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# PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

## *2008 Budget Aspirations: Diplomacy Jilted Yet Again*

By J. ANTHONY HOLMES

With the return of power-sharing to Washington as the Democrats exert control in Congress, the national media focused in February on the administration's defense of its Fiscal Year 2008 budget request presented early in the month. While the staggering cost of the war in Iraq attracted much attention, few noticed the short shrift given to diplomacy in the budget request.

After months of soothing assurances about greater emphasis on diplomacy, one might have expected more. But the request for the State Department was amazingly modest. When inflation is reckoned in, State's budget will essentially be flat for the third year in a row. Although there are some important silver linings, with meaningful increases for security upgrades, the "secure borders" elements of consular work, and additional IT infrastructure, core diplomatic programs continue to be treated as anything but genuine priorities. The department does ask for 254 new positions, yet these barely exceed the 240 it requested but did not receive in FY 06 and 07. It is also important to keep in mind that these are requested funding levels. Congress will likely grant considerably less.

At USAID, things are even worse. Much worse. Right there in the widely distributed budget "summary and highlights" document, in striking juxtaposition to a reference to the need for changes so the agency can "maxi-



*J. Anthony Holmes is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.*

mize its ability to achieve" its highest goal, is the news that the requested operating expense level "reflects a 15-percent cut" (sic) from two years ago. That means a lot fewer people. But hey, no problem, because there will be less work to do.

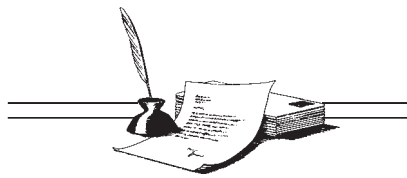
In account after account the administration makes huge reductions in its foreign assistance requests. For example, the key development assistance account, long the backbone of our efforts to promote sustainable long-term economic growth, got chopped by 31 percent from the actual appropriated level of two years ago. At the macro level, the FY 08 budget request avoids looking disastrously low mainly because it contains requests for major increases in two areas: to \$3 billion for the Millennium Challenge Corporation and \$4.15 billion for global HIV/AIDS prevention/treatment — and because it includes \$4.5 billion in Foreign Military Financing in our aid totals. Given that domestic electoral politics has led both political parties to try to improve their budget discipline credentials, Congress can be expected to grant far less than asked for in both accounts — particularly for the MCC, where the political commitment is noticeably declining.

After a couple of years of scrimping, another year of leanness (if not actual cuts) will exacerbate our already declining ability to do what we need to do around the world. That is easily rationalized by our political leaders, though no one frames the issue in terms of the shortsightedness of cutting investments

in prevention but continuing to provide significant real increases for defense and homeland security.

The other striking element of the budget request is its lack of the key, still missing ingredient necessary for the short-term success and long-term institutionalization of Secretary Rice's "transformational diplomacy" initiative. While virtually everything in the request's narrative is cloaked in a TD justification, and the initiative serves as a convenient though ill-defined excuse to gut many foreign assistance accounts, only parts of it are being implemented. Well advanced is the "global repositioning" exercise, in which positions are being shifted from developed to key developing countries. The request also contains the first tentative steps in establishing the initial "American Presence Posts" in important non-capital cities.

Singularly lacking, however, is a request for funded programs that will allow the repositioned diplomats to actually engage their host populations and promote democratic change, economic reform and growth, and pursue the other values-based agendas that the Secretary enumerated in her seminal speech on transformational diplomacy 13 months ago. If she doesn't want more reporting, then what are the new people in these 300 repositioned positions to do without such programs? The department's failure to provide the tools necessary to do their jobs raises fundamental questions, despite the ample rhetoric, about how serious it is about implementing the core of the transformational diplomacy vision. ■



# LETTERS

## Transportation to the “Mall”

In response to your January *AFSA News Briefs* item regarding moving the Transportation Office, let me first say that the Bureau of Administration and State Department management at all levels fully endorses the 1995 Strategic Management Initiative recommendation to “cluster all aspects of foreign transfers and other employee services in a single ‘mall’ location.” The operational realities of today’s State Department, however, reinforce the fact that this mall does not have to be in the Harry S Truman building. The Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance, cited in your news brief, is just the latest example of new, unanticipated space requirements.

We intend to fulfill the 1995 recommendation and provide a reliable platform from which employees and families are able to address their needs while still being able to attend to the needs of the nation during this transformational time. To accomplish this, we plan to move those elements of the existing HST Service Corridor that interface with employees and their families to join MED in Columbia Plaza (SA-1). By consolidating in SA-1, this new mall would be in a building that, while very close to HST, offers the additional advantages of commercial parking, proximity to Metro and, potentially, drop-in child care (to be negotiated with Diplotots).

We have started the planning process and will coordinate with the affected offices on the timing and layout of the new mall. Doing so will also offer us an opportunity to perhaps add some additional offices not currently

in the corridor, such as the Iraq Orientation and In-Processing Center, to the mall concept. Our goal is a “one-stop shop” for our employees at all stages of their careers.

We will also be consulting with AFSA, AAFSW and others on the details of this new mall as the plan progresses. This will be a multiyear effort and, like all projects at State, it is dependent on budget resources. But we are committed to the mall concept and convinced that it will ensure a more family- and employee-friendly consolidated service environment.

*Raj Chellaraj*  
*Assistant Secretary of State*  
*for Administration*  
*Washington, D.C.*

## Transportation Move: Bad Idea

The January *AFSA News* contained an item titled “AFSA Urges State Not to Move Transportation Office.” The director general, the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide, the Family Liaison Office and many FS employees strongly object to moving Transportation out of the HST Service Corridor.

Recently, a new proposal was made — to move the entire service corridor to SA-1. Management has said that we should provide employee support 24/7, but what this proposal really says is: “Employee services and support are not important enough to be in HST.” This unspoken message is not consistent with State Department values and culture. We are asking our employees to take on new, more difficult and even dangerous tasks, and we set a premium

on providing the best support we can. This includes keeping the service corridor in the location where elements of it have served people well for 40 years. Separating it from the rest of the building would reduce our ability to serve and support hundreds of transferring employees for years to come, and would not be a positive legacy for the current management team.

Creating a service mall in SA-1 is of little value — especially when a functioning system already exists. The original recommendation back in 1995 was to expand what was then called the Foreign Service Lounge, but to leave it in place — not move it.

On the current service corridor, nine offices assist transferring employees, including the Transportation Office, which receives 4,000 drop-in consultations annually. For employees who work in HST and who try to prepare transfers during a limited lunch hour, the advantages of not leaving the building are obvious. It would be an enormous waste of time to have to run over to SA-1 every time they need travel or transportation services.

The expense and hassle of moving an entire corridor of offices to SA-1 also makes it questionable. Furthermore, the move would be incomplete, because there are no plans to reassemble all the offices providing services for transfers to the new mall. Why not just move newcomers into vacant space?

The proposal to move the service corridor may be couched in glowing terms of creating a wonderful new mall. However, it does not seem to be based on an understanding of how the trans-



## LETTERS



fer process really works. HST is our corporate headquarters. Support services are so important that they should remain in the headquarters, where they are now conveniently situated.

*Mette Beecroft  
President Emerita  
Associates of the  
American Foreign  
Service Worldwide  
Washington, D.C.*

### Consider Keeley on the Middle East

Thank you for Robert Keeley's excellent contribution to the *Journal's* December issue ("Toward a New Foreign Policy Agenda"). It is as sensible and simply put a statement on Middle Eastern affairs and needs as it is rare. The *Journal* deserves congratulations for presenting it, for the "politics" of Palestine/Israel seldom receives such treatment in the American media. However, one may reasonably wonder whether his proposals will ever be given any serious official consideration.

*Lee Dinsmore  
FSO, retired  
Elcho, Wis.*

### More Kudos for Karen Hughes

Very senior officers, including Under Secretary Nicholas Burns, sent in letters regarding the comments made about U/S Karen Hughes in the October issue (Shawn Zeller, "Damage Control: Karen Hughes Does PD"). Both letters referred to mid-level Foreign Service officers on her staff, of whom I am one.

I began in the Bureau of Public Affairs (R) as a special assistant this past August, and I can assure you that it is one of the most inspiring places to be in this building. There is no one with the commitment, enthusiasm, charisma, humor, energy and loyalty to the department that I have observed in U/S Hughes. She genuinely wants to learn and listen, and is open to

everyone's suggestions. She wants to know what you know, and she wants you to tell her the truth. Before entering her office, I respected her from afar for the task she had agreed to undertake. After being here five months, I can understand the admiration and affection that her staff feel for her.

We just wound up the Global Public Affairs Officer Conference (Jan. 8-10), attended by 171 officers from around the world. U/S Hughes was outstanding. She gave hours of her time to interact with the PAOs during numerous breakout sessions, where she solicited questions and ideas, and encouraged criticism — with the goal of continuing to improve our public diplomacy efforts. She is always searching for the new and innovative, while continuing unstinting support to our tried and true programming. Her support for the Foreign Service, and for those of us in it, is clear-cut and often voiced.

As U/S Burns noted in his address to the PAOs: Karen has chosen to be here — an extraordinary resource for us all — revitalizing the world of R, and instituting legacy programs that will not depend on her strong bond with the president, but that will live on in embassies around the world, whatever the administration. And she has made the public diplomacy cone one of the most exciting and desired among incoming officers.

I feel particularly privileged to have been chosen for this position and to count myself one of the team in R.

*Karyn Posner-Mullen  
FSO, Special Assistant to the  
Under Secretary for  
Public Diplomacy and  
Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C.*

### Republish the PD Issue

The October *Journal*, with its five articles on public diplomacy, was outstanding in the way the writers

explained the complexities and challenges of PD, a term that seems to have come of age since 9/11. As a 32-year veteran of USIA, I particularly liked the article by Kushlis and Sharpe, "Public Diplomacy Matters More Than Ever," because of the examples of successful PD efforts, among other astute observations. Joe Johnson's article put public diplomacy challenges in the current communications environment in perspective.

Because these five articles so excellently cover the subject, one would think that republication of them in pamphlet form would be of great value to students and scholars of PD, especially at schools where it is taught.

*Allen C. Hansen  
USIA FSO, retired  
Falls Church, Va.*

### PD Lessons

Shawn Zeller's account of Karen Hughes' foreign trips (October) might leave the impression, if one rushed to judgment, that they were unmitigated disasters. However, it should be obvious that, at the very least, much can be learned from them. For example, the incidents highlight one of the most important public diplomacy functions of any embassy: to do everything possible to assure that the visit of an official who is going to meet the public will be as productive as possible and to try to assure that the visitor will not be embarrassed. This requires a judicious choice of venues for encounters with the public and the selection of audiences who will treat the visitor with respect, however much they disagree with the views expressed.

In most countries, it would not be wise to program a visitor to speak in a stadium open to the general public. An alternative might be a televised meeting with a limited number of representative students. For that option to be maximally effective,

## LETTERS



embassy personnel should know the invitees or know about them. Knowing local people is a primary objective of skilled practitioners of public diplomacy. The best public diplomacy practitioners are deeply convinced that effective communication is vital to American security and world peace. President Dwight Eisenhower was similarly convinced by his experiences in war and peace, and as a result created the now-deceased U.S. Information Agency.

Public diplomacy will always profit by learning from successes and failures. Sometimes, ironically, what may initially be perceived as a failure may prove in time to have been a blessing, if it contributes to enlightenment. Shouldn't we all hope that such is the case when it comes to Karen Hughes'

tenure as under secretary?

*James H. De Cou  
USIA FSO, retired  
Le Vesinet Cedex, France*

### Dealing with India

Ambassador J. Anthony Holmes' reference to the way the nuclear deal was rolled through Congress, in contrast to the ball-dropping on overseas locality pay (President's Views, January), brought to mind my experience in India during President Bush's visit last year. My wife and I were there when the presidential team arrived. The visit momentarily grabbed the Indian headlines away from the bird-flu frenzy.

Prior to Mr. Bush's arrival, Indian newspapers and television displayed great chutzpah by asserting that the

U.S. would have to bend to India's demands for what they were already calling "The Nuclear Deal." There were other demands, too, including more working visas for Indians and the establishment of a new American consulate or consulate-general in Hyderabad (a worthwhile step, in my view). Personally, however, I think it would behoove India to provide better economic conditions at home for her many talented citizens rather than insist that we or other countries provide opportunities.

Of course, the nuclear deal, as described then and as put into law recently, really was a break with consecrated U.S. nuclear policy. I wondered how it would be possible and what quid pro quo we might receive. I supposed we would try to coax the Indian gov-

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ernment into freeing up troops to help with our pacification of Iraq and Afghanistan. Indeed, President Bush made reference to both countries being victimized by terrorism.

Certainly it would be worthwhile to try to wean India away from Russia and other possible suppliers. But on Jan. 25, the *Washington Post* reported that India had made new agreements with Russia for the construction of nuclear facilities. Have we been “dealt out” of “The Deal?”

Concerning possible benefits for the U.S., at least in public, the presidential team apparently tried to convince India to take a hard line with Iran, her major oil supplier. I believe Indian Prime Minister Singh parried this deftly. There were reports that the U.S. was trying to cozy up to India so as to be a counterweight to China. However, those two countries seem to be seeking better relations, not confrontation.

The net result is hard to calculate. Now that Russia's back in the game, will the American nuclear industry see a boom in orders? Prime Minister Singh's coalition depends upon Communist Party support. Might the comrades prefer Russia?

*Louis V. Riggio*  
Former Foreign Service  
officer  
Hollywood, Fla. ■

### Corrections

In the February *Journal*, the last word in “A Bleak Outlook” by Dennis Jett (p. 28) was omitted as the result of a printer error. The article concludes on p. 35: “That is destined to go down in history as Bush's most enduring legacy.”

In the same issue, author identification for Joshua Muravchik (“A Sound Strategy,” p. 29) was inadvertently omitted from his article. Muravchik is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. We regret the oversight.

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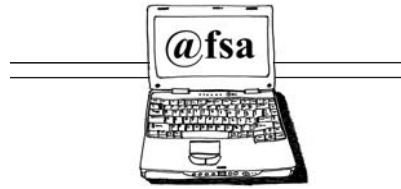
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# CYBERNOTES

## In a Pinch, Call in a Diplomat

“Conservatives may love to bash the State Department; but when their policies fail, they always turn to Foggy Bottom to pick up the pieces,” writes special correspondent Joshua Kurlantzick in a Jan. 25 post to *The New Republic Online* (<https://ssl.tnr.com/p/docsub.mhtml?i=w070122&s=kurlantzick012507>). The Web-only article helps to set the record straight at a time when a new round of the blame game threatens to erupt over Iraq.

Highlighting the recent White House appointment of veteran FSO Ryan Crocker to replace political appointee Zalmay Khalilzad as ambassador to Iraq, Kurlantzick avers that the president knew what he was doing: “Only someone like Crocker, who speaks Arabic and understands intricate Iraqi politics, could even begin to solve the mess in Baghdad.” Crocker’s previous tours include Beirut; Saddam-era Iraq, where he was under round-the-clock surveillance; Pakistan; and Syria, where, in 1998, angry mobs attacked the embassy, trapping Crocker’s wife in a safe room inside.

However, Crocker is “only the latest fireman for conservatives’ fiascos,” Kurlantzick notes, recalling other, recent clean-up missions. In Latin America, where the U.S. is now highly unpopular, “the White House has brought in Thomas Shannon, another longtime FSO, to calm tensions as assistant secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere,” Kurlantzick points out. He adds that the previous Bush appointees to Latin America, such as Otto Reich, “had only fueled

Latins’ anger, whether by seeming to condone a coup against Hugo Chavez or appearing to meddle in Bolivian elections.”

Kurlantzick also cites the cases of John Negroponte, a career diplomat brought in to serve as the first director of national intelligence, and Eric

**W**ant today to pay tribute to the many civilians who on a daily basis see mortar attacks against their positions, who travel in convoys that are dodging attacks. ... When it comes to the need to get Foreign Service personnel out to the field, we’re doing that. ... We are fully staffed in our PRTs. ... We are fully staffed not just in places like Baghdad, but also Kabul and Islamabad and Sudan and difficult posts of those kinds, and we already have people volunteering in large numbers for the follow-on service. It’s a very, to me, courageous thing for civilians to do because they are not war fighters; they are political officers and linguists and economic officers, and yet they have gone to this fight.

— Secretary of State  
Condoleezza Rice,  
House Committee on  
Foreign Affairs hearing,  
Feb. 7, [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov).

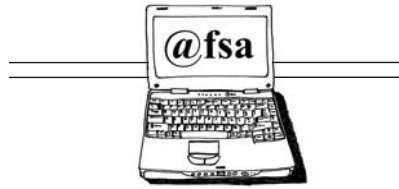
Edelman, another respected, longtime diplomat who stabilized the position of under secretary of defense for policy after several years of turmoil.

What accounts for this curious behavior on the part of conservative administrations? FSOs tend to be liberal, Kurlantzick says. “State Department officials, because they serve longer in the field than political appointees and witness the difficulty involved in actually carrying out policy initiatives, are also often more reticent to embrace transformative foreign policy, including the Bush administration’s transformative policies,” he explains. “Yet, I’ve met no sour-faced, bitter Foreign Service officers trying to undermine U.S. foreign policy, as [Newt] Gingrich has charged. ...

“More important, because of their long service, State officials tend to have insight into potential catastrophes. When it comes to fighting fires, knowing what worked — and didn’t work — in the past, is essential. ...

“Career diplomats also possess skills that simply cannot be filled by political appointees,” Kurlantzick states. He cites FSO William Davnie’s observations [in the *Foreign Service Journal*, November 2006] that “political-appointee ambassadors coming from domestic U.S. politics tend to have skills in crushing the opposition, rather than engaging a broad segment of a public, which is what’s needed in a foreign country. Appointees coming from the private sector have difficulty adjusting to the bureaucratic nature of diplomacy, where ambassadors cannot just give orders like CEOs.”

“The careerists’ strengths often go



# CYBERNOTES

unnoticed. Unlike many political appointees, career diplomats like Crocker do not have much of a constituency in Washington,” Kurlantzick concludes. But whenever the political appointees’ best-laid plans implode, they always know whom to call.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

## A Wikipedia for Whistleblowers

The international movement for corporate and governmental transparency is about to get a powerful boost. Modeled after the do-it-yourself online encyclopedia, *Wikileaks* is designed to assist whistleblowers from “oppressive regimes in Asia, the former Soviet bloc, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East,” according to the Web site’s mission statement ([www.wikileaks.org](http://www.wikileaks.org)). The site makes it possible for people from these regions, along with anyone else who wishes to expose perceived wrongdoing, to

untraceably post government and other secret documents.

The idea behind *Wikileaks* is to provide governmental transparency while protecting whistleblowers; the site is designed to be impervious to censorship from both legal and political quarters. A “wiki” system, as is used at *Wikipedia*, allows for online collaboration from all over the world.

The site was created by a diverse group, including Chinese dissidents, mathematicians and technologists from start-up companies. At the time of this writing there are 22 volunteers on the *Wikileaks* team from the U.S., Taiwan, Europe, Australia and South Africa. An advisory council for the site is comprised of Russian and Tibetan dissidents, reporters, cryptographers and a former U.S. intelligence analyst.

The *Wikileaks* team’s mission of transparency has won supporters such as Kim Sawyer, associate professor at the University of Melbourne and vice

president of Whistleblowers Australia. As she told the Jan. 20 *Sydney Morning Herald*, the Web site provides an opportunity for stories to reach an international audience in a timely manner. Dr. Sawyer believes the anonymity of the site is one of its chief assets because whistleblower protection laws are, in her opinion, largely superficial. *Wikileaks* would provide a safe environment for would-be whistleblowers who fear legal or political retribution.

*Wikileaks* also has its detractors. The same *Herald* article relays concerns over the sharing of “frivolous complaints,” whistleblowers inadvertently putting themselves in danger, and the harmful disclosure of things such as national defense plans and strategies. *Wikileaks* expects to be operational by March.

— E. Margaret MacFarland,  
Editorial Intern

## Whether Military or Civilian, Families Serve Too

Frequent moves. Children who have spent more of their lives overseas than in the United States. A deployed spouse. Is this a State Department family or military family? The diplomatic and the military sides of government service overseas each have their own challenges, but their organizations share the critical need to provide support for service members and their families to cope with a peripatetic lifestyle.

The State Department established the Family Liaison Office in 1978 to support FS families, and the office has developed an array of resources and

**W**e, of course, appropriately and often recognize the sacrifices and valor of U.S. military personnel in Iraq, and rightly so. But we should not forget the dedication and determination and courage the members of the U.S. Foreign Service and civil servants have displayed in Iraq. State Department personnel are accustomed to hardship assignments, which are now becoming almost the norm in the world, and these mostly unarmed individuals are working hard in Iraq in the most dangerous of circumstances. My colleagues and I appreciate the U.S. Foreign Service and their families and the civil servants at the State Department for their unique efforts in Iraq and around the world.

— Sen. Russell Feingold, D.-Wisc., Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Feb. 1, [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov).



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## 50 Years Ago...

Something which struck me, in perusing the November issue, was the considerable number of women's names.

Quite a change from 15 or 20 years ago!

— (Mrs.) R. Steiger, Letters to the Editor, *FSJ*, March 1957.



services ([www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/](http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/)). In recent years, with the rise of terrorism and the challenge of more dangerous, unaccompanied postings and tours in combat zones, these services have become even more critical, and FLO has hired staff specifically to assist families of FS members on unaccompanied tours.

Because the Department of Defense has much more experience supporting service members — who far outnumber the Foreign Service — and their families overseas, a look at what they do, and how they do it, provides food for thought. In particular, the extent and variety of online services available to Armed Forces members and their families are eye-opening.

DOD's *Military OneSource* is, as its name suggests, a one-stop shop for service members of every branch and their families ([www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)). As stated in "About *Military OneSource*" (accessible from the homepage), the site provides telephonic, online and in-person support to military personnel and their families on a range of issues, "[w]hether it's help with child care, personal finances, emotional support during deployments, relocation information or resources needed for special circumstances."

In addition to consultation, *Military OneSource* provides information on various services available in communities, referrals to both military and community resources, online videos on topics germane to military couples and families, and live online work-

shops called "Webinars." The Webinars can feature any topic from debt management to holiday stress or adjusting to middle age; and they allow military families to view presentations online and interact with other Webinar attendees by telephone, instant messaging and polling. Webinars are also accessible from the *Military OneSource* homepage.

While every service branch offers online support to family members, the Army has developed its own particular Internet tool: Virtual Family Readiness Groups ([www.armyfrg.org](http://www.armyfrg.org)). Family readiness, or the idea that the well-being of the families affects the success of the mission, is a key component of every service branch. Within the Army, Family Readiness Groups are official organizations sponsored by unit commanders. FRGs consist of family members, soldiers, volunteers and community members, and are designed to facilitate communication between the chain of command, family members and the community at large.

The *vFRG* site does something similar, as its opening page explains, connecting "the deployed soldiers, their families, the FRG leader, the unit commander, the rear detachment, and other family readiness personnel on their own controlled-access Web system to facilitate the exchange of information and provide a sense of community." To learn more about the *vFRG* and how it works, go to [www.armyfrg.org/skins/FRGPat/display.aspx](http://www.armyfrg.org/skins/FRGPat/display.aspx).

The *vFRG* site also contains help-



ful links for spouses and family members, including TRICARE, which provides health insurance to military personnel and dependents ([www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil)); *Army Knowledge Online*, an online information sharing site and e-mail provider available to soldiers, their families, and Department of the Army civilians ([www.us.army.mil](http://www.us.army.mil)); and *My Army Life Too* ([www.myarmylifetoo.com](http://www.myarmylifetoo.com)).

Designed specifically for Army families, *My Army Life Too* starts with the basics, providing online training for new spouses on the institutional structure, benefits and support options available to them. Tips on deployment, relocation, child care, finances, job hunting and volunteering

are posted on the Web site. The site also features online classes on Army life and Family Readiness Group training.

The Army is hardly unique, however. Each service branch has its own online community designed to promote the sharing of information on numerous topics and between different groups (spouse-to-spouse, service branch-to-spouse, etc.): *Air Force Crossroads* at [www.afcrossroads.com](http://www.afcrossroads.com); *Lifelines (Navy)* at [www.lifelines.navy.mil](http://www.lifelines.navy.mil); *Marine Corps Community Services* at [www.usmc-mccs.org](http://www.usmc-mccs.org); and *National Guard Family Program* at [www.guardfamily.org](http://www.guardfamily.org).

— E. Margaret MacFarland,  
Editorial Intern ■

### Site of the Month: LibrarySpot

Do you need information on government libraries? How about film libraries? Are you wondering where to find the nearest public library? The answers to these and many other questions can be found at [www.libraryspot.com](http://www.libraryspot.com).

*LibrarySpot* functions as a reference site for information on libraries themselves, but also fulfills many of the functions of a traditional library. The Web site was created to help the average Internet surfer find the very best online research tools. Each listing is personally selected and reviewed by *LibrarySpot's* editorial team for, as they put it, "exceptional quality, content and utility."

The site's library database provides access to over 5,000 libraries worldwide. The researcher can search card catalogues at various libraries, make interlibrary loan inquiries, read full-text articles, or even find the nearest library. There is also a Must-See Sites feature, a regularly updated compendium of high-quality library and reference sites. The site's Reference Desk has information on the best sites for business and government information, as well as encyclopedias, calculators, maps and phone books.

In the Reading Room, there are over 50,000 book reviews available, online texts for 3,500 international newspapers, full-text journals and author biographies. A Librarian's Shelf provides information on industry-specific resources, and On Exhibit gives information on library exhibits around the world.

*LibrarySpot* is user-friendly and an excellent resource for researchers and curious individuals alike. The site has received numerous accolades from such organizations as *Forbes* magazine, "Good Morning, America," CNN and the *Washington Post*.

— E. Margaret MacFarland, Editorial Intern

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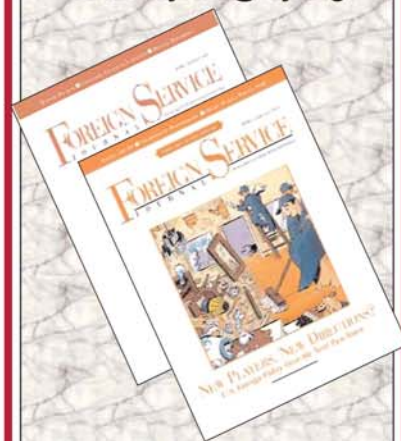
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# SPEAKING OUT

## *How to Measure an Ambassador*

By J. MICHAEL CLEVERLEY

The debate over politically appointed ambassadors is a perennial one, especially popular among career members of the Foreign Service, for obvious reasons. William Davnie's recent Speaking Out column, "Political Appointees: A Cost-Benefit Analysis" (November 2006), made some excellent points on why many appointees fail in their jobs. However, the argument is not a simple one. Having worked for over a dozen ambassadors and served as DCM to five of them, both career and appointed, during my 30-year Foreign Service career, I have seen firsthand how both appointees and career officers handle the demanding job of ambassador.

But what constitutes success and failure? How do you measure them? There is no simple answer, nor, I believe, a single standard. There should be a measure, however, one that newly appointed chiefs of mission are aware of and that the State Department can use to evaluate their performance in meeting American objectives in their countries and missions.

In my experience, there are at least three distinct fields in which most chiefs of mission operate on a day-to-day basis. An ambassador can succeed (or fail) in any one of the three, quite independently of how he or she performs in the others. In fact, it is rare to find an individual who masters all three skills completely.

### **Leading the Mission**

The first of these, and most obvi-

*No matter how well ambassadors "talk the talk," if they neglect "walking the walk" they lessen the likelihood of reaching diplomatic objectives.*

ous, is serving as captain of the ship we call a diplomatic mission. The crew, with its resources, orders and charts, sails a foreign sea that, however placid it may seem, is potentially treacherous and, more often than one would like, unknown. The ambassador is in charge of the vessel and ultimately responsible for its fate.

The job is often likened to that of a CEO, who oversees from a management pinnacle all aspects of the corporation: effectiveness of purpose, human resources, finances, training, morale, profitability, security and so on. However, the diplomatic operational environment is normally less defined than that of a firm and the chief shareholder, Washington, is a full participant.

It is not uncommon to see ambassadors struggling to fulfill this role, whether they are political appointees — for many of the reasons Mr. Davnie explained in his previous column — or career diplomats, who come from a corps known more for intellectual and

verbal skills than managerial and leadership qualities. In today's Foreign Service, there may be a tendency for career officers to short-sell the importance of mission management, somehow assuming, consciously or not, that one's ability to argue the issues is more important than sailing the ship.

Senior officers may also be remarkably short on experience in managing an organization. I still remember arriving for a yearlong detail at the National War College as a newly minted FS-1 who had never supervised an American employee. In sharp contrast, my military colleagues were all old hands at running large units. This deficit of management expertise can be compounded if an ambassador advanced through the service more via Washington tours than through embassy experience. Mission direction in the field is full of challenges distinctly different from those one encounters domestically.

### **The Importance of Feedback**

Compounding these and many other problems is a system that does not offer smooth feedback mechanisms to its local executive. Washington often is not in a position to follow closely an ambassador's management style. Locally, the gulf between the ambassador and DCM, on one hand, and the rest of the mission is a wide one. The staff's tendency to play up to senior managers, or to be intimidated, can easily leave a front office in a bubble of false impressions, misplaced confidence and even hubris.





I have seen, as have many others in the Foreign Service, how isolated chiefs of mission can be from candid feedback. They never find out that their management style is ineffective, that the American staff bridle at the way they are treated, or that the national staff consider them dilettante Americans who never learned their local employees' work, their worth or even their names. Of course, an unwillingness to listen to what feedback the system does afford only exaggerates this divide.

In my experience, the most successful chiefs of mission understand the value of choosing and working closely with a good DCM. The often-noted division of the ambassador's executive role vis-à-vis the DCM's operations job, where the DCM assumes responsibility for day-to-day operations of the mission, is, in fact, an effective one. The ambassador is free to spend time in the other two fields while the DCM stays atop mission direction, depending on his or her competence in assuming operational control and adequate communication and oversight in the ambassador-DCM relationship.

I remember one ambassador, in particular, who'd had my job as DCM in an earlier assignment. His awareness of how best to use a deputy, and his resistance to the temptation to do both our jobs, made for a tight ship and a successful mission.

Conversely, I have seen cases where an ambassador chose a DCM on a basis other than the individual's management skills, thus reinforcing the ambassador's own strengths but leaving the executive office short on operational expertise. The entire mission suffered. DCM selection and the terms of empowerment are crucial, as is the chief of mission's ability to work smoothly with the deputy. In the selection process for a career chief of mission, the candidate's having previ-

ous experience as a DCM can make all the difference.

### Advocating U.S. Interests

This is the second facet of being a chief of mission. Serving as the personal representative of the president, the U.S. government with all its agencies and national interests, especially commercial ones, an ambassador promotes and defends American positions. More than serving as a conduit for dialogue between Washington and foreign leaders, he or she sells ideas and products, sometimes in both directions. Training and years of experience make this job easier, but the more articulate an ambassador is, the more successful. The Foreign Service has produced many outstanding diplomats who have promoted American interests effectively. It has also produced others who should have been better than their record ultimately showed.

Political appointees sometimes remain short on expertise helpful for meeting this key responsibility. I remember being a junior officer and accompanying an appointee ambassador's call on a Cabinet minister. After the ambassador struggled through the issues under discussion, to my embarrassment, the minister began to address me rather than the ambassador. (To this day, I am not certain the ambassador realized how awkward the situation was.) As one senior foreign official once told a young embassy officer, "The problem with your appointees is that after we explain our position, we often have to explain the U.S. position!"

This is not always the case, however. One of the strongest ambassadors I ever served was a political appointee with extensive academic and policy experience, who bested anyone on the staff in articulating American positions in all their nuances. And I've worked for others who were quick learners

and exerted great energy in delivering effective demarches, selling American products, negotiating new bilateral commercial agreements, and promoting American views in the media. More than one political appointee for whom I worked was well enough connected to senior administration leaders to get attention at the very top for an issue just when it was badly needed.

### Building Relationships

It may sometimes be easy to believe that advocacy and articulating an argument are what being an ambassador is all about. Certainly those are key parts of the job, but by no means all of it. Ambassadors who "talk the talk" well, but neglect "walking the walk" — instilling confidence and credibility, forging alliances and building local constituencies — lessen the likelihood of reaching diplomatic objectives. There is much more to diplomacy than laying out the best arguments. One senior European Union diplomat once told me that the logic of a particular American position didn't matter. What did was how his parliament reacted to the issue in question. In fact, the United States' status as the hegemonic superpower often complicates the job rather than simplifying it, as we sometimes mistakenly expect.

There is an art as well as a science to diplomacy — perhaps more art than exactitude in this very human affair. An ambassador needs to influence the political and economic elites of a country, and doing this may often have less to do with cogent argument than social skills. In today's world, where U.S. public diplomacy seems in a perpetually defensive, reactive mode, getting our message out often requires the ability to touch people on the ground. In the multilateral context, it means building a well-functioning rapport with representatives

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## SPEAKING OUT



from countries that do not easily side with the United States. Succeeding at this endeavor in today's still very traditional diplomatic environment, requires social skills as much as any others.

One ambassador I served under in Finland was a Reagan-appointed rancher from the West. His substantive experience in international affairs was limited, but he spoke the language fluently and possessed superb interpersonal abilities. He also knew his weaknesses and exploited his strengths, particularly by criss-crossing the country to meet people. An exuberant chairman of a local city council remarked to me that in all his years in politics, he had never had a discussion in his own language with an American ambassador. This appointee and his family eventually became bigger celebrities in the country than virtually anyone else, appearing almost daily in the media, and particularly in large-circulation magazines that covered movers and shakers.

In Lapland, the ambassador amazed the Sami population at a reindeer round-up when he lassoed one of the animals properly by the right leg. Twenty-five years later, they still talk about the American diplomat who was interested in them and their culture. Ultimately, it did not matter that he was not always at ease advocating detailed positions. The country's president came frequently to the residence for evening chats in front of the fireplace with his shoes off. That relationship had an effective political payoff for American interests.

For any diplomat, there is a temptation to mingle only with the rich and elite — for whom being seen with the American ambassador is a big social plus. But winning friends and influencing people requires targeted social interaction and accomplished representation at *all* levels of society. One political appointee I worked with

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## SPEAKING OUT



understood this well. He attended a different church each Sunday, saying that he met all kinds of people he would never have had an opportunity to meet otherwise. Another ambassador, a career officer, regularly took as many American staff as he could to participate in on-the-ground humanitarian projects, such as painting a shelter for street children. Many ambassadors are superb at reaching out in this people-to-people manner, but others are not. Many have succeeded or failed on the basis of how they interacted with — and influenced — their host nations.

Running a mission smoothly, arguing convincingly on behalf of American interests, and influencing the host society on its own ground are challenges every ambassador faces. The very best can be equally effective

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***In today's Foreign Service, there may be a tendency for career officers to short-sell the importance of mission management.***

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on all levels, but that is quite rare. More commonly, successful chiefs of mission excel in one area and work conscientiously to improve in the others. The danger lies in neglecting the

other key components of the job to concentrate on the role that is most congenial.

Organizationally, it is hard to believe our diplomatic missions will ultimately be any better than the individuals who lead them. Representing America requires the finest ambassadors our nation can produce in order to hone our diplomacy to its most effective. ■

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*J. Michael Cleverley was a Foreign Service officer from 1976 to 2006. His many overseas postings included tours as DCM in Helsinki (1996-1999) and Athens (2000-2003) and as deputy permanent representative in the U.S. Mission to the U.N. Organizations in Rome (2003-2006). He now consults and teaches contemporary U.S.-European relations.*

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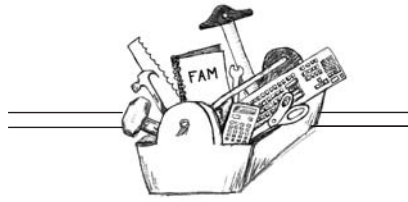
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# FS KNOW-HOW

## *How to Read and Write an EER*

BY JOHN J. EDDY

Though retired for some years now, I can easily recall the anxiety caused by the annual cycle of employee evaluation reports. The tension was even worse in those anti-quarian days, which I remember, when the officer was not allowed to see the report. Secrecy greatly reduced the inhibitions of the rater, who never got to feel the rage of the evaluated officer upon reading criticism of his wife's martinis.

These days, of course, we live in the high, fresh sierra of openness. But now that we have left the tubercles of insensitivity behind in the swamps below, many EERs nowadays still seem drained of all life. Most are as pureed as Gerber peas. They are certainly less interesting than in the days when poison flowed.

These thoughts are personal, naturally. Reading EERs while on threshold and senior promotion boards and while carrying out inspections, I constantly encountered the sameness that you see in those little Nutcracker dolls at Christmas. What always seemed missing was flesh and bone.

A graceful, insightful EER covering the required six competencies is possible, but it is as noticeable as Rudolf Nureyev bounding onto the stage at a third-grade dance recital. An exception was a DCM in Paris who presented the reader with a painting from life. You knew that he was busy, yet it was obvious that he had thought about employees as persons throughout the year. His EERs flowed in one liquid essay, not hacked up into itemized competencies like

*Is the moaning that all EERs read alike exaggerated? Not if you've heard the thud of a thousand feet "hitting the ground running."*



"management ability" — an approach that sometimes gives EERs the look of a probation officer's report. He repeatedly won, and richly merited, commendations for his evaluations by following Ezra Pound's recommendation to young writers: "Make it new."

Is this moaning over the undifferentiated nature of EERs exaggerated? Not if you've heard the thud of a thousand feet "hitting the ground running." Not if you've stood in the street and tried to wave your flag to the dirge of an endless procession of supervisors "leading by example."

Fortunately, most raters are capable of better writing and some show it in the following extracts. (All quotations are approximate, based on my memory and notes.)

"He prepared an outstanding report on beer marketing, establishing that GNP growth was trickling down to the countryside."

"He throws out ideas like a high-speed pinwheel. Some just go pliffit."

Addressing an officer unwilling to

change: "He stood there like a blacksmith watching automobiles go by."

### **Achieve; Don't Just Perform**

True, we should not think of EERs as a fine-arts exercise. The stuff of evaluations is performance, not the artistic or literary ability of the rater. Yet surely there is room to jump a little higher.

I prefer the word "achievement" to "performance." The latter term conjures up for me the hum and reliability of a toothpick-sorting machine, whereas "achievement," described with sufficiently decorous drama, can evoke the shuddering force of Rocky Balboa's right.

If we are to keep the word, performance should not merely signify working hard, surviving staffing gaps, meeting visitors at the airport, beating deadlines, or keeping on good terms with everyone — worthwhile as all those jobs are. "All of these things the gentiles do." Performance, it seems to me, is achievement rooted in strong conceptual ability and charged with sane energy.

Ambition is also important, of course. A drama teacher in elementary school asked my youngest son Bill what kinds of parts he liked. "Big parts," he replied.

Someone has suggested that in order to be a water-walker, you first have to find a post with water. That's true. As Dr. Samuel Johnson observed: "To discover great talents, it is necessary to have great exigencies that call them forth." There is no point in cursing a selection board just because



it is impressed by the power of a telling performance in large events. Board members are as susceptible as anyone else to posing the question, “Who cares?”

One officer acts in matters of great moment to the United States, pushing through a trade agreement with a major trading partner, influencing the creation of a new financial institution, warning correctly of an unexpected change in government. A second officer, in a jungle outpost, stays late and “designs his own kitchen cabinets.”

The top ranks of the Foreign Service are thick with officers who went where they were told to go, serving at unpromising posts where they were assigned unglamorous tasks. Some can be said merely to have survived this career test. Others, recognizing that it was not enough just to meet the demands of the job, created their own demands. For example, they might make the impoverished host country a model for some previously unthought-of route to economic development.

Others, against all odds, were lifted out of anonymity by a political or natural cataclysm. The boss of a one-person post in Indonesia received much praise in official documents for the extraordinary compassion, energy and efficiency he displayed when the 2004 tsunami struck near his modest office far away from the embassy.

Much has been made of the primacy of “management” as a qualifying skill for rising to the top, and therefore as important material for an EER. I’m a convert to this view, though not a zealous one. Managers are not necessarily leaders or even conceptualizers. Managers can organize, oversee, discipline and motivate subordinates, but may not electrify them. That is the province of leaders, who may be weak managers.

The “law partner” analogy as a basis for the promotion of political

officers continues to limp. A political officer may be a writing fool, but if the officer intends only to be a reporter and never a manager, he or she will suffer career limitations. Those employees who view themselves primarily as analysts are entitled to their temperaments, but unless they learn to systematize and supervise, they will not, generally speaking, add enough value to the system to justify making them seniors.

### **Destructive Criticism**

No one likes to give or receive criticism, so it rarely shows up in EERs outside of the “Areas for Improvement” box. One of the most common entries there is “failure to delegate.” For example: “The DCM’s micro-management resulted in a continuing heavy burden on his own schedule and a relaxation of staff efforts.” I believe I noticed, however, that those not subsequently promoted were often accused of a lack of assertiveness or even expression: “His only deficiency is that he is not forceful enough in insisting upon his judgments and thus earning the dividends of being proved correct.”

The bland criticism found in that section sometimes cuts closer to the bone than is realized, however — especially if it is repeated. One of the most damaging pieces of evidence in the eyes of a selection board is the reappearance of the same criticism, however minor, year after year.

Raters often employ faint praise in lieu of direct criticism. It is usually a sign of evasive pusillanimity. Words like “fine” and “good” find themselves gasping for air like a mackerel on the dock next to the sharks of “brilliant” or “sparkling,” overused as these gamy fish may be.

In dealing with apparent criticism, the rated employee might ask the rater if he or she actually intended the statement to reflect negatively. If not,

would the rater consider amending the words or simply dropping the sentence in which they occur? If the rater acknowledges that the implied criticism was intended, the rated employee might then ask that the criticism be made more explicit as an inducement to growth. In this way, at least one of the two participants in the process is acting honorably.

Sometimes worse than faint praise is a sub-category that we might call “inferential ellipsis.” A thought that might initially be considered complimentary is not taken to its final, fatal conclusion: “He doesn’t appear to search for the biggest piece of meat, but it always seems to end up on his plate.”

Selection boards refer to the employee’s statement as the “suicide box.” One employee described as showing manic tendencies, but not quite clinical mania, tended to confirm the reader’s worst fears by writing a 10-page statement of refutation. Instances of intemperance abound: “Morale improved noticeably when the office management specialist departed on her broomstick.” “Yes, I’m late for meetings — because I run into so many people in the halls wanting to discuss his faults.”

In most instances, criticism is best accepted gracefully in the employee’s statement while he or she focuses on the positive — or is simply ignored altogether. Most criticism is far from fatal and is thus better looked upon as a pesky fruit fly than a rodent devouring the entire performance.

### **Damning with Faint Praise**

EER inflation, though rampant, seldom threatens a board’s judgment. Even the most sympathetic, enthusiastic rater cannot manufacture a performance where none exists. “Nemo dat quod non habet” (No one gives what he doesn’t have). The worst examples of inflation amuse rather



than sway a board. One reviewing officer, an ambassador, wrote: "I wish I had more space to write about this truly remarkable human being." He then left a quarter of the page blank.

Unmerited praise demeans both the giver and the recipient. Yet there should probably be more compliments in EERs, not fewer — of the genuine variety, that is. Because the Foreign Service as an institution is not used to commendation, especially from outsiders, too much praise might have an emetic effect. But it is still better to err on the side of generosity.

Behaviorists say that the average person needs some sort of affirmation every 15 minutes. Yet supervisors erroneously fear that too much praise will soften the spine and cause subordinates to lean back on their oars. The opposite is more likely true, for a

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great performance deserves full-bore praise. Consider the following examples:

Of Machiavelli (on his tomb in

Florence): "No praise is equal to that of his own name."

Of George Washington: "If you require a monument, look around."

And my absolute favorite:

Of Shakespeare (by Macaulay): "He had no equal and no second. Of faults he had none, unless it be the slight tedium evoked by his reiterated splendor." ■

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*John Eddy, a Foreign Service officer from 1966 to 1994, served in Caracas, San Salvador, Bogota, Nairobi, Bridgetown, Dhahran and Bombay. His Washington, D.C., assignments included a tour as senior special assistant to the director general. Since retiring from the Service, he has continued to conduct occasional inspections overseas and in the department as a senior inspector.*

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# IRAQ PRTs: PINS ON A MAP



Hugh Syme

WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, CAN THE FOREIGN SERVICE PLAY IN ACTIVE WAR ZONES? HERE IS A LOOK AT THE REALITY OF SERVICE ON IRAQ PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS.

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By SHAWN DORMAN

In November 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited Mosul to inaugurate the first Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Team. “I know that it is not easy work,” she said, while announcing the official opening of this latest diplomatic outpost in the capital of Ninawa province. “I know that it is, at times, dangerous work. I just want to assure you that it is understood in America that it is also really, really important work. Indeed, it is work that is crucial to our own freedoms.” And yet, as Iraq Provincial Action Officer Robert Pope, an FSO who was serving there at the time,

recalls, “The PRTs were rolled out before they were ready for prime time. They didn’t know what we were supposed to do.”

Since then, another nine teams have been established: Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan (the one Regional Reconstruction Team, led by a South Korean ambassador, covering the provinces of Dahuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah); Ramadi, Anbar province; Hilla, Babil province; Baqubah, Diyala province; Tikrit, Salah ad Din province; Kirkuk, Ta’imim province; Nasariya, Dhi Qar province (Italian-led); Basrah, Basrah province (British-led); and Baghdad.

President Bush recently raised the profile of civilian service on such teams when he called for a “doubling” of the PRTs in his State of the Union address. At least eight more PRTs are planned, five of which will operate in the Baghdad area, two more in Anbar province, one in Balad and a possible 19th in Najaf.

Duty at Iraq PRTs represents a new reality for the Foreign Service. Diplomats are accustomed to danger and hardship, but they are not soldiers. So it is not an unreasonable question to ask what role (if any) the Foreign Service should have in active war zones. The PRTs are the administration’s answer to that question. But how they operate, what they try to accomplish and what they actually *can* accomplish is an evolving story — and one that is not the same for each PRT.

In trying to tease out the reality for the Foreign Service behind the rhetoric concerning the PRTs, the *Journal* cast a wide net. Over a dozen Foreign Service members serving at PRTs in seven Iraqi provinces provided input for this report, some on the record and some on background. We spoke with State Department officials in the Office of the Iraq Coordinator. The Office of the Director General provided responses, with input from the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Bureau of Near East Affairs, to additional personnel and security-related questions. A U.S. Army Brigade Combat Team commander currently serving in Anbar offered his own comments about working with the State Department. And the Oct. 29, 2006, report, “Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team

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*Shawn Dorman, a former Foreign Service officer, is associate editor of the Foreign Service Journal and editor of the AFSA book, Inside a U.S. Embassy.*

***Diplomats are  
accustomed to danger  
and hardship, but  
they are not soldiers.***

Program in Iraq,” from the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, Stuart W. Bowen Jr., was especially useful.

### **The Iraq PRT Mission**

Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams, known as PRTs, are civilian-military organizations that are being created to support provincial government capacity development. The plan to establish PRTs in Iraq was introduced in a joint statement issued by Embassy Baghdad and the U.S.-led Multinational Force Iraq (known as MNF-I) in October 2005. The mission, as spelled out by National Coordination Team Chief of Staff Rob Tillery in an Oct. 9, 2006, Baghdad press briefing, is: “to assist Iraq’s provincial governments with developing a transparent and sustained capability to govern, promoting increased security and rule of law, promoting political and economic development, and providing provincial administration necessary to meet the basic needs of the population.” The idea was that “as the provincial governments demonstrate increased capability to govern and manage their security environment, thereby reducing the role of coalition forces in the provinces, then each PRT would transition to a traditional USAID training program to develop local governance capacity.”

The PRTs are loosely modeled on the Afghanistan PRTs, though those are military-led, with a State component. The Iraq PRTs are civilian-led, and fall under the responsibility of the National Coordination Team in Baghdad, which is part of the Iraq Reconstruction and Management Office there. IRMO was established in 2004 by executive order under 5 U.S.C. 3161 as a “temporary organization” with authority to hire temporary employees, called “3161s.” IRMO and the NCT are staffed primarily by 3161s, non-Foreign Service personnel.

The PRTs are comprised of some 35 to 100 personnel, most of whom are from the military. In most cases the team leader is a State Department Foreign Service officer and the deputy team leader is a military officer. The teams, when fully staffed, also include personnel from USAID and its contractor for the Local Governance Program, RTI International; the Department of Justice; the Foreign Agricultural Service; civilian contractors; local employees; and military personnel, including civil affairs personnel.



## FOCUS

Establishing the teams in Iraq has been challenging, in part because of high-level wrangling between State and the Defense Department over who would provide security, support and funding. Initially, DOD was skeptical of the program and there was much confusion about how the PRTs were supposed to function and exactly what the teams were supposed to do. No memorandum of understanding was in place to delineate each agency's responsibilities. By many accounts from those who were sent out to the first PRTs, the process has been ad hoc, with more

or less success depending on the personalities involved and the acceptance, or lack thereof, of the civilian presence by the U.S. military.

A common refrain from Foreign Service members speaking about their experiences in new PRTs is that they have felt like "pins on a map," sent out so officials in Washington could say they were there. They felt "cut off," and were not given clear instructions on their role or on how the chain of command between military and civilian members was to be defined and function. Support from

### Working at PRT Anbar

*By Angela Williams, Public Diplomacy Officer*

Heading to my new post, dressed in 30-pound full metal body armor with helmet, I met my military escort officer at Embassy Baghdad at 10 p.m. to leave for my hook-up to Camp Blue Diamond in Ramadi, in Al Anbar province. We left the embassy and walked over to the launch site to take our flight. Once there, we checked in with the Marines on duty and they wrote on my hand with a black marker the code to Blue Diamond so that if there were any questions as to where I was going, I could show the Marines piloting the Black Hawk or Chinook helicopter my hand (over the noise) and keep it straight where I was to be dropped. They jokingly called this "using my palm pilot."

Life is pretty hard and dangerous at PRT Anbar, definitely not for everybody. Living conditions are spartan; when I arrived at the 10x10-foot portion of my hooch (trailer), it contained only a wooden bed and a chair. I had to put one of my abayas up to the window to keep out light and prying eyes. I share the trailer with a female Marine corporal. We have mice in the trailer and in the offices, and they found nests of cobras hibernating underneath our hooches.

There are no roads in the location of our hooches and when it rains, we must tread through thick mud to get back and forth from work. It is the cold season right now, but I understand that when it gets hot, it really gets hot! We will be swarmed by mosquitoes at night and flies in the morning.

You can't be too fussy about bathroom facilities. Often there are no wet toilets, so we must use port-a-johns; often the toilets are communal (men and women), so you might need to arrange your time to go. Hot showers are a luxury, in short supply and great demand.



*PRT Anbar members, from right: U.S. Navy Commander Geoffrey Schuller, PRT Administrator Sam Foursha, Angela Williams, Locally Employed Civil Engineer and Translator Jamal Refat, U.S. Navy Commander James Lee and USMC Colonel and Deputy PRT Team Leader John Ewers.*

I have six telephones, including a Blackberry, but none work where I am stationed. The satellite phone supplied by the office does work, but only for a three- to five-minute connection. Communications are one of our greatest challenges. Keeping in touch with Baghdad, Washington, or even our local contacts, is hard! Contacting other PRT team members is also difficult.

I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger in the 1970s. The conditions of the PRT remind me of those times; however, the conditions here are even more difficult. In Niger the most remote village would still have been a luxury post compared to PRT Anbar.

Working here at this time is fulfilling and historic, in spite of the dangers and the hardships and isolation. I wanted to work where I could use my knowledge of Arabic, cross-cultural and interpersonal skills, and my knowledge of public diplomacy programming. This is the perfect job for me, and an opportunity to make a difference and do real diplomacy!

Embassy Baghdad and Washington has been, for many PRTs, inadequate.

In somewhat typical State Department fashion, the mandate to staff PRTs came down from above and the Foreign Service had to respond — without an influx of sufficient funding, training or personnel. (Some have compared it to the opening of embassies in all the new post-Soviet countries in the early 1990s, although those missions were not being established in active war zones.)

### The PRT Rollout

“It was like, ‘Okay, here you go, the Secretary wants this to happen,’” explains a recently returned FSO who served in an Iraq PRT and asked not to be identified. “We don’t know how, but go ahead and figure it out because we don’t have time to do it for you.” Another FSO currently serving in a PRT, who asked not to be identified, echoes

that sentiment, “Everyone is so policy-focused — get PRTs up and running in all 18 provinces — that they are not aware of, or even care if they are aware of, the realities on the ground.”

In October 2005, Robert Pope went to Iraq “a believer,” feeling optimistic that he would be able to do good work and make a contribution. He served in Mosul until September 2006 as an Iraq provincial action officer during the transition of the mission from a regional embassy office to PRT Ninawa. “Unfortunately, I had a major crisis of faith when I saw the waste and incompetence and sheer stupidity of what was happening over there,” says Pope. He describes visits to reconstruction projects that had been carried out earlier with no oversight or accountability. A school built six months earlier was already falling down, and roads built in October were gone after January rains because they were not built to standard.

### Bidding Advice from PRT Anbar

*By Horacio Ureta, Iraq Provincial Action Officer*

The key to your success, and subsequently contributing to our mission’s success, is a good attitude. Expect to learn a lot, relearn old things, and do many new things in ways you never imagined. PRT Anbar is like nothing you have ever experienced!

PRT living is dirty, dangerous, exhausting, exciting, boring, dynamic, fluid, dusty, muddy, hot, cold, dry, wet, challenging, frustrating, dangerous (notice that I repeat that one), high-profile, serious, fun, fascinating — and the most rewarding assignment you can have. It’s the most “real” work in the State Department. It has the attention of the world, and is under a magnifying glass from Washington.

I came here from a year in Embassy Baghdad’s political-military section. Baghdad is a five-star resort compared to here (which doesn’t mean Baghdad is that great). However, I much prefer the PRT, because I get out so often. For me, it goes from slow to fast and furious. Still, work and the conditions we face are not for the faint-hearted.

PRT Anbar is in a Marine Forward Operating Base (called FOB Blue Diamond) just north of Ramadi. The Anbar PRT leader is in Fallujah, where the “MEF HQ” is. (MEF stands for



*Ureta visiting Kirkuk.*

Marine Expeditionary Force.) I’d recommend you start learning military acronyms and ranks if you haven’t already. You’ll not be living alongside a military culture; you’ll be living *in* the military.

Actual locations for us can vary. I can’t say for sure where my “home” will be in 30 days, except that it’ll be somewhere in Anbar province, with occasional trips to Baghdad. There are no weekends here.

Expect to work seven days a week. Not that it’s an 18-hour day every day. Sometimes you’ll have free time to work out, nap, read, watch movies, socialize with troops, etc. But you are in a war zone with constant activity, so you have to be available, even though you’re not immediately accessible at your desk. (Actually, I don’t have a desk; I have a table with a State laptop I brought out here). That’s the way it is.

You’ll live either in a beat-up trailer or a beat-up building, and you go outside to use the latrine or shower. Flush toilets are few and far between when you’re embedded.

Take everything I’ve said positively. This is a great assignment and a magnificent life experience where you are truly serving our country. Look at it that way, and all the “inconveniences” of a war zone truly fade away (they do for me).

## FOCUS

“We might have been better off if we’d loaded up C-130s [transport planes] with \$20 bills and dropped them out, because at least some of it would have gone to locals, not all to contractors and scam artists,” Pope says of what he found on the ground in Ninawa.

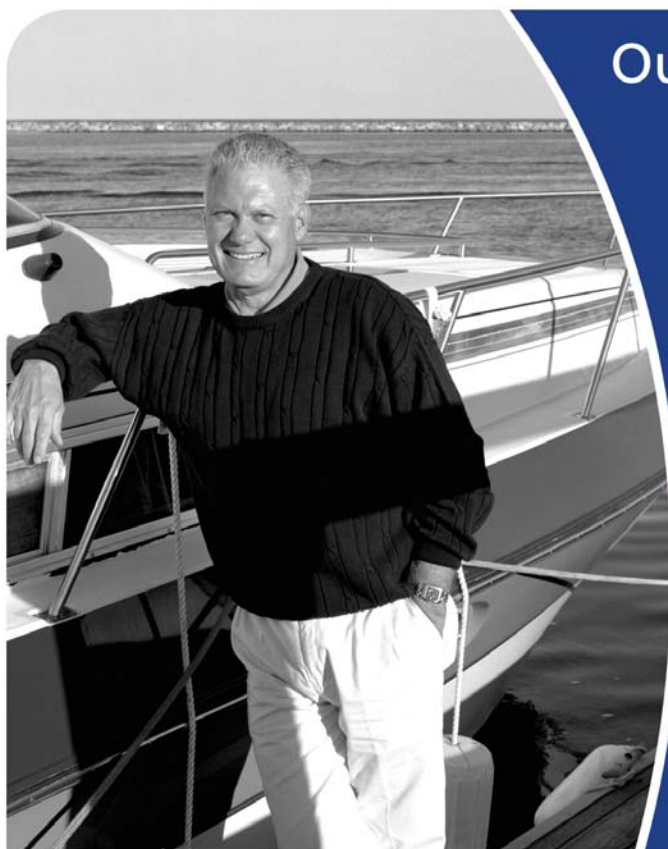
Before the November 2005 establishment of PRT Ninawa, FSOs in Mosul were part of the regional embassy office working out of U.S. Forward Operating Base Courage, supported by State Department security and administrative personnel on site. They had operational phone lines and computer connections to Embassy Baghdad and Washington. The Foreign Service staff of the REO were protected by a dedicated Blackwater (private contractor) personal security detail. In May 2006, when FOB Courage was transferred to the Iraqis, personnel were moved to FOB

***“The unstable security environment in Iraq touches every aspect of the PRT mission.”***

**— Special IG for Iraq Reconstruction**

Marez, which would serve as the base for the PRT.

State and DOD were arguing about a memorandum of understanding right up to the date of the move, according to Pope, causing confusion about who was responsible for what. The move resulted in a general loss of State Department support. Administrative and security personnel from the REO were transferred out of Mosul, and the remaining Foreign Service members lost phone and computer connections, with no communication system available except borrowed, intermittently functional, military links. Contractor KBR (formerly known as Kellogg, Brown & Root) conducted the expensive physical transfer of office equipment and furniture from the REO to the PRT. Much of the furniture and equipment was destroyed during the relocation, according to Pope.



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The move also shifted security responsibility for guarding Foreign Service members from the dedicated Blackwater PSD to the U.S. military. Once they showed up at the new base, the FS contingent became completely dependent on the military for all life and work support. “We were essentially abandoned by the State Department,” Pope says. FS team members opened Yahoo e-mail accounts in order to reach the State Department, as did FS members of many other PRTs who found themselves similarly disconnected.

“In the early days of the PRT, the concept was quite

fluid and uncertain,” says a recently returned FSO who served at a PRT and asked not to be identified. “That uncertainty led to quite a bit of confusion as to what our jobs and tasks were. ... We all had to work together, and we tried pretty damn hard, but at times it was extremely frustrating. I went from having at least one convoy a day at my disposal to perhaps getting out once a week, when possible.” His reporting dropped accordingly, as it became more difficult to connect with Iraqi contacts.

“Despite all these setbacks, and after several months of infighting within the PRT, our civilian and military leaders

## On the Ground in Babil

By Chuck Hunter, Team Leader

At a time when news reports from Iraq often paint an unrelenting picture of death and despair, the Babil PRT is operating quietly but effectively to help Iraqis build their future. The team brings together State Department diplomats, specialists from USAID and its partner organizations, a representative of the Department of Justice, a Seabee engineer, reservists from a Civil Affairs unit based in Knoxville, Tenn., and a variety of contract personnel, including American and Iraqi-born experts in engineering, the rule of law and business. We cooperate closely with the U.S. military, and even share our compound with part of a Special Troops Battalion from the 25th Infantry Division.

On any given day, Babil PRT members might be consulting with officials about which irrigation canals need cleaning most urgently, evaluating operations at a water-purification plant, advising a judge on case management and evidence-tracking procedures, reviewing current project status and future priorities through a joint Iraqi-U.S. committee, or working on increasing citizen participation in governance.

Babil's economic base is largely agricultural, so earlier this year the PRT gave guidance on what to plant to maximize profits. Corn production in the province tripled compared to 2005; next year's yields of this and other crops should increase still further, thanks to modern seed cleaners the team is providing. Honey being another money-maker, the PRT helped put the Babil Beekeepers Association in contact with its



*Chuck Hunter (right) with Aad Hatif Jabr, the chief judge of Babil province, at the groundbreaking ceremony for the federal courthouse that is being constructed with U.S. funds in Al Hillah.*

sister organization in Anbar province, the Sunni region west of Baghdad where the insurgency has been especially deadly, in hopes that Babil's successful training model can generate employment and income in Anbar.

That is not to say that all is sweetness and light here — especially not light, as the citizens of Babil continue to do without electricity for well over half of every day. The PRT is overseeing several power transmission projects that will ease the problem, ideally before demand peaks for air conditioning in the summer. During the cold winter months, however,

there is little we can do to make up for short supplies and high prices of heating fuels. Whenever we feel sorry for ourselves because of occasional mortar or rocket fire in our direction — resulting only in a handful of non-life-threatening injuries to date in the well-heated and well-lit compound — we put things in perspective by remembering how difficult daily life is for Iraqis “outside the wire.”

The chance to make a difference brought PRT members here in the first place and gives us a common purpose. Seeing justice done, helping democracy take root, improving the quality of life of people who have suffered too long — these aims form a tall order. Ultimate success is not a given, especially if the security environment worsens. On its own the Babil PRT will not defeat the terrorists or give everyone electricity 24 hours a day. But while the debate over U.S. policy, troop levels and the definition of “civil war” rages on in Washington, this team and others like it are doing their best to bring America and Iraq closer to victory, one modest step at a time.

## F O C U S

had a meeting of the minds,” this FSO adds. “I believe what was clear was that each person — military and civilian — was dedicated to making a difference over there, so working together was recognized as crucial. With time, suspicions were laid to rest and collaboration became stronger. Maybe the difficult living and working conditions helped contribute to the eventual cohesion, but once it occurred we had a lot of people really ‘drinking the Kool-Aid,’ so to speak, even though our overall mission and Washington’s expectations remained uncertain. I have a lot of respect for our military colleagues working over there, and appreciated their help.” (Note: The phrase “drinking the Kool-Aid” is often used by Iraq veterans to refer to unquestioning support for the mission.)

### **Warriors and Poets**

Joining military and civilian personnel together for a joint mission is a tall order requiring, among other things, the bridging of cultural divides. First come the stereotypes from some in the military: diplomats serving in the

PRTs need “babysitting” and are just there for “tea parties.” Foreign Service officers are “weenies.” And the one Foreign Service members least appreciate: a perception that they have not “stepped up” to serve in Iraq.

While testifying on the Hill in February, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates took a swipe at Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for not being able to quickly fill the civilian surge positions that are to accompany the military surge in Iraq, claiming that State was not stepping up. Press reports highlighted the possible start of a public blame game over losing Iraq. But the criticism was misplaced; only about 10 of the civilian surge positions are for State diplomats and about 10 more for USAID — and most have been filled. The rest require specialists in professions not found in the Foreign Service.

When making arguments about “stepping up,” it is also critical to look at scale. The personnel and budget resources of the State Department and other foreign affairs agencies are miniscule when compared to the Pentagon’s \$400 billion budget and the 2.5 million mem-

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## On the Ground in Iraqi Kurdistan

*By Jennifer Mergy, Iraq Provincial Action Officer*



*Mergy visiting a school in Iraqi Kurdistan.*

The most rewarding moments here as part of the Regional Reconstruction Team in Erbil are in the field. I enjoy the interagency cooperation and the direct contact with Iraqis. One such trip was to areas hit by flash floods in Iraqi Kurdistan's Sulaymaniyah province. The day trip involved logistics and security arrangements with multiple parties — U.S. Civil Affairs, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, USAID, the Regional Security Office, Public Affairs, the South Korean coalition partner, the governor of Sulaymaniyah and the local mayor.

When we arrived at the flood-damaged site, the villagers and local officials met our group and expressed their concerns. I was able to talk with the women about their emergency coping strategies and, more broadly, about their role in the community.

As a follow-up to the trip, I was part of the preliminary evaluation committee that reviewed the flood-relief project proposals. As an RRT officer, I also coordinated with international organizations, including the United Nations, to ensure these efforts were not duplicated and there was a balance among food items, non-food items and infrastructure initiatives.

The whole experience was professionally gratifying because it combined demonstrating our sympathy for the plight of the flood victims and working toward an emergency assistance package. Personally, I was touched by the interaction with villagers who lived far from the region's politics and appeared to view American military personnel and diplomats simply as people making a sincere effort to help others in need.



*Jafati Valley, Sulaymaniyah*

bers in the combined uniformed armed forces and reserves. State employs only about 6,500 active-duty Foreign Service officers, about the size of one military brigade, and these officers staff all U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide. State does not have a reserve corps or barracks from which to deploy: State employees are forward-deployed. Filling a new FS position in Iraq means a job somewhere else in the world needs either to be vacated or left unfilled. And yet, over 1,500 from the State Department have volunteered to serve in Iraq, out of an active-duty pool of just over 10,000 (including State specialists). There are currently close to 200 State

Foreign Service members serving in Iraq, about 50 of them at PRTs.

USAID has only about 1,000 Foreign Service employees total. About 25 percent of USAID FSOs have served in a critical-priority country (Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq) over the past five years and more than 70 are currently serving in Iraq.

From the other side come some civilian perceptions that the military is all about "breaking down doors," possessing a "shoot-'em-up" mentality. "Warriors and poets" is Pope's summary of the differences. "We were told to learn to play nicely with each other, even though State was not very well regarded by several of our high-ranking colleagues in the military," says one PRT veteran who asked not to be identified. He adds that there were "many inherent biases between the two organizations. This tension was exacerbated by whatever relationship State and Defense officials had or did not have at the highest level."

The good news appears to be that many cultural barriers between the services are being overcome and cooperative work is now going on in many PRTs. Yet it is a fluid situation in each team, because personalities and individual perceptions still matter and conditions and relationships change when civilian and military personnel rotate out. Still, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction's October 2006 status report concluded that "in general, the civilian and military organizations within the PRTs are effectively working together, coordinating their activities, and synchronizing their efforts with coalition stability operations in the provinces."

Several PRT veterans point to one key difference between Foreign Service and military personnel: the mil-

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itary takes a shorter-term view than the Foreign Service, which looks at the longer-term payoffs from institution building. “The main point of divergence is in the time horizon,” says FSO Chuck Hunter, team leader for PRT Babil, “with the military focused on short-term effects and State/USAID concerned more with long-term outcomes. The main overlap is in the recognition that security and stability are essential for any of the other things we want to build.”

This view was reiterated by Dr. Barbara Stephenson, deputy senior adviser to the Secretary of State and deputy coordinator for Iraq, who says that diplomats have longer time horizons than the military. “It’s about relationships,” she says, “knowing who’s a moderate.” And the longer the Foreign Service is on the ground in a province, the more chance for success there, because the relationships can be sustained.

“Theoretically, the military pursues the ‘kinetic’ (i.e., fighting) mission and the PRT addresses the ‘non-kinetic’ (i.e., everything else) portion,” says former Diyala

Province PRT leader Kiki Munshi, a retired FSO who left Iraq in January. “In fact, it is not possible to separate kinetic from non-kinetic because winning this ‘war’ is as much political as military. ... Our missions overlap in a more functional way. The military has the control of fairly vast resources in the form of CERP [Commander’s Emergency Response Fund] monies, while the PRT has no money. If the military’s vision of how these funds might best be used fits in well with the PRT’s vision, it’s great. On the other hand, if the military thinks it can do something we believe won’t work or doesn’t think what we want to do is important, we’re up a tree.”

From PRT Anbar, FSO public diplomacy officer Angela Williams and Iraq Provincial Action Officer Horacio Ureta both report good relations with the U.S. military. Williams tells us, “I work closely with their public affairs office and am able to be a contributing member of their work and team efforts. I also work closely with the U.S. military in their civil and social affairs division on the Iraqi Women’s Engagement Program.” Ureta ex-



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plains that being embedded with military units “is the only way we can function, as they have all the assets — Humvees, helos, security, etc. Otherwise, we have no way to engage with the locals.” IPAO Jennifer Mergy, who spoke with the *FSJ* from Erbil several weeks before the Feb. 2 official opening of the Regional Reconstruc-

tion Team there, describes a close working relationship with the military’s civil affairs team and corps of engineers to identify and implement essential infrastructure projects.

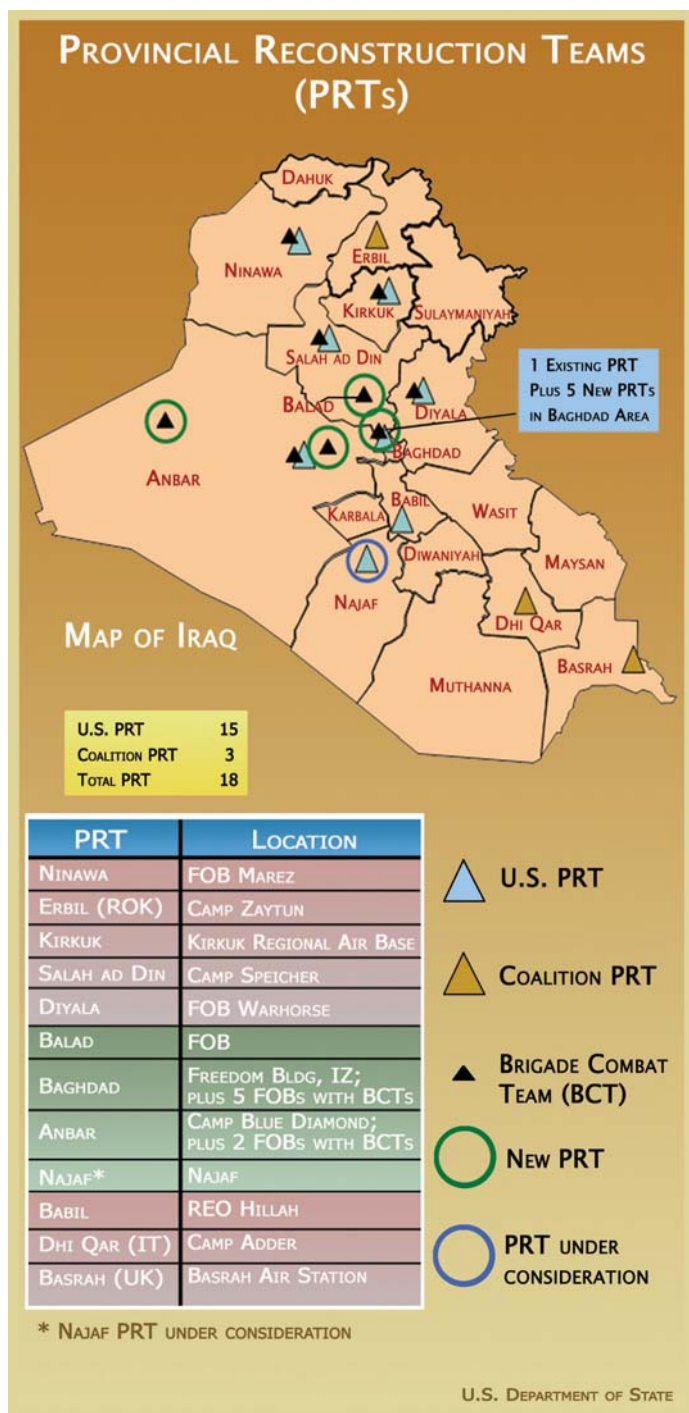
First Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armor Division Commander Colonel Sean MacFarland in Al Anbar offers his thoughts on the civilian/military differences in cultures and work styles. Since forming the PRTs, he says, “things have gotten better, but there is still a long way to go. ... Even at full manning, this organization [PRT Anbar] does not suffice for such a large province.” The State Department “needs to work with the military at every level down to brigade,” he adds. “State should help form a clear strategy for the war, which POTUS [the president] approves and then resources with congressional approval. Then we execute.”

There has been major progress in settling interagency differences over the PRTs, according to Stephenson, and there has now been “buy-in” from the Department of Defense for the PRT program. One solid accomplishment Stephenson points to is the Security Supplemental Agreement, signed in November 2006, which gives DOD responsibility for protection of civilians serving at PRTs based on Forward Operating Bases. Sec. Rice has asked Congress for new funding to support the activities and the security for the PRTs.

### Who Gets the Security Detail?

Apart from the broader civilian-military issues, day-to-day operations on the ground for PRT members are complicated by the reality of an increasingly dangerous environment. “The unstable security environment in Iraq touches every aspect of the PRT mission,” the Special IG for Iraq Reconstruction’s report says. “Because of security concerns, face-to-face meetings between provincial government officials and PRT personnel are often limited, and in some cases do not occur. PRT members are at particular risk when traveling to and from their engagements with their Iraqi counterparts, as are provincial government officials and local Iraqi staff working with the PRT. If identified as cooperating with the U.S. government, all are at risk of threats and attacks by anti-coalition elements. Despite these conditions, some PRT members frequently find ways to interact with their Iraqi counterparts.”

Unlike most of their colleagues at the PRT, Foreign Service members who are not from the Diplomatic Security Bureau are not authorized to carry weapons. No





Foreign Service member travels outside “the wire” anywhere in Iraq without a personal security detail or military movement team. The impact of the requirement to travel with armed guards for conducting diplomacy is profound. The DS force protection rules are fairly uniform for the entire country, although local conditions vary greatly. Even in the so-called garden spot of Erbil, in Iraqi Kurdistan, FS members cannot travel outside the secure compound without a personal security detail.

Thus one constant question for personnel at all the PRTs is “Who gets the PSD?” Plans generally have to be made several days in advance, and may be cancelled at the last minute. While security restrictions do limit the opportunities to engage with Iraqis and cause frustration for FS members who need to meet with Iraqis to do their jobs, none of the FS members who spoke with the *FSJ* suggested the restrictions should be eased. They know they are targets in an extremely dangerous security environment.

Depending on the PRT, security details are provided either by a contractor (usually Blackwater) or by the military. Contractor-provided security is more expensive to the U.S. government than DOD-provided security. However, several FSOs who served on PRTs point out what they see as a critical difference between contractor-provided PSDs and military-provided security: the primary job of contractor-provided PSDs is to protect the “asset” (the FS member), while military personnel have the dual role of protecting the civilian and also engaging the enemy. The military movement teams tend to have less PSD experience and less training for PSD work. The shift of security support from a designated PSD to the military at one PRT — as well as the removal of regional security officers from field offices where PSD support has been shifted to the military — was the subject of a Dissent Channel message in 2006 (one of very few dissent messages sent to the State Department that year).

“It’s not a one-size-fits-all model,” explains Stephenson. “Originally, we thought you can’t work if you can’t get out. . . . We have creative folk out there; they find a way,” she says. Some meetings can be conducted by cell phone or even outside of the province or the country altogether, in a safer locale. Stephenson acknowledges that many of the

***It can take days to get out  
of a PRT locale, even to  
reach Baghdad — and  
then days to get back  
to the PRT.***

accomplishments of the PRTs to date have been due to “heroic ad hoc” efforts by FS members. “Existing relationships allow more to get done than you would think,” Stephenson says. “We get great reporting from the PRTs. They do manage. That’s what FS people do.”

**Tripwires?**

In recent months, the security situation in a number of the PRTs has gotten increasingly dangerous. In most U.S. missions around the world, deciding whether or not to attend a meeting does not usually feel like a life-or-death decision; but in many PRTs, it does. In Mosul, for example, a regional security officer and three security contractors were killed by a vehicle-based improvised explosive device in September 2005 while advancing a meeting between FSOs and provincial government officials. PRT members must constantly evaluate conditions and risks, not only for themselves but for those who protect them and for the Iraqis who may put themselves in danger by meeting with them. The deteriorating security situation in a number of provinces has led to a loss of Iraqi staff, some of whom have faced threats and worse for working with Americans. Having fewer Iraqi staff members, in turn, means even less access to the local population.

In response to questions about “tripwires” in Iraq — the lines that mark the point at which conditions warrant a drawdown or evacuation of civilian personnel — no one offered a clear answer, perhaps by design. The oft-repeated observation from all corners of the Iraq discussion — “If the security situation in Iraq was present anywhere else, we’d have either drawn down or shut down the embassy” — is answered with, “Iraq is different.” According to this view, Iraq is the U.S. administration’s policy issue number one, so the Foreign Service has to be there. But what level of risk is too high, and how large a civilian presence is appropriate?

The official response to a request to the State Department director general for a description of the security conditions for FS PRT members was answered by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security: “Security of U.S. missions is a top priority for Diplomatic Security. We have a robust security program at each post tailored to each mission’s specific needs. Our regional security offi-



*Mosul from the air.*

cers are constantly evaluating and re-evaluating all aspects of security at our facilities worldwide and making adjustments as needed.” It is worth noting that in those Iraq PRTs where security is provided by the military, DS does not play a direct role in managing the day-to-day security for Foreign Service personnel.

In response to the question, “Are there tripwires in place for the Iraq PRTs?” DS responded that “tripwires are a normal part of emergency planning for all overseas posts. In every post, they are under constant review and change as circumstances require.”

To date, PRT Basrah is the only one to have been drawn down. In late 2006, some members of the team were relocated to Kuwait because conditions got too dangerous. A U.S. contractor working for the regional embassy office, on the same compound as the PRT, had been killed in his living quarters in September. The number of mortar attacks and rocket fire into the compound was increasing month by month. Here’s how FSO Andrea Gastaldo, serving in the REO in Basrah, describes conditions in early January, following their return: “We have been sleeping in our offices for months. In the spring we had a rocket attack once in six weeks. Now, we’ve had 129 rockets and mortars over the wall in October, 104 in November, 134 for December, and 18 today alone. We are not looking for glory but for some sort of recognition that we are in the hardest hit of all diplomatic compounds in all of Iraq, yet we are still here trying to accomplish the task of engaging the Iraqis and

promoting democracy. We are in a war zone, where you cannot walk around at dark without your Kevlar and helmet on and where all the staff can differentiate between a rocket, mortar and RPG [rocket-propelled grenade], with no formal training.”

The Special IG report noted the unstable security situation in the southern provinces, concluding that “we question whether the continued deployment of PRT personnel to Anbar and Basrah ... makes operational sense at this time.”

### **The Pencil Problem**

In addition to the restrictions posed by security conditions, the PRTs have faced the more mundane, but also challenging, issues of how to obtain the tools and set up the infrastructure they need to work. Many new PRTs were established without basic support systems in place and without office supplies — and in some cases without offices. Lacking desks, computers, phones, and even paper and pens, team members had to solve what has been called “the pencil problem” on their own.

“The PRTs lacked funding and logistical supply resources,” according to the Special IG report. “Operational budgets initially were not authorized for the PRT program. Accordingly, they functioned without dedicated operating budgets that were needed for purchasing basic office supplies or sundry items for official functions. ... They also functioned without any access to using the base logistics system. ... An inordinate amount of their time and attention was devoted to solving support issues as opposed to substantively engaging with their Iraqi counterparts. ... The consensus among the interviewed PRT leaders was that no PRT should be started until the requisite operational and infrastructure support were in place.”

Foreign Service PRT members who spoke with the *FSJ* reiterated these concerns. “I have spent most of my time in Iraq (nearly nine months) fighting for resources and funds rather than being out working with Iraqis,” says Diyala Team Leader Kiki Munshi. “Until recently, we had no operating budget. The motto of the PRT was, ‘If it’s

## FOCUS

not nailed down, it's ours,' because we filched stationary, pens, chairs, whatever. Also, we have no project money, so we must search for money in order to do anything, and it is very difficult to obtain resources for projects in a timely manner. I have been forced by our bureaucracy to join the long list of Americans who promised things to Iraqi contacts but never delivered."

Angela Williams, at PRT Anbar, among the most dangerous neighborhoods in Iraq, tells us that her PRT currently has no locally engaged staff and they are very much on their own: "You have to make everything happen yourself; it's almost as if you have to make even the paper." She remains optimistic about the team's role in Anbar, but would like to see more support by way of public diplomacy resources that she believes can make a difference.

Stephenson says that the department is working on a "lessons learned" paper that can be shared with anyone heading out to a PRT. It would start with "How I Got Pencils." These lessons will continue to be needed, given that the rollout phase is going to be in play for months to

come as the PRT program is expanded and new teams are established.

### **The Baghdad Disconnect**

Foreign Service PRT members express serious concern — and in some cases, anger — over the lack of a sensibly structured and sustained connection between Embassy Baghdad and the PRTs. The helpful links to Baghdad have tended to come from personal connections rather than through the institutional support system, several PRT members assert.

"There is a huge disconnect between Embassy Baghdad and the field," says an FSO currently serving at a PRT, who asked not to be identified, "and an even larger disconnect between Washington and the field." Another officer who served at a PRT and declined to be identified says, "I felt like I was completely left off the face of the earth when trying to work with Baghdad and Washington."

According to several PRT members, the embassy has

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tended to be very focused on the capital. PRT members would like to see more Baghdad-based FS members concentrating on keeping up with the provinces as well as providing assistance to the teams.

Difficulties with communications and transportation have also left civilian PRT members fairly cut off from their home agencies. Because travel anywhere in Iraq depends on security conditions and military air transport, it can take days to get out of a PRT locale, even to reach Baghdad. And then, it can take days to get back to the PRT.

According to the State Department, support and communication links are improving significantly, however. A new training course is in development, according to the DG's office, to "help newly assigned PRT employees to manage successful progress in their unique and challenging circumstances."

### **Civilian Surge: The Expanded PRT Mission**

On Jan. 10, 2007, in his address to the nation on Iraq policy and the "New Way Forward," President Bush

declared that the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams would be doubled in an effort to speed up reconstruction of Iraq. The "civilian surge," to accompany the much more publicized military surge, has been announced with an expanded mission that still emphasizes capacity building but also includes a counterinsurgency component. Phase I of the expanded PRT program is to be completed in March, with new PRTs to be established in Anbar and Baghdad. Phase II is scheduled for June and Phase III for September.

The objectives of the "Expanded PRT Mission" were laid out in the testimony Secretary Rice presented to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Jan. 11. The mission is defined as follows: "Build Iraqi capacity and accelerate the transition to Iraqi self-reliance; help the Iraqi government expand its reach, relevance and resources beyond Baghdad; and decentralize U.S. government efforts to expand our reach in support of strategic priorities to promote reconciliation, bolster moderates through political engagement and targeted assistance, and support counterinsurgency efforts."

## **On the Ground in Diyala Province**

*By Kiki Munshi, Team Leader*

It's time to prepare for my meeting with the governor. Put notebook in book bag, don body armor and helmet, climb into the Humvee with angles my hip surgeon said would never be possible again, put on eye protection, put on ear protection, say a short prayer ...

Wait a minute! Diplomats don't pray. Or if they do, they don't talk about it in public.

I now understand the power of that statement, "There are no atheists in foxholes." Let's resume. Short prayer for the safety of my team. On with the warlock, machine gun swiveled to three o'clock, and we roll through the gate. Out of the wire and on to the road to Baquba.

Our PRT is on Forward Operating Base Warhorse so we depend on the Army for protection. They do a good job, although the RSO would have kittens if he saw what we do, or if I drew his attention to the fact that we have been in convoys hit by IEDs [improvised explosive devices] seven times and found ourselves in two firefights. The question isn't, though, as many think, as much our safety, but the safety of those we deal with.

What we do isn't traditional diplomacy. It is using diplomat-

ic skills and techniques to do the things USIA used to do and USAID gives contracts to do, but all of it is hard to do in a war zone. It is difficult to work with a provincial council that hasn't managed a quorum in two months. There is no economic development when everyone is busy moving out of town. It is heart-wrenching when your locally-engaged staff member weeps over the telephone because his brother has just been killed.

We roll into the government center, and there is a collective hidden sigh of relief. Off with the armor, on with the headscarf, as much to hide the mussed-up hair as to respect Muslim sensibilities. Helmets don't do much for hair. "Salaam alei kum, peace be with you." The governor and I sit down to talk. "Now about the Project Coordination Center ..." Outside there is an explosion and the rattle of machine-gun fire. "... I'd like to suggest we think of ..."

What we think of is peace. Security. We pretend that it will happen soon and forge ahead. "... having a meeting with the directors general and others involved." Outside there is sudden silence.

## F O C U S

“Our decentralization effort in Iraq will require a more decentralized presence,” explained Sec. Rice in her testimony. “We must continue to get civilians and diplomats out of our embassy, out of the capital and into the field, all across the country. The mechanism to do this is the PRT. We currently have 10 PRTs deployed across Iraq, seven American and three coalition-led. Building on this existing presence, we plan to expand from 10 to at least 18 teams. For example, we will have six PRTs in Baghdad, not just one. We will go from one team in Anbar province to three — in Fallujah, Ramadi and al Qaim. These PRTs will closely share responsibilities and reflect an unprecedented unity of civilian and military effort.” Summing up the goal of the expanded mission, she said that “Our expanded PRT presence will be a powerful tool to empower Iraq’s reformers and responsible leaders in their struggle against violent extremism.”

When asked about the role of the Foreign Service in counterinsurgency efforts, Stephenson said that counterinsurgency work is “20 percent military and 80 percent

everything else. The Foreign Service brings the strategic vision to the picture.”

### Staffing PRTs

The civilian surge plan calls for about 390 civilians to “augment” the current PRT program. The initial announcement sent shock waves through the Foreign Service, causing employees at all levels to wonder where an additional 390 Foreign Service members would be found to staff such positions, given the already overstretched personnel system.

The reality of the civilian surge plan will be less dramatic for Foreign Service personnel, however. There will be a Foreign Service component to the surge, which for most of the 10 new PRTs will consist of one Senior FS or FS-1 level officer from State to be team leader and one officer from USAID to be a senior development adviser. Initially, USAID, which is to play a greater role in the next phase of PRT development, was to provide about 90 of the new PRT members, but as the plans have evolved and

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*Mosul, Ninawa Province.*

details about just what kinds of professionals are needed for the new positions have been spelled out, that number has dropped to about 11 officers.

Most of the new team members will be specialists from outside the Foreign Service. They will be oil engineers, city planners, medical professionals, agricultural specialists, veterinarians and industry experts, among others. State is even floating the idea of hiring non-Americans for some of the specialist positions. Providing security for each new specialist is extremely costly, and one reason non-Americans may be considered is that they may be able to do the job without being as visible a target and thus would require less protection.

Most of the new PRTs will be embedded with Brigade Combat Teams. These will be smaller teams than the existing PRTs, and they will probably have a shorter-term mission than the existing PRTs.

“It’s important to be clear that the numbers and the skill sets are the result of a ground-up review by existing PRTs,” explains Stephenson. “The teams were asked to take a look at their province and take into account Iraqi capacity to absorb the assistance. What skill sets did they need on their teams in order to make the biggest difference? So this won’t come as a surprise to the PRTs; they actually generated it. And, of course, you couldn’t have done that kind of specialized, individualized, tailored look

until you had existing PRTs, and they got to know their provinces well enough to say this is what would make a difference here.”

The Iraq Service Recognition Package offers significant benefits to State Department PRT volunteers, including 35-percent danger pay plus 35-percent post differential. Regional rest breaks are offered several times during a one-year assignment. PRT volunteers receive an extra boost, “enhanced possibility for promotion for creditable and exemplary service.” Perhaps the most significant benefit for PRT volunteers only is guaranteed assignment to “one of the employee’s top five choices for onward assignment, as long as these jobs are at-grade and in-cone or in-

specialty and do not require a language waiver.” USAID, which has its own, similar benefits package, also offers PRT volunteers a top-five choice for onward assignment.

As for filling the new PRT positions, as well as finding replacements for the FS members already serving their one-year tours in PRTs, Stephenson explains that “our fill rate is high.” Current FSO positions in PRTs are 98-percent filled, she says. She noted that there were more qualified bidders for the PRT team leader positions than positions open during the last bidding cycle. For the summer 2007 bidding cycle (still ongoing as we go to press), she says the positions were 87 percent filled by early February.

### **Concerns Persist**

Despite this optimistic view of staffing, there is concern among FS members that the demands for staffing Iraq — the PRTs plus Embassy Baghdad — could lead to a shortage of people to fill the jobs. There is already a significant worldwide deficit of mid-level (FS-2) generalists that will only be exacerbated if many more positions are established in the PRTs. But for now at least, State management does not have plans to direct anyone to serve in a PRT.

Other concerns, from inside and outside the Foreign Service, are that not all FS members who do volunteer for

Iraq PRT positions have the necessary experience or skills to be effective. Some entry-level officers are already being sent to PRT jobs, and many personnel serving in Iraq do not speak Arabic.

In addition to FS and military personnel, Iraq PRTs are staffed by civilian contractors working in a number of capacities, from security to local governance to public affairs. Many of them are “3161s,” hired to staff temporary organizations such as the Baghdad-run Iraq Reconstruction and Management Office and the National Coordination Team under it.

Some Foreign Service members express concern that while many contractors have needed expertise, they can also cause difficulties for the mission because they are not familiar with the procedures, chain of command and culture of the agencies for which they work. One FS PRT member, who asked not to be identified, says, “We’ve got so many 3161s running around, which presents a whole different set of issues — contractors rating FSOs, not knowing anything about how the State Department functions, operational security issues, etc.” Several FS PRT members pointed out that there are 3161s serving as Iraq provincial action officers, in the same positions as Foreign Service officers, yet without the diplomatic training or experience — and for double the salary.

In some cases, Foreign Service employee evaluation reports are being completed by 3161s from the National Coordination Team. This can cause problems, as Andrea Gastaldo explains, because they “are not versed in State-speak; nor do they understand the core precepts that will help JOs move along in their careers.”

### **Too Little, Too Late?**

“On balance, the PRT experience in Iraq demonstrates individual successes arising from individual efforts and improvisations, which allowed some PRTs to move forward with their capacity-development mission,” the Special IG report concludes. “Lessons learned from the PRT experience in Afghanistan showed that the lack of specific guidance led to confusion about civilian-military roles at PRTs. Similarly, executing an effective PRT program in Iraq would have been greatly enhanced if [State

***“We must continue to  
get civilians and  
diplomats out of our  
embassy, out of the  
capital, and into the field,  
all across the country.”***

**— Secretary Rice**

and DOD] shared a common understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.”

Foreign Service members at PRTs operate in an extremely dangerous and challenging work environment, in many cases still without sufficient resources and support, while the security conditions in most places become worse. Some locations have become so dangerous that it is extremely difficult for FS team members to arrange for off-base engagements with Iraqis, which has an impact on effective-

ness, no matter how creative the individuals. This is the case in Basrah, where, at last check, FS PRT members were unable to leave the base at all. In some cases, FS team members are located outside the province they cover (leading to the informal title “virtual PRT”) and access to the province is extremely limited due to travel restrictions based on the security situation. And covering provinces that no longer have a U.S. military presence can be almost impossible for FS PRT members because of access problems. This will be an issue to watch as more provinces transition to Iraqi military control.

As one PRT leader who asked not to be identified reflects, “The PRT concept came late to the party. More often than I’d like to admit I’ve looked at things we’re doing now and thought to myself, ‘Shouldn’t we have gotten started on this before we ended the CPA [Coalition Provisional Authority] and told the Iraqis that they would be running the country themselves again?’

“Some of what we bring to the table now no longer gives us the ability to shape events the way we once could, sometimes as recently as six months ago,” this team leader continues. “American reconstruction funds amount to perhaps 10 percent of what provinces will get from the central government in 2007; in some cases we’re just redoing work that was either done badly or not completed by coalition forces and their contractors over the past several years. Gradual redeployment of U.S. forces has eliminated or greatly reduced our presence on the ground in key areas. That trend will continue as more provinces transition to provincial Iraqi control. Our training and capacity-building programs may find their appeal start to wane with local governments, which now have been in

power for two years even though new provincial elections should have happened months ago.”

### **The Risk-Reward Equation**

For some, the experience has been so frustrating that it has led to the conclusion that a U.S. diplomatic presence is not productive. There may be a point at which the security risks and the security restrictions make doing the job impossible. Team Leader Munshi got to this point in January, and has this to say about the situation in Diyala: “There has been a steady deterioration in the security situation since my arrival in April 2006. It has virtually halted our work. We are able to get out to meet people because of our military movement team support, but many of the Iraqis with whom we work don’t have the same support and don’t come to work. A fair number have been killed or kidnapped, or have fled the area/coun-

try. Economic activity is virtually at a standstill.”

Going on, Munshi says, “Every mission is a trade-off between risk and reward. If the amount of risk is acceptable when weighed against the reward, yes (we should be here). If not, no. In my province, we are moving very close to ‘No.’ This applies to all civilians, not just to FSOs.”

Bob Pope sums up the Iraq PRT program this way: “The PRT concept is both too early and too late — too early because you can’t do development and institution-building in live-fire zones and too late because, four years into this war, it’s way past the time when we have any hope of winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqis. They have been disappointed too many times to believe much of what we say. After hundreds of millions, if not billions, spent on a laundry list of projects, most Iraqis still don’t have potable water, reliable electrical service, operational

### **Suggestions from the Field**

Foreign Service members serving in PRTs were asked for suggestions for improvements that would enable the Foreign Service to function more effectively in the PRTs. One PRT leader, who asked not to be identified, offered a list of suggestions that reflects themes cited by many of the people who contributed to this report.

- **Clear lines of authority vis-à-vis the embassy.** PRT leaders report to the chief of the National Coordination Team, who reports to the head of the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office. Within a PRT, though, the IRMO reports to the PRT leader. It would be clearer if the PRT team leaders reported to the deputy chief of mission, or at least to someone who does.

- **Clear lines of authority vis-à-vis the military in-theater.** Though the hope is for an increasingly civilian face to the transition to Iraqi control, our military brethren (who are more numerous and have greater ease of movement) interact regularly — sometimes more often than we do — with provincial political leadership, tribal sheiks and the population at large. If there’s good coordination our contacts get the same messages from the civilian and military sides, but that’s not always a given.

- **Clearer policy guidance from Baghdad and Washington.** Exactly how clear-cut an idea do we have of how we want the federalism question to turn out, for

instance, and how hard are we prepared to push to get that outcome? What level of outside influence (Iranian, Saudi, etc.) are we prepared to tolerate? How bold can we be in making assertions about connections between elected officials (or at least their parties) and militias? Such questions are vital for gauging how to interact with key interlocutors at the provincial level.

- **More reliable transportation between Baghdad and the PRTs.** Civilian members of all PRTs except Baghdad get back and forth to post only by air. It’s not uncommon because of flight schedules or availability for someone to be stuck in Baghdad for days on end in order to conduct a few hours’ worth of business there. We have to count on a minimum of two days to return from or reach Amman or Kuwait (the two points through which travel to or from Iraq originates). Priority in military-run air movements understandably goes to uniformed personnel, but both operationally and for morale, it would be desirable to have more certainty on in-country travel.

- **Project/program money.** Though we can’t and should not take the place of the local and national government in building a new Iraq, the ability to seize targets of opportunity or to make meaningful gestures with civilian U.S. government funding would raise our credibility considerably.

- **More experienced officers and more Arabic-speakers.**



## F O C U S

sewer systems, jobs, a functioning economy or, most important, personal security. Building a few more wells and creating a few more short-term cleanup projects will not impress these people.”

Offering another view, one FS PRT member in a particularly dangerous province, who declined to be identified, says: “We need to do everything we can to ensure the PRTs can do their work. When we succeed, the Iraqis can run the country themselves and we can go home. We are, in a sense, the exit strategy.”

Angela Williams and Horacio Ureta, both serving in Anbar, argue that the Foreign Service has a critical role to play in Iraqi provinces. “Anbar is extremely dangerous and difficult due to al-Qaida in Iraq. However, we, the PRT, must be here,” says Ureta. Williams tells us that “At some point, we have to pick up the pieces and put a non-military face on it. We are the non-military face.” Her face is particularly effective, because she is an Arabic-speaking Muslim woman, one with more than 15 years of public diplomacy experience. She waits for days for a

meeting off-base with the governor, on hold for the necessary security conditions and support for the trip. She believes the meeting is worth the wait. When she heads out to the meeting, she’s wearing her black abaya. Over her abaya — which doubles at night as a curtain in her muddy shared trailer — she wears a full metal jacket, a helmet, protective goggles and gloves.

Unarmed diplomats flanked by armed personnel on military teams in active combat zones, outside of an embassy structure, in the Iraqi provinces — these may be the faces of the “expeditionary Foreign Service” that is called for by Secretary Rice. But while the Foreign Service is expected to “step up” and serve in Iraq, they should, in turn, be able to expect to be sent only to places where they can actually do their jobs and meet with key interlocutors, where there is a chance that they can play an effective, meaningful role. They should be able to expect that they will not be used simply as “pins on a map” for PowerPoint presentations back in Washington. ■

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# THE VERY MODEL OF A MODERN ...

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y first few months as the sole State Department representative on the Provincial Reconstruction Team here in Jalalabad were pretty rough. I felt like I never really knew what was going on, where I was supposed to be, what my role was, or if I even had one. In particular, I didn't speak either language that I needed: Pashtu or military. For instance, soon after I arrived last August, a really nice soldier came to my office to tell me that "There will be an OpOrd at 1300 in the Force Pro B Hut." I got the gist of the message — in much the way that beginning language students at FSI do — but nothing more.

Now, just a few months later, I am busy and active, and feel like a valued part of the Jalalabad PRT. I understand milspeak reasonably well, and can easily decode messages like the one that visitor brought me.

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*Danny Hall joined the Foreign Service in 1989. A management officer currently with the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Jalalabad, he has previously served in Santo Domingo, Paris, Ljubljana and Washington, D.C. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Hall was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines for four years; he is also a registered architect.*

AN FSO SERVING IN JALALABAD EXPLAINS  
HOW THE 12 U.S.-LED AFGHANISTAN PROVINCIAL  
RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS FUNCTION.

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BY DANNY HALL

I also know that he was an airman, not a soldier.

I am the sole State Department official here, but have lots of company. There are 83 military personnel — 32 from the Air Force and 51 with the Army. The civilian contingent is much smaller: John Minnick, our very active agricultural representative, is a civil servant from USDA, and Brian Bacon, our energetic USAID Alternative Livelihood Program coordinator, is a contractor who covers several provinces and a multitude of projects. (Another USAID officer position is currently vacant.) We also have two civilian engineers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and several full-time interpreters, contracted out of Bagram Air Base. In addition, there are a number of Afghan laborers and craftsmen who work on the base, as well as locally hired interpreters who attend our meetings and go out on missions with us.

This is basically the model for all 12 American PRTs throughout Afghanistan, no matter how big the province: approximately 80 military personnel, one State representative and three or four other civilians. Virtually everyone is on a one-year tour of duty and extensions are rare. The military personnel I work with all trained together in the U.S., arrived last April, and will depart

together this April.

There used to be three Dyncorp contractors here, working with our military Police Technical Assistance and Training team, but they all left and haven't been replaced. The Bureau of International Narcotics Affairs and Law Enforcement sponsors two compounds of Dyncorp contractors: about 40 police mentors are based at the Regional Training Center Annex, across the street from the Provincial Police Headquarters in Jalalabad, and six or so trainers are stationed at the actual RTC (a police training center outside town, literally in the desert). INL also has advisers at the RTC with the Justice Sector Support Program who conduct surveys and do training, and the bureau sponsors a Poppy Elimination Program that operates out of the provincial governor's compound.

Finally, because Jalalabad is a large city, and Nangarhar province is relatively peaceful, there are numerous NGOs and international organizations here, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the National Democratic Institute, the International Committee of the Red Cross and others. There are also Indian and Pakistani consulates here.

However, I seldom see any of the people not assigned to the PRT, even though nearly all of them are about 10 minutes away from me at most. Cell phones work only sporadically, and I only leave our small compound to attend previously scheduled meetings at specific locations.

Besides the 12 American teams, there are 12 other PRTs in Afghanistan under European leadership (German, Canadian, Spanish, British, Italian and several others), each different in size and composition. For instance, the German PRT in Kunduz has over 500 people alone, many times the staffing of an American team.

### **Military Culture(s)**

The working relationship between the State rep and the military personnel at each American PRT varies considerably, depending on the location, the personality and experience of the commander, and the security situation in the province. Fortunately, our commander, Lt. Col. Dave Naisbitt, is awesome. A good leader and

*Four months after  
arriving in Jalalabad,  
I am busy and active,  
and feel like a valued  
part of the team.*

manager who has been here since last April, he understands the complexities of the Third World. He also appreciates the role and contributions of civilian agencies and is very committed to the idea of interagency cooperation, going to great lengths to include my civilian colleagues and me in all PRT activities and issues. Local Afghans respect him and come to him with a multitude of questions

and problems; both the provincial governor and the head of the Provincial Council consider him a close friend and ally.

The Jalalabad PRT has a single mission to which we all contribute in different ways. Our three objectives are to promote security, encourage development and increase governance. Am I able to do my job effectively? The simple answer is yes. But the more complex one is that "my job" is very difficult to define. I see my role as twofold: serving as the Embassy Kabul representative on the PRT, and the PRT representative back at the embassy. I provide "reach-back" by knowing who in Kabul can provide our team with assistance.

By the way, it is ironic that when I served in the European Bureau's executive office last year, the concept of "transformational diplomacy" dominated our working lives. Yet during my time in Afghanistan, I have literally never heard the phrase mentioned.

The 51 Army soldiers who provide our force protection are from two reserve units — one from Connecticut and one from Washington state. I have never told any of them my age, as I am probably older than most of their parents. Many of them are great guys, though some are quite disappointed that they are in Afghanistan, protecting and escorting us rather than "fighting the enemy."

The 32 officers are all from the Air Force, and they have a distinctly different subculture from their Army colleagues. I had no idea of the differences before coming here, but now am very familiar with them.

Another division is between those who approach this extremely difficult situation with enthusiasm, and those who have become cynical as a result of the many challenges, especially the pervasive corruption. I gravitate toward the enthusiastic ones, particularly the commander, the medic, the intelligence officer and the lead



**Left:** Commander Dave Naisbett, First Sergeant Danny Hall Jackson, FSO Danny Hall, and Civil Affairs Director Tom Peters serving dinner at the PRT on Christmas Day.

**Center:** Danny Hall in the back seat of a Humvee. **Right:** Hall with the district prosecutor from Nazyan, who was visiting the PRT compound. (Afghans hold hands a lot.)



he briefs visitors, “We did X yesterday, or maybe it was last week or last month. The days all run together.”

Because it is easier to get to Jalalabad than many other PRTs, and because we have a very articulate and active commander, we get lots of visitors — from the military, Congress, our embassy and other U.S. agencies, as well as from NGOs, other countries and aid organizations. Some of our more noteworthy visitors have included the supreme allied commander of NATO forces and the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We were scheduled to have eight U.S. governors come one weekend, including Gov. Pataki from New York, but their trip to Jalalabad was canceled at the last minute because the clouds were too low for the helicopters to fly.

mechanic. But I understand the cynicism of the others. This is a very difficult place to be, especially when you are young and have families and small children waiting for you back home. In addition, a number of the soldiers and airmen were called up from the reserves, and some have even been called up from the Individual Ready Reserves — so they no longer participate in exercises or receive benefits.

But there is at least one thing nearly all the troops here have in common: chewing tobacco, a habit I still haven’t gotten used to!

### A Day in the Life

We work all day, seven days a week. Friday is supposed to be a “day of rest,” so we don’t schedule missions or meetings outside the base. However, we have regularly scheduled internal meetings at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., and also often receive visitors or taskings from people outside Afghanistan who don’t know that Friday is supposed to be “Sunday.” In addition, because Afghans don’t take American holidays or weekends, and our contacts in Washington don’t know when it is an Afghan holiday, there are always lots of activities and work to do — virtually every day. As our commander often says when



On base, I have a single room, which is very nice, with around-the-clock electricity and central air and heat. Also (amazing for a PRT) I have my own private bathroom with a shower. I also have a private office in a dilapidated building on the compound. But otherwise, daily life here is like being back in a “college dorm” situation, which I personally find very difficult. The “no alcohol, no sex, no pets” rule at all American PRTs does not help, either. (I really miss my cat!)

My office is 55 seconds in one direction from my room, and the cafeteria is 45 seconds in the other direction. These are really the only three places I can be, unless I am on a mission or at a meeting. In my room, I can either sleep or watch my DVDs, but I find that the stress here is so great that I cannot handle any movie or TV program that has more drama than what is encountered on the TV show “Friends.”

## FOCUS

I wake up in the morning based on the time of our first meeting or departure — sometimes as early as 5 a.m. — and go to bed between 9 and 11 p.m. (There is really nothing to do in the evening.) I have to say that this is the first time in my life that one of my considerations when getting dressed in the morning is whether my clothes could be easily spotted by snipers. Several times, my military friends have suggested that I not wear a brightly colored or patterned shirt that I had put on before going out on a mission with them.

Every meal is served in the mess (dining hall). All the food is chosen and provided by the military, and it's all cooked in some other country, then flown in and reheated in our kitchen three times a day. It doesn't help that meals are served only at specified times, and the menu is based on what day of the week it is (Tuesday lunch is turkey cutlets). One of my soldier friends here is counting the time left by the number of "Tuesday Pizza Nights" he has left (12, as of mid-January). Dinner is served from 5 to 7 p.m., cafeteria style. We use plastic

forks and paper plates, and people come in and eat, watch football on TV (with the sound turned way up), and leave. This used to drive me crazy, after many years of elegant meals and lovely dinner parties. But at least now I have some buddies with whom I can sit and joke around for a few minutes. However, if none of them are around when I enter the dining hall, I take my meal back to my room and eat on the bed in front of the TV.

In contrast to this, my State colleague at the Spanish-run PRT reports that the meals are so fantastic that if the base were overrun by insurgents, the Spanish soldiers would protect the cook first. They actually drink wine with lunch and enjoy aperitifs in the afternoon.

### **Meanwhile, Back in Kabul**

There is no easy way to describe relations between our PRT and the embassy. For one thing, neither entity is monolithic; each institution's role is complex, and each group of people reflects a mix of personalities and grapples with multiple issues and goals. Certainly I've found

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my PRT commander to be very responsive to any request from State officials. However, we are obviously a military organization, first and foremost, so he reports to his headquarters, not to the embassy.

I formally report to the PRT office in the embassy, which is extremely active and supportive of the State reps at the 24 PRTs around the country. The complexity of what each of us is doing on our respective teams also gives us an indirect reporting relationship with other sections, particularly the political section, but also with our public diplomacy, economic and USAID colleagues.

However, those of us out in the field are seldom able to maintain close contact with Kabul. Phone service is irregular, and travel is not a routine matter. Though the journey from Jalalabad to Kabul would take less than three hours by road, we don't travel overland due to security concerns. To get to the capital, we have to wait for a helicopter from Bagram Air Base or a plane from PRT Air, which has two small airplanes that are contracted to fly us in and out of the PRTs. They have a proposed schedule (they will come to Jalalabad on Sundays or Wednesdays), and we make a formal request for them to come here when we actually need to travel. There are no instruments at the Jalalabad Air Field, so I now know more about aviation than I ever wanted to! Aircraft can only land if the clouds are at least 12,000 feet above ground level (and if PRT Air remembers to request landing clearance at least 24 hours in advance, which doesn't always happen). Travel is difficult, and I have only been to Kabul twice in the whole time I have been here.

The challenges our dedicated colleagues in the embassy face are different, but no less compelling or overwhelming than those we face at the PRTs. Like us, they work very long hours; I received e-mails from the embassy on Christmas Day. Many of my colleagues in the capital are recently tenured mid-level officers who joined the State Department during the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative. As unit chief for the entry-level career development office a few years ago, I already knew them all, and am proud to be associated with them now as colleagues.

### **Looking for the ONE**

One thing that I believe would greatly improve our ability to act as State representatives on Provincial

Reconstruction Teams would be to have the wonderful OpenNet Everywhere system to connect us to the State unclassified computer system. When I worked in EUR/EX, I had a ONE key fob that would provide a code I could use to access the State system from any computer, anywhere in the world — my condo in Washington, a hotel in Germany, a friend's house in England, or even a place like Jalalabad.

To be sure, there has been real progress with communications during my time here. When I first arrived, the Internet went down with the sun (our computers are not solar-powered, so I never understood that correlation!). Even when the sun was up, it only worked about half the time. Communications are better now, but I only have a connection to the commercial Internet, and even that frequently goes out. So I can't read cables or post reports, look up e-mail addresses, get salary statements, or do any of the multitude of tasks that are now done on the State intranet by colleagues both in Washington and at other posts.

During bidding season, those of us at PRTs were supposed to be priority bidders, but I felt like we were actually disadvantaged without access to the State communication system. We couldn't see current bid lists, find names and contact info for people to lobby, or even enter our selections in the HR system, without assistance from someone else. I was fortunate to have wonderful friends and colleagues in Washington who helped me, and I have been paneled into my first choice for onward assignment, as a management officer in London.

I have proposed that ONE be provided to PRTs in messages sent via the DG Direct pipeline, in requests for e-Diplomacy grants, and by personally lobbying the DCM and our very energetic and responsive management officer back in Kabul. Everyone has said it's a good idea, but so far no one has been able to make it happen.

### **A Deteriorating Security Situation**

As you might expect, security is the dominant factor in everything we do. At some PRTs, my State colleagues walk around alone in town, or drive their own vehicles, without military escort. State has generously provided me with a beautiful new Toyota Land Cruiser; unfortunately, the commander will only let me drive it within the confines of the PRT — about 200 feet in any direction. To leave the base, he requires that an armed

## FOCUS

soldier drive and Humvees accompany us.

While Nangarhar province is more peaceful than some places, particularly the southern provinces, it is much less peaceful than others, especially those in the north. The situation has deteriorated since I arrived in August, with an increase in the number of incidents and attacks, so we limit travel as much as possible. Normally, we only leave the base to attend a meeting or ceremony or to inspect a project site; we travel in a convoy with a minimum of three Humvees and nine armed soldiers. And we all wear body armor and helmets whenever we are "outside the wire."

Jalalabad is a big market town of approximately half a million people, but I have never been to the market, a

***Because it is easier to  
get to Jalalabad than  
many other sites, and  
because we have a very  
articulate and active  
commander, we get lots  
of visitors.***

restaurant, someone's home, or any place that isn't the location of an official meeting. As a former Peace Corps Volunteer, this is very disappointing, for I would like to simply walk around town and talk to people. However, our commander's highest concern is for our safety, and I will never challenge his decision or authority over what is, or is not, safe.

Even with this very limited scope of activities, I find every mission we go on, or meeting we attend, very interesting. Traveling

through the desolate but beautiful landscape, filled with sheep, goats, nomads with camels, snowcapped mountains and vast, rocky deserts, I often feel like I am in *National Geographic* magazine.

We also have many Afghan visitors come to the PRT

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## F O C U S

every day. We encourage this, as it is much easier for people to come see us than for us to go see them (in an armed convoy). Often they request material assistance, or ask if we can address an injustice. Each PRT is meant to be the face of the United States in its province, and in our case, the commander is very well known and respected by Afghans all over the province.

Because we are besieged with valid and urgent requests for assistance, many more than we can fulfill, there is always a need to prioritize. Lack of electricity, lack of employment, lack of education, lack of health care, lack of roads, lack of decent housing, lack of security, etc., etc. How does one decide which needs are most important and most urgent?

### **Making a Difference**

What would I do differently regarding U.S. involvement in, and support for, Afghanistan? First of all, I would place more emphasis on education. When I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines, I saw how

that country is still benefiting from the work of the Thomasites, a group of pioneer American teachers sent by the U.S. government to the Philippines in August 1901 to establish a public school system. While that may have been done for the wrong reasons (to exert our influence by establishing an American school system), the rewards and benefits have been great, as the country has a highly educated work force that sends professionals and skilled workers all over the world. Certainly there are still many problems in the Philippines, but education is not one of them. So I believe that providing funding and security to send a multitude of teachers here would benefit Afghanistan for years to come.

Despite the frustration of our not being able to help everyone in Jalalabad, I can list many different accomplishments: district centers, roads, schools, flood control projects, agriculture cooperatives, etc. But, the “crown jewel” is the Construction Trades Training Center, which is a model for USAID/PRT

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cooperation. PRT funds built the facility and USAID funds hired the staff and developed the programs that train locals in the construction trades — plumbing, carpentry, electricity, etc. We now use these skilled workers on our other projects, not only as the actual builders but also for quality control that was lacking before this center was operating.

Less easily quantifiable successes are those where our team has influenced people to change their behavior, encouraged them to work harder or more responsibly, or resolved an injustice. There are numerous cases in which people have come to request our assistance to resolve a problem or dispute or mistaken arrest. The PRT has access to provincial officials, and can often make a difference

***This is the first time in my life that one of my considerations when getting dressed in the morning is whether my clothes could be easily spotted by snipers.***

in either alerting someone to the problem, or at least letting them know that “Americans are watching and interested.”

As during my four years in the Peace Corps, I find that the physical hardships are the easiest thing to adjust to here. It’s the cultural differences, and never being sure how to act or what to do or where to be, that are the most difficult. In particular, adjusting to life in the military was as hard as adjusting to Afghanistan itself. But as I approach the halfway mark of my

time here, I can say that I am more convinced than ever that the U.S. should be here helping the people of Afghanistan, and that the satisfaction of knowing that I’m part of it is worth all the personal hardships and sacrifices. ■

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# AND NOW IRAQ: A FORMER FSO REMEMBERS VIETNAM

THE PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS NOW IN  
IRAQ ARE A NEW INCARNATION OF THE COMBINED  
OPERATIONS RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAM.

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BY JOHN GRAHAM

I was one of hundreds of U.S. Foreign Service officers who served in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s. While many of us were ordered to go, I went as a volunteer. Fresh from an assignment in Libya during the revolution there, I wanted another big adventure; I wanted to be in a war, and Vietnam was the only war we had. I also knew that another good performance in a difficult and dangerous place would keep

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*John Graham, a Foreign Service officer from 1965 to 1980, served in Liberia, Libya, South Vietnam, Washington, D.C., and at the U.S. mission to the United Nations. He is now president of the Giraffe Heroes Project, a global nonprofit rallying people to take on public problems and giving them the tools to succeed ([www.giraffe.org](http://www.giraffe.org)). He is the author of *Stick Your Neck Out: A Street-Smart Guide to Making a Difference in Your Community and Beyond* (Berrett Koehler, 2006) and of a recently completed memoir, *Sit Down, Young Stranger*. Versions of this article have appeared in the Washington Post and at [www.truthout.org](http://www.truthout.org). Relevant documents and diaries can be found in the John Graham Collection of The Vietnam Project at Texas Tech University ([www.vietnam.ttu.edu](http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu)).*

pushing me up the State Department's promotion ladder. Yes, those motives were shallow, but that's who I was at that time. The irony is that what I saw and did in Vietnam 35 years ago deepened my life more than any other experiences I've ever had.

Like most FSOs in Vietnam, I was attached to CORDS, a countrywide command of American civilians and military, described back home as the "pacification program." The acronym stood for Combined Operations Rural Development Support; our standing joke was that the "R" had meant "Revolutionary," until some Pentagon flack decided that term made us sound too much like the Viet Cong.

The CORDS command structure alternated between civilian and military. I had the equivalent rank of major and worked for an Army lieutenant colonel, who in turn reported to the province senior adviser, a senior FSO. The military participants in the program were almost all Army, while the civilians came from the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development. We all dealt with the inevitable culture clashes, mostly with good humor (though I can still recall my spit-and-polish boss choking on his breakfast when a young USAID officer on my staff showed up for work in

a bowling shirt). But I think we all came to respect and appreciate what each side brought to a very tough job.

The “job” varied, depending mostly on how close you were to the shooting war. CORDS built infrastructure — like schools, roads and fishponds — provided supplies, ran training sessions on everything from public administration to farming and “advised” South Vietnamese officials who were often a decade our seniors. While the CORDS teams that trained local militias were made up entirely of American military, CORDS civilians helped provide security assessments and, especially in exposed areas, supported counterintelligence efforts and often coped with military threats. Those threats got more serious as U.S. combat troops (whom we rightly regarded as our protectors) began to go home.

I got to Vietnam in early 1971, at the midpoint of the withdrawal process. I wasn’t there to fight, but I quickly learned that the word “noncombatant” didn’t mean much where I was posted, in Hué, a provincial capital just 50 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone. A week into my tour, a sniper’s bullet whistled past my ear on the main highway. Joe Jackson, the burly Army major who was driving, yelled at me to hold on and duck as he zigzagged his jeep to spoil the sniper’s aim.

Snipers or not, it was the U.S. government’s policy not to issue weapons to civilian CORDS advisers in Vietnam, even to those of us in distant and dangerous outposts. The reason was not principle, but PR — and here begin the lessons for America’s war in Iraq.

### **Shifting to “Vietnamization”**

Sometime in 1969 the White House, faced with unrelenting facts on the ground and under siege from the public, had quietly made the decision that America couldn’t win its war in Vietnam.

President Nixon and his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, didn’t put it that way, of course. America was a superpower, and it was inconceivable that it could lose a war to a third-rate nation whose soldiers lived on rice and hid in holes in the ground. So the White House conceived an elaborate strategy to mask the U.S. defeat: slowly withdraw combat troops over several years, while focusing the remaining Americans on training the South Vietnamese to fight the war — and build a viable nation — on their own. As a key part of this strategy, we gave the Saigon government a series of performance benchmarks which, if unmet, would trigger a total U.S.

withdrawal while shifting blame to the South Vietnamese for the debacle that would follow our leaving. This strategy was called “Vietnamization,” and it cost at least 10,000 more American lives, and countless more Vietnamese ones, plus billions of dollars over the next several years.

It was a rigged game from the start. All but the wildest dreamers in Washington knew that the South Vietnamese would not and could not meet our benchmarks — especially our demand that they create a stable central government that would attract popular support strong and broad enough to control the rivalries that had ripped the country’s fabric for a thousand years. During the 18 months I was in Vietnam, I met almost no Americans in the field who regarded Vietnamization as a serious military strategy with any chance of success. In fact, more years of American training could not make a difference in the outcome of the war because the core missing element was not South Vietnamese combat or leadership skills, or supplies of arms, but belief in a nation worth fighting for.

The White House hoped that Vietnamization would keep the house of cards upright for at least a couple of years, providing what CIA veteran Frank Snepp (quoting a Kissinger memo) famously called a “decent interval” that could mask the American defeat by declaring that the fate of South Vietnam now was the responsibility of the South Vietnamese. If they didn’t want freedom badly enough to win, well, we had done our best.

To make this deceitful drama work, however, the pull-out had to be gradual and easily explained to the American people. The U.S. training/advisory force left behind also had to be large enough and exposed enough to provide visual signs of our commitment on the evening news. Part of that force were U.S. military officers attached to South Vietnamese Army (known as ARVN) units. The rest of it was comprised of CORDS personnel. Pictures of unarmed American advisers like me shaking hands with happy peasants in the countryside would support the lie that Vietnamization was serious and succeeding.

By June 1971 the U.S. 101st Airborne Division, stationed just outside of Hué, had all but stood down from active fighting. The 101st had provided much of the security that allowed CORDS teams to travel more or less safely in the province that surrounded Hué, building schools and roads and training local officials. Even as that protection ebbed, we were still expected to go into rural

districts that were becoming more dangerous by the day.

In late June, I drove with Graham Fallon, a Navy doctor, out to Nam Hoa, the westernmost — and least secure — district in the province. My purpose was to inspect a CORDS housing project, while Fallon was going to check on a new health clinic. The dirt road to Nam Hoa went north from Hué for a few miles, then followed the Perfume River upstream as it bent toward the mountains. Fallon decided to stop for a cigarette at a viewpoint where the road hairpinned through a set of low hills above the river. He'd barely lit up when we heard three quick shots. One of the bullets ricocheted off the boulder where he was sitting, missing him by an inch. I ran for our truck and started the engine. When Fallon threw himself in the other side, I gunned the truck down the small hill in front of us and out of range.

### **The Policy Collapses**

Things got worse, especially when public pressure for total withdrawal increased and the rest of the American “force protection” troops went home. That left the day-to-day safety of most CORDS teams up to local South Vietnamese militias, a shaky shield at best. In addition, military participants in CORDS, by some inscrutable logic, were being sent home as part of the overall troop withdrawals — so the more dangerous Hué became, the more the CORDS team stationed there became a civilian operation. CORDS advisers became easy targets for assassination or abduction anytime the Viet Cong chose to take us out (FSO Steven Miller had been killed in Hué during the Tet Offensive in 1968).

CORDS civilians quickly learned ways to get the weapons our government refused to issue us. I kept a case of grenades and an Army radio under my bed. I slept with an M-16 propped against the bedstead and practiced rolling off the bed and grabbing it without raising my head. My FSO housemate, Howard Lange, and I built sandbag walls against the windows with firing ports in the middle. We had our own dubious army of four Vietnamese houseguards who (we hoped) would at least fire a warning shot before they ran away. (When the

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State Department sent me to Stanford for a year after Vietnam, for months I walked down the shadowed sides of the streets in Palo Alto to avoid sniper fire.)

In late April 1972, North Vietnamese forces swept south across the DMZ, scattering the ARVN defenders in Quang Tri and pushing toward Hué. By May 2, the battle line arced 15 miles to the north and 10 miles west of the city. To the east was the South China Sea and to the south, the road to Danang — Hué’s last ground link to the outside world.

200,000 refugees poured into the city. There was no shelter for them and almost no food. Hungry people fought for scraps of garbage and looted houses and shops. Among the refugees were hundreds of deserters from the ARVN divisions shattered in Quang Tri, still wearing their uniforms and carrying their M-16s. Key city officials abandoned their posts, gathered their families and fled south. Law and order collapsed; gangs of deserters smashed storefronts and looted at will. A mob of drunken ARVN soldiers torched the main market at Dong Ba; the city’s firemen had long since fled, and the fire quickly threatened to engulf the surrounding acres of shacks and small shops. The black smoke did not rise but hung in a pall over streets now jammed with terrified people and echoing with the sounds of gunshots and shattering glass.

With my three civilian CORDS colleagues, I stared at the melee, stunned. We had spent the entire day moving about the panicked city, trying to find enough South Vietnamese officials to form a martial law government to replace the regular city government that had collapsed and fled. At any point we could have been killed by ARVN deserters who wanted our trucks. Now there was nothing more we could do but watch the shouting, shoving mass of people stream past us toward the Danang road. The ground shook as bombs from U.S. Navy F-4s fell on North Vietnamese Army columns less than 10 miles away. As night fell, the main bridge over the Perfume River was backlit by flames from the burning market. Silhouettes moved slowly across — cars and trucks piled high with people and furniture, and walking figures pushing wheelbarrows or balancing shoulder poles.

## FOCUS

As far as anyone knew, the battle raging just north and west of Hué that night — May 2, 1972 — could have been the turning point of the entire war. If the city fell, the road to Danang, and perhaps Saigon, was open to the NVA.

The consequences would also be personal. The machine guns we had set up on the roof of CORDS headquarters were an empty gesture. None of us Americans believed we would be pulled out in time if the city fell. We knew that Vietnamese desperate to escape would mob any choppers sent to save us. We are alive today because American carrier jets caught the advancing North Vietnamese at daybreak and all but obliterated them.

The interval we bought in Vietnam was never “decent.” While the final defeat would not come for

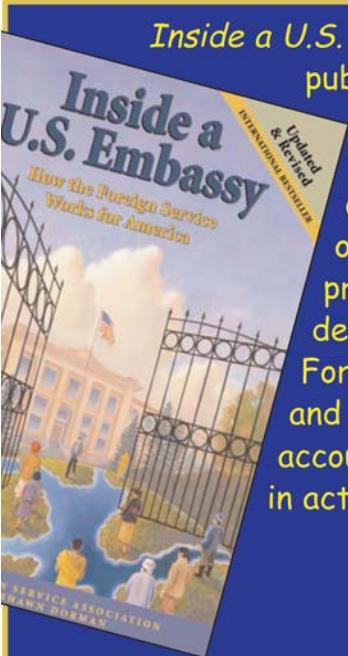
*As in Vietnam,  
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groundwork for blaming  
the loss on the Iraqis.*

three more years, pictures on the evening news showed not happy peasants but terror and carnage as the country collapsed.

### **And Now Iraq**

The pictures from Iraq 35 years later are no different. The Bush administration is “surging” troops into Baghdad to try to quell the violence, but the essential U.S. mission, according to the president’s Jan. 10 speech, remains the training of Iraqi forces. The president will double the number of Provincial

Reconstruction Teams (Iraq’s version of CORDS) to try to rebuild essential services for the Iraqi people. Meanwhile, Washington has imposed benchmarks designed to force the Iraqis toward a political resolution of their civil strife — conditions which, if unmet, will trig-



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ger the end of American support.

This policy is Vietnamization in all but name. Its purpose is not to win an unwinnable war, but to provide political cover for a defeat, and to lay the groundwork for blaming the loss on the Iraqis.

Very few accept the president's assurances that a temporary surge of troops will make any difference — except to the toll of Americans and Iraqis who will die or be maimed. Increased training will make no difference either, for what the Iraqi military and police need is not just technical skill but unit cohesion and loyalty to a viable central government, which is nowhere in sight.

When U.S. troops pull back from fighting the insurgents, violence and chaos will increase across the country. More of the soldiers and police we've trained and

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equipped will join the militias.

At home, political pressures to get out of Iraq completely will increase rapidly as the violence gets worse. The surge will be reversed. The military force left behind to protect the Provincial Reconstruction Teams will be drawn down to — or below — a bare minimum, further increasing the dangers for the Americans who remain.

Our benchmarks won't be met. As the situation gets worse, whatever remains of a central government in

Baghdad will be even less willing or able to control centuries of sectarian and tribal hatreds. The civil war will spiral out of control, giving us the justification we need to get out — blaming the Iraqis for the mess we've left behind.

But the world will know whose mess it is. ■

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# EMBASSIES AS COMMAND POSTS IN THE WAR ON TERROR

**P** ONE RESULT OF THE WAR ON TERROR IS THE MILITARY'S INCREASED PRESENCE IN U.S. EMBASSIES AROUND THE WORLD. HERE'S AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLICATIONS.

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Protecting Americans from terrorist attacks within the United States depends, to a great extent, on U.S. success overseas. The task is vast and worldwide. It requires enlisting host-country police to track and capture terrorists, uncovering terrorist financing, sharing intelligence with foreign partners, strengthening border surveillance in remote and unpopulated regions, and building partnerships with foreign militaries. In the longer run, it requires convincing entire societies to reject terrorist propaganda and recruitment. A successful counterterrorism policy depends on strong relationships with foreign governments and the people residing in countries on every continent.

Embassies are on the front line in the overseas campaign against terror and demands on ambassadors, staffs, and physical facilities have increased exponentially. Since Sept. 11, 2001, embassies have hosted a continuing influx of interagency personnel tasked with the full

range of counterterrorism activities. Under the direction of Chairman Richard G. Lugar, Senate Foreign Relations Committee majority staff visited selected embassies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, as well as the headquarters of four combatant commands, to focus specifically on the civilian/military nexus. He asked staff to assess whether the State and Defense Departments are working together overseas in a way that contributes to overarching U.S. foreign policy goals in the individual countries and in the regions. ...

## **A New Role for the U.S. Military**

The U.S. military has taken on numerous new tasks in the war against terror that are resulting in its having greater presence in embassies. Following the Sept. 11 attacks, combatant commanders were directed by the Secretary of Defense to develop plans within their areas of responsibility that would identify and eliminate terrorists, as well as identify and influence regions susceptible to terrorist influence. Some tasks are traditional boots-on-the-ground military missions. Some of the new tasks have military content, but are not necessarily war-fighting. For example, there is a new security assistance program intended to boost recipient nations' ability to partner with the U.S. military in the war against terror. Still other new tasks go well beyond what one would nor-

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*Editor's Note: The above is excerpted from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff report, "Embassies as Command Posts in the Anti-Terror Campaign" (S. Prt. 109-52), issued on Dec. 15, 2006. The entire report can be accessed online at [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109\\_cong\\_senate\\_committee\\_prints&docid=f:31324.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_senate_committee_prints&docid=f:31324.pdf).*



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mally consider to be a soldier's job; for example, digging wells, building schools and providing public affairs programming.

The defense attaché has long been an important member of the embassy team. He serves as the ambassador's adviser on military issues and the contact with the host nation's military. Depending on the quantity of military assistance, the embassy also hosts an Office of Defense Cooperation, which is the in-country coordinator of such programs as the Foreign Military Financing Program; the Global Peace Operations Initiative, a train-and-equip program for international peacekeepers; and the International Military Education and Training Program. FMF, GPOI and IMET are funded in the civilian foreign affairs budget, directed by the Secretary of State, and carried out by the Defense Department.

The level of assistance available in the foreign affairs 150 account for security assistance is a consistent source of frustration for Defense Department officials. European Command officials pointed out that only \$6 million in FMF funding was available for their entire region of responsibility in Africa. There has been a longstanding question as to whether such security assistance programs should be funded from the civilian foreign affairs budget or the military budget. When the issue has arisen in the past, the decision has been made both in the executive and legislative branches that they should remain in the 150 foreign affairs account under the authority of the Secretary of State. This is rooted in the fundamental belief that determinations as to what countries should receive U.S. military equipment and training, and the extent and type of such training, are fundamentally a foreign policy decision.

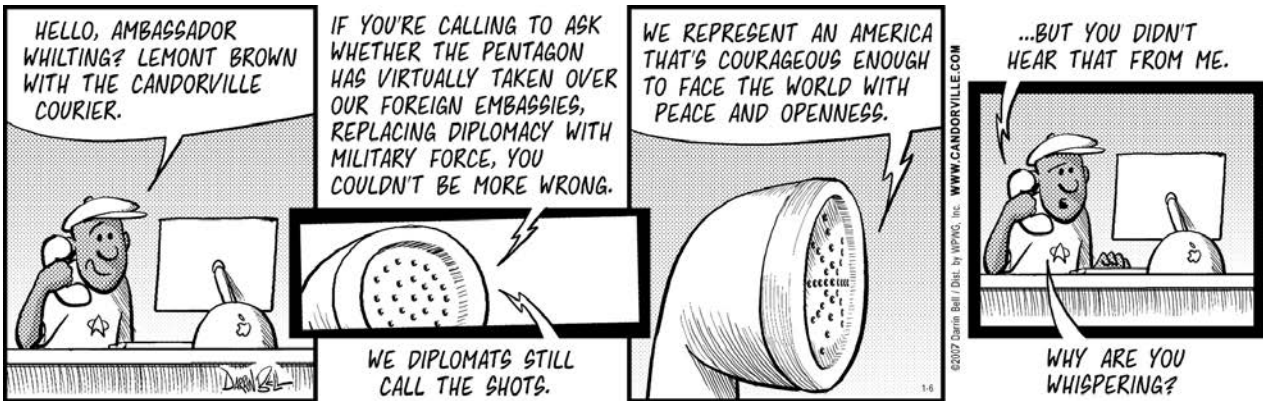
**Section 1206 Security Assistance.** In Afghanistan

and Iraq the executive branch requested, and the legislative branch granted the Department of Defense, the authority and funding to train and equip the militaries and police forces in both countries without going through the State Department. The Department of Defense also received authority to reimburse coalition partners for logistical and military support provided in Iraq and Afghanistan. Subsequently, the executive branch requested that these train-and-equip authorities be extended worldwide.

Department of Defense officials, uniformed and civilian, argued that the department needed the new authority for time-sensitive and urgent terrorism threats to the United States that could not wait for the normal budget process applicable to the traditional programs under State Department authority. They also argued that the additional amounts necessary in a post-9/11 world would not be possible from the strapped 150 account foreign affairs budget.

In response, the legislative branch granted but circumscribed the requested authority in the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act. Called Section 1206 assistance after its place in the bill, the amount of the assistance was limited to \$200 million, as opposed to the \$750 million requested, and [was] allowed only for training and equipping military rather than police forces. It mandated that the president direct the Secretary of Defense to conduct the programs, in order to ensure interagency vetting overseen by the Office of Management and Budget. The law also requires that the Secretaries of Defense and State "jointly formulate" any program and that it be "coordinated" with the Secretary of State in implementation. The law also requires that the Section 1206 program comply with various laws generally applic-





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able to the provision of military assistance.

In the most recent defense authorization bill, again hard-pressed by the Defense Department, members of Congress dropped the requirement that Section 1206 assistance be provided only upon direction by the president and gave the authority directly to the Secretary of Defense. The amount was increased to \$300 million.

Section 1206 security assistance is now being extended to some 14 countries: Algeria, Chad, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, São Tome & Príncipe, Thailand, Yemen, Senegal and Sri Lanka. A number of the 2006 projects focus on strengthening recipient countries' coast guard equivalents or navies. Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, São Tome & Príncipe, the Dominican Republic and Panama are receiving 1206 funding for maritime surveillance and communications equipment and training. The administration continues to seek partners willing and able to participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative, an American-led multilateral effort to coordinate and develop procedures for intercepting smugglers of unconventional weapons. Gaining greater control of maritime transportation routes can reduce drug and gun trafficking, exploitation of human beings, pirating and other illegal activities. Other programs in Yemen and in the trans-Sahara focus on increasing the recipient nations' ability to secure land borders and track and attack terrorist networks.

Overall in fiscal year 2006, \$200 million in funding was appropriated. Only \$100 million of that amount has been obligated, an indication that the initially claimed urgency for the funding was questionable. In the 2007 budget, \$300 million has been authorized for Section 1206 funding and a request of \$750 million is expected for 2008.

**Special Operations Forces.** The Special Operations Command takes the lead for planning, synchronizing and, as directed, executing global operations against terrorists and their networks. Beyond its instrumental role in Iraq and Afghanistan, the command has provided to regional commands some 1,000 special operations troops for service in 50 different countries. Its baseline budget has increased since 9/11 from \$4 billion to almost \$8 billion. According to Commander General Bryan D. Brown, the special forces are expected to grow by some 13,000 personnel over the next five years.

Special operations forces are part of the new mix of military personnel at U.S. embassies and provide information to their relevant combatant commanders. They also undertake military-to-military training, specifically for counterterrorism. Joint Combined Exchange Training teams arrive for short duration training of some one to three weeks and Joint Planning and Assistance teams are embedded for long-term training, with U.S. trainers rotating on a six-month schedule.

**Development and Humanitarian Assistance.** In Afghanistan and Iraq, the military has often had to take on emergency reconstruction tasks. There has been an effort to create a more robust civilian capability to work in hostile environments, but the State Department-organized effort is still nascent and civilian agencies, especially USAID, are still cobbling together ad hoc teams that, while talented and dedicated, are limited in number. As a result, military civil affairs teams have built bridges, schools and hospitals, organized local political councils, and provided humanitarian relief.

Much of the funding came from the Commander's Emergency Response Program, initially supported by the hundreds of millions of dollars found in Saddam

Hussein's secret caches throughout Iraq. Subsequently, the Congress appropriated funding from the Department of Defense budget for the CERP, and included funds for firefighting, repair of damage to oil facilities and related infrastructure, and medical assistance to Iraqi children.

Building on the experience in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Defense Department requested and received authority to broaden a previously existing Combatant Commander Initiative Fund to allow combatant commanders to carry out such projects in any countries where military operations are being conducted. Combatant commanders are now funding joint military exercises, military education and training, and humanitarian and civic projects that include medical and veterinary care, construction of transportation systems, wells, sanitation facilities and landmine clearance and education.

Such an expansion of military-provided humanitarian and civic assistance is nowhere more evident than in the Horn of Africa. The U.S. Central Command oversees some 1,800 troops stationed at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, who are tasked with building health clinics, wells and schools in remote areas where government influence is weak and terrorists are known to be recruiting. In an effort to provide evidence of alternatives to religious extremism, small military teams train local forces, gain access and gather information, and provide practical assistance in an attempt to improve the lives of local residents in areas that terrorists may be targeting.

Staff found that country teams in embassies with a USAID presence are far more capable of ensuring sufficient review of military humanitarian assistance projects than those that have no USAID office. Budgetary cutbacks at USAID, affecting both personnel and programs, are repeatedly cited as a deficiency in the U.S. campaign against extremism in susceptible regions of the world.

**Public Information.** The Defense Department has taken on the additional mission under the direction of the Secretary of Defense to counter terrorist propaganda in key regions and countries of the world. The purpose is to discourage sympathy for terrorists and their efforts to recruit, marginalize radical Islamic ideology, and increase popular support for U.S. operations and multilateral counterterrorism activities. In one of its most recent forays into the civilian world of international public affairs broadcasting, the Pentagon has produced a report that is

highly critical of the Broadcasting Board of Governors' radio and TV broadcasting into Iran. In embassies, military teams of three or four persons are being sent to key countries to carry out informational programs. There are currently 18 such deployments, expected to rise to 30 countries if current plans are realized.

### **Reactions from the Field**

Ambassadors in every country pursue a wide-ranging agenda running the gamut from managing the overall relationship with the host country to resolving trade disputes and rescuing Americans in trouble. All ambassadors interviewed by the staff, with the exception of [the one in] Thailand, reported an increase in military personnel in their embassies since 9/11. One ambassador heading a small embassy in Africa reported that American uniformed personnel may outnumber civilian personnel within the year.

All ambassadors interviewed see the war on terror as a top priority and the military components of the embassy as one tool that can be used to address it. For the most part, ambassadors welcome the additional resources that the military brings and they see strong military-to-military ties as an important ingredient in a strong bilateral relationship. Nonetheless, State and USAID personnel often question the purposes, quantity and quality of the expanded military activities in-country.

Ambassadors are the president's personal representative and top U.S. official in-country. Every ambassador has country-clearance authority. Often permission to work at the embassy is granted routinely to interagency personnel coming on either permanent or temporary assignment. But every ambassador has the power to deny clearance or to suspend it once granted. As one U.S. ambassador stated, "The rule is, if you're in-country, you work for the ambassador. If you don't think you work for the ambassador, you don't get country clearance to come in."

In most cases, ambassadors seemed informed about U.S. military activities in-country and appeared willing and able to provide leadership. In three embassies visited, however, ambassadors appeared overwhelmed by the growing presence of military personnel and insistent requests from combatant commanders. Neither were the ambassadors as knowledgeable on the breadth of military activity in-country as they should have been. In one case, an ambassador to a country that is receiving Section

1206 funding had not heard of the program. In several cases, embassy staff saw their role as limited to a review of choices already made by “the military side of the house.”

There are successes to report that can provide models to new ambassadors. The ambassador to Yemen appears to have developed one of the best procedures for initiating Section 1206 requests. The embassy’s Office of Defense Cooperation works closely with the Yemeni Ministry of Defense to identify needs. The ODC vets these requests through the country team, discussing them with the deputy chief of mission, the political section chief and a political officer who covers counterterrorism issues full-time. The ambassador approves the submission to Washington.

In Thailand, though all military assistance has been suspended due to the Sept. 19 [2006] coup, the ambassador’s deputy chief of mission previously served as a political-military officer, so the ambassador reports a “front office that has a good degree of background knowledge about and sensitivity to the military dimensions of the bilateral relationship.” Another ambassador warned against delegating oversight of military programs and activities to the defense attaché or other military components of the embassy. “The front office must be kept informed, must know when key decisions need to be made, and must make them,” he said.

An ambassador to an African country described the situation in his embassy in this way: “We are a small number of people, in a tight community, with a clear hierarchy. The military respects hierarchy and clarity.” He reports that when he has objections to programs or activities, he says no. EUCOM has a lot of the money to spend “and the atmosphere is that we want to do something with it. My attitude is, ‘The first principle is do no harm.’” He recently suspended country clearance to one military official. The person was gone the next day.

### **Problems and Challenges**

Despite the welcome arrival of new money and other resources to the country team, the increase in military presence and activities has created challenges and raised

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reservations and questions.

Decisions to take action against terrorists in-country require the approval of the Secretary of Defense and “are coordinated with” the ambassadors, according to Department of Defense guidelines. The State Department perspective is that ambassadors have full authority over all U.S. government activities in-country. While such nuanced differences may seem obscure, they are bound to cause problems. One route toward clarity would be the inclusion of new mili-

tary elements under the National Security Decision Directive-38 process. This would “regularize” their presence in-country, specifically placing them under the ambassador’s authority, allowing diplomatic privileges and immunities to be requested for them, and authorizing routine compensation from the Department of Defense for their administrative expenses. The Department of Defense has argued against this process, noting that some military components are part of the relevant combatant command.

Some but not all ambassadors have insisted on having memoranda of understanding signed with the regional combatant commander to clarify lines of authority. The situation should not be left for resolution in the heat of the moment. All ambassadors should pursue MOUs on military presence that reports to the combatant commander and on the broader issue of military action in-country. Or the Department of State should pursue a more systemic solution offered by a global memorandum of agreement between the Secretaries of State and Defense. But it is important to get lines-of-authority questions sorted out before directives from the ambassador and the combatant commander conflict in an urgent situation.

Authority is one issue. Value-added is another. Civilian embassy staff in a number of countries expressed skepticism about the need for and the potential for error by new military personnel. While those sent to work in embassies are expected to be seasoned and experienced professionals, some are seen as poorly trained in information gathering and only rarely have regional or linguistic expertise. Rotational tours of only six months limit

expertise acquired on the job. In several countries, embassy officials say that the time required to bring military personnel up to speed, monitor their activities, and prevent them from doing damage is not compensated for by contributions they make to the embassy team.

There are notable exceptions to such criticism. In Lebanon, new military components in the embassy provided information on appropriate routes in connection with the emergency evacuation of several thousand Americans during the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel in the summer of 2006.

On the issue of Section 1206 funding, regional programs initiated by the combatant commands are not receiving the same embassy input as bilateral programs. In the case of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative, at least one embassy did not realize that its country had been selected to receive assistance until well after the president announced it in May 2006. The ambassador subsequently objected to the assistance and prevailed. In the case of the Gulf of Guinea Initiative, the embassy team that covers São Tome & Príncipe did not know that its participation was being considered until well into the process. EUCOM briefed the ambassador a month after the president's announcement and gained the ambassador's support. (Preliminary findings of a GAO report on 1206 funding are to be completed in January 2007.) Further, Equatorial Guinea, a problematic country that is situated in the strategic Gulf of Guinea, was on the original presidential list of Section 1206 countries before being removed following congressional scrutiny.

Whether the mix of military and civilian foreign assistance is appropriate is another issue. In the Caribbean, for example, there will be some \$7.5 million in Section 1206 funding for the Dominican Republic for interceptor boats and maritime communications and training, while only \$800,000 in U.S. funds is going into public diplomacy. If the terrorist threat is the transit of people and equipment across the island and into the United States, Senate staff questioned whether it would be wiser to spend as much money on public information and an informants' program as on trying to intercept a couple of

***All ambassadors interviewed by the staff, with the exception of [the one in] Thailand, reported an increase in military personnel in their embassies since 9/11.***

boats making their way to the United States through Caribbean waters. In this case, as in others, it is clear that Section 1206 funding, while useful to address drug-trafficking and a future potential terrorist threat, is not the [kind of] time-sensitive, urgent need that cannot wait for the normal budget process.

There is evidence that some host-country nationals are questioning the increasingly military component of America's profile overseas. In Uganda, a military

civil-affairs team went to the northern part of the country to help local communities build wells, erect schools and carry out other small development projects to help mitigate the consequences of a long-running regional conflict. Local NGOs questioned whether the military was there to take sides in the conflict. In Ethiopia, military humanitarian action teams were ordered out of the region near the Somali border due to Ethiopian sensitivities that their presence could spark cross-border hostilities. Whether the humanitarian task force should try to return is still a source of disagreement within embassy team discussions. In Latin America, especially, military and intelligence efforts are viewed with suspicion, making it difficult to pursue meaningful cooperation on a counterterrorism agenda.

Some ambassadors alluded to problems with broad implications for the role of the Department of State. One ambassador lamented that his effectiveness in representing the United States to foreign officials was beginning to wane, as more resources are directed to special operations forces and intelligence. Foreign officials are "following the money" in terms of determining which relationships to emphasize, he reported. A problem cited throughout every region is the understaffing of the civilian side of embassies, a situation corroborated by Government Accountability Office findings ("Department of State: Staffing and Foreign Language Shortfalls Persist Despite Initiatives to Address Gaps," August 2006, GAO-06-894). The military has significantly more money and personnel and is so energetic in pursuing its newly created programs and in thinking up new ones, that maintaining a management hand on mil-

## F O C U S

itary activities is increasingly difficult, according to one ambassador. In posts throughout the world, civilian staff point to the "Iraq tax" and cite instances of civilian job slots emptied and remaining unfilled as personnel and resources are funneled into the effort in Iraq. ...

### Recommendations

**Role of the Ambassador.** In the campaign against terror, the leadership qualities of the U.S. ambassador have become a determinative factor in victory or failure.

- It is imperative that the U.S. ambassador provide strong leadership, steady oversight and a firm hand on the component parts of all counterterrorism activities in U.S. embassies overseas. This includes the authority to challenge and override directives from other government agencies in Washington to their resident or temporary staffs in the embassy.
- The president must send to the Senate as nominees for ambassadorships only those candidates who are qual-

ified for the sensitive and important post-9/11 role of U.S. ambassador.

- In considering the president's nominees, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and subsequently the full Senate, should renew a commitment to insist on the qualities of experienced judgment, knowledge of interagency missions and activities, and a solid grounding in the culture and politics of the region to which the candidate is expected to be assigned.

- The SFRC, during the confirmation process, should make it clear that members will hold the regional assistant secretaries and the ambassador accountable for mishaps or setbacks that could have been avoided through informed and engaged leadership in-country.

- Ambassadors should be charged with the decision whether to approve all military-related programs implemented in-country. That would include Section 1206 security assistance, humanitarian and development assistance, and other programs and operations. In countries with MISTs (Military Information Support Teams), the



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ambassador must similarly approve or disapprove all military-produced informational material and MIST personnel should work under the direction of the country team's public affairs officer.

- In the case of special forces, the ambassador's authority over military activities in-country should be made clear in a memorandum of understanding with the relevant regional combatant commands. Such authority would include approving any mission, monitoring its implementation, and terminating it if necessary. An alternate, more systemic solution would be a global memorandum of agreement covering all special forces activities in-country, signed by the Secretaries of State and Defense.

**Organizing Foreign Assistance.** Some countries are now receiving between a quarter and half of their U.S. foreign assistance in the form of security assistance. In one country visited, security assistance is the only form of foreign aid being provided by the U.S. government. Section 1206 assistance, with the exception of Lebanon and Pakistan, is not addressing threats to the United States that are so immediate it cannot be included in normal budget processes.

- The Secretary of State should insist that all security assistance, including Section 1206 funding, be included under his/her authority in the new process for rationalizing and prioritizing foreign assistance. Country team meetings organized by the Director of Foreign Assistance at the State Department should include military representatives in cases where the country is a recipient or potential recipient of military funding. Otherwise, there is no guarantee that the mix of civilian and military assistance will be effectively balanced to most directly address the terrorist threat.

**Rationalizing Missions and Money.** The current budgets of the civilian foreign affairs agencies do not reflect their key role in the conduct of the war against terror. In fact, it can be argued that the disparity in the ratio between investments in military versus civilian approaches threatens U.S. success.

- The executive branch should undertake a disciplined, coordinated and transparent approach to identi-

*Some but not all  
ambassadors have  
insisted on having  
MOUs signed with the  
regional combatant  
commander to clarify  
lines of authority.*

fying both civilian and military counterterrorism priorities overseas, assigning appropriate roles, missions and divisions of labor among federal agencies, and requesting robust funding to achieve those priorities.

- The legislative branch should fund the civilian foreign affairs agencies, particularly the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, at a minimum to the level requested by the president. Continuing to deny the president his foreign affairs budget by billions of dollars below what he requests

is undermining U.S. national interests. The current 12:1 ratio of military spending to spending on the diplomatic and civilian foreign aid agencies risks the further encroachment of the military, by default, into areas where civilian leadership is more appropriate because it does not create resistance overseas and is more experienced.

- The administration should develop a comprehensive budget for foreign assistance that incorporates economic, development, humanitarian, security and military assistance. All foreign assistance programs should be funded through the foreign assistance accounts, as administered by the Department of State. If foreign assistance is, contrary to this recommendation, to be funded through both the 150 foreign affairs account and the 050 defense account, the Secretary of State should retain primary authority over its planning and implementation. Otherwise, there is the risk of undermining the Secretary of State's role both in Washington and in embassies as the manager of bilateral relationships and as the chief arbiter of foreign policy decisions.

**Regional Strategic Initiative.** The Secretary of State should regularize and expand the department's Regional Strategic Initiative — comprised of regional meetings of ambassadors, regional assistant secretaries and senior interagency personnel, including the combatant commands — to focus specifically on the terrorism threat and appropriate counterterrorism responses. With the rapid expansion of counterterrorism activities and the increasing need for interagency agreement in the field on strategies as well as tactics, such meetings should occur at the most senior level possible, with ambassadors themselves actively engaged and involved. ■

# PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB AND MUSLIM WORLD

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRUE DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL BE SLOW, PAINSTAKING, EXTREMELY CHALLENGING AND, AT TIMES, VIOLENT.

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BY ALON BEN-MEIR

**P**resident Bush's twin notions that democratizing Iraq will have a ripple effect on the rest of the Arab world, bringing prosperity and peace to the region, and that democracy is the panacea for Islamic terrorism, are unsubstantiated as well as grossly misleading. Even a cursory review of the Arab political landscape indicates that the rise of democracy will not automatically translate into the establishment of enduring liberal democracies or undermine terrorism in the region. The same conclusion may be applied generally to the Muslim political landscape.

In fact, given the opportunity to compete freely and fairly in elections, Islamic extremist organizations will most likely emerge triumphant. In the most recent elections in Lebanon and Egypt, Hezbollah and the Muslim Brotherhood, respectively, made substantial gains, and in Palestine, Hamas easily won the national parliamentary elections. That they did so is both a vivid example of today's political realities and an indicator of future trends. And if current sentiments in the Arab states offer a guide, any government formed by elected Islamist political parties will be more antagonistic to the West than the authoritarian regimes still in power. In addition, there are no indications that democracy is a prerequisite to defeating terrorism, nor any empir-

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*Alon Ben-Meir is professor of international relations at the Center for Global Studies at New York University and directs the Middle East Project at the World Policy Institute. This essay is based on the author's direct involvement in Middle Eastern affairs as both a researcher and mediator.*

ical data to support the claim of linkage between existing authoritarian regimes and terrorism. An annual study conducted by the State Department, "Patterns of Global Terrorism," shows that between 2000 and 2003, 269 major terrorist incidents occurred in free nations, 119 in countries considered partly free, and 138 in countries with authoritarian regimes. The study also reveals that during the same period there were 203 international terrorist attacks within India, a democratic state, while there were none in China, which does not meet most standards of a free society.

These findings, of course, do not prove that democracies attract more terrorist incidents than do dictatorial regimes. But they do suggest that while mature democracies are more stable and generally avoid fighting one another, political freedoms in themselves do not automatically create a shield against violence and terrorism. France's centuries-long tradition of democracy did not prevent fast-spreading urban unrest in 2005; until recently, Northern Ireland constituted another glaring example. Unless elections are preceded by the building of democratic institutions and the effective encouragement of social and economic development, they will produce illiberal democracies akin to authoritarian regimes.

Even if one grants the existence of a correlation between the democratic zeal of the Bush administration and the number of acts of terror committed during the same period, the administration's efforts to fight terrorism by also pushing for democracy have failed miserably. A study on terrorism recently released by the State Department indicates that the number of terrorist incidents reached a new record of more than 11,000 attacks in 2005.

Considering the dubious rationale for the war in Iraq and

its continuing, enormous cost to the American and Iraqi people, the Arab public cannot see any justification for the war in the name of democracy. Last year's parliamentary elections and the ratification of a new constitution in Iraq have neither diminished the insurgency nor the intense ill feelings and hatred that Iraqis and Arabs in general harbor against the United States. Not only are they cynical about the United States and contemptuous of it, but they reject the notion that democracy "American style" should be shoved down their throats with a gun.

Still, regardless of their specific national identity, Arabs and Muslims do not reject democratic reforms in principle. On the contrary, tired of despotism, corruption and human rights abuses by those in power, they seek some political reforms — as long as these reforms correspond to their values and are adopted at a pace consistent with the social make-up and political conditions of their respective communities.

### **Pursue Gradual Change**

Because the Arab states have much in common — religion, language and history — and the Muslim world shares a strong bond with them, there are four core measures that can and must be pursued in the region to effect democratic reforms. Those reforms, in turn, will promote progress and stability in place of violence and political turmoil. But the Western world, especially the United States, must facilitate them not through coercive regime change but through a long-term commitment and investment in the region, based on a careful consideration of each country's unique political, social and traditional environment.

Due to their long history of submission to authoritarianism — during which Islam was (and, to a great extent, remains) a dominant factor —

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and because of tribalism and sectarianism based on religious or cultural orientation, most Arab and Muslim societies prefer gradual rather than radical reform. Another complicating factor that needs to be taken into account is the traditional loyalty to the family and to the tribe, which naturally erodes the importance of such principles of democratic government as advice and consent and majority rule.

In country after country — e.g., Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Morocco — most people say they want slow and incremental change to reduce resistance to democratic ideals, eventually win over skeptics, and prevent a serious backlash that could stifle future progress. (Sitting governments naturally perceive such reforms as a threat to their power base and tend to react harshly against them.)

Gradualism allows these regimes to be part of the reform process precisely because they can control events better once they realize that reforms provide hope, especially to the young, and, as such, are a prerequisite for maintaining public calm.

The West must stop the practice of encouraging the people of the Middle East to rise up against their own gov-

ernments, a step the Bush administration has often advocated. In the context just described, such a policy is not simply counterproductive; it is dangerous. The Shiites in Iraq still remember how, left to their own devices after they rose up against Saddam Hussein in 1991, they endured horrible persecution. The U.S. overthrow of Saddam, accompanied by pushing democracy down the throat of Iraqis during the second Iraq War, has similarly proven a dismal failure.

Iraq, with its long tradition of sectarian conflict and tribalism, was not and is not ready for an American-style, democratic form of government. The Iraqis should have been given a much longer transitional period in which to adjust to the regime change and to build in its place a civil society anchored in strong democratic institutions. But even if Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds had all adopted the principles of political pluralism, democracy still would not have blossomed in Iraq, or anywhere else for that matter, according to Mr. Bush's timetable. However, the United States and its allies should still offer help and guidance along with other incentives, essentially allowing each country to develop its own home-grown form of democracy.

### **Provide Economic Incentives**

The United States, along with the European Union and Japan, should offer most Arab regimes economic incentives in exchange for democratic reform. These rewards should not, however, be offered government-to-government with no strings attached, for the money may well end up in private accounts in Swiss banks. Instead, the money should fund sustainable projects through various international agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

The idea is to ensure that local communities are involved in the



design and implementation of the development projects. Indigenous reconstruction has been remarkably successful in communities around the world, because local people have a strong incentive to maintain projects that address their particular needs in education, health, business, agriculture and environmental conservation. In most of these instances, local associations formed by members of the community manage projects and implement new ones.

New ties of cooperation form when neighboring communities join together to create projects beneficial to their entire area. The United States needs to recognize that this type of "bottom-up" development is based on democratic procedures. After all, two fundamental elements in pluralist democracy are the dispersion of power toward the interior (localities) and the inclusion of all social groups in decisionmaking.

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*The idea is to ensure  
that local communities  
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development projects.*

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Broad participation in the reconstruction of communities is pluralist democracy in action, because it strengthens the capacities of local peoples to manage their own development.

If the Bush administration chooses to go this route, it should have no illu-

sions about the resources it will take to make a real difference in the life of the communities spread across the Arab and the Muslim world.

Developing democracy in this fashion cannot be accomplished on the cheap. The West must be prepared to commit billions of dollars toward sustainable development to plant the seeds of democracy. Ultimately, each Arab and Muslim country, depending on its economic power and the pace of its development as it follows this broad policy, must become part of the global economy. Yes, it's a long-term proposition, but then again, neither the evolution of democracy nor the war on terrorism is a short-term project.

### **Develop Democratic Institutions**

To address the need for the development of specific institutions that sustain long-term democracy, the

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West must, when invited, devote more resources to the development of four areas: a free press, liberal organizations, a fair judiciary and human rights. Although the Arab states are awash with print and electronic media, most of these are official or semiofficial organs. While there has been a recent increase in the number of independent media (electronic and print), the traditional government treatment of unfavorable reporting still inhibits the truly free and unimpeded airing of opinions and open-ended debate. Without freedom of expression, democracy has no legs to stand on.

Arab media have been notoriously anti-American and anti-Israeli and have prohibited or repressed free discourse or opposing views that are not endorsed by the government. The West can help to change this by using incentives to persuade Arab regimes of the importance of changing the tone of the media, not so much to improve the West's dismal image on the Arab streets as to permit a freer, more responsible press to flourish as a staple of democracy.

The second focus should be on the development of liberal organizations and political parties (which may require years of nurturing) as a new political force. It should by now be abundantly clear that by themselves, free elections neither create nor constitute democracy. In fact, when they precede the building of democratic institutions and other prerequisites that sustain democracy, elections are more likely to produce instability and upheaval, especially in countries previously governed by authoritarian regimes.

The West, with the United States in the lead, should first assist and encourage the development of liberal organizations in each state in the region to the point where they will be in a position to compete successfully with extremist Islamic groups, which

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***The biggest challenge the West faces in promoting democracy in the Arab and Muslim worlds is suspicion that these efforts are not genuine.***

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are now both better organized and far more pervasive. In scores of countries in South America, Africa and Eastern Europe (including Russia), elected leaders have gradually amassed more and more dictatorial powers, leaving these countries democratic in name only.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has criticized NGOs working on human rights and pushed through a new law requiring that they inform the Russian government of any new project before they undertake it. In Uzbekistan, President Islam Karimov has rewritten the constitution to extend his term in office, and is in the process of closing down most Western democracy initiatives. And in Belarus, President Alexander Lukashenko has forbidden political challengers to appear against him and stifled the development of an independent civil society.

In Africa, the same pattern of crushing democratic initiatives is on the rise. In Zimbabwe, President Robert Mugabe has cracked down on the political opposition and signed legislation prohibiting local NGOs from receiving foreign aid. Eritrea has also enacted new laws prohibiting local NGOs from engaging in any work other than relief activities.

Although most countries throughout Latin America have successfully democratized, last year the Organization of American States overwhelmingly rejected an American proposal to create a new mechanism to monitor governmental compliance with democratic norms.

The leaders of all of these countries were able to do this with impunity because there are no traditional democratic institutions in place or viable political parties to oppose their usurpation of power. Only the emergence of liberal political leaders and institutions with a legitimate chance to compete without fear will permit democracy to grow real roots.

Equally critical is the development of fair and impartial judiciaries. The United States and other democracies can provide substantial help and guidance in building legal systems that, while consistent with the unique character of each society, remain free, fair and equitable. The experience of the Western nations in training judges and enhancing the judiciary system in Iraq can be duplicated in other Arab and Muslim countries.

Here too, however, the tradition of a fair and impartial judiciary can only evolve over time, and thus constitutional safeguards must be established to protect the integrity and safety of judges and the entire judicial system. The ongoing disturbances in Egypt over the judiciary's independence illustrate the importance of these measures. No legal system can function equitably and impartially if it becomes in any way subservient to government manipulations.

Finally, the rights of the individual should be enshrined constitutionally as a prerequisite for the development of true democracy. The fact that in most Arab societies the rights of the collective generally supersede the rights of the individual adds another impediment to implementing demo-

cratic reforms. That said, even dictatorial leaders, because of their fear of international ostracism, are willing, at least formally, to grant full human rights to their citizens. The problem lies in implementing these rights, and here is where regularly applied international pressure often prevents wanton abuses. By careful use of such pressure, the United States and other Western powers can help many Arab regimes to move in a positive direction.

### Reform Educational Systems

Although Arab and Muslim governments are aware that their educational systems need massive overhauling, most of the region has not made nearly enough effort to adapt to a fast-changing world. Tens of thousands of madrasahs, funded mostly by Saudi money and scattered throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds, teach Koranic studies that are based on a Sunni Wahabism laced with poisonous teachings against the United States and Jews. Left unchecked, these schools will not turn out scholars but the next generation of terrorists. Pakistan, for example, has thousands of such Saudi-funded schools, because the government does not have the resources to educate its large and growing population.

What Arab kids are learning today and how that affects their view of the world are immensely important for the future of democratic reform. Therefore, helping Arab states to modernize existing schools or to build new ones, moderate religious studies, and modify or delete anti-American materials is essential, however daunting a project it may seem.

The United States and other Western nations can help by persuading the Saudi government to re-evaluate the teaching requirements and temper course content in these schools; providing direct assistance to

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Pakistan and other Arab and Muslim countries so that national education programs become less dependent on funding from regimes that dictate course content; encouraging other donor nations to offer special assistance for education to needy countries, such as Egypt; and lobbying Arab governments to review their history texts and modify them to reflect more objective accounts.

### Be Patient

The biggest challenge the West faces in promoting democracy in the Arab and Muslim worlds is the fact that most people in these countries do not believe that these efforts are genuine, undertaken to benefit them rather than to serve Western or U.S. strategic interests. They accuse the Bush administration of using democracy as a ploy to target regimes it does not like, such as in Iraq, Syria or Iran, while leaving governments no less

*The development of  
true democracy in the  
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despotic (e.g., Saudi Arabia) to their own devices. They further accuse the United States of trying to promote a democracy of convenience, at a time and place of its choosing, regardless of the aspirations of the people affected by such narrow,

interest-guided policies. So, no matter how sincere, all the enthusiasm in the White House about the spread of democracy in Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan only reinforces cynicism among many in the region.

The development of true democracy in the Middle East will be slow, painstaking, extremely challenging and — at times — violent. Not only the West, but Arab and Muslim states, must learn from the mistakes the Bush administration has made in Iraq. Artificially accelerating the process and forcing democratic reforms on Iraqis have created terrible turmoil with no end in sight.

A far better strategy would be for the United States and its allies to allow political maturity to evolve in such countries by fostering political and economic development. Appropriate assistance will strengthen the basis for sustainable democratic forms of government. ■

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# AFSA NEWS

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## ↪ Annual Report 2006 ↪

### AFSA Defends the Foreign Service During Hard Times

2006 brought an across-the-board deterioration in the working environment of the Foreign Service. Budget coping measures were in place across agencies, hiring was limited to attrition, program funding was stagnant, and morale reeled. The demand for personnel to serve in war zones continued to rise, as did the relentless search for volunteers to serve in them and at all unaccompanied posts, which exceeded 25 percent of the positions filled. The impact of the war in Iraq was felt throughout the foreign affairs agencies as managements struggled to cope with the trade-offs required. New policy directions placed considerable stress on Foreign Service personnel as jobs were globally repositioned and the ever-closer amalgamation of USAID and State brought wholesale change to our foreign assistance regime. Evidence of political influence weighing on personnel issues grew.

AFSA worked extremely hard to mitigate the impact of these factors on our members and made tangible progress in a number of areas, though we were bitterly disappointed that months and months of intensive effort failed to achieve our goal of eliminating the overseas pay disparity. We remain focused in 2007 on our long-term objectives of advancing the interests of our members, promoting the FS to Congress and the public, and fostering a heightened esprit-de-corps within our ranks.

#### SOUND OVERALL CONDITION

AFSA continues to operate on a fundamentally sound financial and membership basis. Total membership has surpassed 13,500. The impact of two years of hiring

only slightly above attrition means that we likely have plateaued for a while. The association's 27 employees continue to be exceptionally well-led, at both the senior and department head levels, where longevity of tenure has provided continuity and institutional memory that offer many advantages and serve our members well.

Financially, we have well over half-a-year's working requirements in reserve, and our scholarship fund's endowment surpassed \$4.7 million. The AFSA headquarters building is in serious need of renovation, a costly proposition. An initiative begun by the previous board to explore development of our small but prime headquarters property did not reveal significant advantage, so this board initiated a major renovation to begin this summer.

#### BREAD-AND-BUTTER ISSUES

We fought hard and made substantial progress in 2006 on our top-priority issue, overseas comparability pay, only to see near-tangible success evaporate at the last minute of the lame-duck session in Congress. The administration's insistence that elimination of the overseas pay disparity be tied to a conversion of the entire FS to an inherently politically controversial "pay for performance" personnel system greatly complicated our task, which will now become even more difficult with the shift in control of Congress this year. We were able to achieve a small but important legislative victory by getting the education allowance expanded, and we continue to press the State Department on a variety of



J. Anthony Holmes

employee-friendly measures, but the difficult budget environment has meant that anything with a price tag is a tough sell. Our legislative priorities in 2007, in addition to OCP, will be enhancing the "death gratuity" to eliminate the bias against specialists and more junior employees, and to liberalize the rules on retiree

WAE employment. We also continue to press management to fix the numerous problems in the security clearance suspension/revocation process and improve the conditions for members of household at overseas missions.

#### ASSIGNMENT SYSTEM CHALLENGES

AFSA's aggressive defense of the individual members and the FS overall led to significant accomplishments in the area of assignments. We have succeeded so far in walking the fine line between allowing non-FS personnel to fill vacancies for which there is no FS employee available — a fairly common occurrence given the ongoing imbalance between people and positions system-wide, and the huge and still growing demand for volunteers for unaccompanied and war-zone service — and allowing the politicization of our ranks. The threat of directed assignments continues to hang over our heads, but skillful use of our influence has helped avoid that so far, though the overall shortage of personnel remains a serious problem. We also initiated an exceptional action to reverse an egregious case of assignment abuse, an initiative that we not only won on its merits but were able to institutionalize into changes in the overall system. □

# AFSA Annual Report 2006

## YEAR IN REVIEW

### JANUARY

AFSA invites Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to meet with the Governing Board; she declines, but Under Secretary Nicholas Burns comes in her stead in March.

AFSA President Tony Holmes writes to the Under Secretary for Management expressing serious concern about the security clearance suspension and revocation process, and proposes a series of meetings with the Diplomatic Security Bureau to improve the process; DS senior management decline to meet.

Labor-Management works with the DS Training Center to improve the implementation and operation of the newly instituted Student Performance Review Committee.

AFSA meets with the career development office to discuss the initial implementation of the Secretary's Global Repositioning Initiative.

AFSA communicates its concerns on the proposed addition of a "360 degree" feedback procedure to the evaluation process; the procedure has not been implemented.

AFSA/FCS representatives and AFSA Legislative Affairs Director Ken Nakamura meet with staff from the offices of Representatives John Mica, R-Fla., and Donald Manzullo, R-Ill., regarding their proposed bills on the Foreign Commercial Service, promoting foreign trade and the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee.

AFSA/Elderhostel begins its program year with a "Day of Discovery" program on Iraq.



By the end of the year, more than 300 people will attend these one-day events, offered at AFSA headquarters. Subjects include Iraq, the Middle East, Afghanistan, failed states and the war on terror.

In a highly popular issue, the *Journal* features the varied accomplishments of Foreign Service retirees and spotlights issues related to retirement.

### FEBRUARY

AFSA engages with M/MED to get Tamiflu supplies shipped to posts in light of the spread of bird flu to Africa.

The Labor-Management team meets with the staff of the School of Applied Information Technology to discuss changes to the Skills Incentive Program for information management specialists. As a result, the department agrees to extend the deadline for IMS specialists to become recertified.

AFSA/USAID successfully negotiates a solution to the first of three grievance cases, each of which is resolved with a much less severe penalty than originally proposed.

AFSA arranges an interview for Ambassador Thomas Dodd to explain U.S. diplomacy in Latin America on the PBS program, "NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."

AFSA/FCS meets with the Office of Foreign Service Human Resources at Commerce regarding review and reform of the Management Planning and Performance

Appraisal System and precepts and related performance-management issues.

AFSA Retiree Coordinator Bonnie Brown releases the first *Retiree Newsletter* of the year; the bimonthly newsletter provides information about federal benefits and legislation and department policies and procedures.

### MARCH

As it had done in March 2004 and 2005, the *Journal* once again focuses on Iraq; specifically, on Foreign Service personnel there, both in Baghdad and elsewhere. The issue draws wide attention, including a half-page excerpt in the *Washington Post*.

AFSA proposes four important changes to Chapter 11 of the Foreign Service Act to improve the operation of the Foreign Service Grievance Board. The department declines to support these changes.

The Labor-Management team meets with the department concerning the latter's position in a "scope of duty" case concerning a principal officer overseas who was involved in a motor accident. The appeals court subsequently rules in the FSO's favor.

In cases where Foreign Service members are called for military duty, AFSA proposes that the department pay for the transport of



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**Professional Issues Coordinator Barbara Berger**: berger@afsa.org

**Elderhostel Coordinator Janice Bay**: bay@afsa.org

#### Governing Board:

**PRESIDENT:** J. Anthony Holmes

**STATE VICE PRESIDENT:** Steven Kashkett

**USAID VICE PRESIDENT:** Francisco Zamora

**FCS VICE PRESIDENT:** Donald Businger

**FAS VICE PRESIDENT:** Vacant

**RETIREE VICE PRESIDENT:** David Reuther

**SECRETARY:** Tex Harris

**TREASURER:** Andrew Winter

**STATE REPRESENTATIVES:** Alan Misenheimer,

Hugh Neighbour, Joyce Namde, Randy

Steen, Daphne Titus, Andrew Young,

Andrea Zomaszewicz and Sandy Robinson

**USAID REPRESENTATIVE:** Mike Henning

**FCS REPRESENTATIVE:** William Center

**FAS REPRESENTATIVE:** Robert Curtis

**IBB REPRESENTATIVE:** Al Pessin

**RETIREE REPRESENTATIVES:** Leonard J.

Baldyga, Roger Dankert, Larry Lesser and

Gilbert Sheinbaum

employees, their families and their possessions to the location where they have been called up to serve, rather than to Washington, D.C. The department has not yet implemented this suggestion.

AFSA protests the department's handling of cases where employees had no prior knowledge of their referral to a Performance Standards Board, and meets with HR to discuss improved procedures for the future.

AFSA writes to Under Secretary for Management Fore in support of an "equalization fund" to facilitate employment of Eligible Family Members overseas at U.S. salaries.

AFSA registers its opposition to the procedures for granting educational allowances when a school at post changes from "inadequate" to "adequate."

More than 100 members attend AFSA's Town Hall meeting in Washington.

AFSA/USAID successfully concludes negotiations with management on a new system of rules for tenure at USAID.

Former AFSA President Marshall Adair and Ginger Adair establish the first perpetual endowed gift to the Fund for American Diplomacy in memory of Marshall's parents, Caroline and Charles W. Adair.

AFSA arranges for four senior retirees to explain the importance of the Foreign Service as part of the Johns Hopkins University "Evergreen" continuing education series.

AFSA/FCS tables three midterm bargaining issues for consideration by management: Senior Foreign Service pay policy reform; improvements in the Work Plan and Appraisal Form (ITA-723); and the proposal for a Standing Committee, including AFSA, on MPPAS and precept reforms.

AFSA/Elderhostel offers the first of three weeklong programs in Washington, D.C. A total of 135 people attend these programs, which include a revamped presentation on the "new Europe." Speakers include Ambassadors J. Anthony Holmes, Robin Raphael and Richard Beecroft.

### APRIL

AFSA writes to the department concerning its lack of procedures for pay equalization when granting the extra 22 days of military leave authorized by 5 USC 6323(b). The department agrees that procedures are required, but

has not yet implemented them.

AFSA agrees to a special time-in-class/time-in-service extension for SFS and FS-1 officers at critical-needs posts, and proposes that this cover all FS-1s who have opened their window. The department agrees.

A change in the Foreign Affairs Manual is the subject of an AFSA proposal to management. AFSA proposes that Eligible Family Members employed at normally unaccompanied posts receive post differential. The department agrees to review this recommendation.

AFSA continues discussions with the department on the regulations and implementation schedule for the new Cybersecurity Program, securing some important changes to the proposed FAM.

AFSA/USAID successfully resolves two long, arduous cases following a federal court win. Each case involves separation of an untenured employee. Both employees are retroactively restored to the employment rolls to the date of their improper separation. Both are also promoted and awarded legal fees.

An AFSA delegation led by Amb. Holmes, accompanied by FCS VP Donald Businger, FCS Rep. Will Center and Legislative Director Nakamura, presents testimony to the House Committee on Small Business. Amb. Holmes argues for a stronger role and much better funding for commercial diplomacy to help support small business exporters in the global competitive marketplace.

Amb. Holmes delivers the keynote address at a luncheon hosted by the Foreign Service Retiree Association of Florida in Pembroke Pines.

FCS VP Businger addresses non-management members at the Regional Conference of the East Asia and Pacific Senior Commercial Officers in Los Angeles and at the Regional Conference of the Western Hemisphere SCOs in Colorado Springs.

### MAY

During AFSA's "Day on the Hill" on May 4, the day before Foreign Affairs Day, staff and officers take retirees from nine states and the District of Columbia to Capitol Hill to meet lawmakers and their staffers. Retirees lobby for AFSA's legislative proposals — including overseas comparability pay, full funding of the international affairs budget and other measures benefiting both active-duty and retired



diplomats — and instill in legislators an awareness of the critical role played by the Foreign Service.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Amb. Holmes preside over the AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony, held as part of Foreign Affairs Day on May 5. Family members, distinguished guests and Foreign Service colleagues gather at the solemn event to honor those killed overseas in the line of duty during the past year. Four names are added to the AFSA Memorial Plaque, bringing the total to 222. Three of the fallen were killed in Iraq, and one was killed in Pakistan.



AFSA writes to, and subsequently holds discussions with, officials of the State Department Federal Credit Union concerning banking facilities for overseas members.

AFSA agrees to a package of incentives to encourage bidders on positions at Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams, including limited changes to the procedural precepts for the promotion boards.

AFSA writes to M/MED concerning the payment of medical expenses for a dependent child suffering from PTSD in the wake of the Nairobi embassy bombing. M/MED responds favorably, granting a one-year extension.

AFSA commences a lengthy dialogue with HR on the proposed bill to modernize the

# AFSA Annual Report 2006

## YEAR IN REVIEW

Foreign Service compensation system by instituting a uniform pay scale across the world and tying this to a pay-for-performance system.

For their academic and art accomplishments, 22 Foreign Service high school seniors receive \$26,500 in AFSA scholarship funds.

Amb. Holmes meets with International Trade Administration Under Secretary Frank Lavin to explain the need for greater cooperation between Commerce Department management and AFSA, noting that AFSA supports a strong career Foreign Commercial Service integrated into ITA. Holmes also expresses concern about funding shortages that could lead to cutbacks or closures and the slow decision-making process within Commerce to address issues like SFS pay and pay for performance.

AFSA representatives attend the U.S. Postal Service ceremony to unveil the Distinguished American Diplomats series of stamps at the 2006 World Philatelic Exhibition in Washington, D.C. AFSA was instrumental in pushing for a diplomat stamp series.

Results of a survey of 230 AFSA/FCS members, posted on the Web site and circulated, show very strong support for the fight for overseas locality or comparability pay, as well as for the view that overall working conditions for the FCS are worsening.

Amb. Holmes speaks to the Foreign Affairs Retirees of New England at a luncheon in Wells, Maine.

### JUNE

AFSA's annual awards ceremony takes place on June 22 at the State Department, co-sponsored by Director General of the Foreign Service George Staples. Awards are presented for constructive dissent as well as for extraordinary contributions to effectiveness, professionalism and morale.



AFSA arranges for Ambassador Richard Holbrooke to explain the key role of the Foreign Service in the Middle East to the Washington Foreign Law Society.

At the AFSA awards ceremony, Director General George Staples presents a special award of appreciation to retiring Senator Paul Sarbanes, D-Md., for his many achievements on behalf of the Foreign Service. Retired Ambassador L. Bruce Laingen is recognized for his many years of dedicated service to AFSA as chairman of the Awards & Plaque Committee.

The AFSA Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy Award is presented to Ambassador Morton Abramowitz by Dr. James Schlesinger.

AFSA proposes the implementation of a Home Marketing Incentive Program to assist DS Agents who relocate within the U.S.

AFSA again proposes an increase in the separate maintenance allowance to accompany efforts to encourage employees to serve at unaccompanied posts.

Concerns about the quality and durability of Kevlar vests issued to DS agents for use in dangerous areas is the subject of an AFSA communication to management.

AFSA protests the assignment of a Senior Executive Service (Civil Service) employee to fill the Foreign Service position of chief information security officer in the IRM Bureau.



Stacy Session, a rising senior at Florida A & M, is chosen as the 2006 AFSA/Thursday Luncheon Group summer intern, and begins work in Embassy Nairobi's management office.

FCS VP Businger addresses the Regional Conference of the Africa/Near East/South Asia Senior Commercial Officers in Philadelphia.

Amb. Holmes travels to San Francisco on the invitation of the Foreign Service Association of Northern California. He meets with local press to speak about the Foreign Service role in defending and advancing U.S. interests.

### JULY

AFSA's National High School Essay Contest winners are honored at the 2006 Youth Awards Ceremony at the State Department.



AFSA meets with Secretary Rice to discuss staffing issues, overseas comparability pay and transformational diplomacy.

AFSA submits its "wish list" to the DG, covering a variety of personnel issues. The Human Resources Bureau reviews and works on these issues over the year.

Concern about the bidding process for employees with restrictive (Class 2) medical clearances is the subject of an AFSA communication to management.

AFSA/FAS meets with the Board of Examiners to review possible changes to testing procedures for new applicants.

USAID Vice President Bill Carter retires after three years with AFSA. USAID Representative Francisco Zamora takes on the VP job, and Mike Henning assumes the representative position.

AFSA/FAS hosts a reception at the global attachés conference in Crystal City, Va.



### AUGUST

AFSA agrees to several changes to Foreign Service assignment rules and procedures, but does not agree to the DG's proposal to scale back the 6/8 year rule for service in Washington, D.C.

Labor-Management finally resolves a grievance dating from 1995 concerning payment of overtime to an information management specialist who is now retired.

Strategizing to assist passage of H.R. 6060 to modernize the Foreign Service pay system is the focus of frequent meetings between AFSA and department officials in both August and September. Though ultimately the bill is not passed by the 109th Congress, these meetings establish a valuable collaborative tool for use in the 110th Congress.

AFSA/USAID successfully negotiates with USAID management to revamp the agency's recruitment programs, creating a new junior officer program that retains the positive aspects of the previous mechanism but streamlines all processes in favor of applicants.

Fall semester need-based AFSA Financial Aid Scholarships totaling \$62,500 are bestowed on 53 undergraduates.

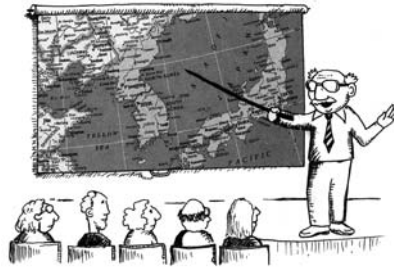
The *Journal* hires Andrew Kidd as its new Business Manager, replacing Mikkela Thompson — the first staff change in over four years.

AFSA/FAS meets with management to discuss the potential outcome of the current agency reorganization.

### SEPTEMBER

Labor-Management writes several times concerning individuals affected by disruptions and delays in the production of personnel actions and travel orders, and subsequently meets with the director of the Assignments Division on measures to cut the backlog.

AFSA writes to the DG concerning contact-reporting requirements, and the confusion caused by having two different FAM sections with different instructions. The department is at last convening a working group to resolve this decade-old problem.



AFSA/Elderhostel offers three weeklong programs in Washington, D.C. Themes include the Middle East, U.S. diplomacy and a brand-new presentation on China and its neighbors. Speakers include Ambassadors Marc Grossman, Beth Jones and John W. Limbert.

AFSA/USAID settles one of three financial grievances for mission directors. A combined total of \$20,000 is restored to these employees, after the funds were improperly withheld as punishment.

AFSA arranges for Ambassador Marc Grossman to keynote the George Mason University's "Learning in Retirement" series on American diplomacy.

A new FSJ department, "In Response," debuts, giving representatives of offices in the State Department and other foreign affairs agencies a forum for replying to critical articles.

Amb. Holmes travels to Prague to participate in the 2006 European Bureau entry-level employee conference.

AFSA/USAID negotiates a settlement for an employee who is allowed to retire on a medical disability rather than be separated for cause.

### OCTOBER

Over 3,400 State Department members worldwide respond to an AFSA survey, ensuring that AFSA is up to date on employee concerns and priorities.

AFSA files an institutional grievance over the assignment of a mid-level Civil Service employee to a Senior Foreign Service position as director of the public diplomacy hub in Brussels.

Amb. Holmes follows the grievance filing with a letter to Sec. Rice protesting assignment system abuse. The case is later resolved with a curtailment of the assignment and agreement to institutionalize the changes to protect the system.

The Labor-Management team holds several meetings to negotiate and subsequently agree on changes in the precepts to allow the Broadcasting Board of Governors to hold promotion and performance pay boards for their Senior Foreign Service.

AFSA suggests measures to enhance the "DS Fitness Program." DS agrees to implement many of the suggestions, and AFSA and DS representatives meet at the DS Training Center to discuss details.

Labor-Management holds a brown-bag lunch meeting with career development officers in the entry-level division to discuss assignments and, in particular, the cases of several officers who entered under the Critical-Needs Language program.

In a case involving separation for cause, AFSA/USAID negotiates a resolution short of the management-proposed action. The employee is able to stay on the rolls until pension eligibility begins.

AFSA/USAID resolves a grievance at the agency level involving an improper board review. USAID grants most of the requested remedies.

The AFSA Scholarship Fund receives a \$157,905 bequest from the Brockman M. Moore Charitable Reminder Trust to be added to his late wife's financial aid scholarship, now to be called the Marcia Martin and Brockman M. Moore Memorial Scholarship.

Amb. Holmes is interviewed by *Business Week* for "Diplomacy — A Dream Career."

FSJ coverage of the state of public diplomacy after Karen Hughes' first year as under secretary attracts media attention (including a story in the *Washington Post*) and continues to generate a lively correspondence extending into early 2007.

The AFSA Governing Board holds a mini-retreat to discuss ideas for 2007.

AFSA/FCS submits midterm bargaining proposals, including: a recommendation on Senior Foreign Service pay policy and reform, including access for AFSA/FCS to the so-called "technical briefings" of the board; a request that Commerce adhere to the letter and spirit of the FAM with regard to Residential Transaction Allowance benefits; and a request that the Personnel Audit Reports be revised to better reflect where officers actually are and what they are doing.

# AFSA Annual Report 2006

## YEAR IN REVIEW

### NOVEMBER

AFSA's Labor-Management team meets with members of Commissioning and Tenure Boards to get feedback on the criteria and procedures of recent boards, and on recent candidates.

AFSA meets with the director of the retirement office to hear about plans to increase the staffing of HR/RET.

Labor-Management writes again concerning an amendment to the FAM to allow visitation travel for children under the legal guardianship of an FS employee overseas.

AFSA protests the proposal to move the Transportation Division out of Corridor 2 (the Service Corridor) in the Harry S Truman Building to an offsite location.

AFSA/USAID sends out a survey to gauge the sense of the membership regarding a number of issues facing the U.S. Agency for International Development. The response is quick and voluminous. Results are released in January 2007.



At the suggestion of the AFSA Education Committee, the Governing Board decides that AFSA Financial Aid Scholarships can now be bestowed on undergraduates attending overseas schools.

AFSA publishes guidance on the class-action suit settlement involving unused annual leave, and gives former USIA employees instructions on how to initiate and become involved in a companion class-action suit that is now pending.

AFSA/USAID sounds the alarm on a faulty travel system being tested in one of the agency's bureaus. With AFSA's input, the system appears to have been vastly improved.

The year's last *Retiree Newsletter* provides information about open season for health benefits (FEHB and Dental and Vision Programs), as well as 2007 changes in Medicare B and Social Security.

AFSA President Tony Holmes travels to Arizona to address students at Arizona University, Arizona State University and the Thunderbird School. He also hosts Tucson-area FS retirees, updating them on changes in the Foreign Service.

### DECEMBER

AFSA protests the appointment of a non-Foreign Service employee as public affairs officer in Baghdad. The individual subsequently resigns from the position.

AFSA's Labor-Management team meets with the head of the medical office and staff to discuss the medical clearance process, and agrees to further meetings as needed.

AFSA meets with the department's Iraq coordinator on the mission and staffing of Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

AFSA meets with HR/REE to discuss the proposed changes to the Foreign Service entry process, and expresses AFSA's opposition to any possible mid-level entry program.

AFSA signs the settlement agreement that curtails the incumbent Civil Service employee from the PD hub director's position in Brussels.

AFSA favorably negotiates a settlement for a State Department employee who had been identified for selection-out. This employee is restored to the rolls with very favorable settlement terms.

The AFSA Fund for American Diplomacy Annual Appeal yields \$15,595.

Spring 2007 semester need-based Financial Aid Scholarships totaling \$61,750 are disbursed to 52 Foreign Service undergraduates.

AFSA/FAS continues to work with management to reach agreement on performance management changes that would include changes to the Selection Board precepts, competencies, etc., and is currently preparing for the opening of full-term contract negotiations in 2007.

In 2006, AFSA public affairs efforts and retiree contributions place 70 articles promoting U.S. diplomacy in leading media outlets nationwide, including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Associated Press* and major TV networks.

AFSA programs a record 520 speaker events during the year to explain the importance of U.S. diplomacy to some 34,500 attendees in 43 states and Washington, D.C. Most of the speakers are Foreign Service retirees.

Eleven Department of State employees are selected as winners of the Matilda W. Sinclair Language Award for outstanding accomplishments in the study of a hard language.

In 2006, AFSA/Elderhostel supervises 23 programs in five states, hosting 1,200 participants. Plans for 2007 include 19 programs and a new program location, San Francisco.



Despite our aggressive effort to mobilize and maximize AFSA's unique strength and standing, the 109th Congress ends without passing legislation to address overseas comparability pay. A provision regarding dependent travel and educational benefits is passed. The president signs this bill into law on Jan. 11, 2007.

The *FSJ* sets a new record for total annual advertising revenue, topping \$520,000.

Retiree Coordinator Bonnie Brown assists more than 400 retiree members during the year, primarily with problems involving annuities, getting the department to respond to retiree requests, death, federal health insurance benefits, Medicare B and Social Security.

AFSA welcomes 31 new life members in 2006.

Emphasis on encouraging retirees to use the annuity deduction for AFSA membership increases total number of deductees to 863. Retiree membership climbs to 3,972.

During 2006, AFSA hosts 15 recruitment luncheons for incoming Foreign Service employees. Over 85 percent of these employees join AFSA as full members. Membership totals 13,700 at year's end.

AFSA assists hundreds of individual FS members by year end.

# AFSA Annual Report 2006

## AFSA Governing Board 2006

Seated, from left: Andrea Tomaszewicz (State Rep.), Joyce Winchel-Namde (State Rep. and Liaison to the Editorial Board), Sandy Robinson (State Rep.), Andrew Young (State Rep.). Standing, from left: Leonard Baldyga (Retiree Rep.), Michael Henning (USAID Rep.), Francisco Zamora (USAID VP), J. Anthony Holmes (President), Alan Misenheimer (State Rep.), David E. Reuther (Retiree VP), Andrew Winter (Treasurer), Randy Steen (State Rep.)

Not pictured: Steve Kashkett (State VP), Don Businger (FCS VP), Will Center (FCS Rep.), Hugh Neighbour (State Rep.), Daphne Titus (State Rep.), F.A. "Tex" Harris (Secretary), Larry Lesser (Retiree Rep.), Roger Dankert (Retiree Rep.), Gil Sheinbaum (Retiree Rep.), Al Pessin (IBB Rep.)



SHAWN DORMAN

## The Foreign Service Journal Editorial Board



SHAWN DORMAN

Front row, from left: Governing Board Liaison Joyce Winchel-Namde, Kay Webb Mayfield, Laurie Kassman, Anthony Chan. Middle row: Kent Brokenshire, Stephen Buck, Chairman Ted Wilkinson. Back row: Christopher Teal, William Jordan. Not pictured: Josh Glazeroff and Crystal Meriwether

www.afsa.org



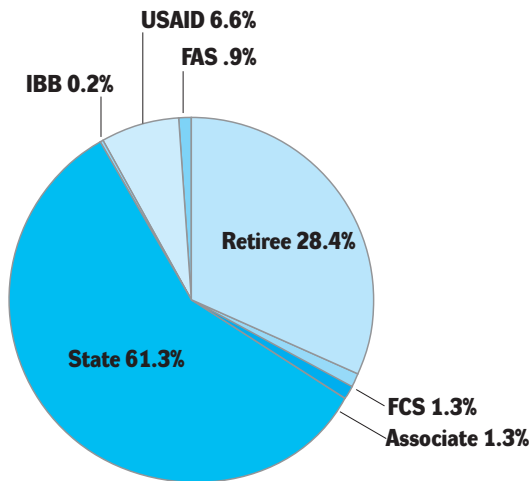
### ON THE WEB at www.afsa.org

The total number of visitors to the AFSA Web site climbed to 300,000 in 2006, an increase of 33 percent from 2005. Month after month visitors returned to the site, with consistent favorites being the *Foreign Service Journal* and AFSA's Scholarship Program. In 2006, we opened up the posting of the current issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* to the public (it had been members-only for the month of publication), which resulted in increased Web readership.

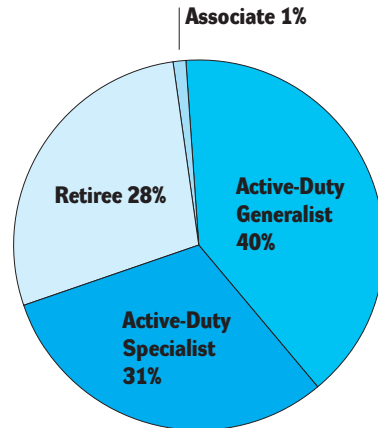
Pages on the Web site devoted to issues of interest to retirees increased in popularity. Page hits indicate the increase can be partially attributed to the Dental/Vision Care and Class Action Suit: Unused Leave pages. The AFSAnet listserv continues to grow. With over 8,500 subscribers and growing, the AFSAnet remains a great way to keep current with Foreign Service news. To sign up for the AFSAnet listserv, go to [www.afsa.org/forms/maillist.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/forms/maillist.cfm).

# AFSA Annual Report 2006

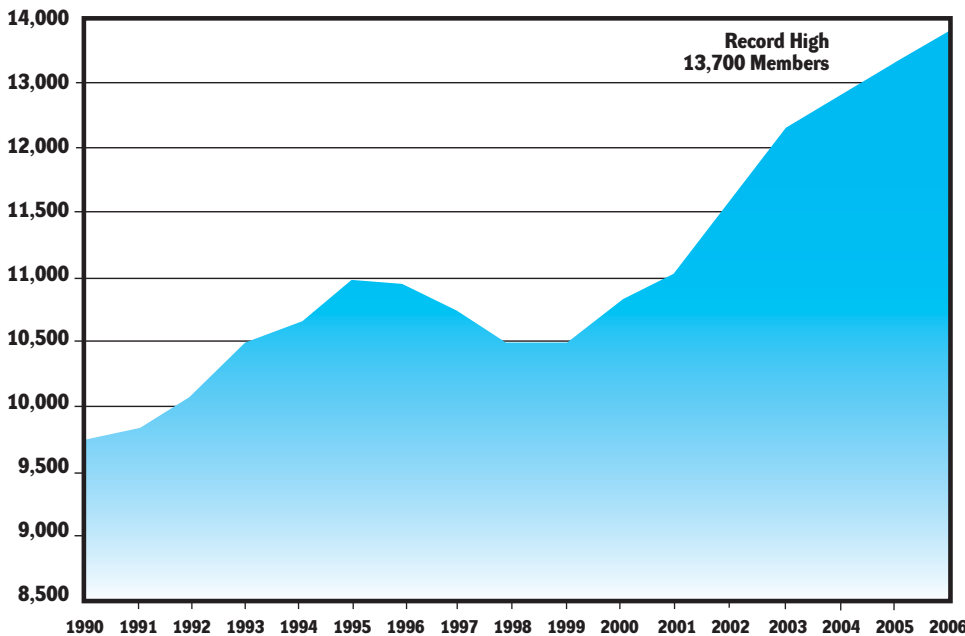
## Membership by Constituency



## Membership by Function



## Total Membership 1990 to 2006



### AUDIT REPORT for AFSA

AFSA's audited financial statements for 2006 will be available on the AFSA Web site ([www.afsa.org](http://www.afsa.org)) in May.

## 2006 Budget in Brief

INCOME .....	\$	EXPENSES .....	\$
Dues .....	2,312,000	Membership Programs.....	1,258,044
Foreign Service Journal Advertising .....	519,000	Foreign Service Journal .....	874,664
Insurance Programs.....	25,000	Legislative Affairs.....	202,758
Legislative Action Fund .....	55,000	Professional Programs and Outreach .....	380,505
Other .....	54,140	Scholarships .....	359,708
Professional Programs and Outreach .....	234,132	Administration.....	445,588
Scholarships .....	372,547	Contribution to Endowment and Reserves.....	50,552
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>3,571,819</b>	<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>3,571,819</b>

## Staff

### Finance and Administration



SHAWN DORMAN

Controller Twee Nguyen and Accounting Assistant Jon Reed. Inset: Executive Director Susan Reardon



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

### Foreign Service Journal



AUSTIN TRACY

From left: Advertising & Circulation Manager Ed Miltenberger, Senior Editor Susan Maitra, Business Manager Andrew Kidd, Associate Editor Shawn Dorman and Editor Steve Honley. Not pictured: Art Director Caryn Suko Smith

- Editing
- Writing
- Design
- Advertising
- Subscriptions and Sales
- *Inside a U.S. Embassy*

### Labor-Management



SHAWN DORMAN

Front row, from left: Office Manager Christine Warren, General Counsel Sharon Papp and Grievance Attorney Neera Parikh. Back row, from left: Labor Management Specialist James Yorke, Grievance Attorney Charles Garten, Labor Management Attorney Zlatana Badrich and USAID/AFSA Office Manager Asgeir Sigfusson. Not pictured: USAID/AFSA Senior Labor Management Adviser Doug Broome

- Negotiations
- Protecting Benefits
- Grievance Counseling
- OIG & DS Investigations
- Member Inquiries
- Informing the Field

### Outreach Programs



SHAWN DORMAN

From left: Executive Assistant to the President Austin Tracy, Retiree Coordinator Bonnie Brown, Congressional Affairs Director Ian Houston and Director of Communications Tom Switzer. Not pictured: Professional Issues Coordinator Barbara Berger and Elderhostel Coordinator Janice Bay

#### Public Outreach

- Speakers Bureau
- Elderhostel
- Memorial Plaque
- Foreign Service Day
- Diplomats Online
- AFSA Awards

#### Congressional Affairs

- Lobbying
- Tracking Legislation
- Hill Testimony
- Grassroots Campaigns

#### Retiree Services

- Member Inquiries
- Retiree Newsletter
- Retiree Directory

### Member Services



SHAWN DORMAN

From left: Administrative Assistant Ana Lopez, Membership Director Janet Hedrick and Membership Representative Cory Nishi

- Member Recruitment
- Post Reps
- Insurance Programs
- Address Changes
- AFSAnet
- AFSA Web Site

### Scholarships



SHAWN DORMAN

Scholarship Administrator Lori Dec

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

# AFSA Annual Report 2006

## AFSA BY THE NUMBERS IN 2006

4	Names added to the AFSA Memorial Plaque during Foreign Affairs Day
31	New Lifetime AFSA members
70	AFSA articles and letters placed in media nationwide
104	AFSANets sent in 2006
143	Embassies and missions overseas that have an AFSA rep to serve members
400	Retirees who received AFSA's direct assistance
985	New active and retired members
520	AFSA speaker programs nationwide
1,200	Number of Elderhostel participants
5,660	Copies of <i>Inside a U.S. Embassy</i> sold this year
8,558	Subscribers to AFSA net
13,700	AFSA members at year's end
34,500	Attendance at AFSA speaker programs nationwide
152,500	Financial Aid Scholarship dollars awarded to 75 students
157,900	Dollar amount of scholarship fund donation from the Brockman M. Moore Charitable Reminder Trust
300,000	Number of visitors to the AFSA Web site

## Benefits of AFSA Membership

**LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS:** AFSA negotiates the regulations affecting employees' careers. We work to make the Foreign Service a better place in which to work, live and raise a family. Our network of AFSA post representatives provides on-site assistance to overseas members.

**CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY:** AFSA is your advocate before Congress on issues affecting the careers of active members and the annuities of retired members.

**OMBUDSMAN:** We work to resolve member problems with pay, allowances, claims, annuities, health care and many other issues.

**VOICE OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE:** As the professional association of the Foreign Service since 1924, AFSA works to strengthen our profession and is ever vigilant for threats to the career Foreign Service.

**GRIEVANCE REPRESENTATION:** AFSA's legal staff provides hands-on assistance with grievance proceedings when your rights are violated.

**OUTREACH:** AFSA communicates the views of the Foreign Service on professional issues to the news media and directly to the general public.

**FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL:** Our monthly magazine offers provocative articles that will keep you current on developments in the foreign affairs profession.

**AFSA NEWS:** AFSA's monthly newsletter, inside the *Foreign Service Journal*, highlights issues affecting your daily life.

**AFSA WEB SITE:** Our online member area includes a member directory and member forums.

**AFSANET:** Regular e-mail updates keep you current on issues of importance to the Foreign Service community.

**LEGAL SERVICES:** We offer free legal advice and representation on employment issues, including security and OIG investigations, discipline cases and security clearance proceedings.

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**AFSA SCHOLARSHIPS:** Approximately 100 merit-based and financial-need scholarships are granted every year to Foreign Service family members. Since 1926, AFSA has awarded approximately \$4,450,000 in scholarships.

**AFSA AWARDS:** This unique awards program honors constructive dissent and outstanding performance.

**RETIREE NEWSLETTER:** This bimonthly newsletter is exclusively for retired members.

**DIRECTORY OF RETIRED MEMBERS:** This invaluable annual listing, by state, of contact information for retired members is provided to all retired AFSA members.

**MAGAZINE DISCOUNTS:** AFSA members are eligible for special discounts on subscriptions to major foreign affairs journals.

**ESPRIT DE CORPS:** We work to build a sense of common cause and professional pride among all Foreign Service members: active and retired; officer and specialist; entry- to senior-level.

**AFSA MEMORIAL PLAQUE:** Established in 1933, and maintained by AFSA, the plaques in the Truman Building lobby honor members of the Foreign Service who lost their lives overseas in the line of duty.

## AFSA Core Values

### THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Established in 1924.

#### MISSION

To make the Foreign Service a more effective agent of United States international leadership.

#### VISION

We work to make the Foreign Service a better-supported, more respected, more satisfying place in which to spend a career and raise a family.



— **RESPONSIVENESS:** We listen to our members and actively promote their interests.

— **EFFECTIVENESS:** We act with a sense of urgency, get results and make a difference.

— **INTEGRITY:** We demonstrate openness, honesty and fairness in everything we do.

— **EFFICIENCY:** We carefully expend our resources where they can have maximum impact.

— **COMMUNITY:** We foster teamwork, respect each other, and enjoy our time together.

— **COURAGE:** We encourage responsible risk-taking in order to achieve results.

— **PATRIOTISM:** We are faithful to the grand and enduring ideals that gave our nation birth.

— **EMPOWERMENT:** We trust each other to give our best efforts guided by these core values.

## Overhauling the Foreign Service Exam



Alarms sounded throughout the Foreign Service when word leaked out several months ago that the Department of State was considering far-reaching changes to the written exam and the entry process for FS generalists. The rumors spread quickly: the test would be shortened, standards would be lowered, the personality traits and political connections of applicants would be factored in, etc., etc.

This reaction in many quarters highlighted the deep attachment that most of us feel to the notion of the Foreign Service as an elite, high-caliber group of people who must win a tough competition in order to join our ranks. It also revealed suspicion that short-term concerns about staffing Iraq and other unaccompanied and “transformational diplomacy” posts might drive the department to create a test designed to bring in more people whose primary qualification is eagerness to fill those particular types of jobs.

AFSA has been involved from the beginning in the consultations surrounding these proposed modifications to the FS generalist exam/entry process, and we are convinced that these fears are exaggerated. The department, in developing these proposals, drew on the recommendations that emerged from a careful study conducted by a private management consulting firm. The underlying idea is to modernize the system for joining the Foreign Service, to streamline it, and to make sure it attracts the best and brightest people who can handle the unique challenges facing us overseas today.

The two most significant changes being implemented will address those goals. First, the Foreign Service written exam will be administered at electronic testing centers on a more frequent basis throughout the year. This makes a lot of sense. Under the current system, a prospective candidate who decides in May to take the exam must wait 11 months before having the opportunity to take it the following April. This cumbersome, one-shot-per-year approach costs us good people.

Second, the written exam score will now be accompanied by a standardized electronic resumé in which applicants can describe their educational background, work history and overseas experiences that might be relevant to a Foreign Service career.

In principle, it certainly seems logical to factor in these personal attributes along with the applicant’s exam score. We are the only country in the world that hires our diplomats with

almost no special regard for their expertise and experience in foreign affairs, but instead on the basis of their tested score on a general knowledge exam. It makes sense to give people a certain amount of credit for, say, possessing a Ph.D. in international relations, speaking three obscure foreign languages or having spent five years working successfully in a difficult overseas environment.

What we at AFSA and most of our members are determined to avoid is any politicization of the process. We must make sure that the selection panels that review these standardized resumé take no account of an applicant’s political leanings, connections to certain partisan institutions, or recommendations from “prominent” people. We must never return to the days when entering the diplomatic service depended on coming from the right family, the right university or the right political milieu.

The one proposal which AFSA rejected — and which we understand is not being developed at this time — is to create a mid-level entry program for applicants with certain special skills or foreign languages that happen to be in short supply within the Foreign Service at the moment. We believe that bringing certain people in at a higher grade than others to address short-term needs would be detrimental to our Service and our esprit de corps.

As FS generalists, our career is highly hierarchical. We acquire many of our special diplomatic skills through on-the-job training during our apprenticeship years as entry-level officers. Performing important consular work, serving as control officers for high-profile visitors, experiencing the pleasures of late-night embassy duty, handling our first representational responsibilities at diplomatic events — these are all rites of passage for all FS generalists during their entry-level years. Bringing in people at higher levels who have not had these crucial developmental experiences, but who would presumably be supervising more junior but more seasoned officers, would erode morale, fairness and efficiency within the Service.

We can be proud of the extremely high caliber of those entering the Foreign Service today. Considering that out of tens of thousands who take the FS written exam every year only a few hundred join our ranks, there is little danger of losing the elite quality of our Service. Let’s keep it that way. □

What we at AFSA  
are determined to  
avoid is any politicization  
of the process.

WE ASKED, YOU ANSWERED

# USAID Members Respond to Opinion Poll

BY FRANCISCO ZAMORA, AFSA USAID VICE PRESIDENT

A total of 368 of the 914 USAID AFSA members responded to our December 2006 survey — a very respectable 40-percent response rate. About 81 percent were stationed overseas. Respondents answered 29 questions about their concerns and priorities for the agency. They were fairly evenly divided by rank: 42 percent were FS-3 and below; 47 percent were FS-1 or FS-2; and 10 percent were Senior Foreign Service officers.

When asked what AFSA's top priorities should be, members said they would like AFSA to continue pursuing locality pay and better benefits (65 percent), closely followed by fighting for fairness in the assignment/promotions area (63 percent). In fact, 95 percent of the respondents wanted AFSA to pursue overseas locality pay "vigorously." This will remain AFSA's major initiative as the new Congress settles in.

The third-highest priority (57 percent) was to ensure equal benefits for members of all the foreign affairs agencies, as there are currently some glaring inequalities. Among them are disparities in compensation for language training between assignments, difficult-to-

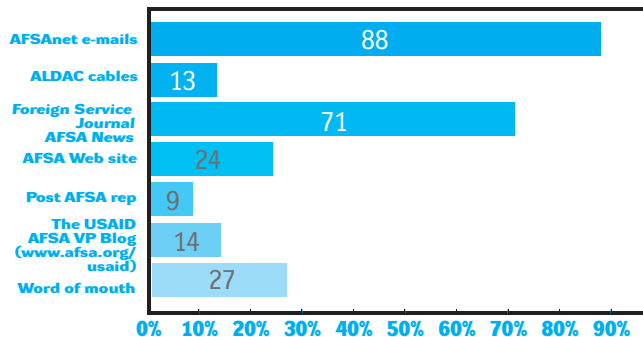
staff differentials, travel benefits, student loan reimbursement and USAA membership.

Most members agreed (40 percent) or strongly agreed (28 percent) that officers who serve in critical-priority countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan should get some "extra credit." Still, a significant 32 percent disagreed with this. AFSA's stance is that presence alone in a CPC should not be the sole determinant for promotion; it must be accompanied by outstanding performance.

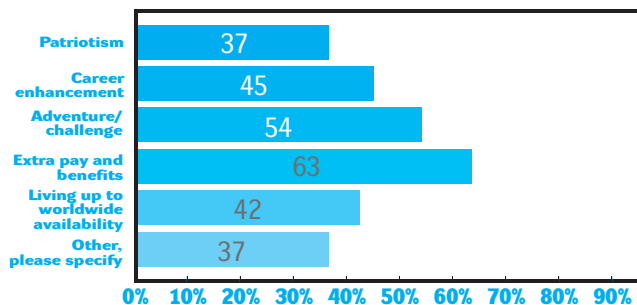
Although many FSOs mentioned disagreement with the current policy (50 percent), separation from family (64 percent) was the principal reason why officers would choose not to volunteer for an assignment in Iraq. Many expressed concern about security (53 percent). Those who have served or would be willing to volunteer (28 percent) are most attracted by the extra pay and benefits (63 percent) and the adventure and challenge (54 percent), as well as the possibility for career enhancement (45 percent).

In other areas, respondents highlighted their biggest concerns as the apparent lack of fairness of the assignment system (44 per-

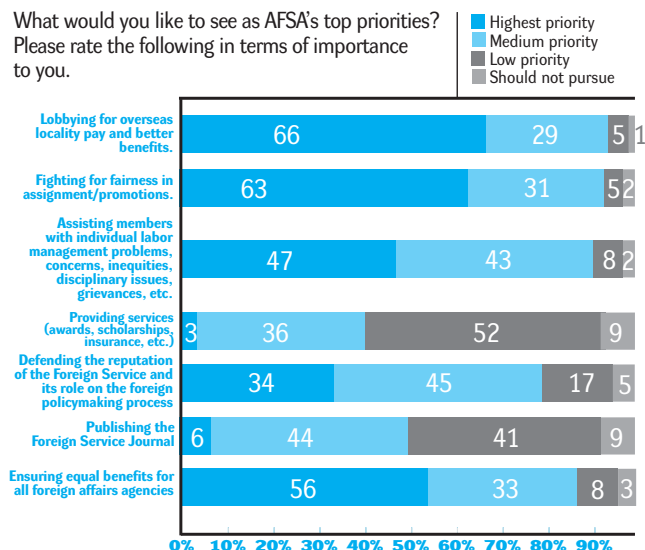
By what means do you get information on AFSA activities and efforts? (Check all that apply.)



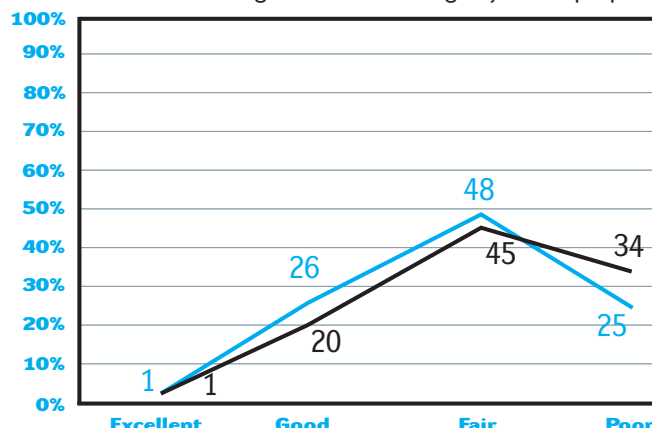
If you have served in Iraq or would be willing to serve there, what are the motivating factors? (Check all that apply.)



What would you like to see as AFSA's top priorities? Please rate the following in terms of importance to you.



How would you rate the job that USAID Administrator Randall Tobias is doing? How would you rate the efforts of Ambassador Tobias when it comes to securing resources for the agency and its people?





cent) and a desire for more family-friendly policies (44 percent). This shows the increased importance that current officers give to a satisfying personal life.

There was also good news to report. Relationships between FSOs and Foreign Service Nationals were overwhelmingly good (32 percent) to excellent (64 percent). This confirms our appreciation of one of USAID's most valuable resources, our overseas FSN colleagues.

On the other hand, agency morale overall is suffering, with nearly half (48 percent) of the officers indicating that it is low to poor. Only one person thought it was excellent, and only 12 percent judged it to be good. This is something that our administrator must pay special attention to given all the stresses that employees are experiencing as the reorganization proceeds.

Not everyone is happy about the significant changes currently underway. Many respondents were critical of the "stealth merger" apparently taking place between USAID and State. The most surprising response was that 67 percent of the respondents believe that overall conditions of work are worsening! This should be cause for concern, especially because the administrator has repeatedly affirmed in video and print messages that most people are "on board" with his changes to the agency.

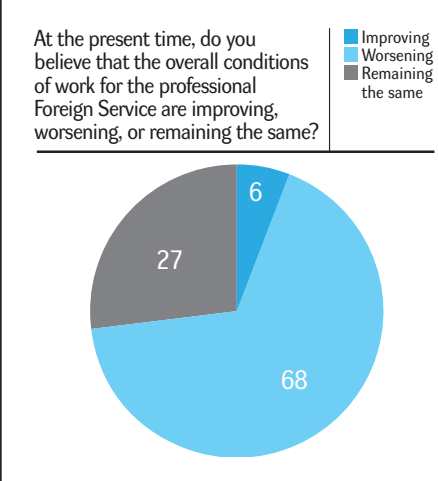
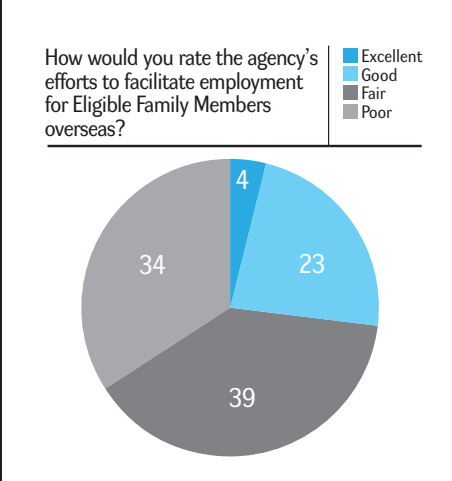
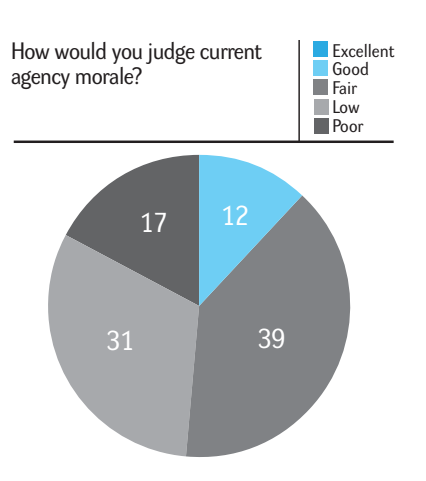
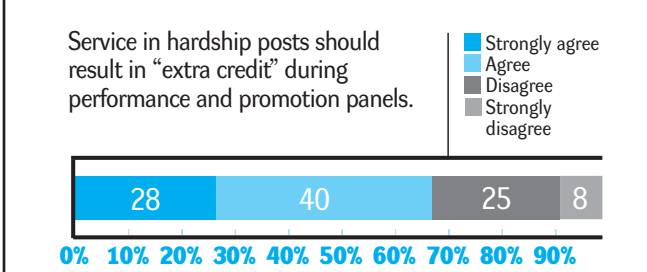
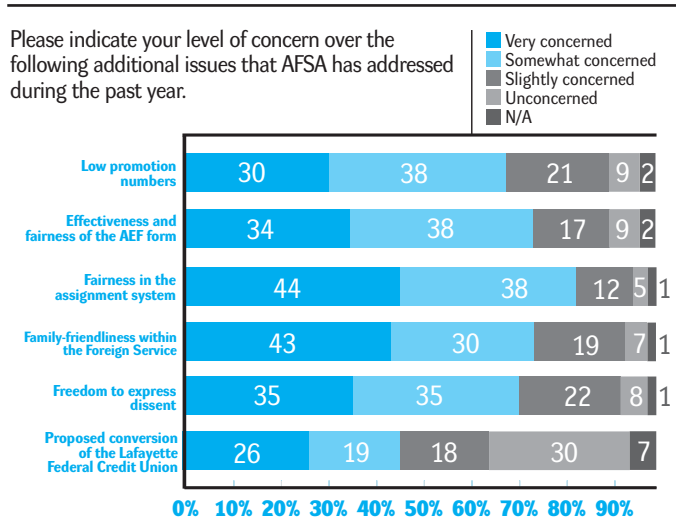
The USAID administrator's job rating was mostly fair (48 percent) and poor (24 percent) with less than one-third (28 percent)

judging him higher. Only one-fifth of the staff (21 percent) believed that the administrator was doing a good job in securing resources for the agency and its people, although another 45 percent felt his efforts were fair and 33 percent thought they were poor.

Here's a sampling of quotes from some of our members:

- "AFSA should be monitoring and ensuring that the integration of USAID into State is done in a fair and equitable manner."
- "The FS Limited program and how it allows non-FSOs to leapfrog over FSOs who are working their way up [is unfair]."
- "We now have an administrator who works for State, not USAID."
- "[We need] equal benefits for members of household."
- "AFSA should be in the lead fighting for a humane maternity/paternity policy. The workforce has changed in its gender composition and the workplace has not kept up — shame on us."
- "I am very concerned that the Senior Management Group assignment process is flawed. There are no established criteria, which leads to poor selection and a lack of transparency."

We want to be responsive to the needs and priorities of the membership. About 77 percent of you were satisfied with AFSA's efforts. However, we are still concerned that 23 percent are not. Most officers (76 percent) want us to be more vocal and assertive and see AFSA as both a labor union and professional association. A majority (58 percent) believe that AFSA as a whole should pay more attention to USAID-specific issues. We are listening to you and will increase our efforts to be more responsive. Thank you for your honest input. We welcome additional comments by e-mail or via our Web log ([www.afsa.org/usaaid](http://www.afsa.org/usaaid), click on blog link). □



# AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



## Memo of the Month

Under Active Consideration

**From: Career Development Officer**  
**To: FS Bidder**

As you are aware, over the past few weeks HR/CDA has been reviewing lists of Summer 2007 bidders who have not yet been paneled into an onward assignment. Your name is one of many being considered for one of the department's most difficult yet very high-priority Summer 2007 assignments. You are actively being considered for \_\_\_\_\_. Your experience and your language skills were key factors that led to your being included for consideration for these jobs.

We should know very shortly whether the \_\_\_\_\_ Bureau will select your name from the list as a leading candidate for this position and whether you will be asked to volunteer for this job. I'll be back to you within the next few days with more details on the selection process. ...

In the meantime, I am unable to record any handshake you might receive in FSBid, as the HR Bureau has asked that we suspend such actions for those under consideration for the 40 high-priority jobs noted in State 7387 of January 19 [2007].

Please contact me with your questions. I'm not certain that I'll have all the answers, but I want to keep you as informed as possible.

## SAVE THE DATES!

**Day on the Hill: May 3**  
**Foreign Affairs Day: May 4**

Join AFSA for Foreign Affairs Day, the annual homecoming for State Department Foreign Service and Civil Service retirees, on May 4 at the State Department. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is scheduled to deliver the keynote address and preside over the AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony.

Invitations will be mailed out in early March. If you would like to request an invitation, please send an e-mail to [foreignaffairsday@state.gov](mailto:foreignaffairsday@state.gov) and include your full name, retirement date (month and year), street address, e-mail address and phone number. For more information about the AFSA events for that day, contact Professional Issues Coordinator Barbara Berger at [berger@afsa.org](mailto:berger@afsa.org).

Day on the Hill — the day AFSA escorts Foreign Service active-duty and retiree members to Capitol Hill — will be held May 3. Please consider participating in this important activity and help the voice of the Foreign Service reach members of Congress. For more information, contact Austin Tracy at [tracy@afsa.org](mailto:tracy@afsa.org).

## AFSA Welcomes New Controller

In January, Twee Nguyen joined AFSA as controller, replacing Steven Tipton. For the past four years, she worked as an accountant for the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (now Veterans for America), and before that, spent 20 years as an accounting manager for an electronic manufacturer/distributor headquartered in Switzerland. She immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1980s from Vietnam, and lives in Germantown with her fiancé and two daughters (both seniors, one in high school, the other in college). She is finishing up an MBA at the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School. You can reach her at [nguyen@afsa.org](mailto:nguyen@afsa.org) or (202) 338-4045, ext. 512.

## Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER



## FSO REUNION

## The Demography of an A-100 Class, 1961

The A-100 Basic FSO Class of the summer of 1961 held a 45th-anniversary reunion in November at DACOR House in Washington, D.C. Class members Ted Wilkinson and Dale Alan Diefenbach organized the event and thought it might be of interest to readers to note the sociological makeup of that A-100 class as compared with those entering the Foreign Service today. Diefenbach notes that "Institutions do change."

Of the 38 original members of the class, 29 survive, and four have served as ambassadors: John Blacken, Stephen Bosworth, John Davison and the late Jack Davison. Approximately 60 percent of the class stayed in the Service until retirement. Many of those who did not stay in the Foreign Service became academics. Gerry Studds became a congressman. The bio stats from the class are as follows: 36 men and two women; one minority member, an Asian-American; the oldest was 31 and the youngest 21; exactly half had served in the military (the draft was in effect); nine had gone to prep schools; 17 had Ivy League degrees, undergraduate and/or graduate (five attended Harvard Law); six went to Georgetown University and three to the Fletcher School; six had attended non-English-speaking universities and three studied in England.



Summer 1961 A-100 Class Reunion at DACOR Bacon House. From left: Roy Thiel, Robin Porter, Kitty Kelly, Ron Woods, Ed Kelly, Dick Burnham, Judith Woods, Ted Wilkinson, Alan Diefenbach, Xenia Wilkinson, Tony Freeman, Christine Bosworth and Steve Bosworth.

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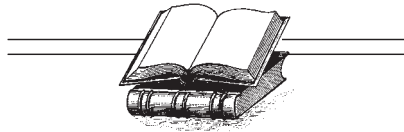
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# BOOKS

## Plus Ça Change ...

**Toussaint's Clause:  
The Founding Fathers and  
the Haitian Revolution**

Gordon S. Brown, *University Press of Mississippi*, 2005, \$32.00, hardcover, 321 pages.

**Plunging into Haiti:  
Clinton, Aristide and the  
Defeat of Diplomacy**

Ralph Pezzullo, *University Press of Mississippi*, 2006, \$45.00, hardcover, 312 pages.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD MCKEE

The dust jackets of these two fine diplomatic histories bear similar illustrations. A heroic Toussaint L'Ouverture, elegantly dressed and wielding an épée, leads ragtag insurgents; 200 years later, a stern Haitian soldier in camouflage uniform and mirrored sunglasses, holding a machine gun, restrains demonstrators. The images reflect the constants of Haitian life that American diplomats confront in both these books: race, violence and poverty.

In *Toussaint's Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution*, retired Ambassador Gordon Brown concentrates on three linked revolutions from the late 18th and early 19th centuries: the primarily political American war for independence from England; the political and social French upheaval of a decade later; and the Haitians' violent racial struggle for political and social equali-

*Both books are  
well worth the time  
of anyone who  
is interested in  
Latin American  
history.*

ty and independence from France. He draws on diplomatic dispatches, debates in Congress and the French Assembly, private correspondence and newspapers to delineate the domestic tensions that influenced the American, French and Haitian leaders' decisions.

As he explains, the leaders of the weak new American republic sought to avoid entanglement in the ongoing conflict between Britain and France while protecting U.S. commerce, particularly the immensely lucrative exchange of American staples for Haitian sugar. Americans' empathy for the Haitians, admiration for Toussaint and hope for commercial gain were all greatly tempered by reports of the slaughter of the white colonial elite, and fear that such an example would influence slaves in the southern states.

To prevent and protest French seizures of American merchantmen, the United States embargoed all com-

merce with France and its territories while inserting a loophole (popularly known as Toussaint's Clause) authorizing the president to suspend the embargo where trade was deemed safe — i.e., with Haiti. Brown reminds us that the United States owes much to the rebels: by frustrating Napoleon's attempt to reoccupy Haiti, they precluded the landing of French forces at New Orleans, facilitating the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

A few years later, Haiti was politically free, economically devastated, and of minimal interest to the U.S. It would take more than half a century before Abraham Lincoln established diplomatic relations with the black republic following the southern states' secession. Another half-century on, in 1915, Woodrow Wilson sent Marines to occupy corruption-ridden, bankrupt Haiti; Franklin Roosevelt withdrew them in 1934. Although Haitians resented rule by foreign blancs (whites), they would later recall nostalgically the domestic tranquility their presence had fostered.

For his part, Ralph Pezzullo recounts the Clinton administration's efforts to forge agreements among Haitian leaders to permit democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, ousted and exiled by a military coup, to regain and retain power peacefully in 1994. The author's primary sources are his father, Lawrence Pezzullo, Secretary of State Warren Christopher's special envoy; Amb. Pezzullo's deputy, FSO Michael Kozak; Argentine diplomat Dante Cap-



uto, representing the moral and legal (if not material) clout of the United Nations and the Organization of American States; his deputy, Leandro Despouy; and (sometimes) Haitian Prime Minister Robert Malval.

Pezzullo gives us an insider account full of frustrations. Both in Washington and Port-au-Prince, some detested Aristide as a populist authoritarian who incited the poor and was desperate to attack and kill his opponents, often by placing tires around their necks, filling them with gasoline and igniting it. Others admired him as a charismatic leader who, having survived three assassination attempts, sought to rid Haiti of the thievery and thuggery of holdovers from the two Duvalier regimes. Caught in the middle, Haitian politicians and military officers eschewed compromises and avoided taking responsibility, looking to Pezzullo's team to craft scenarios to resolve crises.

Meanwhile, Aristide played hard to get and reneged on commitments. He threatened to abrogate the pact empowering U.S. ships to intercept Haitian refugees at sea (which he criticized as racist compared to the treatment of Cubans), forcing them to land or wash up on Florida beaches. The entire delicate framework soon fell apart. Pentagon officials, smarting from the Mogadishu debacle of the year before and bluffed by dockside demonstrators, ordered the *USS Harlan County* not to disembark the military and police trainers authorized by the January 1994 Governors Island Accord, the Pezzullo team's great achievement. As a result, Pezzullo quit, Clinton changed course, and a multinational force occupied Haiti. Aristide's tactics attained his goals: the destruction of the military junta and a virtually unconditional (if short-lived) return to power.

Neither book is entirely satisfactory

in its treatment of its chosen subject. Ralph Pezzullo did not (and perhaps could not) interview Haitian military figures, or Aristide's Haitian partisans and American lawyers; for that reason, their views (as related by the author's sources), appear distorted in some instances. Pezzullo also misspells Haitian names throughout *Plunging into Haiti*. Brown's book evinces similarly lax proofreading: to cite but one example, the French "exclusif," referring to a ban on other states' trading with Haiti, is often rendered as "exclusif."

Despite such lacunae and errata, however, both books are well worth the time of anyone who is interested in Latin American history, or who seeks lessons applicable to our relations with other small countries.

---

*A former FSO, Richard McKee is the executive director of Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired, Inc., and the DACOR Bacon House Foundation. He wishes to note that both these books were published in the Diplomats and Diplomacy series of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and DACOR. These views are his own.*

## A Cautionary Tale

### **Imperium: A Novel of Ancient Rome**

Robert Harris, Simon & Schuster, 2006, \$26.00, hardcover, 320 pages.

REVIEWED BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

Except in our annual compilation of books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors ("In Their Own Write"), the *Foreign Service Journal* seldom reviews fiction. However, I am happy to make an exception to that informal

policy for Robert Harris's masterpiece, *Imperium: A Novel of Ancient Rome* — and not just because I studied Latin for six years.

When Tiro, the confidential secretary (and slave) of a Roman senator, opens the door to a terrified stranger on a cold November morning, he sets in motion a chain of events that will eventually propel his master into one of the most suspenseful courtroom dramas in history. The stranger is a Sicilian, the latest victim of the island's corrupt governor, Verres, and the senator is none other than Marcus Tullius Cicero — an ambitious young lawyer and spellbinding orator who, at the age of 27, is determined to attain "imperium" — supreme power in the state. But the obstacles in his way become more and more dangerous, as Pompey, Caesar, Crassus and many other famous (and infamous) Romans contend for power.

Compellingly written in the voice of Tiro, the inventor of shorthand and author of numerous books, *Imperium* is a re-creation of his biography of his master (lost in the Dark Ages, alas). The novel — the fourth by Harris, a television correspondent with the BBC and a newspaper columnist for *The London Sunday Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* — is full of great lines, many taken from Cicero's speeches, and detailed observations of daily life in Rome that are grounded in meticulous research yet never bog the reader down. All in all, the novel is one of the best works of historical fiction I have ever encountered.

Even so, some of you are doubtless wondering why the *Journal* is reviewing it. To answer that question, I first need to reference a historical event that occurred offstage, if you will, just before the period in which Harris sets his tale.

In the autumn of 68 B.C., the Roman Republic — the world's only



military superpower — was dealt a profound psychological blow by a daring terrorist attack on its very heart. Its port at Ostia was set on fire, the consular war fleet destroyed, and two prominent senators, together with their bodyguards and staff, kidnapped. Like al-Qaida, the pirates who committed this aggression were loosely organized, but able to spread a disproportionate amount of fear among citizens who had believed themselves immune from attack.

So great was the ensuing panic, in fact, that the Romans were willing to compromise their centuries-old rights in return for promises of security. Taking advantage of the opening, the greatest soldier in Rome, known to us as Pompey the Great, was able to manipulate the Senate into passing a

*Imperium functions well both as a work of historical fiction and as a political commentary on our times.*

law (the “Lex Gabinia”) that gave him nearly unlimited authority and resources to pay for a “war on terror,”

which included building a fleet of 500 ships and raising an army of 120,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry. Such an accumulation of power was unprecedented, and there was literally a riot in the Senate when the bill was debated.

Once Pompey put to sea, it took him less than three months to sweep the pirates from the entire Mediterranean. As Harris dryly noted in a Sept. 30, 2006, *New York Times* op-ed piece laying out the parallels: even allowing for Pompey’s genius as a military strategist, the suspicion arises that the pirates could hardly have posed such a grievous threat in the first place, if they could be defeated so swiftly.

But it was too late to raise such questions. Pompey stayed in the Middle East for six years, establishing puppet regimes throughout the region, and turning himself into the richest man in the empire in the process. Less than a decade later, Julius Caesar was awarded similar, extended military sovereignty in Gaul and, like Pompey, became immensely wealthy and used his treasure to fund his own political faction. In 49 B.C., the system collapsed completely, Caesar crossed the Rubicon — and the rest, as they say, is history.

Perhaps the parallel Harris proposes here is a fallacy, or perhaps the Roman Republic was doomed for other reasons. Or both. Still, *Imperium* makes a compelling case that the disproportionate reaction to the raid on Ostia unquestionably hastened the republic’s collapse, weakening the restraints on military adventurism and corrupting the political process. To use a favorite State Department locution, only time will tell whether the United States is repeating that fatal error. ■

Steven Alan Honley is the editor of the Journal.

**2006 Tax Guide**  
 on page 57 in February 2007's  
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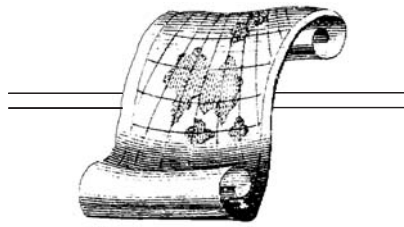
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# REFLECTIONS

## *Mario's Twin Brother*

BY DANA DEREE

Vivid images come to mind when I think about Nicaragua: people selling writhing iguanas on the side of the road, the monkey that jumped from a tree onto our boat, old yellow school buses painted with religious icons side-by-side with Woody Woodpecker. But for the rest of my life, it will be hard to think of Nicaragua without pondering the fate of Mario's twin brother.

My wife, Stephanie, and I met Mario at "Divino Rostro" (Servants of the Divine Image) orphanage in Managua, where we took off our shoes, got down on a padded mat, and spent an hour playing with a swarm of crawling infants.

We were there because our friends Rusty and Krissi wanted to adopt a baby girl, and asked us to help. They wanted a sister for their son, Jackson. Mario, however, was all boy as he pulled at my hair and tried to steal my glasses. I couldn't resist putting the smiley lad on the list of potential adoptees along with five girls.

I gave our list to the Family Ministry. Soon our friends learned that Mario was the only one of the six who had truly been abandoned, and Krissi, Rusty and Jackson flew to Nicaragua to make his acquaintance.

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*The future of  
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tied to the prospects  
for Nicaragua.*

As much as they still wanted a girl, Mario stole their hearts.

He stole our hearts, too. Stephanie and I eagerly offered to foster him during the adoption process. My family, our domestic staff, even our dog enjoyed our time with Mario, the gentle giant (he is a big boy!). With two boys of our own, we were prepared for the long nights that usually come with having a baby in the house, but were pleasantly surprised. We would put Mario to bed at 7:30 p.m. and have to wake him up in the morning: what baby sleeps like that?

Mario stayed with us until we left for my next assignment. Krissi then came down to take care of her new son and see the tumultuous Nicaraguan adoption process through to the end. It wasn't easy. Eventually, Krissi spent almost six hard months in Nicaragua away from Rusty and Jackson back in Arkansas. She lived economically, renting small apartments usually used by short-term church mission teams. She suffered through the constant blackouts, petty crime and lack of air conditioning that come with the territory in Managua. But James "Mario" Fry, as he was to be called, was worth the effort.

Over the months, we learned more about how Mario came into the Frys' lives. Mario's mother had given birth to twins at a hospital in Matagalpa. After being discharged, she gave one baby to an unidentified woman and Mario to a teenager who was visiting a relative who had just had his appendix removed. Mario was soon at Divino Rostro. Despite a concerted search after the Frys said they would adopt both children, the other baby has never been found.

The future of Mario's brother is tied to the prospects for his country. Despite taking so many blows, self-inflicted and otherwise, Nicaragua still has great promise. From natural resources to pristine beaches and wilderness, and boasting an entrepreneurial spirit like I've seen nowhere else, this country has so much to offer its people. I remain hopeful that one day it will realize that potential. At the same time, rampant corruption, poverty and the desperation of people with so little hope that some would hand off a child to a stranger grieve my soul.

I am very happy for my "nephew" Mario, and look forward to watching him grow and thrive in a loving environment of plenty. Yet I am aware that as Mario begins his new life as an Arkansan, his twin stays behind. If nature prevails over nurture then the brother has a fighting chance, for the gene pool he shares with Mario makes him inherently charming and inquisitive. Still, my hopes and concerns for Nicaragua will always be reflected in a face that looks just like Mario's. ■



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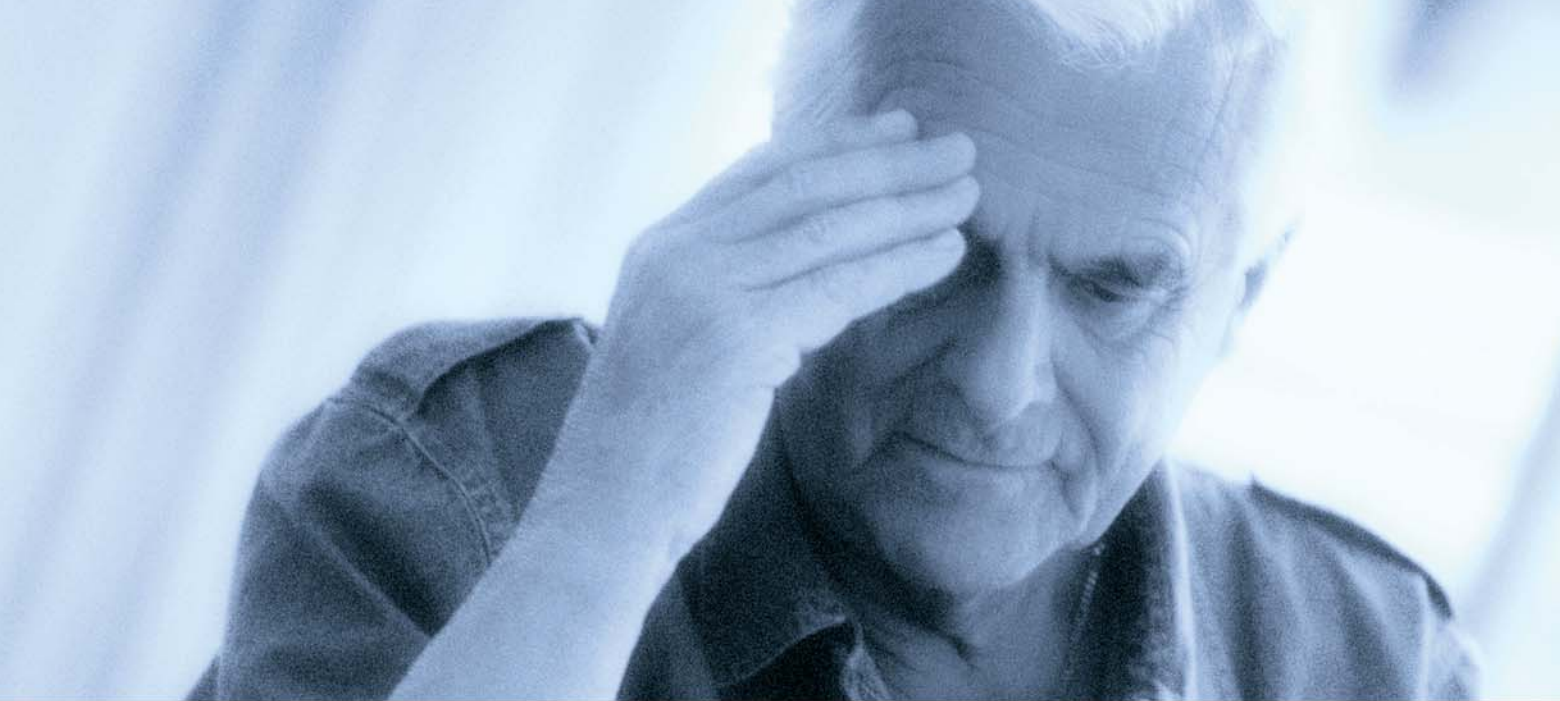
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# What You Need to Know

## About the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP)

The government is not providing the insurance.  
The government is not subsidizing the premiums.  
The government is not guaranteeing the benefits.

FLTCIP is a group program. After September 30, 2008, the premium and benefits may change.

One size does not fit all. An AFSA Representative can help you select the plan best for you.

AFSA Plans offer an indemnity option, survivorship benefit, limited pay option, restoration of benefits, lower premiums and discount plans for family members. FLTCIP does not.

**If You Are Young (Seventy or Below), Healthy and/or Married, the Federal Program Is Not Your Best Option.**

Contact The Hirshorn Company or visit [hirshorn.com](http://hirshorn.com) for information about your best option: the AFSA Long Term Care Plan.

**AFSA Desk The Hirshorn Company**

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