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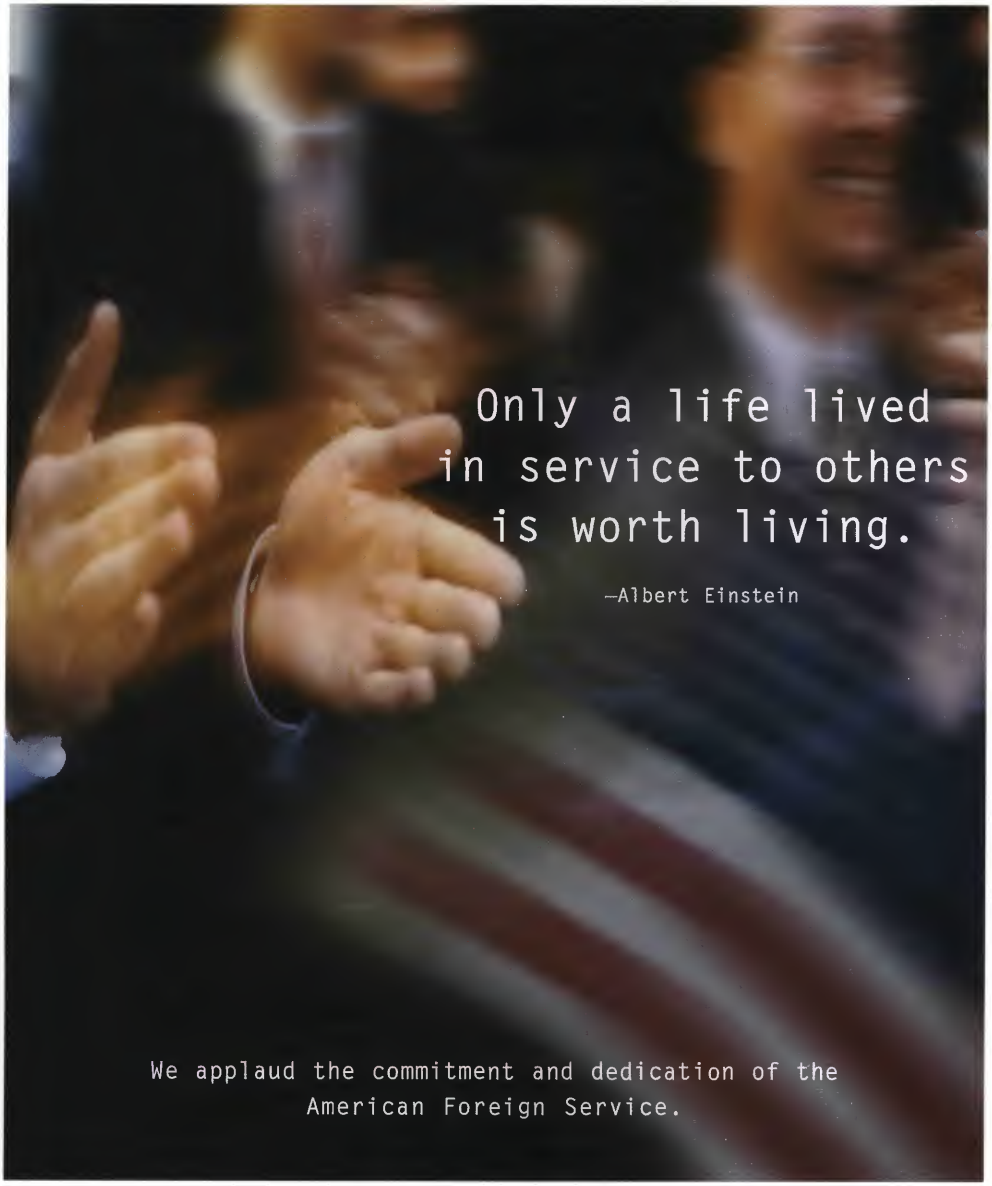
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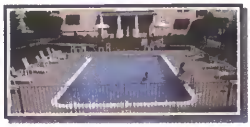
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# President's Views

## *Watch This Space*

*By John K. Naland*



Some changes are coming to AFSA's *Foreign Service Journal* that we hope will make our 83-year-old publication even more relevant and responsive to the needs of the Foreign Service community.

First, the AFSA Governing Board recently issued guidance to the *Journal*'s editorial staff and Editorial Board calling on them to increase coverage of Foreign Service-specific issues (professional, personnel, lifestyle, etc.). In issuing this guidance, we were implementing the clear message of the readers who responded to the survey that appeared in the September 2001 issue of the *Journal*. Obviously, our journal, which bills itself as "The Magazine for Foreign Affairs Professionals," will continue to cover foreign policy issues. But in the coming months and years it will, on average, devote at least half of its space to Foreign Service-specific issues — up from 33 percent (focus sections) and 44 percent (all articles) during the 12-month period ending November 2001.

Second, we have selected a new editorial staff to lead the *Journal* in this new direction. I am delighted that Steven Alan Honley agreed to move up from being interim editor to assume permanent duties as the *Journal*'s editor. Steve is a veteran of the Foreign Service, having spent 12 years as an FSO before leaving to pursue musical and writing interests. Thus, not only is Steve a talented editor, but he also has a firm grasp both of in-house Foreign Service issues and foreign policy topics. Steve earned his B.A. in history at Centenary College in Shreveport and an M.A. in international affairs from The George Washington University.

*As always, AFSA seeks to be responsive to our members and to actively promote their interests.*

We have also selected Mikkela V. Thompson to be the *Journal*'s Business Manager. Mikkela grew up in the Foreign Service and accompanied her parents to overseas postings in Europe and Asia. She is a graduate of Ithaca College and also studied at the University of Copenhagen. As I write, we are still engaged in a search for a new associate editor.

Third, the AFSA Governing Board recently adopted a 2002 operating budget that will fund an expansion of the *AFSA News* section in each month's *Journal*. According to the September 2001 reader survey, *AFSA News* is the single most popular *Journal* feature, with some 76 percent of readers saying that they always or usually read it. With more pages at her disposal, *AFSA News* editor Shawn Dorman (herself a veteran of the Foreign Service) will be able to feature more "news you can use" as well as continuing to answer the question: "What has AFSA done for me lately?"

Fourth, we are redoubling our efforts to encourage the Foreign Service community (active, retired, and family members) to write for the *Journal*. As Steven Alan Honley said in his "Letter from the Editor" published in the January issue: "If you feel we have not devoted enough space to a particular professional concern or functional issue, or if you want to advocate a policy, statutory or regulatory change, I urge you to consider writing about it yourself, or suggesting someone else to do so." Obviously, the *Journal* does not have space to publish every contribution, but it is eager to publish thoughtful articles that address issues facing the Foreign Service. If you want information on how to submit an article, please e-mail journal@afsa.org.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the 401 readers who responded to our September survey. We promised that we would pay attention to that input and this report shows how we are doing so. As always, AFSA seeks to be responsive to our members and to actively promote their interests. ■

*John K. Naland is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.*



# LETTERS

### Support for Afghanistan

I enjoyed reading the December issue of the *Journal*. As a World War II veteran and a long-term USAID veteran who began his career with the Marshall Plan and was a drafter of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 that created USAID, I would like to support wholly the recommendations of Lori Handrahan in her December Speaking Out, "A Marshall Plan for Central Asia."

I've had little experience in Afghanistan, though I did travel to Kabul by jeep in 1953 before the age of the Taliban. It was a poor country then, but the government and economic structure of that day have been destroyed and U.S. and international help is required to get the people on their feet. We helped a war-weary Europe get on its feet. Now let us do the same for Afghanistan.

*Carl R. Fritz*
*FSO, retired*
*Chapel Hill, N.C.*

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

### It's Not Reconstruction

Lori Handrahan makes many good and valid points in her article proposing a Marshall Plan for Central Asia. As an alumna of the Marshall Plan staff, I offer a few comments.

First, she fails to note that the plan was uniquely geared toward reconstruction, not development. The countries involved were among the most heavily industrialized in the world. The Western European countries that joined the plan had sophisticated banking and legal systems in place, educated labor forces and many other key economic and social factors already present. In addition, European leaders and prominent thinkers were at the time voicing ideas similar to those of Marshall.

These factors were pivotal to the success of the plan. Unlike development aid, which was piecemeal and suffered from corruption and inappropriate projects, there was practically no misuse of funds under the Marshall Plan. The administering U.S. agency was miniscule in size. There was intense participation during all stages by European country and regional organizations.

Cultural, economic and social development is needed in Central Asia. But dashing in with lots of money and inaccurate assumptions (as we did in post-Soviet Russia) is not the way to go. Perhaps in Central Asia the best place to start is with expanding education as a preparation for subsequent work. Education is at least as important and as difficult to do as building roads.

*Margaret Clark Dray*
*FSO, retired*
*Corvallis, Ore.*

### In Defense of Our People

Why did you waste our time with not one but two pieces by Lori Handrahan? She believes that we are hated in the Middle East and Central Asia because our assistance money lines the pockets of local officials while the populace suffers, and because official Americans behave badly by staying in nice hotels, not learning the local language or culture, all the while preying upon young women desperate for dollars. I would think the editors of our journal would realize that for every American like the one she describes, there are dozens working in our missions who do speak the local language, only a fraction of whom are young, single men.

We are not the only country that gives aid to developing countries. Handrahan's article might have been worth reading if she could point to what we do that other donor nations, which are not so reviled, do not.

After reading her account of how the money we give to developing countries in the region is counterproductive, can anyone take serious-

ly her call for a Marshall Plan for Central Asia?

*Howard Shapiro*
*FSO, retired*
*Austin, Texas*

### Rebuilding's the Easy Part

I found Dr. Handrahan's two articles in the December issue to typify perfectly the naiveté of the educated elite. She seems to find that we Americans are evil (my term, not hers) because: we try to help; we do not force our cultural values on local potentates; we *do* force our cultural values on them; and our American personnel are overpaid, oversexed and over here in the U.S.

In her "Why Do They Hate Us?" article about an unnamed Central Asian country, only the U.S. is to be hated, not the Russian Empire for conquering and raping them, not the Soviet Union for liquidating hundreds of thousands of their countrymen, and not their political leaders, except as pawns of the evil Americans. Sadly, Handrahan's views just reinforce the truth that no good deed goes unpunished.

Handrahan wonders why the only aid program that worked was the Marshall Plan, without understanding that it worked because it only had to rebuild the physical infrastructure of Europe and could use existing, trained local personnel within functional value systems. The main problem in those countries that stay at the bottom of the Third World is their non-functional cultural values, not their lack of physical infrastructure and trained local personnel. Physical rebuilding is easy, but instilling democratic cultural values is nearly impossible without a colonial stay of at least a century.

I suggest that the U.S. is best served by not trying to save the world from its stupidity and barbarity. We should greatly limit when, where and how we intervene in the world, and help only where help will make a real difference. Let the rest learn from their failures.

Concerning Handrahan's suggestion that we trust an International Criminal Court to handle the al-Qaida leadership, she might remember she just told us there is good reason for Americans to be hated. Can we, as those who are appropriately hated, trust the ICC to give such war criminals a sentence of community service?

*Peter Rice*
*FSO, retired*
*Sarasota, Fla.*

### Moderate Muslim Nations?

Arnie Schifferdecker's otherwise excellent article on the "Taliban-Bin Laden-ISI Connection" (Dec. 2001) asserts that we should take the time to listen to "moderate" Muslims and friendly governments in the Middle East.

The truth is that we have been listening to, and accepting the rhetoric of, so-called "moderate Muslim nations" for much too long. In fact, these nations are dictatorships that have committed numerous human rights violations, and in which women are second-class citizens.

Perhaps it is time for our Department of State to look beyond oil and take the high ground by raising the bar for those regimes, reserving its full support for genuine democracies.

*Howard Moskowitz*
*Hallandale Beach, Fla.*

### Give Walker Representation

I am a retired FSO. Out of 30 years in the service, 22 were in consular affairs, much of that in protection and welfare including visiting jailed Americans overseas. The

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## An Invitation For Summer Fiction

Once again the *FSJ* is seeking works of fiction of up to 3,000 words for its annual summer fiction issue. Story lines or characters involving the Foreign Service are preferred, but not required. The top stories, selected by the *Journal's* Editorial Board, will receive simultaneous publication in the July/August issue and on the *Journal's* Web site. The writer of each story will receive an honorarium of $250, payable upon publication.

Submissions must be previously unpublished. Stories should be unsigned and accompanied by a cover sheet with author's name, address, telephone numbers and e-mail address.

**Deadline for submissions is May 1, 2002. No exceptions.**

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basic rule was that the jailed American was American first, and a suspected criminal second. Many Americans I visited appeared to have done nasty things, but I could not let my personal feelings get in the way of my duty as a consul.

I am sorely troubled by the case of John Philip Walker in Afghanistan. If any American is in need of good, honest, unbiased consular representation, it is he. Yet I've heard nothing of it. His only contact with the U.S. appears to have been with CIA agents and with Marines guarding him.

I fully recognize that we are at war, and that fact changes many things. I do not defend in any way what Walker has done, but I object to his being tried by new legal jurisdictions like trial by talk show and trial by CIA interrogators. I am especially bothered by distorted comments in the media that prejudice his chances for a fair trial.

I think this issue merits discussion by AFSA members and other *Journal* readers. Some questions to ask are: Why has consular representation not been provided to Walker? Why doesn't he have legal representation? Has anyone explained to Walker his rights as an American? Has State officially surrendered its role in this case to the CIA or the U.S. military? Does State still consider consular representation an important part of our role overseas?

*Frederick D. Purdy*
*FSO, retired*
*Santiago, Chile* ■

### *Correction*

*In "FSOs and FSNs Recall Sept. 11" (Nov. 2001), Andrew C. Parker, DCM at Embassy Georgetown, should have been credited as the author of the final recollection (pp. 24-25).*



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# CLIPPINGS



*"We have exercised enough restraint."*

*— INDIA'S PRIME MINISTER, ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE, IN* THE ECONOMIST, *DEC. 20, 2001*

## THE GIFT OF THE AMBASSADOR

The season of giving was extra joyous in 2001 for 12 American families who had waited for many months to bring home their adopted children from Cambodia. After long delays, U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia Kent Wiedemann announced on Dec. 27 that the families would finally be given conditional permission to take their children to the U.S. Ker Munthit writes from Phnom Penh in *The Voice of Cambodia* (www.vocri.org) that this special New Year's gift came after many months, much money and much publicity.

In March 2000, the Cambodian government, in an attempt to stem the adoption fraud so prevalent in the country — including the theft of children and their sale for as little as $30 — set a one-year moratorium on international adoptions. After that moratorium expired, a number of American families traveled to Cambodia in the fall of 2001 to pick up their children. They had gone through reputable adoption agencies, filled out the appropriate paperwork, received pictures of their children, submitted proof that their child was an orphan, traveled halfway around the world and spent months in country forming emotional bonds with their children. Even after all this, they were optimistic when they scheduled their exit interviews with U.S. embassy officials. Yet on Nov. 30, the families were notified that their children's visas were about to be denied, with no reason given. Some of the adoptive families remained in Cambodia, while others returned to the U.S. not knowing whether the adoptions would ever be completed.

Outraged at the lack of communication from their own government, the families promptly took their plight to the news media. ABC's "20/20" featured some of the families on Dec. 19, and on the same day, Letitia Stein and Bonnie Miller Rubin of the *Chicago Tribune* publicized the families' charges that some of the embassy officials had shown favoritism to families who use particular adoption agencies or groups.

The families also claim that the U.S. officials have only half-heartedly attempted to verify their paperwork; for example, the executive director of the Massachusetts-based Wide Horizons for Children, Vicki Petersen (a nonprofit organization that is one of the many that have helped raise the number of immigration visas from Cambodia from 66 in 1997 to 402 in 2000) charged that the embassy had sat on the papers for weeks. One couple who used Petersen's agency asserted that the INS investigator did not even meet with the chief of the village or inspect the orphanage where their daughter was placed after being abandoned in the village of Cheng Meng.

In addition, the families point out that despite allegations that their children may have been acquired illegally, the Cambodian government had already recognized the children as legal orphans. Nor have any Cambodian families ever come forward to claim any of the children.

Glen Johnson, in the Dec. 19 *Boston Globe*, reports that the families' cause was taken up by William D. Delahunt, D-Mass., who adopted a Vietnamese child in 1975. Delahunt has asked fellow committee member and chairman of the House of International Relations Committee, Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill., to call for a hearing.

Meanwhile, Munthit notes, on Dec. 21, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service suspended the issuance of visas to Cambodian orphans in an attempt to stop



# CLIPPINGS

the illegal trafficking of children. The INS also stated its intention to transfer the Cambodian immigrant visa process from Phnom Penh to the U.S. embassy in Thailand due to the volume of immigrant visa applications. An anonymous State Department official said, "The embassy believes there has been credible evidence of widespread corruption and fraudulent practices (in Cambodia) that have caused delays in cases. We have been telling parents to delay travel, but unfortunately, these families were caught in the process."

Many of the families' local papers also picked up on this story with an international twist. Stein and Rubin of the *Chicago Tribune* wrote on Dec. 26 about three of the Chicago area parents who would be spending Christmas on their way to Cambodia to retrieve their adopted children. Stein noted that this was the emotional conclusion to months of frustration for Don Korta who adopted 2-year-old twins from Cambodia. He said that this experience was much more frustrating than his earlier adoptions from the Soviet Union. This adoption process has cost him an additional $8,000 due to the INS delays.

According to Ker Munthit, Amb. Wiedemann pointed out that the embassy had worked through Christmas to process the families' special paroles for the children. This permission was granted on the condition that the parents legally adopt the children in the U.S. within a two-year time limit. Wiedemann also warned that should the ongoing investigations reveal that the children were not legally orphans due to trafficking or having been removed from their "first parents" illegally, then the children would have to be returned to Cambodia.

Yet to Kim and Greg Sferes, who have spent up to $30,000 adopting their daughter, Sorya (which means "sunrise" in Khmer), it has all been worth it. And as the other families came home with their new children, most agreed that, "It's the best Christmas present we could get."

## WIELDING WORDS IN AMERICA'S DEFENSE

Ssemujju Ibrahim Nganda reports in *The Monitor* from Kampala, Uganda, on Dec. 24 that three American diplomats accepted an invitation to join two Muslim scholars in a Ramadan panel discussion, organized by the Uganda Muslim Youth Authority, about the U.S. government's attitude towards Islam. The U.S. embassy representatives were Deputy Chief of Mission Donald Teitelbaum, Political Officer Rhonda Ferguson Augustus and Information Officer Mary Jeffers. The Muslim participants were Dr. Salim Simba, a senior lecturer in political science and public administration at Makerere University, and a don at the Islamic University in Uganda, Eng. Umaru Dauda Kalinge. The theme of the seminar was "Islam Between Containment and Spread."

Noting that there was extra police presence at the seminar site, the Kibuli Muslim Teachers College, Nganda reports that Simba began the discussion by asking why security had been increased for the American participants. Teitelbaum responded that this was normal procedure when visiting a location for the first time. Simba then asserted that what America calls terrorism is in fact an extreme form of Arab nationalism and, since the U.S. supports Israel with $3 billion a year, America has no moral right to be part of the peace negotiations in the Israel-Palestine con-

## 50 YEARS AGO

"You need to be brave — in the sense of expecting no glory and of risking public abuse, malaria and also fever. In fact you need to be a combination of college professor, hard-headed businessman, explorer, journalist, salesman, and psychologist. I might even add poet to the list. And a touch of musicianship won't hurt — because a sense of timing is important for today's diplomatic practice."

*— DEAR JOE: A LETTER ABOUT THE FOREIGN SERVICE BY TOM, "AN EXPERT" IN THE FEB. 1952* FSJ

*"The object of war is not to die for your country; but to make the other bastard die for his."*
*— GENERAL GEORGE PATTON (1885-1945)*

flict. He also alleged that U.S. leaders support bombing other nations as a way to garner popularity for themselves within the U.S. Simba concluded his remarks by attacking Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi for participating in a demonstration against the Sept. 11 attacks on the U.S. when he had not done so following the 1998 bombing of Embassy Nairobi, in which many Kenyans were killed or maimed.

DCM Teitelbaum responded that the U.S. had lost 3,500 lives on Sept. 11 and added that since the attacks were far more serious than a mere property dispute, it had the right to take military action against al-Qaida. Teitelbaum added that "sometimes it is important to act and act quickly." Asked about the U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan, Teitelbaum stressed that while the loss of civilian lives was regrettable, the U.S. would not be paralyzed into immobility by the fear of civilian losses. He reiterated, however, that "Americans are peace-loving people."

For his part, Dauda contended that the U.S. had not produced any credible evidence that would hold up in a court of law against Osama bin Laden and said that "not everybody cried with you but civilization demands that you put up a show." Dauda also said that it was indefensible for the U.S. to bomb an entire country in its hunt for one man and his fighters. He also complained that the continuing crackdown on terrorist organizations and the associated cutoff of funds might force many Muslim NGO's in Uganda and elsewhere to close.

The discussion also touched on the Muslim tradition of women wearing veils. In that regard, Augustus and Jeffers emphasized the importance of letting people make their own choices in such matters, and extended an invitation to Muslim women for further discussions of this topic. ■


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# SPEAKING OUT

## *Blindsided At Embassy Moscow*

*BY GLENN E. SCHWEITZER*

One day in 1964, I was comfortably seated in my eighth floor office in the U.S. embassy in Moscow, working on yet another cable to the State Department on science-and-technology achievements by Soviet specialists. Suddenly, the wall behind the radiator three feet from my desk began beeping. I promptly telephoned the security officer, who instructed me to sit tight.

Within an hour, an engineer had removed the radiator and proudly displayed for me a pinhole in the wall that he said led to a metallic straw. This straw, he continued, led to a microphone embedded more than six inches deep in the wall, one of more than 40 mikes that had been hidden in the walls of the chancery since 1953. After many weeks of digging into the thick concrete walls of the embassy in search of listening devices, the security technicians had discovered the first mike several weeks earlier in an office two floors above mine. They then successfully placed reverse signals onto the wiring grid so that all the microphones would eventually beep — one-by-one — and give away their exact locations. A quite ingenious scheme to find all those devices, it seemed to me.

*Glenn Schweitzer was an FSO from 1956 to 1968, serving in Belgrade, Moscow and Washington. He is now the director of the Office for Central Europe and Eurasia of the National Research Council in Washington, D.C.*

*The State Department failed to protect the health of Foreign Service families and concealed its knowledge of the situation.*

But it would be another 11 years before the department would finally tell me of a related, but deadlier, Soviet tactic to harass Americans occupying both offices and apartments in the chancery that was going on at the very same time. At a 1975 briefing for my wife and me, and a half-dozen other Foreign Service couples who had served in Moscow, I learned that Soviet security forces had been illuminating the building from afar — but not very far — with microwave radiation for a decade before my family's arrival in Moscow in 1963. They continued to do so until at least the 1970s.

This belated notification confirmed rumors that had circulated for years within the American community in Moscow, but it offered little concrete information about what the health effects of such prolonged, intense exposure to microwaves might be. Instead, we were asked to fill out medical history forms so we could be included in an upcoming epidemiological study of possible health effects of the bombardment.

We then put the matter in the back of our minds until five years ago, when my daughter Diane, who was born in 1962 and lived in that illuminated building from 1963 to 1966, developed cataracts and detached retinas in both eyes beginning at age 35. The specialists we have consulted concur that there can be only two explanations for these early-age cataracts and detached retinas — congenital problems or radiation. However, congenital irregularities that cause such problems almost always provide early warning signs of seriously damaged eyes, often in infancy and in any event before the age that my daughter discovered her problems. Thus, congenital problems are a highly unlikely explanation for the damage.

Medical authorities also agree that the eyes of children in the range of one to four years of age are particularly susceptible to damage by radiation, with cataracts and detached retinas often an important manifestation of such damage. And in Diane's case, a period of 30 years to develop radiation-induced problems is consistent with medical research findings.

Still, can we be sure of causality? Of course not. But according to leading retina experts in New York, San Francisco and Washington who have examined Diane, microwave exposure at an early age is a very logical explanation of the damage — and no other explanations are apparent.

### Assessing The Damage

As promised, the State Department sponsored an epidemiological study carried out by the School of Hygiene and Public Health of Johns Hopkins University from 1976 to 1978. The study attempted to compare medical histories of 4,800 employees and dependents assigned to Moscow from 1953 to 1976 with histories of a control group of 7,500 personnel assigned to embassies in Eastern Europe with "similar" physical and psychological environments, except for the radiation.

This study was intended to tease out differences in the medical histories of the Moscow group and the East European control group that could be linked to microwave radiation. However, the researchers faced an extraordinarily complex task with too many variables to quantify. Also, what knowledgeable person would postulate that in the 1960s, living in Budapest and Zagreb was similar to living in Moscow? Furthermore, exposure levels were poorly documented, and it was not possible to easily categorize large numbers of the Moscow group according to exposure. And while the study's emphasis on indicators of cancer is understandable, eye damage should also have received special attention since the eye is more vulnerable to external radiation than other organs, not being protected by a layer of skin or any other type of tissue except when closed.

Acknowledging these design flaws, the researchers recommended in 1978 that a more authoritative biophysical analysis of the microwave field be undertaken, with due consideration of the likelihood of biological effects. Towards that end, State asked the National Telecommunication and Information Administration of the Department of Commerce to undertake the study. That agency, in turn, drew on its Electromagnetic Radiation Management Advisory Council and the Applied Physics Laboratory of Johns Hopkins University for assistance.

***Exposure levels were poorly documented, and it was not possible to easily categorize large numbers of the Moscow group according to exposure.***

Despite being better designed than its predecessor, the NTIA report was too confusing to be credible. First, it reached the astonishing conclusion that no deleterious biological effects to personnel from microwave radiation were anticipated. This assumption apparently referred to exposures beginning in 1953, even though all supporting data cited were from 1966 onward. (The report noted that adequate measurements were not made until the mid-1960s, but this caveat was lost in the description of the study and in the recommendations.)

Secondly, the author or authors who were responsible for the report were not identified and a committee without a designated chair provided oversight for the report simply on the basis of a one-day meeting. And while the report repeatedly refers to scientific evidence, it contains no footnotes; nor does the list of references include citations to relevant findings of previous health research. In short, the report is not helpful in attempting to assess Diane's problem.

### Making Things Right

It is clear that the State Department not only failed to act to protect the health of Foreign Service families and other members of the embassy team throughout this period but concealed its knowledge of the situation behind a shield of security. Had I been warned of the problem, we undoubtedly would have still accepted the assignment in Moscow, but I would have insisted that my family live in embassy apartments on Kutuzovsky Prospekt or Leninsky Prospekt — several miles from the embassy — rather than expose two small children to a risk that could have lifelong consequences.

Secondly, knowing what it did, the department at least never should have allowed unimpeded access to the open space behind the chancery, including the playground, where Diane spent many hours — areas located in the path of incoming radiation according to the department's maps. Still, it was in her bed, located next to a third-floor window, that she undoubtedly received the greatest dosage.

Finally, when it belatedly investigated the effects of its neglect, the quality of the radiation studies the department initiated fell well short of the standards that should be demanded of our scientists when they address such critical issues.

So what should the department do now? It clearly has a responsibility to maintain at least a modicum of medical surveillance over all of us to uncover chronic effects from the exposures. As a simple, low-cost

step toward meeting this obligation, the department should invite those of us who were on the front lines of this nasty phase of U.S.-Soviet relations to meet with experts to assess our health. These experts should, at a minimum, be aware of the linkage between radiation and cataracts and be able to articulate the relationships between microwave exposures and a wide variety of other health effects, based on up-to-date scientific data.

Finally, security specialists from the Departments of State, Defense, and Energy and the intelligence community who have access to unreported information concerning the exposures at the embassy from the very beginning of this period should inform us of the details of the exposures with appropriate documentation. If there are secrecy concerns over release of such information, those of us who still have security clearances can act as surrogates for our colleagues. I am confident we can convey the essence of our findings to them in an unclassified form.

In the meantime, I urge former Muscovites to inform the department's Medical Officer of health problems they believe may be related to microwave exposure. And if any of these problems involve early-age cataracts, I would appreciate an e-mail at Gschweit@nas.edu.

In late December, Diane had another eye operation in San Francisco, and hopefully this will solve the problem for at least a few years. She harbors no bitterness toward the U.S. government, knowing that we were doing an important job at the time of the radiation exposure. However, the department has a responsibility to see to it that other employees and their dependents do not encounter similar problems in the future. ■

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# THE U.S. AND ISLAM IN THE MODERN WORLD




Ben Fishman

THE SOLUTION TO THE CURRENT TRIBULATIONS OF ARAB MUSLIM CIVILIZATION MUST BE FOUND IN THE INNER RESOURCES AND RECUPERATIVE POWERS OF ISLAM ITSELF.

*BY HUME HORAN*

The months that have passed since Sept. 11, 2001, have prompted much reflection among Arabists, like all Americans: "Why have young, male, Arab Muslims figured so prominently in the terrorist annals of the past quarter-century?"

To name but a few incidents, there was the 1970 assassination of Defense Attache Bob Perry in Amman, that of Ambassador Cleo Noel and his DCM, Curt Moore, in Sudan in 1972, the bombing of the U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut in 1983, the two separate bombings of Embassy Beirut in 1983 and 1985, the 1985 murder of Leon Klinghoffer aboard the *Achille Lauro*, the 1988 murder of Col. Rich Higgins in Gaza, the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center, the 1998 destruction of our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, the 2000 attack on the *USS Cole*,

then . . . the awfulness of Sept. 11. And this is by no means all!

There are various reasons for the anger that some young Muslims, raised in the sterile hatcheries of the refugee camps, or the religious schools of Saudi Arabia, feel toward us. Most often mentioned is our support of Israel. But this issue deserves a closer look.

***It is sad but true that America has never gotten much credit for what it actually does for the Palestinians.***

It is sad but true that America has never gotten much credit for what it actually does for the Palestinians. For half a century, we have provided a plurality of the funding for the U.N.'s Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians. For nearly as long, we have led international efforts to advance the Middle East peace process. President Clinton personally oversaw the intensive negotiations that led to the 1993 Oslo agreement and the creation of the Palestinian National Authority. He devoted two weeks, moreover, of his waning presidency to sketching out and attempting to cajole the parties to endorse the outlines of an imaginative agreement — only to have Yasser Arafat refuse even to accept it as a basis for discussion. And we rarely hear of U. S. efforts to succor Muslims in Kuwait, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

Yet once, when I appealed to Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud to give more assistance to UNRWA, he replied only that "You Americans created the refugee problem. You solve it." In response, I asked if he could imagine, had a catastrophe driven half a million Canadians into North Dakota, Idaho and Minnesota, that three generations later, those populations would still be held in refugee camps? How differently the half-million Jews driven from Arab lands in 1948 were received by Israel, compared to how the half-million Arabs driven from Palestine that same year were received by their Arab neighbors!

The truth is that for Arab governments, the Palestinian issue is — among other things — a convenient tactic. By "waving the bloody flag," Arab governments can distract their subjects from misrule, oppression and misery at home. In particular, Palestinians' grievances against Israel have their match in the half-century of neglect and oppression they've endured from supposedly "brother" Arab regimes.

### The Challenge of Modernity

In fact, as things stand now, even if the Palestinian-Israeli dispute were quickly solved by exterior diktat, we would still be the target of alienated young Arab Muslims. Why? Because the Arabs' dispute with Israel is only a symptom of a deeper problem, one that cannot be solved by shuttle diplomacy, special envoys or conferences at Wye Plantation.

This deeper problem exists at two levels. Superficially, it has to do with the failure of Arab political and intellectual institutions to address the needs of their young populations. How can being a citizen of Syria, or Lebanon, or Egypt, or Algeria, or Sudan give young Arabs the sense of patriotic identity that we get from being citizens of the United States? Arab states have little emotional hold on the loyalty of their populations; most Arab regimes are corrupt and morally discredited. This particularly applies to Saudi Arabia, which has shored itself up externally through its ties to the U.S., while at home, it both has placated and suppressed opposition by giving "power of attorney" for social affairs to reactionary, xenophobic Muslim clerics (ulama). What personal attachment can Saudi Arabians — 60 percent of whom are under 18 — feel to their rulers? The king and many of the leading princes are in their seventies, and must seem more remote from most Saudis than, say, George Washington is from us.

Young Arabs, moreover, are failed by their intellectual leaders. Where are the Arab Reinhold Neibuhrs, Christopher Dawsons, Karl Barths, Martin Bubers? Where are the politically engaged intellectuals who can help a young Arab make coherent, responsible sense of a troubling modern world? They scarcely exist in the Arab world. The few that even try are threatened,

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*Hume Horan was an FSO from 1960 to 1998, serving as ambassador to Yaounde, Malabo, Khartoum, Riyadh and Abidjan, as well as Deputy Chief of Mission in Jeddah and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. He is the author of* To the Happy Few, *a novel about terror and the Sudan (Electric City Press, 1996), and currently serves as a consultant on Middle East affairs for MSNBC, NPR and Fox News.*

jailed, flee to exile — or worse. In January 1985, I contacted the Sudanese Presidency to plead for the life of a free-thinking Islamic reformer, Dr. Mahmoud Muhammad Taha. During his trial for heresy under Muslim canon law (Sharià), Dr. Taha had refused to recant his liberal views, and was condemned to death. I was told that the president would not speak to me and that no appeal was possible from the ruling of the religious tribunal. Dr. Taha was publicly hanged.

***Even if the dispute were quickly solved, we would still be the target of alienated young Arab Muslims.***

Accordingly, many young and sensitive Arabs — especially members of the educated elite — are deprived of moral and intellectual leadership from their own religious institutions. Bereft of meaningful guidance, they use violence to fill the void, to provide some sort of an answer — even a negative one — to "Who am I?" Jellyfishes, many of them are drawn to the rocks of Osama bin Ladin's Luddite worldview.

More fundamentally, though, all Arab Muslims — and not just young, educated males — are challenged cosmologically by the modern world. From the start, Islamic society was seen by its members as a "City of God" upon earth. Islamic society was built upon the perfect teachings of God's own revealed word, dictated and unalterable: the Koran. In a spirit reminiscent of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, instructions for even the minutiae of everyday life were divinely vouchsafed therein. Conveniently, Islam's immediate rapid expansion, its political and cultural triumphs, represented incontrovertible evidence to Muslims that God had provided mankind with His perfect and final instruction, for the present and evermore. And God's having revealed the Koran to the Arabs and in Arabic was seen by Arabs as a mark of special divine preference.

From a Muslim's standpoint, the challenges before Mohammed were of a magnitude that, indeed, could only have been overcome by divine guidance and inspiration. He was the Prophet, the bearer of God's final revelation — but given Arabia's political anarchy, its social and intellectual disorder and the proximity of the Sassanid (Persian) and Byzantine empires, he also had to found the Islamic state. He needed to establish the political and legal institutions that could protect and give lasting expression to his teachings.

As a religious figure, Mohammed was more a Moses than a Christ. Yet in Sunni Islam, both the secular and religious sides of Mohammed's mission came to be equally sanctified and immutable — and in theory have remained so to the present. Muslims were supreme in worldly affairs because they were right, and they were right because vice versa. Only in the 18th century did this comforting, complacent alliance between revelation and power begin to break up. That breakup has continued — and accelerated — ever since.

Under Christianity, on the other hand, the relationship of politics to revelation was very different. The Christian revelation came to pass under the Roman imperium, and Rome's established legal and political institutions. Early Christianity tended to accept them as givens. It expected an early return of the Messiah, and sought its center in the spiritual, other-worldly aspects of Christ's revelation. Christianity's development, accordingly, was not much constrained by divine prescriptions for the practical organization of man's life upon earth.

### Making Sense of God's Will

So how should a young Arab Muslim today answer the great question, "How then should I live?" and its corollaries: "How to reconcile the Koran's assurance of divine favor and worldly power with daily proofs that we Muslims are falling behind? And falling behind not just to the United States and Western Europe, but even to its despised 'step-child' Israel? Where today are the happy, successful, and above all, POWERFUL states of Islam? How can God allow His people to be so confounded? Are our tribulations a punishment for our flawed practice of His teachings?" An increasingly common answer to all these doubts is: "I should resolve to become ever-more-and-more intensely and rigorously observant."

Alas! This prescription will never bring relief to the sense of political or moral abandonment of many young Arabs. They are trapped, so to speak, at the bottom of a well, and try to escape by excavating downward — to China. The solution only makes the problem worse. Their anger and frustration at the West grow, and particularly toward its standard-bearer, the U.S. Our worldly success — our mere existence — threatens to

refute those beliefs and traditions that give meaning to the lives of Arab youths.

What is to be done? The longer-term solution to the tribulations of Arab Muslim civilization must be found in the inner resources and recuperative powers of Islam itself. But here we encounter another problem: the passive, rigid, uncreative way in which Islamic culture has been transmitted since the Islamic Middle Ages. Modern Arab societies lack a tradition of self-criticism, of rational analysis. Without the ability to analyze successfully the doings of the world around them, or even of their own societies, the Arab public ego has experienced many reverses. It has become defensive and insecure. Public discourse is dominated by a zeitgeist that attributes any bad news to the workings of various exterior, malevolent powers: British intelligence, the Zionist conspiracy, the CIA. Never to one's own shortcomings. Such an alibi absolves Arab egos from any blame or responsibility for every setback.

***The politically engaged intellectuals who could help a young Arab make sense of the modern world scarcely exist in the Arab world.***

Take one fairly recent example: the Egyptian government's refusal even to consider the possibility that on Oct. 31, 1999, the pilot of Egypt Air Flight 990 deliberately flew his plane into the ocean, killing himself, the other crew members and the 271 passengers aboard. To investigators at the National Transportation Safety Board, the cause of the crash was obvious: the pilot had intentionally pushed the aircraft to its doom. But to this day, the Egyptian government uncritically pursues ever more ingenious and far-fetched strategies of denial. Multiplied across any number of similar instances, however, Arabs come to feel themselves to be impotent, the playthings of unseen but always hostile forces.

It is hard for us Westerners, even "speaking as a friend," to help heal the uncomprehending, wounded pride of a great civilization. We will not be listened to. There is no ecumenical tradition in Islam. There are mosques all over America — there is even one in Rome — but Christians may not bring so much as a Bible into Saudi Arabia. It is inconceivable that anywhere in the Islamic world, the head of a divinity school would establish professorships in Buddhism, women's studies, and the role of religion in international conflict, as Father Bryan Hehir did at Harvard. In Islamic cultures, the foreigner's extended hand receives no response; indeed, the gesture is likely to be rebuffed or misconstrued.

Similarly, a Muslim might try to proselytize a Christian or a Jew. But for him to engage in a genuine dialogue with them would suggest that their faiths contained some fraction of truth not found in the Koran, and from which Muslims might benefit for the more perfect worship and understanding of God. And such a possibility is literally inconceivable to a true Islamic believer.

I'll not forget King Feisal's polite but frosty dismissal of my naive suggestion — as a young chargé d'affaires in Jeddah in 1973 — that much benefit might accrue to both the West and to the Arab world, were Saudi Arabia to send some young Islamic scholars to divinity schools in the United States. A royal adviser afterwards reproached me for raising the question: "You were asking His Majesty to mingle truth with falsehood!"

### Terms of Engagement

What could Muslims themselves do to rejoin the modern world on terms consistent with our times and with Islamic revelation? Some thoughts follow.

First and foremost, Muslims must try to escape from the flies-in-amber position in which history has placed them. What was revealed ever-so-long ago as canonical for Islam's secular and spiritual life has become its prison. Islam, like other religions, dazzled and overwhelmed by the Deity's transcendent force, has elaborately sought to tame and to confine it so that it may be safely observed, or even put to useful work, by mortals. Or to put it another way: not unlike the clerical class of other faiths, the Islamic ulama has made of religion a sort of divine "containment vessel" — a rule book, a mechanical code that promises power and salvation to true believers.

The various Muslim clerics and their supporters throughout the Arab world will naturally fight any challenge to the lucrative monopoly of interpreting the Koran they have enjoyed for well over a millennium.

But meanwhile, the world is changing ever faster about them; it is leaving them, and the societies they purport to guide, further and further behind. The latest catastrophic failure of militant, political Islam may represent the death throes of a crusade that went badly astray. After Sept. 11, and after the Taliban's destruction in Afghanistan, will many young Muslims still want to emulate Osama bin Ladin? Who now remembers the Mahdi, defeated at Omdurman by Kitchener in 1898, or the much-feared Assassins of Alamut, destroyed by Hulagu Khan in 1256?

One may hope that the Taliban's destruction, in particular, will clear the way for Muslims to look again at where they are headed. At the "macro" level, young Muslims may begin to see the heretical nature of aggressive, "political" Islam, which diverts its followers from the worship of God, and the pursuit of social justice, to a distracting crusade for power in this world. There is an idolatrous quality to political Islam that makes earthly power the principal object of Muslim aspiration. One thinks of Livy's denunciation of any religion "in which the will of the gods is offered as a pretext for crimes."

And at the "micro" level, one sees young Muslims not refuting, but simply ignoring, the dysfunctional aspects of their tradition. Many sincere, pious Muslim men and women, are making their own "right reason" accommodations to modernity. They are acting as many Catholics do, following their own consciences on birth control and other social issues — despite papal claims to infallibility in faith and morals.

With the Koran widely accessible to more-or-less educated Muslims, Sunni Islam may be ready for its own "Protestant Reformation." God in Islam has always had a personal, direct relationship with His believers: "I am closer to you even than the artery of your neck," says the Koran. Might Muslims — from the ground up — be ready to break from the orthodoxy fastened upon them so long ago? The present moment may be right for the appearance of a chastened, realistic, more flexible Muslim approach to the 21st century.

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If individual Muslims can strike out for themselves, and if necessary, re-open the "Gates of Ijtihaad" (that is to legitimize) new interpretations by contemporary scholars, there may be hope for their community's reconciliation with our time. In Islam's Arab heartland —Egypt, Syria and Jordan — such an initiative might creatively be led by educated, assertive, Arab professional women. Elsewhere, such an effort might occur in the Muslim diaspora — in Indonesia, or India, or even the United States. And what about the Shiite branch of Islam? It would be ironic if Shiites, who accord great interpretive authority to their juriconsults, the Great Ayatollahs, should lead the Islamic world to a more relevant and better adapted form of Islam.

There may be hope. But as our distinguished late ambassador to Saudi Arabia, William Porter, used to say, "Hope is a good companion, but a poor guide."

***So how should a young Arab Muslim today answer the great question, "How then should I live?"***

As fellow monotheists, as admirers of Islam's contributions to civilization, we may hope that Islam will not let itself be trapped in an obscurantist cul-de-sac. History, however, is unsparingly Darwinian toward societies disfavored by natural selection. History serves up winners and losers. Where now is classical civilization? In our cultural genes, in our museums. Byzantium? It survives as a truncated, disputatious fraction of "that which once was great." The tempo of the modern world is accelerating. It is harder and harder for non-performing societies to keep up, much less catch up. And imagine the violence, the pain, the awful grinding, if Islamic civilization, half-brother to the West, were to be drawn into history's rock crusher! As friends of Islam, we can stand watch by the bedside . . . and hope and pray.


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### How The West Can Help

But there are a few other things we could do. I'd propose first, that when speaking or writing in English, we all stop using "Allah" when we mean "God." A reader or listener might conclude that the God of Muslims is horrific, a Moloch, or something drawn from Aztec mythology. If we can't agree that we worship the same God, and that He listens equally to all our prayers — the prayers of Jews, Christians, and Muslims — we'll never agree on the smaller issues . . . such as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Second, the United States, with its never-equaled political and economic and military might, should peremptorily put a stop to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has already wasted too many lives, taken up too much of our attention, and consumed resources that could have helped move the area forward. It has been too much of a distraction. The expression "confidence-building measures" has a fantastical, even cynical air of unreality to it, at least as applied in the Middle East. The so-called "peace process," has proven to be little more than a diplomatic perpetual-motion machine. It provides excuses for all to keep things on hold. Between Arab anti-Semitism, and Jewish fear of Arab revanchism, no agreement is likely to be reached or to hold unless we take a strong hand.

To us and to many other friends of the region, the outlines of a settlement are pretty clear: they would resemble the Camp David proto-accords. There would be a Palestinian state committed to living in peace with Israel; Israel's West Bank settlements — a bone in the throat to any peace effort — would be dismantled. There would be security guarantees for both Israel and the Palestinians. As a corollary to any agreement, there should be measures in place to monitor the sort of Palestinian state that would emerge; one Taliban-dominated state has been enough.

We should work hard to enlist the association and support of our Western allies in this effort. But we should not get bogged down in details. We should ignore and bypass those who would slow our peace efforts by reviving objections drawn from over 50 years of failed peace-




## Have a Bone to Pick?

Why not write a "Speaking Out" for the *Foreign Service Journal*?

"Speaking Out" is the *FSJ*'s op-ed section, the place where writers can express opinions on issues specific to the Foreign Service, its employees and its work.

Writers are encouraged to take strong stands, but all claims must be supported and documented. Length of submitted articles should be from 1,500 to 2,000 words.

**All submissions go to the *Journal*'s Editorial Board for discussion. If an article is accepted, writers will be expected to meet the magazine's editorial and style requirements.**

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## Tell Us About Your Travels



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Writing for the postcard section should be provocative, detailed and convey a sense of place through anecdote, reporting and keen observation.

Potential writers should refer back to issues of the *FSJ* for subjects covered and guidance in preparing submissions, which should be from 600 to 800 words in length.

**For more information:**
Contact the *Foreign Service Journal* by fax at (202) 338-8244; by e-mail: journal@afsa.org; or by mail.

making. It has been my experience that when the United States makes it clear to all the world that we are utterly determined that something must be done, reality tends to rearrange itself in a complaisant pattern. Once we do, Arab and Israeli leaders could turn to their populations, and say with a shrug, "What could I do against the might and desire of the United States?"

***Our foreign policy should more forcefully and consistently reflect America's ideals.***

Third, our foreign policy should more forcefully and consistently reflect America's ideals. When Secretary Powell eloquently denounced the Taliban's oppression of women, was I the only listener to think he would have made just as much sense if he'd said "Saudi," whenever "Afghan" was mentioned? Our government wants, it says, to reach Muslims' hearts and minds, to reach "the Street." But how to do it? There is a lesson for us in the political landscape of the Middle East. Where governments are friendly to us, we are often unpopular with "the Street." And vice versa. The reason may be that in one case we are seen as a government, as an accomplice to the unpopular local power, while in the other we are viewed as a liberating civilization.

American "exceptionalism" has never been more clearly demonstrated than after the events of Sept. 11, and our victory in Afghanistan. We stand unique in world history, virtually unconstrained by traditional considerations of the balance of power. For the moment, we face no credible adversary. We are therefore free to make fuller use of the source of our strength and our appeal. Yet, in Reinhold Niebuhr's words, "We should be humble hawks." We should seize this millenarian moment, and work for an international community that better reflects our ideals, which are neither of the East nor of the West, and whose appeal transcends most cultures. ■


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INSIDE: TAX GUIDE 2001

# AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • February 2002

2001 LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

## How the Foreign Service Fared

The Foreign Service was poised to do very well on the Hill in 2001 — until the tragic events of Sept. 11 changed the legislative schedule for the State Department's Authorization Bill for Fiscal Year 2002, delaying voting in the Senate until the spring of 2002. Many of the bread and butter issues AFSA worked on all year are included in the Senate version of the bill. AFSA made great headway on a number of issues, and AFSA Legislative Affairs Director Ken Nakamura believes most of these will soon become law.

The following items are already in the Senate's State Department Authorization Bill, and are expected to pass when the House and Senate develop the final authorization legislation in the spring:

**Virtual Locality Pay:** Establish virtual locality pay for Foreign Service employees serving overseas, for annuity computation purposes. All FS employees overseas are currently paid their base rate while their colleagues in Washington, D.C. receive the base pay plus D.C. area locality pay. This distinction substantially impacts the computation of the average of the "high three" for annuity purposes when a person is ready to retire. AFSA's language is currently in the Senate's bill, but AFSA has agreed to work to have an administration proposal serve as a substitute. The administration's proposal would use standard actuarial tables to compute the difference in a person's annuity if they had retired from a D.C. assignment, and the annuity received from retiring from an overseas assignment. The difference would be paid to the individual upon retirement. Both the administration's proposal and the AFSA proposal would take effect 90 days after the date of enactment, with service abroad after the effective date being counted.

**Dual Compensation:** Lift the earnings limitations on Foreign Service annuitants who go back to work for the federal government on a part-time basis.

**PIT Retirement Benefit:** Give retirement credit to Part-Time Intermittent Temporary employees who worked between 1989 and 1998 and did not get credit.

**Travel Benefits:** Give greater flexibility to families to get together when the FS employee is on unaccompanied duty.

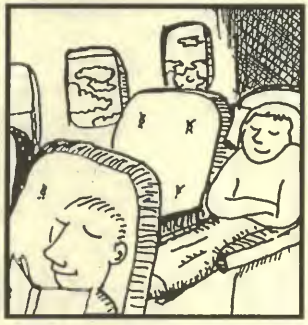
**Storage for Students:** Allow FS dependents attending boarding school or college in the U.S. to commercially store their belongings between school years instead of shipping them temporarily to post.

**Presidential Performance Awards:** Give equal treatment to Senior Foreign Service

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JOSH

Upgrade, Anyone?
See page 14.

AFSA GOES VIDEO

## Reaching Out to Indiana and Beyond

BY TOM SWITZER, AFSA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

On Dec. 6, AFSA held its first outreach video conference to a regional town meeting in Warsaw, Indiana. This two-way dialogue featured Ambassador Phil Wilcox in Washington on the topic "The Importance of Diplomacy in Combating Terrorism." The event, taking AFSA into new video territory with great outreach potential, was a resounding success.

The audience of 85 included the president of Grace College in Warsaw, as well as political science faculty and students from the college; some 30 members of Kiwanis International; the superintendent of city schools; area high-school teachers, and several journalists.

Continued on page 12

# AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

## The Mail Kept Coming

Into January, AFSA continued to receive shipments of mail from pouch-only posts around the world taking us up on our offer to put mail into the U.S. postal system. The State Department's pouch system was suspended for most of November due to anthrax contamination of several State mailrooms and pouches. AFSA offered to receive mail packages sent commercially from posts. As of early January, AFSA had processed over 17,000 pieces of mail from about 70 posts. Now that State has resumed pouch service, AFSA is going out of the mail-forwarding business.




## Long-Term Care Insurer Chosen

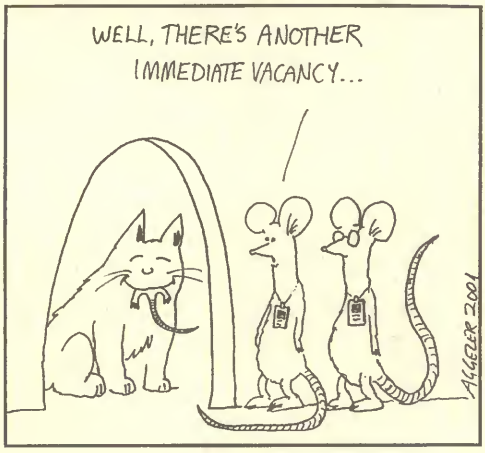
The U.S. Office of Personnel Management announced on Dec. 18 that it has chosen Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. and John Hancock Life Insurance Co. as the insurers for the Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program. The two companies have formed Long-Term Care Partners to operate the program. Coverage will be available by October 2002.

## Call for FS Spouse Writers

We are seeking submissions for the *AFSA News* "Family Member Matters" column, a forum for Foreign Service spouses to voice their opinions on issues of concern to the Foreign Service community. Send your 400- to 500-word essay to *AFSA News* Editor Shawn Dorman at Dorman@afsa.org. All submissions are seriously considered. AFSA will pay a $60 honorarium for any essay published in this series.

## Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER, FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER & CARTOONIST




## Foreign Affairs Fellowships

Applications for the Thomas Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship program are due by Feb. 22 for undergraduates and March 1 for graduate students. For more information about the fellowships, visit the Web site at www.woodrow.org.

## Apply Now for Simon Trust Grants

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is a charitable fund established in the memory of Kirby Simon, an FSO who died in 1995 serving in Taiwan. The trust supports charitable projects that are initiated and carried out, not in an official capacity and not on official time, by FS personnel or family members around the world. Some of the projects that have been supported include the purchase of facilities for children in orphanages, skills-training programs, and educational programs.

Proposals should include: description of project; purpose; role of applicant; plan for disseminating results of project; budget; other funding, if applicable; and biography of applicant. Proposals must be no longer than five double-spaced pages (exclusive of budget and bio).

Proposals for projects to be funded in 2002 must be received by the trust no later than Feb. 28. Go to the Web site at www.kirbysimontrust.org for more information, or call (203) 432-2698. Send proposals to the J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust by mail to: 82 Edgehill Rd., New Haven, CT 06511; by e-mail to john.simon@yale.edu; or by fax to: (203) 432-0063.


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# AFSA 2001 TAX GUIDE

## Federal and State Tax Provisions for the Foreign Service

### Federal Tax Provisions

Under the Tax Act of 2001, there are several tax relief segments that may apply to Foreign Service employees and their families. Foreign Service employees most frequently ask AFSA about home ownership, tax liability upon sale of a residence, and state of domicile. We have devoted special sections to these issues.

AFSA's Tax Guide is designed as an informational and reference tool. It does not presume to be any more than that. Although we try to be accurate, many of the new provisions of the tax code and implementing IRS regulations have not been fully tested. Therefore, use caution and consult with a tax adviser as soon as possible if you have specific questions or an unusual or complex situation.

For 2001, the five basic tax rates for individuals are slightly lower: 10, 27.5, 30.5 and 35.5 percent, and a top rate of 39.1 percent. The 10 percent rate is for taxable income up to $45,200 for married couples, $27,050 for singles. The 27.5 percent rate is for income up to $109,250 for married couples, $65,550 for singles. The 30.5 percent rate is for income up to $166,500 for married couples and income up to $136,750 for singles. The 35.5 percent rate is for income up to $297,350 for married couples and singles. In addition, there is a 10 percent surtax for certain high-income taxpayers. It is computed by applying the 39.1 percent rate to taxable income over $288,350 for singles and married couples and for married couples filing separately whose income is over $144,175. Long-term capital gains are taxed at a maximum rate of 20 percent and are reported on Schedule D. This rate is effective for all sales in 2001, unless you fall within the 10 percent bracket, when the rate becomes eight percent for assets held more than five years but remains 10 percent for assets held less than five years. Long-term capital gain is defined as gain from the sale of property held for 12 months or more.

### Personal Exemption

For each taxpayer, spouse, and dependent the personal exemption has been increased to $2,900. There is, however, a personal exemption phaseout of two percent for each $2,500 of adjusted gross income (AGI) over $132,950 (singles), $166,200 (head of household), $199,450 (joint) and $99,725 (married, filing separately). For those taxpayers in the last category, the phaseout is two percent for each $1,250 of adjusted gross income over $99,725.

### Extension for Taxpayers Abroad

Taxpayers whose tax home is outside the U.S. on April 15 get an automatic extension until June 15 to file their returns. When filing the return, these taxpayers should write "Taxpayer Abroad" on the first page and attach a statement of explanation.




There are no late filing or late payment penalties for returns filed by June 15, but the IRS will charge interest on any amount owed from April 15 until the date they receive payment.

### Standard Deduction

The standard deduction is given to non-itemizers. It has been steadily increasing since 1987. For couples it is $7,600; for singles the deduction is $4,550. Married couples filing separately get a standard deduction of $3,800 and head-of-household filers receive a $6,650 deduction. An additional amount is allowed for taxpayers over age 65 or blind.

Most unreimbursed employee business expenses must be reported as miscellaneous itemized deductions, which are subject to a deduction of two percent of adjusted gross income (AGI). This includes professional dues and publications, employment and educational expenses, home office, legal, accounting, custodial and tax preparation fees, home leave, representational and other employee business expenses, and contributions to AFSA's Legislative Action Fund. Unreimbursed moving expenses are no longer an itemized deduction. As of Jan. 1, 1994, moving expenses are an adjustment to income, which means that you get to deduct them even if you are taking the standard deduction. However, the deduction has been narrowed to include only the unreimbursed costs of moving your possessions and yourself and your family to your new location.

Medical expenses (including health insurance) are subject to a deduction equaling 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI). This means that any deductible medical cost would have to exceed $2,250 for a taxpayer with a $30,000 AGI. There is also an additional three percent reduction of itemized deductions (excluding medical, casualty, theft, and investment interest) if the AGI exceeds $132,950. This three percent is applied to the AGI over $132,950 and not to the total of itemized deductions on Schedule A. The maximum loss of deductions is capped at 80 percent.

State and local income taxes and real estate and personal property taxes remain fully deductible for itemizers, as are charitable contributions (to American charities only) for most taxpayers. Donations to the AFSA scholarship fund are fully deductible as charitable contributions. Donations to AFSA via the Combined Federal Campaign are also fully deductible. Individuals may also dispose of any profit from the sale of personal property abroad in this manner.

For 2001 tax returns, any interest paid

on auto or personal loans, credit cards, department stores and other personal interest will not be allowed as an itemized deduction. Interest on educational loans will be allowed as an adjustment to gross income. If the above debts are consolidated, however, and paid with a home equity loan, interest on the home equity loan is allowable. Mortgage interest is, for the most part, still fully deductible. Interest on loans intended to finance investments is deductible up to the amount of net income from investments. Interest for loans intended to finance a business is 100 percent deductible. Passive-investment interest on loans in which the taxpayer is an inactive participant, i.e., a limited partnership, can be deducted only from the income produced by other "passive income." Interest on loans that do not fall into the above categories, such as borrowing money to buy tax-exempt securities, is not deductible.

### Home Leave Expenses

Employee business expenses, such as home leave and representation, may be deducted as a miscellaneous itemized deduction and claimed on Form 2106. In addition to the two-percent floor, only 50 percent for meals and entertainment may be claimed (100 percent for unreimbursed travel and lodging). Only the employee's (not family members') home leave expenses are deductible. Maintaining a travel log and retaining a copy of home leave orders will be helpful, should the IRS ever question claimed expenses. It is important to save receipts: without receipts for food, a taxpayer may deduct only $30 to $46 a day (depending upon the per diem rate at the home leave address), no matter how large the grocery or restaurant bill. Lodging is deductible, as long as it is not with friends, relatives, or in one's own home. The IRS will disallow use of per diem rates and any expenses claimed for family members. If a hotel bill indicates double rates, the single room rate should be claimed, and, if possible, the hotel's rate sheet should be saved for IRS scrutiny. Car rental, mileage, and other unreimbursed travel expenses, including parking fees and tolls, may be deducted. The rate for business miles driven is 34.5 cents for miles driven during 2001. Those who use this optional mileage method need not keep detailed records of actual vehicle expenses. The only thing necessary will be a detailed odometer log to justify the business use of the vehicle and percentage of business use. From 1998, this optional mileage method applies to leased vehicles.

### Official Residence Expenses

Since Oct. 1, 1990, employees who receive official residence expenses (ORE) have not been allowed to reduce their reportable income by five percent. The IRS ruling regarding ORE states that "usual expenses," defined as five percent of salary, are not deductible. Therefore the only expenses that are deductible are those above the five percent paid out of pocket. Employees should save receipts for any out-of-pocket expenses associated with their representational duties. These expenses can be deducted as miscellaneous business expenses.

### Home Ownership

Employees may deduct interest on up to $1 million of acquisition debt for loans secured by a first and/or second home. This also includes loans taken out for major home improvements. On home equity loans, interest is deductible on up to $100,000, no matter how much the home cost or what the loan is used for. The $100,000 ceiling applies to the total of all home equity loans you may have. The same generally applies to refinancing a mortgage. Points paid to obtain a refinanced loan cannot fully be deducted the same year, but must be deducted over the life of the loan. It is advisable to save the settlement sheet (HUD-1 Form) for documentation in the event your tax return is selected by the IRS for audit.

Qualified residences are defined as the taxpayer's principal residence and one other residence. The second home can be a house, condo, co-op, mobile home, or boat, as long as the structure includes basic living accommodations, including sleeping, bathroom, and cooking facilities. If the second home is a vacation property that you rent out for fewer than 15 days during the year, the income need not be reported. Rental expenses cannot be claimed either, but all property taxes and mortgage interest may be deducted.

### Rental of Home

Taxpayers who are overseas and rented their homes in 2001 can continue to deduct mortgage interest as a rental expense. Also deductible are property management fees, condo fees, depreciation costs, taxes, and all other rental expenses. Losses up to $25,000 may be offset against other income, as long as the AGI does not exceed $100,000 and the taxpayer is actively managing the property. Retaining a property manager does not mean losing this benefit.

### Sale of a Principal Residence

The current capital-gains exclusion on the sale of a principal residence on or after May 7, 1997, applies to all homeowners, regardless of their age. Previously, qualified individuals who were age 55 or older were allowed a one-time capital-gains exclusion of $125,000. Also, under previous law, if you had a gain when you sold your home, you could defer all or part of the gain if you purchased or built another home (of equal or higher value) within two years before or after the sale.

The current tax laws allow an exclusion of up to $500,000 for couples filing jointly and up to $250,000 for single taxpayers on the gain from the sale of their principal residence. All depreciation taken after May 7, 1997, will, however, be recaptured (added to income) at the time of sale, and taxed at 25 percent.

The only qualification for the capital-gains exclusion is that the house sold must have been the taxpayer's principal residence and owned by the taxpayer for at least two of the last five years prior to the date of the sale. There are some exceptions to this two-year requirement. This exclusion is not limited to a once-in-a-lifetime sale, but may be taken once every two years.

When a principal residence is sold, capital gains realized above the exclusion amounts are subject to taxation. This exclusion replaces the earlier tax-law provision that allowed both the deferral of gain and a one-time exclusion of a principal residence sale.

Many Foreign Service employees are hurt by the "two out of five years" residence provision. Despite repeated attempts, AFSA has so far been unsuccessful in getting Congress to pass legislation granting an exemption for Foreign Service personnel who cannot meet this requirement due to prolonged overseas service.

Temporary rental of the home does not necessarily disqualify one from claiming the exclusion. The new tax law requires only that you have occupied the house as your principal residence for the required period (two years out of five).

Under Internal Revenue Code Section 1031, taxpayers whose U.S. home may no longer qualify for the customary residence

replacement rule may be eligible to replace the property through a "tax-free exchange" (the so-called Starker exchange). In essence, one property being rented out may be exchanged for another, as long as that one is also rented. In exchanging the properties, capital gains tax may be deferred. Technically, a simultaneous trade of investments occurs. Actually, owners first sell their property, place the equity proceeds in escrow, identify in writing within 45 days the property they intend to acquire, and settle on the new property within 180 days, using the money held in escrow as part of the payment.

It is important to emphasize that the exchange is from one investment property to another investment property – the key factor in the IRS evaluation of an exchange transaction is the intent of the investor at the time the exchange was consummated. The IRS rules for the exchanges are complex and specific, with a number of pitfalls that can nullify the transaction. An exchange should never be attempted without assistance from a tax lawyer specializing in this field.

### Calculating Your Adjusted Basis

Many Foreign Service employees ask what items can be added to the cost basis of their homes when they are ready to sell. Money spent on "fixing up" the home for sale may be deducted from the sales price. To qualify as legitimate "fixing-up costs," the following conditions must be met: 1) the expenses must be for work performed during the 90-day period ending on the day on which the contract to sell the old residence was made; 2) the expenses must be paid on or before the 30th day after sale of the house, and 3) the expenses must not be capital expenditures for permanent improvements or replacements (these can be added to the basis of the property, original purchase price, thereby reducing the amount of profit). A new roof and kitchen counters are not "fix-up" items. But painting the house, cleaning up the garden, and making minor repairs qualify as "fixing-up costs."

### State Tax Provisions

Every active Foreign Service employee serving abroad must maintain a state of domicile in the United States, and the tax liability that the employee faces varies greatly from state to state. In addition, there are numerous regulations concerning the taxability of Foreign Service pensions and annuities, as each state has different rules about the conditions under which individuals are liable for taxes on such income.

This state guide briefly reviews the laws regarding income tax and tax on annuities and pensions as they affect Foreign Service personnel. Please note that while AFSA makes every attempt to provide the most up-to-date information, readers with specific questions should consult a tax expert in the state in question at the addresses given. Information is also available on the states' Web sites listed below.

Most Foreign Service employees have questions about their liability to pay state income taxes during periods posted overseas or assigned to Washington. It is a fundamental rule of law that all U.S. citizens must have a domicile somewhere. There are many criteria used in determining which state is a citizen's domicile. One of the strongest determinants is prolonged physical presence, a standard that Foreign Service personnel frequently cannot meet, due to overseas service.

In such cases, the states will make a determination of the individual's income tax status based on other factors, including where the individual has family ties, where he or she has been filing resident tax returns, where he or she is registered to vote or has a driver's license, where he or she owns property, or where the person has bank accounts or other financial holdings. In the case of Foreign Service employees, the domicile might be the state from which the person joined the service, where his or her home leave address is, or where he or she intends to return upon separation. For purposes of this article, the term domicile refers to legal residence; some states also define it as permanent residence. Residence refers to physical presence in the state.

Foreign Service personnel must continue to pay taxes to the state of domicile (or to the District of Columbia) while residing outside of the state, including during assignments abroad, unless the state of residence does not require it.

A non-resident, according to most states' definitions, is an individual who earns income sourced within the specific state but does not live there or is living there for only part of the year (usually, less than six months). Individuals are generally considered residents and are thus fully liable for taxes if they are domiciled in the state or if they are living in the state (usually at least six months of the year) but are not domiciled there.

Foreign Service employees residing in the metropolitan Washington area are required to pay income tax to the District, Maryland or Virginia in addition to paying tax to the state of their domicile. However, most states allow a credit, so that the taxpayer pays the higher tax rate of the two states, with each state receiving a share.

There are currently seven states with no state income tax: Alaska, Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Texas, Washington and Wyoming. In addition, New Hampshire and Tennessee have no tax on personal income but do tax profits from the sale of bonds and property.

There are also six states which, under certain conditions, do not tax income earned while the taxpayer is outside of the state: Connecticut, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The requirements are that the individual not have a permanent "place of abode" in the state, have a permanent "place of abode" outside the state, and not spend more than 30 days in the state during the tax year. Also, please note that these six states require the filing of non-resident returns for all income earned from in-state sources.

Pennsylvania holds that "quarters provided by the government at no cost to petitioner cannot be considered as maintaining a permanent place of abode." Thus members of the Foreign Service domiciled in Pennsylvania who occupy government housing overseas must pay income tax to Pennsylvania. If they rent their own home overseas, however, they will be exempt from these taxes. AFSA has not heard of a similar ruling in any of the other five states but Foreign Service employees should be aware that states could challenge the status of government housing in the future. California, Oregon and Minnesota also have rules excusing their domiciliaries from filing a resident tax return while living outside the state.

The following list gives a state-by-state overview of the latest information available on tax liability, with addresses provided to write for further information or tax forms. Tax rates are provided where possible. For further information, please contact AFSA's Labor/Management Office or the individual state tax authorities. As always, members are advised to double-check with states' tax authorities.

### State Overviews

**ALABAMA:** Individuals domiciled in Alabama are considered residents and are

subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Alabama's tax rate ranges from 2 to 5 percent, depending on income and filing status. Write: Alabama Department of Revenue, PO Box 327460, Montgomery, AL 36132-7460. Phone: (334) 242-1170. E-mail: erohelpdesk@revenue.state.al.us.

Web site: www.state.al.us.

**ALASKA:** Alaska does not tax individual income, or intangible or personal property. It has no sales and use, franchise or fiduciary tax. Write: State Office Building, 333 Willoughby Ave, 11th Floor, PO Box 110400, Juneau, AK 99811-0400. Phone: (907) 465-2300.

Web site: www.state.ak.us/tax

**ARIZONA:** Individuals domiciled in Arizona are considered residents and are taxed on any income that is included in the federal AGI, regardless of their physical presence in the state. Arizona tax rate ranges from 2.87 to 5.04 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Arizona Department of Revenue, Attention: Forms, 1600 West Monroe, Phoenix, AZ 85007-2650. Phone: (602) 255-3381 or 1-800-352-4090.

Web site: www.revenue.state.az.us

**ARKANSAS:** Individuals domiciled in Arkansas are considered residents and are taxed on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Arkansas's tax rate ranges from 1 to 7 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Department of Finance and Administration, Income Tax Forms Division, PO Box 3628, Little Rock, AR 72203-3628. Phone: (501) 682-1100 or 1-800-882-9275.

Web site: www.state.ar.us/dfa/taxes

**CALIFORNIA:** Recent changes in FTB Publication 1031 mean that Foreign Service officers domiciled in California must establish non-residency to avoid being liable for California taxes. However, a "safe harbor" provision was introduced in 1994 which provides that anyone who is domiciled in-state but is out of the state on an employment-related contract for at least 546 consecutive days will be considered a non-resident. This applies to FS employees and their spouses, but California residents are advised to study FTB Pub 1031 for exceptions and exemptions. Non-residents use Form 540NR. Write: Franchise Tax Board, Tax Forms Request, PO Box 307, Rancho Cordova CA 95741-0307. Phone: 1-800-852-5711. Web site: www.ftb.ca.gov

**COLORADO:** Individuals domiciled in Colorado are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Colorado's tax rate is a flat 4.63 percent of federal taxable income attributable to Colorado sources. Write: Department of Revenue, Taxpayer Service Division, State Capitol Annex, 1375 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80261. Phone: (303) 238-7378. E-mail: Revenue@spike.dor.state.co.us.

Web site: www.taxcolorado.com.

**CONNECTICUT:** No tax liability for out-of-state income if the individual has no permanent residence in Connecticut, has a permanent residence elsewhere, and is not present in the state more than 30 days during the tax year. No tax liability for those with permanent residence in Connecticut who live in a foreign country 450 days out of 548 days, without spending over 90 days in Connecticut. For details of this rule, go to the Web site: www.drs.state.ct.us/pubs/SNs/2000/sn00(17). Write: Department of Revenue Services, 25 Sigourney St., Hartford, CT 06106. Phone: (860) 297-5962. Fax: (860) 297-4929.

**DELAWARE:** Individuals domiciled in Delaware are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Delaware's tax rate ranges from 2.2 to 5.95 percent depending on income and filing status. The first $2,000 of income is exempt. Write: Division of Revenue, Taxpayers Assistance Section, State Office Building, 820 N. French St., Wilmington, DE 19801. Phone: (302) 577-8200.

Web site: www.state.de.us/revenue

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** Individuals domiciled in the District of Columbia are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence there. Individuals domiciled elsewhere are also considered residents for tax purposes for the portion of any calendar year in which they are physically present in the District for 183 days or more. The District's tax rate is 6 percent if income is less than $10,000, $600 plus 8% of excess over $10,000 if between $10,000 and $20,000, and $1,400 plus 9.5 percent of excess over $20,000 if over $20,000. Write: Office of Tax and Revenue, 941 N. Capitol St., N.E., Washington, DC 20002. Phone: (202) 727-4TAX.

Web site: www.dccfo.com

**FLORIDA:** No state income tax. However, Florida taxes "intangible assets," (which include stocks, bonds, mutual funds, etc.), and real property. For details, write to Tax Information Services, Florida Department of Revenue, 1379 Blountstown Highway, Tallahassee, FL 32304. Phone: 1-800-352-3671 (in Florida only) or (850) 488-6800.

Web site: sun6.dms.state.fl.us/dor

**GEORGIA:** Individuals domiciled in Georgia are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Georgia's tax rate ranges from 1 to 6 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Georgia Income Tax Forms, PO Box 49432, Atlanta, GA 30359. Phone: (404) 463-2550.

Web site: www.ga.tax.org

**HAWAII:** Individuals domiciled in Hawaii are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Hawaii's tax rate ranges from 1.6 to 8.75 percent depending on income and filing status, reducing from 1.5 to 8.5 percent for 2001. Write: Oahu District Office, Taxpayer Services Branch, PO Box 3559, Honolulu, HI 96811-3559. Phone: (808) 587-4242 or 1-800-222-3229.

Web site: www.state.hi.us/tax

**IDAHO:** Individuals domiciled in Idaho for an entire tax year are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income. Idaho offers a safe-harbor provision where a resident individual who is outside Idaho for a qualifying period of time will not be considered a resident. If an individual qualifies for the safe harbor, he would report as a nonresident and be taxed only on income from Idaho sources. A nonresident must file an Idaho income tax return if his gross income from Idaho sources is $2,500 or more. For tax year 2001 Idaho's tax rate is between 1.6 and 7.8 percent depending on earned income. To request forms write: Idaho State Tax Commission, PO Box 36, Boise, ID 83722-0410. Phone: 1-800-972-7660.

Web site: www2.state.id.us/tax

**ILLINOIS:** Individuals domiciled in Illinois are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Illinois's tax rate is a 3 percent flat rate, with a personal exemption for all taxpayers of $2,000. Write: Illinois Department of Revenue, Forms Division, 101 West Jefferson St., Springfield, IL 62794-9044. Phone: (217) 782-3336 or 1-800-732-8866.

Web site: www.revenue.state.il.us

**INDIANA:** Individuals domiciled in

Indiana are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. However, a credit is granted for any taxes paid to the state where the income was earned. Indiana's tax rate remains 3.4 percent. Write: Department of Revenue, 100 N. Senate Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46204. Phone: (317) 232-2240.

Web site: www.state.in.us/dor

**IOWA:** Individuals domiciled in Iowa are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income to the extent that income is taxable on the person's federal income tax returns. Iowa's tax rate ranges from 0.36 to 8.98 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Department of Revenue and Finance, Forms Division, Hoover State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319. Phone: (515) 281-3114 or 1-800-367-3388.

Web site: www.state.ia.us/tax

**KANSAS:** Individuals domiciled in Kansas are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Kansas tax ranges from 3.5 to 6.45 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Kansas Taxpayer Assistance Center, 915 SW Harrison, 1st Floor, Topeka, KS 66625-0001. Phone: (785) 368-8222.

Web site: www.ksrevenue.org

**KENTUCKY:** Individuals domiciled in Kentucky are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Kentucky's tax rate is 2 percent on the first $3,000 of taxable income, plus 3 percent on the next $1,000, plus 4 percent on the next $1,000, plus 5 percent on the next $1,000, and $3000 plus 6 percent on all income over $8,000. Write: Revenue Cabinet, PO Box 181, Station 56, Frankfort, KY 40602. Phone: (502) 564-4581.

Web site: revenue.state.ky.us

**LOUISIANA:** Individuals domiciled in Louisiana are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Resident individuals are entitled to a tax credit for income tax paid to another state on the amount of income earned in the other state and included in that state's taxable income. Louisiana's tax rate ranges from 2 to 6 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Department of Revenue and Taxation, Forms Division, PO Box 201, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0201. Phone: (225) 219-0102.

Web site: www.rev.state.la.us

**MAINE:** Individuals domiciled in Maine are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Credit is allowed for taxes paid in another jurisdiction. Maine's tax rate ranges from 2 to 8.5 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Bureau of Taxation, Forms Division, State Office Building, Augusta, ME 04333. Phone: (207) 626-8475.

Web site: state.me.us/revenue

**MARYLAND:** Individuals domiciled in Maryland are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Individuals domiciled elsewhere are also considered residents for tax purposes for the portion of any calendar year in which they are physically present in the state for six months or more. Maryland's tax rate is a graduated tax up to a maximum of 4.8 percent depending on income and county of residence. Baltimore City and the 23 Maryland counties also impose a local income tax, which is a percentage of the Maryland taxable income using line 31 of Form 502 or line 9 of Form 503. The local factor varies from 0.0125 to 0.0301 depending on the subdivision of domicile.


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6105-A Arlington Blvd.
Falls Church, VA 22044-2708

Write: Revenue Administration, Income Tax Division, Annapolis MD 21411. Phone: (410) 260-7980 or 1-800-638-2937. E-mail address for specific questions: taxhelp@comp.state.md.us.

Web site: www.marylandtaxes.com.

**MASSACHUSETTS:** Individuals domiciled in Massachusetts are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Salaries and most interest and dividend income are taxed at 5.6 percent for calendar year 2001. Write: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Taxpayer Services Division, PO Box 7010, Boston, MA 02204. Phone: (617) 887-MDOR; within Massachusetts: 1-800-392-6089.

Web site: www.state.ma.us/dor

**MICHIGAN:** Individuals domiciled in Michigan are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Michigan's tax rate for 2001 is 4.2 percent. Write: Department of Treasury, Forms Division, Treasury Building, Lansing, MI 48922. Phone: 1-800-487-7000.

Web site: www.treas.state.mi.us

**MINNESOTA:** Individuals domiciled in Minnesota are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Minnesota exempts domiciliaries who meet the foreign earned income exclusion, even though they may be federal employees. Minnesota's tax rate ranges from 5.35 to 7.85 percent depending on income and filing status. Joint filers with taxable income of at least $26,480, where each spouse has earned pension or social security income of at least $15,000, may be eligible for a marriage credit. Write: Department of Revenue, Forms Division, Mail Station 5510, Saint Paul, MN 55146-2220. Phone: (651) 296-3781 or 1-800-652-9094.

Web site: www.taxes.state.mn.us

**MISSISSIPPI:** Individuals domiciled in Mississippi are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Mississippi's tax rate is 3 percent on the first $5,000 of taxable income, 4 percent on the next $5,000, and 5 percent on taxable income over $10,000. Write: State Tax Commission, Forms Division, PO Box 1033, Jackson, MS 39215. Phone: (601) 923-7390.

Web site: www.mstc.state.ms.us

**MISSOURI:** No tax liability for out-of-state income if the individual has no permanent residence in Missouri, has a permanent residence elsewhere, and is not physically present in the state for more than 30 days during the tax year. Missouri calculates tax on a graduated scale up to $9,000 of taxable income (TI). Any TI over $9,000 is taxed at a rate of 6 percent. File a return yearly with an attached "Statement of Non-Residency" (Form 1040C). Also use this form if you have income of more than $600 from Missouri sources. Write: Division of Support Services, PO Box 3022, Jefferson City, MO 65105-3022. Phone: (573) 751-3505 or 1-800-877-6881. E-mail: dormail@mail.dor.state.mo.us.

Web site: www.dor.state.mo.us.

**MONTANA:** Individuals domiciled in Montana are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Montana's tax rate ranges from 2 to 11 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Montana Department of Revenue, PO Box 5805, Helena, MT 59604. Phone: (406) 444-6900.

Web site: www.discovering montana.com/revenue

**NEBRASKA:** Individuals domiciled in Nebraska are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state with credit allowed for tax paid to other states. Nebraska's tax rate ranges from 2.51 to 6.68 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Department of Revenue, Forms Division, 301 Centennial Mall South, PO Box 94818, Lincoln, NE 68509-4818. Phone: (402) 471-5729.

Web site: www.revenue.state.ne.us

**NEVADA:** No state income tax. Address: Nevada Dept of Taxation, 1550 E. College Pkwy, Suite 100, Carson City NV 89706. Phone: (775) 687-4892.

Web site: www.tax.state.nv.us

**NEW HAMPSHIRE:** No personal income tax on earned income, and no general sales tax. There is a 5 percent tax on interest and dividend income, 8.5 percent on business profits including sale of rental property. Applicable taxes apply to part-year residents. Write: Taxpayer Assistance Office, 45 Chenell Drive, PO Box 2072, Concord, NH 03302-2072. Phone: (603) 271-2186.

Web site: www.state.nh.us/revenue

**NEW JERSEY:** No tax liability for out-of-state income if the individual has no permanent residence in New Jersey, has a permanent residence elsewhere, and is not physically in the state for more than 30 days during the tax year. Filing a return is not required, but is recommended in order to preserve domicile status. Filing is required on Form 1040 NR for revenue derived from in-state sources. Tax liability is calculated as a variable lump sum plus a percentage between 1.4 and 6.4 percent of taxable income. Forms may be requested by writing to: Department of the Treasury, Division of Taxation, PO Box 266, Trenton, NJ 08625-0266. Phone: (609) 292-6400.

Web site: www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation

**NEW MEXICO:** Individuals domiciled in New Mexico are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. New Mexico has a graduated rate table with seven brackets ranging from 1.7 to 8.2 percent based upon New Mexico taxable income and filing status. Write: New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department, Tax Information and Policy Office, 1100 St. Francis Drive, PO Box 630, Santa Fe, NM 87504-0630. Phone: (505) 827-0700.

Web site: www.state.nm.us/tax

**NEW YORK:** No tax liability for out-of-state income if the individual has no permanent residence in New York, has a permanent residence elsewhere, and is not present in the state more than 30 days during the tax year. Filing a return is not required, but it is recommended to preserve domicile status. Highest tax rate in New York State is 6.85 per cent and in New York City it is 3.592 per cent. Filing is required of Form IT-203-I for revenue derived from New York sources. Write: Department of Taxation and Finance, Technical Services Bureau, W.A. Harriman Campus, Albany, NY 12227. Phone: 1-800-225-5829.

Web site: www.tax.state.ny.us

**NORTH CAROLINA:** Individuals domiciled in North Carolina are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. The tax rate ranges from 6 to 7.75 percent depending on income and filing status. North Carolina also imposes a "use tax" on purchases made outside the state for use in North Carolina. Write: Department of Revenue, PO Box 25000, Raleigh, NC 27640. Phone: (919) 733-4684.

Web site: www.dor.state.nc.us

**NORTH DAKOTA:** Individuals domiciled in North Dakota are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the

state. Tax rates vary according to income and whether the standard method (Form ND-1) or the optional method (Form ND-2) is used. Write: Office of State Tax Commissioner, State Capitol, 600 E. Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58505-0599. Phone: (701) 328-2770.

Web site: www.taxdepartment.com

**OHIO:** Individuals domiciled in Ohio are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income. Ohio residents are given a tax credit to reduce the Ohio income tax due if another state or the District of Columbia taxed part or all of their income. Ohio part-year residents are allowed a tax credit for income not earned or received in Ohio for the period of time they resided in another state. Ohio's tax rate ranges from 0.743 to 7.5 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Ohio Department of Taxation, Taxpayers Services Division, 800 Freeway Drive North, Columbus, OH 43329. Phone: 1-800-282-1780.

Web site: www.state.oh.us/tax

**OKLAHOMA:** Individuals domiciled in Oklahoma are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Oklahoma's tax rate is based upon income and various exemptions. Write: Oklahoma Tax Commission, Taxpayer Services Division, 2501 Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73194-0009. Phone: (405) 521-3160.

Web site: www.oktax.state.ok.us

**OREGON:** Individuals domiciled in Oregon are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. However, under a 1999 law, Oregon exempts domiciliaries who meet the foreign residence requirement for the foreign earned income exclusion, even though they may be federal employees. Oregon's tax rates range from 5 to 9 percent of taxable income. Write: Department of Revenue, Revenue Building, 1st Floor, Room 135, 955 Center Street N.E., Salem, OR 97310. Phone: (503) 378-4988.

Web site: www.dor.state.or.us

**PENNSYLVANIA:** No tax liability for out-of-state income if the individual has no permanent residence in the state, has a permanent residence elsewhere, and spends no more than 30 days in the state during the tax year. Filing a return is not required, but it is recommended to preserve domicile status. File on form PA40 for all income derived from Pennsylvania sources. Pennsylvania does not consider government quarters overseas to be a "permanent place of abode elsewhere," so Foreign Service PA residents abroad in government quarters must continue to pay Pennsylvania income tax. Pennsylvania's tax rate is a flat 2.8 percent. Write: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Revenue, Taxpayer Services Department, Harrisburg, PA 17128-1061. Phone: (717) 787-8201. E-mail: parev@state.pa.us.

Web site: www.revenue.state.pa.us.

**PUERTO RICO:** Individuals who are domiciled in Puerto Rico are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the commonwealth. Normally, you may claim a credit against Puerto Rico tax for any federal taxes paid. Address: Departamento de Hacienda, PO Box 50065, San Juan, PR 00902-6265. Phone: General Inquiries: (787) 721-2020, ext. 3611 or 1-800-981-9236. E-mail: support@hacienda.gobierno.pr.

Web site: www.hacienda.gobierno.pr

**RHODE ISLAND:** Individuals domiciled in Rhode Island are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Although Rhode Island tax for the 2001 tax year is now being calculated based on the federal tax income, it will still work out as about 25.5 percent of the federal income tax liability. Write: Rhode Island Division of Taxation, Taxpayer Assistance Section, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908-5801. Phone: (401) 222-1040.

Web site: www.tax.state.ri.us

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Individuals domiciled in South Carolina are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. South Carolina's tax rate ranges from 2.5 percent at the lowest end to 7 percent for income over $12,000. Write: South Carolina Tax Commission, Forms Division, 301 Gervais Street, PO Box 125, Columbia, SC 29214.

Web site: www.sctax.org

**SOUTH DAKOTA:** No state income tax. Address: South Dakota Dept of Revenue, 445 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501-3185. Phone: 1-800-829-9188.

Web site: www.state.sd.us/revenue

**TENNESSEE:** No personal income tax. Tennessee imposes a 6 percent tax on dividends and certain types of interest income received by Tennessee residents. Write: Department of Revenue, Andrew Jackson State Office Building, Nashville, TN 37242. Phone: (615) 253-0600.

Web site: www.state.tn.us/revenue

**TEXAS:** No state income tax. Write: Tax Policy Division, Comptroller of Public Accounts, PO Box 13528, Capitol Station, Austin, TX 78711-3528. Phone: 1-800-252-5555. E-mail: tax.help@cpa.state.tx.us.

Web site: www.window.state.tx.us.

**UTAH:** Individuals domiciled in Utah are considered residents and are subject to Utah state tax. Utah requires that all federal adjusted gross income reported on the federal return be reported on the state return regardless of the taxpayer's physical presence in the state. Utah's highest tax rate is 7 percent. Write: Utah State Tax Commission, Taxpayer Services Division, 210 North 1950 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84134. Phone: (801) 297-2200 or 1-800-662-4335.

Web site: www.utah.gov/living/taxes.html.

**VERMONT:** Individuals domiciled in Vermont are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Tax rates should be obtained from the tax tables in the Vermont income tax booklet or from the Vermont website. Write: Vermont Department of Taxes, Taxpayer Services Division, Pavilion Office Building, Montpelier, VT 05609-1401. Phone: (802) 828-2865. E-mail: vttaxdept@tax.state.vt.us.

Web site: www.state.vt.us/tax.

**VIRGINIA:** Individuals domiciled in Virginia are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of their physical presence in the state. Individuals domiciled elsewhere are also considered residents for tax purposes for the portion of any calendar year in which they are physically present in the state for 183 days or more. Individual tax rates are: 2 percent if taxable income (TI) is less than $3,000, $60 plus 3 percent of excess over $3,000 if TI is between $3,000 and $5,000, $120 plus 5 percent of excess over $5,000 if TI is between $5,000 and $17,000, and $720 plus 5.75 percent of TI over $17,000. Write: Department of Taxation, Office of Customer Services, PO Box 1115, Richmond, VA 23218-1115. Phone: (804) 367-8031. E-mail: tax-indivrtn@state.va.us.

Web site: www.tax.state.va.us.

**WASHINGTON:** No state income tax. No tax on intangibles such as bank accounts, stocks and bonds. Address: Washington Dept of Revenue, General Administration Building, PO Box 47450, Olympia, WA 98504-7450. Phone: (360) 786-6100 or 1-800-647-7706.

Web site: www.dor.wa.gov

**WEST VIRGINIA:** No tax liability for out-of-state income if the individual has no permanent residence in West Virginia, has a permanent residence elsewhere, and spends no more than 30 days of the tax year in West Virginia. Filing a return is not required, but it is recommended to preserve domicile status. Filing is required on form IT-140-NR for all income derived from West Virginia sources. Tax rates range from 3 to 6.5 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: The Department of Tax and Revenue, Taxpayer Services Division, PO Box 3784, Charleston, WV 25337-3784. Phone: (304) 558-3333 or 1-800-982-8297.

Web site: www.state.wv.us/taxdiv

**WISCONSIN:** Individuals domiciled in Wisconsin are considered residents and are subject to tax on their entire income regardless of where the income is earned. Wisconsin's current tax rate ranges from 4.73 to 6.75 percent depending on income and filing status. Write: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, Audit Bureau, PO Box 8906, Madison, WI 53708-8906. Phone: (608) 266-2772.

Web site: www.dor.state.wi.us

**WYOMING:** No state income tax. No tax on intangibles such as bank accounts, stocks or bonds. Address: Wyoming Dept. of Revenue, Herschler Building, 122 West 25th St., Cheyenne, WY 82002-0110. Phone: (307) 777-7961. E-mail: dor@state.wy.us.

Web site: revenue.state.wy.us.

### State Pension & Annuity Tax

The laws regarding the taxation of Foreign Service annuities vary greatly from state to state. In addition to those states that have no income tax or no tax on personal income, there are several states that do not tax income derived from pensions and annuities. Idaho taxes Foreign Service annuities while exempting certain portions of those of the Civil Service.

**ALABAMA:** Full exemption. Federal pensions are not taxable.

**ALASKA:** No personal income tax.

**ARIZONA:** Up to $2,500 of U.S. Government pension income is exempt.

**ARKANSAS:** Up to $6,000 exempt.

**CALIFORNIA:** Fully taxable.

**COLORADO:** Up to $24,000 exempt if age 65 or over. Up to $20,000 exempt if aged between 55 and 64.

**CONNECTICUT:** Fully taxable for residents.

**DELAWARE:** Two exclusions: (1) Up to $2,000 exempt if earned income is less than $2,500 and Adjusted Gross Income is less than $10,000; if married and filing jointly, up to $4,000 exempt if earned income is less than $5,000 and AGI is under $20,000. This is applicable if 60 years or older or totally disabled. (2) If under age 60, the amount of the exclusion is $2,000 or the amount of the pension (whichever is less) and for age 60 or older, the amount of the exclusion is $12,500 or the amount of the pension and eligible retirement income (ERI) whichever is less. The combined total of pension and ERI may not exceed $12,500 per person age 60 or older.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:** Pension or annuity exclusion of $3,000 if 62 years or older.

**FLORIDA:** No personal income tax, but Florida has an "intangibles tax."

**GEORGIA:** Up to $13,500 exempt for those 62 years or older or permanently and totally disabled, rising to $14,000 for the 2002 tax year.

**HAWAII:** Government-funded portion not taxed; employee-funded portion taxed at standard rates.

**IDAHO:** Foreign Service retirees whose annuities are paid from the FSPS are fully taxed on their pensions. Those persons retired under the Civil Service Retirement


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Act are exempt up to $18,432 for a single return and up to $27,648 if filing jointly. Up to $18,432 is exempt for unmarried survivor of annuitant. Must be 65 years or older, or 62 years or older and disabled. Amount reduced dollar for dollar by social security benefits.

**ILLINOIS:** Full exemption; U.S. government pensions are not taxed.

**INDIANA:** Up to $2,000 exemption for most 65 or older, reduced dollar for dollar by Social Security benefits.

**IOWA:** Fully taxable. However, there is a pension/retirement income exclusion of up to $6,000 for individual and up to $12,000 for married taxpayers who are disabled or are 55 years of age or older, or are a surviving spouse or other survivor of the annuitant. The same income tax rates apply to annuities as other incomes.

**KANSAS:** Full exemption, government pensions are not taxed.

**KENTUCKY:** Government pensions attributable to service before Jan. 1, 1998, are not taxed. In future, the portion of annuity income attributable to service after Dec. 31, 1997, will be taxed at the appropriate rate, but is eligible for the pension exclusion of up to $37,500 in 2001 (up from $36,414 in 2000).

**LOUISIANA:** Up to $6,000 exempt if 65 years or older. ($12,000 if both filers over 65).

**MAINE:** Recipients of a government-sponsored pension or annuity are deductible up to $6,000 on income that is included in their federal AGI, reduced by all social security and railroad benefits.

**MARYLAND:** For individuals 65 years or older or permanently disabled, federal pensions and annuities, including Social Security, may be excluded up to a maximum of $16,500 under certain conditions. Eligibility determination is required. For other annuitants, the total amount is taxable.

**MASSACHUSETTS:** Full exemption; U.S. government contributory pensions are not taxed.

**MICHIGAN:** Full exemption; federal government pensions are deducted from Michigan taxable income.

**MINNESOTA:** Certain persons over 65 with incomes under $42,000 may be eligible for a subtraction. The maximum subtraction is $12,000 married joint and $6,000 single, which is reduced dollar for dollar by untaxed Social Security benefits, and by one dollar for each two dollars of income over $18,000 for married and $14,500 for single. The marriage credit also applies to annuity and pension recipients.

**MISSISSIPPI:** Full exemption, U.S. government pensions are not taxed.

**MISSOURI:** Up to $6,000 exempt if the pension income is less than $32,000 when married filing jointly, $16,000 if married filing separately, or $25,000 for a single or head of household filer.

**MONTANA:** Up to $3,600 exemption if the pension income is less than $32,000.

**NEBRASKA:** Fully taxable.

**NEVADA:** No personal income tax.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE:** No personal income tax; federal pensions are not taxed.

**NEW JERSEY:** Pensions and annuities from civilian government service are subject to state income tax with exemptions for those who are age 62 or older, or totally and permanently disabled. Singles and heads of households can exclude up to $11,250; married filing jointly up to $15,000; married filing separately up to $7,500 each.

**NEW MEXICO:** All pensions and annuities are fully taxed.

**NEW YORK:** Full exemption, U.S. government pensions and annuities are not taxed.

**NORTH CAROLINA:** The "Bailey" decision resulted in any federal retiree who had 5 years of creditable service in a federal retirement system on Aug. 12, 1989 receiving a refund and an exemption from North Carolina tax in the future. Those who do not have 5 years of creditable service on Aug. 12, 1989, must pay NC tax on their federal annuities. Up to $4,000 of any federal annuity income is exempt.

**NORTH DAKOTA:** All pensions and annuities are fully taxed, except first $5,000 which is exempt, less any Social Security payments, but only if the individual chooses to use Form ND-2 (optional method). Individuals are cautioned to check both Form ND-1 and Form ND-2 to ascertain which one yields the lowest tax for the year. Qualifying for the exclusion does not mean that Form ND-2 is the better form to choose.

**OHIO:** Taxpayers over 65 may take a $50 credit. In addition, Ohio gives a tax credit based on the amount of the retirement income, reaching a maximum of $200 for any retirement income over $8,000.

**OKLAHOMA:** Up to $5,500 exempt on all federal pensions.

**OREGON:** Generally, all retirement income is subject to Oregon tax when received by an Oregon resident. This includes non-Oregon source retirement income. However, federal retirees who retired on or before Oct. 1, 1991 may exempt all of their federal pension; those who worked both before and after that date must prorate their exemption using the instructions in the tax booklet. Oregon-source retirement income received by nonresidents who are not domiciled in Oregon is not subject to taxation by Oregon.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Full exemption for government pensions and social security.

**PUERTO RICO:** There is an exemption of $8,000 on income received from pension accounts if you are under 60. Over 60, the exemption is $11,000.

**RHODE ISLAND:** Fully taxable. No exemptions available.

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** On retirement income: under age 65 a $3,000 exemption may be taken; over 65 years of age a $10,000 exemption may be taken on retirement income, and an additional $15,000 exemption may be taken on income regardless of source.

**SOUTH DAKOTA:** No personal income tax.

**TENNESSEE:** Full exemption; government pensions are not taxed.

**TEXAS:** No personal income tax.

**UTAH:** Under age 65 a $4,800 exemption may be taken. However, the deduction is reduced $.50 for every $1.00 that the Federal Adjusted Gross Income exceeds $32,000 (married filing joint) or $25,000 (single). Over 65 years of age a $7,500 exemption may be taken for each individual. However, the exemption is reduced $.50 for every $1.00 that the Federal Adjusted Gross Income exceeds $32,000 (married filing joint) or $25,000 (single).

**VERMONT:** Fully taxable.

**VIRGINIA:** Age deduction of $12,000, if over age 65, and $6,000 if age 62 to 64. All taxpayers receive an additional $800 exemption.

**WASHINGTON:** No personal income tax.

**WEST VIRGINIA:** Up to $8,000 of income received from any source is exempt if 65 years or older.

**WISCONSIN:** Pensions and annuities are fully taxable. However, benefits received from a federal retirement system account established before Dec. 31, 1963, are not taxable.

**WYOMING:** No personal income tax. □

*James Yorke, who compiled the tax guide, would like to thank M. Bruce Hirshorn, Foreign Service Tax Counsel, for his help in preparing this article.*

V.P. VOICE: **RETIREE** ■ BY ROBERT W. "BILL" FARRAND

# AFSA Needs Active Retirees



Looking back over my first six months in this job, I thought I would share with you some impressions about the state of AFSA and the role the retiree community — you and I —play in it. In December, the AFSA Governing Board met to discuss the budget for 2002. Tom Boyatt, our treasurer, delivered a sober report that ended with the statement: "In times when many businesses and organizations are struggling, AFSA is fortunate. Through prudent management, our organization is stable and able to maintain our current level programs and service to members." That was the good news. The bad news was that even though membership numbers were up slightly from last year because of the intake of new recruits —which should total some 1,650 over three years — revenue from dues was down. The reason is that our new junior members pay lower dues than those of retiring senior members who tend to drop membership in AFSA as they ride off into the sunset. Why is that?

One reason seems to be that as we retire we lose the privilege of having our dues deducted from our paychecks as we could do on active service. The problem lies with State's software, which I understand is being upgraded so that the dues check-off option can be extended to retirees as well as to active employees. This new feature should be ready by spring. When it becomes an option, I hope you will all respond positively and in large numbers, signing up to have your AFSA dues automatically deducted from your annuity check. Our colleagues who permitted their AFSA memberships to lapse on retirement need to be encouraged to come back on board under the payroll deduction system. The larger AFSA's membership, the more clout it will have in looking after your interests.

Our colleagues who permitted their AFSA memberships to lapse on retirement need to be encouraged to come back on board. The larger AFSA's membership, the more clout it will have in looking after your interests.

Speaking of your interests, my January "Speaking Out" in the *Journal* urged the State Department to use AFSA's database of over 200 retired members as an invaluable resource for the war on terrorism. To add your name, go to the skills database on the AFSA Web site at www.afsa.org/skills/skillsdata.html. Your e-mail address is your user name and your last name is your password. AFSA needs to have your e-mail address on file in order for you to be able to access the system. If we do not have your e-mail address, please send it to member@afsa.org with your full name.

Several of you have written concerning the issue of virtual locality pay, currently before the Congress. The burning question is whether the law, once passed, will be "grandfathered" to cover those who recently retired from overseas posts rather than in Washington and are receiving a somewhat smaller annuity. Regrettably, the answer is "no" because of the constitutional prohibition against ex post facto laws.

Finally, our thanks to all of you who took the time to complete and return the *FSJ* reader survey. Retiree responses outnumbered all others. Your ideas and suggestions for improving the *Journal* were gratefully received and culled for useful ideas to improve the magazine. □

**Video • Continued from page 1**

Wilcox emphasized the critical ongoing role played by U.S. diplomats in forging an international coalition against terrorism as well as intensive efforts to restrain violence between Israelis and Palestinians and other issues. The audience engaged him in a vigorous question and answer exchange focused on possible outcomes of U.S. efforts against al-Qaida. Wilcox closed with an appeal to audience members to urge their congressional representatives to provide sufficient funding to support U.S. diplomacy over the long term.

The organizers of the town meeting reported to AFSA that their audience was highly impressed by Amb. Wilcox's concise presentation and his effective responses to some 16 questions. They also praised the technical quality of the two-way video linkup.

The video conference format is a convenient, low-cost communication tool that AFSA can utilize to reach target audiences nationwide.

The superintendent of Warsaw schools said: "I had no idea such a clear, frank dialogue with a former U.S. official could be done this easily. Our faculty and students are really excited about this, and would like to request other programs about careers in the Foreign Service and other topics."

The video conference format is a convenient, low-cost communication tool that AFSA can utilize to reach target audiences nationwide, especially in those more remote, smaller cities not easily accessible to our retired Foreign Service speakers. Almost all mid-sized communities in the country now have basic video conferencing facilities.

AFSA appreciates the use of State's video conferencing facilities, and would like to give special thanks to Sanda Bruckner of State's International Information Programs division, who managed this program from State's studio. AFSA is planning follow-up programs in coming months. □

Legislative • Continued from page 1

members and Senior Executive Service members when giving Presidential Performance Awards.

### Other Legislation

**Capital Gains Tax Exclusion:** AFSA got closer than ever before to success in getting new legislation passed that would change the tax code to shield Foreign Service and uniformed military employees from unreasonable residency requirements for the exclusion of the tax on capital gains from the sale of a primary residence. Currently, Foreign Service and Uniformed Services employees must pay capital gains taxes if they did not live in their principal residence two of the last five years prior to selling it. AFSA has worked closely with the Uniformed Services Coalition and others to find a legislative vehicle to carry the provision exempting FS and uniformed military employees from the residency requirement and to inform members of Congress about the issue.

There is now widespread support for the provision, including support from Secretary Powell, the Office of Management and Budget, the military service chiefs and 40 senators. The vehicle found to carry the provision was the president's economic stimulus tax package. Agreement on the package failed to come together in the final days of 2001, and it did not pass. If it is not revived, AFSA will look for another vehicle. The support that AFSA and others have garnered for the provision gives reason for hope of passage in 2002.

**Compensation for Terrorism Victims:** PL 107-77, passed on Nov. 28, seeks to establish "a comprehensive program to ensure fair, equitable, and prompt compensation for all United States victims of international terrorism (or relatives of deceased United States victims of international terrorism) that occurred or occurs on or after November 1, 1979." The original draft legislation covered only victims of terrorist acts that occurred after 1997, designed to begin with the East Africa embassy bombings of August 1998, but was later changed to reach back to 1979. AFSA supports this important legislation. □

V.P. VOICE: **FCS** ■ BY JAMES JOY, ACTING VICE PRESIDENT

# Tenure Impasse



In June, AFSA reached agreement with FCS management on revised Policy and Precepts for the granting of tenure. Last August, however, AFSA was notified that, as a result of a "technical review," management required changes. The new language would widen the discretionary capacity of the director general to contravene the recommendations of the Commissioning and Tenure Board. AFSA objected, but finally submitted counterproposals at the end of September. Formal negotiations on Nov. 27 did not reconcile the differences. At the heart of the controversy is management's contention that the tenure decision is vested in the director general. The DG has the right to accept or reject the board's recommendations. In refusing to grant tenure following a board recommendation, no reasons have to be given. Indeed, a denial can be based on the simple fact that the DG does not like the candidate. The DG is not bound by the tenure precepts and does not have to give any justification for the decision. In a similar vein, the DG can grant tenure even though the board recommends against it.

The AFSA position is diametrically opposed. For us the tenure decision is vested in a board. This principle is clearly stated in 3 FAM 2246, which deals with commissioning and tenure in the Department of State. The lead principle section of the first subsection, on policy, says: "The decision on whether to tenure a candidate will be made by the Board." In our negotiations, Commerce management rejected State's approach and noted that the FAM was not binding on FCS. AFSA General Counsel Sharon Papp pointed out to Commerce management sections in the 1980 Foreign Service Act that clearly vest tenuring in a board. FCS is bound by that law.

At the heart of the controversy is management's contention that the tenure decision is vested in the director general.

It appears that the issue is headed for the Impasse Panel and that it may be months before it is resolved. This is most unfortunate. By requiring changes, the technical review prevented the new tenure policy from taking effect. This leaves a number of FCS officer candidates in limbo. During the mid-1990s, FCS management was pushing to "integrate" its Foreign Service officers with its GS employees. As part of that scheme, new Foreign Service officers were required to complete two years in a domestic office during their first seven years in the service. Often the domestic assignment was the first tour of duty. With three years service abroad required for tenure, plus proficiency in a foreign language, it is evident that for many, it would be virtually impossible to get it all done in the allotted five years. The new policy would have relaxed the three-year abroad requirement allowing candidates to be considered for tenure after three full years of service, including one overseas.

With this technical review, FCS management has chosen a path that no other foreign affairs agency has taken. They have also put at risk numerous career candidates who were assigned to domestic offices as a consequence of management's ill-considered integration policy. □

FROM THE HILL

# Frequent Flyers: Keep Your Miles!

The State Department succeeded in getting the Foreign Service included in the part of the 2002 defense authorization bill, signed into law by President Bush on Dec. 28, which permits military personnel to keep frequent-flyer miles received while traveling on government business. The provision allows Foreign Service employees to retain travel benefits they previously had to forfeit, such as frequent-flyer miles, upgrades and access to airline clubs or facilities. Family members are covered as well.

As quoted in the *Washington Post*, Senator Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., who supported the legislation, said "This initiative will correct a glaring inequity that exists between government and private-sector employees for work-related travel."

The Bureau of Administration's Logistics office (A/LM) is currently revising department regulations to implement the new legislation. In the meantime, State Department employees and family members may begin taking advantage of the new legislation immediately. Foreign Service employees of other agencies are also immediately eligible and should go to www.policyworks.gov, and click on "Travel Management Policy" for direction. One remaining question is whether the travel benefits will be taxable as income: an IRS decision is pending. For more details on the new policy, go to GSA's Travel Advisory "Using Frequent Traveler Benefits" on the AFSA Web site at www.afsa.org/news/travel/html. Also see State 05844. □



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# Why Do They Hate Us? A View from Mexico

Here is another answer to the question many Americans have been asking since Sept. 11.

*By John Dickson*

Why do they hate us? That question has been on the minds of many Americans ever since the horrific events of Sept. 11, 2001.

To some extent, the explanation lies in the phenomenon known as *Schadenfreude*, the great German term which captures in one word the (sometimes) secret joy people take in seeing someone else's discomfort, pain or defeat — even, or perhaps especially, a friend's. But I believe that sentiment is just one part of the answer to the question.

For those of us in the Foreign Service who have been living with this question and the reality of resentment and hate towards the U.S. throughout our careers, it seems logical to look overseas for some answers.

Shortly after Sept. 11, the banner headline in *Jornada*, a left-leaning Mexico City newspaper, mocked us yet again for being so unaware of how the world supposedly views Americans: "Bush: *Amazed* the World Hates USA." And the truth is, to that paper's readership, it is plainly obvious, and understandable, why the world hates the U.S. And yet it is equally true that many Americans *were* amazed at the depth of hatred which could produce such horror and rejoicing over our tragedy.

Not just in Mexico, but in many other parts of the world, we have been hearing the word "arrogant" a lot used recently to describe us. Our critics feel that we are rubbing in their faces our status as the world's only remaining superpower whenever we call ourselves the "indispensable nation," however accurate that characterization may be. They resent having to rely on us to promote world stability, peace and prosperity.

This is completely understandable, to be sure. To use a sports analogy, the side which dwells on the game long after it is over is usually the losing side, not the winner. Thus, here in Mexico, they talk about 1848 as if it were yesterday. They have a museum dedicated to the interventions of, principally, the U.S., while we have no such institution dedicated to our victories over Mexico or any other nation. Indeed, our limited collective sense of history barely goes back to the 1994 Mexican peso bailout. By contrast, the same Mexican paper which printed the headline above also printed a list of all U.S. military interventions around the world in the last 50 years, filling up a whole page of small type. There are those who know that list by heart, and they are undoubtedly the same who said that on Sept. 11, the U.S. "was reaping what it had sown."

***Resentment of the U.S. is both more than it seems, and also less.***

They also don't like that we seemingly haven't cared what they think of us. We just keep moving ahead, coming out with a newer and better model of a product, or a city center, or an idea, every year or half-year, leaving them further and further behind. Meanwhile, their voices get even louder and opinions even shriller because we ignored them the first time around. I remember one African politician who once said that each country ought

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to be represented in our legislature because what is decided in our Congress affects other countries, and they should have a say in decisions which affect their country.

Our critics also hate us both because we are rich and because, they insist, we got that way at their expense. Global trade (NAFTA being the example that hits closest to home for many Mexicans) only helps the United States, they complain, allowing us to penetrate their markets without giving them leverage to compete with us. They see their consumers choosing to buy *our* movies, our corn, our sneakers and so many other products and services — decisions which collectively put their uncompetitive industries and their farmers out of work. But such short-sighted, zero-sum analysis overlooks the new industries in their own countries created to satisfy the needs of ever-expanding global trade as well as the elevation of their own living standards. It also disregards one undisputable fact of the past decade: the U.S. has been the world's principal consumer, strengthening the economies of many countries through our purchases.

And then there's the criticism which crosses into the category of misinformation, deliberate or not, and helps fill up the well of resentment. Mexicans know all too well the political uses to which past governments here put their routine, public expressions of anti-Americanism. And on a personal level, take the example of a political science professor who once told me that if the U.S. divided up its military budget among the total population of the world, every person on earth would have $50 million dollars! After asking him if I could use his calculator to do my taxes, I wondered how many classes he had told this "fact" to over the course of his career. It's no wonder there's so much resentment of us in Mexico and elsewhere.

***To use a sports analogy, the side which dwells on the game long after it is over is usually the losing side, not the winner.***

### Double Standards

We also hear the term "double standard" as our critics talk about our behavior around the world. They know we are a great nation with great ideals, and they hold us to them. They also are quick to point out when we don't live up to them, and even more so when we don't live up to the ideals which we expect from others.

For example, a Mexican university student said to me recently that maybe it is time for us to be a little self-critical, to review our policies. My answer to him was: welcome to the land of self-criticism! We are constantly reviewing our actions, analyzing them. It is part of our system, part of our character, part of the way we become better. We evaluate, tinker, and make it better. And move on.

But that self-criticism is misinterpreted overseas and often used against us. People who criticize us outside of our country are often reading our own newspapers and magazines or watching our own television and using the same arguments which are part of our everyday democratic discourse to criticize our failures. They cite the same examples, they quote our own pundits and scholars. But they don't complete the loop because they're not part of the other side of that self-criticism — the side which uses the criticism to self-correct and improve. So all that's left is the criticism, filling up the well of resentment.

One ironic example of this is that over the past decade, we have criticized ourselves for not being tolerant enough in our country, and we have designed a national campaign around building tolerance, around valuing as a strength our diversity. And so our critics overseas have latched on to our concern over intolerance in the U.S., and fail to see the contradiction as they use the most intolerant of language in their criticism of us.

Yet our critics, too, have a double standard. They know we are a powerful nation, and they depend on our leadership. They resent our power on the one hand, but they also exaggerate it, hating us when we fail to use our clout to solve their problems, whether it is the Palestine-Israel conflict or world poverty. They also resent us using our power to advance our own interests. And, quite frankly, we often define our interests in ways which reflect short-term, parochial gains, rather than taking into account broader, global benefits which would benefit us more in the long term.

On a more "micro" level, consider two different sets of Mexicans who visited the U.S. embassy in Mexico City on the same day not long ago. While 350 demonstrators were out in front burning our flag (a not uncommon event, admittedly), another 2,500 people came throughout the day — as they do every other day — to get visas to travel to the U.S. Yet which group got their picture in the newspaper as representative of Mexican attitudes towards the U.S.?

Similarly, no prizes for guessing which of the following two groups was more criticized in Mexico for restricting the press: the Taliban, who initially kicked out all "infidel" journalists, arrested those who have tried to sneak back in their country and actually murdered journalists, or the U.S. government, which committed the "sin" of asking the main television networks not to air bin Laden's video message in its entirety because of the possibility that he might have been using that low-tech means to communicate messages to terrorist cells in the U.S.? Indeed, several respected Mexican commentators have dismissed our television networks as "arms of the Pentagon" as a result of their decision to comply with the administration's request.

Finally, a poll in the Mexican daily *Reforma* at the end of September indicated that 70 percent of Mexicans thought that Mexico should adopt a neutral stand in the current conflict. And yet, when asked if they expected the U.S. to support Mexico if it were confronted with terrorism, 70 percent of the same respondents said yes.

### The Rest of the Story

As such examples show, in the end, resentment of the U.S. is both more than it seems, and less. Much of it is mixed with admiration, though the line between the two emotions can be thin and blurred.

A recent Mexican newspaper article attempting to describe the United States consisted of nothing but a free-association list, a full column of names, places, and events which undoubtedly inspired either admiration or resentment in its readers. The list covered cultural figures (such as George Gershwin, Andy Warhol, Janis Joplin), shopping items or travel destinations (Barbie, 5th Avenue, the San Diego Zoo, pretzels and waffles), and then historic, political or military terms or events (Monroe Doctrine, drug trafficking, smart bombs, Grenada). Like the list; most Mexicans' feelings about the U.S. are a jumble of mixed, contradictory and fluid memories and associations.

***Our character as a nation has been on full display, both in New York and elsewhere, from Sept. 11 forward.***

In fact, such a list becomes a Rorschach ink blot, where the sum total of the positive and negative views would determine where one's views reside on the continuum of resentment to admiration.

For our part, I was not surprised by the American response when we realized that some people in the world hate us enough to do what they did on Sept. 11. Our character as a nation has been on full display, both in New York and elsewhere, from that date forward. We will not, as a nation, cry in our beer. Self-pity is not part of our character. We will do as we have always done. We will reflect and evaluate, come up with a plan and make it better. And get back to work.

We are already looking inward to see what we did to create that resentment. We have made some immediate corrections, such as paying U.N. dues and waiving the irritant of drug certification. Commentators in prominent U.S. newspapers are questioning the cutbacks in exchange programs and international broadcasting, and in public diplomacy generally. We are already getting to work on doing a better job of communicating what we stand for, and I am confident we will come up with a plan to reach youthful populations overseas, particularly in the Middle East.

But ours is not the only country which should be using this opportunity for a little introspection or midcourse correction. Our universities should not be the only ones revising their curricula to make them more international, and our media should not be the only ones to reexamine their content for accuracy or to include other perspectives.

Above all, we need to keep in perspective the handful of foreign demonstrators burning the U.S. flag. Yes, some in the world do indeed hate us, but many admire us. Thus, we should take solace from the moving St. Paul's Cathedral memorial service for the victims of the Sept. 11 tragedy, and resolve from the less widespread news of Mexicans resident in the U.S. who were so angry at the terrorists that they wanted to enlist in our armed services. And let us choose to remember the many spontaneous and anonymous gestures of support such as the flowers placed in front of many of our embassies and consulates around the world and the thousands of cards, notes, and letters sent to our posts around the world even by people who have never been to the United States. [*Editor's Note:* See "FSOs and FSNs Recall Sept. 11," Nov. 2001 *FSJ*, and "FS Personnel Recall Sept. 11, Part II," Dec. 2001 *FSJ*.] ■

# My 30 Years in Africa: Still Searching for Answers

Given Africa's huge bounty of resources, and the billions of dollars expended since independence on thousands of development projects, why aren't the lives of most Africans better? Here is a former FSO's analysis.

*By Mark G. Wentling*

When I first arrived in Togo on Sept. 20, 1970, I planned to do a single stint as a Peace Corps volunteer in the village of Agu, and then return to my university studies in the States. But it did not take long for me to realize that while I had been born a white man in Kansas, Africa was my true home. In 1972, I married a woman I met in Agu, with whom I had three children before we divorced 20 years later, and I later lived with a Kenyan woman before starting a new family with a woman from Zambia.

This full course in African family and village life was duly noted when I joined the Foreign Service in 1977, serving throughout Africa until my retirement from the Foreign Service in 1996.

My various assignments doing development and humanitarian assistance work all over the continent for the Peace Corps, USAID and as an independent consultant have enabled me to meet national leaders such as Ethiopian President Zenawi Meles, who helped us hammer out agreements among Somali factions — and (years before) the man he had ousted, Mengistu Haile Mariam, whom I once saw parading incongruously down Haile Selassie Avenue in Nairobi with Kenyan President Daniel Moi. And not long after I arrived in Togo, I saw another parade with Congolese (then Zairian) President Mobutu Sese Seko helping Togolese President Gnassingbe Eyadema kick off a bizarre "authenticity" campaign.

I've also observed some moving moments in African history, including Sao Tome's first Independence Day celebration and South Africa before and after apartheid. I've served as an election observer in Benin and Zanzibar, been evacuated to Kenya from several different countries, experienced the chaos of Lagos, observed the beginnings of the post-Kaunda era in Zambia and the post-Banda period in Malawi, visited teeming refugee camps in Tanzania, and been chased out of eastern Congo (formerly Zaire) by troops fleeing the first round of rebel attacks. Recently, I had the pleasure of shaking hands with President Joaquim Chissano, who continues to lead the rebuilding of war-torn Mozambique.

My profession has also brought me in close contact with all the organizations, large and small, on the development and humanitarian assistance scene in Africa, as well as hundreds of diplomats, missionaries, scholars, writers, foreign businessmen and travelers.

But it is the thousands of individual Africans from all over the continent who have made the deepest impression upon me.

As I have lived among Africans and tried to help improve their lives, I keep returning to one fundamental question: Given Africa's astonishing bounty of resources, and the billions of dollars expended since independence on thousands of development projects across the continent, why aren't the lives of most Africans better? Indeed, the average African is poorer today than he or she was 30 years ago, something true almost nowhere else on the planet.

Start with the obvious: Much — too much — of Africa's history has been accidental. The national boundaries carved into the continent by competing colonial powers appear to have been the work of a madman. Most of sub-Saharan Africa's 43 countries are not nations according to any meaningful definition of that term, thereby rendering the very concept of national sovereignty ludicrous. Yet there has been well-nigh universal insistence over the past 40 years on the inviolability of these borders, despite abundant evidence that they have only compounded Africa's problems. There is a great

need for a new map that reflects the realities of the continent's natural divides and potential lines of solidarity.

Yet the colonial legacy, terrible as it was (and continues to be) in many ways, can no longer serve as the principal explanation for Africa's problems. And that is the very reason, it seems to me, that many of the continent's political and economic afflictions have not been amenable to the remedies I and so many others have tried to implement.

### Family Values

Instead of blaming outsiders for their problems, Africans (and their international friends) need to face some hard truths about their own attitudes and behaviors. Chief among these is the widespread emphasis on the extended family unit, which may be a sound strategy when times are bad, but more often is self-defeating. Many Africans live a complicated life of trying to provide for their many relatives while keeping them at arm's length to avoid becoming totally impoverished themselves. These additional demands on Africa's statistically few breadwinners make it hard to accumulate the wealth needed for productive investment.

This pressure on the successful to support so many others also discourages many Africans from attempting more lucrative vocations, thereby stifling innovation and preventing the kind of competitive effort needed to make a free-enterprise system work well. In general, it may be that many Africans are not disposed culturally to take full advantage of the kind of economic and political schemes that made the high-income countries what they are today. This apparent lack of a natural inclination toward such initiatives needs to be taken much more into account by those offering assistance to Africa.

A corollary of this emphasis on family is Africa's multitude of social divisions. Although the high level of tolerance demonstrated by diverse ethnic groups which coexist peacefully (sometimes in very close quarters) is often striking, there is no doubt that the hundreds of clashes, many violent, along tribal, regional, caste, clan and religious lines frustrate progress in Africa. The formidable divide between agriculturists and pastoralists, for example, represents one of Africa's most notable conflict zones. Other social barriers include those between those who descended from former slaves and those who did not, and those who descended from so-called royal blood and the general population. Many Africans are condemned at birth to suffer a lifetime of discrimination that limits forever their potential.

***It is the thousands of individual Africans from all over the continent who have made the deepest impression upon me.***

All these divisions, as well as struggles over valuable natural resources, have beset Africa with one violent confrontation after another. There were hopes that the end of the Cold War would mean the end of many of these conflicts, but all too many African countries are still wasting away as they suffer from armed rebellions. Apparently, almost no African nation is immune to armed insurrection: almost half the countries in Africa have been devastated by war at some point since independence. The shocking record of atrocities committed by Africans against Africans is appalling even today.

In addition, a number of traditional practices persist that are unhelpful to social and economic progress. Central to these is the sway invisible forces have over the average African's life. This entails the massive recourse to paying for the services offered by a variety of local witch doctors and sorcerers. It is not unusual for an African family to pay more for these services than they do for the education and health of their children. These practices, as well as the excessive alcoholic consumption found in many parts of Africa, work against the advancement of Africans.

Military regimes and the dictators they have backed represent another major obstacle to progress, as they not only put the wrong people in power but foster corruption and block the involvement of better elements of society. Even though democratization is finally gaining momentum in much of Africa, strongmen still hold on to power

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in all too many countries, frustrating efforts to instill respect for the rule of law.

As long as political elites and the wealthy can do as they please without fearing any kind of legal sanctions, the huge and growing gap between the great mass of people who have little and the small percentage of the population who possess much will grow. Corruption is endemic throughout the continent and at virtually all levels of society. In fact, sometimes Africans who defraud the government or private firms to enhance the status of their family are looked upon more as role models than criminals. Justice is often very much lacking: small-time thieves who steal food for themselves or their families are severely punished while big government officials who embezzle millions from the state treasury and live grossly opulent lives are applauded.

Africa lacks the kind of stability that facilitates more rapid economic growth and the prevailing disorder is hard to correct because the livelihoods of so many vested interests depend on perpetuating this disorder and the high degree of corruption that characterizes it. This, in turn, hinders the development of a vibrant civil society and keeps most Africans effectively powerless over their destiny. There are many people of goodwill in Africa who would gladly volunteer their time and efforts to help their communities, but such initiative has been stifled by years of authoritarian government. Conditions need to be created to reward individual behavior that benefits the community.

The low priority given to education, especially for females, also stymies even the best-laid development plans. How can any country expect to develop if most of its adult population has not completed primary school? And, even for that minority of Africans who were able to go to school, the quality of education is usually so low as to negate the sacrifices they made to do so. The resulting high level of illiteracy in Africa, particularly among rural populations, places severe limits on many kinds of development efforts - and makes much more difficult the task of slowing the spread of AIDS, an unprecedented calamity that is nullifying precious development gains throughout the continent. Indeed, a careful examination of why some African countries have the highest HIV infection rates in the world speaks volumes about the factors contributing to Africa's development ills.

***I soon realized that while I was born a white man in Kansas, Africa is my true home.***

But perhaps the most damaging strike against Africa is the degree to which women lack power. No female has ever been a head of state in post-colonial Africa. The harsh socialization process girls are subjected to and the extraordinary dominance of men in most African societies have kept Africa from benefiting fully from the enormous potential of half its population. Progress will continue to be limited in Africa as long as women are relegated to such an inferior status and conditions do not exist for them to offer the full measure of their potential.

### How Outsiders Can Help

Most foreign assistance programs in Africa, whether bilateral or multilateral, since independence may have actually worsened the continent's problems by supporting dictators and politicizing assistance programs. A good amount of this wrongheaded diplomacy was motivated by the Cold War, which gave countless corrupt and bloodthirsty leaders the means to oppress their own people and solidify their hold on power.

With the end of the Cold War, it should have been easier for the West to concentrate on providing meaningful humanitarian assistance, but instead it has become all too clear that very few outsiders really care about Africa. Thus, most diplomatic missions have continued to conduct business as usual, or even pull out altogether, while Africa sinks deeper into an almost irreversible morass of poverty and chaos. The resulting decline in assistance to Africa over the past decade shows how little strategic interest the continent has for the U.S. or almost any donor countries these days, and makes a mockery of the high-sounding declarations we hear about helping Africa more.

What is most needed is a consistent and aggressive "tough love" diplomacy that refuses to deal with leaders who have blood on their hands and fortunes stashed away in foreign bank accounts, and steps up support for legitimate, non-violent opposition groups. At the same time, while we work to isolate and castigate corrupt, oppressive leaders, diplomatic efforts should not allow the acts of these leaders to block assistance that is truly needed by the people. More aid should be

channeled through non-governmental organizations that work at the community level.

The main objective should be to build local capacities. Huge and expensive USAID missions are not always required. Take the example of Niger. For legislative reasons, USAID was obliged in 1996 to close its mission in this very poor country. Yet some significant USAID-funded activities continue to be conducted in Niger by U.S. NGOs.

Making matters worse, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other international financial institutions have pursued their own brand of neo-colonialism while providing little benefit for the average African. The loan repayment rate by Africa today to the IMF and World Bank is higher than the total value of new loans, giving Africa the highest debt ratio in the world. This adds to the negative capital flight that most African countries have known for years. Recent debt relief actions are welcome but, so far, IMF and World Bank debt cannot be rescheduled.

Over 30 years of development failure by the multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies should be telling somebody something. Yet most of these well-endowed agencies have not really learned how to bring the benefits of assistance down to the community level. And, even those that have made a good-faith effort to do so, are often stymied by the ruin left after decades of neglect and abuse by local and national officials. (The failure to maintain well the infrastructure that has gobbled up so much of Africa's resources is particularly lamentable, since such spending has created most of the continent's high debt load.) Making up lost ground in Africa is in itself a daunting challenge.

***The average African is poorer today than he or she was 30 years ago, something true almost nowhere else on the planet.***

At this stage, therefore, the dictum of "do no harm" should be the first prerequisite of any assistance provided Africa, whether bilateral or multilateral. As the record since independence demonstrates, sometimes no aid can be better than too much aid of the wrong kind.

To supplement and eventually replace direct aid, the U.S. has emphasized the role of trade in stimulating African economies. Yet lacking sufficient goods to trade profitably in world markets and suffering from poor management of its resources, Africa may suffer even more in a "globalized" world. Yes, trade is better than aid, but trade alone makes no sense if a country has nothing or very little to offer. In addition, many African countries with something to trade are finding that their traditional exports are garnering less income now per unit than they did 20 years ago. These dismal terms of trade suffice to justify the most favorable trade arrangements with Africa, whose share of world trade is unbelievably miniscule. Yet the self-interests of many richer nations continue to conspire to limit the few opportunities Africa may have to increase its exports.

Protecting existing assets in Africa's resource-poor countries, where the vast majority of the population depends on subsistence agriculture — much less creating and sustaining even low levels of widespread wealth — is increasingly a losing battle. Rising standards of living simply cannot be constructed on falling levels of soil fertility, one of Africa's great economic constraints. Even more fundamentally, the scarcity of fertile, cultivable land throughout much of the continent exacerbates the declining per capita food-production trend, with its many negative ramifications.

Our shrinking, highly competitive world requires every country to run very fast just to stay in the same place. Africa, as a whole, has already fallen far behind and, to catch up, it must run as twice as fast as any other area of the world. To do so, it needs wise debt forgiveness, much higher levels of external assistance and, most important, large increases in private investment. But none of this will do any good if conditions on the ground are not conducive to the optimum use of this increased assistance and long-term predictions for a stable and attractive investment environment are not convincing. Assistance should be provided only where it is merited and can be used wisely both in the short- and long-term sense. Without the practice of good governance and a solid record of fiscal responsibility by the recipients, direct assistance to governments should be avoided.

In addition, the high cost and risk of doing business in Africa have to be remedied if Africa is going to be able to attract the private investment capital it needs to develop on a sustainable basis.

In particular, the high cost and erratic supply of electricity both

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need addressing, as do weak or non-existent communication and transport links. The countless road checkpoints around all of Africa need to be demolished and cross-border formalities need to be greatly eased. High security costs also discourage business creation, as a large portion of operating budgets has to he devoted to protecting property. Increasingly, living well in Africa means living with all the security arrangements of a prison.

The most discouraging thing about Africa's future is that even under a best-case scenario, it will take a monumental, sustained effort over decades to realize the level of economic growth needed to reduce widespread poverty. Even if Africa's best-performing and most prosperous countries could achieve five percent GDP growth per annum on an unfailing basis, it would still take 50 years for them to graduate from the status of low-income countries. Nonetheless, the race is on, and all African countries need to get started and hold the course until the next century. It will be a great failure for humanity if at the end of this century the gap between Africa and most of the rest of the world is not considerably narrowed.

Thanks in no small part to its so-called benefactors, Africa has essentially lost several decades of productivity. Thus, it is imperative to move quickly ahead with the rebuilding of an improved foundation for a new and better start. There are no quick fixes for doing this and it cannot be done on the cheap. It will take the best leadership, and the highest general commitment and discipline that Africa's people have to offer over a generation or more, to correct the failings of the past and put Africa on a better development footing. Yet, I fully believe that if peace and stability can be made to prevail, and the African people are given the chance to engage themselves behind trusted and competent leaders, then by the end of the century Africa, with its abundance of natural resources, can be well positioned to be the continent of the 22nd century.

***The dictum of "do no harm" should undergird any assistance provided Africa, whether bilateral or multilateral.***

So the urgent task at hand now is to lay the groundwork for getting Africa back on a better track and undertake actions that restore hope to the African people for a better future. All possible steps should be taken to unleash in a constructive fashion all the enormous talents and energies of the African people. Toward that end, Africans need to stop failing themselves and placing too much blame on others for their failures. Ultimately, only Africans can ensure that the children born in this generation will have better lives than their parents had. Although much help will be needed from Africa's friends, most of the choice about the quality of their future — as cruel and hard as some of the options may be — is up to the Africans themselves. ■

# The Case for a Religion Attaché

THE U.S. NEEDS TO ELEVATE THE CONSIDERATION OF RELIGIOUS FACTORS IN FOREIGN POLICY. APPOINTING RELIGION ATTACHÉS TO GATHER INFORMATION IN KEY COUNTRIES WOULD BE A KEY STEP TOWARD THIS END.

*By Douglas M. Johnston*

As the United States recovers from the recent attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the focus of government action and popular attention has been the war on terrorism and the campaign in Afghanistan. At home, measures ranging from tightening security in government buildings and installations to federalizing airport baggage handlers add to a growing list of expenditures to address various symptoms of the problem. (The annual cost of the new Transportation Security Administration alone will be $1.25 billion.) But what about the underlying causes? Aside from the steps that are being taken to eradicate terrorism, is there anything comparable that the U.S. could do to address such motives before they give rise to violent expression?

One of the most helpful steps we could take in this regard would be to elevate the consideration of religious factors within the U.S. policy-makers' calculus, a step that is long overdue. Reluctance to consider religious factors cost the U.S. dearly in Iran and Lebanon a quarter-century ago, to name just two countries where we simply did not understand or respond to the religious dynamics.

In the case of Iran, President Carter and his top policymakers in Washington were caught unaware by the Islamic revolution, even though Embassy Tehran's own reporting at the time noted that the Ayatollah Khomeini had emerged as the most outspoken critic of the government, that the Shah's Islamic opponents were in a strong position, and that the Shah's days were probably numbered. These observations were effectively suppressed at higher levels by the combined influence of economic determinism and dogmatic secularism.

***Religion has yet to be treated as a major consideration in U.S. foreign policy even though it is central to the strife in the world today.***

It is entirely possible that a greater recognition and accommodation of the religious dimension may not have significantly altered the outcome in either of those situations. On the other hand, if the religious factors had been properly considered, the resulting improvements in our ability to anticipate and react could conceivably have spared us untold national embarrassment in Iran (and the embassy staff in Tehran 444 days of anguish). The same could also be said for Lebanon (and the loss of 241 U.S. Marines) several years later.

A more recent example of Western indifference to religious imperatives was the NATO decision to bomb Serbia on Orthodox Easter in 1999. Although the issue was intensely debated at the time, the choice to bomb was

*Douglas Johnston is president and founder of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy in Washington, D.C. He is the editor and principal author of* Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft *(Oxford University Press, 1994) and* Foreign Policy into the 21st Century: The U.S. Leadership Challenge *(Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1996). The ICRD has religiously-based peacemaking initiatives under way in Kashmir and Sudan and last year led the training of all U.S. Navy and Marine Corps chaplains in religion and statecraft as part of an effort to enhance the conflict prevention capabilities of the sea service commands.*

apparently taken out of a concern that if the bombing were to stop even for a day, it might prove difficult to get the Allies to reengage the following day. Whatever the rationale, it is a decision the Serbs will never forget. As they were quick to point out, the only others to have bombed them on this holy day were the Germans in World War II.

Proper consideration of the religious factors in political conflicts, however, will not necessarily ensure a predictable outcome. In the aftermath of Sept. 11, for example, there was considerable hand-wringing in U.S. policy circles on whether or not to continue the bombing of Afghanistan during Ramadan. The concern was well placed, but in this instance, historical precedent suggested a greater room for maneuver.

The first consideration in such a decision is understanding exactly what it is that the religious observance is celebrating. Then it becomes instructive to examine how Muslims themselves have dealt with this same kind of issue. During the Iran-Iraq War, for example, both sides fought through Ramadan every year of the conflict (although Saddam Hussein once offered a Ramadan cease-fire, only to have it rejected by the Ayatollah Khomeini). In 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel during Ramadan. While commonly referred to in the West as the Yom Kippur War, among Muslims it is known as the Ramadan War. Finally, in 624, Mohammed himself conquered the holy city of Mecca during Ramadan. While none of this should be viewed as a license to do as one pleases, it does provide a helpful context for determining how to deal with such questions.

### More Now Than Ever

It is particularly strange that religion has yet to be incorporated as a major consideration in U.S. foreign policy since it is central to much of the strife that is taking place in the world today. Almost anywhere one turns — Macedonia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Chechnya, Kashmir, Sudan or Sri Lanka, for example — one finds a religious dimension to the hostilities. Whether it is the root cause of a conflict, as it is in the Middle East where there are competing religious claims to the same piece of real estate, or merely a mobilizing vehicle for nationalist and ethnic passions, as has traditionally been the case in the Balkans, religion's potential to cause instability at all levels of the global system is arguably unrivaled. And as the Sept. 11 attacks brought home all too vividly, we must face the very real possibility of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of religious extremists.

***Without the Cold War to suppress its influence, religious conflict has become widespread, virulent and inimical to vital U.S. national interests.***

Without the Cold War to suppress its influence, religious conflict has become widespread, virulent and inimical to vital U.S. national interests. South Asia is replete with ethno-religious challenges that are being dealt with along traditional secularist lines. Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir stare nervously at one another through the crosshairs of their rifle sights or, more ominously, their nuclear delivery systems — ever susceptible to the flames of nationalism and religious unrest. In Sri Lanka, the tenets of Buddhism have been perverted to justify a never-ending stream of military atrocities between the Buddhist majority and the Tamil separatists.

Further east, there is Indonesia, an immense archipelago straddling a number of the world's vital shipping lanes. Once considered a rock of stability, it is periodically wracked with religious violence so severe that some fear it may lead to outright disintegration of the country. And back to the west, Muslims and Jews continue to square off in the Middle East over their mutual religious claims to Jerusalem, as terrorists find continuing inspiration to play their deadly game.

In all likelihood, religion's importance will only continue to increase in response to the growing threat to traditional values posed by economic globilization and the uncertainties stemming from the revolutionary pace of technology change. To underestimate these realities in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy is to tempt the gods, so to speak.

### A New Approach

One effective way to give the religious factor its just due as a defining element of national power would be to create a new position within the Foreign Service — that of the religion attaché. These attachés would be assigned to diplomatic missions in those countries where religion has a particular salience. Included in their portfolio of responsibilities would be the tasks of developing relationships of trust with local religious leaders and groups, reporting on relevant religious movements and developments, and helping the mission to deal more effectively with complex religious issues.

*One way to give the religious factor its just due as a defining element in policy-making would be to create a new religion attaché position within the Foreign Service.*

The religion attaché's role would not differ dramatically from that of the cultural officer in his or her performance of public diplomacy, except for its narrower focus on religion and its requirement for special aptitudes and training to deal with the non-rational complexities of many religious issues. Like the cultural officer, the religion attaché's mandate would require a penetration of the local culture and a greater focus on people than on institutions. As currently configured, consideration of religious factors typically resides with the cultural attaché or a political officer (or, in some instances, the ambassador). But regardless of where the responsibility lies, the reality is that religious concerns often get squeezed out by other seemingly more pressing matters; hence the need for a new position.

Fortunately, the new religion attaché would not have to begin the process from ground zero. Some exposure will have already taken place in the natural scheme of things, particularly in conjunction with the relatively new reporting requirements of the International Religious Freedom Act. The new attaché could take over the man-


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agement of these contacts (as well as the religious freedom reporting requirements) and work to deepen them, in addition to developing others. Needless to say, the religion attaché would have to work closely with the political and cultural officers in the sharing of pertinent information and contacts. Configured in this manner, this portfolio would relieve already overburdened embassy staffs, help improve America's image with important religious groups and leaders, and provide valuable insights into their motives and objectives.

There are a number of characteristics a successful religion attaché would need to have. First, an ability to understand and deal with the specific language of local religious expression would be essential. Second would be a sensitivity to religious motives and priorities, coupled with a keen understanding of how faith inspires action. And finally, the religion attaché should have a gift for foreign languages and dialects, since local religious figures often do not have the same English skills normally found among government officials and the intelligentsia, with whom other FSOs commonly interact.

Obvious places to search for recruits who would have such qualifications would be from among seminary graduates or religion majors as well as from within the ranks of the Foreign Service itself (where those already possessing such skills might welcome the new challenge). With the necessary skills and strong support from the top, the religion attaché could go far in closing the existing gap in religious understanding.

### Prime Assignments

A conservative estimate of global requirements suggests the need for a cadre of at least 30 such attachés at an initial total annual cost of $10 million. This figure is based on a State Department budget office estimate of $250,000 to $300,000 per year to field a person in a new position (including salary, benefits, transportation to and from the post, shipping of household effects, outfitting of a new office, and any allowances for hardship, danger pay, cost of living adjustments and housing). The total also includes an increment for the added training that would be required. Annual recurring costs would be somewhat less, so even a slight shift from the reactive to the preventive side of the ledger in our budget priorities would more than suffice to fund this initiative.

***The religion attaché's role would not differ dramatically from that of the cultural officer in his or her performance of public diplomacy.***

The new corps of attachés could most usefully be distributed as follows:

The Arab World and Turkey (approx. 8): Because of the unquestioned importance of religion in this region, there should be some coverage of every country in this part of the world. The missions in Israel, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria, Sudan, and Turkey would all benefit from a full-time religion attaché. For others like Bahrain and Kuwait, shared coverage might suffice.

South Asia (at least 3): Separate religion attachés would be required in both Pakistan and India. As alluded to earlier, religion and religious nationalism are particularly powerful forces in these two countries. That, combined with their historic animosity over Kashmir and the fact that both countries are nuclear powers, makes a very compelling case for individual coverage. Because of the religious dimension to the conflict in Sri Lanka, an attaché should be stationed there as well.

Central Asia (1-2): Religious fundamentalism is a growing concern in this region and a significant factor in any number of conflicts. While there may not yet be a need for coverage in some countries, it would be advisable to have at least one, if not two, attachés to collectively cover Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgystan and Kazakhstan.

China and Southeast Asia (4): China's repression of the Falun Gong, Tibetan Buddhists, Christians and its Muslim Uighur minority suggests a deep-seated insecurity to which the West should be closely attuned. As already discussed, Indonesia has a compelling need for a religion attaché owing to its strategic importance and the religious aspects of its internal conflicts. The Philippines qualifies for a resident attaché based on the extended conflict there with Muslim insurgents and the strong influence of the Catholic Church. The rest of the region could possibly be covered by a single regional attaché.

Russia (1): Like China, Russia is too strategic and too involved with religion to remain unmonitored. Beyond the situational influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, there are important questions relating to the rights of other religions and religious denominations to actively practice their faith and the prospec-

tive impact of Islam on the country's internal stability (as manifested in Chechnya, the Crimea, and certain Central Asian Republics).

Latin America (5): Catholicism is an important part of life in Latin America and has at times played a crucial role in politics, including involvement in the removal of several dictators. The corresponding rise and increasing influence of evangelical Protestantism also suggests a need for some degree of coverage. Here, regional coverage would probably suffice, with one attaché each for the Southern Cone (including Brazil), the Andes, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

Sub-Saharan Africa (4): Religion plays an underappreciated role in Africa. Like Indonesia, Nigeria has suffered from repeated riots stemming from animosity between Muslim and Christian communities. In South Africa, religious actors were crucial in the movement to dismantle apartheid and to prevent civil war from breaking out in its aftermath. In other African countries like Sierra Leone, where governments have failed to meet the needs of their people, religious institutions have stepped in to provide basic services. As with Latin America, Africa could be split up into southern, western and eastern regions for purposes of this coverage, with individual coverage for Nigeria.

The Balkans (4): Having been coopted earlier by the forces of nationalism, religion has a crucial role to play in peacemaking, conflict prevention, and the rebuilding of civil society in the former Yugoslavia. Religion attachés should be assigned to Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia/Kosovo, with one additional to cover the rest of the Balkans.

Central and Eastern Europe (1): Although Catholicism played an instrumental role in the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, particularly in such countries as Poland, East Germany, and Romania, it no longer has the influence that it once did. Thus, the region could probably be adequately covered with a single regional attaché.

***To underestimate the growing importance of religious factors in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy is to tempt the gods, so to speak.***

### Possible Problems

To be sure, the idea of establishing this new position comes with a host of concerns that must be carefully thought through. The following are representative:

1. Without adequate support from the ambassador, the traditional political and economic mission sectors could push the newcomer to the side and effectively "ghettoize" religion. Instead of giving religion a higher profile, such a development could have the reverse effect and actually downgrade its importance. Internal politics are key.

2. The mission assignments of the new attachés might be driven less by need than by political influence and budget.

3. There might be a tendency for the religion attaché to become preoccupied with the major religious traditions to the exclusion of smaller but nevertheless important traditional faiths, such as African animists.

4. The State Department's practice of rotating personnel will result in an ongoing need to re-equip these attachés with an in-depth understanding of the religious complexities he or she will confront with each new posting.

5. The logistical burden of adding additional staff to the smaller missions must be taken into account.

6. Most missions may not want another staff position unless that person comes with a budget to support his or her programs.

7. Some countries may take offense at the presence of a religion attaché on the grounds that it will create an unwanted intrusion in their internal affairs (in much the same way that the annual report on religious freedom has been viewed with some degree of resentment).

None of these concerns, however, are insurmountable. To begin with, the position would, in all likelihood, have the prestige to stand on its own (in terms of its priority in the hierarchy of mission concerns). Second, creation of the position would represent an opening wedge through which religious considerations could begin to balance the influence of the rational-actor model of decision-making that has so dominated U.S. foreign policy over the past 50 years. Through this wedge, the flow of religious reporting over time would sensitize others to religion's importance, as would the presence in the mission of someone specifically assigned to the topic.

The remaining concerns are largely structural in nature and not particularly worrisome. A quick review of the proposed mission assignments reveals that few of the smaller missions would require a religion attaché. Most of the new positions would already be intended for those missions having the larger

budgets and greater political clout. Most of those working out of smaller missions would be providing regional coverage (in which several missions would be able to pool their resources in support of a single position). The position itself might also come with a small budget to support religious-related activities, such as inter-faith seminars and the like.

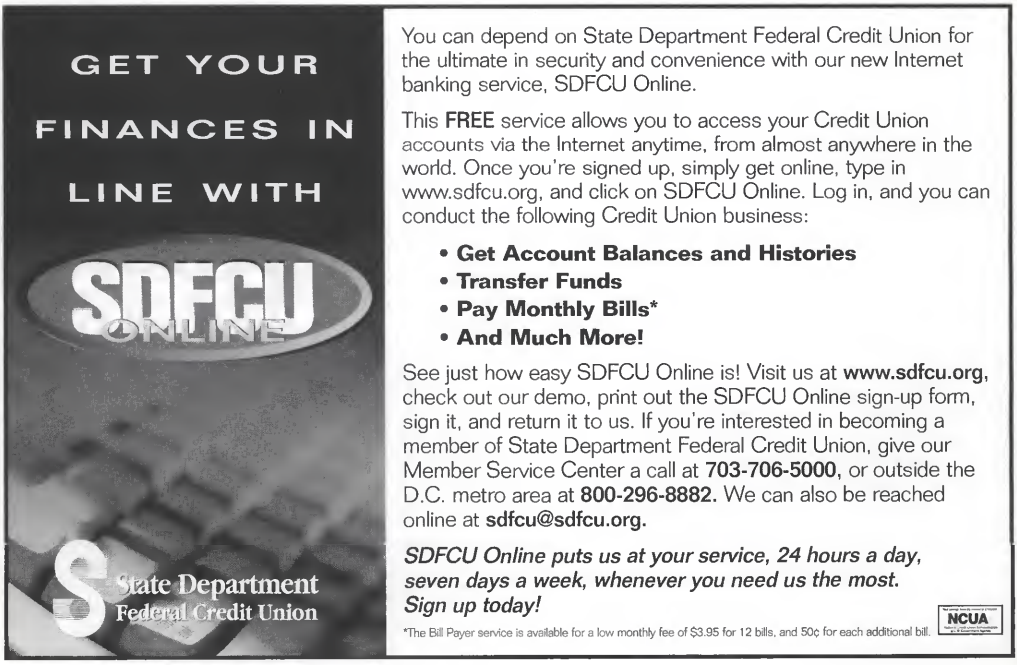
In those countries where the mere assignment of a religion attaché could cause consternation — such as China — the position could technically be given a different label. The remaining concerns generally fall into a category where "forewarned is forearmed;" i.e., if those involved proceed with their eyes open, there should be no problem.

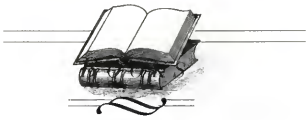
### Meeting the New Challenge

It would appear from the foregoing that the benefits of creating the religion attaché position would outweigh the possible liabilities. Increased contact with the local religious communities would provide added insights on (1) what is going on in this critical area at the grassroots and national levels, (2) concerns that religious leaders may have about U.S. decisions that are either being taken or contemplated, and (3) concerns these leaders might have with regard to local demagogues who attempt to manipulate religion for their own political purposes. Any such information would be highly valuable, as would the greater general understanding of religious imperatives that would accrue.

For far too long, the United States has focused the bulk of its energy and resources on reacting to events, usually in the form of picking up the pieces following the outbreak of hostilities in some near or distant part of the globe. That could be expected in a democracy where a crisis is often required to achieve the necessary political consensus for taking action. But in the post-Sept. 11 world, this approach will no longer suffice.

Other considerations aside, the looming marriage of religious extremism with weapons of mass destruction demands a markedly different approach, one that is both proactive in nature and that gives overriding priority to the task of conflict prevention. Establishing a corps of religion attachés would constitute a meaningful first step in this regard. It would give the United States an added capability for engaging on a preventive basis, while enhancing its ability to deal with a long-overlooked element of national security. The challenge now is to muster the political will to make the adjustment. ■



# BOOKS

## HOW *NOT* TO HELP

**The New Missionaries: Memoirs of a Foreign Adviser in Less-Developed Countries**
*Richard D. Mallon, Harvard Institute For International Development, 2000, paperback, $15.95, 119 pages.*

REVIEWED BY TAMERA FILLINGER

When finance ministers from the world's top donor nations meeting in Canada this past November urged a doubling in foreign aid, U.S. Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill attracted widespread criticism by responding that "Over the past 50 years, the world has spent an awfully large amount of money in the name of development without a great degree of success."

Yet there is little doubt that Richard Mallon, the author of *The New Missionaries: Memoirs of a Foreign Adviser in Less-Developed Countries*, would sympathize with O'Neill's skepticism on that score. Even though Mallon spent nearly four decades with the Harvard Institute For International Development (HIID) and its precursor, the Harvard Development Advisory Service, he paints a bleak picture of the efficacy of foreign aid.

Mallon, an economist who is also the author of *Economic Policymaking in a Conflict Society: The Argentine Case* (Center for International Affairs Series, 1975), began his career at Harvard in 1961 — just as one of its most famous alumni moved into the White House. As he documents, the Kennedy administration launched the heyday of foreign advisers, whose primary role was to train individuals and build institutions to design and implement public policy. Harnessing the wisdom of these trained local professionals, countries could then make decisions tailored to their own historical context and development needs.

***Although Mallon's development philosophy seems preferable to shock therapy, he provides little evidence to show that it has worked better.***

That collaborative approach eventually began to change, however — as did the role of the advisers themselves, from behind-the-scene educators to high-profile activists, the "new missionaries" of his title: figures like Raul Prebisch, Paul Harberger, Richard Gilbert and Jeffrey Sachs. Their "religion" is to convert foreign governments to the economic orthodoxy of free markets, and they are regularly (and for the most part accurately, he maintains) accused of blatantly interfering in the internal affairs of those countries.

This transformation was bolstered by systemic changes in the purpose and flow of foreign aid and technical assistance, prompted first by the Cold War and other international political rivalries and then, particularly over the past decade, by major economic crises. As a corollary to that trend, the emphasis of technical assistance has shifted from what Mallon calls "people-building" to forcing advisees to introduce policy reforms advocated by international donor agencies. Adoption of such reforms then becomes a condition for receiving additional foreign aid.

Mallon makes no secret of the fact that he falls in the other camp, favoring teaching rather than preaching. He insists that there are no instant answers that can be universally applied to help developing countries. Instead, he supports sustained, long-term work with countries to help them develop their own development paths, by training a cadre of professionals to run institutions and to develop and support the rule of law.

Yet while his development philosophy seems preferable to shock therapy, he provides little evidence to show that it has led to greater successes in helping countries develop. For example, he acknowledges the successes of the "Asian Tigers" (e.g., Singapore, Thailand, South Korea), but does not tie their progress to any foreign advice or philosophy despite considerable evidence to the contrary. Instead, he contends that their successes were home-grown, and that they fueled the tide of the free-market reform approach to development, not the other way around.




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Whatever the merits of his argument, is it too late for a local-capacity-building approach to development? It is at HIID, at least. In 2000, the institute was dismantled by its final chief, economist Jeffrey Sachs, who carved up and distributed its remains to the Kennedy School of Government and various professional schools.

*Tamera Fillinger was an FSO legal adviser with USAID, serving in Nairobi and Jakarta from 1992 to 1999. She now practices law in Washington, D.C.*

## A View of The Hemisphere

**Exiting the Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean**
*Robert A. Pastor, Westview Press, 2001, paperback, $20.00, 334 pages.*

Reviewed by David Casavis

Good books on U.S.-Latin American relations are hard to find. Rarer still are books focusing on American policy toward the Caribbean basin. But books that cover both regions thoroughly and thoughtfully are truly few and far between.

Thus, a large part of what makes *Exiting the Whirlpool: U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Latin America and the Caribbean* so valuable is the multiple audiences it addresses. Because its focus is truly hemispheric, it speaks to readerships throughout the Americas, not just in the United States. It is a book about the roads we — North, Central and

***Pastor's concise and compelling account of the events leading up to the invasion of Grenada in 1983 is a highlight of the book.***

South Americans alike — travel, how we came to travel them together, and how we make each other uncomfortable yet cannot get away from each other.

Besides the scope of the book, the other key to its success is, of course, the wealth of hands-on experience Robert Pastor brings to his topic. Director of Latin American and Caribbean affairs at the National Security Council from 1977 to 1981, and a fellow at the Carter Center from 1985 to 1998, Pastor is now a professor of international relations at Emory University.

Pastor devotes the first half of *Exiting The Whirlpool* to analyzing presidential policies toward the region from Carter through Clinton, starting with a useful thumbnail sketch of the political maneuvers surrounding the negotiation and ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty. The author's warm feelings toward the Carter administration, as well as his intimate knowledge of the Torrijos period, bring these events to life in a way that is not as true when he analyzes developments during later administrations. But even when dealing with presidents with whom he is clearly less sympathetic, he offers useful


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insights into the usual litany of topics one expects to find in a treatise on Latin American history, including succession crises, revolutions, economic development and democratization.

At times, his alternation between a somewhat scholarly style and sudden first-person references can be jarring. Yet Pastor is anything but pompous, as witness the following exchange he had with David Aaron, the deputy assistant for national security affairs, in 1979:

"Pastor," he bellowed, "did you lose Grenada?" "It wasn't me, sir," the author replied. "As far as I know, Grenada is still about 100 miles north of Venezuela. It's not lost."

A concise and compelling account of the events leading up to the invasion of Grenada in 1983 leads off the second half of *Exiting The Whirlpool*. The book is worth shelf space for this chapter alone, which cites two little-known demarches that are essential to understanding what really happened and why. U.S. Ambassador to Grenada (resident in Bridgetown) Frank Ortiz, Cuban Ambassador to Grenada Julian Rizo and Grenadan Central Committee Member Bernard Coard will never be remembered as vividly as Maurice Bishop is. Yet Pastor makes a persuasive case that the drama that played out in Grenada would not have happened but for Ortiz's demarche and Rizo's meeting with Coard.

The remainder of the book addresses what Pastor calls "recurring problems" in Latin America. But one of the most valuable chapters is a slim yet powerful treatise on interbranch relations, in which he demolishes the Foreign Service dogma that "We have a constituency of one" (i.e., the president) and demonstrates how important it is for State to cultivate Congress.

All in all, *Exiting The Whirlpool* is a worthy successor to Frank Tannenbaum's *Ten Keys to South America* (1964). It should be as influential on serious students of U.S. relations with its Latin American neighbors at the onset of this new century as that volume was to a generation growing up in the Sixties and Seventies. ■

*David Casavis works for the U.S. Department of Commerce in New York City.*


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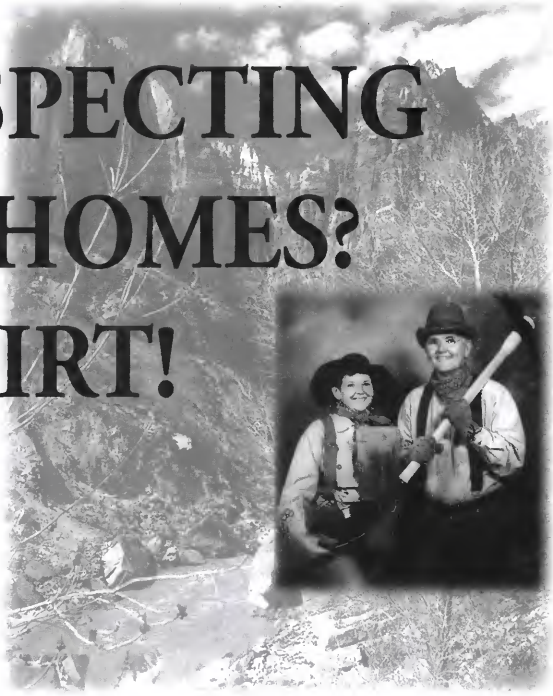
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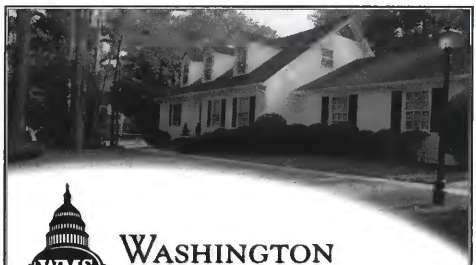
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# POSTCARD FROM ABROAD

## *Border Crossings*

*BY KATHRYN W. UPHAUS*

When we drove through Europe years ago, I remember the disappointment I felt crossing international borders: no guards, no formalities, and no colorful stamps in our passports to mark the journey. Often we weren't sure which country we were in as we blithely slipped from France into Germany and through Luxembourg. So it seemed an anachronistic pleasure when our recent crossing from Bangladesh into India provided not only many stamps, but also a glimpse back in time.

Two men appeared to be on duty when we arrived at the immigration shack at Dawki, but when we tried to hand one of them our passports, he demurred. The civil servant we sought was praying, and we had to wait. Circumspectly refraining from asking why the particular individual we needed was the only one to hear the muezzin's call, we sat down to fill in the immigration cards we'd been given.

When our official appeared, he was young, brisk, and business-like. He escorted us into the dark interior of his small office, pulled out a large ledger, penciled in the necessary columns with a long ruler, and proceeded painstakingly to copy the information from our forms into his book. The other officials (or perhaps they were just curious villagers) soberly and silently watched his every pen stroke. When he finished, we were requested to sign the ledger.

> *Our luggage was accorded the same indifference it had received at Dawki.*

Thinking the formalities over, we thanked him, only to be reminded that we now needed to clear customs. We took our bags across the gravel road to a slightly larger building, which had two doors and appeared to consist of two rooms, labeled "Inspector Room" and "Assessments Hall." Entering the first door, we discovered only one large room, divided by a long table, behind which sat stacks of moldering ledgers and bundled papers, tied, sadly, not in red tape but plain old binder twine. How many years of border crossings were chronicled in those dusty tomes, I wondered?

Here, too, were several individuals, but only one was working. He copied the same information from the same immigration cards into yet another ledger while his office mates sat — still, silent, and most serious about their official functions, which apparently consisted of watching. The information duly recorded, our signatures were again requested. No one looked at our luggage.

We walked across the border into India, and duplicated the process we'd just finished. Not to be outdone, the Indians added a police checkpoint, with one more ledger and another set of signatures. The official here was supervised by two young soldiers, somberly polishing their weapons. The combined immigration/customs hall featured an imposing, albeit out of order, x-ray machine, but our luggage was accorded the same indifference it had received at Dawki.

The procedures were equally painstaking, cumbersome, and time-consuming, and the ratio of on- to off-duty officials about the same. Several hours elapsed before all ledgers were filled and all signatures affixed. Yet I didn't feel those hours had detracted from our trip to the hill station of Shillong. For didn't our passports have several new, colorful stamps, indelible proof of the improbable hours we'd spent getting out of Bangladesh and into India — hours that could easily have passed in the 19th as in the 21st century? Weren't our signatures forever fixed in five unlikely ledgers, one day to be carefully tied up in binder twine and officiously stacked behind the rickety table in the Assessments Hall?

Moreover, I was already beginning to suspect that on our return journey, the young, brisk, business-like Bangladeshi official would greet us as old friends.

Three days later, I was proven correct. ■

---

*Kathryn Uphaus is a freelance journalist in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The stamp is courtesy of the AAFSW Bookfair "Stamp Corner."*




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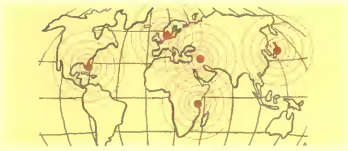
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