Loy Henderson Auditorium, followed by a State Department Treaty Room pizza party?

State volunteers invariably say the personal rewards of this program are considerable. Not only do their activities meet Secretary Albright's mandate to reach out to the American people, to inform and to educate; they also give volunteers the satisfaction of demonstrating the vital work of the State Department, exploring first-hand the relationship between foreign policy and our national interests and, ultimately, the impact of these issues on the well-being of all Americans. Volunteers come to know and appreciate the Washington environment. They achieve a sense of contributing in a tangible way to the welfare of individuals and of institutions. "The work of these Model U.N. volunteers reminds me of that commitment to community we so often see among Foreign Service personnel abroad," says AFSA President Don Geisler.

A recent State Department Notice, Wanted: A Few Good Diplomats, discussed the partnership and called on State employees to volunteer. Ambassador, attaché, consul, counselor, emissary, envoy, minister, specialist. Whatever your title, whatever your skill, you can find a place in the International Studies Partnership. You, too, can give something back. To learn more about this program, call Elmira Bayrasli at (202) 647-0684.

Polly Gilbert, AFSA News Editor

• Letter •

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK AMBASSADOR La Porto for his service as AFSA president and concur with him on the "debilitating trend" at State regarding staffing reductions and the concomitant inefficiencies ("President's Views," "The Incredible Shrinking Foreign Service," November Journal). I would find his lamentations more credible, though, had AFSA been more supportive of FSOs during last year's important staffing-related decision on JO caning.

The caning system as it exists now for those who entered the Service after the end of "caning an entry" but before January 1997 serves neither the Department nor the FSO. Using EERs, it assumes that a JO who has done an "outstanding" job in the political section can do just as well in other sections. While there may be some merit to this assumption, it can create obvious dysfunctions. For example, JOs who cannot attain the zenith of the political cone often settle for their second choice, usually the economic cone. Given State's desire to be more active in promoting U.S. business interests, it can hardly be censuring to U.S. industry that its issues of import are being left to FSOs who only reluctantly take up their standard or, worse, try to perform an economic officer job like a political one.

The method used to cane entering FSOs since January 1997, the "self-selection" process, is arguably even worse. Although the statistics regarding cone choice are apparently not as dismal as feared, they show that the entering JOs are well aware of the unspoken hierarchy in the FS. Witness the number of entering FSOs who self-select the political cone, when by all accounts the Department finds itself continually pressed to fill consular and admin slots. In my opinion, this self-destructive hierarchy is just one of the reasons cones should be abolished altogether.

AFSA's role in this issue has unfortunately not been one to instill confidence in its newer members. In fall of 1996, AFSA and PER publicized a survey planned among unconed JOs. "Tell us what method you prefer for caning," exhorted the State cables. The large majority of JOs chose

Continued on AFSA News page 6

AFSA News continues after AFSA 1997 Annual Report

Working For You

AFSA 1997 ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since 1924 the American Foreign Service Association has been the Voice of the Foreign Service. That voice is as important today as it was back when Calvin Coolidge signed the Rogers Act creating our unified diplomatic and consular service.

For 74 years AFSA has been the professional association for America's diplomatic corps. Our mission in this regard has been to ensure that America has the world-class international representation that the world's leading nation requires. In addition, AFSA educates the clients of diplomacy—America's citizens—on the importance of international affairs and the contribution of the career Foreign Service. We also ensure that the voice of the Foreign Service is heard by the administration and by the Congress. The 1997 Annual Report includes some of the specific actions we took throughout the year in advancing American diplomacy and educating the U.S. government and our fellow citizens.

Since winning a State representation election in 1972, AFSA has assumed an additional role, that of a statutorily recognized exclusive employee representative. Today AFSA serves as the collective bargaining agent for Foreign

"We not only speak for Foreign Service employees. We also listen to their concerns. We consult with them. We respond to them."

Service officers and specialists in five agencies: the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Information Agency, the Foreign Commercial Service and the Foreign Agricultural Service. In this capacity, AFSA serves as the advocate of the rights of Foreign Service employees. We not only speak for Foreign Service employees. We also listen to their concerns. We consult with them. We respond to them. We take positions on their behalf not only with agency managers, but also with the Congress, free of the restrictions that administration policy places on management.

That's what you get for being a member of AFSA. Membership means more than having the *Foreign Service Journal* delivered to your door every month, or the availability of legal advice if you have a problem with your agency, or the potential for an AFSA merit scholarship for your child. Belonging to AFSA means being part of the vast majority of Foreign Service officers and specialists who have joined the only organization that listens to you and speaks on your behalf.



Dan Geisler



AFSA President Al La Parta (left) shares the history of AFSA with his German counterpart, foreign ministry personnel representative and labor coordinator Friedrich Däuble, at a working lunch in the Foreign Service Club.



AFSA President Tex Harris (left) welcomes President George Bush during the 1997 AFSA Annual Awards Ceremony June 26 in the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room of the Department of State. President Bush received the Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award.

Working Fo

JANUARY •AFSA State negotiates improvements to the instructions for preparing employee evaluation reports. •Va. House of Delegates unanimously passes an AFSA-supported bill to amend the Va. Constitution so that Foreign Service can vote in state & local elections by absentee ballot. (Va. Senate follows in February.)

FEBRUARY •AFSA sends 18 proposals to the House and Senate regarding improvements in the conduct of foreign affairs, Foreign Service professionalism and conditions in the Service. •AFSA and DACOR publish "The Foreign Service Reader," selected articles from 77 years of the *Foreign Service Journal*. •AFSA saves ten of the 16 USIA jobs slated to be RIFed.

MARCH •As a result of an unfair labor practice charge filed by AFSA, the FLRA issues a complaint against USAID and orders the agency to cease making threats against the union. •AFSA V.P. Ed Rowell testifies before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary. •AFSA Pres. Tex Harris launches the West Virginia Foreign Service retiree group in Harpers Ferry.

APRIL •U.S. Court certifies class action age discrimination case filed against USAID as a result of the 1996 RIFs. AFSA is "of counsel" in the case. •AFSA Friday Forum features discussion of Reorganization Task Forces. •AFSA continues to lobby for locality pay for FS serving overseas, with meetings on the Hill, State management & other government agencies fighting for similar benefits.

MAY •Grievance Board rules in favor of FAS AFSA, declaring assignment of a Civil Service employee to a Foreign Service assignment improper. •AFSA hosts Foreign Service Day reception and brunch attended by 170 Foreign Service retirees. •Thirty-two FS youths receive a total of \$23,000 in AFSA and AAFSW merit award scholarships.

JUNE •AFSA participates in 18 reorganization task force groups and core teams. •AFSA honors constructive dissent and contributions to FS life at State Dept. awards ceremony where Pres. George Bush received the AFSA award for lifetime contributions to diplomacy. •Senate passes State/USIA/ACDA authorization which drops two AFSA-opposed provisions initiated by State regarding grievance procedures and included numerous AFSA-supported provisions. •AFSA signs agreement with management on revised Skill Code Change regulations; blocks State efforts to shorten statute of limitations for filing grievances; agrees to open up bidding of secretarial positions to USIA secretaries provided that it be done on a reciprocal basis.

LABOR MANAGEMENT

- Negotiations
- Protecting Benefits
- Grievance Counseling
- OIG and DS Investigations
- Member Inquiries
- Keeping the Field Informed



Fram left: Staff Attorney Calleen Fallon, Representative Tami Cale, Grievance Attorney Harry Sizer, General Counsel Sharan Papp, Grievance Attorney Suzanne Brennan, Office Manager Geri Verble, Coordinator Jack Bryant. Not shown: Coordinator Dick Scissars, USIA Labor Relations Specialist Carol Lutz, & USAID Office Manager Rita Cahen

MEMBER SERVICES

- Member Recruitment
- Post Reps
- Insurance Programs
- Member Benefits Programs
- Address Changes
- AFSANET
- AFSA Home Page

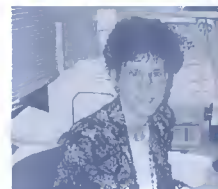
Membership Representative Santita Prather (left), Acting Membership Director Yolanda Odunsi, Administrative Assistant Thamasina Jahnsan (seated)



SCHOLARSHIPS

- Financial Aid
- Merit Awards
- Art Merit Awards
- Committee on Education

Scholarship Administrator Lari Dec



FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL

- Editing
- Writing
- Design
- Advertising Sales
- Subscriptions
- Newsstand Sales



Fram left: AFSA News Editor Pally Gilbert, Assistant Editor Evelyn Latta Janssan, Managing Editor Kathleen Currie, Advertising & Circulation Manager Ed Miltenberger, Editor Bab Guldin

OUTREACH



From left: Corporation Relations Director Mark Lore, Communications Coordinator Kristina Kreomer & Professional Issues Coordinator Dick Thompson

- AFSA Awards
- Memorial Plaque
- Foreign Service Day
- Corporate Relations
- Putting A Face on the Foreign Service
- Diplomats Online
- Media Relations

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION



Accounting Assistant Jenifer O'Neal (left), Controller Dove McEvoy & Executive Director Suson Reardon

- Accounting
- Financial Management
- Staff Recruitment & Supervision
- Building Administration
- Board and Committee Support

RETIREE

- Member Inquiries
- Retiree Newsletter
- Retiree Directory
- Speakers Bureau
- Elderhostel



Retiree Liaison Word Thompson, Congressional Affairs Director Ken Nokomuro

CONGRESSIONAL

- Lobbying
- Tracking Legislation
- Hill Testimony
- Grassroots Campaigns

JULY •AFSA President Tex Harris appears on NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw speaking on the qualifications of American ambassadors. •AFSA President Tex Harris and USAID V.P. Frank Miller testify before the House International Relations Committee on investigative abuses by the Office of the Inspector General. •AFSA newly elected Governing Board takes office.

AUGUST •AFSA meets with Office of the Inspector General staff to discuss the results of the OIG's review of the Foreign Service discipline system. •AFSA raises concerns with State/MED about increasing number of problems FS employees are encountering in obtaining reimbursements from medical insurers. •AFSA CS participates in meetings to lay out a planning structure for long-term integration of the domestic and foreign branches of the Commercial Service.

SEPTEMBER •AFSA offers new professional liability insurance, a must for all executive and consular officers. •AFSA bids farewell to AFSA Secretary and two-term President Tex Harris. •After years of financial struggle, the FS Club closes for daily lunch service, remaining open for catering & special events. •AFSA, AAFSW and DACOR award financial aid scholarships to 68 Foreign Service youths. •FSJ international crime lead article by Louise Shelley placed on congressional Web site by Rep. Benjamin Gilman.

OCTOBER •AFSA's public affairs program "Putting a Face on the Foreign Service" places a piece on FSO Peter Whaley in the *Tufts University Magazine*. •AFSA retirees conduct three one-week Elderhostel programs on the Foreign Service, bringing the total to 10 programs presented in Virginia and California, with more than 400 participants.

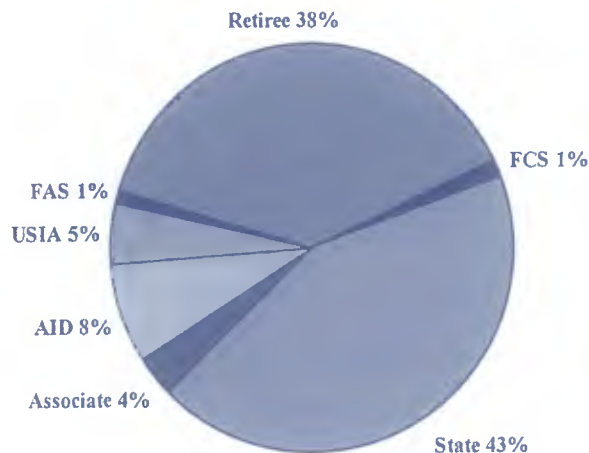
NOVEMBER •Working with GLIFAA, AFSA suggests improvements to the State Department's EEO regulations on processing allegations of sexual orientation discrimination. •"Inside A U.S. Embassy," AFSA's highly successful primer on the Foreign Service is reprinted by popular demand with support from DACOR. AFSA bids farewell to President Al La Porta and welcomes Bill DePree as interim President and Dan Geisler as President, effective January 1998.

December •AFSA sends personal letter to President Clinton on FY99 funding concerns. •Jeffrey Bader, NSC director for Asian Affairs, speaks to 65 U.S. business leaders and members of the AFSA International Associates program on U.S.-China relations. •FSJ publishes first "Congressional Scorecard" on legislators' foreign affairs issues voting records. •AFSA's legal, grievance and labor management staff have assisted hundreds of members over the past year.

Working For You

AFSA 1997 ANNUAL REPORT

AFSA Membership 1997



1997 AFSA Award Winners

Lifetime Contributions to
American Diplomacy *GEORGE BUSH*

Christian A. Herter Award
MARGARET P. BONNER

William R. Rivkin Award *PETER WHALEY*

Avis Bohlen Award *ANNE KAUZLARICH*

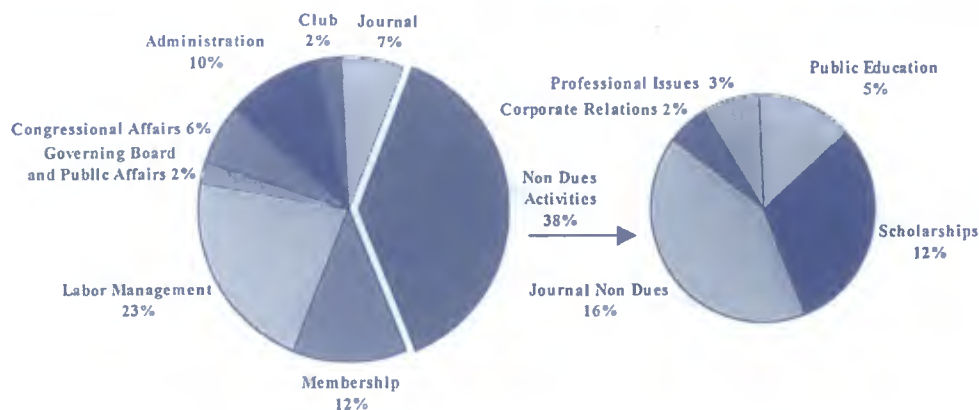
Delavan Award *DIANN M. BIMMERLE*

M. Juanita Guess Award
MARIA EULALIA BAKKEN

AFSA Achievement Awards
Active Duty Member *THOMAS ALLEN*
Retiree Member *DANIEL O. NEWBERRY*

Matilda W. Sinclair Awards
DORON D. BARD (State) Hebrew
PAUL BRENNAN DALEY (State) Nepali
DAVID J. FIRESTEIN (USIA) Chinese

AFSA Expenses 1997



Thrift Savings Plan

Continued from page 1

included in the open season. Thanks to Congressman Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), chairman of the House International Relations Committee, and Congressman John Mica (R-FL), chairman of the House Civil Service Subcommittee, H.R. 3249, which seeks to address the problem of federal employees' having been placed in the wrong retirement system, also contains a provision to amend current law to include the Foreign Service in the open season. At press time, this bill was expected to be considered by the full House of Representatives during the last week of March.

Those under the old system who plan to stay in government for more than five years—and who switch to the new system and can afford to contribute at least five percent of their salary to the TSP—will get a free five percent annual (maximum) contribution from Uncle Sam—effectively a five percent tax-deferred raise. Those who can afford it are encouraged to contribute ten percent of their salary. The employee's contribution, plus the matching five percent from Uncle Sam, will be tax-deferred and will continue to compound until withdrawals begin at retirement age, when the retiree is likely at a lower tax bracket. This might well be a terrific deal.

In terms of investment choices, the TSP offers three funds. Investments can be made to accounts in five percent increments, up to ten percent of salary, not to exceed \$10,000.

(1) Common Stock Index (C) Fund is comprised of a mix of common stock that roughly mirrors the Standard & Poor's 500 Index. The C-Fund has had the highest cumulative return of the three TSP funds and has been the most popular. From 1988 to 1996, the compound annual rate of return was 15.87 percent. The C-Fund skyrocketed recently, with returns of 37.41 percent in 1995, 22.85 percent in 1996 and 33.17 percent in 1997. Many analysts predict that long-term the C-Fund will average a more modest ten percent return—still very good if inflation remains at three to four percent. It is important to remember that with the higher rates of returns in the C-Fund come higher market risks.

(2) The Government Securities Index (G) Fund is comprised of special U.S. Treasury securities backed, of course, by the U.S. Government. Current maturities of these securities range from one to four days. This fund offers the lowest market risk in the TSP and the lowest return. From

1988 to 1996, the compound annual rate of return under the G-Fund was 7.67 percent. The G-Fund returns for 1995 through 1997 were 7.03 percent, 6.76 percent and 6.77 percent, respectively.

(3) The Fixed Income Index (F) Fund is comprised of a mixture of USG, corporate and mortgage-backed securities that make up the fixed-income securities market. This index fund attempts to mirror the performance of the Lehman Brothers Aggregate (LBA) Index, which measures the performance of the major U.S. markets. The average maturity of securities in this fund is just over eight years, and the funds are all high-quality credit investments. The F-Fund offers slightly higher returns than the G-Fund with very low risk. From 1988 to 1996, the compound annual rate of return under the F-Fund was 8.3 percent. The F-Fund returns for the last three years were 18.31 percent in 1995, 3.66 percent in 1996 and 9.6 percent in 1997.

If there is an open season that includes the Foreign Service, AFSA encourages employees to carefully review their other investments and their retirement needs while they decide whether to change retirement plans. This is an individual decision which should be based on the individual's personal circumstances. Should employees consider switching to the new system, they should review their complete investment portfolios, assess their years left before retirement and their tolerance for risk in order to develop the right mix of the three plans.

Most financial planners advise that you invest as early as you can, and as much as you can, in tax-deferred accounts such as the TSP Funds described above. These planners also predict that, in the future, more than half of federal employees' retirement income will come from TSP investments in the C-Fund, assuming a maximum contribution to the C-Fund plus an average annual return of ten percent.

While recent market growth makes the new retirement plan seem attractive, there are some important considerations that Foreign Service employees should review before switching to the new system.

Under the new system the employee loses .3 percent per year after switching and cannot earn and save additional sick leave to add to years of service. [To compute an annuity under the new system, use this formula: number of years and months under old system (FSRDS) + sick leave balance at the time of transfer to new system (FSPS) x 2 percent + number of years and months under new system (FSPS) x 1.7 percent (for the first 20 years under FSPS and

then 1 percent for the years under FSPS thereafter) x high 3 average salary.]

The new plan requires contributions to the Social Security system. To qualify for Social Security benefits, an employee must have earned at least 40 quarters under Social Security between public and private sector positions. The old plan, however, gives no credit for Social Security quarters earned in the past. In switching to the new plan, an employee can "unlock" Social Security benefits already credited by earning additional benefits under the new plan and through any work performed after government service. Remaining in the old system may result in losing money paid into Social Security before joining government service.

The cost of living adjustment (COLA) under the old plan is the full Consumer Price Index (CPI). Under the new system, however, COLAs are calculated as follows: If the CPI is less than 2 percent, the COLA is the CPI; if the CPI is 2 to 3 percent, COLA is 2 percent; and if CPI is 3 percent or more, COLA is CPI minus 1 percent.

This opportunity to change retirement plans was initiated by Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AK), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, though he did not include the Foreign Service in the original legislation. Other supporters include Representatives Bob Livingston (R-LA), John Mica (R-FL), Ben Gilman (R-NY), Constance Marella (R-MD) and Steny Hoyer (D-MD). We are grateful to all of them for their advocacy for federal employees.

It is important to note that the Clinton Administration has not been supportive of the effort to allow employees to change plans and boost their retirement incomes. A large bipartisan group in Congress has been more employee-friendly on this issue and should have the votes to stop the President's proposal to repeal the open season. Nonetheless, it is important that we contact our legislators to express our support for H.R. 3249 as reported out of the Government Reform Committee, which includes the Foreign Service in the open season. Remember, though, that the law requires that in contacting your legislators, you do so on your own time and using your own resources.

Once the Clinton Administration stops fighting this effort, most federal agencies will provide software packages and seminars to employees to assist in making this retirement plan decision. For now, employees should review the TSP material regarding the two retirement systems already available from their human resources offices.

Letters

Continued from page 4

self-selection, the only obvious rational choice among the alternatives given in terms of pure self-interest, although it makes little sense from the "best use of scarce resources" perspective. This effort was an empty exercise, since a decision on coning methods had been made prior to the solicitation of comments by Stote. Self-selection would be offered to FSOs entering in January 1997, PER decided, but no substantive change would be made to the status quo ante for JOs already in the system. Meanwhile, AFSA responded obliquely to its field reps as to its role in these deliberations and what it was prepared to do to address JO grievances once the decision had been announced.

Despite numerous teleggrams from AFSA overseas reps protesting the decision, reports from JOs who attended meetings with Ambassador Lo Porto in Washington were not encouraging. Instead, the meeting at Meind State after the decision was announced gave the impression to many that AFSA was not about to engage Stote on one of the most important issues to unconnected JOs. Yet, in his November mes-

sage, Ambassador Lo Porto decried Stote's failure to "protect and nurture" its most precious investment, its FSOs. His sentiments are on the mark, but AFSA's role in the JO coning issue exposes a substantial gap between word and deed in terms of nurturing and protecting. What we are left with is a system that cones JOs not with the goal of making the best use of scarce resources, but rather of avoiding a lawsuit. This is no way to run an airline, folks.

David M. Birdsey, Economic Officer,
U.S. Embassy Bonn

I AGREE WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITH THE THRUST OF Ann Irvine's letter ("Unfair Tax on Homes," February AFSA News) and suggest that AFSA take up the guntlet on behalf of all FS employees who have been and who will be subjected to this unfair tax.

I retired in 1995 and was required to reside away from my District of Columbia residence. My home there, which was vacated in 1992 and became a rental property when I transferred from the State Department to an overseas assignment for three years, remained a rental property and, thus, not my principal residence. I sold the property in 1997 and will have to

pay dearly on the capital gain.

AFSA might want to take steps to determine how much interest there is in this issue by communicating with its membership and simply ask if this is a problem area which it should address. I certainly believe it's a real and growing problem, which AFSA should take on as soon as possible.

Bernard J. Woerz, Retired FSO,
Coconut Grove, Fla.

verbatim

"We FS men and women serve today in countries marred by violence and civil unrest and severe economic and political instability.

We serve because we believe in our country and we believe in our mission. Many of us serve with outdated equipment, while living in substandard housing, and in the face of an expanding workload without equally expanding resources. AFSA asks that we be given the tools we need to shape world events to advance America's national interests. We firmly support full funding of the international affairs account for FY99 and we ask that the Subcommittee move quickly on this legislation."

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The stock market crash of 1929 developed into the Great Depression partly because there was no international bank of last resort. The London financial market could no longer play that role, and the U.S. market was not yet ready to take Britain's place. So the Depression kept on getting worse. Both creditors and debtors were ruined; there was very little demand for equity shares; one company after another closed down. We all know the results of that debacle: a great depression followed by a great war.

The lesson was well learned. When leaders assembled after World War II, they heeded the advice of John Maynard Keynes and others, and created two international banks of last resort: the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In the current Asian crisis, it is the loans of these institutions that have set limits to the crisis — limits that did not exist in 1929. This is all the more true since the conditions that they have attached to their loans will help the recipients to correct errors that triggered the crisis.

When the IMF and the World Bank were first set up, they were the main source of available capital. It took quite a while for private financing sources to regain their strength after the war, but now their resources vastly exceed those of multilateral development banks and the IMF. These international institutions can play an important role, but it is now private investment and commercial banks and stock exchanges that move most capital about the world. They can do it a great deal more rapidly and efficiently and on a much larger scale than ever before. Indeed, it was the global reach of this private sector, more than of governments, that made possible the unprece-

dent and long-lasting global boom after 1945 — a boom that has benefited not only the industrial countries of Japan, Western Europe and North America, but also such emerging market areas as Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Central Europe.

When the present crisis developed in Asia, however, the private sector drew back. It was scared. Until the confidence of the private sector has been fully restored, which will take time, it will be the IMF and the World Bank that will have to help hold the line against deepening recession.

There is a great deal of furor right now about these international financial institutions' role. Some on the right criticize these institutions, and particularly the IMF, for intervening in free markets; some on the left argue that the IMF protects bankers and other rich folks, and leaves the poor to get poorer. Both criticisms miss the point. The conditions that the IMF attaches to its aid require governments to stand to one side, so that free markets can function; this helps rich and poor, alike — at least in the long run. At the same time, World Bank aid, through long-term development projects in fields such as health, education and family planning, helps to cushion the effects of the free market in some countries.

The economic pain in these troubled Asian nations will still be great enough to serve as a powerful deterrent to a repetition of the errors that brought it about. So other emerging market countries will much prefer to take the advice of the IMF, thereby avoiding these mistaken economic policies and the pain and suffering caused by these errors.

At the heart of this analysis is the fact of economic globalization. There's a lot of debate as to whether this globalization is good or bad, but that argument is largely irrelevant. Blue collar unions, environmentalists, and even the Pope have raised questions about economic globalization. But it keeps on moving forward, and that won't change. The real question is not whether it can be halted (it can't), but whether there is anything that can be done to protect, at least in some degree, those who are most vulnerable to its worst effects. That is what the World Bank does, while the IMF protects societies as a whole against a repetition of 1929.

Henry Owen is a senior adviser to Salomon-Smith Barney and is co-chairman of the Bretton Woods Committee, which seeks to support and improve the work of international financial institutions. Owen served in the State Department from 1946 to 1969, including three years as head of the Policy Planning Council. He later was director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution, and during the Carter administration served as ambassador-at-large for the G-7 economic summits.

F O C U S

Whether the IMF will be able to continue to play this role on the scale required depends on the outcome of the debate now raging in the U.S. Congress. A considerable number of Republicans and quite a few Democrats argue that the IMF distorts the working of free markets, and thus prolongs the ills facing some emerging market countries — and, anyway, it costs too much.

Supporters of the IMF address the last argument first. The IMF does not receive funds from the U.S. government; it borrows these funds and repays them with interest. Over the years since the IMF's founding, the U.S. government has made considerable money by lending to the IMF, which in turn lends these funds to member countries that repay them.

As to the effect on free markets: If precipitate economic declines, such as now afflict some Asian countries, continue, they are apt to lead to protectionist and other nationalist economic policies that destroy free markets, as was the case in the Great Depression. If the IMF had been at hand to lend funds to the German government in 1931, Hitler

might never have come to power in the wake of rising unemployment and declining production.

That is why the Congress will probably sustain the IMF and provide the resources (around \$18 billion) that the administration is requesting. Such wise and cool heads as those of Jim Leach, Republican chairman of the relevant House committee, and Richard Gephardt, liberal House Democratic leader, now support the IMF. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D) is of the same view, although he notes that this stand is not easy to sell to his Chicago congressional district. None of these congressmen want to see growing Asian economic crisis lead to other countries' adopting protectionist or even autarkic policies that would undermine the world economic growth from which the U.S. benefits.

The congressional risk is less that the IMF bill will be defeated than that it will be so laden down with unwise, irrelevant, and self-defeating conditions (e.g., regarding abortion) as to cause it to sink of its own weight beneath the waves of congressional politics and procedures.

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F O C U S

Perhaps the IMF should start raising money from private sources, rather than exclusively from governments.

In past years, the Congress has often attached to bills providing for IMF funding a provision that the executive branch should study the possibility of raising IMF funds not from governments but from private financial markets, as the World Bank does.

Those provisions have not led to much action, but this year may be different. Governments may well agree that the next time the IMF needs more money, some of this money should be sought in private financial markets. The outstanding record of the IMF in repaying its obligations should make these markets receptive. A very modest borrowing probe in this direction might lead to a small precedent-setting success, so that a much larger part of the IMF's needs might be met from private markets thereafter.

There has been resistance to this idea on the part of some countries that fear it would free the IMF manage-

ment from the control of governments. If we look at the record, however, private markets are at least as tight-fisted as governments. It is unlikely that these markets would support the IMF embarking on adventures that governments would not have tolerated.

If the present crisis moves the IMF in this direction of private financing, perhaps it will have served one useful purpose, despite all the pain it caused. At any rate, this is an idea that merits more careful scrutiny than it has received in the past.

But the immediate issue is not the longer-term future, but what to do about the IMF now. It is too late to embark on experiments this year. A congressional vote should now be sought on the administration's proposal. If that vote is positive, as I believe it will be, then there will be plenty of time afterward to draw lessons for the future. ■

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THE IMF SHOULD TEMPER, NOT FEED, SPECULATIVE FRENZIES, PROTECT WORKERS

By Robert Borosage

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin has enlisted the Business Roundtable and other corporate lobbies to press the Congress for \$18 million in borrowing authority to bolster the International Monetary Fund in the wake of the Asian financial collapse. Despite the secretary's sterling reputation, the business community's impressive clout, and nearly universal editorial approval, Rubin is having a hard time rounding up the votes.

As the emergency room doctor for the global economy, the IMF faces charges of malpractice and question about its license. The fund intercedes when countries face currency crises. Many critics argue the fund is more

F O C U S

IMF policies bail out speculators, while imposing austerity on the poor and creating unnecessary recessions.

quack than cure. In Asia, the IMF has received withering criticism for imposing remedies that have little to do with the source of the crisis, thereby making it worse. But the debate about the fund is part of a far broader struggle over regulating the global economy, a policy and political debate likely to frame a good portion of our politics over the next decades.

The crisis in Asia is, in cause and in effect, a global crisis. The Asian tigers — Thailand, Indonesia, Korea — have been shaken by the bursting of a classic speculative bubble. The bubble was inflated by profligate short-term loans to and equity speculation in Asian companies, with U.S., European and Japanese banks and investment houses central participants in the folly. Despite ritual assurances — just a “glitch in the road” said President Clinton last fall — the crisis is much more serious than initially expected. Currencies and stock markets have plunged throughout Asia. Initial IMF bailout plans proved inadequate in South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. Bankruptcies and layoffs have just begun. Food riots are spreading in Indonesia. Over a million workers are facing layoffs in Korea. Analysts fear that aftershocks of the crisis may yet shake Russia, Brazil and other developing nations. The impact in the industrial nations is just beginning to be felt. Japan — already in recession and with a banking system burdened by bad debts — will face greater pressure from lost markets and bankrupt investments in Asia, and greater competition in export markets from the Asian tigers. China — facing slower growth amid a wrenching reduction of wasteful state enterprises — will also contend with greater competition for export markets. If China devalues or Japan allows the yen to depreciate as many fear, it could trigger another round of competitive devaluations, and global deflation.

Robert Borosage is the co-director of the Campaign for America's Future, a new organization that seeks to insert a populist economic agenda into the debate about the nation's future. He earlier served as the director of the Institute for Policy Studies.

The impact on Europe and the U.S. has yet to be measured, but, as Jeffrey E. Garten, dean of the Yale School of Management, notes, “It’s simply not credible that a third of the world can suddenly go from dynamic growth to widespread recession without affecting our own economy.” Even if current efforts to staunch the hemorrhaging are suc-

cessful, U.S. exports to the region — which constitute 30 percent of the total — will decline. Exports elsewhere will face tougher competition. Our markets will be flooded with lower-priced goods. Conservative estimates predict a trade deficit increased by \$50 to 100 billion in the current year. Rule of thumb estimates suggest over one million workers will lose their jobs over the next 18 months. Wages and profits will be under pressure as corporations struggle to meet the competition.

The most knowledgeable are the most alarmed. Barton Biggs, the chairman of Morgan Stanley Asset Management, warns that the “U.S. economy inevitably will begin to be hollowed out and the protectionist outcry begin. World-wide competitive devaluation, trade wars and deflationary tendencies could result in a synchronized global slowdown recession and simultaneous bear markets in Western stock markets. A vicious circle could develop.” Even Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan, a man not given to rhetorical excess, has warned of the dangers of generalized “deflation.”

Representatives of the Clinton administration and the International Monetary Fund have labored to blame the crisis primarily on Asia’s “crony capitalism.” And it is true that authoritarian regimes in East Asia, as Korean President Kim Dae Jung has argued, lived a “lic.” But crony capitalism isn’t new. Indeed, the Asian tigers received lavish praise from the World Bank and the IMF for getting the “fundamentals right” — high savings rate, low inflation, balanced budgets. They were the sole countries in the world to enjoy year after year of significant growth, lifting living standards for their people.

What burst in Asia was a classic speculative bubble.

Deregulation — dismantling capital and currency controls without the regulation needed to monitor the risk — opened a flood of short term, speculative money, predicated on the general assumption that growth would continue indefinitely. But when China devalued in 1994 and the yen lost 40 percent of its value in dollars, East Asian exports faced new competition. When growth slowed, nervous speculators started to get out, and the bubble burst.

The IMF then stepped in to try to stem the crisis. But the IMF has been as much part of the problem as part of the solution. The fund helped create the bubble by pushing the Asian nations to end controls on capital accounts and currency flows before sensible banking regulations were in place. It helped feed the bubble by bailing out speculators from profligate loans in Mexico and elsewhere, creating what Treasury Secretary Rubin calls the “moral hazard” of gamblers encouraged to bet ever more recklessly, confident their losses will be covered on the down side. It helped attract more investors into the bubble by lavishly praising the Asian economic management that it now condemns for rampant corruption and crippling debt. And when the crisis began, the fund marched in — and by its own admission in Indonesia and Thailand — helped spread the panic rather than relieve it.

Numerous experts have criticized the IMF standard bailout program for reinforcing the very dynamics that caused the crisis. As Jeff Uscher, the editor of *Grant's Asia Observer*, writes, the fund bails out the speculators, giving them back “100 cents on the dollar,” thus feeding the speculative fever for another round. It enforces austerity on the countries involved, boosting interest rates, demanding spending cutbacks, requiring sale of assets to foreign investors at fire-sale prices, forcing countries to export their way out of the crisis. The fund's package seems particularly inappropriate to the Asian countries where the problem was not in the public sector — these are countries with balanced budgets and high savings rates — but in private profligacy. Even Joseph Stiglitz, chief economist of the World Bank, publicly criticized the fund for pushing the Asian nations into unnecessarily severe recessions.

The IMF and Congress

Ironically, the strongest opposition to the administration's IMF request is based in the Republican party. The social conservatives of the Republican right turned against globalization long before the Asian crisis. Pat Buchanan railed against the North American Free Trade Agreement, the World Trade Organization and fast-track trade authority. Conservative activist Gary Bauer led the religious right into the battle against most favored nation status for China. Much of the Republican class of 1994 — what one Republican pollster called the “black helicopter crowd” — is generally suspicious of global institutions — from the United Nations to the “pointy headed bureaucrats” at the WTO. Last year, social conservatives blocked an emergency \$3.5 billion supplemental that Treasury sought for the IMF by attaching an anti-abortion rider to it.

Now, the protectionist right is joined by mainstream Republican free traders. The Heritage Foundation, the libertarian Cato Institute, and much of the American Enterprise Institute — all supportive of fast track — have come out against refunding the IMF. They have been joined by surprising allies in the establishment like former Secretary of State George Shultz and former Citibank head Walter Wriston.

The free traders argue that the IMF interferes in workings of the free market which otherwise would work out the financial crisis. Markets require punishment of the improvident to discipline speculators and entrepreneurs. Thus, speculators shouldn't be bailed out of bad loans; improvident borrowers should be forced to take their losses. Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes argues that the IMF should be “told to take a hike,” and that “bailing out investors and speculators ... unwittingly encouraged speculative money flows elsewhere.”

Democrats, on the other hand, generally favor public intervention and strong international institutions. They argue that markets “work out” these crises through deflation and depression. Since the 1930s, civilized nations have considered that too big a risk. Thus House Minority leader Richard Gephardt, who led the fight against fast track, has worked with the administration to round up support for the IMF request. But while progressives in the Democratic Party support *an* IMF, most of them strongly oppose *this* IMF.

The IMF may not have ignited the Asian conflagration but it has cheered on those who were playing with fire.

For them, expanding the IMF without dramatic reforms is perverse. It's like giving a full gas can to an admitted arsonist in order to forestall future fires. In the Asian conflagration, they argue, the IMF may not have lit the match, but it helped provide the tinder, supply the gas and cheer on those who were playing with fire. And once the smoke appeared, the IMF shouted fire, adding to the panic.

Moreover, support for the IMF is not an easy vote. As Rep. Barney Frank noted, "no one in New Bedford is urging me to vote \$18 billion to the IMF." Many union activists, mobilized around NAFTA and the fast-track debates, oppose IMF funding, as do the environmental and consumer groups that led the fight against fast-track. The AFL-CIO has not mobilized union opposition, but it has conditioned its support on structural reforms of the IMF, including support for worker rights.

So progressive Democrats — led by David Bonior, Barney Frank, Bernie Sanders and others — have been pushing for reform of the IMF and the international system as a price of their support (though it seems that in March Bonior for one had reached a compromise with the administration that would allow him to support IMF funding). They've introduced amendments demanding that the fund's work be opened to outsiders, that it practice the transparency it preaches to others. They insist that the fund's programs measure their impact on workers and the environment, and take concrete steps to further basic worker rights and environmental protections. They want the fund to stop promoting an export-oriented growth strategy, and start laying the conditions for what economist Lester Thurow calls a "shift to a strategy of internal growth." They urge Secretary Rubin and the president to press Japan and Germany to stimulate their economies to provide a global stimulus, alleviating the deflationary effects of the Asian collapse.

Treasury Secretary Rubin concedes much of this critique, has warned of the "moral hazard" of bailing out speculators, and called for reform of the "architecture" of the global financial system. In meetings of finance ministers, Treasury representatives have pushed for finding

ways to "bail speculators in" — not bail them out — of financial collapses.

But like Saint Augustine who implored God to rid him of sin, but not yet, Rubin is for reform, but not yet. He wants the Congress to pass the IMF funding first. A U.S. vote of confidence, he says, is vital to help staunch the crisis, warning that failure to act may shake markets here and abroad.

The threat is more effective than true. The IMF has more than enough capital to handle the next crisis and can borrow virtually unlimited amounts. No other country is racing to ante up the new request for expanded quotas. Clearly the treasury secretary is using the crisis to drum up support for IMF expansion. But he doesn't want to dramatize the seriousness of the Asian collapse for fear of spooking the markets once more. Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan's testimony in March — when he balanced fears of inflation with warnings of potential deflation — demonstrates how carefully the financial leaders are treading.

With millions of Americans invested in an already overpriced stock market, Rubin's warning has political force. Legislators, headed into an election in a time of prosperity, have no desire to be tagged with responsibility if the market falls. Many observers assume that, at the end of the day, Congress will pass the IMF funding, rather than risk being blamed if the market does crash.

At the Davos, Switzerland, meetings of world leaders this spring, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney argued that the Asian crisis marks an historic turning. "The long effort to build a global market has succeeded. ... The question now is how to put sensible boundaries on the market that already exists. How to make the market work for the majority and not simply for the few." Sweeney's views might have been hard for the corporate executives in the audience to swallow, but they were seconded by George Soros, the billionaire hedge fund operator whose success gives his word great clout.

Global trade and corporations are hardly new. But the growing integration of a global market is a relatively recent achievement. It is only in the last two decades that countries have dismantled currency and capital controls, and opened markets to foreign investment. President Clinton, like President Bush before him, made the con-

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struction and celebration of this global market a centerpiece of his "economic strategy." The administration has pushed for the ratification of the World Trade Organization, the North American Free Trade Agreement. It has opened negotiations on a Multilateral Agreement on Investment. It has encouraged the IMF to seek greater authority over liberalizing capital flows. It has sought fast-track trade authority to facilitate negotiation of a free trade accord with Latin America, among other trade agreements.

As a result, financial flows to favored countries in the developing world have skyrocketed since 1990, with the vast majority coming from the private sector of banks and investors. Mutual funds and pension funds began to allocate more of their portfolio to overseas investments. Whereas public sources provided the bulk of financial flows in 1990, by 1996 the flows increased sixfold and over 85 percent came from private sources — banks, investment houses, corporations, etc. Each day over \$1 trillion dollars is exchanged in foreign transactions, with merely a small fraction needed for the real economy — financing trade, supporting direct investment. The remainder is short-term, hot speculative money — gambling in a casino economy.

Investment banker and former Treasury official Roger C. Altman compares the force contained in the new global financial market to that of nuclear weapons: "The markets have emerged as the ruling international authority, more potent than any military or political power." The Mexican collapse in 1994 might be considered an initial test of the power of this force. And it is truly a perverse historic irony that it would first detonate over Asia. In the sudden collapse of the Asian tigers, Altman warns, "we saw what a worldwide collapse might look like." The world's central bankers and investors continue to fear that the Asian market collapse will go global. It is essential that this new potent force be brought under better control.

Needed: A New Internationalism

Even before the Asian detonation, the struggle to put rules around the global marketplace had begun. Human rights campaigns against child labor led companies to cobble together "codes of conduct" for their subcontractors to protect themselves from consumer reaction. Labor unions began working across national

borders in organizing and negotiating efforts. Environmentalists have continued to push global agreements to limit despoliation. Consumers issued alarms as uninspected imported foodstuffs poisoned children in Michigan and elsewhere.

In the aftershock of the Asian collapse, these citizen groups are joined by more enlightened business leaders. Financier George Soros calls for radical reform of the global financial system, warning that the "private sector is ill-suited to allocate international credit. It provides either too much or too little." Morgan Stanley's Barton Biggs calls for measures to "control macro traders who today almost rule the world."

For years, efforts to regulate the global system have been scorned as "protectionist." But efforts to build rules around the global market — to enforce labor rights and environmental protections, to regulate food and drug standards, to slow currency and capital flows — aren't efforts to shut down the market, but to save it from its own excesses. This is a new internationalism vital to the global market.

Thus, progressives should be insisting that IMF replenishment be conditioned on structural reforms, both of the fund and of U.S. policy generally. The central reform demands are clear.

Enforcement of internationally established labor rights — the right to organize, to bargain collectively, to strike — is essential. Labor rights help temper the "race to the bottom," where companies play countries off one against the other, forcing competitive devaluations, suppression of workers, elimination of sensible regulation to attract capital. Economically, the growth of inequality, the suppression of wages in the North from competition and in the South, often by brute force, is raising the specter of inadequate demand, and global deflation. Protection of labor rights gives workers in each nation a better chance to capture a fair share of the returns they generate. As their wages go up, they can afford to buy more of other nations' products. This is essential not only for human rights, but for continued economic growth.

Yet, the World Trade Organization protects property rights, but not worker rights. The IMF often forces — as it has in Korea — the dismantling of worker protections as a condition for its aid. Replenishment of the

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The IMF has more than enough capital to handle the next crisis and can borrow virtu- ally unlimited amounts.

fund should be conditioned on the fund's agreement to report on the effects of its programs on workers and worker rights, and requiring that it seek to enforce core labor rights.

Second, the speculative frenzies of the global financial markets must be tempered. The fund seeks permission to change its charter to gain a mandate to push for further dismantling of capital and currency controls. Congress should insist that the U.S. representative oppose any such expansion.

Instead, the Congress should require the Treasury to put together a plan for regulating short-term capital flows. At the very least, the fund must be required to make speculators pay part of the price of their own folly as part of any rescue plan. Treasury should explore renewed support for national controls on speculation, like those imposed by Chile on short-term foreign currency loans and investment. George Soros has called for a global version of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., a public institution funded by private banks and investment houses that would set limits on the levels of insured debt nations could assume. Nobel laureate James Tobin has pushed for a small tax on global transactions, that would make short-term speculation more costly. These might be considered first steps towards moving to a new Bretton Woods, an international agreement to re-regulate currencies.

Third, the IMF must be opened up. Its past efforts should be open to independent review. Its conditionality agreements should be published and open to outside criticism. Democrats on the House Banking Committee have pushed for an independent citizen committee — including representatives from labor, business and consumer groups — to review IMF activities. This is the prerequisite for a larger debate about the extreme laissez-faire potions that the IMF prescribes as an all-purpose remedy.

Environmentalists and consumers have focused more of their attention on the World Trade Organization and the World Bank. But they want the fund to assess the environmental and consumer impact of the conditions that the IMF enforces on countries in distress. When a country is in crisis, the

fund's objective is to stabilize currencies and regain the confidence of international investors. But the dismantling of environmental and consumer protections ought not be part — directly or indirectly — of the package created to appeal to investors. Environmentalists have also been the most vocal about the need for debt relief for developing nations, lifting the debt burden that too often gives them no choice but to join the "race to the bottom."

Not all of these core reforms will be gained in the current debate over the IMF. If conservatives continue to oppose any funding, then the administration will have no choice but to obtain a majority from the center and the left, opening the possibility for progressives to insist on significant reform as a precondition for support. Whatever happens, the IMF debate and the Asian crisis mark historic turning. In many ways, the debate parallels the American experience at the beginning of this century. Then capital and communications built national companies, production and distribution networks. The centralization triggered populist resentment from local farmers and small businesses, from workers and consumers. Muckrakers exposed corporate abuses. Middle class progressives, combined with some of the more enlightened corporations, emerged to push for reform — the minimum wage, eight-hour day, union rights, food safety laws, banking and currency reform, etc. It took decades — two world wars and a great depression — but eventually progressives built the mixed economy that provided greater security for more working people.

Today, the companies and communications have gone global. In the global North, a populist response is building among labor, environmental, human rights and consumer movements. (It takes reactionary as well as reformist forms — as illustrated by Pat Buchanan in the U.S., Jean Marie Le Pen in France or the fundamentalist and nationalist movements building across the developing world.) Now it is vital that a movement for progressive reforms of the global marketplace begin. The debate over the IMF — and the reform pledges exacted as a price of funding — may well mark the beginnings of a new age of reform. ■

THE U.N. AS EVIL EMPIRE



CHET PHILLIPS

F A STRANGE PARANOIA UNDERMINES U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

By James Leonard

For more than 40 years, the Soviet Union filled the role of archenemy for the American public. Now, with the evil empire replaced by the Commonwealth of Independent States, other candidates for demonization have popped up. China, Iraq, Libya and North Korea come to mind.

Some people see an even better candidate right on Manhattan's East River: the United Nations. While most of the foreign policy community considers the U.N. to be at worst ineffective, a right-wing fringe harbors hostility toward it that takes many forms. There is, for example, a paranoid fantasy that the U.N. has a fleet of black helicopters preparing for a military takeover of the United States.

Not as fantastic, but still far-fetched, is another theory that the U.N.'s program to identify and help protect historic sites and natural wonders will undermine U.S. control of places like the Alamo or Yellowstone Park. At least some members of Congress take this theory seriously, because it was deemed grave enough to justify a paragraph in the 1997 Senate bill authorizing U.N. funding. Although it did not pass, the bill warned the U.N. to keep its hands off U.S. property or it would not receive U.S. dollars.

Another, more sophisticated, argument places the Executive Branch and the U.N. in cahoots to erode Congress' constitutional power to declare war and appropriate funds. According to this scenario, the executive branch has been systematically undermining Congress by using the U.N. Security Council to endorse "peacekeeping" operations, then mobilizing U.S. troops and telling Congress that the United States is already committed to the operation as a U.N. member.

This argument, which is not totally without merit, goes back to June 1950 when the Truman administration used a similar procedure to assist South Korea in resisting the invasion from the North. It was revived in August 1990 after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait prompted the U.S. to organize a coalition force under U.N. auspices. In September 1993 U.S. Army Rangers in Somalia sought to capture or kill clan leader Mohammed Aided in parallel with a U.N. peacekeeping operation. The Rangers, who were under a chain of command that led directly to the White House, met with disaster when 18 were killed and their bodies dragged through the streets by Aided's men. Responsibility for the operation has been repeatedly mislaid at the U.N.'s door.

It is the horrors of the breakup of Yugoslavia that have fueled the most intense congressional criticism of the U.N., however. In 1990 the Bush administration reached a compromise with the United States' European allies. The United States would provide support for a Security Council decision to send peacekeeping troops into the area, but no U.S. military would be involved. The U.S. portion of this

*The horrors of
Yugoslavia have
fueled anti-U.N.
sentiment in
Congress.*

multi-billion-dollar operation was 30 percent. Most of the present U.S. arrears to the U.N. derive from this decision and its aftermath.

At the time, most members of Congress were against sending U.S. troops to Yugoslavia, but the idea of sending U.S. dollars was almost as unpopular. The horrors of Serbian attacks in Bosnia, particularly the mas-

sacre at Srebrenica where more than 6,000 unarmed Muslim men were slaughtered after Bosnian Serb troops muscled aside Dutch U.N. peacekeepers, further poisoned congressional attitudes toward the U.N.

The concept of "safe areas" for protection of Bosnian Muslims was pressed on the U.N. by the major powers, including the United States. But these governments then refused to make available the number of troops the secretary-general's military advisers told him were needed to deter Serb attacks. With no ground forces at risk in Bosnia, the U.S. was ill positioned to press others to risk more.

Many observers felt that then Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali should have resigned rather than go forward with this deeply flawed plan. He decided to stay in office and U.N. forces were left to do what they could, short of suicidal resistance to Serbian forces.

NATO subsequently replaced the U.N. as peacekeepers on the ground, and the Dayton Agreements, which were brokered without U.N. help, brought about a kind of peace. For critics of the U.N. the lesson of these events seemed obvious: NATO good — U.N. bad.

When a second Clinton administration took office in 1997, Congress had been refusing to pay either regular U.N. dues or peacekeeping assessments, creating serious consequences for both the U.N. and United States. Close to bankruptcy and forbidden to borrow money unless specifically authorized to do so by the General Assembly, the U.N. has been paying its bills by borrowing internally, using money contributed for peacekeeping to pay its non-peacekeeping accounts. In effect, governments who have provided troops have not been paid. In effect, the United States, by not paying its share of U.N. costs, is accepting interest-free loans from these countries.

The arrearage damages U.S. credibility and ability to shape Security Council actions. If it gets high enough, under the U.N. Charter the United States could lose its

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vote in the General Assembly, though not its seat, vote or veto right in the Security Council. Moreover, with former U.S. Representative to the U.N. Madeleine K. Albright, under whose watch these obligations were incurred, now serving as secretary of State, and Kofi Annan, the U.S. choice as a reform-minded secretary-general installed at the U.N., there are powerful arguments that the arrears should be paid. Annan will have a hard time surmounting the obstacles to change within the U.N. unless the U.S., the main advocate for reform, is paid up.

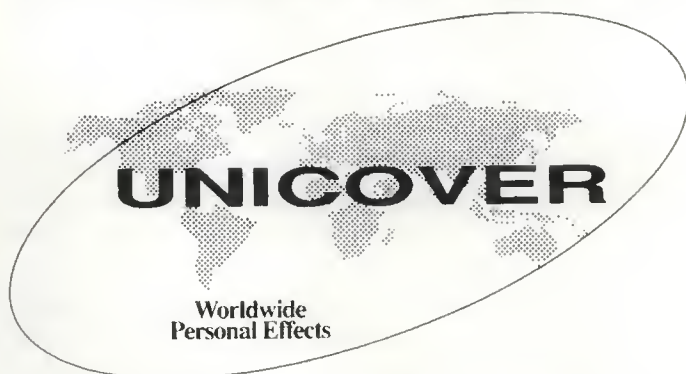
Still, Clinton administration advocates for paying U.N. dues face a Republican majority in the Congress. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is a sharp critic of the U.N. He admired the strong position taken by Albright and former Secretary of State Warren Christopher in opposing a second term for Boutros-Ghali. While he was not won over completely, he did negotiate a complicated agreement with Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.),

the ranking Democrat on the SFRC, to pay less than \$1 billion to the U.N., an amount several hundred million dollars short of the \$1.3 billion the U.N. says the U.S. owes and about one hundred million less than the Clinton administration had requested. The deal set out more than 30 stipulations which the U.N. had to meet to get the payment. That measure flies in the face of U.S. ratification of the U.N. Charter and passage of the U.N. Participation Act by Congress in 1945 by which the U.S. agreed to accept unconditionally its obligation to pay U.N. dues. Still, Congress has the power to authorize and appropriate money, and if it imposes conditions, the U.N. has no choice but to take it or leave it.

Included among the stipulations were warnings that the U.N. must not infringe on U.S. sovereignty, borrow from anyone, or develop a proposal for international taxes. Also included were numerous provisions aimed at U.N. reform, such as reducing the organization's budget and establishing an independent inspector general. Many of these stipulations were already being addressed in September 1997.

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The number of employees at the U.N. in New York had been reduced from 10,000 to 9,000 and an inspector general was going after cases of corruption and mismanagement. Moreover, U.N. ambassador Bill Richardson was working in New York to fulfill another of the stipulations by negotiating a smaller share of the U.N. budget for the U.S., down from 25 percent to 22 percent.

Among members of Congress outraged by the Helms-Biden deal were Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), the number two Republican on the SFRC, and Rep. Lee Hamilton of Indiana, ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, both of whom were ignored during its negotiation. Still, the Clinton administration, for whom the U.N. arrears has been a continual headache, was eager to see the deal passed, even with conditions. Many defenders and critics of the U.N. in Congress agreed.

One man brought the whole deal down. Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) attached a rider to the bill denying payment

The U.N. needs more business "godfathers" like Ted Turner and George Soros.

other groups that do. The Smith Amendment was unacceptable to the pro-choice Clinton administration. Smith was backed by the Republican House leadership, who smelled political gain, even though abortion opponent Helms made it clear that he did not want the Smith amendment attached to the U.N. legislation.

It is not yet clear if Helms-Biden is dead or merely hibernating. Following its failure on the final day of the 1997 session, the Clinton administration issued angry denunciations of the Congress and has said it is still interested in negotiating a deal. Sen. Helms still supports the compromise, but whether the House of Representatives will change its position remains to be seen.

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In the meantime, U.S. credibility with the U.N. is at an all-time low. U.S. requests for lower dues levels will not even be discussed until it is clear the Congress will deliver on what the administration has proposed.

The Clinton administration is negotiating in private with congressional leaders in an effort to revive Helms-Biden without the abortion amendment. Another choice would be to go to the public to generate popular pressure on Congress, but that strategy would risk antagonizing congressional leaders and would require a major public relations effort.

Still, taking the U.N. to the people does have its appeal. A 1997 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press showed that 64 percent of Americans give the U.N. a favorable rating. Though this is down from 73 percent support in a similar 1993 poll, it compares to the 53 percent favorable rating given NATO in the 1997 poll. Significantly, the U.N. is more popular among the general public than among influential elites. While 30 percent of the American public agreed that

strengthening the United Nations should be a top priority of U.S. foreign policy, only 21 percent of the news media agreed with that statement. In other sectors support was even lower: congressional policy staff, 13 percent; academics and think tanks, 17 percent; and business and finance, 9 percent.

On one hand, elite circles are less starry-eyed than the public about the U. N. More of them are in business, which makes them susceptible to the argument that the U.N. is pro-big government, anti-free market and quasi-socialist. More members of the elite have an understanding of the humanitarian and other technical work of the U.N. The U.N.'s supporters lack the intensity of its critics, however, and are much less likely to become active on its behalf. For this reason, a member of Congress who takes out after the U.N. has little to fear.

What can be done? If the Clinton administration and its successors want to enlist the American public behind a leadership role in the world for the U.S., they will need business leaders in the front ranks. So far their record is

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mixed. Businessman Ted Turner's cool billion-dollar contribution to the U.N. and similar efforts such as financier George Soros' large-scale aid for democratization in Eastern Europe set an example. Many on Wall Street are pro-U.N., but industrial and commercial leaders in Chicago, Detroit and Houston are rarely heard speaking up for it. Even worse, the energy and auto industries, unhappy with the administration's policies on the problem of global warming, repeatedly refer to the Kyoto draft treaty on the environment as "that U.N. treaty," apparently sensing that a U.N. tag will mobilize resistance.

The U.N. needs more business "godfathers." Pharmaceutical firms contribute millions of dollars worth of free medicine to the World Health Organization, a U.N. agency. Could that industry contribute a bit more to lobby Congress? American agriculture benefits greatly from the programs of the Food and Agricultural

*Elite circles are less
starry-eyed about the
U.N. than is the general
American public.*

Organization and the World Food Program. Couldn't agribusiness give a hand on Capitol Hill?

In 1984 Great Britain and the United States withdrew from UNESCO, charging abuses in its management. A new UNESCO

director general has corrected these problems, but in view of the problem of U.S. arrears to the U.N., President Clinton has not asked the Congress for the funds to rejoin UNESCO. For the world's richest, most prosperous country to say it "can't afford" UNESCO dues and won't pay other legitimate bills it incurred is shameful.

Perhaps now with U.S. budget surpluses more abundant in Washington, Congress will agree to pay the U.N. debt and get the U.S. off the sidelines and into the front lines of the next century's battle to build a better world. Anything less will be an embarrassment to the United States and its people. ■

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SIERRA LEONE'S DREAM

DIPLOMATIC ACTIVISM, NOT DOLLARS, HELPED BRING
DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS TO A WEST AFRICAN COUNTRY

BY CHARLES A. RAY

On March 10 President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone was greeted by jubilant, screaming crowds in the streets of the capital, Freetown, when he returned from a 10-month exile in neighboring Guinea. "We are going to make this a brand new beginning for Sierra Leone," he told people lining up to see his triumphal motorcade.

Kabbah fled Freetown just last May 25 when gunfire and explosions shattered the early morning quiet as a group of disgruntled enlisted men of the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces blew the gates off Pademba Road Central Prison, freeing convicted plotters from a previous coup attempt. The sleepy West African country had recently celebrated one year of elected civilian rule, but the newly-elected president, Kabbah, was ousted by a military junta that May. The junta selected Major Johnny Paul Koromah, a veteran of a previous coup attempt who had been newly freed from prison, as its leader.

Over the next several months, the junta, which named itself the Armed Revolutionary Council, tried unsuccessfully to establish control over Sierra Leone. The junta failed to win recognition from other countries and international organizations and junta members were banned from travel to or transit through other countries by a U.N. Security Council resolution

Charles A. Ray is an FSO whose next assignment is principal officer in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He has served in Sierra Leone, Thailand and China.

that was observed by most countries in the region. In addition, the junta faced armed resistance from the military arm of the Economic Community of West African States led by Nigeria's military ruler, Gen. Sani Abacha. Also opposing the junta were the Kamajors, a network of local civil defense groups throughout Sierra Leone which had been organized by the ousted Kabbah government. Thousands of Sierra Leoneans fled their country, determined not to accept the junta as their government. Of those who stayed, thousands of government workers refused to report for duty. The Sierra Leone Teachers Union ordered its members to stay out of classrooms.

Since receiving independence from Great Britain in 1961, Sierra Leone had experienced a series of military takeovers, most of which had received at least initial support from the civilian population. Why the difference during last year's coup? The answer lies in the past.

In 1787 a group of English anti-slavery activists bought a few square miles of land on the peninsula of West Africa in what is now Sierra Leone for the purpose of providing a home for 400 free blacks from England. Freetown later became the home for former slaves from the New World colonies, the Caribbean or from slave ships in the Atlantic waters off the West African coast. A portion of Sierra Leone around Freetown was declared a crown colony in 1808 and the rest of the country was made a British protectorate in the late 1800s in an effort to block French expansion along the Niger River.

When Sierra Leone, the "Athens of West Africa,"

came peacefully to independence in April 1961, its Creole society, the well-educated descendants of Freetown's original freed slaves, had strong ideas about freedom. Aware of their small numbers in the country, they had never monopolized power like the Americo-Liberians in Liberia, but they had often treated other clans from the country's interior with disdain. Upon independence, Dr. Charles Margai, one of the first non-Creoles in the country to become a medical doctor, formed a government dominated by the Mende ethnic group from the southern- and eastern-based Sierra Leone People's Party. When he died, he was replaced by his half-brother, Albert Margai, who quickly replaced all northerners and many Creoles with Mende.

Southern dominance of the government ended in 1967 with the election of union activist turned politician Siaka Stevens, a member of the northern Limba clan. Although Stevens came to power through democratic elections, he pushed through legislation making his All People's Congress the only legal political party in the country. Stevens destroyed the country's economy and, distrusting the educated Creoles, dismantled the country's educational system. Following the pattern set by Charles Margai, he replaced southerners and easterners in the government and military with northerners, whom he assumed were more loyal.

Under the leadership of Gen. Joseph S. Momoh, whom Stevens designated his successor in 1985, the economy continued to decline and political discontent increased. In 1991, Foday Sankoh, a disgruntled former army corporal and leader of the Revolutionary United Front, invaded Sierra Leone with the support of militia leader and current Liberian president Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia. Sankoh quickly gained control over most of the eastern and southern provinces, as the untrained, poorly equipped Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces dropped their weapons and fled.

Momoh promised political reform and an end to one-party rule, but his military forces were barely able to hold their own against the rebels. A group of disgruntled young officers ousted Momoh in a coup on April 29, 1992 and instituted military government,

calling it the National Provisional Ruling Council. By autumn 1993 the military government appeared solidly in place despite junta leader Captain Valentine E. Strasser's promise to turn power over to an elected civilian government within three years.

Vowing to end corruption and defeat Momoh's forces, Strasser promised elections in three years. Still, Strasser's soldiers were soon practicing their own corruption, passing draconian decrees and confiscating property. In December 1992, the junta summarily executed people accused of plotting against it.

Most Sierra Leoneans and the international community were convinced that elections were an impossible dream. In late 1993, Strasser formed the Interim National Electoral Commission and appointed James Jonah, an under secretary general of the United Nations, chairman.

Housed in a run-down parliament building with a staff consisting of Jonah, four regional commissioners and an executive secretary, the electoral commission's mandate was to prepare for general elections at some unspecified future date. In addition, conventional wisdom held that elections could not be held until the war had ended. With reports of increased fighting in rural areas, that meant no elections.

Another problem faced by the electoral commission was its dependence on the international community for aid, which was slow in coming because of doubts about the elections. The British Government High Commission provided the elections commission with office furniture and equipment. The European Union representative provided funds to renovate a building. The American Embassy, through USAID's Democracy and Human Rights Fund, gave money for portable sound equipment to be used for voter education in rural areas.

James Jonah scheduled a National Conference on Elections for August 1995 to decide whether elections should be held, but anti-election activists tried to thwart it with almost daily "Peace Before

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Elections" rallies. Still, Jonah proceeded with strong support from women's groups like the Women's Movement for Peace and a one-woman campaign mounted by Zainab Bangura, president of Women Organized for a Morally Enlightened Nation (WOMEN). Political parties were allowed to form only weeks before the conference, but 17 sent representatives to the three-day event. The conference also drew some 200 representatives from government, the military, police, women's groups, unions, academia, refugee groups, traditional local rulers and Sierra Leoneans living overseas. In the face of anti-election lobbyists, the delegates voted to hold elections in December 1995, but then agreed to postpone them to February 1996 to give the election commission more time to prepare voters.

Yet Another Coup

With the support of the government, anti-election activists increased agitation. Permits for their gatherings were routinely approved, while political parties found it difficult to get permission for theirs. In early 1996, two events increased skepticism about the elections. First, Valentine Strasser was ousted by his deputy, brigadier and head of the military Julius Maada Bio, who claimed that Strasser was planning to run for the presidency and sabotage any chance of a return to democracy. Following the bloodless coup, Bio contacted foreign ambassadors in Freetown to assure them that elections would go forward as planned. Then, in early February he announced that he was reconvening the National Conference on Elections, saying he wanted to be assured that people wanted elections in the midst of a war.

On the day of the conference, the roads to the Bintumani Conference Center where it was to be held were occupied by heavily armed soldiers who harassed pro-election groups. One pro-election party leader was reportedly

dragged from his car and beaten. In contrast, anti-election demonstrators were permitted to assemble outside the conference center and display their banners inside the building.

With all the representatives from the earlier conference in attendance, James Jonah, in a brilliant tactical move, placed only one item on the agenda. Sidestepping the issue of delaying elections until the war was over, he asked simply, should elections be held on the scheduled date? Despite harassment and threats, the delegates voted a resounding yes. Junta leader Bio's only options were to allow elections or use violence to stop them.

Election-Day Courage

On election day, in an effort to scare voters away from the polls, soldiers lined up along a road in the hills overlooking Freetown and fired rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons. They said they were fighting off the Revolutionary United Front, but a U.S. embassy Marine who saw the incident said the soldiers fired their weapons into the air, strange behavior for soldiers countering a rebel attack. Voters — some of whom had lined up the night before — refused to move, so the soldiers shouldered their weapons and returned to their barracks. In another incident, a group of armed soldiers dismounted from a truck near a polling place and began moving menacingly toward people waiting to vote. An unarmed group of teenagers interposed themselves between the soldiers and the polling place, yelling taunts and inviting them to open fire. After a few tense moments, the soldiers got back on their truck and left the area.

Later, gangs of angry youths who were unarmed or armed only with machetes and clubs marched toward the military barracks, but were turned back by the police. Similar incidents were reported in provincial towns, where enraged youth attacked and

killed soldiers whom they suspected of interfering with voting.

Conventional Wisdom Failed

Despite the doubts of domestic and international observers, February polling led to a run-off in March between the top two candidates. In April, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the Sierra Leone People's Party was installed as president.

Where did the pundits go wrong? Only a few people within the international community had bothered to talk with average Sierra Leoneans, who were longing for change. Instead, they relied on the opinions of the educated elite. Only the U.S. Embassy, the British High Commission and the U.N. special envoy were in touch with grassroots opinion and believed change was possible. Only a few months before the election, for example, a mid-level Sierra Leone military officer had predicted, "Right now, people are so fed up with the National Provisional Ruling Council that a snake could win an election against them."

United States support for Sierra Leone's elections amounted to \$100,000, including cash grants and provision of equipment and supplies. While this amount of money seems small, it was crucial to the success of the electoral process because it showed that someone cared. The moral support the embassy provided to non-governmental and community groups was even more important. Kiki Munshi, USIS Director at Embassy Freetown, promoted women's groups by providing them help in developing bylaws, giving them office equipment and finding them space for meetings, even giving them the use of her residence.

The embassy stayed in constant contact with government officials and private citizens throughout 1994 and 1995, encouraging them to stand firm in their commitment to democratic transition. Aware that the United States would not be offering large

amounts of financial support, the embassy's message to Sierra Leoneans was not only that they could do it for themselves, but that they must do it themselves, because outsiders could not make a country for them. The U.S. Embassy also served as a neutral place where opposing groups who would not have otherwise met with each other could speak. In January 1996, for example, the embassy hosted a meeting between then head of state Julius Maada Bio and the heads of the newly organized political parties.

In August 1995, when I was chargé d'affaires, I spent three days as an international observer at the first national conference on elections held at the Bintumani Conference Center. I was told later by Sierra Leoneans that just the presence of an American official gave people confidence that the process had a chance to succeed. I learned later that I was a prominent figure in the TV coverage, creating the accurate impression that the U.S. embassy supported democratization.

From August 1995 to February 1996, Peace Before Elections increased its harassment of opposition leaders and just weeks before the elections, unidentified assailants assaulted the residences of elections commission chairman Jonah and SLPP presidential candidate Kabbah with automatic weapons and grenades.

At the same time, U.S. Ambassador John L. Hirsch, who had arrived in late August, was firm with his message to the government. "You have promised to step down," he told them. "Sierra Leoneans and the world expect you to keep that promise." Although many in the government were made angry by this, they could not complain because Hirsch was only reminding them of what they themselves had promised. Ambassador Hirsch was available at any hour to provide moral support. Along with Chairman of the Electoral Commission Jonah, British High Commissioner Ian McCluney, U.N.

Only a few people in the international community had bothered to talk with average Sierra Leoneans, who were longing for change.

Envoy Ambassador Berhanu Dinka and UNDP Resident Representative Elizabeth Lwanga, Hirsch met with President Bio at 10 p.m. the night before the elections to remind him of his responsibility to ensure peaceful, free and fair elections.

The United States was able to play a major role in restoring multi-party government in Sierra Leone by spending less than \$1 million between 1993 and 1996. In addition to \$100,000 spent on the elections, over a three-year period the amount the embassy spent for equipment, supplies, training, travel and consultants was less than \$800,000. More important than money, though, were the time and energy U.S. diplomats spent developing accurate sources of information on the elections. During that time, receptions at the ambassador's residence were often tense affairs, because political competitors came there to meet on neutral ground. But no one ever complained about our gatherings and senior officials, including President Bio, rarely turned down an invitation.

At the same time, all embassy programs were geared toward supporting the democratic transformation of Sierra Leone. For example, embassy personnel kept lines of communication open to all military factions. The embassy's Department of Defense-sponsored International Military Education and Training program was geared to promoting military professionalism and

good relationships between civilians and the military. Other embassy programs supported the civilian control of the military. At the urging of the embassy, the Sierra Leone military hosted a two-day conference in the fall of 1995 to assess civil-military relations in the country. A landmark event that featured frank and open discussions, the conference developed a number of recommendations to begin the process of healing the rift between the military and civilians.

Were these efforts successful? Elections were held and a civilian government was installed, but one election is not the end of a process. True success comes when democracy endures.

As events during the last year have shown, it's probably too early to predict whether democracy has taken root in Sierra Leone. Still, the U.S. embassy experience there illustrates two lessons. First, there is no off-the-shelf prescription for developing good government. Each country has to be encouraged to develop locally from within itself in its own unique way. Second, massive amounts of money won't guarantee success, but small amounts of money given intelligently can make a difference. In his work with the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe after devastation during World War II, George F. Kennan stressed rehabilitation rather than relief. "When the U.S. simply poured dollars and relief supplies into a foreign area, they tended to sink away like water in the sand," he said. These lessons are appropriate for Sierra Leone and the rest of Africa today.

Diplomats can and should swim against the current and invest time, energy and emotion in promoting democracy, but in the end only the people of any nation can decide what type of government they want. ■

CELLULOID DIPLOMACY

After Years of Searching, FSO Finally Finds A Decent Diplomat in the Movies

BY MICHAEL CANNING

Diplomacy and its intricacies are too complex and subtle to find full expression in the American popular arts. When Hollywood isn't portraying diplomats as facile stereotypes, it shows them as ineffectual.

American diplomats in the movies have ranged from the cartoon of Ambassador Hooper Moulsworth in 1961's "Romanov and Juliet" to the lampoon of the bar-girl-turned-protocol-officer in 1984's "Protocol." The singular exception to this trivial vision of the American FSO appears, with thudding irony, in Costa-Gavras's 1982 film, "Missing." The film featured the most realistic portrayals of FSOs ever seen on the screen, but it aroused the ire of the State Department because of its unflattering treatment of a real diplomatic incident, the disappearance and death of American Charles Hornan in Chile in 1973.

Now another film, "Four Days in September," treats actual events in 1969 in Brazil when U.S. Ambassador Charles Burke Elbrick was abducted by a band of terrorists, the first of a spate of kidnappings of American diplomats. Directed by Bruno Barreto, who is best known for his 1977 film "Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands," this Brazilian take on the incident was recently released in the United States and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

At last here is a film with a sympathetic portrayal of a U.S. envoy, a film that FSOs can take their families and friends to see without cringing. Instead of another representation of a U.S. chief of mission as a bubble-headed, impotent clown, "Four Days in September" is a balanced political film.

Barreto was 14 years old and living in Brazil when the Elbrick kidnapping occurred, during a time when

the country's military regime had imposed arbitrary rule. He now lives in New York City and has worked in both Brazil and the United States. Perhaps the measured, objective quality of "Four Days in September" can be explained by the passage of almost 30 years since the incident it treats, or perhaps it can be explained by Barreto's physical distance from his home country. Maybe the film benefits because it's a Brazilian effort and thus less subject to the mass market pressures of Hollywood. Whatever the reason, Barreto has brought together a compelling ensemble of characters, including the shaky terrorist band, the Brazilian security forces tracking the kidnapers and Ambassador Elbrick.

The film is loosely based on "O Que e Isso, Companheiro" ("What's This, Buddy?"), a 1979 book written by Fernando Gabeira, one of the terrorists. It manages to paint telling personal portraits created by a convincing group of actors. Written years after the event, Gabeira's account is more a meditation on what happened than a fact-based account. Barreto calls the film "a fictional character study as inspired by Gabeira's thoughts."

In the film Fernando Gabeira (Pedro Cardoso), is a prototype of the committed, romantic intellectual longing for "pure action" in a terrorist cause. As the lone English speaker in the group, he argues politics with Elbrick and is susceptible to another kind of romance with his comrade Maria (Fernanda Torres). It is Gabeira, the man with no killer instinct, who draws the unenviable assignment of shooting Ambassador Elbrick unless the Brazilian authorities release 15 detainees by the terrorists' deadline. The rest of the terrorist gang are also credible, from the world-weary Spanish-American War veteran Toledo (Nelson Dantas) to the fresh-faced ingenue Renee (Claudia Abreu). The movie also provides a balanced portrayal of the Brazilian cops who hunt down the kidnapers.

Michael Canning is a retired FSO, whose last post was with USIA in Brazil. He writes movie reviews for The Hill Rag, a monthly newspaper in Washington, D.C.

But it is the portrayal of Ambassador Elbrick that is most surprising, coming as it does in a foreign film. As played by Alan Arkin, the principal American actor in a Brazilian cast, Elbrick is a sympathetic figure, a thoughtful, level-headed chief of mission any FSO would willingly serve. He is first shown celebrating the July 1969 U.S. moon landing at an embassy party. In later scenes, he is shown to be enamored of his wife, and a competent Portuguese speaker, decent to his help and judicious with his staff. It's the ambassador's easy-going nature which prompts him to drive to work underprotected and an easy pick for the plotters. (FSOs will be shocked to see how thin security was in the good old days.)

The kidnapping scene is brisk and tense, full of tough, honest realism. During his captivity Elbrick comes to life. His strength and vulnerability are both displayed; becoming a captive frightens but does not immobilize him. Engaging in heartfelt discussions with Fernando, he voices his doubts about American backing for governments such as Brazil's which have not been elected and do not have popular support. He also expresses his concerns about U.S. policy in Vietnam, while at the same time arguing that he must defend the policy. These were the real Charles Elbrick's views, which Barreto gleaned from interviews with Elbrick's daughter, Valerie. As portrayed, Elbrick defies the Brazilians' stereotypes about Americans. He is both a regular, unassuming guy — though one with an indulgence for foreign tailoring — and a firm, dignified presence.

Elbrick's fear is palpable as the terrorists wait for their demands to be met, which, after four days in captivity, they are. He is then left dazed and confused among a horde of soccer fans outside a Rio de Janeiro stadium. He takes a taxi back to the embassy.

The real Charles Elbrick returned to Washington shortly after his release and never had another foreign assignment. He had begun his career in 1931 and early assignments included Panama, Southampton and Port-au-Prince. Stationed in Warsaw as a third secretary in 1939, he fled with the Polish government before the invading German and Soviet armies. While in Paris with the Polish government in exile, he was forced to

flee another Nazi invasion and spent the rest of the war in Portugal and Tangier.

After World War II, he helped re-open the Warsaw embassy and later served in Havana and as a delegate to the Atlantic Council. He was named assistant secretary for European Affairs in 1957, ambassador to Portugal in 1958 and ambassador to Yugoslavia in 1964. At the time of his kidnapping, he had just been promoted to the rank of career ambassador, the highest rung on the diplomatic service's ladder. His service in Brazil lasted only one year. He returned to Washington in May 1970 and left the Foreign Service in 1971 for medical reasons. He died of pneumonia in 1983 at the age of 75.



Alan Arkin as Ambassador Charles Elbrick — nobody's fool.

According to Valerie Elbrick, her father was different in demeanor, bearing and physique than the Alan Arkin portrayal. A native of Kentucky, Charles Elbrick was a tall, soft-spoken, elegantly dressed man with a conservative manner.

Though there may be contrasts in the movie persona and the real man, "Four Days in September" is a fitting tribute to the spirit of Charles Elbrick, who bore up under his travails as well as any FSO could hope to have done. ■

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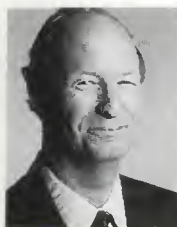
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BOOKS

LEGACY OF EXCESS, ACHIEVEMENT

Sumner Welles: FDR's Global Strategist

Benjamin Welles, St. Martin's Press, 1997, hardcover, \$35, 437 pages.

BY PETER F. SPALDING

With the exception of George F. Kennan, Sumner Welles, who died in 1961, had more influence on 20th century American foreign policy than any other career diplomat. He is the father of two towering monuments of diplomacy: the Good Neighbor policy, which continues to be the cornerstone of U.S.-Latin American relations, and the Atlantic Charter, the template upon which the United Nations was established. Above all, he was a dreamer and a dynamo who helped shape President Franklin D. Roosevelt's vision of foreign policy.

Welles' diplomatic accomplishments should be at the center of his legacy, but a combination of alcoholic excess and sexual appetite got in the way. In September 1940, while returning on FDR's private train from the funeral of House Speaker William Bankhead, an inebriated and exhausted Welles propositioned male porters for sex. FDR kept the incident quiet for three years, but Welles' enemies — notably U.S. Ambassador to France William Bullitt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull — used their knowledge of the incident to drive him from the State Department.

After joining the Foreign Service in 1915, Welles rose rapidly in the State Department, which was then made up of the sons of privilege. Tall, handsome, arrogant, he was a caricature of his class.

By age 45, Welles was under secretary of State and a close adviser to FDR, with whom he shared long-term family ties. It is not surprising, then, that Secretary of State Hull, a Tennessee politician whose folksy style contrasted with that of the patrician Welles, became intensely jealous of a deputy who wielded more power with the president than he did.

Still, Welles was more complicated and gifted than his image as an aristocratic diplomat. He was a highly disciplined negotiator, a fluent Spanish speaker and the author of a well-received history of the Dominican Republic, *Naboth's Vineyard*. At a time when most diplomats were not comfortable outside their upper-crust background and many were anti-Semitic, Welles was a lone voice advocating an Israeli homeland in Palestine.

In addition to being Sumner Welles' biographer, Benjamin Welles, a respected former journalist for the *New York Times*, is also his son. He employs a narrative style that reads like a novel and treats with courage and honesty his father's many diplomatic triumphs and personal disasters. He addresses the train scandal in the book's prologue. While this is courageous reporting, it detracts from the biographical and historical narrative. The incident could have been treated

chronologically as the denouement to a life of wealth and excess, where immature gratification was pursued without thought of consequences to family and personal reputation.

Peter F. Spalding is a retired FSO.

WHAT THEY DID IN THE WAR

Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944 to May 7, 1945

Stephen E. Ambrose, Simon and Schuster, 1997, hardcover, \$27.50, 512 pages.

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Convincing military history is difficult to write, as contemporary readers have neither first-hand combat experience nor interest in hearing the gory details. Fortunately, Stephen Ambrose, whose previous book, *Undaunted Courage*, detailed the Lewis and Clark expedition, has found a solution. He relies on interviews with men and women who fought in World War II, supplementing their accounts with published and unpublished memoirs and documents from military archives. The result is a fascinating, gritty account of life in Europe during the last year of World War II.

The book's first, second and fourth

BOOKS

sections take a chronological approach to the war, covering both the Allied and Axis sides' strategy and tactics, while the third section covers issues and personalities. Ambrose is not shy about reporting his protagonists' character flaws and errors in judgement. British Gen. Bernard Law "Monty" Montgomery comes off only slightly better than Adolf Hitler. Even American Gen. Dwight D. "Ike" Eisenhower, clearly Ambrose's personal hero, gets criticized for missing several opportunities to avoid casualties and achieve victory more quickly, though Ambrose justifies these lapses as coming from political and diplomatic pressures.

Beyond his coverage of personalities, Ambrose is adept at showing how and why sensible strategies met with grief on the battlefield. The winter of 1944 to 1945 was one of the harshest of this century, and far too many American troops were not properly

trained, equipped or provisioned for it. While he lays the blame for this on Quartermaster Lt. Gen. John C.H. Lee, he also gives Lee credit for defying the Army's Jim Crow policy.

In the book's interesting third section, entitled "Life in the ETO" (European Theater of Operations) Ambrose takes a welcome break from describing brutal clashes to look at race relations, the treatment of POWs by both sides, the role of medics and nurses, air support and frantic efforts to get replacement troops up to the front. A few minor infelicities do creep into *Citizen Soldiers*. A story about U.S. POWs is repeated verbatim twice and homosexuality in the trenches is glossed over as "rare to non-existent." Even a cursory look at *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. Military*, Randy Shilts' classic study, would have kept Ambrose from that oversimplification.

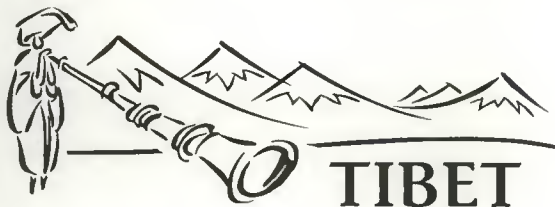
Still, Ambrose's description of how American "grunts" overcame daunting obstacles can be boiled down to the explanation many veterans offered him: "We had a job to do and we did it." *Citizen Soldiers* makes clear how hard that job was. ■

Steven Alan Honley, a former FSO, served in Mexico City and Wellington.

Essay an Essay?

The *Journal* is interested in a new genre: the book review essay. Made famous by *The New York Review of Books*, this form includes reviews of several current books about the same topic within one thoughtful essay.

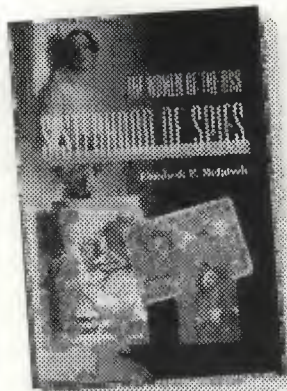
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TIBET THE STORY OF AN AMERICAN INFATUATION

For a diplomatic and cultural history of America's relationship with Tibet, the author, a Foreign Service Officer, would like to hear from active and retired members of the U.S. foreign affairs community who have worked on Tibetan issues.

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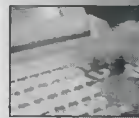
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POSTCARD FROM ABROAD

Tennis at the Tamil, Anyone?

BY WILLIAM C. DAWSON, JR.

At 5 p.m. on Saturday afternoon, as the tropical sun begins to soften and gentle sea breezes riffle the palm fronds, tennis players in their whites wend their way by car and scooter to Colombo's Tamil Union Cricket and Athletic Club for their weekly ritual of tennis doubles. The air is soon filled with tennis balls and rent with cries of "bad luck" and "shot," shorthand for "good shot." After two or three sets, players towel down, change shirts and repair to the cricket pitch, where, under a canopy of stars and fading pink clouds, they drink and munch on "short eats" surrounded by mosquito coils lit and set in place by waiters in scruffy street clothes.

"Today was bloody humid, no?" says one player. Others discuss the strengths and weaknesses of leading cricketers from Australia to Zimbabwe. Still others recount the travels and scandals in the lives of former school chums and university fellows. In Sri Lanka in 1997 there are few family secrets.

The Tamil Union's two dozen tennis members represent Sri Lanka's middle class: company executives, an accountant, an engineer, a police officer and the executive director of the Fullbright Commission. They come from the island's major ethnic groups — Sinhalese, Tamil, and Eurasian — and practice the coun-

William Dawson was cultural affairs officer for USIA in Colombo from 1993 to 1997. The stamp is courtesy of the AAFSW Bookfair "Stamp Corner."

*The Tamil Union
has remained a
redoubt of
vanishing civilities.*

try's major religions — Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. All speak English, the lingua franca of Sri Lankan sports clubs.

As with politics and religion, gender is not an issue at the club. In Sri Lanka, the president, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, and prime minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, are daughter and mother, so Sumangala Rajaratnam, the talented and determined daughter of a club member, plays easily amid an all-male phalanx. In Sri Lankan fashion, the teenager addresses her middle-aged compatriots as "uncle."

Founded in 1899, the Tamil Union at one time boasted the most celebrated cricket stadium on the island. Colombo's July 1983 anti-Tamil riots — triggered when Tamil guerrillas killed 13 soldiers from the country's dominant Sinhalese ethnic group — lapped at the gates of the club and Sinhalese vandals ransacked the premises. After the riots, uneasiness, especially among Tamils,

led to fewer families visiting; the bridge and billiard regulars also stopped coming. Now, on some Saturday nights only the tennis regulars, attended by a gaggle of stewards, show up at the club. Even the formidable Tamil Union cricket teams don't attract the crowds their predecessors drew during their glory years after World War II.

Despite its frayed and mildewed present, the Tamil Union symbolizes a genteel time when Sri Lanka was an oasis of calm in South Asia. Ceylon, as the island was called until 1972, was renowned to world travelers for hundreds of years for its beauty and culture. In recent decades, however, Sri Lanka has been buffeted by incessant bomb blasts, political killings and pitched civil war battles. The Tamil Union, with a membership fee of only two dollars a month, has remained a redoubt of vanishing civilities. Friendships run deeper than race or religion or nationality. Gentlemen smile graciously after a defeat and apologies are still proffered after a net-cord winner.

The British novelist Evelyn Waugh dreamed of spending his winter holidays at an English seaside hotel reading Edwardian novels. I dream of spending my winter holidays at the Tamil Union Cricket and Athletic Club playing tennis and waiting for a familiar voice to ask, "Today was bloody humid, no?" ■

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