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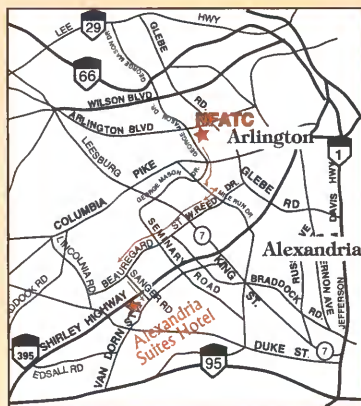
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PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

Still a Viable Career?

BY MARSHALL P. ADAIR

This issue of the *FSJ* poses an important question: Is the Foreign Service still viable as a career? I believe the answer to that question is strongly affirmative. But there is another equally important question: Will it continue to be viable in the future? The answer to that is, only if we make it so. That will not be easy.

Today, Foreign Service personnel have the opportunity to live all over the world, experiencing directly cultures that most Americans are only vaguely aware of. The Foreign Service offers the opportunity to serve others and the nation in an enormous variety of ways: from the personal — impacting individual lives through consular services, to the general — constructing foreign policies to protect the security of the nation.

Of course, the Foreign Service has always included difficulties: the hardship of living in less developed or hostile areas, the danger of unfamiliar disease, the constant uprooting and re-establishing of families without the support of long-time friends, and the struggle to provide adequate education for children. In some respects these difficulties have contributed to the definition of a unique service, adding to its challenge and its rewards.

Over the last several decades, however, a number of trends have developed which threaten to transform these difficulties from a challenge that

Marshall P. Adair is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

The Foreign Service will continue to be an attractive career only if we make it so.



strengthens the service to a burden that weakens it. Resources allocated to foreign affairs have decreased — by nearly 50 percent since 1985 — and benefits and support for personnel and their families overseas have decreased as well. At the same time, life at hardship posts, which used to be less expensive than in the U.S., is now often more expensive.

Social and economic changes have made life for single-income families increasingly difficult — but it is not correspondingly easier for Foreign Service spouses to find jobs overseas, much less to maintain separate careers. Meanwhile, private sector career alternatives to the Foreign Service are growing. McKinsey and Co.'s "War for Talent" report warns that competition for intellectually gifted, internationally oriented people will continue to increase over the next 20 years. Private sector salaries, at both entry and senior levels, dwarf those offered by the State Department.

The psychic rewards of government

service, and particularly of the Foreign Service, are critical, but they too are eroding. International affairs is a less exclusive preserve as businessmen, journalists and academics often spend more time in a particular country or region than do diplomats. In the United States the clamor against government "elites" is as loud as ever, not only from Congress, but from within the administration as well. The ratio of political to career ambassadors clings precariously to 30:70, but political appointments to key State Department positions are growing steadily.

On top of all this, the danger from terrorism is now worldwide, not limited to specific countries. It is directed not just at Foreign Service personnel, but at their families as well. At home, successive administrations and Congresses have failed to allocate sufficient resources to protect against that threat, and show little willingness to address it more seriously now.

The Foreign Service probably will continue to be an attractive career, but it may be attractive to a less competitive population. In the years to come, this nation needs the strongest possible professional diplomatic service. That requires the highest caliber people the country has to offer. Without a significant sustained effort to counter the negative trends in resources, attention and attitudes that we now face, it seems unlikely that we will continue to attract that high caliber of people for the service, or the corresponding caliber of service for the nation. ■

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The Demise of USIA

The demise of USIA began with the election of Ronald Reagan, and not merely due to the antics of Director Charles Wick cited by Ambassador Peter Galbraith (*FSJ*, September 1999). A highly ideological administration, its political appointees strove to make USIA "the intellectual bulwark against Communism." Telling America's story to the world was deemphasized in favor of more overtly anti-communist goals, and the agency's leadership managed to save us from State's severe budget cuts because of our presumed Communist-fighting value.

With the dissolution of the Soviet empire, the agency lost its *raison d'être* and cast about for other activities to convince the White House and Congress of its continued importance. The leadership felt, rightly or wrongly, that enabling foreign audiences to better understand the United States was by now insufficient to justify its existence.

Throughout this decade, long-term investments and the promotion of understanding of the U.S. through such programs as libraries, American studies, student counseling, publica-

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tions, and Arts America were eviscerated or eliminated in favor of ill-conceived attempts to show that we were contributing to the lessening of imminent threats to democratic rule, a cause dear to Washington power brokers. These included drugs, the administration of justice, civic education, and environmental awareness, among others.

Emphasis was placed on proving the unprovable: that USIA, with little money and no trained personnel, was actually making a difference on these intractable problems. Thus, inordinate effort went into the documentation of what little we did and ever more exaggerated claims were made about the importance of every visit or press placement. By President Clinton's second term the agency became a textbook example of inefficient and ineffective use of taxpayer dollars.

Here's hoping that State will not

merely allow USIA to transform itself into a semi-autonomous cone. Sound and thoughtful management is needed to bring order to the chaos that was USIA.

*Howard Shapiro
USIA FSO, Retired
Annandale, Va.*

Gravedancer Galbraith

I call into question your editorial judgment in running the Galbraith anti-USIA diatribe at this time. Gravedancer Galbraith's piece reflects poorly, not on our agency's work, but on him. He thinks *Worldnet* stinks and complains that it didn't cover the '96 election well enough to properly entertain his cocktail guests. He says that CNN does a much better job. As the teenagers say: "Well, duh?"

His repeated references to "his" embassy and "his" staff remind me of an interview I had about five years ago. Someone suggested I try to do a TDY in Zagreb, an embassy which, for reasons that now seem obvious, had unfilled positions. During an interview for the position, a senior officer whom I knew only slightly asked me if I had any idea what a mess I was attempting to get into. The ambassador (Peter Galbraith), he said, is "such an (expletive deleted) that if you hadn't seen your family for two years and they flew in on Christmas Eve, if he felt like it, he'd call you at home at 10:30 that night and tell you to get into the office."

Besides being dead wrong on a number of points, including his brash and undocumented claim that the

LETTERS

agency has "squandered its overseas resources" for the past two decades, the overall tone of Galbraith's piece, when contrasted with the well-written and evenly reported piece by Kenton Keith, is snide, snotty and unworthy of your publication. Former Ambassador Keith, a career USIA officer who didn't feel the need to trade on his title in a publication read by diplomatic colleagues, confirms what my mama always said: "Class will tell."

*Ellen F. Toomey
Program Officer, USIA
Bureau of Information,
Washington, D.C.*

Public Diplomacy Dustbin?

Ambassador Peter Galbraith gives a fine definition of public diplomacy, in which national interests are advanced through the use of the media, exchanges and the like.

However, he thinks that public diplomacy should consist primarily of organizing audiences for ambassadorial events, disregarding the additive and long-term nature of many USIS programs, which he describes as obsolete. This is an error.

The type of program which USIS offered — Mission Program Plan driven, public-oriented and above all, capable of being evaluated and reoriented quickly if need be — may be more necessary now than ever. The world has not become noticeably quieter with the demise of the Soviet Union. Good programs well executed gave our missions a voice and a presence that reached far beyond the offices of ministers and presidents, beyond the capital cities, beyond the charmed circle of privilege in which many of our colleagues are wont to move.

Which programs would Ambassador Galbraith scrap — besides Worldnet, about which he has waxed acerbic: International Visitor Programs which address intellectual property rights violations or the importance of civil rights to the administration of justice? Speakers who explain some of the internal political factors in the making of U.S. foreign or economic policies to academics, journalists and diplomats in the Newly Independent States? USIA consultants working with nascent media organizations in countries without a tradition of a free press, encouraging reporters to play a watchdog role? Are these really obsolete?

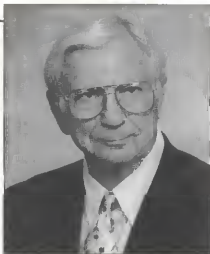
Galbraith disparages Information Resource Centers as irrelevant, since the information they offer is already on the Internet. But a good IRC is proactive, guiding people through the



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Until there is general agreement on the necessity for a robust public diplomacy presence in the Department of State, we are all in danger of becoming little more than ambassadorial press agents.

*Morgan Liddick
Cultural Affairs Officer
Panama City*

Make That Ambassador Keith

Typo? Editor's choice? More likely typically "Keith-ian" understatement. In his otherwise solid look back at our 1997 roller coaster ride ("Troubled Takeover: The Demise of USIA," September *FSJ*), Kenton Keith neglected to mention the fact that he earned an ambassadorship — and as a USIS officer to boot.

Ambassador Keith knows the many-faceted Foreign Service and exemplifies, to my mind, the best in public service.

*Vicky Bell,
FSO (LWOP)
Antananarivo, Madagascar*

Who Lost USIA?

When Ambassador Peter Galbraith served as the senior assistant to Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) on the Foreign Relations Committee, I invited him to speak at USIA. He was one of a "Whither USIA?" series of AFSA speakers in the mid-1980s. He gave us pointers on relations with Congress and predicted a positive future for USIA. Well, times and attitudes change.

In 1988, when I organized an election bash in Santo Domingo, we had excellent videos, interviews and a live hookup via satellite, facilitated by USIA, with Dominicans in New York.

It was a fabulous night, supported by many of the American businesses located in Santo Domingo and held at the bi-national center. The biggest television, radio, press and, yes, major political figures of the country showed up. I just cannot fathom how it was possible for Ambassador Galbraith and his team to manage such an election bust in Zagreb!

Indeed, I find it a bit disingenuous to blame Sen. Helms for the demise of USIA and exalt Brian Atwood for the USAID survival. USAID has enormously powerful constituencies in the United States, which benefit handsomely from USAID largess; USIA has none. Sen. Helms wanted to get a handle on the Department of State and foreign affairs. He and Secretary Albright cooperated, each for their own reasons. Unfortunately, USIA just happened to be a relatively insignificant object in their paths.

For Ambassador Galbraith's purposes, former USIA Director Charles Z. Wick serves as an irrelevant but useful *bête noire*. But he did produce resources which were used effectively by many of us. Did he, along with other directors, have his own agenda and peccadillos? Do trees grow in the forest?

USIA was degraded and lost on Joseph Duffey's watch. Deals made in these last few years, incompetent leadership, contrary educational agendas and lack of constituency are what brought USIA down.

*Sheldon Avenius
PAO, retired
Arlington, Va.*

Proactive Public Diplomacy

Ambassador Peter Galbraith's perception of the potential of USIA programs is limited at best. With his descriptions of Worldnets aimed at "reluctant" journalists, Galbraith demonstrates a misconception that is

LETTERS

unfortunately all too common among ambassadors and non-USIA officers; that is, that press contacts and the Fulbright exchange program are the only saving graces of a post-Cold War USIA.

As program development officer for USIS-Lima (soon to be the Public Affairs Section), I work with a variety of audiences for our speakers, Digital Videoconferences (DVCs) and Worldnet programs. In just the past two weeks, USIS-Lima has hosted a state Supreme Court chief justice for an international forum on judicial reform and a Q&A session with his Peruvian counterparts; connected via DVC to the United Nations Environmental Program's Fifth International Roundtable to discuss environmentally friendly portfolios; and yes, even briefed journalists on our National Drug Control Strategy Report. We receive speaker, DVC and Worldnet requests almost daily from Peruvian government agencies, academics and NGOs, and our past few events have boasted a record-breaking number of participants.

USIS-Lima collaborates with other embassy sections and agencies to make sure our programs are reaching target audiences and fulfilling the objectives set out in the Mission Performance Plan. This collaboration, combined with long hours and hard work, are the reason these sections and agencies know who we are, what we do, and how we can help them. Other posts must take a similarly proactive, cooperative stance, as this is the only thing that will ensure that public diplomacy programs are not put on the State Department chopping block after integration.

*Michele Back
Program Development
Officer
U.S. Embassy Lima*

It's Not Dumbing Down

Jeff Kaplow's article in the September issue on the Alternative Examination Program, "Dumbing Down Entry to the Foreign Service?" should have been titled, "State Smartens Up on Entry to the Foreign Service — Finally!" Neither AFSA nor the State Department has ever provided statistics that show any correlation between results on the written exam and success in a diplomatic career. So how can one assert that an alternative is unlikely to yield candidates of equal merit? It is also possible, although perhaps heretical, that an alternative might yield higher quality candidates. The only way to know for sure is to conduct the kind of test the department has under way.

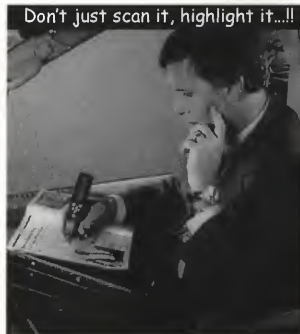
It is ironic that Kaplow's article is in the same issue as another article calling on State to reinvent itself and adopt the best practices of American industry. How many successful American corporations select their professional employees using an exam process that takes some 18 months from start to finish? Most use a combination of résumés, applications and interviews. Sounds a lot like the AEP.

The acute shortage of resource management personnel (consular and administrative) is not new. Skip Gnehm, John Collins and the other people who worked hard to develop the AEP are doing something positive to correct this. When the results are in, the naysayers, including AFSA, just might be surprised.

*Matthew J. Burns
Senior Advisor to the Chief
Financial Officer
Department of State
Washington, D.C.*

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Honor: A Vietnam Tale" in the October *Journal*. Ambassador Terry McNamara's concern and involvement with his staff did not end with the evacuation of the consulate in Can Tho, South Vietnam, in 1975.

After the closure, the former consulate staff returned to their home agencies and soon were scattered around the world. Nonetheless McNamara worked to see that each agency recognized and acknowledged the performances of their employees in the evacuation. The Department of State and the Marine Corps quickly did so. However, AID did not and resisted acknowledging the roles of those AID FSOs in the consulate evacuation who worked, often alone, in the provinces in the final dangerous days of the conflict. The ambassador characteristically simply would not accept this.

For more than two years, he continually pressed AID to take some appropriate action. Finally, almost three years after the events, I was summoned to AID Administrator John Gilligan's office for an unpublished private award ceremony held in his inner office away from public view. Terry McNamara's former consulate AID FSOs and a small number of other former AID people stationed in the provinces at the end of the Vietnam conflict were present for awards. As I recall, McNamara was the only guest.

I doubt that any of those present will forget Gilligan's opening remark: "I do not understand why I am presenting these awards when thousands of soldiers have not been recognized." This ungracious and inappropriate statement is also factually wrong. I was attached for several years to a 90-man Military Advisory Team in An Xuyen province. Under the standard universal Army policy, every one of the hundreds of soldiers

who rotated in and out of the team received appropriate awards for their service in Vietnam.

Fortunately, the administrator's viewpoint on the USAID/VN staff during the final days was rarely seen among our colleagues. But it does illustrate the obstacles at the top that Terry McNamara faced on behalf of his former AID staff. It was clear to us all that even this belated recognition never would have occurred without his determined persistence.

As it has for many years now, that award hangs on a wall in my home, not for what little it says, but for what it really represents — a tangible example of Ambassador McNamara's belief that each person with him on that trip down the river deserved to be acknowledged for their actions. For him, it was and still is a point of honor.

Cary Kassebaum
FSO, retired
Cottonwood, Ariz.

"Gimme a Break"

In the September *FSJ*, Dexter Anderson, who signed off "FSO retired," wrote in response to Stephan Helgesen's "Speaking Out" piece about not getting his US&FCS assignment because the ambassador objected purely on the grounds of prerogative.

In defense of unquestioned ambassadorial preeminence, Anderson wrote: "The pomp surrounding an ambassador reflects an important and desirable reality ... the ambassador must have authority commensurate with the high responsibility conferred upon him," whereupon you could hear a worldwide, collective FCS sigh, "Gimme a break!"

Mr. Anderson should have signed off "retired and out-of-touch."

Walter Hage
Commercial Service Officer
Detroit, Mich. ■

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CLIPPINGS



"What about 'exit strategies'? you may ask. Surely we cannot get sucked into ethnic conflict unless we see in advance a way out. Well, President Roosevelt did not go into World War II thinking about an exit strategy: ... We cannot necessarily wait until one side capitulates ... or for there to be a peace to keep. Defining every ethnic conflict as 'too hard' is not going to take us very far."

—CHESTER A. CROCKER, "HOW TO THINK ABOUT ETHNIC CONFLICT" (1999 PERLMUTTER LECTURE ON ETHNIC CONFLICT)

USIA INTO STATE: A ROCKY START

The absorption of USIA into State has already produced severe friction in Foggy Bottom, Ben Barber reports in the Oct. 7 *Washington Times*. Jamie Metzl, the director of the International Public Information (IPI) program — created just this past April by Presidential Directive 68 to control foreign information and psychological warfare — is "having his wings clipped" to head off what some FSOs perceive as empire-building, according to one unidentified senior State official, and his office's structure and mandate are being reviewed (a process set to be completed by the end of October).

Although the State source cited as the catalyst for the move expressed concerns that IPI's efforts to influence public opinion abroad might "blow back" and affect the American public, he also acknowledged the fears of some State FSOs that Metzl's office could "become a monster with an IPI person in every office in every functional and geographic bureau at State, CIA and other federal agencies," rather than remaining "a small office of three to five persons dispensing information."

Professional jealousy is all the more plausible as a motivation for the move against Metzl and IPI because the fledgling operation has already scored one success in its short history, Barber notes. Using radio stations in Croatia, Romania and Bosnia to transmit Serbian-language programs from the Voice of America and other Western news agencies this past spring, it coordinated the creation of a "ring around Serbia" of broadcasts aimed at undermining Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's stranglehold on Serbian media during the Kosovo bomb-

ing. IPI is currently working to win international support for the U.N. peacekeepers in East Timor.

Seeking to ease more general anxiety about media manipulation by State in the wake of the move against IPI, Evelyn Lieberman (just sworn in as under secretary of State for public diplomacy, and now Metzl's boss) reiterated that the office was set up, and will continue to operate, simply to coordinate U.S. foreign public information programs and avoid duplication of those efforts. She also pledged to keep the entire former USIA wing of the Foreign Service immune from use by the CIA as cover for spies overseas.

MASTERING DISASTERS, AT LAST

Commenting on the massive earthquakes that rocked Turkey in August, *The New Republic* editorializes in its Sept. 13-20 edition that while they certainly constituted a tragedy, they at least demonstrated that "the international community's capability to respond to natural disasters has improved." For example, a rescue team left Fairfax County, Va. for Istanbul less than 24 hours after the quake and arrived in time to save some lives instead of simply pulling bodies out of the rubble.

Similarly, rescue teams from France, Mexico, Italy and Kyrgyzstan worked jointly to save people buried alive in the town of Gulcuk. In all, 35 nations and dozens of international organizations sent more than 2,200 rescue personnel to Turkey, while many other countries and charities sent aid in the form of supplies and money — all coordinated by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).



CLIPPINGS

Such effective coordination is a new phenomenon, the editorial explains. In fact, there was no coordination of international relief efforts at all until 1971, when the U.N. General Assembly created the United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) to coordinate international disaster relief operations following badly bungled relief efforts in response to an earthquake in Peru in 1968 and the East Pakistan cyclone of 1970.

Unfortunately, UNDRO was "worse than useless." In one notorious case, international donors sent so much of the same medicine to Guatemala following a 1976 earthquake that more than 100 tons of it had to be buried. To be sure, the magazine acknowledges, much of the fault lay in the agency's mandate, which was to be a clearinghouse for relief operations — a function requiring time-consuming analyses of

needs and resources — rather than a coordinator.

To obtain help from UNDRO, a country seeking disaster relief had to make a formal request to the United Nations. Then UNDRO, which was based in Geneva, would dispatch an investigator to the country to examine its needs. Subsequently, UNDRO would consult its computer to find out which nations or non-governmental organizations were best able to meet those needs. Only then would formal requests for aid be issued. The result was long delays in sending any aid at all, while disaster victims suffered and died unnecessarily around the world.

That began to change once the U.N. finally abolished UNDRO and established OCHA in its place in 1992, the magazine notes with approval. Though its overall function is broadly similar to

50 YEARS AGO

"The assumption that any American citizen, however inexperienced, is competent to defend the overseas interests of the United States better than well-educated men who have spent half a lifetime learning about the ways of the world makes as much sense as praising a banker for never having handled money, a businessman for never having studied economics, or a civil servant for never having met a payroll."

—EDGAR ANSEL

MOWRER, FSJ

EDITORIAL,

DECEMBER 1949

ALL REFUGEES ARE NOT EQUAL

The Sept/Oct. 1999 edition of *World Watch Magazine* features the following chart comparing international assistance to the Balkans and to Africa during the first half of 1999:

Amount spent in 1999 by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, per refugee, per day, in the Balkans;	1.23
Amount spent per refugee, per day, in Africa	0.11
Number of doctors per 100,000 refugees in 1999, in some refugee camps in the Balkans;	14
Number of doctors per 100,000 refugees in some camps in Africa	1
Number of people who died as a result of public health emergencies such as epidemics or starvation, in the largest refugee camps in Macedonia (which held 33,000 people), per day in 1999;	0
Number who died from these causes in the refugee camps of Africa (which held up to 500,000 people), per day in 1999	up to 6,000
Amount of money the World Food Program was able to raise for food aid to Kosovo in 1999, in millions of dollars;	423
Amount it was able to raise for Liberia during a comparable period	2



CLIPPINGS

"In statesmanship, get the formalities right; never mind about the moralities."

— MARK TWAIN

its predecessor's, OCHA minimizes bureaucratic dawdling in getting aid to victims. The agency also works to ensure that each country's designated international disaster relief teams (the U.S. has two such squads, in Dade County, Fla., and Fairfax County) meet certain standards and have practiced together in simulated emergencies.

Still, while *The New Republic* praises OCHA, it also continues to call for the UN to take the next logical step: "Unlike OCHA, which can coordinate aid from countries and private organizations but can't actually dispense aid on its own, a permanent standing force, under an interna-

tional command structure, would be able to deploy itself and carry out its own operations."

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SPEAKING OUT

USIA's Terminal Myopia

BY NICK MELE

I entered senior career leadership at the U.S. Information Agency as deputy director of the Office of East Asian and Pacific Affairs in January 1996, shortly after the organization had fended off one poorly conceived effort to merge it into the Department of State. I soon became part of a management team that put all its efforts into blocking integration of the foreign affairs agencies. Even after the Clinton administration announced the merger of State and USIA, ending USIA's struggle to remain independent, many of the agency's managers focused all efforts on changing as little as possible. Unfortunately, no one on the management team considered the excellent arguments for USIA's integration into the State Department, much less a method of accomplishing it that would ensure maintenance of USIA's public diplomacy capabilities and resources.

As a group, we couldn't conceive of a working environment different from the one that we had known all our working lives. We also failed to recognize that there might well be a way to reorganize both agencies to improve U.S. foreign policy programs. As much as anyone, I am accusing myself of failure, because I was part of the group whose shortsightedness missed opportunities as we attempted to cope with budget

Nick Mele, an FSO, coordinates press and public diplomacy for the U.S. delegation to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

No one on the management team considered the excellent arguments for USIA's integration into the State Department, much less how to accomplish it.



cuts, political leadership that was not supportive of — even possibly hostile — to us, and changing international and domestic environments.

Basically, USIA management did not examine who we were as an agency and what our mission should be after the end of the Cold War. Although radical reforms had been initiated after 1993, making greater use of the Internet and other new information resources, there was no agency-wide reexamination of priorities and no genuine effort to persuade anyone outside of USIA of the importance of public diplomacy. The 1993 Government Performance and Results Act mandated an in-house review of USIA's mission and objectives as part of a required strategic plan. The resulting tortuous process

of negotiating mission statements and goals to accommodate the interests of all elements of the agency resulted in a patchwork, narrowly defined statement that did not serve U.S. interests in maintaining an effective public diplomacy function.

As one of the drafters of USIA's first strategic plan, I was unhappy with the outcome, but was unable to propose an alternative. Bureaucratic turf considerations crept into the process, but the larger problem was opposition from politically appointed heads of USIA's functional bureaus. In hindsight, it is clear that USIA's senior career Foreign Service and Civil Service leadership should have engaged the agency's political appointees in a thorough evaluation of USIA's mission, as well as the agency's tools for accomplishing that mission. If we had done so, the outcome may well have been a commitment to integrate USIA into the State Department, a recommitment to Edward R. Murrow's original idea of "telling America's story to the world," or another, entirely new conception of who and what USIA was.

It is even possible that the final recommendation of such an honest evaluation would have been to disband the agency because USIA's mission had been accomplished. Although this may sound heretical, perhaps any foreign affairs or national security agency conceived and created to meet Cold War challenges should be abolished in favor of new institutions created to address a new international situation.

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SPEAKING OUT

We failed to accurately assess USIA's needs and we also failed to collaborate with our staffs to identify solutions and challenge the accepted standard wisdom of top management.

Our failure to address honestly USIA's situation paralleled other failures. We failed to accurately assess USIA's needs and we also failed to collaborate with our staffs to identify solutions and challenge the accepted standard wisdom of top management. While Congress trimmed USIA's budget year after year, career Foreign Service and Civil Service managers shifted between fighting frantically to retain resources and searching for the most acceptable way to make the cuts that had been imposed on us. At some sessions, we discussed presenting USIA's political appointees with a unified proposal for alternative reductions based on U.S. policy goals and the public diplomacy tools in our "inventory." The only thing that came of these sessions was the Foreign Service's acquiescence to a few piecemeal initiatives to drastically reduce U.S.-based programs, such as Arts America, the office that arranged for American writers, artists and performers to travel overseas to display the diversity of the arts in this country. What we lost sight of was an adequate presence overseas to ensure the best possible public diplomacy operation in terms



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SPEAKING OUT

of U.S. policy and interests. As a result, our overseas posts were so severely cut that they can do almost nothing to advance U.S. interests, while U.S.-based programs struggle for relevance in the absence of guidance from the field.

In 1997, when the White House announced that the foreign affairs agencies would be integrated, USIA's director chose only one career manager — the comptroller — to represent USIA in the planning process. Senior career employees — including me — grumbled among ourselves, but did not make any serious, concerted effort to articulate our concerns or make the case to USIA Director Joseph Duffey that the involvement of career people was essential to a successful integration of State and USIA. Soon enough, career Civil and Foreign Service representatives joined the task force, but they played mostly secondary roles, drawing up the broad outlines of the consolidation as determined in the summer of 1997.

From the spring of 1997 until the present, communication within USIA about the integration process has been totally inadequate. This lack of communication — in an agency whose business is communication — has been a major factor in employees' cynicism and apathy about the merger. Individual career foreign and domestic service staff members have improved communications when and where they could, but these attempts have been sporadic and have faded as people have moved on to new assignments. USIA's top management has left employees to learn about developments by reading about them in the press or by gleaning what they could from corridor gossip and rumor.

Early in the process, USIA's senior career leadership attempted

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to force Joseph Duffey to communicate clearly to overseas posts about integration by issuing guidelines on how it would be accomplished. Our draft telegram was altered to the point that, instead of informing employees, it confused them. Each area office was then reduced to sending "back channel" e-mail messages to overseas public affairs officers when direct, front channel guidance from Duffey's office would have been preferable. Perhaps it would not have been possible to force Duffey to provide the field with the type of information that was needed, but career leadership could have worked together to ensure that the informal guidelines we sent out were consistent and endorsed by all area offices. We failed because we lacked a sense of

Since none of us had a clear picture of USIA's mission in the post-Cold War era, no one was able to articulate strategies and goals that would persuade colleagues.

public diplomacy's mission and its importane to the U.S. national interest. We also lacked commit-

ment to improving morale throughout the agency and the determination to fill the leadership vacuum left by Duffey.

Even had we manifested the courage to consider challenging political leadership's decisions, during those years we never evidenced any ability to put the larger interests of the U.S., or even of USIA, above our particular interests as heads of geographic or program offices. Inevitably, when two or three heads of area offices agreed to risk or sacrifice some of their interests to the larger interest, the remaining area offices would not agree.

Our efforts to persuade one another were ineffective. Given our common backgrounds and interest in preserving as robust a public diplomacy presence overseas as pos-

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SPEAKING OUT



sible, it is difficult to understand why this was so. After months of reflection, I have concluded that our inability to unite over budget and other issues reflected our own lack of vision and a related lack of courage. Since none of us had a clear picture of USIA's mission in the post-Cold War era, no one was able to articulate strategies and goals that would persuade colleagues to submerge their parochial interests in favor of overall U. S. and USIA interests. Furthermore, since none of us had committed to a clear goal, none of us were willing to risk challenging Duffey or other politically appointed leaders. In the end, we failed to act like the leaders of the community we professed to nurture and manage. If this lack of leadership carries over to the State

Department, the best we can hope for is continued demoralization of the public diplomacy staff and purposeless reductions of resources for public diplomacy.

This is rather a grim note on which to end. After some reflection, I hope that my colleagues in USIA's leadership core would agree that if we had another opportunity we would work together in ways we could not imagine at the time. Prior to my return from overseas to USIA headquarters in early 1996, my leadership philosophy could have been stated in a few brief aphorisms:

- Never ask a subordinate to do something I would not do.
- Inspire people to work, don't order them to work.
- Listen, listen, listen.
- Know a team's strengths and

delegate tasks to them accordingly.

- Set realistic goals and ensure the team knows what the goals are.

While I still consider these principles essential to effective leadership, during my most recent Washington assignment I learned that true leadership requires vision, insight, courage and commitment to building the larger institution. A number of talented people are now working to bring about the integration of USIA into the Department of State. If, along with their abilities, they bring to the process clear vision and commitment to building a community of foreign affairs professionals within the new Department of State, the integration process will succeed. ■

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

A VIABLE AND ATTRACTIVE CAREER?

Last December, when I interviewed Ambassador George F. Kennan, I asked him whether he would recommend the Foreign Service as a career to a bright college graduate today. Somewhat to my surprise, he replied in the negative. (See the box on this page.)

Kennan's response was published in May as part of the *Journal's* special issue commemorating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the modern U.S. Foreign Service. I believe I received more comments from readers about that short passage than about any other item the *Journal* has printed during my tenure as editor.

Spurred by a letter from reader Michael Zak, the *Journal's* Editorial Board decided to use Kennan's remarks as a springboard for discussion. Hence, the last issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* during this anniversary year focuses on the question: Is the Foreign Service still a viable and attractive long-term career?

We approach this complex topic from several angles:

- An overview of how the Foreign Service career has changed in recent decades, by retired FSO David Jones;
- For comparison's sake, a look at how Canada is dealing with the its foreign service challenges (the resemblances are striking), by historian Hector Mackenzie;
- A generally positive appraisal by Phyllis Oakley, who faced discrimination as a woman in the service, but came back for a successful career;
- A critical view of the State Department's corporate culture by former ambassador Cresencio Arcos, with a special look at the career prospects of Hispanic FSOs;
- A report by two junior officers — Anthony Ieronimo and Nikolai Wenzel — on their decision to quit the Foreign Service after two years of what they experienced as favoritism and systemic corruption.

Of course, the perspectives published here cannot hope to be a complete picture of a complex and changing institution. Still, after reading them, one is left with the strong impression that the traditional concept of a Foreign Service career — one lasting three decades or more, with steady progress up the ranks — has become obsolete and will not return.

As always, the *Journal* welcomes comments and articles in response to this topic, so central to our readers' interests.

—Bob Guldin

KENNAN: "I WOULDN'T JOIN IT"

From the *Journal's* May 1999 issue:

FSJ: *If you were talking to some bright young people today, college graduates, would you recommend the Foreign Service to them?*

Kennan: No. A number of youngsters have come to me to ask my advice about this. What I have said in recent years was: Look, if you are going to regard life in the Foreign Service as a prolongation of your education, as a remarkable and unique opportunity to live in a foreign city with a respectable entree to the whole place, including the government — if you take it that way, then by all means.

But if you're fiercely ambitious, and you want to get ahead, and you're interested in getting promoted before anybody else, then I wouldn't join it. I would have to say also that I've gradually become persuaded that this is not a thing one should join for life.

That's for two reasons. First, if one had a wife, she would now want a professional life of her own. But also, the fact that top ranks of the service are so blocked by White House appointments means that you're apt to be cut off just when you've achieved the peak of your usefulness to the government.

YOU CALL THIS A CAREER?



L IS THE FOREIGN SERVICE STILL AN ORGANIZATION WORTH JOINING? OUR ANSWER: A VERY QUALIFIED "YES."

BY DAVID T. JONES

Last spring, the State Department received a report entitled "The War for Talent: Maintaining a Strong Talent Pool" — the latest in a long series of studies describing the department's problems and how to fix them. Presumably at considerable expense, the high-powered consulting firm McKinsey and Co. suggests that State needs to drastically retool the way it recruits and manages its professional workforce.

Based on over 600 responses to questionnaires, focus group discussions with "high performers" and employees who have left the department, the report offers judgments on State's workforce attitudes and management policies. The "war for talent" must be waged, the study suggests, in part because between now and 2015 there will be a 15 percent drop in the pool of potential "future executives."

But McKinsey's glossy charts and graphs tell us essentially what we could learn in casual chats in the cafeteria: FSOs like the substance of their jobs but (to use the vernacular) think management sucks. Department civil servants and specialists appreciate career stability; mid-level officers think their lifestyle preferences are not respected and their careers are stagnating. Almost everyone believes the private sector does it better. As one FSO commented after hearing a "town meeting" presentation June 24, "I hope they didn't pay for this."

The department's preliminary response contains a mixture of promises and homilies, such as cheering State's inspiring mission and talented employees. Among the suggested changes: better training for managers, better talent management, efforts to identify professional positions for spouses overseas, and quicker recognition and advancement of "high performers."

There is nothing wrong with the McKinsey conclusions. But experienced FSOs and other observers will suspect that "The War for Talent" is simply the flavor of the month in expert reports. Like its predecessors — the Wriston Report (1954), the Macomber Report (1971), the Bremer Report (1989), the Thomas Report (also 1989) and many others — it may well be destined for a dusty shelf.

No Time for Studies

Why do these well-meaning and often thoughtful studies have so little effect on the State Department and the Foreign Service? It may well be that a combination of institutional rigidity and an overextended officer corps mitigates against thorough-going reorganization.

Many current and recently retired FSOs have viewed the periodic navel gazing of high-profile studies with disdain or indifference throughout their careers. They were too busy working to worry about the nature of their work.

Critics of the Foreign Service usually have a difficult time getting a serious hearing from the establishment. Those who have been successful within the current system assume from their success that the current system is quite acceptable, requiring only trivial tinkering at most. They dismiss external critics as ignorant. They dismiss

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Today's junior officers will not be tomorrow's seniors and they realize it.

internal critics (particularly ones who were less successful within its parameters than they) as disgruntled rather than perceptive.

Who Wants to Be an FSO?

Despite the conservative mindset often encountered within the Foreign Service's senior ranks, there is abundant evidence of serious problems, and these are reflected in the entry process.

Admission to the service has long been gained through a challenging written and oral exam. In one exam in the mid-1930s, 105 of 1,000 passed the written exam and, of these, 35 passed the oral. During the past decade, responding to concerns over real and perceived inequities, the oral exam has been repeatedly revised to emphasize testing in directly career-relevant skills. In the 1980s and early 1990s, it sometimes appeared that every liberal arts grad without a job was taking the Foreign Service exam. Registrations for the written exam once were massive, e.g., 28,248 in 1984; 25,585 in 1987. But these figures have now dropped substantially — to 11,587 in 1996 and 13,482 in 1998, despite there being no exams given in 1995 and 1997. To boost the pool available for the oral exam, the pass rate from the written exam has been increased. While the average between 1981 and 1986 was 20 percent, more than 31 percent of the 1996 and 1998 test takers passed. Likewise, the pass rate for the oral exam has increased. From 1990 to 1994, the average pass rate was 12.3 percent. That increased to 19 percent in 1996 and 36 percent in 1998.

These top candidates also have a plethora of alternative opportunities. Thus, there are increasing numbers of "no shows" at the oral exam — candidates who presumably decide that their current job or prospects are better than the Foreign Service option. In 1990, successful written exam candidates appeared at a better than 90 percent rate, but in 1998 less than 80 percent took the oral. Perhaps not so curiously, one Board of Examiners official noted that the no-shows seemed to increase after the July 1998 embassy bombings. Additionally, anecdotal accounts indicate that those who pass the oral exam — particularly minorities — are less likely to enter due to competing, usually better paid, offers immediately available.

The problem is reflected in the continuing shortfall for entering A-100 classes in qualified administrative cone officers, as well as periodic shortfalls in consular and eco-

conomic entrants. (There is no shortage in qualified political cone entrants.) To attract more admin candidates, the Board of Examiners is stressing to oral candidates the dearth of other appointments.

The department has also introduced an Alternative Examination Program to induce attractive candidates in other federal agencies to enter the Foreign Service by passing the oral exam without taking the written test. Some believe that the AEP includes opportunities for fraud by applicants, who must provide self-evaluations of their competencies. Other observers see the AEP as a long-overdue modernization. The program, in any event, is being given a trial run this year and will be carefully scrutinized.

Despite problems, the departure rates for junior officers remain quite low. Between fiscal 1994 and '98, almost no FS-6 generalists left, and FS-5 departures averaged 1 percent per year (these figures include both resignations and terminations). Interestingly, the departure rate for FS-4s, who have typically been in the service for five to 10 years, has been rising steadily — from 2.5 percent in fiscal '94 to 3.5 percent in '98. It's not clear whether these are FSOs who have been with State long enough to know that they should leave, or whether State has found them wanting — which is also quite possible.

Equal Opportunity Resentment

One of the truly perplexing factors facing the Foreign Service, and the foreign affairs agencies more generally, is that of equal opportunity with regard to race and gender.

Certainly, the Foreign Service has come the proverbial "long way" in opening up career opportunities. At the beginning of the 1960s, only 17 of 3,732 FSOs were black, while in March 1999, 209 black FSOs were working at State. The first female FSO was commissioned in 1922, but only four were admitted between 1926 and 1929, and not one was commissioned between 1930 and 1941. Until 1971 a woman had to resign when she married. In 1975 only 9 percent of active FSOs were female; by 1995 that figure had risen to 24 percent. As of last March, there were 1,199 female FSOs at the State Department.

There have also been significant increases in the number of women and minorities at senior levels. The first black ambassador was not named until 1949 and the first female career ambassador in 1953. As of March 1999 women and minorities held 35 percent of chief of mission

positions—56 out of 159 (though that includes political appointees).

Despite this progress, among State Department employees, there are widespread feelings that the system isn't fair. Women and minority group members note that white males still dominate the top levels (in 1995, white males constituted 84 percent of the Senior Foreign Service). After blacks and women successfully sued State and won damages for prior discrimination, white males began to complain about "law suit promotees" who were said to have less than stellar qualifications. A reliable source told me that one FSO class, observing its 30th anniversary, noted that only one person from its ranks had made ambassador: a woman.

The question of what is "fair" in such circumstances becomes extraordinarily complex. Women believe they have been handicapped by their gender; men likewise. Various racial groups believe they have either been disadvantaged or are angry because others believe they have benefited because of their race. In such an all-against-all atmosphere, it become difficult for anyone to respect the system.

The Up Or Out System

Questions of fairness and equal opportunity have special weight because of the "up or out" promotion system in the Foreign Service, a system that has become more competitive over time. When many able people are competing for a few slots, tension is a career constant.

One recently retired career ambassador recalled that, when he was sworn into the Foreign Service at age 23, an official told him he could look forward to a 42-year career. Today, FSOs are told to think of 25 years — if they receive tenure.

Since the Second World War, the Foreign Service has become gradually more competitive, with increasingly stringent up-or-out personnel rules. While the concept of selection out has existed since the Foreign Service Act of 1946, it was at first generally directed at the blatantly unsuitable. An FSO could expect a career to last until 60 or 65, not the mid-50s.

The 1980 Foreign Service Act tightened the up-or-out system by establishing time-in-class limits for the Senior Foreign Service. (Before 1980, those promoted to the Senior Foreign Service could stay in until retirement.) The 1980 act also implemented "limited career extensions" for excellent officers who had not been promoted

and would otherwise be retired. But in recent years, the State Department has effectively abandoned LCEs, closing another door for experienced FSOs.

Currently, selection out is often directed at more senior officers trapped in assignments from which they cannot be promoted; these officers may be "low ranked" and designated for selection out. During the past decade, in a move justified by general government downsizing and getting rid of "deadwood," the Senior Foreign Service has been thinned. For example, senior ranks are now 678 compared to 817 in 1993. From 1995 to '97, 458 senior FSOs and FS-1s were retired.

Thus, today's juniors will not be tomorrow's seniors and they realize it. Unless a new FSO enters at mid-life, the odds are overwhelmingly against the Foreign Service being a lifetime career. While this circumstance may also be a reflection of changing career patterns in the broader society, it is not an inducement to commitment. It is a sobering circumstance for above-average officers to recognize that having spent 20 to 25 years achieving positions where they can make substantial contributions, they are likely to be fired when they have another 10 to 15 years to contribute. The system also means one can expect fewer senior (or interesting) positions prior to forced retirement.

Given the specialized nature of the profession, the FSO's post-retirement career options are frequently limited. One cannot practice one's trade elsewhere, and age discrimination for the over-50 crowd is a stark reality of the job market. Taken together, these factors must diminish the attractiveness of the Foreign Service for young people aspiring to international careers.

Perennial Problems

In addition to the various personnel problems discussed above, the Foreign Service and the State Department suffer from a number of age-old deficiencies that make a long-term career problematical.

Low Morale. Throughout my career, bad morale has not been the exception at State; it has been the rule. One colleague recalled when he was first told about bad

morale at State — it was at the introductory reception for his A-100 class in the late '60s. There are, of course, exceptional individuals, negotiating teams or overseas posts with good morale, but they are the exceptions.

Indifference at the Top. Senior officers at State, particularly political appointees, have little interest in the department or its employees. State has perks to be enjoyed or tools to be used or boxes to check on their way elsewhere. There is no loyalty downward — and thus no benefit in loyalty upward.

Most political appointees barely make a pretense of interest in the Foreign Service professional corps. They scarcely even offer lip service, thinking that a ceremonial stroll or two through the State Department cafeteria illustrates the popular touch. Contrast this pathetic situation with U.S. military, where numerous commanders can call on loyalty because they both have had combat experience and have demonstrated dedication to their soldiers.

Increasing Irrelevance. Officially the State Department holds primacy in foreign affairs. In fact, this primacy has eroded for decades from lack of funding, insufficient personnel, antiquated technology, and substantive competition from other agencies. Once the seedbed of presidents, over the past generation no secretary of State has held a significant subsequent national position. Each of the major agencies — Defense, CIA, Commerce, Agriculture, Treasury — has its own foreign policy priorities and personnel. Instead of leading the embassy country team, today's ambassador is more akin to the proprietor of a small boarding house afflicted by many demanding tenants, who won't follow house rules and whom he can't evict.

And when a crisis does erupt, modern transportation and communication make it likely that the administration will try to handle it from Washington, with the aid of special missions and teams flown in for the occasion. The officer in the field is useful, even valuable — but not vital.

No Apocalypse Now. Additionally, we have avoided Apocalypse. For over 50 years, U.S. diplomats struggled first against fascism and then communism for stakes that were no less than the survival of democracy and liberty. There is no comparably inspiring current challenge. Yes, massacres in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and East Timor are horrifying; repression in Bosnia/Kosovo disgusting; the prospect of a drug/terrorist Colombia unsettling; but these are tertiary challenges to U.S. national interest, and most FSOs recognize them as such.

NO STEPPING STONE

"The Foreign Service is not a stepping stone to some other career. Your first years will be spent in menial jobs, and your eventual achievements will be hard to explain to businessmen, who don't know what the service is or what it does."

— a retired career ambassador

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As retired career ambassador H. Allen Holmes told me, FSOs today "feel like neutrons bouncing around aimlessly. They know they're on the front lines, because they're being targeted, but they don't feel part of a well thought out policy campaign."

In the absence of serious challenges, writing still another set of talking points for a deputy assistant secretary about that pipeline in Azerbaijan, arranging for the visit of the foreign minister from Chad, reviewing the seventh draft of the annual human rights report, or comparable paper chase activity becomes no more meaningful than selling shares in Intel, teaching high school in Scranton, or lobbying for Greenpeace.

Political Indifference. The typical White House attitude toward the Foreign Service is one of distrust. FDR apparently believed U.S. diplomats were indifferent to fascism and were "old-dealers" overly hostile to Russia. Reportedly he quipped that State was "neutral" entering World War II and he hoped that it would remain that way. President Kennedy famously compared State to a bowl of jello, and President Johnson (accurately) believed rank

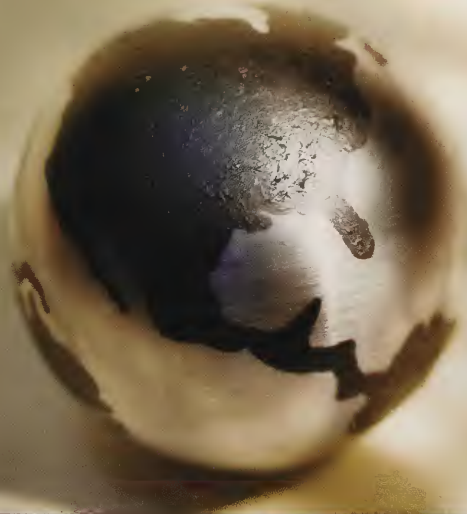
and file diplomats opposed his Vietnam policies. Subsequent Republican administrations have viewed State as too liberal while Democrats have been irritated by policy demurs on areas such as former Yugoslavia.

The relationship with the Hill has been no better. State is endlessly engaged in no-win confrontations with members of Congress fronting for special ethnic/local interests at variance with administration foreign policy. And when you argue with those who control your budget, you lose even if you "win."

Lifestyle Pressures. A variety of pressures associated with Foreign Service life take their toll over the years. Overseas, it is not so much the once-a-decade fear of being blown up as the endless grind of little things. One faces constant pressure to reduce allowances and extend tours in hardship assignments. Disease, seldom fatal but frequently debilitating, is a hallmark of such assignments and is shrugged off only by those who have not suffered from dysentery or worried about the effects of malaria suppressants.

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painful compromise on family separations. And the expectations of spouses with professional careers often cannot be accommodated. In Washington, killer commutes driven by the sky-high real estate market in the inner suburbs are hardly unique to FSOs, but they transform family life into "good morning" and "good night." And weighing on this endurance exercise is the belief of FSOs — perhaps unrealistic — that they could make more money and live better elsewhere.

Career Limitations. There is a basic problem with any institution where you cannot aspire to the top job. This circumstance is, of course, inherent for any of the Cabinet departments, but has become even more pointed at State. Over the past generation, there has been a steady migration of the better, more important, embassies from career diplomats to political appointees. There are always exceptions, but the movement toward increased politicization has been relentless. It is unlikely to be reversed.

This trend has endless explanations and defenses, from the need of the president to have his own people in charge of foreign policy to the substantial expertise demonstrated by many political appointees, e.g., Mike Mansfield in Japan, James Blanchard in Canada or William Crowe in the U.K.

The quality of selected political appointees, however, is an excuse rather than an explanation. What these appointments convey — whether at the ambassador, assistant secretary or DAS level — is the implicit judgment by elected officials that senior career FSOs are not trusted for substantive knowledge, political reliability, or personal relationships.

"A MONASTIC ORDER"

When I entered the Foreign Service, in 1956 many of the prewar FSOs were still in the service. They seemed to regard the Foreign Service as being almost a dedicated monastic order in its commitment. My generation inherited a goodly portion of this but we were also ready to call for change. Today, there are more "main chancers" — people whose prime objective is to exercise responsibility at the top as quickly as possible and who seek to get there by any route, including leaving and in effect rejoining the service. Sometimes the gamble pays off, sometimes it doesn't.

—Retired career ambassador W. Maynard Glitman

The consequence, however, is that the promotion and assignment possibilities for FSOs are substantially reduced.

Nor are all ostensibly career senior appointments non-political. One of the fastest paths to an ambassadorship is to have been well and favorably known at the NSC. When the highly confidential D Committee short lists for senior level appointments are constructed, having White House support is definitive. Moreover, a friend in the director general's office is useful, as the DG can propose names or remove names from the list, and briefs the D Committee on all individuals on the list.

We should also ask if current hiring and promotion procedures permit the survival of the "brilliant maverick" so exalted in the service's past. As one FSO concluded after serving on a promotion board for seniors, "We wouldn't have promoted George Kennan."

"Golden Handcuffs"

Whether the Foreign Service is an attractive career depends as much on what you want from it as on what it offers. The 21st century Foreign Service will be ever more concentrated on customer service and paperwork or its electronic equivalent, less on reporting and analysis. ("If CNN is there, who needs an FSO?") The unmarried and those who don't really like their families will be less constrained by the extended duty hours.

For Generation X and those who follow, the Foreign Service is likely to be one of several careers — indeed, in contrast to the past, a career perhaps better at its beginning than subsequently. The appropriate analogy may well be to the young lawyer spending a few years at the Justice Department or devoting some early years to the Hill. Discovering how the "system" works is an invaluable part of building a knowledge base for other work. Likewise, the Foreign Service will teach the young officer a language and offer assignments in several often interesting countries, providing never-to-be-forgotten experiences and insights into U.S. foreign policy.

Staying much past those first few tours, however, often catches FSOs in the "golden handcuffs" problem: Despite career frustration, the lure of retirement at 50 with a substantial pension remains attractive. At worst the Foreign Service is an indoor job with no heavy lifting. But future FSOs should bear in mind Ambassador George Kennan's comment in last May's *Foreign Service Journal*: "This is not a thing one should join for life." ■

DIFFERENT COUNTRY, SAME PROBLEMS



W DESPITE CANADA'S VERY DIFFERENT FOREIGN SERVICE HISTORY, ITS DILEMMAS SOUND AWFULLY FAMILIAR.

By HECTOR MACKENZIE

When asked by the *Foreign Service Journal* recently whether he would recommend a Foreign Service career to young people today, former Ambassador George Kennan replied "No," except as "a prolongation of your education." Kennan cited, among other factors, the slow pace of promotions for the "fiercely ambitious," the career-limiting effects of political appointments, and the difficulty of maintaining two-career marriages.

Less than two years earlier, the retiring deputy minister of foreign affairs for Canada, Gordon Smith, was asked much the same question by *bout de papier*, a magazine published by Canada's Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO). "Yes, unequivocally," Smith answered. Smith acknowledged that for junior officers,

"the issue of the careers of spouses," was "very difficult to resolve." And he observed that "the youth of today" contemplated "career changes with a much greater degree of equanimity than was the case with my cohorts." To Smith, however, these were problems for managers to address, not insuperable obstacles.

Overall, Smith declared, the foreign service still offered "enormous opportunities" and "fascinating career prospects" for new entrants, much as it did when he joined 31 years before. Though advancement had been a persistent problem, Smith's assessment was that "there are real opportunities coming up" simply as a result of the "demographics" of the department, i.e., the upcoming retirement of the generation that entered in the 1960s.

Though the conclusions of these two elder statesmen differed, the issues raised in their responses demonstrated some of the common problems confronted by the foreign services of the United States and Canada. Not the least of these difficulties will be attracting and keeping the best candidates to renew the profession of diplomacy.

From my perspective as a historian of Canada's foreign affairs who has observed our diplomatic profession at close range, I believe a look at the origins and development of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade will help in understanding the situation of the foreign service today.

Separating from Britain

It was not until 1909 that legislation established Canada's Department of External Affairs (DEA), thus creating the basis for a distinct Canadian foreign policy as well as a Canadian foreign service. Throughout the 19th century, the British government had devised imperial foreign policy and conducted international relations on behalf of Canada and the rest of the British Empire. That approach was anachronistic in the 20th century, but an independent foreign policy for Canada evolved uncertainly and incompletely until the Second World War.

Development of a Canadian foreign service in the 1920s was the work, in large part, of Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs O.D. Skelton. Skelton had

been a senior academic and distinguished scholar before he was lured to Ottawa by the prime minister and secretary of state for external affairs, William Lyon Mackenzie King. To Skelton, a separate foreign service was essential for Canada to assert its autonomy.

Skelton firmly believed in competitive entry and advancement by merit. With King's support, Skelton recruited eight young men (women were not eligible), most with some experience teaching in university, in demanding examinations and interviews which Skelton designed and conducted in 1927-28. This ordeal favored articulate "generalists" and those who succeeded usually came from a background of history or political economy. For more than 30 years, lengthy essay questions were the hallmark of the foreign service examination. Among this group were Skelton's successors, Norman Robertson and Lester Pearson. Pearson would go on to be Canada's foreign minister and then its prime minister.

This initial recruitment coincided with the opening of Canada's first diplomatic missions — legations in Washington, Tokyo and Paris. With the enhancement of the work of Canada's high commission in London and the eventual establishment of a permanent office at the League of Nations in Geneva, there were overseas opportunities for these new diplomats. However, the first heads of post were selected by the prime minister, with prosperous former political colleagues predominating. Not until the eve of the Second World War was a "career officer" named to head a Canadian diplomatic mission.

By then, the foreign service had survived the Great Depression and, perhaps more significantly for its future, a change in government. While in opposition, the Conservatives had mocked the political appointments and regretted the obvious break with imperial diplomatic unity. When the Conservatives came to power in 1930, the foreign service was still a recent development and one closely associated with the former Liberal regime. Skelton and his recruits kept their jobs, thereby confirming the nonpartisan nature of the new institution. King's successor as prime minister, R.B. Bennett, even retained two of King's envoys. The growth of the foreign service was modest and its pay was cut, neither development surprising in those lean years. Arguably more damaging to the morale of the talented individuals that Skelton had recruited was the often complacent and usually non-committal foreign policy pursued by the Canadian government in the 1930s.

Hector Mackenzie is the senior departmental historian at Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The views expressed are those of the author only, not of the department.

Post-war Expansion

Canada's international relations and its foreign service were transformed by the Second World War and its aftermath. One participant, Escott Reid, later recalled the 1940s as a "golden decade" of positive involvement in world affairs and exceptional opportunity for Canadian FSOs (the abbreviation used in Canada, rather than the American "FSO"). Reid and his colleagues had become responsible for framing and articulating Canada's foreign policy and their efforts were sustained by broad support from the Canadian public. In addition to the remarkable growth in the international agenda, there was an exponential expansion of Canada's representation abroad (now more often at the rank of ambassador). Even with accelerated recruitment, the foreign service could not keep pace with the growing demands. Its numbers were bolstered by academics and women, the latter classified as clerks though they performed the work of officers.

With the postwar influx of veterans and the acceptance of women as officers in 1947, the composition of the foreign service was altered considerably. Back in power since 1935, King still exercised his prerogative to appoint heads of post, but the opening of new missions ensured that there were ample opportunities for career officers as well. Indeed, by the time King retired as prime minister in 1948, most of Skelton's recruits were ambassadors or deputy ministers, while one, Pearson, who had made the jump to politics to join the Liberal cabinet, was serving as secretary of state for external affairs under the new prime minister, Louis St. Laurent. Not surprisingly, this heady mixture of expansion, advancement and engagement in the major issues of international affairs fostered a positive outlook for most members of the foreign service in the early years of the Cold War.

That is not to say that there were not problems, in the "golden decade" of the '40s and after. The consensus surrounding Canada's international relations began to break down in the late 1950s; the election of a Progressive Conservative government under John Diefenbaker in 1957 put many in the foreign service who were closely identified with past policies on the defensive. The process for recruitment still favored excellence in policy formulation, but not necessarily in administration. That shortcoming left the Department of External Affairs vulnerable to criticism from elsewhere in government. Senior managers worried that the quality of entrants had

declined and that francophones especially were under-represented.

Those concerns would be magnified in the 1960s as attrition from the ranks was more pronounced than before. As government and other public institutions, most notably universities and colleges, expanded, the competition for new recruits became more acute. More than half of the successful candidates in the early 1960s turned down offers of employment. No longer was the foreign service the only, or necessarily the most attractive, way for Canadians to see the rest of the world. Officers left its ranks in unprecedented numbers.

Some, including senior officials, did so involuntarily as victims of a "gay purge" in Canada's public service in the 1960s (gays were depicted as suffering from "character weaknesses" and branded as "security risks," thus rendering them unemployable in the foreign service). As for women diplomats, DEA did little to attract them and still less to keep them. Even the continued overall growth in Canadian representation abroad, and consequently in job opportunities, was less comforting than before, as new posts were opened in less prosperous and often less secure locations in the Third World. To fill these needs, recruiting accelerated, but that simply swelled the lower ranks without necessarily making sufficient provision for advancement.

Trudeau's Challenge

Despite the comforting presence of a former colleague, Pearson, as prime minister from 1963 to 1968, these problems contributed to a relative decline in morale for the foreign service. By the late 1960s, that had led to the formation of the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers, whose role as the bargaining agent for the foreign service was formalized when collective bargaining was introduced in the Canadian government in 1967-68.

Yet the most emphatic challenges to the work of the foreign service — and to the rationale for its existence — came from Pearson's successor as prime minister, Pierre Trudeau, who held that office, except for a brief interruption, from 1968 to 1984. Though a Liberal and a former member of Pearson's cabinet, Trudeau expressed disdain for the avowedly internationalist policies that Canada had pursued in the post-war period as well as for "quiet diplomacy" and the diplomats who had practiced it. Trudeau followed through on his rhetoric, trimming

the budget for DEA at headquarters and abroad. Later in his administration, Trudeau commented that the image and self-image of the foreign service "are based on a concept of diplomatic practice grounded in an age which has disappeared. ... Traditional concepts of foreign service have diminished relevance in an era of instantaneous, world-wide communications, in which there is increasing reliance on personal contacts between senior members of governments, and in which international relations are concerned with progressively more complex and technical questions." Needless to say, Trudeau's ruminations did not boost morale in the foreign service.

An Inward-looking Nation

As well, there was a questioning of the persistent recruiting preference for "generalists," with one of Trudeau's foreign ministers suggesting that DEA lacked strength "on the economic side." Commentaries and surveys of new entrants detected a decline in idealism in the foreign service, as "a more hard-nosed approach to international affairs" took hold. Canadians generally were more inward-looking and wary as a result of rising unemployment and inflation as well as faltering national unity. That made them, and those who represented them, less disposed to take bold initiatives in world affairs. Whether or not it had earlier been as prevalent as legend and memoirs would have it, the missionary zeal of Canada's foreign service officers had apparently abated. More than their predecessors, recruits worried about working conditions and career prospects. These anxieties had been compounded by a move announced at the end of 1971, to reduce the number of levels in the foreign service (from ten to five), to bring it into line with other job categories. Thus, promotion became a rarer event.

In January 1982, as part of a reorganization of government departments dealing with economic development, Trudeau announced the "restructuring" of DEA, which would henceforth include the Trade Commissioner Service. The government stated the department's "primary purpose was to pursue aggressively international export markets and to give greater priority to economic matters in the development of foreign policy." With the addition of immigration and aid officers, the foreign service was integrated within the expanded department (though the immigration service would depart a decade later and the principal instrument for aid would remain the Canadian International Development Agency). It

wasn't until 1993 that the nomenclature caught up with reality and DEA became the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Morale on the Margins

In the 1980s, the growing number of political appointments to head diplomatic missions became a controversial issue in national politics. Trudeau's tally had been 17 appointments in 16 years. When the Conservative Brian Mulroney took over as prime minister in 1984 he affirmed his commitment to "the standard of professionalism so characteristic of our foreign service." But the Mulroney government soon lapsed from its professed faith. With 19 diplomatic appointments in his first three years in office, Mulroney and his foreign minister, Joe Clark, soon eclipsed the record of their predecessors. Clark suggested to PAFSO that one purpose of such patronage was to compensate for the inability of DEA to reflect "national priorities" in selection and recruitment (that is, the under-representation of women, those from non-professional backgrounds and Canadians from minority communities).

More galling still for members of the foreign service was that this activity took place against a backdrop of budget cuts and post closures. In February 1987, when six posts were closed, the only head to be reassigned at a comparable level was a political appointee. Later that year, the acrimony between PAFSO and the minister over the issue of political appointments to diplomatic positions received considerable attention in the national media. One academic lamented "the decline in the status of Canada's professional diplomatic corps" from its earlier exalted position as "a high calling for the best and brightest young Canadians of the day."

To compound the frustrations in the ranks, DEA had encouraged "lateral entries" (often at higher salaries than their counterparts in the foreign service) to improve its policy-making capacity as well as its relationship with other government departments. In addition, the number of non-executive levels in the foreign service had by then been reduced to two, reducing the FS's opportunities for promotion. In 1986, PAFSO noted the negative impact of lack of promotions, loss of positions and programs at headquarters and abroad, and "a freeze on recruitment to the Foreign Service" imposed for reasons of "economic restraint." With justification, recruitment also bore the burden of making the foreign service a more accurate

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reflection of Canadian society — that is, bringing in more women, aboriginal Canadians, minorities and disabled persons.

Successive budget cuts and reorganizations certainly did not improve the situation. DEA was seen as less “connected” to the rest of government, an impression reinforced by the relocation of its headquarters away from the center of power near Parliament Hill. Attempts to redefine DEA as a “central agency” of government had failed. Other than trade promotion, its work was viewed as marginal to the basic needs and concerns of Canadians. In the early '90s, the reputation of the foreign service for integrity was damaged as well by allegations of fraudulent travel claims. Meanwhile, for fiscal reasons, recruitment had become intermittent and consequently even more unpredictable, thereby discouraging potential applicants.

The specific problem of unpredictability was solved with the resumption of annual recruiting in the early 1990s; but other implications of recruitment policy have required more fine tuning. In an effort to cut the costs of

the ritual, the focus of the competition was narrowed a few years ago to favor those with degrees in business or economics or with facility in a few specific languages. That move provoked considerable controversy among academics who specialized in international relations, whose students were among those excluded from consideration. Stung by that criticism, DFAIT moved first to raise the bar, transforming its past preference for graduate training into a qualification, then more recently to lower it. The latter change, earlier this year, prompted the National Post to headline its article, “Ottawa lowers standards to fill foreign service jobs,” not exactly the positive message that DFAIT wished to convey about casting a broader and more inclusive net.

Earlier this year, the department dropped the “Foreign Service Knowledge Test” as part of the entrance examination. That multiple-choice test had become little more than a form of Trivial Pursuit for Canadians interested in international affairs, and was widely seen as having little relevance to the actual work of FSs.



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The Attrition Dilemma

In its "Human Resources Strategy" in 1998, DFAIT acknowledged that a higher standard for recruitment may have contributed to the department's most acute personnel problem, the rate of attrition in the foreign service. "The number of officers leaving after their first posting has been rising steadily since 1986," the study noted, "with approximately 25 percent resigning within seven or eight years of joining DFAIT." With a continuation of the upward trend, DFAIT "would face a serious staffing problem." The same document identified the main reasons "given by our departing officers" as:

1. Low, non-competitive salaries;
2. Poor promotion prospects;
3. Spousal employment issues (single income, single pension);
4. Family related issues (aging parents/children's education);
5. Devaluation of benefits;
6. Low morale (perception that the department's senior management simply doesn't care about the plight of overworked and underpaid officers); and
7. Decreasing job satisfaction.

By aiming for individuals with more education, experience and skills, DFAIT recruited and trained people who expected "professional pay-offs" within a "shorter time horizon." Ultimately, DFAIT "cannot compete" with the "compensation packages" available from the private sector.

A 1997 report had similarly warned about the significant increase in the attrition rate of junior officers after five years. "The bottom line is that the primary feeder group for our management cadre will be at risk unless we take action now." In other words, the best candidates would not stay to reap the benefits of the "demographic" trend of the current period (that is, the depletion of the executive ranks through retirements).

As part of its comprehensive personnel reform, DFAIT in 1998 adopted an approach of "up or out" for foreign service recruits after five years. With the reintroduction of additional levels in the foreign service, likely in the near future, promotions will be more frequent. Salaries could be raised, as they were lower than the equivalent professional groups in the public service, let alone the private sector. However, the 1997 study conceded that there were other factors, such as

"family situation" or "recognition that foreign service life is not the career of choice," that "cannot be satisfactorily addressed by the Department."

While the prime minister retains the right exercised by his predecessors to name heads of post, PAFSO maintains its vigilance about whether this notion has been broadened to include missions formerly assigned to career officers. Of course, the list of assignments is also scrutinized by colleagues, government agencies and the media to assess whether it meets other objectives, including, for example, representation of women.

No "Golden Age"

What does this brief glance at the historical record imply for career prospects for new recruits? Certainly, it demonstrates that the foreign service operates within a political, economic and social context. Not surprisingly, there is a strong correspondence between Canadian and American experiences. In both countries, foreign service leaders must take into account the values, interests and aspirations of new prospective entrants.

As recent editions of DFAIT's "Human Resources Strategy" indicate, senior managers are acutely aware of the difficulties of adjusting policies to take account of current circumstances and contemporary attitudes to employment. As retired Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Gordon Smith stated, current demographics may favor the entrants who decide now, for personal and professional reasons, to continue as foreign service officers, in spite of the problems that George Kennan cited and the complaints that PAFSO and its membership articulate. Adoption by DFAIT of a personnel policy of "up or out" after five years will certainly have an impact on the foreign service — but that impact may not be any greater than the cumulative effect of individual decisions to stay or not after a comparable trial.

To develop solutions to longstanding problems such as advancement, compensation and spousal employment is no less a challenge for Smith's successors than it was for his predecessors — or indeed for their international counterparts. But it would be a serious mistake, in Canada or elsewhere, to contrast the situation now with an imagined past — whether depicted as a "golden age" or not — in which such problems supposedly did not exist. ■

I WOULD DO IT ALL AGAIN



A

DESPITE HARDSHIPS, THE FOREIGN SERVICE IS A DREAM JOB FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS JUNKIES.

BY PHYLLIS OAKLEY

As a member of the Foreign Service community for some 42 years, I always felt fortunate. I found foreign affairs fascinating as subject matter. I also reveled in the variety and the surprise of overseas assignments. And I valued highly the American and foreign diplomats with whom I worked and the friendships my husband, who was also a career Foreign Service officer, and I formed throughout the world.

I have often been asked if I would recommend the Foreign Service as a career. And I have often said yes, I would do it all again. I still would not hesitate to recommend the Foreign Service as a career, with some reservations.

*We talk of world
leadership, but we
cannot staff our
embassies overseas
or the Department
of State.*

When I entered the Foreign Service in 1957 after completing a master's degree in international relations at the Fletcher School of Diplomacy, there was a great deal of talk about how low morale was in the service. Somehow the State Department had taken in too many junior officers and didn't know what to do with us. I think it is instructive that all these years later Foreign Service officers are still concerned about morale, but with a different twist. Today there are too few officers, many jobs go unfilled and, for the first time that I know of, there has been difficulty filling junior officer classes.

Why can't we seem to get it right? When I give speeches around the country, I tell people that the most serious foreign policy issue in the United States today is matching resources to foreign policy goals. We talk of world leadership, but we cannot staff our embassies overseas, let alone fill all positions at the Department of State. Security has, understandably, become our greatest concern, but we risk the "hollow embassy" syndrome — an embassy where fewer and fewer diplomats hunker down in fortresses and cannot get out to establish contacts and gain real understanding of the countries in which they are serving. Living in and understanding foreign cultures is what the Foreign Service is all about — or, at least what it should be about.

Today the State Department is threadbare, the result of resource and budget problems. It is barely able to hold its own among the rich "giants" of foreign affairs agencies, the Defense Department and the intelligence community. In my view, State needs a commitment of more resources in order to be the first line of foreign policy defense for the United States and to adequately protect American citizens and American interests abroad.

In addition, State needs to re-think the way it recruits Foreign Service officers. At present, we cannot fill spaces for new officers in the winter, but in summer we have too many candidates. Also, the Foreign

Phyllis Oakley, a retired FSO, served as assistant secretary of State in the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Service's practice of sending new officers to visa mills is enough to discourage even the hardest souls. This traditional servitude experienced by most new FSOs should be re-thought. In addition, State must continue to provide quality training in languages and other disciplines, as well as institute the type of new, rational personnel policies that new officers have the right to expect. Former Secretary of State George Shultz, who was a great manager, used to say, "The first step in solving a problem is to admit that you have a problem." The Department of State has got a problem. These and other, larger, issues need to be addressed so that the Foreign Service and its officers know what role they play in the nation's foreign policy.

With this in mind, I have several other caveats for anyone considering a career in the Foreign Service.

Anyone contemplating a diplomatic lifestyle should be realistic, because there are many moves and many frustrations. New Foreign Service officers should not expect to "make foreign policy." That is done increasingly by political appointees in State and the White House. What FSOs do, as they rise through the ranks, is carry out foreign policy. Most FSOs will have only tangential influence on how the United States conducts its diplomacy. FSOs work the field based on initiatives from Washington and posts. Still, it is surprising to me how often FSOs can influence decisions as they are being shaped. Batting down bad ideas is sometimes more difficult.

Diplomacy is also a long-term commitment. I do not believe that you can be successful if you only work in the profession a few years, or think you can move in and out of it. Professional development takes time in diplomacy, as it does in any area.

The Foreign Service is a total commitment, not just a job that one leaves at five in the evening. That commitment extends to family and spouse, particularly if that spouse is not employed. Truly successful diplomats have this kind of commitment. They develop contacts who become friends, and they socialize and entertain with their ears to the ground and their brains engaged.

Diplomacy is also a profession that involves both husband and wife and places formal and informal demands on both. I have often thought that diplomatic

***Often assignments
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off to a new post.***

couples are like couples in the clergy. During my career in the Foreign Service, I have been a single officer, a spouse and then a member of a tandem couple. When I decided to marry another Foreign Service officer in 1958, it was understood that I would resign from the Foreign Service. I was then a Foreign Service spouse for 16 years. I wouldn't have gone back to work, but my husband, Bob Oakley, was sent to Vietnam on assignment and he couldn't take the family with him. I went with our two small children to live in Shreveport, La., and taught history at a local university. My brain started to work again, so in 1974, when I could, I rejoined the Foreign Service, which was finally open to married women.

There had been a shift in the thinking at State, because, among other things, during the early 1970s, FSO Alison Palmer won a discrimination appeal to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and she and other women FSOs filed a sex discrimination suit against the State Department. Every woman in the Foreign Service—including me—benefited from the actions of these FSOs, who raised the consciousness of the Department of State and pried open possibilities for women.

After I rejoined the Foreign Service, my first assignments were in Washington. When my husband went as ambassador to Zaire in 1979, I became the first spouse to work in her husband's mission. I was on loan to USIA as cultural affairs officer, and though one USIA officer protested and used my assignment as an excuse to get out of his, the working situation succeeded very well.

Still, all tandem couples have to make adjustments so that both spouses can have a career in the Foreign Service. For example, when you have children, there will always be the issue of who should go to the PTA meeting. In our case, it was usually me. Bob so far outranked me in the Foreign Service that he would get an ambassadorship and I would adjust. Most couples have to take turns as to who decides.

Another hardship in the Foreign Service is that often assignments are to places in which it is difficult to live. Some postings involve risks, but I always felt adventuresome heading off to a new place. In retrospect, those places with the most hardship were the postings we

enjoyed the most: Beirut, Khartoum, Abidjan, Islamabad and Kinshasa. We also worked out our postings so that we could serve in Washington during most of the time our children were in high school.

In my opinion, separation is the hardest compromise couples have to make in the Foreign Service. My husband and I don't like to be separated,

but we were on three occasions. Still, we were always committed to our marriage and children, who came first. Once my husband retired, I decided not to bid on overseas posts. Bob said that he would accompany me and serve tea and cookies, but whenever I repeated his promise to an audience, it drew laughter. I decided that this arrangement couldn't pass the giggle test and wouldn't work for us. Instead, I served as assistant secretary in the State Department twice, but I never served overseas as an ambassador. I did miss it, having been an ambassador's wife.

There is no question that the Foreign Service is not for everybody. Anyone who has lived abroad—either as an exchange student, Peace Corps volunteer or a humanitarian aid worker—and has few illusions about what living in a foreign environment entails, has a terrific background for a career in the Foreign Service. Everyone considering the career should be aware that there is a lot of drudge work, though there may be times of high drama and even privilege.

The biggest reward for embarking on a Foreign Service career is still the subject matter—the role of the United States in the world today. To me, the challenge of trying to understand another country by learning its language, culture, history and politics is real excitement. The opportunity to apply ideas to U.S. policy objectives is even more exciting. But, for anyone not absolutely hooked on diplomacy and world affairs, it is a bad career choice.

If the State Department can improve its internal management and strengthen its place in the U.S. government, if new Foreign Service officers have realistic expectations, want to see and know the world, and want to be of service to the nation, then the Foreign Service can be an outstanding career. And for the best and brightest of young diplomats, the sky will be the limit. ■

THE POST-COLD WAR FOREIGN SERVICE BLUES



Eric Larson

FOR HISPANIC AND OTHER MINORITY FSOs, SIMPLY NAVIGATING STATE'S CORPORATE CULTURE CAN BE A SERIOUS CHALLENGE.

By CRESENCIO ARCOS

I had a wonderfully exciting and satisfying 24-year career with the U.S. Foreign Service. I started out in the Vietnam era, in the midst of the Cold War. During the Portuguese revolution of 1974, I debated Marxist students at the University of Lisbon (my oddball status as a Mexican-American gave me more credibility than the typical U.S. diplomat).

Serving in the Cold War's last great flash point, Central America, in the 1980s, I was able to work both for the containment of communism and the protection of human rights. I am proud of my contribution to the ultimate success of U.S. policy in bringing peace, democracy and stability to that region.

It is not easy, then, for me to look back at the Foreign Service and discuss its problems. But it must be said:

The corporate culture and the management of the Foreign Service are in serious disrepair, if not entirely broken. While the service continues to attract and recruit many outstanding individuals, it often fails to make good use of them.

The Foreign Service continues to be very desirable as a career; gaining entry is still highly competitive. However, outside the Beltway, it is one of the least known professions in America.

A Serious Image Problem

The images of the American diplomat are less than flattering. On the rare occasion that a movie does show a diplomat, as in "Missing," the image is of a cold, uncaring bureaucrat; you don't know if he or she is looking at you or smelling you. Diplomats have no Clancy, LeCarre, or Fleming to exalt their heroes. Plainly, they are unsung heroes at best — not the action-oriented spies or Special Forces types our mass media exalt. Perhaps even more distressing is that among higher political circles FSOs are often viewed suspiciously as effete, untrustworthy characters who better represent the country they are assigned to than the U.S.

For almost 50 years, the defining force of U.S. foreign policy was Soviet Communism. Virtually all strategic and vital issues evolved around this issue. Bilateral relations with the other superpower were based on three options: (1) nuclear incineration; (2) subjugation of one superpower; or (3) negotiations. The last one became the only realistic and viable option. Hence, a career in diplomacy was on the cutting edge of public service.

Since the end of the Cold War, however, with no central defining force, formerly second-tier or functional issues have emerged as increasingly important. These include narcotics, terrorism, human rights, environment, democracy, trade, finance and immigration. The political cone has traditionally been the Cadillac cone of the Foreign Service, the path to the senior levels. But that practice is being challenged. At the same time the State Department in the interagency process is not the lead pol-

icy formulator on many of these issues. No wonder the FSO's motivation is often muddled.

Attracting the best and the brightest to the Foreign Service is not a recent challenge. During the upheaval of the 1960s and '70s, with its political assassinations, civil rights, Vietnam and Watergate, the confidence in public service began to wane. At that time, many of the best minds in America went into journalism and academia where you could "tell it like it is." By the '80s and '90s, Wall Street and Silicon Valley were where it was happening. Today, finance and high-tech command the greatest compensation. The Foreign Service cannot compete with their salaries and high potential payoffs.

Moreover, internally the Foreign Service is riven with profound and divisive concerns. The diversity question heads the list. While most members of the Foreign Service welcome diversity, acceptance is uneven. African-American and Hispanic numbers have improved (white males are often heard decrying this situation). But the broad consensus is that white women have done much better in the diversity struggles among under-represented groups.

Clearly, the State Department's senior management has demonstrated less than forceful leadership in addressing these concerns. In fact, women and blacks had to resort to lawsuits to get management's attention. Hispanics and Asian-Americans have yet to choose this route. Articulate leadership on the issue at the highest level is warranted. This means reassuring and having interactive discussions with the FSO corps. The management reaction is perceived to be a rush to meet numerical goals, promote and select almost haphazardly to keep the wolf (the courts) from the door.

A Place for Hispanic FSOs?

Foreign Service management has spawned this disquiet by not making a serious and concerted effort at proper communications and career planning early on to meet diversity needs. As an example, most minorities have traditionally been slated for consular or administrative cones and quickly dispatched to Africa and Latin America where "they can presumably blend in and feel comfortable." An assignment in Latin America is known by many as the "Cucaracha Circuit."

Hispanics in the Foreign Service are a relatively new phenomenon. The first Hispanic career FSO to reach the rank of ambassador was John Jova, in 1965. Before 1992,

Cresencio Arcos is the regional vice president for international public affairs, Caribbean & Latin America, of the AT&T Corp. He also serves on the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. He was an FSO from 1971 to 1995, serving in Brussels, Lisbon, São Paulo, Leningrad and Washington, and was ambassador to Honduras.

a total of seven Hispanic FSOs had reached chief of mission rank in the entire history of the Foreign Service. The current administration, with congressional prodding, has now doubled this number. The low number of Hispanics in the senior ranks reflects the small numbers entering the FSO corps each year. The subsequent assigning of Hispanics to "non-substantive" cones has further exacerbated the situation.

Factors external to the Foreign Service also play a role. By and large, the Hispanic community has taken little interest in foreign policy. Domestic issues overwhelmingly dominate the Hispanic agenda. These primordial concerns include poverty, jobs, education, health, and housing. Proportionately fewer Hispanics apply to the Foreign Service than non-Hispanic whites and African-Americans. If this is to change, foreign policy issues must become part of the Hispanic agenda, and the service must also increase its recruitment to target Hispanics.

Once in the FSO corps, the Hispanic faces an "alien" corporate culture. Often mentoring of minorities is simply viewed as a necessity to insure an FSO corps that "looks like America." Too often, there is a lack of a presumption of competence. Minorities are seen as getting special help to get into the Foreign Service; promotion of minorities is viewed as a form of meeting numerical goals.

Interestingly, the recent senior promotion list had only two Hispanics out of over 130. Certainly not a threatening number. Yet this serves to signal Hispanic mid-level and junior officers that opportunities at the top are a tad restrictive. For Hispanic women, the situation is even more appalling. Until recently, there had not been one female Hispanic career senior FSO.

As mentioned earlier, Hispanic officers are disproportionately assigned to Latin America, where U.S. policy and careers too often languish in the post-Cold War period. The rap on Hispanics and other minorities is that they do not take risks, hence do not get the promotions. The fact is, neither do the overwhelming majority of white males and females. The very few that take risks do because they have a "safety net" — a powerful mentor who will help out when they stumble.

But Hispanics have little top cover within the department. No judicial or court order exists to afford any remedy. Lately, Congressman Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) has demonstrated a persistent interest in the welfare of Hispanics in the Foreign Service. This has helped immeasurably in legislation, hearings and inquiries. In addition,

senior Hispanic officers need to be more proactive as mentors and models to the junior ranks, especially in the assignment process. Young Hispanic talent entering the Foreign Service needs to understand and master the corporate culture and not just rely on outside political or judicial forces to jawbone or order recruitment and promotions.

Of course, it is not just the minority or female FSO who benefits from having a mentor. Every new FSO is faced with understanding the intricacies of the corporate culture in his or her agency. (While State tends to set the pace and has the culture most resistant to change, there are variations in the other Foreign Service agencies.) The junior officer must learn informal aspects of how things really work. Among the most important norms are the roles of personalities and personal relationships.

The ideal mentor provides not only wise counsel and guidance, but also can wield some influence on behalf of the novice FSO. Without this assistance, the new officer may soon encounter frustration, distrust and demoralization. Senior management should recognize the damage this inflicts, and attempt to minimize it through outreach programs and in-house orientation by professional career counselors.

The Flawed Assignment Process

Beyond diversity concerns, the Foreign Service appears to shy away from building leadership skills. It lacks an adequate system for identifying first-class leadership potential. Leadership is too often confused with being able to write brilliantly and render excellent analysis.

Leadership means more than taking care of those above you. Those below require effective leadership. Brief senior executive courses taught by outside consultants should be a requirement for all senior promotions.

The assignment process also elicits bitter commentary. The bidding process is transparent. However, the selection process is not. Virtually all FSOs are convinced that there's a "fix" in on all desirable postings. In fact, anyone who has to go to Personnel directly for an assignment is viewed as not having "a friend or patron." A seventh-floor assignment is viewed as the "golden ring" that can jumpstart a career. Hence, a "kiss up, kick down" system becomes a reality — and cynicism runs rampant.

As I've discussed, the system encourages one to find a mentor, but the callow and ambitious FSO is forever seeking a "rabbi" or "padrino" with power. "Wiring" the assign-

FOCUS

ment process, which ultimately determines promotions, is available just to a select few with top cover. This is most demoralizing.

Who needs generalists?

The FSO of the next century faces new challenges. In the Internet age, there's little room for thoughtful and deliberate analysis in a dispatch or airgram. Relations with Congress and the media have assumed greater importance and must be cultivated. Too often, FSOs see political appointees, especially ambassadors and assistant secretaries, as amateurs to be held in contempt.

As students of power, American diplomats too often focus only on the power structure of the State Department. More assignments outside the department should be mandatory to overcome this insularity and parochialism.

The men and women of the Foreign Service I have known are among America's best talent. But this human resource has to be better utilized to ensure American

security in the post-Cold War period. The core competence of the Foreign Service is truly being challenged as the "American Century" ends. The age of the traditional generalist may be receding into the past.

While cross-cultural understanding remains essential, new knowledge and training will be required on evolving technologies and their impact on the global political economy. These skills will also make it easier to move to a second career, a factor of growing importance for many FSOs who leave the service in their 40s or 50s. In my own case, I left the Foreign Service at 50 when I received an attractive offer in the private sector. Even though the Foreign Service prepared me well for the challenges of my second career, new and more relevant skill sets are increasingly necessary.

The Foreign Service remains an attractive career for the brightest and most ambitious. However, both State Department and Foreign Service senior management need to focus on tomorrow's challenges in order to avoid the threat of mediocrity and irrelevance in the coming century. ■



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WHY WE GOT OUT



Eric Larson

TWO JUNIOR OFFICERS FIND THAT “KISS UP, KICK DOWN” IS THE WORKING MOTTO OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE.

BY ANTHONY IERONIMO AND NIKOLAI WENZEL

Like dozens of other officers, we both entered the Foreign Service in 1997 (Nikolai in the 81st A-100 class and Tony in the 82nd). Our strong interest in international affairs had drawn us to the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in the early 1990s. That school's workshops and contacts, including several ambassadors in residence, skillfully marketed the Foreign Service to students. It was the combination of the curriculum and those connections that led us to a career that we had not known much about, let alone planned to pursue.

While at Georgetown, Tony did a Foreign Service internship at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See and met a number of FSOs working there and at Embassy Rome. One officer presciently told him that it was hard to get

AFSA NEWS

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REDUCING THE COST OF OVERSEAS SERVICE: SOME PROGRESS IN MEDICAL BENEFITS

By John Naland,
State Vice President

Last spring AFSA began a major initiative to combat the rising cost of overseas service. From loss of locality pay to reductions in hardship differentials, employees face an array of disincentives to going abroad.

Over the last several months AFSA has polled the membership for suggestions and forwarded a series of proposals to management. Three benefits packages focused on the areas of allowances and differentials; travel, transportation, vouchers and claims; and overseas medical benefits.

While most of these issues are still under review, the State Department accepted the following six AFSA proposals to stop the erosion of overseas medical benefits:

1. End the required use of R&R for medical treatment.

2. Pay for outpatient mental health treatment not covered by private insurance.

3. Provide overseas medical services to employees and eligible family members whose pregnancies originated in the U.S. Management has drafted implementing regulations allowing payment by the department as a second insurer regardless of the country in which the pregnancy originated.

4. Give cash advances for out-patient care. At management's request Congress put a section into the department's authorization bill permitting advances of up to three months' salary to employees serving abroad when they or their family members need medical treatment outside the U.S.

5. Provide better information on overseas health insurance programs. State 135792, an excellent primer from management on insurance options, will be

Continued on page 6

• AFSA Dateline •

•LCE Group Settlement. A six year battle by a group of former USAID employees, AFSA and counsel against the agency's LCE (limited career extension) policy has been settled in favor of the grievants with the agency paying them over one million dollars. The employees had filed suit in U.S. District Court against USAID after the Foreign Service Grievance Board upheld the agency's denial of LCEs to the group even though the promotion board had recommended them for LCEs. The court overruled the FSGB's decision as "arbitrary, capricious, and not in accordance with law." In AFSA's view, USAID

sought settlement to avoid a finding of agency liability. For details see <http://www.afsa.org>.

•Professional Liability Insurance. President Clinton signed legislation in September requiring the State Department to pay half the cost of professional liability insurance for some employees. The provision, authored by Representative Frank Wolf (R-Va.), applies to "supervisors, management officials, and law enforcement officers." AFSA sent a letter to management asking for expeditious implementation of this legislation.

Continued on page 6

STATE
V.P. VOICE

• BY JOHN NALAND •

LET'S TRY WORKFORCE PLANNING

No organization that views its mission seriously should tolerate the extended staffing gaps that the Foreign Service routinely experiences. Years of lean budgets and expanding commitments have produced a situation in which we have about 500 fewer people than positions (including training, details, leave without pay, etc). The result, as we all know too well, is under-staffed offices, over-worked employees, degraded operations, abbreviated home leaves, forgone training, and weakened management controls.

What do we do about it? We need to start by doing something that neither the department nor some 90 post-World War II studies of the Foreign Service have ever done: workforce planning.

AFSA has long advocated that the department develop a long-term workforce plan (as the Pentagon does) that projects how many people with what skills State will need to accomplish our mission in the coming decades. AFSA recently renewed our push on this issue and is pleased to report that the director general was very receptive. We have already had several exploratory meetings with PER and plan to work together in the coming months to see what can be accomplished. AFSA's point person on this initiative is Ambassador Bill DePree, our retiree vice president.

Our objective is to develop a long-term workforce plan in order to build a stronger case for

expanded funding for diplomatic readiness. Quite simply, we need to change the terms of the debate on Capitol Hill and in the Office of Management and Budget.

Instead of asking which foreign policy objectives the State Department can afford to accomplish with available funding, the focus should be on what level of funding is needed to accomplish the nation's foreign policy objectives. Our overseas missions need to be seen as the true front line of America's national security. And they need to be funded accordingly.

Workforce planning should give us the data to argue, for example, that our overseas missions must be staffed at 110 percent strength (as the military does now for front line units) to cover staffing gaps caused by transfers, home leave, training, seasonal work surges, and other routine factors. (The "extra" 10 percent could be rotational junior officers, professional associates, TDY rovers, etc.) In addition, long-term workforce planning should help ameliorate the dramatic swings in promotion and hiring rates that we have seen in recent decades.

Although this is a daunting undertaking and one that, even when completed, may have to await a new Congress and presidential administration to produce noticeable results, AFSA is dedicated to pursuing workforce planning. We will keep you informed.

As always, we welcome member input. Contact me at NalandJ@state.gov or by fax at 202-647-0265.

"No organization that views its mission seriously should tolerate extended staffing gaps."

THE THOUGHT BEHIND THE GIFT

The reasons people make a charitable gift to AFSA's two philanthropic organizations, the AFSA Fund and the AFSA Scholarship Fund, are as varied as the donors. For those who don't know, the AFSA Fund educates the public on the importance of American leadership abroad and the Foreign Service, while the AFSA Scholarship Fund provides scholarships and awards to Foreign Service kids. Besides favorable tax considerations, planned gifts usually have special meaning behind them. Although most planned gifts to AFSA have taken the form of bequests in wills, some individuals see firsthand the benefit of their contributions.

Many just want to give something back in exchange for a career that treated them well. One woman considering making a gift to the AFSA Fund says she is honored to be an American and proud of her career in the Foreign Service and wants others to know the significance of U.S. diplomacy. Ambassador Ernest V. Siracusa established a perpetual scholarship not only in his name but one for his wife, Jacq Bachman Siracusa, "to recognize her merit and to honor her work."

Others want to keep the memory of their loved ones alive. Howard Kavaler, whose wife, Prabhi Kavaler, perished in the Nairobi, Kenya terrorist bombing in 1998, established a perennial scholarship in her name so no one forgets. "I don't want my wife to be just another name on the memorial plaque (at Main State's diplomatic entrance)." Jack and Trudy Collins along with their friends and family established the Suzanne Marie Collins Perpetual Scholarship for their 19-year-old daughter who was brutally murdered in 1985. "It is a way to help in the healing process. Although the grief never goes away, it is lessened knowing something good has come out of our daughter's senseless death," says Jack.

Continued on page 3

Gifts

Continued from page 2

Gifts to AFSA's two funds have been made in different ways. Ambassador William Macomber did not sell the revised copy of his book, *The Angels' Game*. Instead he directed folks to make a donation to AFSA and sent the books out free. These contributions were then bestowed on a needy Foreign Service student in the form of a financial aid scholarship. The family foundation of the widow of Ambassador William R. Rivkin has contributed funds so that the AFSA Fund is able to provide an annual award to a mid-level Foreign Service officer who has exhibited extraordinary accomplishment involving initiative, integrity, intellectual courage and constructive dissent. This award is presented by Ambassador Rivkin's widow each year.

In 1996, Mrs. John Becker threw a 60th birthday party for her husband. For friends and family who wanted to give him a gift, she let them know that they could make a donation in his name to the AFSA Scholarship Fund. A scholarship was bestowed on a student in Mr. Becker's name that fall.

Whatever the reason for making a gift to the AFSA Scholarship Fund or the AFSA Fund, it goes to help someone in the Foreign Service community or to inform the public about the Foreign Service. For more information on making a planned gift, please contact Lori Dec at 202-944-5504 or dec@afsa.org. ■



Foreign Service alumnus Samuel T. Scott (left) discusses USAID careers with a student during the Aug. 13 International Affairs Careers Day of the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs of the University of Texas at Austin. (See Retiree VP Voice at right.)

RETIREE

V.P. VOICE

• BY WILLARD DE PREE •

Outreach: Retirees Are Key

A FSA has seen encouraging results in our efforts to raise Americans' awareness of the importance of diplomacy. And retirees are making this happen, through activities which can serve as models for still more colleagues.

Mentoring: Colleagues in the Foreign Service Group of Central Texas provide mentors to students

at the LBJ School at the University of Texas at Austin. The group's founder, USA alumna Vic Niemeyer and president George McFarland, Ambassador Lewis Hoffacker and Joseph McLean (State), joined by USAID alumnus Samuel Scott of the San Antonio retirees group, participated in the August LBJ career day, kicking off a series of discussions with interested students. (See photo.) Three of last year's LBJ School students are entering the Foreign Service. According to the dean, who welcomes retirees, the school is placing additional emphasis on international affairs.

Speakers Bureau: With help from the Delavan Foundation, an AFSA ad in Kiwanis magazine brought requests for Foreign Service speakers from as far afield as Waco, Milwaukee and northern Vermont. Retired colleagues who live near these localities agreed to give talks about their career experiences. We anticipate more requests as we expand our speakers bureau publicity to Rotary and Lions Clubs, Junior Chambers of Commerce and other service organizations.

Elderhostel: Demand continues to climb for the one-week courses on the Foreign Service

which AFSA presents to senior citizens from all over the U.S. In 2000 we're expanding to eight courses in D.C., repeating the San Diego course and adding one in St. Petersburg, Fla, where 200 people applied for 50 class spaces. We can meet this demand without drawing a cent from AFSA dues because retirees

who live in the area are contributing their considerable expertise.

We are exploring offering courses in Arizona and Washington State, as well as in New England, where I recently had an enjoyable meeting with the foreign affairs retirees group.

What do we get out of this?

Retirees who participate in our Elderhostel and speaking programs find sharing their experiences with interested audiences to be most satisfying, and telling these people about the importance of our work does make a difference. E.g., this response from an Elderhostel participant: "My image of the State Department was Alger Hiss and a bunch of people in striped pants doing their damndest to give away this country. What I learned was that the types of Foreign Service officers we met are, or ought to be, the State Department's best ambassadors to the American people. I have volunteered to do a program for the Downtown Toledo Exchange Club on the Foreign Service."

AFSA needs more "ambassadors to the American people" who can tell our story and inspire audiences to continue their interest in diplomacy and the Foreign Service.

"Telling these people about our work does make a difference."

COMMERCIAL SERVICE
V.P. VOICE

• BY PETER FREDERICK •

INTEGRATION: SEPARATE IS NOT EQUAL

The Commercial Service may be unique among the foreign affairs agencies. It has one worldwide mission, one work force, and relies on two career paths based on two different personnel systems. Management has made integration of the two career services its primary objective. AFSA and CS management agree on the goal to strengthen our unified organization. However, we continue to disagree on how best to do so.

The Foreign Commercial Service was established in 1980 within the Commerce Department, as an adjunct to the existing United States Commercial Service, which had offices (now called export assistance centers) throughout the U.S. Commerce also had personnel serving overseas at the various U.S. trade centers. While the trade center personnel were smoothly melded into FCS, the integration of the domestic and Foreign Service has taken much longer.

The easiest step was changing the name to the Commercial Service. The Commercial Service mission is to help American companies profit in international markets and to defend and protect American business interests internationally. Working with business enterprises in the United States provides excellent training for commercial officers; likewise, working in an embassy offers professional benefits for export assistance center personnel.

In the early days of our service, civil servants from the domestic offices could join the FCS through

a lateral entry program. However, once commissioned into the Foreign Service, very few wanted to return to a domestic assignment primarily because of the adverse effect on their careers. The problem facing management is not the compatibility of the work force, but the incompatibility of two personnel systems, two sets of job requirements and different career goals.

Separate is not equal.

The Foreign Service "up or out," "rank in person" system, which is based on competition, rank ordering and potential selection out, is dependent on management's ability 1) to

evaluate officers working around the world in different environments, 2) to provide sufficient promotion opportunities, and 3) to establish an assignments system that is transparent and fair. The civil service "rank in position" system is based on different requirements with a different career path. Job requirements as basic as moving one's family every four years compared to staying in the same community for a full career are significant and reflect divergent career goals. I recently met with a career candidate who bemoaned the fact that his grandmother could not understand why his first assignment as a Foreign Service officer was in Atlanta.

It is absolutely essential that we work together to achieve integration within the existing regulations and remain consistent with the rest of the foreign affairs community. AFSA is committed to do so. We hope that management is too.

"The problem is incompatibility of two personnel systems."

The Indispensable Opposition

by Maggie Dowling
Outgoing FAS Vice President

Reflecting the administration's determination to increase union participation in federal workplace decisions, the White House plans to require federal agencies to file progress reports with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on steps they are taking to improve their labor-management relations. The president's reaffirmation of his support for partnership is likely to re-engage and focus the whole government, keeping the issue on the agenda of every agency.

The Foreign Agricultural Service is the only foreign affairs agency with a formal partnership council. STATE, AID and FCS have developed cooperative approaches without the formal PC structure. The FAS Partnership Council consists of three parties: AFSA, AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees), and FAS management. Since 1994, the FAS PC has tackled the most difficult issues facing the agency: Foreign Service numbers, job placement plans, civil service job rotation, supervisory/managerial position descriptions, establishment of a leave bank program, restructuring the EEO advisory process, career development and training. While agreements may have fallen short of the original intent and work remains to be done, we should never lose sight of where we were less than five years ago.

Partnership council agreements, like collective bargaining itself, will always remain a work in progress; however, we should take great pride in the participatory process that has been established and continues to be honed with experience and increasing trust between parties. We have made significant progress, and that success can be attributed to the commitment by all three parties to

continued on page 5

Opposition

continued from page 4

partnership and a continuing focus on our collective goals and mission and an appreciation of the individual parties' interests.

Despite frustrations and differences, our relationship with FAS management is improving. Our Foreign Service officers enjoy flexible work schedules, flexiplace opportunities, and a more flexible tour of duty policy; in short, ready access through AFSA to participate in many policy developments affecting their work lives. In fact, FAS managers are increasingly aware of the benefit of consulting unions in workplace and policy changes early in the process. This may be our most important accomplishment.

Partnership fosters the "indispensable opposition" that Walter Lippman cited in the need of any organization for a counterbalancing force, to be constantly challenged in order to discover truth and to rise to its greatest potential.

For this AFSA vice president, the challenge was often our respective standing committee meetings. My best ideas and proposals brought to the AFSA/FAS standing committee, after frank and open discussion, came out better and stronger as a result of the synergy that takes place in that forum. I often was a little worse for the wear after those meetings, but that debate along with feedback from the field often made me re-think my initial position. I come to relish the challenge and value the thoughtful consideration by my members who took the time to become informed and involved on the issues.

I have found that with increasing AFSA success concurrently comes, increasing member expectations from AFSA. Those expectations will be met as long as the union and management continue to foster an environment of full participation. By each of us critically challenging the other, the bar of excellence will continue to rise. What can be more exciting and rewarding than constantly being challenged to better your best? ■

USAID V.P. VOICE

• BY FRANK MILLER •

Assignments by Priority

On September 29, the Office of Human Resources requested that AFSA approve procedural changes to the Foreign Service Assignment System for the year 2000. According to HR, these changes were necessary to balance the need to fill positions world-wide versus the long-standing practice of giving individuals a

choice in assignments. Two bureaus were particularly concerned that they would have trouble filling their positions.

The HR proposal would assign bidders based on a system that would rank all open positions by priority regardless of the bidder's stated choices. Each bureau would rank positions into top, middle and bottom third priorities. This list would then be converted into an agency ranking using the same three categories. HR and the bureaus would directly assign bidders based on the priority listing. All top third positions would be filled before moving to the next two thirds. The priority ranking would not necessarily be synonymous with size of mission, and all positions would be ranked in order by backstop (primary skill code).

AFSA objected because the proposed changes were brought to the table after COARs (employee bid lists) were due in Washington. Therefore employees would have bid without knowing the criteria for selection. In essence, employees would be bidding blind and would have to put their trust in HR. The proposed system was neither transparent nor did it provide any semblance of due process. Moreover,

the proposal was not in keeping with the Family Friendly policies which encourage balancing agency and family needs.

AFSA requested that the agency post a list of priority positions, only the top third, and provide the criteria used to classify them as priority to employees. Bidders would be asked to redo their COARs to

include at least one priority position. Noting the difference between hard-to-fill, hardship and priority positions, we insisted this exercise should not be used to address hard-to-fill positions unless those positions are truly priority positions. We asked that past patterns of employee assignments and family needs be taken into account. The agency should not ask the same employees to continue to be placed in difficult assignments while others go to cushy jobs.

TO HR's credit, they worked with AFSA to address these concerns and reissued the assignment list. The top third priority positions are identified and will be filled first. The remaining positions will be filled under normal procedures.

AFSA reminded HR that major difficulties filling overseas positions started in 1996 after USAID RIFed 97 Foreign Service officers. The problem is a lack of management planning not employees' reluctance to be available for world-wide assignments. Employees have been telling us that the agency is trying to do all the programs it used to do, in more places, with fewer people. The result is poor morale and burnout. This is a failure of management – not of discipline.

"Employees would have bid without knowing the criteria for selection."

Medical Benefits

Continued from page 1

posted on AFSA's website for the health insurance open season. 6. Assure that employees do not bear the cost of medical clearance exams. MED has rewritten its instruction letter to health providers and is making a greater effort to deal directly with medical providers on billing.

AFSA appreciates management's response and looks forward to seeing the implementing regulations (where required).

AFSA will keep you informed of the response to the other proposals. Please forward any comments or suggestions you have to NALANDJ@state.gov or fax 202-647-0265. ■

To receive notices of AFSA initiatives to reduce the cost of living overseas. Go to <http://www.afsa.org> and

Click on AFSANET

Dateline

Continued from page 1

•AFSA wishes all the best to departing FAS Vice President Maggie Dowling, who is stepping down to take Polish language training for her assignment as agricultural attaché to Warsaw. The Governing Board appointed FAS Representative Evans

Browne to serve as the new FAS vice president and Ed Porter to serve as FAS representative.

•AFSA welcomes Kalpna Srimal, the new controller, to the staff. Kalpna was an accountant with the American Medical Informatics Association of Bethesda before coming to AFSA. In her free time she is a soccer mom.

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into the service but even harder to get out — an implicit warning he now wishes he had heeded.

We were both attracted by the prospect of engaging in what the Foreign Service brochure described as “the most interesting work in the world.” We also expected to represent U.S. interests abroad. Sadly, during our 30 months as FSOs, spent primarily in Mexico City (1997-99), we discovered that the reality of a diplomatic career is completely at odds with its prestigious reputation. In fact, the Foreign Service is a bizarre world unto itself: an artificial environment detached from reality and from the values of the country it purports to serve, and operating according to a code of conduct that would not be tolerated in the United States. (Before going further, we wish to note for the record that all references to the Foreign Service in this article reflect our judgments about the State Department and not other FS agencies.)

Early Warning Signs

During our orientation period, we were both impressed by many of our A-100 colleagues, but encountered relatively few mid-level and senior officers with admirable qualities. We wondered at this scarcity of good mentors but carried on undeterred.

Maintaining our optimism about our new career became more difficult, however, once we began making numerous excursions from FSI to Main State in order to resolve voucher, allowance and other administrative issues. On top of that, our A-100 instructors devoted a session to troubleshooting our earnings and leave statements. Although one has to expect a degree of inefficiency from a government agency that spans the planet, we began to realize quite early on that the

Nikolai Wenzel, 81st A-100 class, and Anthony Ieronimo, 82nd A-100 class, graduated from Georgetown University in 1994, with a bachelor's degree and master's degree, respectively, from the School of Foreign Service. They were FSOs from 1997-1999, serving in Mexico City before resigning. Wenzel worked in the consular section as well as in the office of the ambassador; Ieronimo worked in the consular and administrative sections of the embassy.

Foreign Service managers do excel at one thing, at least: managing their careers.

State Department bureaucracy demonstrates all the characteristics of an idiot savant — minus the occasional flash of genius. (State's bureaucracy continues to haunt us even after resignation: one of us is still due back pay from a promotion last January, and the other had air freight, clearly marked for another officer, delivered to his separation address.)

The bureaucracy is not the major problem at State, however, nor is it unmanageable; it is simply unmanaged. Poor management is the real failing of the Foreign Service, as underscored by a McKinsey and Co. study conducted at the behest of a State Department ostensibly concerned about stemming officer resignations. A Department cable (99 State 120779, sent 28 June 1999) summarized the results: “According to the McKinsey pollsters, there is an overwhelming impression that the Service is poorly managed.” Yet despite this harsh, virtually universal judgment by Foreign Service officers themselves, the department has taken no action to correct the problem.

The Foreign Service Spoils System

Far from punishing bad managers, the State Department appears compelled to reward them. During our tour in Mexico City, several high-ranking Foreign Service officers won substantial management awards, including high-profile, agency-wide honors, at a post that has remained chronically hard-to-fill due to infamously low morale, that is known by seasoned officers as one of the worst with respect to administrative management, and that has generated numerous curtailments over the past few years in addition to the resignations this year of three first-tour officers (we two among them). The truth is, regardless of the awards listed on their personnel audit reports, many administrative and consular bosses whom we have known were shockingly poor managers.

Foreign Service managers do excel at one thing, at least: managing their careers. In the Foreign Service, sycophancy is synonymous with ambition. One senior officer in Mexico City shamelessly advised us and other subordinates that “managing upward” is the key

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to success. (We have also heard that a mid-level officer in Mexico described this approach as "kissing up and kicking down.") Given the brief period during which an employee and his or her rating officer work together, the natural tendency for the rating officer's opinion to be mimicked by the reviewing officer, and the lack of peer review in the evaluation process, it is not surprising that many, perhaps most, officers who advance professionally are those who focus on charming their supervisors, not on honing their managerial skills. But by consistently rewarding poor managers, the Foreign Service sends the message that good managers needn't bother, and that complaints about the system are futile.

Despite talk of reform, the Foreign Service personnel system is still, in truth, little more than a spoils system, in which the well-connected thrive and everyone else struggles just to stay in. An "old boys" network confers unofficial, behind-the-scenes protection and favors, promotions and assignments to all its members but damages the Foreign Service as an institution in the process. Our observations in Mexico City lead us to conclude that so-called "corridor reputation," rather than serving as an informal mechanism for recognizing and advancing talented officers, is instead the product of loyalties between officers who have curried favor with each other at various stages of their careers.

Don't Rock The Boat

As new players in the Foreign Service spoils system, and anything but members of the old boys network, we quickly learned that our role was to be servile. Above all, we were not to discuss problems at post, because doing so might suggest that an officer was not doing his or her job, which could thereby threaten a carefully cultivated reputation. So, for example, when a group of officers in Mexico City identified security and other issues involving their government housing, and brought these issues to the attention of administrative management, their concerns were summarily dismissed. And when these officers held a meeting to discuss other remedies for their housing concerns, and management learned of the meeting, two junior officers were approached by a high-level administrative official and warned that "going to the inspector gener-

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we quickly learned
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to be servile.*

al is not the way to make friends in Washington."

While all too many officers are willing to play an obsequious role, others recognize the system as foreign to the principles that they have sworn to uphold, and refuse to participate. These officers either resign, or see their careers stymied

by a system that prefers sycophancy to merit.

In Mexico City, these perverse loyalties not only muddied managerial relations but actually protected potentially criminal behavior. During the summer of 1998, several junior officers had gathered evidence suggesting that a mid-level officer was offering visas to applicants in exchange for sexual favors. One junior officer volunteered to communicate these suspicions to consular management. A high-ranking consular manager, whose ties to the suspected officer predated Mexico City, attempted to intimidate the junior officer. Fortunately, another manager intervened. A Diplomatic Security investigation followed, and precipitated the suspected officer's resignation from the Foreign Service. However, the consular official who had attempted to suppress the allegations was never punished. In fact, the official went on to win two management-related cash awards and be congratulated in a cable from Consular Affairs as follows: "The best of the best is what you are, and it's great to see all you have done acknowledged." (98 State 199852, sent Oct. 28, 1998)

Those who wish to believe that this was a unique situation should consider a similar case from Beijing, where a group of JOs took the initiative to notify post management of a mid-level officer's involvement in visa-line corruption even more serious than that in Mexico City. As the *Los Angeles Times* ("Clippings," July 1999 FSJ, p. 10) reported this past May, it took a "small-scale mutiny" by the officers before the offending FSO was dismissed from post in 1996. Astonishingly, he moved on to an attractive domestic assignment and even received a meritorious pay increase. (In contrast, three of the whistle-blowers resigned from the Foreign Service, citing as their motivation the State Department's mishandling of the investigation.)

The officer was ultimately terminated from the

Foreign Service in 1998, but only after his activities in Beijing came to the attention of the Justice Department investigation of the Democratic campaign fund-raising scandal. (More details on the Beijing case are available on the website of the House Committee on Government Reform, at www.house.gov/reform/oversight/hearings/99.07.29/index.htm.)

The abuses in Beijing make clear that the malfeasance in Mexico City was not an isolated episode. The same managers in Consular Affairs who had botched Beijing mishandled Mexico City, and sent JOs at both posts an important message: Foreign Service officers — or at least well-connected ones — will not be held accountable for improper actions; rather, the system will protect them.

Keeping It In The Family

This dysfunctional system can remain so powerful because most Foreign Service activity takes place in remote overseas locations, where inadequate supervision allows officers the freedom to act in ways that would be considered unacceptable in the United States. For example, Embassy Mexico, with the approval of the department, was able to circumvent restrictions on nepotism in a number of cases in which officers at the FS-1 level and above had spouses working elsewhere in the same embassy section. In Mexico City, for example, the DCM's wife is the chief of a consular sub-unit; the consul general's wife is the deputy chief of a consular unit; and the administrative counselor's wife is an NIV adjudicator. Even the NIV chief's wife is an NIV adjudicator!

In particularly blatant cases, the embassy contrived what was termed a "cut-out," by which the management chain between a senior official and his or her spouse was broken by introducing a third party, "cut out" of the chain of command, who acted as the subordinate spouse's rating officer. This meant that the senior spouse would neither write the junior spouse's employee evaluation report nor write the evaluation of the third-party supervisor of the junior spouse. However, this solution adheres only to the letter of the law, not its spirit, because it is based on the assumption that EERs are the sole means of exerting influence

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over employees. The reality is that there are many ways for a ranking officer to influence the career of a subordinate spouse, of the subordinate spouse's supervisor, and of the subordinate spouse's colleagues, regardless of how the chain of command is defined on paper. In Mexico City, we saw situations where such influence played a role in determin-

ing award nominations, leave requests, and even the hour at which an employee left the office each day. This blatant disregard of the need to avoid even the appearance of impropriety would not be tolerated in the private sector or even in most other government agencies, but it is routine at many overseas posts.

Crowd Control

Nor is this the only way in which the Foreign Service is out of step with the expectations of most Americans. U.S. immigration law is also subordinated to the Foreign Service's mission of keeping the visa lines moving to help maintain good bilateral relations. In Mexico City, it was very clear that the priority of consular management was for officers to interview and approve as many applicants as possible, in order to meet public relations goals. In other words, post management allowed visa demand to dictate workload without regard to available resources (or the applicants' qualifications). The inevitable result was 2,000 and more non-immigrant visa (NIV) interviews conducted on each 10-12-hour workday (double the maximum pace CA describes as acceptable). Consular management at post actively discouraged junior officers from filing for the resultant overtime pay. Although it grudgingly relented when junior officers insisted on this legal entitlement, its resistance spoke volumes about management's expectations.

Non-immigrant visa adjudicators were expected to average no more than two minutes (!) per interview and were primarily judged on how many interviews they conducted and on how politely they treated the applicants. The substance of the interview itself became increasingly unimportant as the workload grew. Both the emphasis on speed and the many hours of nonstop interviewing impaired an adjudicator's judgment so that vigilance against fraud, which occurs regularly in

Mexico City, became practically impossible. When one junior officer asked a high-level Consular Affairs visitor how the department expected officers to recognize fraudulent cases under those circumstances, the response was that fraud was unimportant unless it involved trafficking in drugs, women or children. Thus, before our eyes, the department completely reinterpreted U.S. immigration law.

When State puts speedy, friendly customer service ahead of enforcing immigration law as a consular priority, the results are not hard to predict. At a March 1999 congressional hearing, an INS spokesman testified that 40 to 50 percent of illegal residents in the U.S. entered on (putatively) non-immigrant visas issued at U.S. diplomatic posts abroad. The truth is that State Department administration of U.S. immigration laws is a farce. Poor management and misplaced priorities render the department incapable of meeting the expectations of the American people with respect to enforcing these laws.

Paying Lip Service To Morale

Throughout our tours in Mexico City, senior management at post and in Washington told us that they were concerned about JO morale in Mexico City. Several high-ranking officials, ranging from the director general to officials at the deputy assistant secretary and assistant secretary levels, visited post and met with junior officers. However, as with many diplomatic duties, these visits were ceremonial rather than substantive. During a visit by several high-ranking officials from Consular Affairs, for example, one junior officer asked about a cable he had seen from CA stipulating that each visa officer should interview no more than 150 applicants daily over no more than five hours. Despite the fact that several JOs confirmed having seen the cable, the visiting officials said they were unaware of its existence. Subsequent to the visitors' departure, the JOs were able to locate a copy of it. (The cable, 97 State 227586, is actually part of the Consular Best Practices Handbook!) For us, the exchange symbolized the department's disregard not only for junior officers but also for its own word.

The director general also visited Mexico City during our tour, and several months later sent a team from the JO assignments division to follow up and verify that morale had improved since his visit. Following

the visit, the director general sent a memorandum (dated May 12, 1999) to State's undersecretary for management indicating that the team had "found JO morale high and attitudes generally good," and that "junior officers felt that their Mexico assignments were exceeding their expectations, professionally and personally." It is an indication of management's profound disconnect with junior officers that three JOs resigned from Mexico City within four months of the team's visit.

Opting Out

If one could endure the bureaucracy and improper, even illegal, conduct, would the substance of a Foreign Service career be worthwhile? It is difficult to comment on the substance of Foreign Service work because the bureaucracy is so thick that it takes years for most officers to receive any real, substantive responsibility. So rather than imagining diplomats engaged in the implementation of U.S. foreign policy, it is more accurate to think of bureaucrats at all levels (not just JOs) performing much more mundane duties: paraphrasing local newspaper articles, escorting official guests on shopping expeditions, and performing glorified social and clerical work from behind bulletproof windows. And of course, as described above, a prominent feature of any officer's list of regular duties is career management by currying favor with supervisors.

So after just one tour, and despite receiving comfortable onward assignments in Western Europe and Northern Africa, we decided that we could no longer live in the Foreign Service's artificial world and play by its bizarre rules. In fact, we would have left sooner had departmental rules not made resignation so expensive. (JOs, take heed: What you heard in A-100 about the right to resign after only one year of service without having to reimburse Uncle Sam for training and other expenses is not true.)

To be sure, there are certainly some benefits to the Foreign Service, such as frequent travel, decent pay, free housing and (relatively high) job security and prestige. For a patient, nonjudgmental person who can deal with inefficiency, bad management and improper behavior, and who can get accustomed to reacting to news of promotions and awards with a sense of irony, the decision to pursue a diplomatic

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career may make sense. However, we found that the disadvantages far outweigh the benefits, and we therefore urge anyone contemplating the Foreign Service as a career, or even as a short-term job, to consider very carefully the issues discussed in this essay. Above all, pay no attention to the prestigious, but thin, veneer; it actually prevents the institution from improving its abysmal management and offering junior officers like us concrete incentives to stay. As a senior officer who was nearing the end of his career explained to one of us, those who leave the Foreign Service are "smart enough to get in and wise enough to get out."

Despite that comment, some will undoubtedly say we did not give the Foreign Service a fair chance. However, we believe that our investment of over two years each was sufficient, given that the problems we

*After two years,
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bizarre rules.*

have cited here were not isolated but appear symptomatic of the State Department as a whole. Also, the advice of more experienced colleagues reinforced our own sense that leaving the Foreign Service would only become more difficult after subsequent tours. In the end, we decided that the institution simply did not merit the risk of discovering, two or more years down the line, that our initial instinct to get out was correct, and then finding it even harder to locate more satisfying employment.

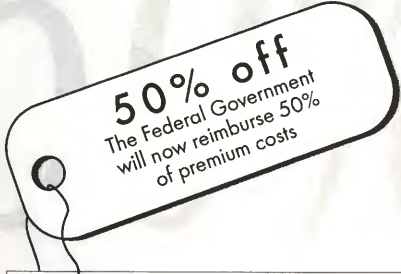
Finally, we offer our apologies to the Foreign Service's many good officers, who may feel unfairly associated with those who merit the harsh judgments of this essay. If we had met more officers like you, we might not have resigned. We also offer our appreciation to AFSA, which took an early interest in addressing the issues we have raised here. ■

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GENERAL PINOCHET AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONUNDRUM

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A SPANISH JUDGE HAS FORCED THE WORLD TO FACE UP TO THAT THORNY PROBLEM —
WHETHER IT WANTS TO OR NOT.

BY GEORGE GEDDA

When Chilean President Augusto Pinochet stepped down in 1990, turning over power to an elected successor, there was a sense of relief around the State Department.

With his long record of abuses and recurring suspicions of American involvement in his rise to power in 1973, the general had been a troublesome figure for successive administrations for almost two decades.

In opting for democracy, Chile was at last joining the Latin American mainstream. Thus, when President Bush visited Chile in December 1990, he gratefully praised Pinochet for policies that had helped bring prosperity to Chile, and made no references to human rights abuses. The general was pleased.

Soon thereafter Pinochet was gone, or at least less relevant than he once was. Despite his myriad abuses over 17 years in power, adding up to 3,197 dead or disappeared according to official Chilean figures, he could rightfully claim that he had revitalized Chile's economy and reinstated democracy (though Chile was the last nation in the hemisphere, Haiti and Cuba excepted, to embrace the massive shift toward electoral democracy throughout Latin America that had begun in 1979). As a result, Chile, after years of being viewed as a Latin American headache, has been hailed for much of the past decade by U.S. officials as a role model for the hemisphere. Indeed, from Washington's viewpoint, practically the only unpleasantness emanating from Santiago for most of the past decade related to trade issues.

That all changed abruptly on Oct. 16, 1998, when an obscure Spanish judge, Baltasar Garzón, issued a warrant

for Pinochet's arrest in London (where he was undergoing medical treatment). The details of the many abuses cited in Garzón's arrest order are chilling: Men vanish from city streets in front of their wives and children. People are dragged from their beds. A pregnant woman is hauled off to a police station and never heard from again.

On the basis of those many individual cases, Garzón charged Pinochet with multiple counts of genocide, torture and terrorism and demanded that he be extradited to Spain for trial. Britain's House of Lords ruled on Apr. 15, 1999 that Pinochet could only be extradited to face charges of torture alleged to have occurred after December 1988, when London adopted the European Convention on Terrorism, which requires signatories to cooperate with each others' judicial processes in cases of terrorism. The bulk of the abuses in Chile occurred between 1973 and 1978 but Garzón, intent on keeping his case alive, came up with dozens of allegations of torture inflicted after 1988.

Pinochet's supporters insist that his health is too fragile for him to stand trial and that, in any case, the prosecution still has not established a direct connection between the general and the crimes he allegedly committed. Extradition hearings were held in late September in London and a British magistrate ruled on Oct. 8 that Pinochet should be extradited to Spain to stand trial on the charges. However, no final disposition of the case is expected until Britain's High Court rules on Pinochet's appeal, which could take up to a year.

The American Response

With Pinochet's arrest, the grim memories of a generation ago were resuscitated: the period when the United States was seen to be favoring the ouster of an elected government by a military dictator; when Pinochet's security services engaged in an orgy of repression; when leftists or sus-

George Gedda covers the State Department for the Associated Press.

pected leftists lived in terror, fearing that late-night knock on the door. There were also recollections of the role of Pinochet's intelligence agency in the murders in Washington in 1976 of former Ambassador Orlando Letelier and his assistant, Ronni Moffitt.

Pinochet's many critics in the United States and Chile also recalled the CIA role in support of a truckers' strike in Chile in 1973 — support designed to weaken the Marxist-dominated elected government. There were equally uncomfortable flashbacks of Cuban agents swarming around Chile during the pre-Pinochet period, and of the concern that Chile could be used as a base for subversion elsewhere in South America.

In light of that quarter-century of history, how would the Clinton administration respond to this unprecedented attempt to hold Pinochet accountable for his crimes? Should it be supportive of the overarching principle of universal respect for human rights, or should it respect Chilean internal processes that gave national reconciliation precedence over revenge?

For each argument in the debate, there was a counter-argument. Human rights groups contended that Garzón's action, if successful, would put dictators on notice that justice now reaches across borders. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms said the effect would be just the opposite: "Dictators will be put on notice all right. And the lesson will be: Never step down. You'd be a fool to give up power, as Pinochet did. Fight until the last man." Helms also complained that the "brave new world of global justice" leaves unanswered the question of who goes free and who stands trial. Could Russian President Boris Yeltsin be arrested for the abuses in Chechnya?

The issue left the State Department deeply divided, with human rights and other bureaus adopting a Pinochet-must-pay line. An opposing faction, led by the Western Hemisphere Affairs bureau, argued that the United States must do nothing that could weaken the fragile left-right accord in Chile that allowed for elected governments to run the country while leaving Pinochet immune from prosecution for his abuses.

Long weeks passed after Pinochet was placed under house arrest in London, with the State Department coming down firmly in support of neither side. Finally, on Nov. 30, 1998, the State Department tilted somewhat against the Spanish extradition effort. Spokesman James P. Rubin said that if, as in Chile, "citizens are wrestling with the need to

**"Dictators will be
put on notice all right.
And the lesson will be:
Never step down."**

— **Senate Foreign Relations
Committee Chairman**

Jesse Helms

balance the demands for justice with the requirements of reconciliation, significant respect should be given to their conclusions."

Yet the corollary to that principle is that outside intervention, perhaps in the form of an international tribunal, is appropriate when a country is unable to deal with mass killings through internal mechanisms. Such were the cases in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda: With strong U.S. support, the tribunals were established fairly quickly after the abus-

es occurred. In the Pinochet case, the Clinton administration's equivocations caused outrage among human rights groups.

Morality vs. Realpolitik

The debate over morality in diplomacy is not a new one. Indeed, Britain has been wrestling with such issues far longer than the United States. In the Victorian era, the quintessential moralist was William Gladstone, who was appalled by the reported atrocities by Turks against Christians in Bulgaria. Gladstone, quoted in *The Economist* magazine, said in 1876, "There is not a cannibal in the South Sea islands whose indignation would not arise and overflow at the recital of what has been done." The Conservative prime minister of the day, Benjamin Disraeli, believed that national interests required a pro-Turkish policy to offset the power of Russia and to protect British imperial interests. At the time, the British ambassador to Turkey, according to a leaked telegram, argued that British interest in keeping Turkey strong was "not affected by the question of whether it was 10,000 or 20,000 people who perished."

That discussion in Britain of more than a century ago mirrors the current debate in the United States. Put in simplest terms, the question is: Just how much of a role should human rights be given in the formulation of foreign policy? The answer generally has been that human rights deserve consideration but that it is only one of many foreign policy concerns. Peace and trade also deserve attention as do domestic constituencies. Since differing circumstances require differing emphases, there is little uniformity in the application of foreign policy.

"We set up this nation to make men free, and we did not confine our purpose to America," said President Woodrow Wilson in 1919. But sometimes that dictum is not so easy to apply. Surely, Wilson would not have objected to the assistance provided by the United States to Stalinist Russia in the early 1940s when it was doing battle against Nazi Germany.

As wicked as Stalin was, no one was suggesting in those bleak days that U.S. assistance be tied to improved human rights performance. Wilson should have added a qualifier to his credo: The fight for freedom can be put on hold if it contradicts the goal of peace.

Human rights almost never comes up in discussions about North Korea, for example, because the administration wants nothing to complicate its efforts to keep the Korean peninsula peaceful. By contrast, human rights override all other considerations in the policy towards countries such as Cuba and Burma, which are both oppressive and too weak to hit back. Often, however, human rights is trumped by other concerns. "We don't have a cookie-cutter foreign policy," proclaims Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. The tendency to give human rights considerations short shrift in many instances exasperates rights advocates such as the New York-based organization Human Rights Watch. Conversely, proponents of "realism" in foreign policy sometimes believe human rights loom too large in the scheme of things.

Carter's Example

Precisely a century after Gladstone's anti-Turkish diatribe, Jimmy Carter won election to the White House determined to put human rights high on the foreign policy agenda. In part, Carter seemed to be disassociating himself from the policies of the departing secretary of State, Henry A. Kissinger, who once pledged to "purge our foreign policy of all sentimentality." Kissinger, for example, believed that working to reduce the Soviet military threat was more important than concerns over treatment of dissidents.

The new administration was an eclectic mix of human rights militants arrayed against Kissinger-like realists, generally found in the career service.

Patricia Derian, Carter's assistant secretary of state for human rights, argued—with limited success—that the United States should distance itself from all these regimes; by supporting them uncritically, the administration was feeding anti-American sentiment to the detriment of long-term U.S. interests. What emerged from the internal debate was a generally tough policy against weak targets, such as the military-run regimes found in much of Latin America, and a business-as-usual attitude toward strategically important Cold War allies under dictatorial rule, such as South Korea and the Philippines.

As a result, U.S. relations with countries like Chile, Brazil and Argentina generally suffered during the Carter era as Washington stepped up criticism of widespread human rights violations (though this approach would later be vindicated when democratic governments replaced the juntas). But it was also during Carter's watch that the United States suffered serious strategic defeats: Once the U.S. distanced itself from Somoza in Nicaragua and the Shah in Iran over both regimes' repressive policies, hostile forces seized power in both countries in 1979.

These setbacks, notes John Shattuck, President Clinton's first assistant secretary of state for human rights, left Carter "open to the charge that his policies had helped undermine repressive pro-American regimes and replace them with more repressive anti-American ones."

No Good Choices

Curiously, little has been written about Carter's policy toward Cambodia, where geostrategic requirements ruthlessly shunted aside human rights considerations. Cambodia was Chile writ large: much higher geostrategic stakes, infinitely greater human rights abuses.

The Khmer Rouge regime took

power in Cambodia in 1975; Vietnam and Laos moved into the communist camp at about the same time. As is well-known, the Khmer Rouge rule was one of the bloodiest in history: between one and two million Cambodians died under the Khmer Rouge's abusive rule between 1975 and early 1979, when invading Vietnamese forces ousted the regime and set up a government friendly to Hanoi. To some, the Vietnamese action was a human rights gain for Cambodia; after all, a more conventional communist regime had replaced a genocidal one.

But others, particularly National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, were alarmed by the Vietnamese takeover. It meant that Cambodia had joined Vietnam and Laos in the pro-Soviet camp in Southeast Asia, and the power balance in the region was shifting toward the Soviets. They reasoned that for all the Khmer Rouge's sins, they served U.S. interests because they were the one and only anti-Soviet power center in all of Indochina. Accordingly, among other measures, the Carter administration challenged the legitimacy of the new regime in Phnom Penh by continuing to recognize the Khmer Rouge ambassador to the United Nations. It argued that the pro-Hanoi regime in Cambodia did not have a legitimate claim to the seat because of the way it had taken power. In addition, Brzezinski was quietly urging China to provide support to the Khmer Rouge, who were regrouping in western Cambodia for an attempt to dislodge the pro-Hanoi regime in Phnom Penh.

The irony of all this is heavy: the most pro-human rights U.S. administration in history found itself looking for ways to assist a group responsible for the deaths of perhaps 1,000 people a day for nearly four years, a policy President Reagan saw no reason to change.

Later, during the Bush administration, there were hopes that the Khmer Rouge would support a U.N.-sponsored effort to hold free and fair elections in Cambodia. Encouraged by that prospect, the U.S. maintained its kid gloves approach: Far from calling for a war crimes tribunal for the Khmer Rouge, the Bush administration limited itself to saying that top leaders of the rebel movement should be denied a role in any elected government. The point became moot when the Khmer Rouge spurned the democratic process and continued their quest for power by force.

The Place Of Human Rights

China, of course, represents a classic case of the tensions between geostrategic needs on the one hand and human rights goals on the other. Human rights issues were not even on the radar scope when President Nixon made his ground-breaking visit to China in February 1972. It was the middle of the Cultural Revolution, one of history's greatest examples of mass repression. Nonetheless, the visit was hailed by Americans across the board as long overdue; Moscow's giant rivals to the east and the west had joined together in a tactical alliance. In those days, anything that gave Moscow pause was eagerly pursued. If China was repressive, so be it.

Since that 1972 visit, repression in China has eased dramatically. But the very openness of China nowadays has dramatized to the outside world the degree to which China is still not free. By Chinese standards, the crackdown on pro-democracy militants at Tiananmen Square in 1989 was a relatively minor event. But the televised images of the crackdown, beamed worldwide, had a devastating impact on China's image, particularly in the United States. During its first year in office, the Clinton administration sought to give primacy to human rights in its relations with China, only

to back down when it sensed that the costs were too high. Human rights remains part of the U.S.-China dialogue because Congress demands it, but it does not dominate the relationship; trade and security interests do.

Rare indeed are those countries where human rights outstrip all other considerations in U.S. dealings with the outside world. One example is Cuba, primarily because Castro's regime these days is no longer a force to be reckoned with, either politically or militarily. Economically, the country is off the charts. It is run by an unappealing dictator with a long record of anti-Americanism and opposition to democracy worldwide, who expropriated U.S. property soon after seizing power and later shipped his criminals and mentally ill to U.S. shores. In addition, Cuba was a Soviet client state for decades; it even offered to host offensive missiles pointed at the United States. Couple those negatives with the presence of a powerful anti-Castro lobby based in Miami, and the result is Cuba policy that is uniformly hostile to the regime. In effect, successive administrations have told Castro (virtually alone among world leaders): We won't do business with you at all until you free your people.

In human rights policy, context is everything. When Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against his own people in 1988 in the city of Halabja, there was a muted response at best from the Reagan administration. This was primarily because Iraq was seen at the time to be playing a useful role in containing Iran. The perception of Saddam, of course, changed forever following his invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and U.S. officials now cite the massacre at Halabja and his many other abuses of power quite openly.

Overlooking the sins of allies which happened to mistreat their people was an American habit during the

Cold War. Besides Chile under Pinochet, other examples include the regimes in Zaire, Somalia and El Salvador.

Final Reckoning

As for the Pinochet case, the United States has been at the periphery of the debate and probably will be content to remain there, leaving it to Chile to make its own efforts to deal with the abuses of the past. Surprisingly, those initiatives have been gaining ground as Chilean judges seek ways around the amnesty that the general arranged for himself and his subordinates before leaving power. Some of his underlings have already suffered the shame of being summoned for court appearances. And human rights activists won an important victory in July when the Chilean Supreme Court ruled that politically-motivated "disappearances" were the equivalent of a continuing kidnapping and were therefore not covered by the amnesty.

The State Department acknowledged Chile's progress in August at the time of a visit to Washington by Foreign Minister Juan Gabriel Valdés. "The United States is committed to the principles of accountability and justice, and to supporting Chile as it wrestles with the difficult problem of how to balance the need for justice with the requirement of reconciliation," State spokesman James P. Rubin said at that time.

Meanwhile, Gen. Pinochet remains under house arrest in a rented mansion outside London. In the end, his fate may depend more on the increasingly frail state of his health than the judicial process; in September, the 84-year-old leader visited a hospital for a brain scan. But regardless of whether he is ultimately extradited to Madrid, returns to Santiago, or dies in London, he has—however unwittingly—advanced the cause of human rights. ■

THE BULLDOZER AND THE OLIVE TREE

WHY CULTURE AND CIVIL SOCIETY MATTER,
ESPECIALLY IN AMERICA'S RELATIONS WITH EAST ASIA.

By DAVID I. HITCHCOCK

In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman heralds the advent of a new era of globalism. The bestseller by the *New York Times* correspondent contrasts the world's traditional cultures, symbolized by the olive tree, with the integrated world economy, symbolized by Toyota's luxury car.

Certainly, the high-tech revolution is a principal force behind the rapid growth of short-term global speculation, with billions of dollars sloshing around the world's financial markets overnight. We seem to be headed for a single worldwide trading and financial system, with or without moderating regulations to supervise it.

This country's technological dominance has given an additional boost to a spirit of American triumphalism, which has been growing since the fall of the Soviet Union. Here's Thomas Friedman on the U.S. role today: "We are the apostles of the Fast World, the prophets of the free market and the high priests of high tech."

Furthermore, he warns, if you "think you can resist the new global market system without paying an increasingly steep price ... then you are deluding yourself."

A Tectonic Shift of Cultures

But this vision of an electronically unified world market leaves out an essential question: What happens to the cultures around the world that are not yet plugged into the global economy? They may be, in effect, our most "endangered species" in an era when we are experiencing what Erla Zwingle described as "a worldwide reformation of cultures, a tectonic shift of habits and dreams."

David I. Hitchcock is a retired FSO who served in USIA. He is a senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

In the face of American hubris, there continues to be concern about the impact of America's culture on local traditions. Within the West, both Canada and France are trying to resist American dominance.

And in the early 1990s, the unprecedented growth of many East Asian economies stimulated a perception that "Asian values" might even be superior to those of the individualistic West. Social conditions in the United States, with its drugs, guns, school violence, urban blight and deteriorating family values, were seen as proof by leaders such as Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew that Asia's sterner approach to governance was justified. Maybe the West could learn from Asia, many in the region argued.

East Asia's 1997 financial crisis, echoed in Latin America and Russia, changed all this — especially as the U.S. economy continued its long boom, and as American crime and unemployment dropped. By 1998, Asian hubris had been replaced by American hubris. Writers such as Francis Fukuyama, Anthony Lewis and Walter Russell Meade have tended to write off Asian values; they asserted that authoritarianism was losing to democracy and free markets. "All that is Korean wilted, and all that is Western has risen," wrote Michael Lewis in 1998, when Korea agreed to reform its economy in exchange for a \$57 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. Although its reporting suggests otherwise, the Dow Jones-owned *Far Eastern Economic Review* editorialized that we can "forget the Asian-American distinction ... we think alike."

Of course, cultural influence never flows just one way. But deep down, Americans do not expect to be changed much by others; we tend to assume that the rest of the world will become more like us, because we have the economics right, possess most of the hard and soft power, and enjoy a pop culture and open society which entice almost everyone.

American influence has not, however, led to construction of a new framework for U.S. foreign policy, to replace "the Russians are coming." With the end of the Cold War, it has become more difficult to build coalitions for common purposes. There have been exceptions in Iraq and Yugoslavia, but absent a new global threat, other countries' former automatic (if grudging) acquiescence in most U.S. requests can no longer be counted on.

American Values/Asian Values

In 1994 and 1996, I conducted interviews on the question of American and Asian values with a cross-section of 100 top experts in Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea and China. My respondents believed there had been considerable convergence in some values or predispositions of behavior, but that there remained substantial differences between East Asia and the United States (as well as some within the region). While most were probably not ready for Fukuyama's conclusion that the culture wars are over, none accepted Samuel Huntington's dire warnings that a clash of civilizations may be just beginning. In a survey of personal and societal values, my respondents checked the top five or six out of 12 or 14 they thought were most important to people in their country. Americans also participated in the exercise.

Two of the top five personal values on both East Asian and American priority lists were "hard work" and "self-reliance", with "honesty" right behind. Two of the top six societal values were on both lists - "freedom of expression" and "accountability of public officials." But huge gaps existed between East Asian and American replies over the importance each attributed to "respect for learning", "orderly society," "respect for authority," and "preserving harmony for the group" (all high in East Asia), and to "personal freedom" and "rights of the individual" (high in the United States).

Although certainly not scientific, the study was nevertheless one of few multi-country field efforts. It attracted considerable Asian attention then (and in books this year by Malaysia's Prime Minister Mohamad Mahathir and Hong Kong's last governor, Christopher Patten) — but apparently not much at the International Monetary Fund. Like many economists, the IMF pressed for sweeping financial reforms in East Asia to achieve transparency, de-regulation, bank restructuring and less corruption. Separately, Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan and others argued that in overcoming the Asian (or any other) financial crisis, "It would be a great tragedy were we to stop ... the cycle of creative destruction ... because of an incapacity to assist the victims of progress." In other words, it is unfortunate if companies go out of business or unemployment rises as a result of reform, but the process of change should continue.

The persistent, if diminished, importance of values such as preservation of harmony, orderly society and deference to authority in much of East Asia should not be ignored by Western reform advocates, no matter how well intentioned they are. These values are reflected to a significant degree in important East Asian societies, where deals have been made behind closed doors, through personal cultivation, connections, and expensive "expressions of sincerity," and where publics have been shielded from conflicts and embarrassing unpleasantness. Given this cultural terrain, it may just take longer than the economists would like to achieve the IMF's much-touted — and generally sound — proposals.

The *Far Eastern Economic Review's* 1999 spring and summer regional reports made it clear that financial reforms are not yet being fully carried out. Traditionally interventionist governments and old personal loyalties, rather than free market forces, are preventing deep restructuring of East Asian economies. The operative descriptions in these reports were: "bank credit to well-connected, rather than well-run, companies (Thailand and Indonesia); conglomerates "staving off painful restructuring" (in Malaysia); and money-losing Chinese state enterprises allowed to maintain "excessive workers on the payroll" and "receive additional loans." In short, in Japan and other countries: little fundamental reform.

Free Western Advice

The modernization that swept across much of East Asia in one generation, rather than many generations in the West, created a growing middle class and reduced poverty. But it caused enormous disruption in society's pillars — family and faith, education and governance.

One year before the 1997 financial crisis, my Asian respondents were worried over what "cascading social change" was already doing to their societies; people were trying to cope with the most rapid industrialization, urbanization and modernization the world had ever witnessed. Since 1997, pressured by international organizations and economic experts, these same societies have been expected once again to carry out rapid change: to overcome their fallen currencies, banks and markets, thus turning upside down not only their economies, but certain of their behavioral "habits of the heart."

Even before this latest wave of advice, my respondents reported a widespread East Asian perception that the United States (the country they nevertheless felt most comfortable with) was "culturally insensitive." Among their comments: America always wants to "teach us how to do things;" it is "unable to put itself in other people's shoes;" it is "unwilling to come down from the pulpit." When the United States pressed for more trade

liberalization, democracy, human rights, fair wages, stricter environmental or labor standards, respondents said many East Asians felt: "Here they come again!"

These comments convey a central truth: the recovery of East Asia's economies will require the blending of Western-prescribed financial reforms with ways of life many East Asians may want to preserve. Cleaning up unreliable financial institutions is one thing, but washing away differing behavioral priorities in a tidal wave of globalization is something else. We may see develop across the Pacific a greater mix of East and West, with transparency not total but tinted, a brand of capitalism still cozier than free market purists want. These societies may try to preserve more personal, mutually dependent business relationships than may now be possible in the depersonalized, free-market capitalism of the United States.

In Japan, unlike the United States, profit has not been the reminder stuck on every businessman's shaving mirror; the key is market share and the prestige of a quality product. Japanese assumptions about life's purposes are still somewhat different from those in the U.S. To ensure security and stability, Japanese — and to some extent other East Asians — accepted their lot in life as a member of a company or family. The desire to go it alone, to plunge into murky and perhaps dangerous waters for fast profits, would not have occurred to most Japanese workers and has traditionally been discouraged by society.

The preference for economic equity and security over Greenspan's "creative destruction" can be seen in Europe too, where British globalization critic John Gray sees "encumbered markets" as "essential for social stability." The problem, says Francis

***Reform advocates
see the overturning
of comfortable old
patterns in East Asian
economies as
"creative destruction."***

Fukuyama, is how to "reconcile the imperatives of deregulated markets with enduring human needs."

A Moral Vacuum

East Asia and the rest of the world watch the U.S. with mixed emotions of fascination, envy and horror. As George Kennan has noted, Americans tend "to see themselves as the center of political enlightenment," but not everyone agrees. The content offered by the largely American electronic and Interneted media — much of it mindless, violent video games — may give pause to those who are not yet fully part of the wonderful world of high tech.

Comments by my respondents, a cross-section of perceptive observers in East Asia, suggest a new emphasis for international cooperation with the U.S.: sharing ideas on how best to handle the common social problems that have arisen with globalization. When asked what were the most important domestic issues their country faced (a year before the 1997 crisis), most respondents described similar concerns. Most felt that "people in their country" had lost trust in their governments as a result of corruption (Singapore excepted). They worried — presumably more now — over the widening gulf between the rich and the poor (Japan excepted). People felt helpless in the face of destruction of their forests and waters. The tornado of social and economic change was weakening traditional reliance on reli-

gion. There was also growing concern for the moral or ethical shape of their society. And most Moslem or Buddhist leaders were not considered able to relate meaningfully to societal concerns of huge urban populations.

Some respondents referred to the loss of a "moral compass." A film producer in Shanghai said it all: "When my son asked me to recommend a book of moral guidelines, I could not answer — I felt vacant in my brain."

The family in much of East Asia seemed to be facing new challenges, with fewer members under the same roof and less time spent together. Child abuse and divorce rates were on the rise. No longer could the family effectively hold a security net for the aged or sick. While schools were seen as teaching basic skills well, they were not teaching children to be creative or accept social responsibility.

Listening to these descriptions of societal concerns in seven countries, I was struck by how closely they resembled concerns felt by many Americans about their own country. For example, in a 1998 poll conducted jointly by *The Washington Post*, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University, three out of four Americans said their country's values were in serious decline. Nearly two in three said they were dissatisfied with the "honesty and standards of behavior of people in this country," and 55 percent said they believed their values were losing influence. Compared to 1968, when 61 percent said they trusted the U.S. government to do the right thing most or all of the time, in 1998 only 33 percent felt that way.

The Missing "Fourth Leg"

U.S. foreign policy generally continues to reflect the traditional three "legs" — security, political and economic — that President Bill Clinton and Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto referred to in their 1996 Joint Communiqué, which also noted

their "shared values and interests." But too often, the "sharing" is an afterthought. And when the brass bands retire and leaders go home, it's back to the old approaches, to immediate issues — pressing others to accept the latest U.S. request.

What's missing is a fourth leg in our foreign policy strategy with important countries: what Hegel described as "civil society" (the sector beyond the family and short of the state). Too often, American foreign policy is seen as too narrowly centered on U.S. national interests. Foreign publics, in East Asia at least, seldom if ever hear from the U.S. that America is interested in exchanging ideas over somewhat similar societal problems.

Granted, in his January 1999 State of the Union Address, President Clinton said, "We have to put a human face on the global economy." Why not start with key countries in East Asia? The U.S. should further broaden the scope and adjust the focus of its diplomacy to center more on cooperation, especially in a region like East Asia where cultural differences still play an important role.

Cultivating Common Ground

What is called for is an entirely new level of dialogue, supported by both the private and public sectors, to deal with similar social issues. Who might benefit from such exchanges? My respondents suggested civic education teachers, environmental education experts, business management educators, job retraining specialists, jurists, criminologists, family and student counselors, family court members and religious leaders (to discuss the role of religion in social change). Add to that list experts in communications, computers and new media, who may have valuable insights in how to deal with life in a wired world.

Such an exchange across the Pacific could lead to a broader sense of commonality and community. This

might, over time, make it easier to overcome more traditional bilateral differences when they arise.

Respondents in the interviews usually did not see the United States as a model, but they pointed to the innovative and creative spirit of Americans, to American volunteerism and penchant for tackling problems head on.

No one I interviewed expected vast new government programs; but they saw the value of bilateral grassroots, professional exchanges among private and equal citizens. Proliferating NGOs can play an even greater role, as recommended by the 1998 report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, *Reinventing Diplomacy in the Information Age*. What the U.S. government can do is provide official encouragement for vastly stepped up private dialogue, and stop the dismal spiral since 1992 in the funding of exchanges, formerly administered by the U.S. Information Agency (now by the State Department's Bureau of Public Diplomacy).

We can hope that as East Asia's economies revive, there will be new possibilities for sharing ideas about how to build more decent, fair and stable societies that are able to confront today's social challenges. A less culture-bound U.S. foreign policy can pay better attention to the factors influencing other nations' official stances on sensitive issues, such as financial transparency, for example.

The newly integrated Public Diplomacy function of the State Department must help ensure that steady attention is given to these important cultural and societal aspects of international relations. By adding a civil society leg to our diplomacy, and cultivating the common ground between us, the United States can develop healthier and more stable relationships with other important countries, especially in East Asia. ■

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BOOKS

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Behind the Embassy Door

James J. Blanchard, *Sleeping Bear Press, 1998, \$29.99, hardcover, 300 pages.*

BY DAVID T. JONES

When James Blanchard, a former Democratic congressman and governor of Michigan, left his post as politically-appointed ambassador to Canada, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien called him "the best ambassador the United States has ever sent to Canada."

Hyperbole aside, Blanchard, who served in Ottawa from 1993 to 1996, was a rarity among both political and career appointees: an ambassador who could get a respectful hearing with any senior official in Washington, from the president on down. He insists that he kept the State Department informed of his actions, although senior diplomats on his staff in Ottawa say they were not always aware of their boss's activities. Further evidence of Blanchard's style of ambassadorship is found in his memoirs. Blanchard approvingly cites the advice of John Kenneth Galbraith, another former political ambassador, who said,

David T. Jones is a retired FSO who served as political minister counselor in Ottawa from 1992 to 1996.

"Communicating to the White House through State is like fornicating through a mattress."

Blanchard's account of his tour as ambassador is a cut above the standard diplo-political memoir. It is also full of "gee whiz, I'm an ambassador" enthusiasm, mixed with equal parts irritation at State Department forms, clearances and bureaucratic hassle. He has general praise for the Foreign Service, but specific criticism of individuals whose advice he found wanting. His deputy chief of mission, James Walsh, and his chauffeur, whom he refers to as "my top political adviser," receive the greatest praise. For followers of Clintonology, Blanchard offers fascinating observations. A long-time Clinton supporter, Blanchard expected to be named secretary of transportation following Clinton's 1992 victory. When he learned by watching CNN that the new president had appointed Federico Peña to the post, he was stunned. "I thought I knew him really well up until this moment," he writes. "Then I decided I didn't know him at all." Blanchard characterizes the White House staff as a "steady stream of young, arrogant, officious staffers [who] think nastiness and rudeness are signs of strength and effectiveness. They don't know enough to know what they don't know."

He makes astute observations and comparisons between Canadian and U.S. politics and society, partially based on his experience as gover-

nor and partially based on travel and observation in Canada. For example, he surmises that the U.S. relationship with Canada is like a one-way mirror pointed south through which Canadians see all the U.S.'s activities, but the U.S. sees only a reflection of itself. Anyone who has endured a presidential visit will appreciate Blanchard's acid-etched descriptions of testosterone-charged conflicts between the Secret Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and his blunt illustrations of White House social office incompetence.

As might be expected, however, Blanchard is the hero of his own tale. He claims success at securing Chretien's support for NAFTA, creating a modernized "open skies" agreement with Canada and managing neuralgic trade portfolios. His account of his role in orchestrating U.S. support for Canadian unity during the 1995 Quebec sovereignty referendum is most interesting. He reveals some new, behind-the-scenes information and details his own role in shoring up U.S. interest in Canada's fate, including his efforts to strengthen U.S. officials' statements in favor of unity. During the process he was consulted by senior Canadian government officials, including Prime Minister Chretien, and briefed extensively by Canadian government pollsters. He was so involved in the process that his memoir could have been subtitled, "How I Saved Canada".

BOOKS

Still, if success has the proverbial thousand fathers, then Blanchard can credibly share pride of paternity.

CONFUSED BY CONFUCIUS


**Confucius Lives Next Door:
What Living in the East
Teaches Us about Living
in the West**

T.R. Reid, Random House, 1999,
\$24.95, hardcover, 276 pages.

BY JASON HYLAND

After about two decades of popular focus on Asian values, and the "new way" they supposedly offered us — particularly in achieving prosperity — we were rudely awakened by the devastating 1997 Asian financial crisis that swept across many of the countries that had been the prize pupils in the region. Why, if those countries had done so well in the past decades, did their economies get hit so hard? Will their broader social fabric — low crime, high educational standards, and social peace — be torn as well? These questions are particularly important to ask about Japan, because its comeuppance was so abrupt, its economy is so vital to the world and its social calm is such an enormous source of stability for all of Asia. T.R. Reid, who has spent many years in Asia, some of them as

Jason Hyland, an FSO in the class of 2000 at the National War College, served as special assistant in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs in 1998-1999 and as principal officer at the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka, Japan from 1995 to 1998.



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a *Washington Post* correspondent in Japan, could have performed a service by asking them. In *Confucius Lives Next Door*, Reid explores why many Asian countries achieved a "social miracle" and decides that Confucian ethical values were the primary reason, but leaves these and other key questions largely unanswered.

Instead, he tells amusing anecdotes about his experiences in Asia and recounts fascinating bits of the region's history. Reid even devotes an entire chapter to his children's elementary school experience in Japan. As a book about Asian popular culture, *Confucius Lives Next Door* is a pleasant read. It is always lively and full of humorous, personal observation. Still, anyone already

Reid proposes rounding up American youth for a national "coming-of-age" day. I hope it works better than Woodstock '99.

familiar with standard, light pieces on Japan should avoid it, because it travels well-covered ground and its stories are dated.

Moreover, Reid himself seems

unconvinced by his own thesis. In his last two chapters — appropriately titled "Atogaki: What's Wrong with the Thesis of this Book" and "Our Own Miracle" — he abruptly shifts course and says that both Western and Eastern core values are great. Americans should learn from Asia and from Confucius, he suggests, by, among other things, finding "excuses to hold big ceremonies... to set forth our values." Reid could start by rounding up American youth for the national "Coming-of-Age Day" that he proposes holding on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. I hope it works out better than Woodstock '99.

Reid offers a readable discussion of Confucius' life and philosophy, but avoids the sticky question of why, if the Confucian model is so

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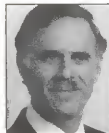
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compelling, did it run into so many rough spots over the past 2,500 years? Instead, he tries to build a historical argument focused almost entirely on the past 30 years. Even when he limits himself to this period, however, he does a poor job of accounting for the anomalies of uneven success and varying political systems throughout the Confucian world, which encompasses such divergent societies as North Korea, China, Japan and Singapore. Most disappointing, however, is Reid's failure to draw more from the Asian experience in the 1990s, when the go-go years led to financial distress. A look at where Confucian society is having the most difficulty coping with rapid technological, social and economic change would have been far more interesting than anecdotes about Japanese elementary schools or corporate entry rituals. If the 1990s have taught us anything about Asia, it is that the basic rules of economics and business *do* apply to the East.

Reid predicts that the Asian economies will reach "full flower" in the early 21st century. If he means that Asian countries need not fix the problems that got them into trouble because they are all one indivisible part of the Confucian growth engine leading to prosperity and social harmony, he is mistaken. If Asian countries don't change, even as they reaffirm their many cultural sources of strength, they will suffer the decline of a society that proves unable or unwilling to change. *Confucius Lives Next Door* sounds distressingly like a call for complacency, which is not what Asian audiences need at this point. Readers looking for a dynamic picture of Asia to give them clues about where its societies and economies are heading will have to look elsewhere. ■

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I.B. OR NOT I.B.? THAT IS THE QUESTION

THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE IS A RIGOROUS
SECONDARY-SCHOOL PROGRAM — BUT IT'S NOT RIGHT FOR EVERYONE.

By LUCIENNE BOYD

The endless round of university applications can be a frustrating, nail-biting experience for all college-bound high school students. Foreign Service children who complete their secondary education overseas face added burdens. Their parents' peripatetic wanderings often mean education as varied as the countries in which they have lived. When it comes time to gather high school transcripts and plunk down application fees — often from half a world away — FS children can't be sure that their international education will meet the admissions standards of universities worldwide.

Since the mid-1970s, however, students in secondary schools both abroad and in the United States have had the option of completing high school with a standardized, internationally-recognized diploma, the International Baccalaureate. The IB degree, which is awarded in addition to a regular high school diploma, is based on a curriculum developed by the International Baccalaureate Organization, an educational foundation with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. The IBO conducts standardized testing and scoring of all IB students each May. Now offered in 816 public and private high schools in 99 countries, the IB program is a rigorous schedule of courses that students take during their last two years of high school. More than one-third of IB programs are located in the United States, where the number of students in the program has tripled in the last 10 years.

To qualify for an IB degree, students must complete at least one class from each of six subject areas — including courses in the student's first and second languages, sociology, mathematics, the arts and several electives — plus a two-year philosophy course entitled "Theory of

Lucienne Boyd, the Journal's fall intern, is a student at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash.

Knowledge," that incorporates different academic disciplines. There is even a requirement for extracurricular activities and community service. Finally, all IB students write 4,000-word essays based on original research. This final component, say IB degree proponents, is particularly useful in giving students a leg up in preparing for demanding university-level research and writing.

"It helps prepare you for college work because when you are taking the higher level classes, it's like being in a college class," said Johanna Prip, a junior at the Washington International School in Washington, D.C. Prip, who has lived in the Dominican Republic and Aruba, plans to attend college in the Netherlands.

Not only does the IB program prepare students for college work, it may also help some students get into college. For example, educational standards and college admissions requirements are more rigorous in many countries than in the United States. Length of study required for a high school diploma also differs.

Many European ministries of education require 13 years of education, while in the United States the standard is 12 years. As a result, European universities regard American diplomas as less-than-desirable and will often require a year or more of additional study before students with standard U.S. high school diplomas can be admitted to universities. Completion of the IB program can fill this gap, because the IBO has negotiated agreements recognizing the degree with more than 70 ministries of education in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Another advantage offered by the IB program is that scores in its language tests can often be substituted for those required by foreign universities.

"It [the IB program] is a way to get me to England, not a way to learn more about the world," said Nicolas Graham, a junior at the Washington International School. "They [English universities] say they accept a regular high school diploma, but if they see it is from the United States,

(continued on page 62)



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I.B. or Not I.B.?

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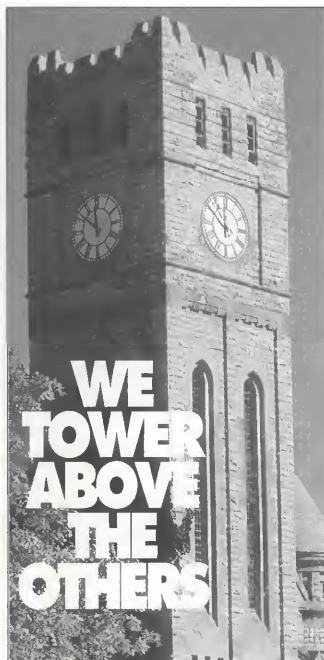
you can't get into any of the good colleges."

Still, IB graduates shouldn't assume that their degree automatically guarantees admission to a foreign university. Students must also meet university-specific requirements. For example, although the IB fulfills general entry requirements for universities in the United Kingdom, admission to a specific university will depend on that university's requirements and the individual student's success within the IB program. Sweden, for another example, has special entrance requirements for schools of engineering and medicine. The IBO provides information on these university-specific requirements.

Many educators say the IB degree is best suited to students who plan on attending university abroad. "The major drawback of the IB is that students who put in all the extra work for the diploma run the risk that it will not be recognized by universities in the U.S.," said Lori Dec, the American Foreign Service Association's scholarship program coordinator. Some U.S. universities grant generous academic credit to students who do well on IB tests, but others don't recognize the degree at all.

Rhian O'Rourke, an IB graduate who now attends Wellesley College in Massachusetts, said she received very little credit for the extra work she did for her IB degree. "The admissions office was not sympathetic at all," she said.

(continued on page 64)



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I.B. or Not I.B.?

(continued from page 62)

Advanced Placement Programs, which were developed by and for U.S. educational institutions, may be better suited for students seeking academic credit at U.S. universities. "The IB degree doesn't make much sense for American students because Advanced Placement is better known in the states," said Tanya Goldman, an IB graduate of the American Embassy School in New Delhi who received an AFSA scholarship to study at Stanford University.

For students who want an IB program, but who also want the recognition that AP programs bring, there is a compromise: Most IB courses prepare students for AP examinations.

For many students and parents, the whole point of the IB program is the education it provides, not its application to college credit. "It made high school worth it," said Rhian O'Rourke, who attended secondary school in Cairo. "A lot of people graduate wondering what they did in high school. With the IB you come out with something special."

Sydney Tyson, who until recently was the education and youth officer in the Family Liaison Office at the Department of State, agrees. She and her husband moved from Annandale to Falls Church, Va. so that their daughter, Jessica, could work toward an IB degree at George Mason, a public high school. "Unlike the AP, the IB is an integrated program. I wanted an education that would show my daughter at an early age how to think about things," she said. Tyson said that by taking both IB and traditional classes her daughter has the best of both educational worlds. She adds: "I've seen her come alive. She never liked science before, but now she is taking higher level science and doing well."

Advocates also point out that the IB program is especially well suited for global nomads and third culture kids, because it helps them create a

(continued on page 66)

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I.B. or Not I.B.?

(continued from page 64)

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"The IB is a good idea for children of parents working in the Foreign Service," said student Nicolas Graham. "Most international schools have the IB, which creates continuity and a common curriculum."

The IB high school program is now so successful that the IBO recently inaugurated a new program for students from ages 11 to 16 called the "Middle Years Program" and another for students as young as three years of age called the "Primary Years Program." These new programs might create an added constituency for the diploma program, but neither is a prerequisite for it.

The bottom line for enrolling in an IB program, though, may be that it offers quality education. "The more rigorous the program, the better prepared a student will be for college," said Lori Dec. "A challenging program like the IB can only benefit students, even if universities don't recognize its merits."

*For further information, contact:
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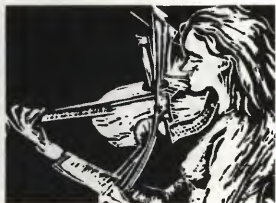
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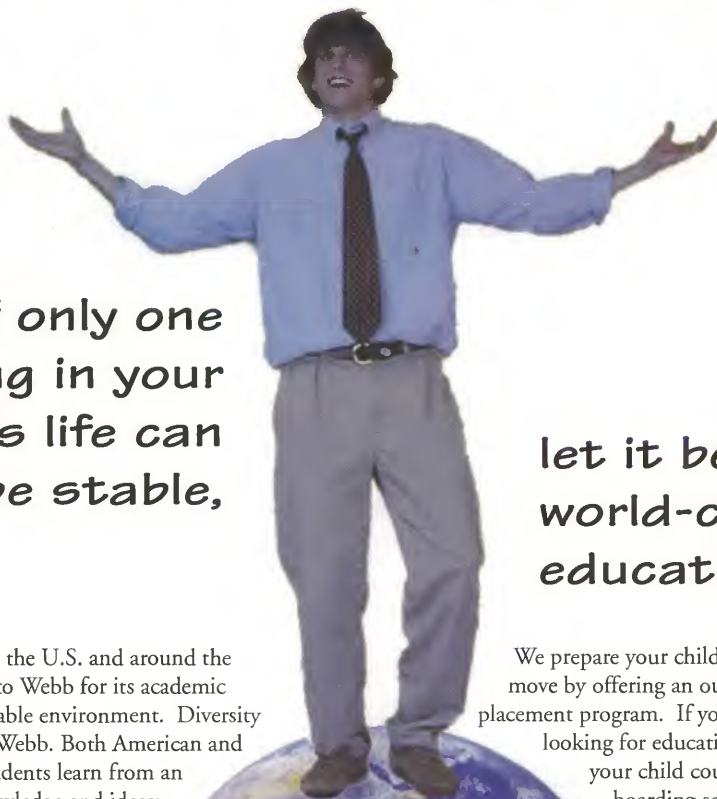


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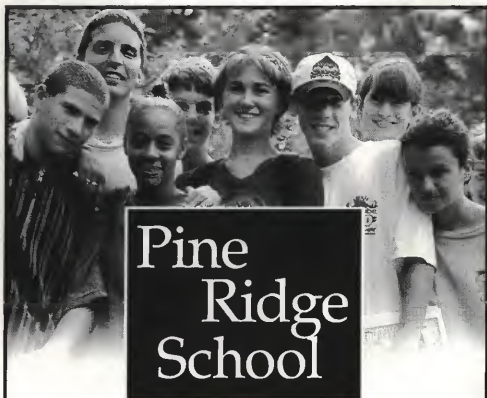
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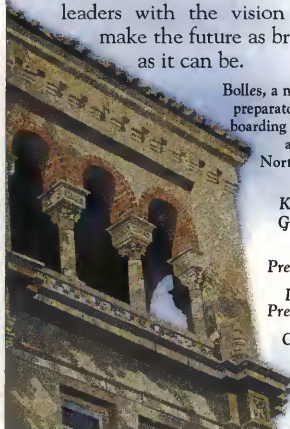
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Schools & Universities	Enrollment	Gender Distribution, M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	Common Application	Accepts/Others ADD and LD	Distance to Int'l Airport	Int'l Students Orientation	Dorms w/Email-phones	Holiday Break Coverage	Tuition
Admiral Farragut Academy	310	75/25	60	25	6-12 ¹	N	N	20 miles	Y	N	Y ²	19,000
Bolles School, The	1,184	53/47	10		7-12	N	N	20 miles	Y	Y	N ³	20,600
Cardigan Mountain	199	All boys	90	25	6-9 ³	N	Y ⁴	1.5-2.5 hrs.	Y	Y	N ⁵	26,520
Chicago Junior School	235	42/58	13	4	3-8 ⁶	N	N	23 miles	Y	Y	N	21,300
Christchurch School	200	85/15	66	10	8-12	Y	NA	2 1/2 hrs.	Y	Y	N	21,250
Columbia University	Continuing education by internet http://dlp.tc.columbia.edu											
Dana Hall	382	All girls	50	14	6-12	N	N	1/2 hr.	Y	Y	N	27,500
The Delphian School	250	50/50	90	20	3-12	N	N	50 miles	Y	Y	special arrangement	23,458
Foxcroft School	157	All girls	85	18	9-12, PG	Y	N	30 miles	Y	Y	Y	25,900
Garrison Forest School	213	All girls	46	9	9-12	Y	N	35 miles	Y	Y	N	24,950
Gow School, The	145	All boys	100	12	7-12, PG	N	all LD	20 miles	Y	Y	N	28,450
Grier School, The	163	All girls	100	40	PK-12	Y	Y/Y	120 miles	Y	N	Y	20,250
Hockaday School, The	1009	All girls	7	3	PK-12 PG	Y	Y/N	30 mins.	Y	Y	Y home stay	24,000
Hun School, The	570	60/40	25	12	9-12, PG	Y	Y	45 miles	Y	N	N	25,600
Interlochen Arts Academy	435	39/61	90	15	9-12	Y	N	250 miles	Y	Y	N	23,650
Leysin American School	300	50/50	100	60	9-13	N	N	90 miles	Y	Y	N	24,000
Linden Hall	120	All girls	75	20	6-12, PG	Y	Y	30 miles	NA	Y	home stay	23,540
Marine Military Academy	330	All boys	100	10	8-12, PG	NA	N	1 mile	N	N	Y ²	15,600
Marion Military Institute	299	89/11	90	1	7-12, PG	N	N	71 miles	Y	Wired on req.	Y ²	17,581 ⁷
Miss Hall School	130	All girls	70	18	9-12	Y	NA	1.25 hrs.	Y	N	N	25,500
New York Military Academy	270	88/12	95	20	6-12, PG	Y	N	10 miles	Y	Y	N	18775
Northfield Mount Herman	1139	53/47	82	25	9-12, PG	N	Lim.	10 miles	Y	Y	Y	25,950
Oak Ridge Military	180	82/18	70	10	7-PG	N	Y	6 miles	Y	N	Y	16,980
Oakwood Friends School	130	50/50	50	4	6-12	N	Y	35 miles	N	N	N	24,350

Continued on page 76

¹K-12 day, 6-12 boarding; ²Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break; ³average to well-above average ability, accelerated classes; ⁴with mild learning disabilities; ⁵Int'l students can stay on campus; ⁶general studies, college preparatory, ESL; ⁷School: 17581/College: 10230; ⁸no special program; ⁹w/ host family



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	Schools & Universities	Enrollment	Gender Distribution, M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD and LD	Distance to Int'l Airport	Int'l Students Orientation	Dorms w/Email-phones	Holiday Break Coverage	Tuition
Ojai Valley School	337	51/49	46	24	3-12	Y	Y	1.75 hrs.	Y	N	N		26,700
Oregon Episcopal School	724	49/51	6	60	PK-12	N	Y ^a	12 miles	Y	Y	N ²		23,860
Oxford Academy	40	All boys	100	25	9-PG	N	Y	60 miles	Y	N	N		37,180
Perkiomen School	250	60/40	60	15	7-12 PG	Y	Y	1 hr.	Y	Y	Y	Home stay	24,500
Pine Ridge School	87	60/40	80	15	Ages 13-18	N	Y	5 miles	N	Y	N		38,700
Pomfret School	300	53/47	75	10	9-12, PG	Y	N	60 miles	Y	Y	N		27,200
Putney School, The	198	43/57	76	8	9-12, PG	Y	N	100 miles	Y	Y	Y		25,750
Randolph Macon Academy	457	70/30	84	13	6-12, PG	Y	Y	60 miles	Y	Y	N ²		16,000
Sandy Spring Friends School	492	49/51	20	15	PK-12	Y	N	20 miles	Y	N	N ³		21,625
Sedbergh School	100	60/40	90	30	4-12	Y	N	1.5 hours	N	N	Y		16,000
Shattuck - St. Mary's School	300	63/37	80	15	6-12 PG,	Y	N	45 min.	Y	Y	N		21,100
Shawnigan Lake School	390	60/40	90	25	8-12	N	N	150 km	Y	N	Y		27,200 CA
St. John's North-Western Military Academy	393	All boys	100	20	7-12	Y	N	45 mins.	Y	Y	N		21,350
St. John's Preparatory	250	54/46	36	18	7-12, PG	Y	N	90 mins.	Y	boys-N girls-Y	N		17,758
St. Timothy's	120	All girls	70	15	9-12, PG	Y	NA	25 mins.	Y	2 dorms	N ³		26,900
TASIS England	740	50/50	50	30	PK-12	N	limited	15 mins.	N	limited	N		16,470
TASIS Switzerland	215	50/50	90	65	7-12, PG	N	limited	1 hr.	N	limited	Y		27,800
Vermont Academy	256	67/33	69	7	9-12, PG	Y	Y	2 hrs.	Y	common rooms	N ³		26,300
Washington Int'l School	745	45/55	0	33	PK-12	N	N	5 mins.	N	No dorm	N		15,400
Webb School, The	270	50/50	50	15	7-12	PG	N	45 min	Y	Y	Y		22,000

¹K-12 day, 6-12 boarding; ²Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring Break; ³average to well-above average ability, accelerated classes; ⁴with mild learning disabilities; ⁵Int'l students can stay on campus; ⁶general studies, college preparatory, ESL; ⁷School: 17581/College: 10230; ⁸no special program; ⁹w/ host family

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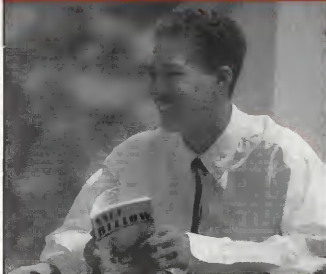
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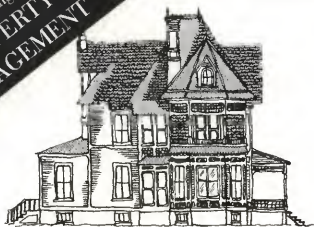
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POSTCARD FROM ABROAD

Christmas in the Clouds

BY KELLY BEMBRY MIDURA

My husband and I spent our first Christmas in the Foreign Service in La Paz, Bolivia's capital, a Spanish colonial city nestled in the Andes at 12,500 feet. In contrast to the elaborate celebrations in my home state of Tennessee, Christmas in the Andes was a low-key event. There were no malls to run to for last minute shopping frenzies, no Santa Clauses with which to pose for photos, no piped-in Muzak Christmas carols. We never saw a talking Christmas tree or an animated, glow-in-the-dark reindeer.

Since a junior officer's salary didn't allow for a Christmas trip home, we decided to spend the 1998 holiday season in the heart of the city surrounded by small shops and dimly lit cobblestone streets. As Christmas approached, most storefronts displayed charmingly dilapidated crèches, some decorated with a few strands of tinsel and a scattering of eucalyptus boughs, the only inexpensive greenery available.

One toy store proudly displayed what must have been the only miniature train in town. Tiny Victorian cars carrying plastic English passengers chugged behind a locomotive through an incongruous landscape dotted with diminutive shops, *salteña* (snack) stands and clay vehicles painted to resemble the gaily decorated local buses. The clay fig-

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ures had been created for Alacitas, a celebration held each January in honor of Ekeko, an Inca deity. They were pressed into service for Christmas, when, in typically Bolivian fashion, the traditions of the Catholic Church are heavily flavored with pre-colonial rituals and deities. Christmas tends to fade in comparison with the pagan festivals and with the riotous days of Carnival, which follow shortly thereafter.

As Christmas approached, ragged children wandered in caroling groups, warbling for spare change, a scene reminiscent of Dickensian London. Bolivia, a land of mountain shepherds, also preserves the traditional Biblical custom of bringing flocks — in this case dozens of smelly, notoriously ill-tempered llamas — to church for Christmas Eve blessings.

For the privileged descendants of the Spanish conquistadors, Christmas includes shopping trips to Miami or

Buenos Aires, where their suitcases are filled with expensive toys and electronics. For the other 90 percent of the population — descendants of Aymara and Inca natives — the celebration is simpler. Fortunate children might receive one or two inexpensive toys on Christmas Eve, while adults rarely exchange gifts. Major Bolivian holidays are celebrated with fireworks, so weeks before Christmas the streets were dotted with bowler-hatted native Bolivian women selling cheap, dangerous, illegal Chinese fireworks. The local police allow this, settling for bribes instead of arrests. Homemade fireworks are also common, as are nasty injuries, especially among children. Fortunately, most fires resulting from the fireworks fizzle out in the thin mountain air.

Sleep is impossible on Christmas Eve, so my husband and I shared a bottle of Chilean wine on the balcony of our 15th floor apartment while waiting for the show to begin. A few minutes before midnight the pop-pop of fireworks began moving from one side to the other of the bowl-shaped canyon which contains the city. In the plaza below us, children screeched with pleasure as their bottle rockets shot upward. When church bells rang at midnight, La Paz was filled with thousands of thundering fireworks and Roman candles shot into the sky around us in a blaze of light.

At that moment, I decided that the Foreign Service might not be such a bad way of life after all. ■

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