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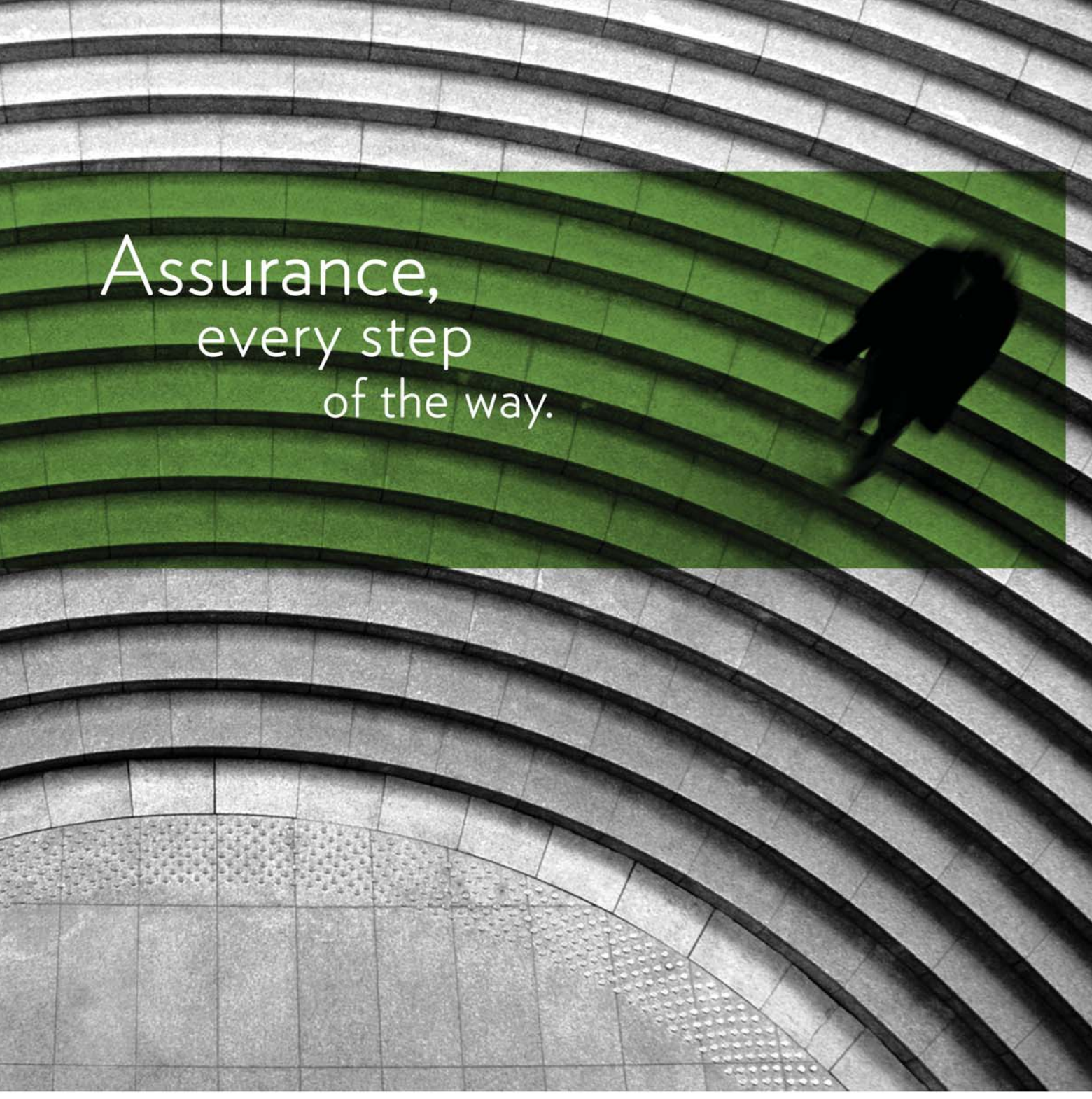

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President's Views
Professionalism

By John K. Naland

According to the dictionary, a profession is "an occupation requiring advanced education and training, and involving intellectual skills." The U.S. Foreign Service certainly qualifies as a profession. Ours is a worldwide-available corps of professionals who possess unique knowledge, skills and abilities that are essential to foreign policy development and implementation.

One hallmark of any vibrant profession is self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses. Thus, while AFSA is quick to defend the Foreign Service against attacks by those who fail to understand the role of diplomacy (for example, see the Issue Brief in this month's *Journal*), we must not shy away from constructive criticism by those who know us well.

Consider this recent "tough love" reflection by Ambassador Chas W. Freeman Jr., a retired FSO and former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia: "Frankly, our Foreign Service, staffed as it is with very intelligent men and women, remains decidedly smug and amateurish in comparison with the self-critical professionalism of our armed forces. There are many reasons for this, including lack of training, professional standards and mentoring, funding and esprit."

Without agreeing with everything he says, it is undeniable that the Foreign Service has long been shortchanged on many of the elements that strengthen professionalism. For example:

• Compared to the career-long continuing education required of other professions such as doctors, lawyers, teachers and military officers, Foreign Service members typically race from assignment to assignment with little time for in-service training (see "Training America's Diplomats," October *Journal*). To close that gap, employees should proactively seek out training in order to strengthen currently needed skills and for general professional development. Too often, we become our own worst enemies by failing to take advantage of existing training opportunities.

• Many professions maintain a recommended professional reading list as a career development resource. For example, the U.S. armed forces have such lists, which are typically issued by the senior career officer in each service (for example, the Army chief of staff). The Foreign Service does not. To close that gap, AFSA is currently working with others to create a foreign affairs professional reading list. Once it is ready, Foreign Service members may use it as a resource for ongoing self-development.

• Members of many professions publish articles analyzing ideas and issues in an effort to further the continuing education and development of themselves and their colleagues. For example, military journals are full of thoughtful essays by mid-level officers. In contrast, relatively few career diplomats publish articles of professional interest — despite clearly possessing the necessary analytical and writing skills.

To close that gap, Foreign Service members should consider writing for professional publications such as the *Foreign Service Journal* and *State* magazine. The *FSJ* welcomes submissions to its "Speaking Out," "FS Know-How" and "FS Heritage" departments, as well as longer analytical pieces on international affairs and professional issues. (See Steve Honley's "Letter from the Editor" in this issue for submission guidelines and the 2008 list of focus topics.)

• The Foreign Service has been criticized as being an organization for which the whole is less than the sum of the parts. To the extent that is true, it is largely due to underinvestment in, and undercommitment to, career-long training, education and professional development. While it is a fact that Foreign Service members face institutional stumbling blocks hindering professional development, we must strive to overcome such obstacles to take advantage of opportunities to strengthen our individual and collective effectiveness.

America is counting on the Foreign Service to capably advance vital national interests in a dangerous world. We must continue to meet that professional challenge. ■

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

J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST

AN INVITATION TO PROPOSE PROJECTS FOR FUNDING BY THE J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST IN 2008

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is a charitable fund established in the memory of J. Kirby Simon, a Foreign Service Officer who died in 1995 while serving in Taiwan. The Trust is committed to expanding the opportunities for professional fulfillment and community service of active Foreign Service Officers and Specialists and their families.

The principal activity of the Trust is to support projects that are initiated and carried out on an entirely unofficial, voluntary basis by Foreign Service personnel or members of their families, wherever located. The Trust will also consider projects of the same nature proposed by other U.S. Government employees or members of their families, regardless of nationality, who are located at American diplomatic posts abroad. Only the foregoing persons are eligible applicants.

In 2007 the Trust made its eleventh round of grant awards, 50 in all, ranging from $250 to $4500 (averaging $2280), for a total of $113,940. These grants support the involvement of Foreign Service personnel in the projects briefly listed below (further described in a Trust announcement titled "Grants Awarded in 2007" and available at www.kirbysimontrust.org). The grants defray a wide range of project expenses, including books, food, medicines, furniture, computers, wheelchairs, kitchen and medical equipment, excursion costs and instructional costs.

• **Educational Projects:** *Belize*, reading program for poor children; *Bolivia*, repair of flooded rural schools; *Cambodia*, school for street children; *Egypt*, vocational training for Sudanese refugees; *Georgia*, vocational training for street children; *India*, school for girls; *Israel*, conflict resolution handbook used in Arab villages and Jewish community centers; *Malawi*, life-skills activities for children and vocational training for adults; *Namibia*, after-school program for poor youngsters; *Russia*, computer instruction for street children; *Swaziland*, rural preschools for orphans and other children; *Togo*, gardening and business training for at-risk children; *Turkey*, local library for squatter neighborhood; *Turkey*, vocational training for low-income women.

• **Other Projects for Children:** *Afghanistan*, playground and mural for orphanage; *Belarus*, rehabilitation center for learning-disabled children; *Ecuador*, lead paint eradication in orphanage; *Cyprus*, athletic equipment for Turkish Cypriot orphans; *Guatemala*, sports equipment and training for vulnerable young women; *Guyana*, residence for children and adults with developmental disabilities; *Lithuania*, excursion for children's home; *Macedonia*, equipment for community-building sports program; *Malaysia*, school and medical supplies for Burmese refugee children; *Morocco*, orphanage bathroom renovation; *Russia*, sports facility for children's shelter; *South Africa*, coordination of care for children in crisis; *South Africa*, refuge for children orphaned by AIDS; *Sri Lanka*, home for orphaned street girls; *Taiwan*, empowerment activities for teenaged orphans; *Zambia*, cultural exchange between local and American schools.

• **Health-Related Projects:** *Belarus*, cooking training for orphans; *Colombia*, vaccinations and medical records at girls' orphanage; *Colombia*, medical supplies and evaluations for children at risk; *Congo*, residential care for polio patients; *Djibouti*, information campaign to combat breast cancer; *India*, public-education video focusing on the deaf community; *Indonesia*, vocational training for female leprosy survivors; *Ivory Coast*, equipment for disabled orphans; *Romania*, mattresses for disabled children; *Sierra Leone*, therapeutic food for malnourished children; *Tajikistan*, winter clothing for nursing home residents; *Uganda*, preschool for deaf children and sign-language training for adults.

• **Other Facilities for Poverty Areas:** *Armenia*, partial renovation of kindergarten building; *Cameroon*, education and recreation room for orphanage; *China*, rebuilding of home destroyed by landslides and flooding; *Kenya*, reforestation project in Maasai village; *Liberia*, library at rehabilitation center; *Mexico*, rainwater harvest and retention systems in rural communities; *Nicaragua*, construction of crafts cooperative; *Nicaragua*, sanitary facilities at poverty-area schools.

The Trust now invites the submission of proposals for support in 2008. It is anticipated that few of the new grants will exceed the average size of the 2007 awards, and that projects assisted by the Trust will reflect a variety of interests and approaches, some of which are illustrated by the 2007 grants.

Grants provided by the Trust can be used to support several categories of project expense; the third paragraph of this announcement provides examples. However, certain restrictions apply: (a) Funds from the Trust cannot be used to pay salaries or other compensation to U.S. Government employees or their family members. (b) The Trust does not support projects that have reasonable prospects of obtaining full funding from other sources. (c) The Trust will provide support for a project operated by a charitable or educational organization only where the individual applicant(s) plan an active part in initiating and carrying out the project, apart from fundraising. (d) The Trust will support only projects in which each applicant's role is clearly separate from the applicant's official responsibilities.

A proposal should include a description of the project, what it is intended to achieve, and the role to be played by the applicant(s); a preliminary plan for disseminating the results of the project; a budget; other available funding, if any; and a brief biography of the applicant(s). Proposals should be no longer than five double-spaced pages (exclusive of budget and biographical material). Please follow the application format available at www.kirbysimontrust.org/format_for_proposals.html or by communicating with the Trust (see below).

Proposals for projects to be funded during calendar year 2008 must be received by the Trust no later than March 1, 2008.

Proposals can be submitted by mail, by fax or (preferably) by e-mail to:

J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust
93 Edgehill Road
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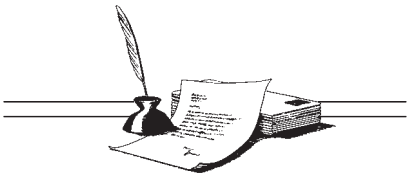
FAX: 203-432-0063
info@kirbysimontrust.org

Further information about the Trust can be found on the Web at www.kirbysimontrust.org.



LETTERS

The Iraq War Blame Game

In an Oct. 12 speech to the Military Reporters and Editors Forum, former U.S. Iraq commander Lt. General Ricardo Sanchez condemned the mistakes of others in Iraq — though not his own. We'll hear more such speeches from recently retired senior officials as the war winds down in failure and the blame game heats up. The general's comments were candid, accurate and brave regarding the role of the press and the highest echelons of this administration. But in trying with an almost casual and unsupported "one-liner" to throw much of the blame for the Iraq debacle on the State Department, he erred. That record must be corrected.

His complaint (implicit because never voiced in detail) is that the State Department has not "been there" enough — a common complaint now from the Defense Department. That is ironic, given that the bulk of prewar planning for a postwar Iraq was conducted by the State Department, only to be trashed by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his civilian coterie. They shoved the State Department aside during the initial period of occupation in favor of a seemingly total laissez-faire policy.

Then the Coalition Provisional Authority appeared in Iraq — not a State Department creation, but a hodgepodge of professionals heavily diluted by incompetent political appointees headed by a former State Department official, whose only significant posting abroad (as distinct from 7th floor and National Security Council service) was as ambassador to a benign, unchallenging post, The Hague. Paul Bremer made disastrous decisions and bears a heavy responsibility. But he was not a State Department appointee in Baghdad; he was a political appointee favored by this administration due to ideological considerations, not relevant experience.

Is the State Department still absent from the field, as Gen. Sanchez implies? Roughly a quarter of all current FSOs have rotated through Baghdad or Kabul. I'll admit that I think the Service should have gone to directed assignments long ago, instead of using an elaborately baroque set of incentives for loading onward assignment bidding criteria. That said, Gen. Sanchez errs if he expects unarmed civilians — including diplomats — to perform the role of soldier or point of the lance in venturing into the middle of free-fire zones that the military has been unable to pacify.

That is not to blame our military, who have been given a difficult, if not impossible, task in Iraq, due in part to insufficient resources and a lack of real national mobilization. But what American soldiers cannot achieve against armed insurgents on the battlefield, unarmed diplomats cannot achieve either.

Those of our colleagues who seek to persuade or rebuild cannot get very far if they cannot move about and do their jobs, or if their Iraqi contacts cannot be assured of survival.

Marc E. Nicholson
FSO, retired
Washington, D.C.

Our Lost Voice for Human Rights

I commend the *Journal*'s focus on human rights in the September issue. The articles by Ed McWilliams, Ken Roth, Sarah Sewall and, especially, Craig Murray were right on target. I wish our timid public media would give them a wider airing.

I was one of the officers assigned in 1976 to the State Department's new human rights office, which Congress insisted we create. Under the leadership of such legislators as Donald Fraser, Tom Harkin, Jonathan Bingham and Ted Kennedy, Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act of 1976 over the veto of President Gerald Ford. (Yes, more than two-thirds of both houses of Congress voted in favor of human rights measures!)

The law included the Harkin Amendment, which called for the withholding of U.S. foreign assistance to any country that engaged in a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights. It also required the department to submit annual human

rights reports on American aid recipients to Congress.

I stayed on through the first year of the Carter administration, which made human rights a major policy consideration. I assembled the first human rights reports sent to Congress in early 1977. Those reports on about 75 countries, compiled in a booklet no more than half an inch thick, were a mere shadow of the tomes the department later produced and continues to send to Congress each year.

In those years the United States became the leading voice for increased respect for internationally recognized human rights. In 1975, State Department FSOs insisted on including respect for human rights in the Helsinki Final Act, a first step in confronting communist regimes with their rights abuses.

The 1977 reports to Congress made front-page headlines in leading American newspapers, and Pres. Carter's references to human rights in his inaugural speech were followed by Vaclav Havel's creation of a human rights group in Prague the next day.

Top-level administration officials, including Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Patt Derian, advocated increased respect for human rights publicly and privately in high-level diplomatic meetings. Even in the midst of the Cold War, we began to raise human rights concerns with our repressive allies and with communist adversaries.

Admittedly, human rights policy application was tentative, sometimes experimental and not always uniform, as its critics charged. But America's advocacy gradually brought some improvements around the world. And there was no doubt anywhere that our government, Congress and the majority of American people were strong supporters of human rights.

I don't think the department ever officially defined the term "gross violations" of human rights in the Harkin Amendment, but our working definition certainly included such abuses as murder, other violations of the safety and integrity of the person, incarcerations without charges or trial, disappearances (a common practice in the Chilean and Argentine dictatorships) and torture.

Torture was viewed as barbaric, uncivilized and unjustifiable under any circumstances — a taboo. Until the aftermath of 9/11, I never imagined that U.S. officials could advocate, justify and condone its use. My shock and dismay only deepened as American citizens' civil rights — i.e., human rights — were also undermined in the mistaken belief that our security could be enhanced by violating some of our rights.

Back in the 1970s, we often told dictatorships fighting insurgencies that the rule of law must be maintained, even in a state of emergency. We need more voices to make that point in Washington today, as Amb. Murray did so forcefully in the September *Journal*.

Sadly and tragically, America has now lost its human rights voice at home and abroad. Even worse, as some of your authors indicated, we now serve as an example and excuse for other rights-violating regimes. Little wonder that our reputation in the world has fallen to a historic low.

Your focus was one in a chorus of voices we must raise to denounce the current abuses and the wrong human rights policies of our government, both in the public forum and at the ballot box.

H. Kenneth Hill
Ambassador, retired
Bradenton, Fla.

A New Counterinsurgency Doctrine

Speaking as someone who took part in the CORDS pacification program in Vietnam, I write to compliment the *Foreign Service Journal* for its enduring attention to counterinsurgency. Between the publication of Sarah Sewall's article in the September *FSJ* and an all-too-similar article by Undersecretary for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson, which the *Journal* published in July 1962, 45 years passed.

In 1962, it looked like counterinsurgency doctrine had a better future than it does now, even with the recent publication of a brand-new army field manual. As Sewall points out, the interagency process that would implement the new doctrine is stalled, and she recommends a high-level bipartisan commission to clarify when and why counterinsurgency serves the national interest. In 1962, such a high-level body existed; it was called the Special Group (Counter-insurgency) and included Robert Kennedy, Gen. Maxwell Taylor, Edward R. Murrow and Under Secretary Johnson.

After Vietnam, counterinsurgency fell into disfavor. The Weinberger and Powell Doctrines put up a political barrier to counterinsurgency and other military intervention. In 1987, seeing the need for better coordination in the low-intensity conflict spectrum after the disastrous 1980 attempted rescue of the Embassy Tehran hostages and the fumbling surrounding the 1983 Grenada operation, President Reagan signed a National Security Decision Directive that established a low-intensity conflict board.

Because of opposition from the Defense Department, very little came of that body, even though it included a senior DOD official named Richard Armitage. It is more than ironic that the 1990s campaign against the U.S. military participation in counterinsurgency and low-intensity conflict (in the Balkans) was led by Gen. Colin

Powell, who later, as Secretary of State, opened the way to the invasion of Iraq, creating the need for the new counterinsurgency doctrine.

Sewall notes that the new field manual recognizes the primacy of politics, and rightly so. But politics can be intractable. As this is written, Ambassador Ryan Crocker, reflecting on the political impasse in Iraq, has told Congress, "I cannot guarantee success." In his 1962 *FSJ* article, Under Secretary Johnson wrote that it was difficult to persuade a government threatened by subversion or insurgency to take remedial measures toward reform: "This calls for the utmost skills of our profession for it is always a difficult task and sometimes an impossible one."

Sewall is appropriately realistic in pointing out the challenges ahead to organize anew for a counterinsurgency doctrine. Although the U.S. government did organize a successful counterinsurgency strategy for the pacification of Vietnam, counterinsurgency doctrine barely survived the bitter memories of our eventual defeat. The disengagement strategies for Iraq seem to be equally bleak. Will counterinsurgency survive it?

Alfred R. Barr
FSO, retired
Washington, D.C.

Modernize Hiring

Ludovic Hood's letter in your September issue, "The Case for Mid-Level Entry," was right on the money. From a human resources point of view, the current Foreign Service recruitment and promotion system is inefficient, not merit-based. It wastes a lot of talent and management skills that could be put to work for the State Department and for America, right away.

The current system directs untenured generalists to visa lines around the world for up to four years. While the department obtains a significant amount of revenue from visa application fees, that does not justify the current practice. Does the Department of Homeland Security staff airport passport control lines with Ph.D.-holders and lawyers? Other options do exist.

Similarly, at a time when the image of the United States is plummeting abroad, we recruit individuals with 10 years of press or public relations experience in the private sector only to stick them on the visa line for three years.

Further, being against mid-level

recruitment merely perpetuates the "old boy" system and the flawed mentality that only years of corps service bring competence and success. We need to modernize and accept the changes in the U.S. labor market of the last 25 years, and AFSA should support efforts to do so.

Ralph Falzone
FSO
Embassy Hanoi

Getting the Best

Ludovic Hood makes a well-reasoned and convincing argument for a mid-level FSO entry program in his September letter. Many other officers also feel that there is a lack of avenues and enticements available for talented acquaintances and schoolmates with a raft of professional experiences to enter the Foreign Service. The pleasure I took in seeing questions raised, often off-hours in print, was matched only by the shock of learning that AFSA has actually made it a policy to oppose any such program.

American diplomacy is sorely in need of the best minds and the best leaders possible. Now, more than ever before, government must compete with highly prestigious and well-compensated business and academic positions. The plain truth is that for successful investment bankers, think-tank advisers, lawyers or military personnel contemplating a new career in foreign affairs, the prospect of spending four years with no opportunity to take on the challenges for which you signed up, or responsibilities similar to those from where you came, is a non-starter.

New hires — the lifeblood of any organization — should be given reasons to join the Foreign Service, not disincentives. I would like very much to hear AFSA's rebuttal to Hood's persuasive case for instituting a mid-level entry program. It would appear that only tenured, middle-level FSOs who could not compete with entrants from the private sector would have anything to fear from such a program.

Mid-level hiring worked for the Foreign Commercial Service. Why not for the State Department? At the very least, why not encourage the department to institute a fast-track program similar to that of the U.K.'s Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to seek out and aggressively promote talented and experienced newcomers? New management styles, ways of thinking and new skill sets, as well as the motivation that arises from competition, can always benefit an organization.

Corporations remain competitive by hiring the best within their field, as well as taking strong candidates from other fields. The Foreign Service would do well to emulate them. Congratulations to Mr. Hood for raising an issue essential to the future relevance of America's professional diplomatic corps.

Nick Snyder
FSO
Embassy Beijing

A Tragic Death in Afghanistan

On Oct. 4, Steven Thomas (Tom) Stefani was killed in an IED attack on the military convoy he was part of in Ghazni province, Afghanistan. I want to express to his family, friends and colleagues at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as his coworkers in Afghanistan, my deepest sympathies and sorrow at their loss. To my knowledge, Tom has the unfortunate distinction of being the first U.S. government employee in a non-combat, non-drug interdiction, non-counterterrorism role killed in Afghanistan.

Tom was a USDA rangeland management specialist, who answered a call for assistance by his agency and volunteered to serve in Afghanistan. I met him only briefly during my tour there (April 2006 through May 2007), but always found him to be committed to the task at hand, extremely professional and skilled. He was someone who got the job done, no matter what obstacles were placed in front of him.

USDA volunteers primarily serve as advisers to military commanders in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, where development theory and civilian-military cooperation are being put into practice. Tom was based in Ghazni province, an increasingly hostile and dangerous place, but one where the need for development assistance is perhaps most acute. He lived, worked and played in conditions many can't even imagine, let alone have the desire to experience.

Tom's death is made even more unfortunate by the way it has been handled by USAID and the State Department. I only heard about it through the grapevine, two weeks after he was killed. After getting over my shock, I began to check around to see if I missed the announcement from USAID or State. When I checked both internal Web sites, I was dismayed to find no notice on the USAID site at all, and only a brief mention of Tom's death by a State Department official during a routine daily press briefing. There was no statement from the Secretary of State, the acting USAID administrator or the ambassador. Only Acting Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Conner released a statement.

Although he was not an employee of either State or USAID, Tom, like the other USDA advisers serving in Afghanistan, was there under a Participating Agency Service Agreement between USAID and USDA. In Fiscal Year 2006 alone, an estimated $1 million was transferred by USAID to

USDA to help cover costs associated with staffing USDA personnel at the PRTs. This should not matter, however. Protocol about who releases a statement should have no agency limits, especially regarding the tragedy of a death in the service to one's country.

As someone who has served in Afghanistan, completing a 14-month tour only four months ago, I am troubled by the silence from State and USAID. The lack of acknowledgment of Tom's service diminishes the efforts of all those who have already answered the call, and the contributions, commitment and sacrifice of current U.S. government employees in Afghanistan.

Given this lack of support and acknowledgment from our leadership, it should come as no surprise that it is becoming increasingly difficult to staff posts in places like Afghanistan. I am proud to have served there and would consider volunteering again. But I am no longer certain.

If the State Department, USAID and other agencies are serious about demonstrating support to those working in Afghanistan, Iraq and other critical-needs countries, a good start would be to recognize the service of *all* who serve, not just those sent by their home agency.

Randy Chester
USAID FSO
Embassy Sarajevo

Editor's Note: Steven Thomas Stefani's name will be inscribed on the AFSA Memorial Plaques in the C Street Lobby of the Department of State's Harry S Truman Building at the next Foreign Affairs Day commemoration on May 2, 2008. ■

Correction

We regret the errors in the entry for *Foreign Service Family,* the memoir by Harriet (Rita) Prince Parrish Youngquist and Eric V. Youngquist, on p. 31 of "In Their Own Write" in the November *Journal*. The cost of the book is $21.00, and it can be ordered by writing to Managing Editor Nathaniel Kenton at Voyageur Publishing Co., 834 Lynnbrook Road, Nashville TN 37215.

CYBERNOTES

Investment in Iran: Diplomatic Leverage?

The latest unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran, announced Oct. 25 by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson at a joint press conference at the State Department, are, in Rice's words, part of a "comprehensive policy to confront the threatening behavior of the Iranians." Washington remains open, she added, to a diplomatic solution.

The harshest American action against Iran since the 1979 siezure of Embassy Tehran, the sanctions are designed to isolate the Revolutionary Guard, a large and critical part of Iran's military establishment, and anyone who does business with it. The guards have grown to play a dominant role in the country's economy, most recently in the oil and gas industry.

What the sanctions will accomplish remains to be seen. At hearings convened by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia on Oct. 23, the problems the policy faces were discussed — including the fact that its success rests on persuading others to join the boycott (**http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/testimony.asp?pg=2**). The opposition of Russia and China, hesitation of Europe and paralysis of the U.N. Security Council are additional obstacles.

"This is a frustrating and uncertain policy course: but it is far better than the alternatives of acquiescence or war," concludes Philip H. Gordon of the Brookings Institution in his detailed testimony (**www.brookings.edu/testimony/2007/1023iran.aspx**).

To get an idea of just what the sanctions involve, readers can consult *Global Investment In Iran: Interactive*, a Web tool developed at the American Enterprise Institute to assess foreign investment in Iran (**www.aei.org/IranInteractive**).

For additional background on the policy, see the Council on Foreign Relations (**www.cfr.org/publication/12742/century_foundation.html**).

— *Susan Brady Maitra, Senior Editor*

Going Native: Retiring Abroad

More than 160 million U.S. citizens are expected to retire over the next 30 years, and exotic cultures, climates and locations offer enticing prospects for them. So does the often-lower cost of living, which allows retirees to maximize nest eggs by easing the burden of soaring U.S. health care, housing and energy costs. Moving abroad can also make early retirement a viable choice. Many Foreign Service retirees, already familiar with living abroad, find the idea of settling abroad particularly appealing.

> We got a leader in Iran who has announced that he wants to destroy Israel. So I've told people that if you're interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon.
>
> — Pres. George W. Bush, at his Oct. 17 press conference, *http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/10/20071017.html*

The State Department estimates that 6.6 million American citizens (excluding the military) live abroad. But it is difficult to determine how many of them are retirees because neither the Census Bureau nor the State Department keeps track of that. The Social Security Administration reports that in 2005, about 442,000 individuals received Social Security payments while abroad. It doesn't, however, count those who may live abroad but collect their benefits at U.S. addresses.

There can, of course, be challenges. Retirees may find themselves at the mercy of local exchange rates: if the dollar dives, so does their spending power. Health care can also be a challenge. Retirees on Medicare have to travel back to the States to have their treatment covered, though overseas health insurance is available. In Mexico, for example, private insurance offers several options designed especially for expatriates, but the quality of care varies, with better equipment and specialists more readily available in the larger cities.

Overseas retirement may also benefit local economic development. As Walter Russell Mead argues, senior citizens retiring south of the border may "help our Latin American neighbors make the transition to First World prosperity much more rapidly

than even most optimists dare to hope." He also asserts that it will "reduce the Medicare deficits that pose an even greater threat to the long-term fiscal health of the U.S. Treasury than Social Security."

Moving abroad does not mean expatriates lose a say on issues that affect them. The Association of Americans Resident Overseas, a nonpartisan association representing members in 21 countries urges Congress to take into account the contributions, needs and issues of Americans abroad (**www.aaro.org**). AARO is currently working to secure Medicare coverage for eligible Americans residing overseas.

Without language fluency or family connections to their new country, retirees may find integrating themselves into local communities difficult. Fortunately, however, many cities have large expat communities. The Internet has made it easier for expats to stay in touch with family and connect with other Americans abroad. *Expat Communities* (**www.expatcommunities.com**), a directory including more than 100 countries, provides links to expatriate organizations, online forums and local newspapers. Online classified ads feature real estate, financial services, language lessons and domestic help (see **www.expatriates.com**).

Guides are also available on foreign residency requirements, property laws and security concerns — for example, **www.liveabroad.com**.

— Marc Nielsen, Editorial Intern

Burma: An Olympic Challenge

Aug. 8, 2008, will mark the start of the Beijing Olympic Games, almost exactly 20 years to the day after the Burmese military junta put down student-led protests, killing more than 1,000 people. The September demonstrations in Burma (renamed Myanmar by the junta) brought world attention to the isolated country and prompted calls for Chinese intervention.

What started out as a protest over increased fuel prices grew into nationwide marches calling for national reconciliation. Thousands of Burmese took to the streets, emboldened by maroon-clad monks demanding regime change. The ensuing military crackdown was reminiscent of 1988, when at least 1,000 protesters were killed and thousands imprisoned — most notably, opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

So far, the regime has arrested more than 3,000 protesters and admitted to killing 10, but diplomats and dissidents say many more have died. Students and activists used e-mail, blogs and cell-phone cameras to document military actions until the government cut telephone lines and blocked Internet and e-mail access.

But using high-resolution satellite images, the American Association for the Advancement of Science has confirmed field reports of destroyed villages, forced relocations and a growing military presence (the full report can be accessed at **www.aaas.org/news/releases/2007/media/0928burma_report.pdf**).

Following the September visit of the U.N.'s special envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, the Security Council officially deplored the junta's use of violence and called for the release of all political prisoners, urging the government to engage opposition parties in dialog (**www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc9139.doc.htm**).

Reiterating its commitment to non-interference, Beijing threatened to veto any sanctions against the regime. The junta's largest trading partner, China aims to ensure access to the country's timber, oil, gas reserves and precious stones. Beijing also relies on the junta for access to the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea — which the Chinese military monitors. In addition to unwavering diplomatic support, the PRC's ties to the junta have been strengthened with billions of dollars in investment, trade and weapons sales.

In an attempt to counter Chinese influence, India has provided the junta with light artillery, tanks, reconnaissance aircraft and small arms. Currently Burma's fourth-largest trad-

Site of the Month: www.opensecrets.org

The 2008 candidates seeking to become president have raised record amounts of money, and the race seems on track to reach an unprecedented $1 billion total. While trying to determine where the candidates stand on an issue can be difficult, finding out their bottom line just got easier.

Opensecrets.org conducts computer-based research on campaign finance issues with the aim of creating a more educated voter, an involved citizenry and a more responsive government. The organization compiles political contributions from more than 80 different industries and provides financial data for congressional, senatorial and presidential races.

A project of the Center for Responsive Politics, *opensecrets.org* is a nonpartisan, nonprofit group. Based in Washington D.C., CRP is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, foundation grants and individual contributions. It does not accept money from corporations, labor unions, political parties or other interest groups.

— Marc Nielsen, Editorial Intern

ing partner, India also plans to build a road network through the country that would increase trade with the other Southeast Asian nations.

Despite the lack of progress since Burma's admission to ASEAN in 1997, and the negative publicity generated by the protests on its 40th anniversary, ASEAN, like India, continues to oppose sanctions. The association is concerned it will lose access to Burma's natural resources and push the regime further into China's orbit.

While Japan has cut economic assistance, and the U.S. and European Union have imposed new sanctions on the junta, others see China as the key player. "This regime has survived to this day because of Chinese government support — financial, diplomatic and military," says Aung Din, co-founder of the U.S. Campaign for Burma (**www.uscampaignforburma.org**), a grassroots organization that is calling for the world to boycott the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The E.U. countries are also calling for a boycott of the Beijing Games. "The Olympics is the only real lever we have to make China act. The civilized world must seriously consider shunning China by using the Beijing Olympics to send the clear message that such abuses of human rights are not acceptable," Vice President of the European Parliament Edward McMillan-Scott told Reuters.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., has introduced a resolution in the House, calling for the U.S. government to boycott the Olympics (**www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=hr110-610**). In August, two other House bills were introduced calling for an Olympic boycott, but many lawmakers have expressed caution, saying a pullout will do more to punish athletes than censure China.

In September, Pres. Bush accepted an invitation from President Hu Jintao to attend the Games; but aides said he will do so as a sports fan, not to make a political statement.

For background information and a selection of helpful Burma-related links, see "Myanmar: A Call for Regional Action" at the International Crisis Group Web site **www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5093&l=1**. In addition, the Sept./Oct. issue of *Foreign Policy* has a useful guide to understanding Burma's "economic lifelines." The article can be accessed at **www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3986**. ■

— Marc Nielsen, Editorial Intern

50 Years Ago…

The Association and its *Foreign Service Journal* can do more than we have in the past to serve the interests of the Service in the matter of public relations. I fear that if we stand upon our dignity we may not have much left to stand on. I think within limits there is room for a more muscular, red-corpuscular attitude on the part of the Association and the *Journal*. By that, however, I do not mean leaping to the barricades or fomenting revolution. We must always confine our effort to the bounds of common sense and that "application of tact and intelligence" which is the hallmark of diplomacy.

— Robert McClintock, "The *Journal* and the Service," *FSJ*, December 1957

SPEAKING OUT

Expeditionary Sidekicks? The Military-Diplomatic Dynamic

BY GERALD LOFTUS

We still refer to one subcomponent of the political cone as "pol-mil" — as if, by putting "political" first, we indicate its primacy over the military. Civilian control of the military has always been a byword of democracies, as we never tire of lecturing military officer corps from around the world. Yet a look at our current military-diplomatic relationship should give us pause.

Speaking at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 12, General David Patraeus hailed Ambassador Ryan Crocker as "my great diplomatic wingman." The term's Air Force origins denote a trusty sidekick, hovering slightly behind "Top Gun." Granted, Iraq is a unique situation; thankfully, most U.S. ambassadors do not have four-star generals commanding troops in a war zone in their countries of assignment. But the overall attitude toward diplomacy within our national security structure typified by this quote is still troubling.

We are used to a defense attaché and perhaps a military assistance officer as part of the embassy country team, where the ambassador is in charge. But increasingly, Foreign Service officers find themselves in subordinate relationships to the military, especially as the "expeditionary" model is expanded. Combatant commanders have long had Foreign Service political advisers and, more recently, also operate Joint Interagency Cooperation Groups, with representatives from foreign affairs and other agencies. Now POLADs are present at subordinate commands and in the offices of service chiefs. And AFRICOM, the newest geographic command, expects to use diplomatic and development experts for a third of its headquarters complement.

Why should the world's leading democracy accept an increasing militarization of its diplomatic engagement with the world?

Going Through the Motions

Without a doubt, the U.S. military values diplomatic expertise. But the relationship can be one of checking boxes, not of acting on civilian expertise. Carl von Clausewitz's dictum, "war is merely the continuation of politics by other means," has become a staple of military culture, so war-game planners frequently write scenarios with just a nod to diplomatic niceties before cutting to: "Diplomacy has failed; send in the military."

If the post-9/11 era really is to be characterized by long, global wars, we must be particularly wary of the dangers of focusing obsessively on notions like expeditionary diplomacy, to the exclusion of our core competency. War zones are military turf, and in that kind of expeditionary environment, the "pol" will always be wingman to the "mil." Even in such FSO billets as Provincial Reconstruction Team leader, what is the nature of authority when the PRT is embedded in a larger military unit?

Recall that in the Red Army, the political commissar could contravene decisions taken by military professionals. Happily, there are no signs of that on our side, nor would we want the tail to wag the dog in that manner. But why should the world's leading democracy accept an increasing militarization of its diplomatic engagement with the world?

Though the expeditionary diplomat/soldier amalgam may appeal to writers like Robert Kaplan, it presupposes that Iraq and Afghanistan are not one-off circumstances. If expeditionary (as opposed to what — desk-bound?) is to be the new ideal, where (and what) is the next expedition? David Jones pointed out several fallacies behind the headlong rush to jettison traditional diplomacy in his Speaking Out column in the July-August 2006 *FSJ* ("Run, Lemmings, Run"). Exposed one-officer posts, with a company of security contractor outriders, to perform "transformational diplomacy" — is that the new paradigm? How does that help the U.S. deal with the rest of the world?

Washington on the Rhine

When I attended National Defense University (1998-1999), I was part of a student body comprised largely of colonels and senior civilians. But I was conscious of who was missing. Where were the rising GS-14s of the Treasury Department, who might one day deal with America's increasing

indebtedness to China? Or the stellar scientists from Agriculture, whose work on dry-land farming might be crucial to sustaining our food supply?

When the premier federal institutions of learning are those designed for professional military education, that tells us something about our national priorities. This is not new: the panic over Sputnik in the 1950s led to the National Defense Education Act, and the same period saw further billions spent on the Eisenhower Interstate and Defense Highways. Though NDU and the other war colleges, to their credit, also study the other elements of national power, including diplomatic, economic and informational resources, the stress is inevitably on national security in the classic Defense Department sense. The fact that FSOs are "embedded" in classes for some diplomatic leavening does not alter the fact that these institutions remain war colleges.

The superstars of the U.S. official presence overseas are, let's face it, not the 190 or so ambassadors accredited to conduct bilateral relations, but the four-star geographic combatant commanders of EUCOM, CENTCOM, PACOM, SOUTHCOM and AFRICOM. For their full-spectrum approach to their respective areas of responsibility, the Pentagon wants the various commands to fund such programs as "Building Global Partnerships" and greatly expand the Commander's Emergency Response Program. This is not your $5,000 "Ambassador's Self-Help Program" disbursing grants for village schools; we are talking about many millions of dollars here.

In a May 13 *Washington Post* article, Walter Pincus quotes a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report: "As a result of inadequate funding for civilian programs ... U.S. defense agencies are increasingly being granted authority and funding to fill perceived gaps ... weakening the Secretary of State's primacy in setting the agenda for U.S. relations with foreign countries. Some foreign officials question what appears to be a new emphasis by the United States on military approaches to problems that are not seen as lending themselves to military solutions." Indeed. Generals are naturally assertive about their role in their areas of responsibility.

21st-century challenges demand more of the FS than to be sidekicks to the armed forces.

Stuttgart and the U.S. European Command are actually on the River Neckar, but a "Washington on the Rhine" outlook can develop there or at any of the overseas commands. In their quest for greater unity of effort, combatant commanders lament the bureaucratic barriers to their centralizing interagency coordination. Some of them would like to "mature" the interagency process to the regional level (see "Extending the Phase Zero Campaign Mindset," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 45, 2nd Quarter 2007). But how do you do that when there are some 50 U.S. ambassadors in Africa, but only one four-star general?

Here's the rub: when you establish and fund regional combatant commands, they must "do something" about crises in their bailiwick. As the U.S. launches another continental-sized mission in AFRICOM, we should consider what Andrew Bacevich, in his 2005 book *The New American Militarism*, said regarding the 1980s growth of CENTCOM activities in its Mideast domain: "As the U.S. military profile in the region became ever more prominent, the difficulties with which the United States felt obliged to contend also multiplied."

This is not just a matter of historical interest. The establishment of AFRICOM — how it is to be configured, where headquartered and with what missions — is a live issue. Is it to be a classic geographic combatant command, with the force structure that comes with four-stardom? Maybe not. Will it move from collocation with EUCOM in Germany, from which it was created, to Africa? Probably, but where? Throughout the continent there is clear reluctance to host a foreign military presence.

And what missions will AFRICOM undertake? Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea's oil shipping lanes is a strategic interest, as is transnational terrorism across the Sahel. But African publics and governments have already begun to complain that U.S. engagement is increasingly military, pitting 50 U.S. ambassadors and their self-help programs against a brand-new U.S. commander for whom Africa is his sole job description.

Stake Out the Core Turf: Diplomacy

Some analysts argue that the unprecedented size, resources and strategic reach of the U.S. military give us a comparative advantage in power projection, similar to the one China has in producing cheap products for the world, or the European Union has in unifying a continent. The strength of the U.S. military is undoubtedly a prime asset, but as Thomas Barnett recently wrote in *Esquire* ("The Americans Have Landed," June), the danger is that "the poised hammer makes everything suddenly look like a nail."

Does the U.S. need "expeditionary diplomacy?" Perhaps, but not as its

default posture, unsuited as it is to solving the myriad problems that don't fit a Foreign Legion stance.

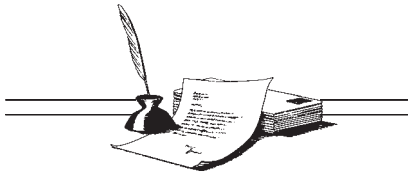
The vast majority of the world's 193 countries do not qualify as war zones. True, not all of them are completely stable or developed, and many are not democracies. But they still constitute sovereign nations in the generally accepted sense, with boundaries, capitals, elites and economies. This non-expeditionary world — about 180 countries — is the *diplomatic* "area of responsibility," where the Foreign Service works to advance American interests.

In the "Rest of the World" (to use Pentagon parlance), basic social structures and norms do not exist or are exceedingly shaky. In those places, the host government cannot (or will not) provide perimeter security for the embassy, let alone ensure a safe working environment for diplomats to do their jobs. Nor can the Marine security guard detachment. And as we are learning in Iraq, the costs of hiring private security companies to do the job go far beyond dollars and cents. It is in these relatively few extreme environments that the military can and should take the lead — and where our diplomatic presence should be kept lean until conditions permit peacetime operations.

So by all means, let imaginative Army majors produce and debate papers on "armed diplomacy" at places like Leavenworth's Combat Studies Institute. Meanwhile, the non-expeditionary core of the Foreign Service should take the lead in confronting climate change, mass migrations and the implications of the colossal U.S. currency reserves in foreign hands, to name just a few of the serious threats we face.

Let me be clear: Political-military issues, including counterterrorism and expeditionary forays in war zones, will remain important. But they should not blind us to the many other challenges that demand much more of the Foreign Service than to be sidekicks, diplomatic wingpersons to the armed forces. ■

Gerald Loftus, a Foreign Service officer from 1979 to 2002, lives in Brussels. Since retirement, he has focused on the interagency and multinational aspects of defense, with an emphasis on Africa.



Letter from the Editor

By Steven Alan Honley

Happy holidays! Once again it's time for my periodic invitation to take advantage of the many opportunities to contribute to the *Journal*.

Each issue features a focus section examining various facets of an issue related to the Foreign Service or international relations. This month, for instance, we examine the management challenges chiefs of mission (and all Foreign Service personnel) face in coordinating with overseas representatives of non-foreign affairs agencies. As always, we have put together a range of commentaries and analyses from a variety of perspectives, both from within the Service and beyond it.

You will find a list of the focus topics our Editorial Board has identified for the coming year (subject, of course, to revision) on p. 19.

As you can see, most of these themes relate directly to Foreign Service professional and lifestyle issues, so I hope many of you will consider sharing your insights and expertise. Do note, however, that because of our lead time for publication, and the requirement for Editorial Board approval, we need to receive submissions at least three months (and preferably longer) prior to the issue's release date. Thus, we have already lined up authors for the January and February issues, but there is still time to submit manuscripts for later months. Submissions should generally be between 2,000 and 3,000 words, though shorter pieces are always welcome.

There are many ways you can share your insights in our pages. Let us hear from you.

If those choices don't grab you, or if you feel we have not devoted enough space to a professional concern or functional issue, please consider writing a feature article (also in the 2,000-3,000 word range) about it.

A new department we'll be introducing is FS Heritage. As its name suggests, this periodic feature is intended to spotlight key events in the history of the Foreign Service and diplomats whose names many of us know only from history books or the halls of State. (The first article will be about Loy Henderson.)

Our annual fiction contest continues with the same rules that applied this year: Entrants are restricted to one story of 3,000 words or less, which must be e-mailed to Business Manager Andrew Kidd at kidd@afsa.org no later than March 1. We will publish the winning story (selected by the FSJ Editorial Board) in our July-August 2008 double issue, and the other top stories during the fall months. For more details, see the ads in upcoming issues, or contact Andrew directly.

We invite those of you who expect to publish a book between now and next fall to send us a copy (along with promotional materials) for inclusion in our annual compilation of recently published books by Foreign Service-affiliated authors, "In Their Own Write." Sept. 1 is still the deadline for inclusion in the roundup, which will again run in November. For more information, contact Senior Editor Susan Maitra at maitra@afsa.org.

Share Your Insights

We take seriously our mission to give you "news you can use" — e.g., information about how to advance your career; tips on dealing effectively with the bureaucracy at

State and the other foreign affairs agencies, especially when you are trying to resolve a problem; and updates on how AFSA is working to improve working and living conditions for Foreign Service employees and their families.

Much of that coverage is found, of course, within the pages of *AFSA News* (now part of the magazine's "white pages"). That section offers many different ways for members to share their experiences, thoughts and concerns regarding professional issues, including the following departments: Family Member Matters, Of Special(ist) Concern (a forum for specialists), Where to Retire, Memo of the Month and The System and You (notes from inside the bureaucracy). Contact Associate Editor Shawn Dorman for more information at dorman@afsa.org.

Another place to look for such items is our periodic FS Know-How department (which ran five times in 2007, I'm happy to say). We welcome contributions on topics ranging from managing one's career and cutting red tape to parlaying one's professional skills in retirement, as well as financial information and guidance for Foreign Service personnel.

The Speaking Out department is your forum to advocate policy, regulatory or statutory changes to the Foreign Service. These columns (approximately 1,500 words long) can be based on personal experience with a professional injustice or present your insights into a foreign affairs-related issue.

Our Reflections page presents short commentaries (approximately 600 words long) based on personal experiences while living or traveling overseas. These submissions should center on insights gained as a result of interactions with other cultures, rather than being descriptive "travel pieces." We are also pleased to consider poetry and photographs for publication, either in that section or as freestanding features.

Please note that all submissions to the *Journal* must be approved by our Editorial Board and are subject to editing for style, length and format. For information on how to submit a column, article or letter, please contact us at authors@afsa.org, and we will be delighted to respond. For other inquiries — changes of address, subscriptions, etc. — e-mail us at journal@afsa.org.

Finally, I hope you will share your reactions, positive and negative, not only to this issue but to what you read every month, by contributing to our Letters section. Just bear in mind that, as with all periodicals, the briefer and more focused your letter is, the more likely we'll be able to print it in full. (In general, 200 to 400 words is a good target.)

Let us hear from you. ■

2008 EDITORIAL CALENDAR for the *FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL*

JANUARY	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in the Foreign Service
FEBRUARY	The Diplomacy of Climate Change (PLUS AFSA Tax Guide)
MARCH	Iraq, Five Years Later (PLUS AFSA Annual Report)
APRIL	Political Islam
MAY	Democratization and Transformational Diplomacy
JUNE	Future of the Foreign Service Personnel System (PLUS semiannual SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT)
JULY-AUGUST	Africa
SEPTEMBER	Foreign Policy & the U.S. Presidential Election (PLUS AFSA Awards coverage)
OCTOBER	The Peace Corps & the Foreign Service
NOVEMBER	COVER STORY: "In Their Own Write" (annual roundup of books by FS-affiliated authors)
DECEMBER	New Foreign Policy Ideas for the Incoming Administration (PLUS semiannual SCHOOLS SUPPLEMENT)

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

THE ISSUE OF WHO WIELDS AUTHORITY OVER NON-STATE AMERICAN EMBASSY PERSONNEL CONTINUES TO PROMPT INTERAGENCY CONFLICT, AS IT HAS FOR YEARS.

BY SHAWN ZELLER

"You are in charge of the entire United States diplomatic mission, and I shall expect you to supervise all of its operations. The mission includes not only the personnel of the Department of State and the Foreign Service, but also the representatives of all other United States agencies which have programs and activities in [country]. I shall give you full support and backing in carrying out your assignments."

Those were the words of President Kennedy's May 29, 1961, letter to his diplomatic team throughout the world.

In the midst of a Cold War struggle that had boosted the aggressive interagency posture of the Defense Department and intelligence community, it was a notable affirmation of where Kennedy believed power should lie, at least in the area of foreign relations.

Every president since then has sent such a letter to his chiefs of mission abroad. But the issue of who wields authority over American embassy personnel — particularly those who don't work for the State Department — continues to prompt interagency conflict, as it has for years. What's notable, today, top diplomats say, is the upsurge in such personnel. That, in combination with an amorphous war on terrorism, has raised the question anew of whether ambassadors remain the president's chief representatives overseas.

As during Kennedy's time, many of the questions center on the Foreign Service's status vis-a-vis the Pentagon. DOD has not only boosted its military presence overseas since Sept. 11, 2001, but has taken on an increasing role in public affairs and the disbursal of foreign aid. What's different this time around, many State officials fear, is that President Bush is not holding as firmly to the notion that his ambassadors lead the diplomatic mission and have the final word over initiatives emanating from their embassies.

About the numbers themselves, there can be no doubt: chiefs of mission are managing more diverse staffs. Figures compiled in November 2006 by the State Department's Overseas Building Operations Bureau for the purpose of setting agency fees for new embassy construction indicate that diplomatic personnel, not including support staff, occupy 42 percent of positions at overseas posts — a plurality, not a majority. Another 36 percent are shared State Department support staff under the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services program. Non-State agencies make up the remaining 22 percent; of those, the U.S. Agency for International Development represents 9 percent of the total, followed by the Defense Department at 6 percent. The Agriculture, Commerce, Homeland Security and Justice Departments also each post more than 500 employees abroad, even though several agencies have scaled back their overseas staffing to reduce their costs under the Capital Security Cost Sharing Program, which sets embassy construction fees.

Another 2006 review of embassy operations, this one conducted by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, would seem to indicate that the growth of non-State personnel, particularly Defense Department employees, may be even greater given the large number of DOD personnel assigned to temporary duty overseas since 9/11. Of 20 embassies surveyed, 19 reported significant increases in military personnel at post. According to many of the chiefs of mission at those posts, this uptick has created significant tension over ambassadorial authority and even the direction of U.S. foreign policy.

Setting the Right Tone

All of the former chiefs of mission interviewed for this story, including Ambassador George Staples, until recently director general of the Foreign Service, concur that managing the growing number of non-State personnel at overseas posts is a challenge. But it can bring real benefits if the ambassador sets the right tone.

It's sometimes difficult to find the balance between wielding chief-of-mission authority and encouraging cooperation among a diverse staff. The ex-ambassadors said that the key to success is effective use of the country team, which encompasses the heads of all embassy sections and U.S. government agencies at post. That involves both projecting authority as the president's principal representative and using communications and people skills that are as effective outside the embassy's walls as within.

"I urge ambassadors early on, at their first country team meeting, to give everyone a copy of their letter of instruction," says Staples, whose diplomatic resumé includes ambassadorships in Rwanda, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. Then, Staples says, ambassadors should provide everyone in the mission with a list of overall foreign policy objectives and what they are expected to do to make them a reality. "Let them know that they have to help you succeed."

Across the board, ambassadors agree that being open and aboveboard about what is expected of personnel at post is a management necessity. That message, they say, has to counteract the never-ending problem of agency officials back in Washington eager to direct their overseas staff, sometimes without filling in the ambassador.

"It's awfully easy for someone back in Washington, in Justice or Agriculture, just to pick up the phone and tell

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Shawn Zeller, a senior staff writer for Congressional Quarterly, *is a regular contributor to the* Journal.

a person to go and do something," says Charles A. "Tony" Gillespie Jr., who served as ambassador to Grenada during the 1983 U.S. invasion. "The challenge is to make sure the voice of the United States is consistent and to make sure that agency heads understand that they are supposed to let the ambassador know of their programs and give him a chance to weigh in. Otherwise it's very easy for someone in Washington to treat the embassy as their own foreign office."

Involving non-State personnel in the working life of the embassy can also help head off any communication problems.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee report makes plain that challenges to ambassadorial authority continue to be a problem, especially in the Defense Department, which has in some cases openly questioned State's role and even won congressional approval for its actions. A case in point, the report notes, is the Bush administration's push to expand a stream of funding for security assistance in foreign countries, dubbed "Section 1206 assistance" in reference to the section of the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act under which the program was created. These funds flow directly through Defense rather than through the traditional channels for such aid controlled by State. They are used to train and equip foreign military forces.

The growing DOD presence at many posts, the report said, is "placing new stresses on interagency coordination in the field." And while "overlapping missions and interagency frictions are, for the most part, refereed by the U.S. ambassador and other State Department leadership in the embassy," the committee investigators said they feared that Defense is showing signs of chafing under State leadership.

The expansion of the Section 1206 program, combined with a ballooning DOD budget that continues to outpace funding increases at State, the report added, not only dwarfs State's role but threatens to undermine U.S. foreign policy objectives, as military solutions gain prominence over diplomacy. Congress and the administration cannot continue "to undervalue the role of the civilian agencies if we want to ensure that our response to violent extremism is calibrated, supported by an appropriate mix of civilian and military tools," then-Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar, R-Ind., wrote in the report's introduction.

To reverse these alarming trends, the report added, Congress and the administration must increase State funding and more clearly delineate the authority of ambassadors.

"This Worked for Me"

In the meantime, though, it's up to ambassadors to use their management skills to make it clear that they are the president's principal representatives at post. Former ambassadors say country team meetings are the perfect venue. The Foreign Service Institute's handbook for new ambassadors, "This Worked for Me," recommends that new ambassadors make it clear that the mission is a team, "not a loose confederation of more or less independent entities." The best ambassadors treat all agency officials as valuable team members and advocate for the best solutions to problems that arise, no matter from which agency they emerge. To reinforce the team concept, the guide recommends making ample use of interagency task forces and repeatedly stressing the need for full disclosure of agency initiatives.

Ambassadors interviewed for this article shared several other tricks of the trade they used to keep everyone on the same page. One tactic is to hold smaller meetings, where agency heads could discuss issues directly with the ambassador or deputy chief of mission. "I'd say to my defense attaché: this is your 30 minutes to talk to me about what you think I ought to know about your programs," recalls Steven Pifer, a career Foreign Service officer and ambassador to Ukraine from 1998 to 2000. While that approach put agency heads on the spot, the sessions ultimately built good will, offering Pifer a chance to offer his personal assistance and that of the rest of the embassy staff to whatever project agency officials were pursuing.

Delegation can be key, as is having a trusted No. 2, says David Greenlee, who recently retired from the Foreign Service after serving as ambassador to Bolivia. "If you have a big embassy, you can't do everything, so you need good section chiefs and agency heads to make it work and you have to rely on them. If you're going to get to the point in the Foreign Service where you are a counselor, you have something close to a Type A personality. You're going to defend turf, and occasionally sparks

will fly. That's why you need a good deputy chief of mission, who can make sure that as ambassador you don't cut people off at the knees. You should be the last person they come to to settle a problem."

Involving non-State personnel in the working life of the embassy can also help head off any communication problems. Staples says he insisted on members of other agencies serving on the embassy's housing board and recreational association. In addition, all newcomers to post had to be sponsored by a representative of a different agency from their own. It was, he says, "a way to build trust and break down barriers." Often such efforts can tilt more to personal tastes. For example, Gillespie recalls a story about an ambassador who took new recruits mountain-climbing in order to get to know them and build a sense of camaraderie.

The advent of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's "transformational diplomacy" has in some ways made the task harder by spreading out embassy resources over broader geographic areas. That's made it all the more important, Staples says, to ensure that everyone with a stake in a policy issue, "is involved and listened to, and has input into it. You can't have a decision made in the mission and then have people go back to individual agencies and recommend that back in Washington it be opposed. It should never get to that point if you've done the consultations in the field. There should be no surprises. If there are differences, everyone should be up front about them."

When Things Go Wrong

But what do you do when things go really awry? When, for example, you discover an agency project going on behind your back that threatens overall mission goals?

As you might expect, it's a judgment call. "The ambassador has tremendous convening authority," says Gillespie. "If he knows and understands and cares to use it, he can usually get into a Cabinet secretary's office." At the same time, he says, "A good desk officer at State should have contacts or know how to make them within other

agencies. You try to resolve these things at the lowest possible level, but you can kick it all the way up to the National Security Council."

Greenlee says he made a point of ensuring that either he or his deputy returned to Washington once a quarter to make the rounds, both at State and at other agencies with missions in Bolivia. "You don't want to get so separated from Washington that you don't understand that people at the Defense Department might be pushing on something." In that sense, he says, it's critical to understand the pressures that are being brought to bear on State by other agencies in Washington. "What's harder to know is when you ought to stop pushing in Washington. Some battles you're just not going to win, and you realize in some cases that it's not where you want to break your spear."

Greenlee agrees: "It's one of those things where as ambassador you could get out the letter and say, 'By God, it's my call,' but you want a good relationship with other agencies."

Working it out diplomatically — so to speak — is best, of course, but when something egregious occurs, it's critical that an ambassador take a stand. Staples says that it's simply unacceptable "to have any kind of operation in the country without the chief of mission's knowledge. It just cannot be. If you ever have an instance when something is done behind your back and it blows up and causes a serious incident, you as chief of mission are perfectly within your rights to raise hell with the agency back in Washington and the individual at post."

That said, Staples insists that such instances are extremely rare and that "99 percent of the time agencies work hard to maintain the trust of the ambassador." When that's the case, non-State personnel can prove a boon through the monetary and reporting resources they bring to bear. Numerous ambassadors interviewed for this article noted instances where a Foreign Agricultural Service or Foreign Commercial Service staffer, who had funding to travel the country, was able to provide valuable reporting back to the embassy about conditions far afield. Pifer, who served in Ukraine during the Y2K transition, called on Peace Corps Volunteers to report back the night of the new millennium. "I thought, 'Here are 250 people who can tell us what's going on around the country,'" he recalls, adding that their reports proved "some of the best information we received."

Freelancing and overaggressiveness by FBI investigators or DOD Special Forces can needlessly destroy diplomatic relationships.

That, of course, is the best-case scenario. In other instances, the camaraderie at post can be overtaken by parochial concerns and interagency battles rooted in Washington, which then spill over into agency freelancing overseas. Ambassadors can be caught in the middle as they attempt to repair the damage such freelance projects can do to the bilateral relationship.

Turf Battles

Ambassadors say that clashes can arise from the simplest of problems, such as an agency that provides its overseas staff with better funding than State does. Or mistakes can be made due to ignorance of diplomatic methods and procedures. Then there can be grander challenges that cut to the heart of embassy authority. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, for example, suggests that the threat of terrorism has spawned just that, as the Bush administration has allowed Defense to exert more independence at overseas missions.

As a result, conflicts have arisen over everything from public diplomacy to security assistance. In one Islamic country visited by the committee's investigators, Defense public affairs officers wanted to feature a prominent Muslim cleric in a U.S.-produced program. State opposed the plan, arguing that it risked tainting an independent moderate with Western approval. The investigators found similar problems in both humanitarian assistance and security programs run by the Pentagon.

In Uganda, for example, 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, the report said. But local nongovernmental organizations speculated that the military was there to take sides in the conflict. In Ethiopia, similarly, military humanitarian action teams were ordered out of the region near the Somali border, ostensibly due to Ethiopian sensitivities that their presence could spark cross-border hostilities.

In another African country not named by the investigators, civilian embassy officials questioned the rate at which military programs are rapidly escalating and the sizable and still growing presence of U.S. military personnel in-country. A U.S.-labeled backpack, observed on a government soldier undergoing DOD training, underscored for the Senate investigative staff the potential complications of a too-close association with the country's military. "It would be a major setback if the United States were to be implicated in support of operations shoring up the repressive regime, regardless of the stated intent of such training," the report said.

Meanwhile, further exacerbating the problem, the investigators found that just as Defense has ramped up its involvement in humanitarian and development aid, State and USAID have had to scale back some operations due to the ongoing "Iraq tax" and budget limitations. The Senate investigators reported that "country teams in embassies with USAID presence are far more capable of ensuring sufficient review of military humanitarian assistance projects than those that have no USAID office." Yet the same report also noted that "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."

That, in turn, poses all kinds of questions about the direction of U.S. foreign policy and the country's ability to win the war on terrorism, the investigators argued. "Such bleeding of civilian responsibilities overseas from civilian to military agencies risks weakening the Secretary of State's primacy in setting the agenda for U.S. relations with foreign countries and the Secretary of Defense's focus on warfighting," the report said.

Barbara Bodine, who served as ambassador in Yemen at the time of the 2000 strike by al-Qaida on the USS *Cole*, which left 17 sailors dead, experienced just such a challenge to ambassadorial authority first-hand, as she sought to balance the overall foreign policy goal of maintaining a working relationship with Yemen's government,

while the military and Justice Department sought to investigate the strike.

The response, at least in some quarters, was to paint Bodine as a bureaucratic interloper, who impeded the investigation. Some have even alleged that because of her resistance to investigators, she played a role in the intelligence failure leading up to the 9/11 attacks. Bodine, of course, sees it differently. The *Cole* investigation, in her view, marked a shift in the balance of power between ambassadors and the military and Federal Bureau of Investigation agents. With their aggressive, take-no-prisoners attitude, the latter two groups began to run rampant over State's diplomatic approach.

Culture Clashes

Gillespie traces the phenomenon, at least in the case of law enforcement officials, not so much to the political turf wars of the Bush years as to agency culture clashes that have emanated naturally from former FBI Director Louis Freeh's move to expand the investigative agency's overseas presence. "They are a very tight-knit culture," he says of the FBI, and the relative openness at overseas missions is "alien to them."

In response to challenges in the past, Bodine says, "We always had as our trump card the chief-of-mission letter. At the end of the day, you knew and they knew that letter meant something, that Washington would back you if push came to shove. But now, in the wake of Rumsfeld's tenure at Defense and the attitude of the White House, the letter doesn't have the same kick to it. Without that, you're hosed. In the past, with both Republicans and Democrats, there was a very strong sense that 'this is my person in-country.' If the president and vice president aren't conveying that, it makes it that much harder. If there were deep philosophical problems, or an agency representative that was not playing with the country team, you could refer it back to Washington, and it would be resolved. Now I get the sense that in its most extreme form, they look at you and laugh. They say, 'I don't report to you; my boss doesn't report to you.'"

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, in response to the trend, goes so far as to suggest that ambassadors work out memoranda of understanding with DOD to make clear where lines of authority lie.

Gillespie sees the problem as broader than just a conflict between State and Defense or State and Justice. He agrees that agencies have become "more robust, not necessarily in terms of numbers, but in the ways they think they can operate under this still not terribly well-defined authority of the chief of mission." That has led to an uptick in challenges to ambassadorial authority, he expects, though the phenomenon itself is "nothing new."

Staples argues that such disputes are not necessarily anything sinister — in terms of a direct and deliberate challenge to ambassadorial authority — but can emanate from ignorance of diplomatic complexities. It's entirely natural, he says, for an FBI investigator to want to turn to his counterpart in the national police of the country in which he's posted. But an ambassador needs to provide the "broader perspective" when such natural tendencies won't necessarily work in a foreign environment, or could potentially disturb broader embassy goals.

Greenlee agrees, citing his experience leading up to, and after, the 2006 election of Bolivian President Evo Morales. Substantial opposition to bilateral cooperation arose in Washington because of Morales' past links to drug traffickers. But Greenlee recognized that the new president had won a landslide victory and the United States had to engage him. "Some took the attitude that all we have to do is cut off funds and people will do what you want, but it's really much more complicated."

Bodine hopes the pendulum she believes has swung in the direction of Defense and Justice will swing back in a new administration. Freelancing and overaggressiveness by FBI investigators or Defense Department Special Forces can needlessly destroy diplomatic relationships, she says. In Yemen, she recalls, "The FBI were accusing me of putting the bilateral relationship ahead of the investigation, but the investigation can't go forward irrespective of the rest of the relationship. This is a point that

some new players don't understand. A good relationship is not the end; it's the means. If we have a candid, honest relationship, then you can do a great deal. If you have Pyrrhic victories, they're not going to be there for you the next time."

Such overaggressive attitudes, she stresses, are typically not exhibited by longtime overseas personnel, such as members of the Foreign Commercial Service or Foreign Agriculture Service. "Where it intrudes is when you get TDYers, DOD with its special teams, and investigative deployments. They are not really part of the country team and they are reflecting particular Washington parochialisms. The problem is that some of these are becoming much longer-term."

In addition, the war on terrorism has added to the questions about who in the embassy answers to whom because of the long-held policy that military personnel involved in combat operations answer to their military commander, not to the ambassador. "The military can operate without informing the ambassador if they are doing battlefield preparation. The problem with that is if you have a global war on terrorism, the battlefield is everywhere. Ergo, there are no rules anymore," says Bodine.

If she is right, the next few years could be crucial. A whole generation of Foreign Service officers has now come up in the post 9/11-environment. "There's nothing worse than to go to an interagency meeting and the other guy has a bigger dog in his yard," Bodine says, referring to Defense's clout during the Bush years. "We've become third-rate soldiers as opposed to first-rate diplomats. It's going to take concerted effort by the new Secretary of State, whoever that is, to prove that diplomacy is not an arcane art form."

Staples, like many other diplomats interviewed for this story, doesn't see the situation the same way. If anything, he says, the terrorist threat "has made people pull together even closer overseas." Regardless, leadership by the chief of mission remains the key element in keeping embassy country teams running smoothly to carry out U.S. objectives in each country. ■

CHIEF-OF-MISSION AUTHORITY: A POWERFUL BUT UNDERUSED TOOL

THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHOULD CAPITALIZE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL MANDATE GIVEN TO EVERY COM TO STRENGTHEN THE COUNTRY TEAM MECHANISM.

BY EDWARD PECK

Representatives of more than 30 federal agencies are currently stationed in U.S. embassies, where they manage and advance their particular organization's agenda based on instructions from headquarters. When their efforts are coordinated under the country team umbrella, they can achieve great things, but this happens far less often than it should.

Edward L. Peck, a Foreign Service officer from 1956 to 1989, was chief of mission in Baghdad from 1977 to 1980 and ambassador to Mauritania from 1983 to 1985, among many other postings. In 1974, he won AFSA's William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent by convincing the Department of State to change the rules for joint caption telegrams worldwide, in order to clarify and protect the chain of command from the Secretary of State to ambassadors. (He may also be the only officer to win a grievance against the State Department and go on to an ambassadorship.) In addition, he proposed and compiled the first "Ambassador's Handbook" in 1973.

Ambassador Peck lectures at FSI and other U.S. government institutions on the subject of "Advocacy and Dissent" and does other public speaking and writing. A former retiree representative on the AFSA Governing Board, he is a longtime member of the Awards Committee.

That gap between theory and practice should not surprise anyone familiar with organizational behavior in the general sense. But there is an additional problem that is specific to the conduct of international relations. In Washington, during the formulation phase of the foreign policy process, the various agencies are more or less equal. None can give orders to, nor will they ever accept them from, other agencies. As a result, communication lapses can occur, with one agency failing to discuss with or even inform others about what is being planned and where. Meaningful direction and supervision must come from higher levels: the National Security Council, the Cabinet and, ultimately, the president.

In foreign affairs, the consequences of such lapses show up overseas in the form of haphazard policy implementation. Without meaningful direction by a higher authority in the field, U.S. foreign policy risks being hamstrung at best, and counterproductive at worst. This is where the State Department, by capitalizing on the presidential mandate given to every chief of mission, can be most effective. Regrettably, however, State has failed to make the best possible use of this unique role.

How We Got Here

Prior to World War II, few government agencies had overseas representatives. Such employees basically had

two functions: observe and report. Accordingly, ambassadors needed few formal authorities in their dealings with non-State Department officials.

The Cold War generated a plethora of proactive programs: political and economic reporting, development assistance, cultural relations, military cooperation, intelligence collection and analysis, etc. It soon became evident that one agency could be busily working toward goals that ran counter to what another agency in the same country was trying to accomplish. This was partly the result of the organizational problems mentioned above, compounded by the lack of clear instructions as to who was in charge of what, and to what extent.

In an effort to improve the coordination of implementation, President Dwight Eisenhower initiated the current practice of giving each ambassador direct, written authority over the activities of all in-country executive-branch personnel, except for those under an area military commander. (Formerly known as commanders in chief, or CINCs, those leaders are now referred to as combatant commanders, or CoComs.)

Ever since the passage of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, the letter has been addressed to chiefs of mission rather than ambassadors (see the next paragraph), but with the same clear objective: to inject a level of command and control at the implementation end of foreign policy that is difficult to maintain at the formulation stage. Each president has used slightly different wording, but the basic delegation of authority for the conduct of relations remains unambiguous.

It may be useful to clarify the distinction between ambassadors and chiefs of mission. Individuals formally representing their nation abroad have an internationally recognized diplomatic title: ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary. From an operational perspective, an AEP's functions are concentrated on dealing with the host government. By contrast, American chiefs of mission are also charged with responsibility for the management of all internal operations.

The two titles are required for two reasons. First, the leader of a U.S. delegation to an international conference, for example, may be given a temporary title as ambassador, but is neither an AEP nor a COM. Because of this situation, both the president's letter and the law refer only to the responsibilities and authorities of COMs; neither document explicitly mentions ambassadors. Second, and of perhaps greater significance: While all AEPs are also chiefs of mission, some COMs are not AEPs — but they are given precisely the same managerial authorities.

The COM's Mandate

Extracts from pertinent portions of the president's letter are compelling. "As chief of mission, you have full responsibility for the direction, coordination and supervision of all United States government executive-branch employees. ... You have the right to see all communications to or from mission elements, however transmitted … As chief of mission, you are not only my personal representative, but that of our country."

This is an extraordinary mandate. The letter goes to some length to insure inclusion of all personnel, in all functions and locations. The import of the last phrase cited above is unambiguous: Chiefs of mission work directly for the president, because the president says they do.

In the Foreign Service Act, the section on COM authorities and responsibilities uses language identical to that in the president's letter. Of even greater potential significance, the sentence introducing that section of the law begins: "Under the direction of the president ..." (emphasis added). Note that it does *not* say "under the direction of the Secretary of State."

There is solid, indisputable logic behind the establishment of a direct link to the president. If chiefs of mission worked for the Secretary of State, they would be on the same organizational level as their overseas counterparts from other agencies, who also report to their respective Cabinet secretaries. Despite being the most senior Cabinet member, the Secretary of State lacks any authority over his or her colleagues.

The Secretary of State's Role

To establish the COM-Secretary of State relationship, the president's letter says, "Please report to me through the Secretary of State. Under my direction, the Secretary of State is, to the fullest extent provided by the law, responsible for the overall coordination and supervision of U.S government activities and operations abroad." This sentence is the key to the entire exercise. If properly employed, it gives the Secretary, and therefore the department, an unparalleled mechanism for affecting the full range of our actions abroad.

The Secretary cannot be placed between the president and the COM on an organization chart, nor presented as occupying such a position. To do so would not

only vitiate the intent of the letter and the law; it would eliminate the direct linkage to the president that is the single, sine qua non basis for COM authority. The stronger and more publicly emphasized that connection, the stronger the Secretary of State's role. Yet an understanding of this basic fact is neither as widespread nor accepted as it should be, even within the State Department.

In any event, it is relatively easy to announce, but very difficult to impose, one agency's authority over others. The National Security Act of 1947 is an illustration. It gave the director of the Central Intelligence Agency control over the intelligence budgets of all other agencies. A potentially important concept, it was doomed to fail.

Attempts to amend the rigid, hierarchical rules of organizational behavior by placing relatively equal agencies in a permanent superior-subordinate relationship are unlikely to succeed. It is for this reason that considerable effort has been expended in the White House and on Capitol Hill to make it clear that chiefs of mission work directly for the president. Yet State has consistently made insufficient use of that exceptional leverage.

Without meaningful direction by a higher authority in the field, U.S. foreign policy risks being hamstrung at best, and counterproductive at worst.

Where State Fails

Giving the Secretary of State control of the only channel for instructions to COMs provides the department with the means for a significant impact on the implementation of policies, across the board. The role of the COM should logically be strengthened and supported at

all times and in every possible way, but it very seldom is. In fact, it is often ignored, and frequently undercut.

Those who have served as chiefs of mission are perhaps most familiar with the problem. Solid backing from State in a difference of opinion with another agency's representative, for example, cannot be depended upon. Messages from the department on the subject, often distributed to other agencies, sometimes dismiss legitimate concerns in an offhand manner. Similarly, cables addressed to chiefs of mission, often prepared by individuals not in the proximate chain of command, do not always convey the impression that the COM's authorities or views are of particular importance. If State does not treat chiefs of mission as personal representatives of the president, especially in open communications, it cannot expect others to do so — or respect their authority in the interagency process.

Chiefs of mission work directly for the president, because the president says they do.

Consider for a moment the self-evident and highly instructive answers to two questions. If the COM's authorities were given to the senior military officer, would there be a discernible change in the manner in which the recipients would attempt to carry them out? And would DOD not make every possible effort to elevate its status, expand its role and make maximum use of its newfound authority?

Many years ago, I learned that a regional bureau assistant secretary, a former political-appointee COM, had written all his chiefs of mission (with copies to other agencies) instructing them that they worked for and took their orders directly from him. I was unsuccessful in getting him and the department to understand that the letter greatly weakened his role, as well as State's, by undercutting the COM's direct link to the president.

This brings up an important related point. The embassies with the heaviest concentration of agencies and activities are often, logically, in the larger, more strategically important countries. If it is located in a pleasant place, the embassy is frequently headed by a political appointee who, despite other abilities and accomplishments, knows very little about who does what, how the system works, or what its procedures, problems and mechanisms are. The result is a further diminution of the primordially important role given to COMs, and the reasons why it was given in the first place: to improve coordination of our policies and programs abroad.

Some Corrective Measures

• The small, somewhat marginalized Office of COM Authority, currently in the Bureau of Administration, should be expanded, made a part of, and report to the under secretary for political affairs, with a major role in following issues related to post management as they arise.

• State personnel, especially but not exclusively in regional bureaus, should be fully briefed on the importance of supporting the direct relationship between the COM and the president.

• A compilation of documents on COM authority should be in the hands of every regional assistant and deputy assistant secretary, as well as office directors, their deputies and desk officers, and should be used as a measuring stick on all instructions to COMs, from whatever office or agency.

• State reps assigned to DOD training facilities should make extensive presentations on this important topic. Military personnel have little trouble understanding a chain of command.

• FSI should include an explanatory presentation on the role of the COM in all of its interagency training programs.

• All entering Civil Service and Foreign Service employees should receive briefings on the subject and its importance in the effective performance of the department's responsibilities.

• Chiefs of mission or the Secretary of State, depending on the circumstances, should equip every chargé d'affaires with a letter delegating the maximum possible derived authority for the interim management of the post. This very basic procedure has never been instituted.

• COMs, in particular those who are non-career, should receive extensive, detailed and specific instruction on their mandated authorities and responsibilities, as well as a reality check on their limitations.

Taking these and related steps will improve and facilitate the ability of chiefs of mission to achieve national objectives. Without them, the ongoing erosion of State's management of our foreign relations will likely accelerate. ■

ONE HAND CLAPPING: THE SOUND OF STAFFING THE FOREIGN SERVICE

THE FOREIGN SERVICE HAS BEEN CRITICALLY UNDERSTAFFED FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES.

BY MARK JOHNSEN

In a memorable Sidney Harris cartoon, a scientist fills a blackboard with equations, in the middle of which he writes, "Then a miracle occurs." A second scientist examining the work responds, "I think you need to be more explicit here in step two."

This cartoon came back to me vividly and repeatedly during lectures at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., where I was privileged to spend a year in 2000. In discussing various scenarios, an instructor or student would often refer to a process diagram to describe organizational interactions and responsibilities in operational situations. At some critical point, the presenter would point to a subprocess, and confidently state, "The Department of State steps in here and takes care of it."

Such expectations of the State Department and the Foreign Service increasingly caused me concern. To provide a little more perspective, I prepared a force analysis of the Foreign Service for my classmates. While most of my fellow students had never encountered a real, live FSO, they were very familiar with problems of staffing and force analysis, and confidently expected that the State Department had done its homework, too.

My presentation, however, did little to support the expectation of a miracle regarding the State Department's part in the process diagrams. Indeed, filling positions in the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan has become a major challenge for the Department of State. While these new requirements have strained State's human resources, they are not themselves the source of the current staffing crisis. In fact, the Foreign Service has been critically understaffed for more than two decades: this is an entrenched liability that the demands of Iraq and Afghanistan have simply exacerbated.

Some measures can be taken to more effectively leverage the existing inadequate numbers of personnel. But even in the optimal scenario — where Congress and the administration drastically increase hiring — the staffing deficit will continue to limit the effectiveness of U.S. foreign policy long after Iraq moves from the headlines to the history books.

A Snowballing Deficit

The Department of State's funding in real terms in 2000 was about 50 percent of what it had been in 1985. On the personnel side, the picture was even bleaker. From 1990 to 1997, State hired at below attrition levels, resulting in a shortfall of about 700 Foreign Service

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entry-level officers. A buyout program in the mid-1990s further compounded the reduction in the Service by drawing down senior ranks.

At the same time, during the 1990s the Department of State opened 22 new embassies. Assuming an average of 60 FS employees per embassy, that's about 1,320 new positions. The 1990s also saw a substantial workload increase as a result of the accelerating pace of globalization. In the consular field alone, for instance, the workload increased during the decade by at least 30 percent, creating a demand for approximately 300 more officers.

Beyond supporting this expansion, the Foreign Service was also carrying large, accrued deficits of time for training (only 50 percent of the officers occupying language-designated positions were getting the necessary language training as of 1997) and for the use of mandatory home leave. By my estimate, the personnel needed to cover the training and leave deficits alone totaled approximately another 900 positions.

By 2000, then, the actual shortfall for Foreign Service staffing was not 700 positions — the number commonly accepted at the time as the deficit and the target for the subsequent Diplomatic Readiness Initiative. Because of the additional, cumulative deficits that were never addressed, such as those cited in the previous paragraph, it was actually more like 2,000 to 3,500 positions. Although the Foreign Service was marginally capable of fulfilling the elemental functions of its mission, it lacked the resources necessary to effectively respond to more challenging demands.

Now seven years have passed, and the Foreign Service is still struggling to fill all of its positions and meet its commitments overseas. Dire in 2000, the staffing situation has only marginally improved since then. The Diplomatic Readiness Initiative that began in 2001 hired 1,158 people above attrition, yet the entrenched, historical staffing shortfalls have persisted. And they have been aggravated by increases in staffing demands and changes in staffing demographics.

Policy Demands, Demographics Undercut DRI Gains

One source of increased demands on staffing has been the DRI itself, inasmuch as the program introduced new Servicewide leadership and management training requirements. Apart from DRI initiatives, other FS training programs have been added or expanded since 2000. This training comes at a cost: time. A week of training for 11,000 Foreign Service employees costs 440,000 hours, or the equivalent of about 212 full-time-equivalent positions. Nor has the upward trend in workloads slowed since 2000. Consular workloads have continued to increase with the implementation of post-9/11 procedural changes and the growth of travel by both Americans and visitors to the United States. New embassies in Baghdad, Kabul and Tripoli have placed added demands on staffing resources.

It is not just the increase in workloads that is affecting the Service. Like much of the federal government, the Foreign Service is an aging work force. Baby boomers are poised to retire in unprecedented numbers, potentially swelling staffing deficits. Moreover, health and family commitments play larger roles in older employees' decisions to serve overseas, making it more likely that they will serve fewer tours abroad.

Other factors are also eroding the personnel base. Individuals retiring under the Federal Employees Retirement System, which went into effect in 1987, face losing accumulated sick leave. Under the Civil Service Retirement System, retiring employees could convert unused sick leave for cash; under FERS, sick leave is "use it or lose it" upon retirement. Not surprisingly, the trend has been for employees to increase the use of sick leave in the years before retirement rather then forfeit it. Even a slight tick upward in its use can add another couple of percentage points to the personnel deficiency. And in the department's Foreign Service employment pool of 11,000, each percentage point is worth 110 positions.

More significantly, a deficit of several thousand Foreign Service employees is not something that can be cheaply or quickly corrected. The DRI effort severely strained the department's recruitment, training and assignment capacities. Developing a trained, professional force takes time — an average of 10 years of experience and training to reach mid-level proficiency. Even if the hiring of entry-level officers were doubled or tripled tomorrow, it will take as long as it takes the average Foreign Service officer to advance to senior ranks — between 20 and 30 years — to raise staffing by a third at all levels of the Foreign Service.

Political realities make increasing the numbers of the Foreign Service in the near term highly unlikely. So if the will and the money are not there to build a Foreign Service that is matched to its mission, what other options

exist? Well, there aren't many. No matter how firm the faith might be in rightsizing, only so many rabbits can be pulled from that hat. The staffing resource base is simply too small to possess enough waste or surplus that could be mined to close the gap between personnel supply and demand.

To balance the force with its mission, either the size of the force or the mission must change. If a major increase in staffing will not happen, only a correspondingly major overhaul of what we do and how we do it will balance the equation.

A deficit of several thousand Foreign Service employees is not something that can be cheaply or quickly corrected.

"Anti-Deficient" Staffing

The first step in achieving a fundamental change in staffing the Foreign Service is to manage its human resources with the same care and consideration given to financial resources. The department has implemented comprehensive financial control systems to capture actual monetary costs; nothing is left to chance. Any federal employee who makes a financial commitment on behalf of the government without having sufficient funding risks serious consequences. Obligations that require personnel should be subject to the same level of control and accounting. We should be no less serious about staying in balance in staffing than we are about funding.

Keeping human resources in balance entails recognizing that time is a resource and making the connection between time and positions. Tasks require time, which comes from people. New tasks require new positions, a correlation that is routinely overlooked. For example, visa sections have already gone from taking no fingerprints to taking two per applicant, and now must take 10

prints. One rough field estimate is that taking 10 fingerprints instead of two requires an additional minute per applicant. So in a section that daily processes 500 visa applications, eight more hours a day are needed. This time debt must be met either by adding an eight-hour-a-day position or reducing other tasks in the section.

We should be no less serious about staying in balance in staffing than we are about funding.

To reduce the existing staff-time deficit, large time liabilities need to be removed from the staffing balance sheet. One of the biggest single time-sinks in the Foreign Service is the Employee Evaluation Report and promotion process. The current practice consumes two months to produce and five more months to evaluate. It is doubtful that the institution is getting a sufficient return on this enormous investment. Two other policies that need to be reconsidered with a view to freeing up staff time are the retirement age of 65 and the time-in-class limits, both of which are legally mandated by Congress.

Secretary Rice has called for a more "expeditionary" Foreign Service, and this idea has potential for leveraging staff resources. While technically any force that is overseas is expeditionary, the concept implies a more self-contained, flexible organization, operating in remote areas. Interestingly, as historical staffing data show, the Foreign Service of the early 20th century could be seen as something of a model.

In 1920 we had 413 overseas posts. In 1997 we had just 237. Thus, in the post–Cold War era, a period of increasing complexity with rapid growth in populations, economies and threats, we had fewer posts than we did after World War I. But from 1880 through 1930, the number of employees per post averaged 3.33. By contrast, from 1950 through 1997, the number of employees per post averaged 61. Similarly, the ratio of domestic to overseas staff has ballooned from .22 in 1910 to 1.55 in 1997. (The ratio went to 1.38 in 1920 and has stayed above that ever since.)

Significantly, however, the historical data also highlight the stagnation in absolute numbers of overseas personnel over the long term. Through the turbulence of the last several decades, the number of overseas personnel has remained flat — fluctuating between about 5,800 and 6,800 from 1960 to 1997. This long-term stagnation underlies the staffing crisis prompted by recent demands from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Just Showing Up

If we are seeking to free up resources for redeployment in the developing world, to become more expeditionary, the manner in which we organized and operated our posts a hundred years ago should perhaps again become more the rule than the exception.

Setting up more American Presence Posts (each with a single mid-level officer supported by one to four locally engaged staff at a regional center), with smaller footprints and lower overhead, achieving more influence through closer integration with local institutions — rather than the trend toward fewer, bigger posts — would better match the goal of a globally positioned, expeditionary Foreign Service.

After all, no congressional candidate up for re-election in a contested district would attempt to campaign only from Washington, D.C., forgoing personal appearances at hometown venues. Likewise, Starbucks would not make a double hazelnut decaf caramel macchiatos in Nebraska for a customer in Manhattan just because overhead is lower in Omaha. Whether one is running for Congress or selling cups of coffee, influence and market share are won at the local level. Presence is the key to influence; smaller, more numerous posts can efficiently deliver that presence.

Where the greatest gains can be made in increasing the expeditionary nature of the Foreign Service, however, is not at rough posts in developing countries, but in the cities of the First World. The transformation to an expeditionary force is dependent upon two changes: relying more on private-sector services and making it simpler to obtain those services. While outsourcing is not a panacea for the strategic-level staffing shortfalls, at the tactical, post level, contracting for basic services would obviate the need for positions that duplicate those services. Legal restrictions and security concerns would, of course, have to be worked through. But generally, in the cities of the First World, stable and complete commercial sectors enable an expeditionary presence.

This shift to the private sector for administrative support will not produce the needed gains in efficiency, however, if the existing structure of management controls must also be supported simultaneously. Much of a man-

agement section's effort at post does not go to direct support of the mission, but rather to the application of regulations and policy relevant to that work. For example, we do not just purchase a plane ticket; we filter the purchase through a screen of rules.

This level of management control comes at a high cost, and current regulations impose a significant overhead on posts' operations. At large posts where the overhead is spread among many employees and many agencies, the cost is proportionally smaller and the protection it gives proportionally higher. For a small post in a First World city, where both the staff and the potential losses are small, a high level of management controls is not cost-effective.

Success in shifting to private-sector services is dependent upon adopting private-sector modes of operation. Most critically, this means moving away from management by regulation to management by budget. Small, lightly staffed posts do not have the staff to work both the substantive issues and the intricacies of our housing, travel and allowance systems. Although shifting to management by budget might save money, it would, even more importantly, free up positions that otherwise would have been devoted to navigating basic business decisions through a sea of regulations.

Keeping staffing in balance depends on the recognition that time is a resource.

Woody Allen famously said that 80 percent of success is just showing up. Becoming readier, more rightsized, expeditionary, transformed and globally repositioned — in short, doing more with less — as we are doing, will help to maximize our current, inadequate supply of human resources. But in more and more arenas, the Foreign Service does not have the staff to even show up. Ultimately, without a net addition of personnel, we are taking ourselves out of the fight. ■

The Embassy of the Future

Here is a vision of the new American diplomacy, along with practical steps to get there. Excerpts from a recent report.

The United States faces unprecedented opportunities and challenges around the world. We will not meet these challenges, or grasp the opportunities available to us, without successful American diplomacy.

What we think of as traditional diplomacy — where government and social elites interact in highly formal channels — is being transformed. As today's diplomats continue to conduct traditional business, they must also adapt their capabilities to nontraditional settings, beyond conference rooms and offices.

America's diplomats are doing business in new ways. They work to bring development to mountain villages in Nepal and Peru, travel to remote jungles to support drug eradication missions in Colombia, and have delivered food and water in tsunami-devastated Indonesia. They deploy with U.S. military forces in provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan and Iraq and operate from one-officer posts to promote American business in commercial centers in France.

America's diplomats are also struggling to break free from the bureaucratic practices that keep them inside U.S. embassy buildings and that emphasize the processing of information over the personal, active, direct engagement that wins friends and supporters for America — the kind of diplomacy that inspired Foreign Service officers to serve their country in the first place.

Today's diverse diplomatic challenges — such as highlighting and demonstrating American values; strengthening the growth of civil institutions and the rule of law; promoting democracy; serving and protecting the millions of American citizens who live and travel abroad; promoting trade and investment; fighting drug trafficking; stopping the trafficking in persons; supporting sustainable development to combat poverty; preventing genocide; strengthening foreign cooperation and capacity to address global security challenges such as terrorism, weapons proliferation, international crime, disease and humanitarian disasters — cannot be accomplished from Washington. These objectives require front-line activity by skilled diplomatic professionals operating in — and increasingly out of — embassies of the future.

America's diplomats will still put effort into influencing foreign governments — bilaterally and multilaterally. But they increasingly will work directly with diverse parts of other nations' societies, including the emerging interest groups and future leaders — from business and academia, urban centers and remote villages, and religious institutions — who shape their nations' values and behavior over the long term. Around the world, youthful populations are forming their identities. Will they view the United States favorably or as an adversary?

Global anti-Americanism has lethal consequences for our nation and its citizens. Suspicion and misunderstanding of what the United States stands for and what we seek in the world do as much damage to our national interests as an attack by a hostile intelligence service or a terrorist group. Diplomats of the 21st century must meet this great challenge directly, using tools and practices that will help them create and sustain partnerships across and within societies on a much deeper and broader level.

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A successful U.S. diplomacy must be backed by military force. The United States will continue to face situations where armed conflict is inevitable. There will be nations or terrorist groups who will not change their strategies or tactics because of diplomacy, no matter how energetic and creative. If conflict does come, our diplomats need to support our military forces before combat by making it possible — through arrangements with other countries — for our forces to project power. During conflict, our diplomacy must promote the widest possible coalition to support our efforts and, during the post-conflict phase, our representatives must be ready to lead the reconciliation and reconstruction of countries and societies.

But we should strive for an effective American diplomacy for the 21st century based on values, integration, alliances and coalitions, and built on America's unique position of strength, to set an example and encourage others to join us in pursuing great objectives.

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What kind of diplomats will our nation need abroad in five to 10 years? What jobs will we ask them to do and how best can they accomplish those missions? Our diplomats need to operate in many different environments, on many different tasks. They must be better equipped to work collaboratively, with other parts of our government or the private sector and with our friends and allies. They must be more capable of operating independently, connected at all times to the broader network of the embassy and with their colleagues. ...

Modernization and reform of the diplomatic profession and its infrastructure have begun. The Embassy of the Future Commission supports this current rebuilding effort, including personnel recruitment and training, and the program to replace outdated facilities with modern, secure embassy buildings. But we must do more. For example, the State Department needs more people so we can deploy and train our diplomats properly without leaving long gaps in staffing diplomatic posts abroad.

Our diplomats must operate effectively and safely outside of embassy buildings, new or old, and the State Department must find new and better ways to help our diplomats operate in different venues. To support this more dispersed concept of operations, the State Department must do more to embrace the tools and practices of modern communications and information sharing. Our ambassadors will need greater ability to coordinate the activities of their personnel. The commission's objective is to create more flexibility in where and how our diplomats pursue America's interests abroad.

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Supporting an embassy of the future will require changes in how Americans perceive diplomacy. Americans sometimes mistakenly see diplomacy as a tool for the weak, always about making concessions or appeasing our foes. In fact, diplomacy is a vital tool of national security. The men and women who pursue America's diplomatic objectives abroad are as honorable and dedicated in their promotion and defense of America's interests as our men

This article is excerpted from the final report of the **Embassy of the Future Commission**, released on Oct. 15. Footnotes have been deleted. See the box on p. 41 for a list of the commission's recommendations; Recommendation 7 has been reprinted in full. The entire report, titled "The Embassy of the Future," can be accessed online at www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/embassy_of_the_future.pdf.

The project was launched in the fall of 2006, as the result of discussions between Henrietta Holsman Fore, under secretary of State for management, and Dr. John Hamre, president and CEO of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Former Ambassadors George L. Argyros, Marc Grossman and Felix G. Rohatyn served as co-chairs of the 25-member commission. The project was funded by the Una Chapman Cox Foundation.

Building on a long line of distinguished studies on diplomacy and overseas presence, in particular the 1999 report of the Overseas Presence Advisory Panel, the commission's goal was to create a vision for an embassy of the future that could be realized by implementing practical recommendations today. Participants looked at how the diplomat's job is changing and then at the training, platforms, technology and business practices that tomorrow's diplomats will need to promote and protect U.S. interests.

— Susan Brady Maitra, Senior Editor

and women in uniform.

The more diplomats we have engaged further forward and deeper into societies, the more likely it is that even best efforts to protect them will sometimes fail. Threats will be more prevalent in more places. Many American diplomats have been killed in the course of their work. They should never be forgotten. As even more of America's diplomats operate in harm's way, we will need to provide them new kinds of training and protection: the better able they are to work in troubled lands, the more secure our nation will be.

American diplomacy can help our country defeat our enemies, support our allies, and make new friends. What follows are practical recommendations the commission believes necessary to create the philosophy as well as the foundation for 21st-century diplomacy. Carrying out our recommendations will take resources and the continuing commitment of both the executive branch and Congress. The commission urges that this effort start today.

On the Front Lines of the New Diplomacy

Our embassies and the people who work in them are on the front lines of the new diplomacy. The State Department has made significant strides in the last several years toward meeting new challenges, with improvements in training capacity, construction of new buildings and technological advances. Nevertheless, if the State Department is to effectively meet tomorrow's challenges, much more must be done.

The commission built its approach on three premises:

• First, diplomacy is the first line of America's defense and engagement. Diplomats cannot accomplish their work from Washington. U.S. diplomats overseas engage in a complex environment where national interests are at stake. More than ever, they need to be able to understand and influence societies abroad.

• Second, the power of non-state actors and new audiences is growing. With the spread of democracy, advances in communications capabilities and globalization, many actors affect and influence U.S. interests. The State Department and its people must be able to engage with a wider audience and new centers of influence.

• Third, operating in a higher-threat environment is ever more part of the job. America's men and women overseas today operate in an environment of increased risk. Threats to their security and safety are higher and more prevalent than in the past. Acts of terrorism can occur anywhere, as we have seen — from Nairobi to Karachi to London. We must plan for a future in which the threat of terrorism will continue and likely grow.

The commission envisions an embassy presence in which U.S. officials reach out broadly, engage societies comprehensively, and build relationships with key audiences effectively. Resources, technology, a well-trained work force and a culture that is more tolerant of risk will offer opportunities to expand the capabilities of U.S. per-

Final Recommendations

The Embassy of the Future Commission identified 10 practical recommendations to make U.S. diplomacy more effective:

• **Invest in people.** The State Department must hire more than 1,000 additional diplomats so that it can fill positions at home and abroad while providing the education and development programs that 21st-century diplomats need.

• **Integrate technology and business practices.** Senior department leadership needs to raise the profile of technology within the State Department and use it more effectively in the service of business practices.

• **Expand knowledge and information-sharing.** As an information-producing, knowledge-rich organization, the State Department must do a much better job of sharing both.

• **Embrace new communications tools.** The State Department must exploit Internet-based media, which are changing the way people interact with one another around the world.

• **Operate beyond embassy walls.** U.S. diplomats must work effectively and routinely outside the embassy compound.

• **Strengthen platform and presence options.** The commission recommends a comprehensive, distributed presence around the world that will allow for a broader and deeper engagement with governments, opinion leaders and the global public.

• **Strengthen the country team.** Interagency cooperation at overseas posts is essential for the embassy of the future.

• **Manage risk.** To support a diplomatic presence that is distributed, the department's security culture and practices must continue to transition from risk avoidance to risk management.

• **Promote secure borders and open doors.** With the post-9/11 removal of the waiver for personal appearances for nonimmigrant visas, together with increased visa workloads, embassies face big challenges in managing their visitors.

• **Streamline administrative functions.** The State Department must continue the process of streamlining and standardizing its administrative functions and consolidating them regionally.

sonnel to operate outside the embassy and thus develop and sustain the relationships that are at the heart of diplomatic engagement.

Embassy structures, while important, are only one dimension of the embassy of the future. The commission underscores that the U.S. presence and our diplomacy are, at the core, about our people and their capacity to carry out their mission.

As technology advances, so too will the capability of U.S. diplomats to operate independently beyond embassy compound walls. Communications and information-sharing capabilities should facilitate a decentralized diplomatic presence. Technology can also support a model that is substantially "optimized for the edges" — that is, one in which diplomats have the ability and authority to operate independently at the local level.

Building new relationships between diplomats and their host-nation audiences depends principally on personal interaction. Even with improved technology, there will continue to be a vital role for face-to-face contact in the same physical space.

Security requirements will continue to challenge the ability to operate effectively in the field. The embassy of the future requires security, but the principal objective remains engagement. These twin objectives may be in tension, but trying to create a zero-risk environment will lead to failure.

The U.S. presence of the future must be designed strategically and comprehensively for each country, on the basis of U.S. interests and objectives. The form of the design should follow function and should be resourced accordingly. This presence should be distributed, coordinated and connected. …

The commission has sought recommendations that would be resilient against a range of possible futures. These recommendations underscore the need for growth and for change. Both Secretary Powell and Secretary Rice have promoted improvements to State Department operations. These recommendations build on those steps. They are practical recommendations that serve longer-

term objectives and that the State Department, together with Congress, can implement starting now. ...

Recommendation 7: Strengthen the Country Team

All embassies are interagency platforms. Large country teams and a distributed presence pose increasing challenges for the ambassador's leadership. The scope and scale of representation from other federal agencies at embassies have been growing steadily, with 27 agencies (and numerous subagencies) represented overseas. In some large embassies, the proportion of State Department representation relative to other federal agencies can be less than one-third of full-time U.S. personnel. From 2004 to 2006, Defense Department personnel grew by 40 percent over previous periods, Department of Justice by 18 percent, and Department of Homeland Security by 14 percent, respectively. These increases reflect not only staffing in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also the growing importance of counterterrorism and law enforcement in U.S. foreign policy generally.

The future strength of U.S. embassies depends on the ability of U.S. representatives to work together at all levels to advance American objectives. Ambassadors' authorities over mission personnel are articulated in a presidential letter that provides the ambassador full responsibility for the direction, coordination and supervision of U.S. government employees assigned to the embassy on official duty. U.S. ambassadors need the capabilities, authorities, support and institutional structures and processes in place to lead a unified team. In the course of this study, which looked principally at routine embassy operations, the commission identified a strong desire on the part of State Department personnel to more effectively leverage the presence of all agencies overseas.

Ultimately, the responsibility for establishing a truly coordinated interagency policy is in Washington, where policy decisions are made and resources assigned. But if building enhanced interagency unity of effort must begin in Washington, a number of steps can be taken in-country to build mission cohesion (where interagency cooperation is often stronger than in Washington) and strengthen policy implementation wherever possible. The recommendations below reflect commissioners' experiences, views and project field interviews. We note that in a number of cases they reiterate recommendations from one or more of the many other studies on this subject.

Ensure that ambassadors and deputy chiefs of mission have the capacity to lead. The most important ingredient in a strong country team is the leadership capacity of the ambassador and, increasingly, the deputy chief of mission. To fulfill their roles successfully, they must be strong leaders, capable managers and adroit spokespeople for U.S. policy objectives. They must also be fully invested in the coordination of mission personnel and capable of providing strategic guidance. Conversely, mission personnel and their home agencies need to be educated and informed about the ambassador's authorities in advance of deployment to the embassy.

Leadership skills. Ambassadors must have leadership training and access to advice that will support them in leading large numbers of people who are both in the State Department and outside it. DCMs should have access to the leadership training as well. Language ability will continue to be a very important factor for most assignments.

Ambassador's authorities as the president's representative. The ambassador's authorities, articulated in a letter from the president, should be codified in an executive order. Such an order would have the value of being carried over across administrations and would underscore the ambassador's role as the president's representative. Ambassadors should develop a strong relationship with the interagency group that is supporting them while they are in-country, meeting with that group before and during their service overseas.

Promote interagency cooperation. Agency cooperation at post can be enhanced in a number of ways.

Organizational structure. To strengthen, broaden and refine the use of interagency task forces, or "clusters," ambassadors' experiences implementing these task forces must be shared routinely with other ambassadors. Beyond that, the State Department should also explore the value of organizing embassies along functional rather than agency lines.

Physical collocation. The State Department, together with other agencies represented overseas, should, to the extent possible, adopt floor plans that facilitate interagency interaction and cooperation. Floor plans that have been used successfully to implement this objective should be widely shared.

Personnel practices. Personnel should have the opportunity, particularly in larger posts, to serve voluntarily

in a rotation in another section with State Department personnel, or rotate to another agency's section. Rotations might be of a short duration; three months would be sufficient to expose personnel to another perspective. These short rotations would be most appropriate for personnel who are not yet in management positions. Longer rotations of up to one year should also be encouraged, potentially as part of the initiative to develop a national security professional corps.

Improve access to information across agency lines.

Ensure common network access. Many mission personnel are linked together through the State Department unclassified system (OpenNet) and, for those who have classified access, through a classified system. Problems persist for individuals who are not subscribed to OpenNet and who must communicate with their colleagues across stovepiped legacy networks instead, creating major delays in message traffic. All mission officers should be required to subscribe to OpenNet, or alternatives must be found to allow agencies' unclassified networks to communicate directly with one another. As handhelds come into common use in the field, all agencies must also be on compatible wireless systems that can access the mission's unclassified network for communications and reporting.

Implement embassywide directories. The State Department should develop an internal online directory that overseas missions can populate with full contact information and relevant professional data for all personnel. A regularly updated directory will prove invaluable as officers find themselves increasingly collaborating and cooperating across mission and agency lines.

Extend ambassadors' authority over performance evaluations. To further the alignment of ambassadorial responsibilities and authorities, the ambassador should conduct performance evaluations for all members of the country team. That authority, now vested in the ambassador for all foreign affairs agencies, should be expanded to all agencies overseas. ■

BURIED

A great old ceiba tree in the mountains of south-central Cuba holds a revelation into the island's history, humor and people.

By Michael Kelly

The sun sparkled off the flat surface of the Florida Straits as Cuba fell from view. It was a situation I thought I had grown accustomed to in 30 years as a diplomat — sitting in an airplane as my latest home receded into the distance. Each time, I left a small part of me behind, unwittingly exchanged for some aspect of the local culture or a friendship destined to wane through time and distance. Perhaps this time I had left behind too much, because my heart ached and I fought back tears.

I turned my gaze from the window and let my memories overwhelm me. Like the frames on an old movie reel, the images of my time on the forlorn island clattered through my mind in sepia tones and blurred lines. But then some images of a day spent in the mountains of south-central Cuba several months earlier came into focus in vivid technicolor splendor, and I let myself get lost in the memory and the revelation that the day had held for me.

This story was a finalist in the Journal*'s 2007 Foreign Service fiction contest.*

Michael E. Kelly is married to an FSO and lives with his family in Nuevo Laredo. In nearly a decade-and-a-half as an FS spouse, he has happily accepted any odd job that was offered him or that he could dream up. Those experiences have culminated in his current position as a school administrator, but he still aspires to be a writer when he grows up.

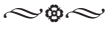
The morning sun had not yet crested the surrounding mountains, but already its light and the promise of a clear day reflected off the straggling remnants of rain clouds that scuttled low across the land in their retreat. I had awakened early, as usual, and took my coffee in the hotel dining room by the big picture window that looked out over the lake. Drops from the night's rain still dotted the glass and dripped from the overhanging branches of the flame trees that framed the view; the grounds were littered with the last of the crimson blossoms knocked free during the passing storm.

Ignacio, my guide, found me there, and we walked down to the boat together in silence. We rarely spoke before we were settled out on the water, and this day was no exception. Once on board, we sat hunched with our heads bowed into the cool morning wind as we moved across the water, propelled by the small but efficient outboard on Ignacio's aluminum skiff.

Ignacio knew where to take me without asking. It was the same place he took me every morning that I fished on this lake. We always started at the submerged cemetery of the long-forgotten town of Guannacanoa. As Ignacio told it, the town had been a thriving seat of local color on the shores of the Río Negro long before the river was damned to create the lake. The old town had a rich history, even boasting a casino. I pictured it as Cuba's version of a Wild West Sodom. After the flooding, little was left of the town except the cemetery. During the long, dry summers, when the

water level in the lake dropped, the shadowy outlines of the tombs could be seen in the murky deep. Few fished the cemetery. Fear and superstition kept them away, which was fine with me. I enjoyed the solitude.

Later, when the sun sat fat and heavy on top of the lake, we drifted into the sheltered bays and lingered in the shadows of the tall mountains. I paused, put my fishing rod down and took in the spectacular view around me. It was a view that I had captured countless times on my little pocket camera and now had etched in my memory.



The mountains, part of the Escambray range in southern Cuba, jutted up from the water, sometimes in gentle slopes but more often in steep inclines. They were lush and draped with a verdant tropical tangle. Springs fed a handful of waterfalls, and in places the mountainsides were scarred by deep crevasses formed by the runoff of torrential rains. Wild orchids clung to the creases and folds of the trees. Countless birds peered down from their high perches but rarely took wing in the heat of the day. Deer — tiny, delicate things — and wild turkeys ranged the lakeside, every now and then offering a glimpse of themselves as they came down to take water.

We always started at the submerged cemetery of the long-forgotten town of Guannacanoa.

In places where the terrain was gentler and the incline not so steep, small pockets of trees had been cleared and wooden shacks built. There, farmers raised pigs and grew the starchy white root called malanga that was served most nights.

I had often stayed out late on the lake with Ignacio. Both of us would stretch back in our seats and look up at an unrivaled sky that was so clear it made the heavens seem impossibly bright and perfect. On nights like that, when the wind idled low, the surface of the lake glowed and the dark mountains crowded in on us like slumbering giants. Ignacio knew no other sky. He didn't know how city lights could drown out and diminish a star's beauty. But I knew enough to cherish this vista.

I had known Ignacio for going on two years. He was perhaps the Cuban I had grown closest to during my time on the island, yet I still didn't know how much of the friendship that he returned was sincere or state-mandated. We were close in age, but leagues apart in the experiences of our lives; I carried most of mine safely arranged and labeled in file cabinets and stacks of photo albums, while Ignacio wore his in the lines of his face and the stoop of his back. Nor were we freshwater incarnations of Ernest Hemingway and his trusted captain and guide, Gregorio Fuentes. While Ignacio could have fit the bill as Fuentes, I, for all my want and desire, was only a diplomat — literate, but not literary.

We drifted a while at the slow mercy of the wind that was channeled through the mountains. The wind was hot but, thankfully, it kept the thick tropical air from resting too heavily on my shoulders. Despite knowing that the fish wouldn't begin to bite again for several hours, I kept casting my lure into the water and retrieving it in a slow, methodical manner. Fishing wasn't always about catching fish.

With a final gust before dropping away, the wind pushed us deep into a shallow bay. Before us rose a grassy slope that was not choked by the usual tangle of bushes and vines, and perched midway up the slope was an immense tree. The gray trunk was massive and seemed to swell at the middle, and hardly a leaf adorned its outstretched branches. I had probably fished this bay and seen the tree countless times, but never took notice of it until that day.

"What type of tree is that?" I asked Ignacio.

"That one up there?" He pointed. "That is a ceiba."

That meant nothing to me, and he must have seen that on my face, so he continued.

"In Santería, the people believe spirits inhabit these trees."

I rolled my eyes and curled the corner of my mouth. Santería, voodoo, juju. In three decades of making my home in different corners of the world, I had decided they were all the same hocus-pocus, just in different wrappers.

"This one in particular," he said, pointing up to the tree again. "They say a witch lives there."

"A witch?" My reaction came out as a question, although I had already lost interest in the tree and had turned my attention back to my fishing line.

But Ignacio was inspired. "Yes," he said. Then he leaned forward, a mischievous gleam shone in his eyes. "A virgin witch ... they say she lives there with her children." He waited for the irony of the fable to sink in, and when it did I laughed out loud. Ignacio joined in my mirth as he reached into the cooler and pulled out two cold drinks, tossing one my way.

That was the way with Cuban humor. It was subtle and kind of snuck up on you. I was reminded of a joke about a diplomat leaving the exclusive "diplo-mercado" in Havana with a trunk full of groceries. As he pulled out of the parking lot, he rear-ended a bus stopped in front of a long line of hopeful passengers. His trunk popped open and his groceries flew through the air and were strewn across the street. Immediately the people broke from the line as they traded their quest for a rare berth on the bus for the even rarer opportunity to lay hands on some groceries.

A little egg that had survived the crash jumped up, dusted himself off and, upon seeing the crowd bearing down on him, broke into a sprint down the street. As he neared the corner, he saw a fillet steak that he recognized from one of the shopping bags. The steak was calmly sunning itself on the curb. The egg paused long enough in his flight to yell a warning: "Hey, steak! Get up and run! The crowd is coming. They're gonna get you!" The steak glanced over at the approaching crowd, then turned to the egg and said casually, "You hurry up and run, little egg. They don't know *me*."

The humor is buried in the reality of the Cuban situation: buses are rare, lines are long, groceries are scarce, and a little egg has more to fear than does a fillet.

"The virgin and her children," I repeated, shaking my head in amusement. But my laughter died away as I stared up at the tree. There was something about it that made me pause. It stood huge and imposing in the center of the grassy slope, an image that was just too perfect, too manufactured. The more I looked, the more I realized that somebody tended the green swath of grass and the solitary tree.

"Ignacio, who owns this land?"

He shrugged and shielded his eyes to look through the glare of the sun to the far side of the lake at nothing in particular.

It was obvious that somebody took care of the site. It wasn't farmland; it hadn't been tilled. There was no shelter or indication that animals were kept there. It had the distinct feel of a special place set aside for a special purpose. The tree, I realized, was a monument.

"I want to go up there," I said to Ignacio, not taking my eyes off the tree, intrigued.

"What?"

"I want to go up to the tree. I want to see where the virgin's children live."

Ignacio let out a low whistle and then reached for the cord on the outboard to bring the small motor to life and begin moving us across the lake again. Before he could start the engine, I continued more insistently, my curiosity overcoming me.

"No, take me there."

A shadow of fear darkened Ignacio's face. He glanced over a shoulder, his normally easygoing manner replaced by apprehension, as if my request bordered on conspiracy. Then he looked into my eyes as he swallowed a deep breath and then, just as quickly as it had come, the shadow vanished. Ignacio turned his attention back to the tree and considered it for a long moment before standing up.

The bottom of the shallow bay was clearly visible. Silently, he reached down for the long pole that lay propped along the side of the boat and began to push us the short distance to shore. Ignacio nudged the bow of the boat gently between the rocks at the edge of the water, then sprang forward to secure the craft with a frayed piece of rope.

Without exchanging a word, we began up the side of the hill, Ignacio in the lead. I followed, feeling all of my years weighing heavily on my bones and mind. Sweat poured from my body, and I craved a cold drink of water.

The climb that looked to be easy from the lake was much longer and steeper that I had imagined, but eventually we arrived at the base of the immense tree and collapsed in what little shade its bare limbs offered. The lake spread out before us as blue as the sky it mirrored.

After catching my breath, I turned to Ignacio and asked where it was that the virgin and her children lived.

"Under the tree, of course," he said, but he wasn't smiling. He was clearly uncomfortable.

I stood and took a close look at the tree. I decided that if an old elephant could be a tree, then this is what it would look like — huge, grey, leathery and tired.

"What's under the tree?"

"Nothing ...," Ignacio paused and wiped a tattered rag across his brow. "Just some old bones."

"Old bones? What, animal bones?"

"No," Ignacio hesitated before continuing. "Human."

"The witch and her children?" I asked. Ignacio did not answer. "Whose bones are they?"

Ignacio sighed then squinted up at me. "Just the bones of some old patriots," he answered.

"Patriots? You mean revolutionaries?" I asked as I continued to scan the base of the tree.

"No ... I mean patriots ... *counter*-revolutionaries."

I could tell Ignacio was growing impatient with this little adventure and wanted to get back to the boat. It was then that I spied faint marks — scratches at the base of the trunk that only a human hand could have made. I knelt and ran a finger over the old scars. The year 1960 was etched

there, and below it a series of letters that I took to be initials: PPR PRR JPC SWR ARS.

Behind me, Ignacio began reciting the names of the fallen heroes — Prieto, Ramberto, Palomino, Walsh, Rodriguez — all commanders in Castro's rebel army who later turned on him when they realized that his revolution was taking a turn toward communism. They had taken refuge in these mountains, fought and eventually died here, heroes to a people who had believed in the original dream of the virgin — a pure and unspoiled country — and her children, the patriots who wanted to liberate her.

I turned to address Ignacio. I had questions that were still seeking answers, but found that he was already making his way slowly down to the boat.

I returned to the lake twice more before my departure from the island. Both times I requested Ignacio as my fishing guide, but he was not available. I never did see him again. I asked about him at the front desk of the hotel, and I asked the other guides. Everybody just lowered their heads and muttered something about him or his wife having taken ill. So I fished and chatted with the replacement guides, and from the middle of the lake I sought out and sometimes spotted that great old ceiba tree that reminded me of how much of the island — its people, its humor, its history — lay buried.

Suddenly my reverie was interrupted by the flight attendant. She asked if she could get me anything. I couldn't find the words to answer her, so I just shook my head and offered a weak smile. When I looked out the window, all sight of Cuba was gone, buried in a bank of clouds. ■

Remembering USAID's Role in Afghanistan, 1985-1994

During a critical decade in Afghanistan, USAID successfully operated a "mission in exile."

By Thomas H. Eighmy

The activities of the United States Agency for International Development in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation and its aftermath have been less well documented than the role of the Central Intelligence Agency. Unlike the CIA, USAID is an open institution. Its budget is a matter of public record and, typically, its officers and activities are well known in the numerous countries where it operates programs with host-government counterparts. It is perhaps worthwhile, given the situation in Afghanistan today, to consider the highly atypical and difficult conditions under which USAID operated rather effectively from 1985 to 1994.

The substantial involvement of USAID/Afghanistan in agriculture, health, education, public administration and disaster relief programs from the 1950s to the 1970s ground to a halt in 1978-1979. In rapid succession, a coup brought the Soviet-influenced People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan to power; U.S. Ambassador "Spike" Dubs was assassinated; and, faced with popular unrest, the Soviets invoked the "Brezhnev Doctrine" to invade in late 1979 in support of their client. With varying degrees of success under a string of Afghan leaders, the Soviets continued their support for the PDPA until after their military withdrawal in 1989. Meanwhile, the U.S. embassy maintained a skeletal staff until its closing prior to the Soviet withdrawal, reopening only in December 2001. From 1985 to 1994, USAID undertook to operate an interim Afghan "mission in exile."

Thomas H. Eighmy, Ph.D., was a Foreign Service officer with USAID from 1978 through 1997. He served in Morocco, Sudan, Liberia, Pakistan (Office of the AID Representative for Afghanistan Affairs) and Washington (senior desk officer for the Central Asian republics, with assignments in Russia and Eastern Europe). Since retiring from the Service, he lectures, consults and volunteers from Bethlehem, Pa.

Getting Started

Until 1985, the U.S. funneled most of its non-lethal assistance through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Pakistan. Many hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees were pouring across the border. Pakistan's principled support for the Afghan refugees inside its borders and the active resistance both to the PDPA and the Soviets inside Afghanistan helped to influence the U.S. decision to provide a wider range of assistance.

Thus was born the Office of the USAID Representative for Afghanistan Affairs or, less formally, O/AID/Rep. It would deal with humanitarian assistance only and run a principally rural-based program, because the towns were held by the PDPA. Except near the Pakistan border, fighting in many of the rural areas was sporadic and shifting.

Operating such a complex program from distant Washington made no sense. And for security, logistics and other reasons, USAID could not operate directly from resistance areas inside Afghanistan. The bordering Soviet republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were off-limits, as was Iran, given relations with the U.S. following the hostage crisis. The Chinese-Afghanistan border was short, remote and otherwise unacceptable.

The only possible major logistics base for the Afghan resistance was Pakistan, with its major seaport, airport and road transport routes. Its long, porous border, with a difficult terrain, was home to a large ethnic Pashtun community on both sides. U.S. support for the Afghan resistance depended upon

Pakistan. And that ally, in its existence-threatening confrontation with the Soviet Union at that time, would also benefit from U.S. assistance to the resistance.

The overall program effectiveness and operational details of O/AID/Rep owe much to the office's first director, Larry Crandall. He and some Washington allies moved USAID to support a non-traditional country program with an office in exile and a non-traditional counterpart. The main office was housed in Embassy Islamabad, deliberately separate from, and largely independent of, USAID/Pakistan. Operational offices were soon established in Peshawar and Quetta close to the Afghan border, where most contractors and grantees with their large, qualified Afghan staffs were housed and trained. (For security reasons, U.S. staff were not permitted to enter Afghanistan.)

The non-traditional counterpart was Pakistan's now well-known InterServices Intelligence Directorate, which proved to be a generally supportive and effective counterpart, interfering little in the movement of humanitarian and developmental supplies and staff.

Afghans date America's abandonment of them from April 1992.

Beginning in the last two months of Fiscal Year 1985 with limited and previously obligated but unexpended funds, the program grew in size and scope to about $250 million. It included PL-480 Title Two food aid and more than 100 "McCollum Flights," which transported the Afghan war wounded for prearranged pro bono treatment in the U.S., Europe and Japan. The Primary and Mother/Child Health and Education programs alone totaled over $140 million, with one annual obligation of $70 million supporting 15 contractors, grantees and multinational NGOs.

A little-used Foreign Assistance Act "notwithstanding clause" multiplied the U.S. budget obligations. This permitted binding provisions on a given program to be waived in the interests of the U.S. government. However, those interests had to be codified and reduced to a decision memo, and no unlawful activities were allowed. Medical supplies and pharmaceuticals from quality-tested and certified U.S., multinational or Pakistani manufacturers, produced in Pakistan, could be substituted for U.S.-made materials. (Items that cost $1,000 when purchased in the United States could be delivered in Pakistan for $200.) This boosted the local economy, shortened supply lines and greatly magnified the humanitarian impact of the health program for Afghans.

A logistics and transport program airlifted Tennessee mules for transport of donated or purchased humanitarian supplies, built roads and constructed a strategic, U.S.-supplied, movable steel Bailey Bridge across the Konar River. This provided access to northern Afghanistan, bypassing the principal north-south routes held by the PDPA. A mine-detecting dog program proved an effective multiethnic, humanitarian and national institution that continued into the current decade. Training and salaries to several thousand Afghan staff boosted institutions and economies in the Pakistan border areas and Afghanistan.

A Unique Structure

U.S. project officers and implementers operating in Pakistan enjoyed remarkable freedom from interference in carrying out these programs, due partly to the unique structure of the organization and the high morale of O/AID/Rep staff. The informal motto was "Ready, fire, AIM" (the acronym standing for "Activity Identification Memo" — an O/AID/Rep substitute for the more ponderous USAID project development paperwork normally required).

O/AID/Rep programs also enjoyed the cooperation of the Afghan resistance organizations and good relations with the Pakistani ISI to a degree not possible with the lethal assistance — the subject of "blowback."

The health and education programs, for example, were able to finesse the ISI standard that all assistance had to be distributed through one of the seven Pakistani registered political organizations, several of whom were known to be extremist. (It should also be noted that Islamic-funded health and education NGOs declined to join in coordination efforts with USAID and other donors.) The health and education programs expanded from the border areas to serve anywhere in the country based on population distribution, and regardless of dominant ethnic or party affiliation. Project implementers were encouraged to switch the focus of training and implementation from U.S. and third-country staff operating out of Pakistan to Afghan trainers working inside Afghanistan. U.S. staff in Pakistan provided logistics support and quality control.

O/AID/Rep was generally the largest, and sometimes the sole, bilateral contributor to programs assisting the majority of Afghans who remained in the country. It directed assistance to resistance-controlled areas, whose population was estimated in 1990 as exceeding eight million (excluding refugees, war dead and populations under PDPA control). The resilience of the Afghan people and the level of outside support for those remaining in the country under often-appalling conditions contributed, as intended, to blunting the Soviet depopulation and "scorched earth" policy. This

reduced the refugee flow to Pakistan and encouraged the withdrawal of Soviet forces, leading to the ultimate collapse of the PDPA regime.

What Happened

Unfortunately, this auspicious start to the post-Soviet era would not persist. The humanitarian and development program peaked in the early 1990s. Momentum for the financial, operational and strategic retrenchment of the O/AID/Rep program began with the withdrawal of Soviet forces in February 1989. Several parallel tracks of events followed in short order.

• Administratively, O/AID/Rep was "regularized," dealing less with the ISI and more with Pakistani civil authorities. In 1992, programs were running on money still in the pipeline. Later the mission was folded into USAID/Pakistan. This move was understandable in light of scarce operating expense funds, but it signaled a lack of U.S. long-term commitment to Afghanistan.

• Soviet aid to the PDPA continued briefly, but frontal assaults on Jalalabad and Khost failed. The collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 ended external support for the PDPA.

• With the Soviets gone, Pakistan's ambitions in Afghanistan, muted during the Soviet occupation, were again advanced by proxies. Pakistan created an Afghan Interim Government, complete with ministries of health and education. O/AID/Rep officers tried to treat the AIG as if it were a normal host-country government in 1991. But it was a bare recasting of the seven Pakistani-registered political parties. While it might have been regarded at the time as part of a necessary transition to the establishment of a broad-based Afghan regime in Kabul, it quickly proved to be an unsuccessful precursor.

• In April 1992, the mujahedeen captured Kabul and forced Najibullah, the PDPA leader at the time, to take refuge in the United Nations compound. The PDPA regime came to an end.

• Instead of facilitating a peaceful transition from Peshawar to Kabul, the AIG fractured. Power-sharing and control of Kabul were the first bones of contention. Then savage fighting broke out among the seven parties of the Pakistani resistance alliance and with those outside it.

What Might Have Been

The resulting civil war period and the rise of the Taliban have been well analyzed and, in any case, lie beyond the scope of this article. From my perspective, however, it seems that personnel from State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security were allowed to serve as a screen for a policy of U.S. disengagement from Afghanistan. DS's concern was that the situation in Kabul was insecure and dangerous, as indeed it was. DS argued that Embassy Kabul, whose skeletal staff had been evacuated in 1989, should not be reopened.

Senior policymakers concurred, noting that overall strategic aims had been achieved with the Soviet withdrawal and that Afghanistan was now of peripheral interest. A one-dimensional security view conveniently stood for overall policy.

Afghans date America's abandonment of them from April 1992. This withdrawal occurred despite the fact that officers from the State Department and O/AID/Rep, and probably the CIA, were prepared to open the embassy on a skeletal basis and serve there voluntarily. These officers were knowledgeable about and accepted by the Afghan actors — and had safely carried out their activities amidst the turmoil of Peshawar, Quetta and the border for nearly nine years.

How much future bloodshed, Afghan and American, might have been prevented had they been allowed to try? ■

"The Best of AFSA": An Appreciation

Richard Curtis Scissors

1935 – 2007

By Susan Maitra

Richard Curtis Scissors, 71, a retired Foreign Service officer, former AFSA Governing Board member and tireless advocate for equitable employment practices for Foreign Service officers, Foreign Service National employees and their families, died at his home in Chevy Chase, Md., on Sept. 1. With his passing, AFSA and the Foreign Service lost a great friend and advocate. Recognizing this, the Governing Board has named AFSA's new legal defense fund in his honor.

Mr. Scissors was born on Oct. 23, 1935, in St. Louis, Mo., the only child of Jack and Irma Scissors. His father had emigrated from the Ukraine at age 10, one of nine children in a Jewish family. Irma was the eldest of six children in a Catholic family. Both had had to drop out of school after eighth grade in order to help support their families during tough times. They wanted their son to have all the opportunities offered by a good public school education and access to the many cultural opportunities available in the St. Louis area.

"Getting justice for all was his passion."

— F.A. "Tex" Harris

After graduation from Clayton High School — where he was a good student who came to love film and music, especially classical, show tunes, jazz and anything by Stevie Wonder — Scissors headed off to Harvard, where he majored in government, graduating in 1957. At Harvard, he thrived on exposure to the finest minds of the times. He managed the squash courts to earn spending money and despised the rainy, dreary Cambridge weather, but he made lifelong friendships and never stopped marveling at the chances he had been given. This past June, he went back for his 50th reunion and relished wandering the campus, staying in a dorm and reminiscing with old friends.

Following enlistment in the U.S. Army for a two-year stint, his dream of being accepted into the Foreign Service came true in 1960, and he spent the next 36 years as an FSO. He married and became the father of two sons, Derek and Curtis. He traveled extensively, serving in Stuttgart as a vice consul, and in Lahore, Karachi and Cape Town as an economic officer. Later overseas postings took him to Bucharest and back to Cape Town where, as consul general in the late 1980s, he reported on the collapse of apartheid. Assignments at home included various economic policy positions, director of maritime affairs and land transport and, finally, political adviser to the commandant of the Coast Guard.

Scissors was a dedicated diplomat who, as his wife, Patricia Scissors, notes, "was involved in Foreign Service matters until the end." Following retirement in 1996, he put his FS background, and in particular his experience in the area of human resources, to work advancing AFSA's goals. As the association's labor management specialist, he was active on behalf of office management specialists and was instrumental in the revamping of the Language Incentive Pay Program, among many other accomplishments.

"Dick deeply cared about the Foreign Service, the rights and responsibilities of its members and ensuring that they received fair treatment," recalls Tex Harris, a former AFSA president and current secretary. "Getting justice for all was his passion," Harris adds. "He helped so many members with his smarts, experience and abiding dedication to fairness. He represents the best of AFSA."

AFSA General Counsel Sharon Papp elaborates: "Dick

Susan Maitra is the Journal*'s senior editor.*

went out of his way to help people with a range of issues such as assignments, low rankings and medical clearances. He was very knowledgeable and kind, and truly dedicated to trying to make the Foreign Service better for its employees."

Scissors retired from this position in 1999 and, the next year, was elected to the AFSA Governing Board, where he served as a retiree representative for two years (2001-2002). "I can say without reservation that no FSO I know had a greater respect and appreciation for the work of AFSA in defending and supporting the Foreign Service than he did," says AFSA Retiree Vice President Bill Farrand, recalling his friend and colleague of 35 years.

At a memorial service at DACOR-Bacon House on Oct. 7, family members, friends and colleagues celebrated Scissors' life. They praised his extraordinary kindness and generosity,

Dick Scissors at his desk.

as well as his sharp and analytical mind, keen memory and enviable ability to write clearly and cogently. As his wife recalled, he also had a great sense of humor and one of the biggest laughs imaginable. Many of them came at the dining room table after a wonderful meal and good wine with family and friends, she added.

Besides his immediate family, Scissors loved and often mentored the young people to whom he was closest: his nieces and nephews, and the Mullen clan of New Hampshire. One of them offered this tribute at the memorial service: "What I will always remember about Uncle Dick is his intelligence, his kindness, his generosity, sense of humor and legendary laugh! Most important for me was his remarkable ability to listen. He always took such a keen interest in my life, my goals and my interests. This is something he did for each of us, and I will never forget it."

Scissors was formerly married to Rochelle Edelman Scissors. He leaves his wife, Patricia, of Chevy Chase, Md.; two sons, Derek of Bethesda, Md., and Curtis of Jonesborough, Tenn.; and two grandchildren, Rachel and Naomi of Bethesda. ■

AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • December 2007

IRAQ SERVICE AND DIRECTED ASSIGNMENTS

DG Announces "Prime Candidates" for Iraq

BY SHAWN DORMAN

On Friday evening, Oct. 26, Amb. Harry K. Thomas Jr., the director general of the Foreign Service, sent out a worldwide unclassified cable, "A Call to Service" (State 149670), announcing that the State Department had identified "prime candidates" for 48 positions (out of a total of 252 positions) at Embassy Baghdad and on the Iraq Provincial Reconstruction Teams that did not have any qualified bidders for summer 2008.

An accompanying cable, "Details and Procedures Associated with Directed Assignments" (State 149682), spelled out the process for identifying and assigning prime candidates to Iraq and stated that the Human Resources Bureau would notify these candidates by e-mail immediately. The identification of prime candidates is the prelude to directed assignments.

Due to the Friday evening timing of the ALDAC messages, many Foreign Service members learned about the decision to initiate directed assignments from press reports over the weekend. AFSA had urged the department not to time the announcement that way, to no avail. By Monday morning, AFSA was being inundated with e-mails and calls from members around the

Continued on page 60

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR DISSENT AND PERFORMANCE AWARDS

Are There *Any* Dissenting Voices Out There?

BY BARBARA BERGER, PROFESSIONAL ISSUES COORDINATOR

AFSA is calling for nominations for the 2008 Constructive Dissent Awards and Exemplary Performance Awards. The Constructive Dissent Awards honor and recognize those members of the Foreign Service who dare to stand up to conventional wisdom, to question the status quo or to offer an unpopular or contrary view on policy or operational procedures.

The AFSA Dissent Awards are unique, both because they are based on integrity and professional courage rather than performance of duties, and because no other organization or agency in the U.S. government has such a program. A Foreign Service employee who dissents is taking a risk that could jeopardize his or her career. However, that is all the more reason to honor that courage.

Describing several tenets of good leadership, former Secretary of State Colin Powell issued the following challenge: "Dare to be the skunk at the picnic. Every organization should tolerate rebels who tell the emperor he has no clothes … make the tough decisions, confront people who need it, reward those who perform best. Speak your mind, work toward consensus-

Continued on page 57

In This Issue:

NAVAROO NAWS

AFSA staff members (from left) *FSJ* Business Manager Andrew Kidd, Advertising Intern Loes Wierstra and Membership Rep. Cory Nishi.

AFSA's headquarters building, at 21st and E Streets NW, is being renovated. The staff has been relocated to temporary offices on the 12th floor of State Annex 15 at 1800 N. Kent St. in Rosslyn. The Labor Management Office in the Truman Building has not moved. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses remain the same for all AFSA staff.

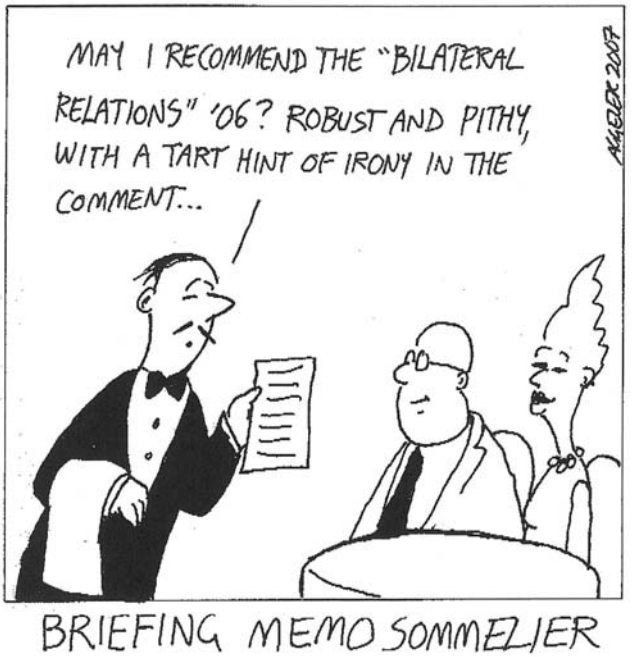
AFSA NEWSBRIEFS

Money for College: Apply by Feb. 6

Apply now for AFSA Academic and Art Merit Awards as well as need-based Financial Aid Scholarships. The deadline for application is Feb. 6, 2008. More than $150,000 will be awarded to over 75 deserving students from the Foreign Service community. Go to www.afsa.org/scholar/ for the eligibility requirements and applications, or contact Scholarship Director Lori Dec at (202) 944-5504 or 1 (800) 704-2372, ext. 504.

Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER



BRIEFING MEMO SOMMELIER

Seeking "Family Member Matters" Submissions

We are looking for Foreign Service family members to write about issues relating to life and work in the Foreign Service for our occasional feature, Family Member Matters. An honorarium of $100 is paid for submissions that we publish.

Please send your 400- to 600-word essay to *FSJ* Associate Editor Shawn Dorman at dorman@afsa.org. There is no deadline; this is a standing call for submissions.

FS Retirees: You're Needed in Iraq

As the Foreign Service faces its fifth rotation into Iraq, the number of active-duty members with Arabic-language skills who have not already gone there is declining. While the active-duty contingent has been stepping up to the plate in large numbers, with more than 2,000 volunteers for Iraq over the past four years, there is no question that this continuing effort is putting a strain on our ranks.

Thus, AFSA encourages FS retirees with Middle East experience, particularly those with Arabic-language skills, to consider serving in Iraq. The large and growing U.S. mission in Baghdad and the expanding Provincial Reconstruction Teams around the country have numerous positions that seasoned, qualified FS retirees could fill. Indeed, many retirees have already served there with distinction.

There are various ways to be hired for temporary duty to Iraq. The salaries, above and beyond your pension, can be lucrative. Obviously, there are also substantial risks. For more information, please contact Tony Spakauskas in State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA/SCA/EX) at spakauskasA2@state.gov.

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Iraq: The Blame Game

Four interrelated things happened at nearly the same time when I was preparing to write this column, all of which reminded me pointedly that the Foreign Service is getting a flagrantly unfair and uninformed raw deal in the media these days, and that we are increasingly being turned into the whipping boy for problems in Iraq.

First, we all witnessed the gratuitous State-bashing in the now-famous "nightmare with no end in sight" speech by retired Lt. General Ricardo Sanchez, who suggested that the military was doing its part, but that the State Department bore the blame for failing to send its people to fix everything wrong in Iraq. Second, I recently testified before a dozen members of the House Armed Services Committee who mainly wanted to know just why the Foreign Service has been "utterly absent" in Iraq since 2003.

Third, we learned that the department is in the process of doubling the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq — the dangerous Red-Zone outposts where nearly 100 of our members are serving — despite the recent report issued by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction concluding that security conditions have crippled the efforts of PRTs, which "have shown little progress in promoting economic development, the rule of law or political reconciliation." Last came the wildly erroneous misinterpretations by the media of the director general's announcement of the Iraq "prime candidate" identification exercise, which was portrayed as proof that State diplomats have been refusing to serve in Iraq and will now have to be forced to go.

How did we get tagged as slackers who have allowed Iraq to deteriorate to its current state? How have we allowed so many military colleagues and right-wing pundits to get away with the spurious allegation that it was somehow State's job to come in and fix Iraq after the military-led occupation started going sour? How have we failed to make the public understand the limitations on what even hundreds of unarmed diplomats can realistically accomplish in the middle of a combat zone wracked by civil war?

We at AFSA will keep doing our best to set the record straight in the public mind. At every opportunity, we have drawn attention to the numbers:

- Since 2003, more than 2,000 State Department Foreign Service members (out of a total pool of only 11,000) have volunteered for war-zone assignments in Iraq or Afghanistan;
- The total Foreign Service is less than one-half of 1 percent of the size of the U.S. military, and our members are already stretched thin staffing all the other 260 embassies and consulates worldwide, a majority of which are hardship posts;
- Until now, we have filled every position at Embassy Baghdad and the PRTs with willing volunteers; not a single person has had to be ordered to go.

The facts tell of a tough, dedicated, patriotic corps of skilled foreign-affairs professionals who have stepped up to the plate in Iraq, yet we continue to take the heat for lack of progress there. The undignified and unwarranted finger-pointing by certain people at the Pentagon eager to lay the blame at the feet of the State Department Foreign Service is becoming more and more overt.

How did we get tagged as slackers who have allowed Iraq to deteriorate to its current state?

Maybe it is time for a candid public discussion of the limitations on what diplomats assigned to a besieged embassy or to provincial teams embedded with U.S. military units in the middle of an active combat zone can realistically be expected to accomplish.

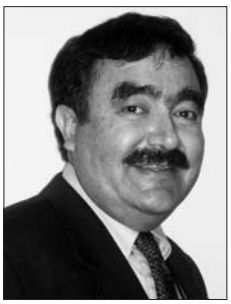
After my recent testimony, one member of Congress pulled me aside and asked why on earth State has not sent thousands of Foreign Service officers to Iraq to oversee the "postwar" reconstruction and establishment of a democratic government, "as we did after World War II" in Germany and Japan. This often-cited description of the post-World War II period is utterly false. First, we did not send thousands of FSOs to Germany and Japan; rather, the reconstruction/rebuilding was supervised by generals, logistics officers, engineering officers and civil affairs officers of the U.S. military occupation. Second, the reconstruction and development of democratic institutions in Germany and Japan only took place once the war was over and hostilities had ended. This is obviously not the case in Iraq. In addition, where would we get thousands of FSOs without leaving most of our other 260 diplomatic missions around the world significantly understaffed or vacant?

Our Foreign Service members have courageously volunteered to staff the embassy and PRTs and lend their diplomatic skills to the U.S. effort there over the past four years. They are doing their best under extremely adverse conditions. But, as the SIGIR report noted, their ability to succeed depends on the security situation and on progress of the overall war effort led by the military.

We all recognize that both the military and the Foreign Service have been handed a daunting task in Iraq. Castigating the dedicated people of the Foreign Service for the current impasse is an appalling attempt to play the blame game. ❑

V.P. VOICE: **USAID** ■ BY FRANCISCO ZAMORA

Who's on First?



If you've ever seen the Abbott and Costello skit "Who's on First?", you'll remember Abbott's attempts to explain the lineup of team players whose given names were literally "Who," "What" and "I Don't Know"? The ensuing confusion is a classic comedy routine.

What does this have to do with USAID, you may ask. Plenty, because all the same ingredients contributing to confusion of roles are there. It would be hilarious if it weren't for the fact that this situation is also tragic and obstructing our mission.

Like poor Costello, we are all trying to make sense of the changes in our organizational structure that have resulted from the ongoing reforms precipitated by the transformational diplomacy decree. To start with, USAID now has a phantom bureau called the Foreign Assistance Bureau, or FA, which has no real people working in it. It is intended as a placeholder for actual employees sent to work at the State Department in the "F Bureau."

We are all trying to make sense of the changes in our organizational structure that have resulted from the ongoing reforms precipitated by the transformational diplomacy decree. To start with, USAID now has a phantom bureau called the Foreign Assistance Bureau, or FA, which has no real people working in it.

At State, this F Bureau is made up of about 115 positions, of which some 60 are filled with Civil Service and Foreign Service USAID employees, the remainder being State Department employees. Within the F bureau are five geographic offices: African Affairs, Near Eastern Affairs, European and Eurasian Affairs, Western Hemisphere Affairs and a combined East Asian and Pacific Affairs and South and Central Asia Affairs; one program management function; and a global/functional unit. At the same time, in the same State Department building, you will find the regular geographic bureaus for the same five regions (plus a South Asia Bureau). Then, back at the USAID Ronald Reagan Building headquarters, you will find the same five regional bureaus matching the F Bureau yet again. Confused yet? You're not to blame.

Now, imagine a scenario in which decisions need to be made regarding a particular country program. Which desk officer of any of the aforementioned offices is responsible? State's regional bureau? The F regional office? Or USAID's regional bureau? Does anyone know? If it is hard for us to understand, imagine how outside organizations react. We reformed foreign aid and created the F Bureau with the idea of coordinating foreign aid. This does not accomplish that. Basic roles and responsibilities are greatly confused.

And, while we have triplication of regional functions, one vital activity, policy and strategic planning, actually ceased to exist when the Policy and Program Coordination Bureau at USAID was abolished. The policy function has long been recognized as essential to improving coherence, consistency, management and leadership at USAID, but no longer. Initially, policy development was transferred to F, but then was abolished by the former USAID administrator, who apparently did not see a need for someone other than himself to develop policy (a la Louis XIV, "L'etat, c'est moi"). However, the F Bureau's organizational chart still shows four senior policy advisers assigned there. It is not clear what their jobs will be now.

Subsequently, sensing the need to re-establish a policy function, USAID created the Program Analysis and Coordination Office under the chief operating officer at USAID headquarters. However, from what we can tell, this office still does not have the same role PPC had in developing true policy and strategic planning functions.

The current reorganization has caused fragmentation of our development assistance programs to the point where no one knows anymore who is in charge. We may need to rethink how to clearly and logically divide up the work, as well as delegate authority and responsibility among all actors.

Once upon a time, the roles for USAID and the State Department in regard to foreign assistance were clear. USAID did development and foreign assistance, and State carried out diplomacy. Now there is confusion about Who decides What, and What is the Policy. I don't know. Oh wait, he's on third ...! ❑

AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

Good News for Retired DS Agents

Section 845 of the Pension Protection Act of 2006, which took effect Jan. 1, 2007, contains a provision that allows retired "public safety officers" to request that up to $3,000 be deducted from their annual pensions to pay for medical insurance and long-term-care insurance, thereby reducing their taxable income by that same amount. This significant money-saving option has been enjoyed by active-duty federal employees since 2000, but efforts by AFSA and others to get coverage expanded to all retirees have not yet succeeded.

The Office of Personnel Management recently ruled that the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employees Retirement System are eligible plans under Section 845. After meeting with staff at OPM, AFSA contacted the State Department's Retirement Office, which determined that the Foreign Service Retirement and Disability System and the Foreign Service Pension System are also eligible retirement plans under the PPA.

The State Department will issue official guidance at some point. OPM explained in its benefits administration letter that retired public safety officers whose annuity payments include a direct payment to a health insurance carrier may self-identify eligibility for, and self-report, the tax exclusion to the IRS.

For retirees who are not former DS special agents, AFSA continues to support legislation to permit all Foreign Service retirees to pay their health premiums on a pretax basis. The House bill is now before the Ways and Means Committee, which is an important step forward. This change could save the average retiree around $800 a year. But, because it would cost the government more than $12 billion in lost tax revenues over a 10-year period, quick adoption seems unlikely given pressures to limit non-defense related deficits. AFSA will keep you informed.

For information on how this premium conversion option works, please see 2006 tax year IRS Publication 721, p. 15 (www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p721.pdf).

Awards • Continued from page 53

building, but don't hide from reality" (*State* magazine, Feb. 2002).

Former AFSA President John Limbert summed up AFSA's desire to honor dissenters this way: "We have always needed our dissenters, and we need them now more than ever. AFSA believes that the courage to ask 'Why?' or 'Why not?' or suggest ideas that may be considered controversial or against popular wisdom is a true indication of loyalty — to our Service, to our oath of office, to our profession and to the values upon which our country was founded."

AFSA seeks to continue to recognize and honor those who have demonstrated the initiative, integrity and intellectual courage to dissent on an issue that affects the work of the Foreign Service, but to do this by working **within the system**. The Constructive Dissent Awards are not for performance of assigned duties, however exceptional. Submissions that do not meet the criteria of initiative, integrity and intellectual courage in constructive dissent, as determined by our judges and the Awards & Plaques Committee, will not be considered.

Constructive Dissent Awards

The **Tex Harris Award**, for a Foreign Service specialist;

The **W. Averell Harriman Award**, for a junior officer (FS 6-4);

The **William R. Rivkin Award**, for a mid-career officer (FS 3-1); and

The **Christian A. Herter Award**, for a senior officer (FE OC-CA).

Exemplary Performance Awards

AFSA also offers three awards for exemplary performance of assigned or voluntary duties at an overseas post that constitutes an extraordinary contribution to effectiveness, professionalism and morale. These awards are:

- The **Delavan Award**, for a Foreign Service office management specialist who has made a significant contribution to post or office effectiveness and morale beyond the framework of his or her job responsibilities;
- The **M. Juanita Guess Award**, for a community liaison officer who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, dedication, initiative or imagination in assisting the families of Americans serving at an overseas post; and
- The **Avis Bohlen Award**, for a Foreign Service family member whose relations with the American and foreign communities at post have done the most to advance the interests of the United States.

All winners receive a monetary award of $2,500 and a framed certificate. They are also honored at a reception in late June at the State Department's Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room. The Secretary of State is invited to participate in the ceremony.

Nomination Guidelines

Nominations for all awards should be written in the following format:

Part I — The name of the award for which the person is being nominated; the nominee's name, grade, agency and position.

Part II — The nominator's name, grade, agency and position, and a description of the association with the nominee.

Part III — The justification for the nomination. This narrative should discuss the actions and qualities that the nominator believes qualify the nominee for the award, giving specific examples of accomplishments that fulfill the criteria stated in the previous paragraph. Part III should not exceed 700 words.

Further details on nomination procedures, additional guidelines and a nomination form can be found on the AFSA Web site at **www.afsa.org/awards.cfm**. From there, you can link to articles about the AFSA awards and find a comprehensive listing of past award winners.

Please send questions to Barbara Berger, coordinator for professional issues, at berger@afsa.org, or call her at (202) 719-9700.

The deadline for submitting nominations is Feb. 29, 2008. ❑

AFSA Issue Brief

Telling Our Story

BY JOHN K. NALAND, AFSA PRESIDENT

A growing number of voices are criticizing the State Department and Foreign Service for not "stepping up to the plate" in Iraq. Some, including the very people who urged the 2003 invasion, clearly seek to shift blame for failures by other actors. While other critics appear to have no such malicious agenda, their criticisms are based on wildly inflated estimations of the capacities of civilian agencies to operate in combat zones such as Iraq. Comparisons between the military and the State Department are often made with complete disregard for the facts relating to scale: budgets, personnel and capacity for war-zone service.

AFSA is making an effort to set the record straight. Toward that end, AFSA President John Naland sent a response, "Telling Our Story," on Oct. 16 to a journalist who had written an error-laden diatribe about Foreign Service staffing in Iraq. The text of the note, summarized below, was then sent out by AFSAnet in order to offer members information that can be used to help educate those outside the Service on the realities of the Foreign Service role in Iraq. We encourage members to find talking points here and help tell our story.

Baseline Facts about the Foreign Service

The huge disparities between the State Department and Defense Department in operating budgets are widely known. Ambassador (ret.) Chas W. Freeman Jr., in his article "Can American Leadership Be Restored?" in the November *FSJ*, estimates that the total budget in Fiscal Year 2007 for defense-related activities was $935 billion. In contrast, the 2007 budget for international affairs was $30 billion — only $5 billion of which was for State and USAID operating expenses (with the rest going for foreign assistance, peacekeeping and other such outlays).

The State Department Foreign Service is made up of approximately 11,500 people. Of them, 6,500 are Foreign Service officers while 5,000 are Foreign Service specialists (for example, Diplomatic Security agents). There are another 1,500 or so Foreign Service members at USAID, the Foreign Commercial Service, the Foreign Agricultural Service and the International Broadcasting Bureau. Because it is where most of the criticism is aimed, this article will focus on the State Department Foreign Service component.

Let's put the size of the State Department Foreign Service in perspective. The U.S. active-duty military is 119 times larger than the Foreign Service. The total uniformed military (active and reserve) is 217 times larger. A typical U.S. Army division is larger than the entire Foreign Service. The military has more uniformed personnel in Mississippi than the State Department has diplomats worldwide. The military has more full colonels/Navy captains than the State Department has diplomats. The military has more band members than the State Department has diplomats. The Defense Department has almost as many lawyers as the State Department has diplomats.

The key point — especially for observers who think in terms of the myriad capabilities of our nation's large military — is that the Foreign Service has a relatively small corps of officers.

A Forward-Deployed Force

Moreover, in contrast to the military, the vast majority of Foreign Service members are forward-deployed (hence the word "foreign" in Foreign Service). Today, in a time of armed conflict, 21 percent of the active-duty military (290,000 out of 1,373,000) is stationed abroad (ashore or afloat). That compares to the 68 percent of the Foreign Service currently stationed abroad at 167 U.S. embassies and 100 consulates and other missions.

There is nothing new about this high percentage of Foreign Service forward deployment. The percentages are the same as they were two decades ago when I joined. Thus, the typical Foreign Service member serves two-thirds of his or her career abroad. Over a 30-year career, that adds up to 20 years spent stationed overseas.

Where are these overseas Foreign Service members? Nearly 60 percent are at posts categorized by the U.S. government as "hardship" due to difficult living conditions (for example, violent crime, harsh climate, social isolation, unhealthy air and/or terrorist threats). Of those hardship posts, half are rated at or above the 15-percent differential level that constitutes great hardship. Thus, unlike the old stereotype that has most Foreign Service members serving in comfortable Western European capitals, only one-third of overseas posts are non-hardship. The majority of people at such posts are decompressing after serving at a hardship post, and they are doing important work.

Again, the contrast with the military is instructive. As previously mentioned, 79 percent of the active-duty military is stationed stateside (including 36,000 personnel in Hawaii). Of those serving abroad, there are more U.S. military personnel serving in the United Kingdom, Germany and Japan than the State

Department has diplomats worldwide.

The military does have a greater percentage of its personnel serving in unaccompanied tours than the Foreign Service. I have not found solid statistics on this point, but subtracting those stationed at accompanied postings in Western Europe, Japan and South Korea, it appears that around 11 percent of the military is serving in unaccompanied tours. But the Foreign Service is catching up. Since 2001, the number of unaccompanied and limited-accompanied Foreign Service positions has quadrupled to 700 (representing 6.1 percent of the Foreign Service) at two dozen danger-pay posts in such countries as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. This represents a dramatic change for Foreign Service members, who previously had fewer than 200 unaccompanied slots to fill at a few posts such as Bogotá and Beirut.

Further, consider these facts. Around 40 percent of the 7,800 overseas Foreign Service positions come up for reassignment each year (including all 700 one-year unaccompanied positions and a mixture of two-year greater-hardship posts and three-year lesser-hardship and non-hardship posts). That means that, in any given annual assignment cycle, almost one quarter of all overseas Foreign Service jobs to be filled are at unaccompanied or limited-accompanied danger pay posts.

What about the toughest duty assignment, Iraq? Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in an Oct. 1 interview with the *New York Post* editorial board, stated that more than 20 percent of the Foreign Service has served, or is serving, in Iraq. I would have guessed that the percentage was a little lower, but let's stick with Sec. Rice's official estimate that 20 percent of our nation's diplomats have served in war-zone Iraq since 2003.

I have not found comparable military statistics. Presumably, at least for the Army and Marine Corps, it is over two-thirds, with many troops serving two or more tours. But again, unlike the military, which maintains 79 percent of its active members stateside, the Foreign Service has worldwide staffing responsibilities that necessitate posting the majority of its members in the 188 countries besides Iraq. Thus, of the 80 percent of Foreign Service members who have not (yet) served in Iraq, most are now at, or have recently returned from, a hardship assignment.

There are currently approximately 200 Foreign Service positions at Embassy Baghdad and another 70 or so at the 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Compared to the U.S. military presence in Iraq, those numbers look small. Of course, the U.S. civilian presence in Iraq includes a range of other types of employees. But if press reports are accurate that around 1,000 U.S. citizens work at Embassy Baghdad, then the Foreign Service positions constitute about 20 percent of that total. Turning to the PRTs, which comprise up to 600 members, the Foreign Service component is 10 to 15 percent.

There are good reasons for those ratios. As Sec. Rice has repeatedly explained in public statements, no country's diplomatic corps has people with many of the skills now needed in Iraq: oil and gas engineers, electrical grid managers, urban planners, city managers and transportation planners. If any U.S. defense planner in 2003 thought that the State Department and other civilian federal agencies had such people on staff in large numbers (Arabic-speaking or not) ready to rebuild Iraq, they were wrong. Obviously, if they wanted to do so, the president and Congress could staff up civilian agencies to take responsibility for stabilization and reconstruction. But they have not done so.

Here are some other points to consider. While some Foreign Service members in Iraq are engaged in support activities that do not require them to leave the International Zone, many do travel in the "Red Zone" — working out of Embassy Baghdad, serving at one of the pre-surge PRTs, or serving at one of the 10 new PRTs embedded in Brigade Combat Teams. Also, most Foreign Service members serve one-year tours in Iraq with only a relative few going for shorter temporary-duty assignments. A small but growing number of Foreign Service members have served more than one tour in Iraq. None, except for some Diplomatic Security special agents, are permitted to carry a weapon.

Foreign Service members receive very little preparation before deploying to Iraq — less than two-weeks of special training to serve in a combat zone. Contrast that to their predecessors 40 years ago, who received three to six months of training before deploying to South Vietnam in the CORDS program. While Foreign Service volunteers in Iraq do receive added pay and other incentives (but not tax-free income like the military enjoys), surveys show that most Foreign Service volunteers in Iraq have been motivated by patriotism and a professional desire to try to advance the administration's top foreign policy objective.

From 2003 through 2007, every one of the more than 2,000 career Foreign Service members who stepped up to the plate to serve at the large and growing U.S. mission in Baghdad and the expanding Provincial Reconstruction Teams around the country did so as a volunteer. Unfortunately, on Oct. 26, 2007, the director general of the Foreign Service, Ambassador Harry K. Thomas Jr., announced to the news media (and, later to employees via an ALDAC cable) that the well of volunteers had finally run dry. He announced that, if volunteers could not be found for 48 remaining positions by mid-November, then directed assignments would begin.

AFSA immediately issued a statement encouraging any Foreign Service employee who has been contemplating a tour of duty in Iraq to consider volunteering. This followed up on an earlier call to Foreign Service retirees with Middle East experience, particularly those with Arabic-language skills, to consider serving in Iraq.

At the same time, AFSA restated its long-standing position that directed assignments of Foreign Service members into a war zone would be detrimental to the individual, to the post and to the Foreign Service as a whole. AFSA urged the State Department to find ways to increase the pool of qualified voluntary bidders. Only time will tell how this all plays out. ❑

Directed Assignments • Continued from page 53

world angry about the way the news reached them and concerned about how the identification process would proceed.

Beginning on Monday, Oct. 29, approximately 230 individual State Foreign Service officers received notifications by e-mail that they were "prime candidates" for one or more Iraq positions. Prime candidates were given 14 days to respond to the prime candidate identification. They could volunteer for the positions indicated or submit an appeal statement to the DG through their career development officers explaining their circumstances and any special considerations that should exempt them from being directed to the particular assignment.

These statements were to be read to the special assignment panel for directed assignments, which was scheduled to begin on or about Nov. 13. The panel would then select the employees to fill the open positions for which there was no volunteer. Employees selected by the identification panel would have 10 working days to respond. As stated in the DG's message 149682, "Should an employee refuse to accept assignment upon conclusion of this process, appropriate disciplinary action will be pursued, including possible separation for cause."

AFSA's Position

Immediately following the State announcement, AFSA sent out a cable and AFSAnet message on Oct. 27 (State 149686). That message offered further information on the assignment process and spelled out the AFSA position. AFSA believes that directed assignments of unarmed Foreign Service members into the war zone in Iraq would be detrimental to the individual, the post and the Foreign Service as a whole.

Between 2003 and 2007, more than 2,000 members of the Foreign Service volunteered to serve in Iraq. Now, with the next rotation of personnel, 80 new positions have been created at Embassy Baghdad and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, increasing further the size of what was already the biggest U.S. mission in the world. As AFSA President John Naland pointed out in an Oct. 30 message to members, "With 68 percent of the Foreign Service already 'forward deployed' in 189 foreign countries (compared to 21 percent of the uniformed military stationed abroad), the Foreign Service has no bench strength with which to surge more personnel into Iraq." Significant additional resources and personnel have not accompanied the rising number of FS positions in Iraq.

AFSA has been responding individually to hundreds of inquiries since the Oct. 26 announcement, providing information and advice, in confidence, to Foreign Service members. Further inquiries can be sent to the AFSA Labor Management Office at AFSA-Staff-DL@state.gov. To speak to an AFSA representative by phone, call (202) 647-8160. ❑

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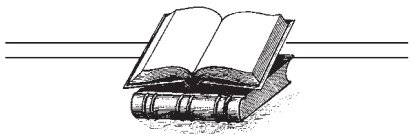

BOOKS

How *Not* to Do Diplomacy

Statecraft and How to Restore America's Standing in the World
Dennis Ross, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007, $26.00, hardcover, 370 pages.

REVIEWED BY JAMES PATTERSON

In his preface, Dennis Ross defines statecraft as "the use of assets or the resources and tools (economic, military, intelligence, media) that a state has to pursue its interests and to affect the behavior of others, whether friendly or hostile." His new book assesses how well the current administration and its two predecessors have practiced that challenging discipline.

As the lead Middle East envoy during the administrations of former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton — an experience he detailed in his previous book, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (2004) — Ross is uniquely qualified to make such comparisons.

In the first Bush administration Ross worked for Secretary of State James Baker, who skillfully assembled a global alliance to counter Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Baker traveled the world for meetings with high-ranking government officials while Pres. Bush diligently worked the phones to assure them that the war would be limited to liberating Kuwait, not overthrowing Saddam Hussein.

Bush and Baker also used statecraft to help Germany reunify while remaining within NATO, despite objections from some European Union leaders. But their decision not to intervene in the disintegration of Yugoslavia, on the faulty assumption that the Europeans would resolve the problem, led to a bloodbath. As a result, Pres. Clinton spent most of his two terms working to end the hostilities and bring Slobodan Milosevic to justice. These were cases of statecraft done well, according to Ross.

He also gives Clinton high marks for his approach to the Middle East and his efforts to keep the Israelis and the Palestinians productively engaged in peace negotiations.

By contrast, George W. Bush largely neglected the two parties, at least in his first term. Immediately after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Bush wanted to hit back at al-Qaida and "hit S.H. [Saddam Hussein] at [the] same time," as George Packer reported in his 2005 book, *The Assassins' Gate*.

That campaign began right away, yet only as an afterthought did Bush send Secretary of State Colin Powell to the United Nations in February 2003 to justify the use of force. Ross deplores Powell's role in that fiasco, though he concedes that by that point the Cheney/Rumsfeld push for regime change in Baghdad was unstoppable. Similarly, he praises Condoleezza Rice as intelligent, thoughtful, capable and serious, but says she has been "hamstrung by the ideology of the administration."

"The Iraq case stands as a model for how not to do statecraft," Ross writes, though intelligence failures undoubtedly played a part in that disastrous decision. He speculates that because Bush truly believed that Saddam had helped plan the 9/11 attacks and possessed weapons of mass destruction, he assumed that other nations would support action to oust the regime. Had Bush stuck to the mission of liberating Afghanistan and neutralizing al-Qaida, he might well have succeeded in assembling a true "coalition of the willing," as his father had done before him.

Ross faults the current administration for other foreign policy failures, as well. Bush's first-term decision to completely withdraw from the Israeli-Palestinian peace process not only stymied progress in talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, but emboldened Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other terrorist groups. And his strong rhetoric against Iran has not played well in the Arab street, which sees the U.S. as an occupier in Iraq, with similar intentions for other Persian Gulf nations.

"One reason for writing a book on statecraft now," Ross explains, "is to recognize that administrations, especially those in power for eight years, leave legacies." Asserting that Pres. Bush abandoned statecraft, he declares: "We can redeem our foreign policy and our place in the world. But if we are to do so, statecraft must no longer be a lost art. It is time to rediscover it."

Jim Patterson, a former Foreign Service officer, is an economist and freelance journalist whose work has

appeared in the Foreign Service Journal, New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, The Hill *and the* Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, *among other publications.*

Unrealistic Expectations

U.S. Relations with Latin America during the Clinton Years: Opportunities Lost or Opportunities Squandered?
David Scott Palmer, University of Florida Press, 2006, $24.95, paperback, 144 pages.

REVIEWED BY DENNIS JETT

David Scott Palmer describes this slender volume as the first full-length overview of the Clinton administration's policy toward Latin America. The book, like the policy it describes, is rather superficial, but is still well worth reading. Palmer, a professor of international relations at Boston University, is a recognized authority on Latin America who brings great experience to the topic. He has no ideological axes to grind, but his disappointment with the policy appears to reflect some unrealistic expectations.

In the interests of full disclosure, it should be noted that I was interviewed twice by the author and get mentioned in the book because of my service as ambassador to Peru from 1996 to 1999. Whether the insights my involvement provides make up for any lack of detachment or objectivity I leave to readers to judge.

Palmer's basic thesis is that the end of the Cold War presented an opportunity for the Clinton administration to significantly improve relations with Latin America, but it failed to take advantage of the opening. As a result, he describes those relations as "largely adrift and the opportunities once present closed" by the time Clinton left office.

The author acknowledges several accomplishments, including the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement, the institution of the Summit of the Americas process, the handling of the Mexican peso crisis and the achievement of peace between Peru and Ecuador. But he deems Clinton's failures more significant: the lack of additional free trade agreements, instability in Haiti, the erosion of democracy in Colombia and Peru, the stalement in relations with Cuba and a general worsening of environmental quality throughout the hemisphere.

Palmer's disappointment with the Clinton administration's lack of sustained attention to the region is understandable. Indeed, area specialists for just about every region but the Middle East and Europe might have similar complaints. But however justified, Palmer's disappointment leads him to some unreasonable conclusions.

The yardstick he uses to judge the administration's performance is the action agenda set at the 1994 Summit of the Americas: strengthening democracy, promoting trade and economic integration, eradicating poverty and discrimination, guaranteeing sustainable development and conserving the environment. (The heads of state apparently forgot to include a cure for cancer and world peace.)

While Palmer is right to point out that there was little serious follow-up and few resources were dedicated to achieving these lofty goals, 33 countries signed on to them. So the failure hardly belongs to the United States alone.

The end of the Cold War did end the argument that right-wing dictators should be supported simply because they opposed communism. While that shift may have created an opportunity for a new policy that Clinton largely ignored, it did not change anything in Latin America, which still suffered from ineffective institutions and other ills.

On Peru, the author criticizes the U.S. for putting drug interdiction ahead of democracy promotion. He asserts that I lacked access to Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, but spoke out against antidemocratic measures — whereas my successor had access to him, but did not speak out. Palmer seems to equate access to influence, yet when Fujimori finally falls, he attributes it to the actions of Peruvians, not outside actors.

It is unclear what he thinks the U.S. could have done in the face of the Peruvian president's determination to stay in power, short of invading the country. In the end, Peruvians made the right choice and Fujimori is in jail instead of the presidential mansion.

Palmer usefully points out that attention given to any region must compete with everything else happening in the world and a lot of domestic politics, as well.

Even with concerted attention from Washington, however, American policy, whether conveyed through public statements or quiet diplomacy, can only do so much. ■

Dennis Jett, an FSO from 1972 to 2000, was ambassador to Mozambique and Peru and DCM in Malawi and Liberia. Dean of the International Center at the University of Florida, he is the author of Why Peacekeeping Fails *(Palgrave, 2001) and* Why American Foreign Policy Fails, *which will be published in May 2008.*

THE BOARDING SCHOOL OPTION: A TENT FOR A GLOBAL NOMAD

FOR FS FAMILIES, A BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION HAS MUCH TO RECOMMEND IT. HERE IS AN ASSESSMENT OF THE OPTION AND TIPS ON HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF IT.

BY PAMELA WARD

Boarding schools — residential schools where students live as well as attend class — are not a typical choice for most Americans. In this country, young people usually live at home and attend a public or private day school until they go to college, start work, marry or otherwise begin their own adult lives. Those of us in the Foreign Service community, however, are increasingly considering and choosing boarding schools as an option for our children in high school or even middle school.

There are several factors that play into this shift. Many parents and educators believe that continuity in both the academic program and the peer group is most desirable during the high school years. Historically, the Foreign Service has acknowledged this concern and built some flexibility into the assignment system, including extensions at posts and in Washington for educational reasons. In recent years, because of the sharply increased demand for Foreign Service staffing and the shift toward a more expeditionary model of diplomacy, this flexibility is increasingly unavailable. Consequently, some parents are deciding, often at considerable personal effort and expense, to send their children to boarding school to allow them to finish high school in a single setting, with the same curriculum and the same group of friends.

Also, more and more postings are unaccompanied, to places where family members are not allowed for security reasons. For the increasing number of tandem couples and single-parent families, this adds an additional layer of complication to educational planning for their children. Most families want to avoid taking the chance that their child's high school career might be interrupted by an evacuation.

Some posts do not have an American curriculum or English-language school, or parents believe that the available options do not offer a program broad and strong enough to support college admissions in today's competitive climate.

Other families find that their children have special learning needs that cannot be easily accommodated overseas. And in some cases young people have developed a passion, interest or talent that requires specialized nurturing by expert teachers or coaches.

The boarding school option can offer continuity and security, and be a good educational and social match for a particular student. In such an environment, a young person can develop excellent study habits and put down roots in a way that might not be possible with frequent moves. The downside is the sadness both parents and children must contend with as the result of a premature separation of the nuclear family and the distance, perhaps continents, that may lie between them.

Criteria for Success

The most critical factor in the success of a boarding school experience is the correct fit between student and school in a variety of areas. Parents often ask for a list of the "best" boarding schools. There is no such thing. Which boarding school is best depends on the characteristics and interests of the student and the circumstances of the family.

The most obvious factor in school choice is the academic profile of the student. There are boarding schools that are extremely competitive with regard to admissions and academically tough once a student has enrolled. Some young people thrive with competition. Other students, equally bright, may be happier and do better in a setting that emphasizes cooperative learning and self-paced instruction. Some teens

Continued on page 69

Pamela Ward is a regional education officer in the State Department's Office of Overseas Schools. She was formerly the education and youth officer in State's Family Liaison Office.

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Which boarding school is best depends on the characteristics and interests of the student and the circumstances of the family.

are ready for intellectual freedom and have developed excellent study habits. Others need the structure of mandatory study halls, frequent progress reports and close teacher supervision.

It is important to determine if a particular student is likely to achieve at about the same level as other students at the school. The boarding school's Web site and literature may not list the typical band of test scores and grades of accepted students that colleges do. However, they will give you this information if you ask, and this will be helpful in determining if the school is a good academic fit.

In some cases, a young person may have already identified an area of intellectual passion or demonstrated unusual abilities. During a recent boarding school visit, I spoke with several young women who were doing internships in the genetic research labs of a nearby world-class university. They bubbled with excitement about their projects.

The right school will give students the opportunity to go as far and deep as they wish in a field that has aroused their curiosity. There are boarding schools that have special programs in everything from classical dance to marine science, where students can study with experts, teachers and other students who share their passion.

The social fit is as important as the

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academic fit, and this has to go two ways — the student must be comfortable, and the parents must feel that the standards, expectations and values of the school are consistent with their own. The boarding school will, in fact, be a "stand-in" for the parent in deciding standards of behavior and social interaction. I have talked with students and families who will not even consider a school that requires uniforms or has mandatory chapel attendance, while others prefer very strict rules, a dress code and little unsupervised time.

Each family should discuss these issues in their preliminary review of school Web sites and materials and request clarification from the school on any issues that are important to them. This includes the consequences for breaches of the regulations and the workings of the honor code, if one exists. One student I met recently told me she was disturbed by the school honor code's requirement that a student report any classmate who they knew had lied or cheated. Even speaking hypothetically, she did not like the idea of being required to turn in a friend.

Perhaps the single most important question is the number of day students and five-day boarders, compared with seven-day boarders.

Foreign Service students tend to be most comfortable in schools that are diverse in the broadest sense. Not only should diversity manifest itself in a variety of racial, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds among students, but there should also be a good number of international students from several countries. American students should hail from a wide range of geographic areas in the U.S. Perhaps the single most important question is the number of day students and five-day boarders, compared with seven-day boarders. If a large percentage of students go home every evening or every weekend, the school is less likely to have a wide choice of weekend and evening programs and activities, and it may be very lonely for those left behind.

I remember talking with one parent who had selected a school in part

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Schools at a Glance

Please visit *www.fsjournal.org* and click on the Marketplace tab for more information.

School Name	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD & LD	Miles to International Airport	International Student Orientation	Dorms w/E-mail & Phones	Holiday Break Coverage	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS													
Browne Academy	90	288	49/51	NA	1	PK - 8	N	N	5	NA	NA	NA	7,925 – 19,050
National Presbyterian School	74	250	50/50	NA	3	PK - 6	N	Limited	32	Y	Y	Limited	12,000 – 19,470
ELEMENTARY / JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS													
Congressional Schools of Virginia, The	82	375	53/47	0	20	PK - 12	N	N	22	N	N	N	15,200 – 19,450
Langley School, The	82	475	49/51	NA	0	PK - 8	NA	N	15	NA	NA	NA	12,300 – 24,200
ELEMENTARY / JUNIOR / SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS													
Barrie School, The	81	395	50/50	NA	NA	PK - 12	NA	Limited	31	NA	NA	NA	10,750 – 22,040
Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart	88	740	All girls	NA	5	PK - 12	N	N	15	N	NA	NA	10,000 – 19,275
Washington International School	80	885	48/52	NA	70	PK - 12	N	Limited	8	Y	N	N	25,030
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS													
Hockaday School, The	84	1,020	All girls	9	50	PK - 12	Y	Y	30	Y	Y	Y	36,900
Indian Mountain School	81	260	60/40	37	12	PK - 9	N	Y	50	N	Y	N	35,180
Rectory School, The	70	230	70/30	65	20	5 - 9	Y	Limited	40	Y	Y	Y	35,350
JUNIOR / SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS													
Brandon Hall School	76	120	84/16	46	20	9 - 12, PG	Y	Y	32	Y	Y	N	49,000
Orme School, The	89	190	51/49	80	18	8 - 12, PG	Y	Limited	70	Y	Y	Limited	34,450
Perkiomen School	74	275	60/40	60	20	5 - 12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	N	38,200
Thomas Jefferson School	74	82	49/51	54	26	7 - 12, PG	Y	N	12	Y	Y	N	32,250
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL													
Cushing Academy	90	445	55/45	85	25	9 - 12, PG	Y	NA	60	Y	Y	NA	39,950
Foxcroft School	81	180	All girls	72	14	9 - 12	Y	Y	30	Y	Y	Y	39,375
Georgetown Preparatory School	82	457	All boys	20	10	9 - 12	N	Y	20	Y	Y	N	39,000
Idyllwild Arts Academy	70	270	45/55	85	32	9 - 12, PG	Y	N	120	Y	Y	N	42,500
Interlochen Arts Academy	82	475	40/60	89	18	9 - 12, PG	N	N	16	Y	Y	N	35,850 – 37,450
Kents Hill School	86	230	60/40	75	20	9 - 12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	Limited	39,400
La Lumiere School	86	165	60/40	40	10	9 - 12, PG	Y	Limited	70	N	Y	Y	30,475
Miss Hall's School	84	195	All girls	70	24	9 - 12	Y	Limited	40	Y	Y	N	39,800
Wentworth	75	200	70/30	100	15	9 - 12, PG	Y	Limited	50	Y	Y	Limited	27,490
West Nottingham Academy	77	123	40/60	67	15	9 - 12, PG	Y	Y	50	Y	Y	N	34,900
Western Reserve Academy	71	385	55/45	63	11	9 - 12, PG	N	N	35	Y	Y	Y	35,800
White Mountain School	89	100	50/50	80	14	9 - 12, PG	Y	Y	110	N	Y	N	39,800

Notes: ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder LD - Learning Disability NA - Not Applicable PK - Pre-Kindergarten PG - Postgraduate
** Additional fees may apply*

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Dr. Milton and Mrs. Beth Costa, parents of James Costa (class of 2008) said: *"We are very pleased and grateful for what the staff and faculty at MMA have done for our son. ... Please let all know what a tremendous influence they are having on his life and what a blessing we consider it to be for him to be attending Massanutten."*

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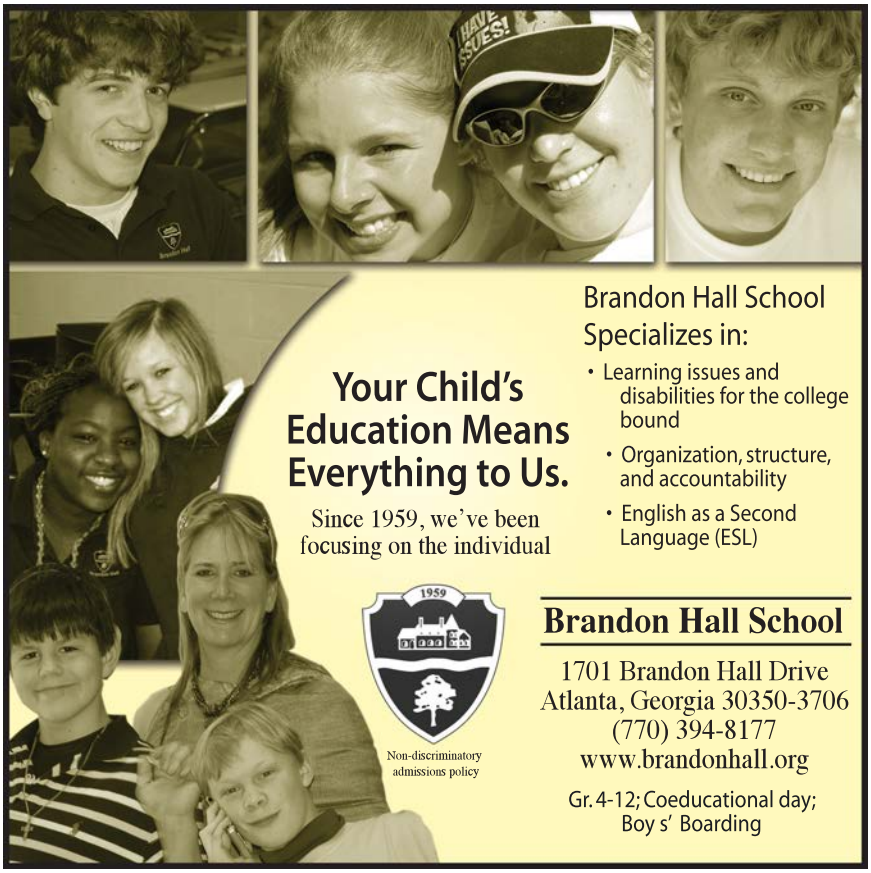
because of the large number of foreign students. She hadn't pursued the questioning far enough, however, because it turned out that all but two of the foreign students came from one country, and as soon as the many day students went home each afternoon, these students lapsed into conversing in their native language. Her son was miserably lonely and transferred after one semester.

Other Considerations

Some families choose a boarding school option so that a student can pursue a sport or activity not available overseas. This is an important consideration, but the offerings at each school should be closely examined. For example, if a student has gone horseback riding only a few times and hopes to do more, she might not be comfortable at a school where all the riders have their own horses and are competing at a very high level. A baseball player won't be content if all the others at his school are high school All-Americans and he does nothing but sit on the bench. Conversely, an accomplished musician needs more than a typical high school orchestra. Artists need well-equipped studios and guidance with their portfolios. It isn't enough to determine that the activity exists at a school; one must explore the level and intensity of the program. Visiting the campus and talking with teachers and students in the field should provide that information.

There is often greater socioeconomic diversity in U.S.-based schools, and there may be more opportunities for community service, internships and other opportunities.

Finally, geography is an important consideration. For a student whose family may be living on another continent, it is important for him or her to have access to an international airport and to have extended family or close friends nearby to help in a pinch or just to visit for Thanksgiving. In the U.S. there are more schools and a wider selection of programs. In addition to greater socioeconomic diversi-



The application process for boarding schools is much like that for college admissions.

ty, U.S.-based schools may offer more opportunities for community service, internships and other programs. Further, the transition to college may be less traumatic for an international student from a U.S. boarding school.

Alternatively, there are numerous excellent American-curriculum boarding schools abroad. Many families find those an appealing choice because of the international student body, meaning that most of the other students are also global nomads with distant families. It is also closer and less costly to go "home" if parents are posted overseas. In addition, the student's college admissions profile may be enhanced by an international high school experience.

Finally, families may decide on boarding school if a student is struggling academically or not performing as expected given his or her potential. Many college preparatory boarding schools have academic support in the form of a learning center to teach study skills, supervised study halls and tutoring. In some cases, the smaller classes and absence of distractions such as video games are all that is needed to improve academic performance.

In the case of a student with an identified or suspected learning or emotional disability, there are all levels of specialized schools and programs. This is a topic in its own right, but if parents know or suspect that their child has such needs or if the staff at the child's present school has expressed concern, parents should contact the Employee Consultation

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Schools at a Glance

Please visit *www.fsjournal.org* and click on the Marketplace tab for more information.

School Name	Page Number	Enrollment	Gender Distribution M/F	Percent Boarding	Percent International	Levels Offered	Common Application	Accepts/Offers ADD & LD	Miles to International Airport	International Student Orientation	Dorms w/E-mail & Phones	Holiday Break Coverage	Annual Tuition, Room & Board (USD)
SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS													
Benedictine School, The	90	100	71/29	80	5	NA	NA	Y	60	Y	Y	N	call for tuition
Gow School, The	68	145	All boys	100	2	7 - 12, PG	N	Y	20	Y	Y	N	43,600
Kildonan School, The	83	140	70/30	60	7	2 - 12, PG	N	Y	90	Y	Y	N	51,500
Landmark School, The	87	447	60/40	50	10	2 - 12	N	Y	25	N	Y	N	40,500
Riverview School, The	76	177	50/50	97	6	6 - 12, PG	N	Y	75	Y	Y	N	63,900
OVERSEAS SCHOOLS													
CCI Renaissance School	90	120	40/60	100	5	PK - 12	N	N	175	Y	Y	N	32,500*
Guanacaste – Country Day School	77	150	50/50	15	80	PK - 12	N	N	40	Y	Y	N	24,580
International School of Berne	68	290	53/47	NA	98	PK - 12	N	Y	NA	NA	NA	NA	6,900 – 24,920
Jakarta International School	69	2,474	50/50	NA	80	K - 12	NA	Limited	30	Y	N	N	6,250 – 18,600
John F. Kennedy International School of Switzerland	81	70	50/50	50	70	K - 8	N	Limited	90	Y	Y	N	39,500
Leysin American School in Switzerland	67	370	52/48	100	65	9 - 12, PG	Y	Limited	75	Y	Y	N	38,000
Marymount International School of London	68	240	All girls	43	75	6 - 12	N	Limited	12	Y	Y	Y	50,000
Marymount International School of Rome	87	750	40/60	17	58	PK - 12	N	Limited	15	Y	N	N	10,125 – 19,500
St. John's International School	79	905	51/49	NA	NA	PK - 13	Y	Y	5	NA	NA	NA	9,000 – 32,000
St. Stephen's School	87	218	40/60	17	58	9 - 12, PG	N	N	12	NA	Y	N	46,200**
TASIS, The American School in England	91	750	51/49	25	35	PK - 12	Y	Limited	8	Y	Y	N	11,345 – 53,000
Woodstock School	75	470	50/50	85	56	PK - 12	N	N	230	Y	Y	N	16,000 – 19,000
MILITARY SCHOOLS													
Marine Military Academy	85	340	All boys	100	17	8 - 12, PG	N	Limited	2	Y	Y	N	24,750
Massanutten Military Academy	73	200	75/25	96	7	7 - 12, PG	N	N	60	N	Y	N	23,489
DISTANCE LEARNING SCHOOLS													
American Military University	67	25,000 military & civilians in over 100 countries. 50+ undergrad & graduate programs, including Intelligence, Homeland Security and Emergency & Disaster Management. Visit www.amuonline.com											
University of Missouri Center for Distance & Independent Study	80	Independent study: Grade 3 through University. Accredited HS diploma. Bachelor's degree completion. Visit http://cdis.missouri.edu/go/pFSJ7.asp											
OTHER													
FSYF		*Foreign Service Youth Foundation* Go to www.fsyf.org Assisting Foreign Service youth.											
RNG International Educational Consultants	84	Specializing in comprehensive and personalized educational advising. Go to www.rebeccagrappo.com											

Notes: ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder LD - Learning Disability NA - Not Applicable PK - Pre-Kindergarten PG - Postgraduate
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The first few weeks at school can be fraught with homesickness for students and anxiety for parents. Planning ahead can make everyone feel more comfortable.

Service — by e-mail at MEDECS @state.gov or by phone at (202) 663-1815 — in the Department of State Medical Division to arrange for an assessment. Parents overseas should talk with their regional medical officer.

The Financial Piece

An important and complex aspect of the boarding school decisions made by families relates to the financial implications of their choices. The U.S. government provides educational allowances to assist families posted overseas in financing an education similar to that available in a good public school in the U.S. Although this sounds straightforward, it can be quite complicated, depending on the post and the circumstances.

Many posts around the world have private, English-language, American-curriculum international schools that are deemed by professional educators to meet this educational standard. In that case, the educational allowance for that post is based on the tuition charged by the school at post. Parents may, however, select other educational options, including boarding school — but costs over and above the allowance for the day school at post must be paid by the family.

Often, young people are not allowed to live at certain posts for secu-

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rity reasons. And some posts lack schools that meet the criteria of English-language, American-curriculum, nonprofit and secular. In these situations, an "away-from-post" or boarding school allowance is provided for some or all grades.

This allowance varies by post and is based on the average of the tuition, room-and-board costs for all the boarding schools attended by children of U.S. government families posted abroad, plus the cost of three round trips a year to return to post or visit parents at an alternate point during school vacations.

This calculus is the reason it may be more cost-effective for a student to attend a school closer to post. The amount allowed for each post can be found on the State Department intranet by clicking "Allowances, Rates, Education" and conducting an alphabetic search for your country.

There are many variables in each situation, so when in doubt, ask. The Family Liaison Office and the Office of Allowances can assist with questions about midyear transfers, training, unaccompanied tours and other situations that come up. One important point to keep in mind is that if a student has a parent living in the U.S. for any reason, he or she is not eligible for an educational allowance to attend school in the States unless that U.S.-resident parent has no custodial rights.

In such cases, an overseas boarding school may be worth considering. However, parents should keep in mind that there are likely to be additional expenses, such as uniforms and field trips, that are not covered by allowances.

Although the Family Liaison Office will gladly provide guidance, some circumstances may require specialized assistance. For instance, if a student has special needs or a placement is needed immediately or the admission application deadline has passed, professional assistance may be required. There are excellent private consultants who specialize in helping internationally mobile families. FLO can give you referrals.

The Application Process

The application process for boarding schools is much like that for college admissions. It takes almost a year from registering your expression of interest to receiving the letter of acceptance.

• Consult reference works, talk with other parents, and contact FLO's education and youth officer and your school guidance counselor for suggestions.

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Boarding school experiences can provide a great education, lasting friendships and deep roots in an institution.

• Narrow down the list of "possibles" by reviewing school Web sites and making campus visits. Home leave or R&R may be the best time to visit a campus, both because no allowance funds are available for this purpose and because you may have to return for an interview if you decide to apply.

• Carry your school reports and any test scores you may have with you on a school visit and ask for an honest appraisal of whether that school would be a good fit. They will usually be very candid. It is not in the best interest of the school to wade through stacks of applications from students who will only be rejected. The right fit is very important to schools as well as families.

• Talk with teachers and students and, if possible, visit dorms, classrooms and sports facilities and eat in the dining hall.

The Admissions Test

Many competitive schools require admissions test results and other evaluations.

• The Secondary Schools Admissions Test is a standardized test much like the college entrance examinations. A student should sit for the SSAT in the summer or fall before he or she wishes to begin boarding school. Bear in mind that this exam is not given everywhere overseas. Do your research and plan ahead.

• A student with even mild learn-

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ing or psychological challenges may need an individual psychoeducational evaluation done by a licensed diagnostician. This can be arranged through the Employee Consultation Service, but is usually done in the U.S. Again, advanced planning is necessary.

• Send in the school application well in advance. Note that the application fee is not covered by allowances, even if the student later attends that school.

• Arrangements should then be made to have supporting documents, such as the transcript from the current school and recommendations, sent.

• Schedule an interview, if necessary. Sometimes a telephone interview or a meeting with a traveling admissions representative can be arranged for overseas families.

• Now the waiting begins. Unless a school has rolling admissions, meaning they make a decision as soon as a file is complete, acceptances are sent out in the spring, usually March or April. A deposit, required upon acceptance, can be refunded to a parent once the student enrolls. Vouchers and receipts are submitted at the parent's post of assignment.

The Adventure Begins

The decision has been made and the deposit sent. Now it is time to embark on the new adventure called boarding school. Here is very good news for families: as of July 22, 2007, students attending boarding school are allowed a shipment of 250 pounds of unaccompanied air baggage sent from post to school and back yearly. This allowance can be used for storage at school over the summer in lieu of shipment. There is still no allowance, however, for a parent to accompany a student to school the first time to get settled, so many families choose to plan their home leave or other vacation so that they are around to help a new boarding school student get settled.

The first few weeks at school can

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be fraught with homesickness for students and anxiety for parents. Planning ahead can make everyone feel more comfortable. Students and families should work with the school to schedule a regular call time that works with the school hours and time-zone differences. Some schools have strict rules about phone usage but may make exceptions for students whose parents are several time zones away.

Agree to phone regularly, at least once a week, and keep that commitment — on both sides. Of course, you can also use e-mail to touch base regularly. In particular, both students and parents should keep each other advised of any travel plans.

Families need to make plans together before school starts for long weekends, parent weekends and Thanksgiving break. It is lonely to be one of only a few students on campus during a holiday weekend. After the first year this may take care of itself, but when your child is starting out, make sure a plan is in place. Parents should also arrange with school staff to facilitate medical or dental care or medication. Such care may be better than that available at post, but adults will need to help with making appointments and transportation.

Parents should also purchase tickets and arrange for airport transport for travel at winter break well in advance. It may be wise to store travel documents such as tickets and passport with the school administration for safekeeping.

These logistical arrangements, best done in person, will alert the school staff to the fact that a student is a "global nomad," a long way from his family for the first time. Under such circumstances, it is not too much to ask that teachers, house-parents and counselors be alert for signs of sadness, loneliness or acting out. Still, adjustment typically takes up to a few months, and parents should not be alarmed if things are not immediately perfect. The school may make a special effort to make sure internationally mobile young people meet each other. One school staffer should be in touch regularly with parents to report on social, academic and emotional adjustment.

Boarding school experiences can provide a great education, lasting friendships and deep roots in an institution. It is a gift that we are privileged to be able to offer our children. If students are allowed to participate in the selection of the school and parents are aware of the supportive role they need to play, the experience can be important in helping a young person maximize his or her academic and social potential. ■

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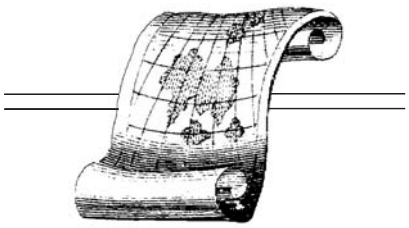

REFLECTIONS

Buying Potatoes in Havana

BY ROBERT BLAU

"Pssst. Tengo papas" (I have potatoes), says the Cuban vegetable-market guy in a stage whisper, as he comes out of the shadows. You would think he's using some sort of a code to try to sell you cocaine, or ask your help to migrate out of Cuba, but he really is just trying to sell you potatoes.

Shoppers at Havana's agro-mercado, where many fruits and vegetables are for sale, must go through this secretive drill for potatoes, which are a more tightly controlled product than, say, green peppers, onions or bananas. Those products are permitted to be sold there, so long as producers supply the official market quota to the government first.

Potatoes, by contrast, are legally produced and distributed only to the food-ration stores, where they are sold at heavily subsidized prices to average Cubans. But that doesn't stop the potatoes from falling off the supply trucks and making their way to the murky basements on the fringes of the agro-mercado.

Cuba is the hemisphere's most screwed-up economy, like a failed laboratory experiment that the mad scientist in charge doesn't know has failed because the results fit his basic plan: keep Cubans poor and scampering around for food all day so they have no energy left to protest their lack of fundamental human rights. Every ordinary citizen understands the official system is a failure and does what he can to hustle on the side. (The official wage is the equivalent of about $15 per month.)

Every ordinary citizen understands the official system is a failure and does what he can to hustle on the side.

Restaurant employees steal food and resell it. Drivers of official cars steal gasoline and resell it. You can go to a hardware store and buy hammers but not nails, because "Hammers are something Cubans buy; nails are something they steal."

Anyone with farmland will hide as much of his output as possible from the production-quota police and sell it on the side. And, as regards potatoes, truck drivers in the food distribution system misdirect part of their cargo to black markets.

Some of these people get caught and are made an example of. The following dialog could be heard in any of the many Cuban prisons:

Prisoner A: What are you in for?

Prisoner B: Armed robbery and murder. You?

Prisoner A: Handing out copies of the International Declaration of Human Rights. How about Juan over there?

Prisoner C (Juan): Trafficking in potatoes.

You're aware of this as you go to the market, having learned that the official policy of "socialism or death" has done nothing in 50 years to undo the hard-wiring for creativity and entrepreneurial talent in Cuban DNA. This strand is right next to another that makes Cubans love the United States, despite 50 years of daily anti-American propaganda. The seller knows from your license plate that you are an American, but he wants to sell you those potatoes just as badly as you want to buy them.

So, if it's potatoes you want, you nod your head to the guy from the official state-run car-parking mafia who approaches you with "Psst. Tengo papas." Or, if he's slow on the uptake, you can wait for the bag-carrier guys who pretend to be political dissidents to get bigger tips and who can also be potato middlemen.

Third choice (my favorite) is the wizened old man who sometimes shows up at the back of your car with his potatoes in a little red wagon, hawking them with the promise that they are the best in all of Cuba.

Finally, if none of these sellers materialize, you learn to walk around the perimeter of the market area with a look on your face that says: "I've got hard currency and I need potatoes." And, in a matter of less than a minute, a seller will appear. Guaranteed. ■

Robert Blau, an FSO since 1983, returned in July from a two-year tour in the U.S. interest section in Havana. He is now deputy director of the Cuban Affairs Office in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

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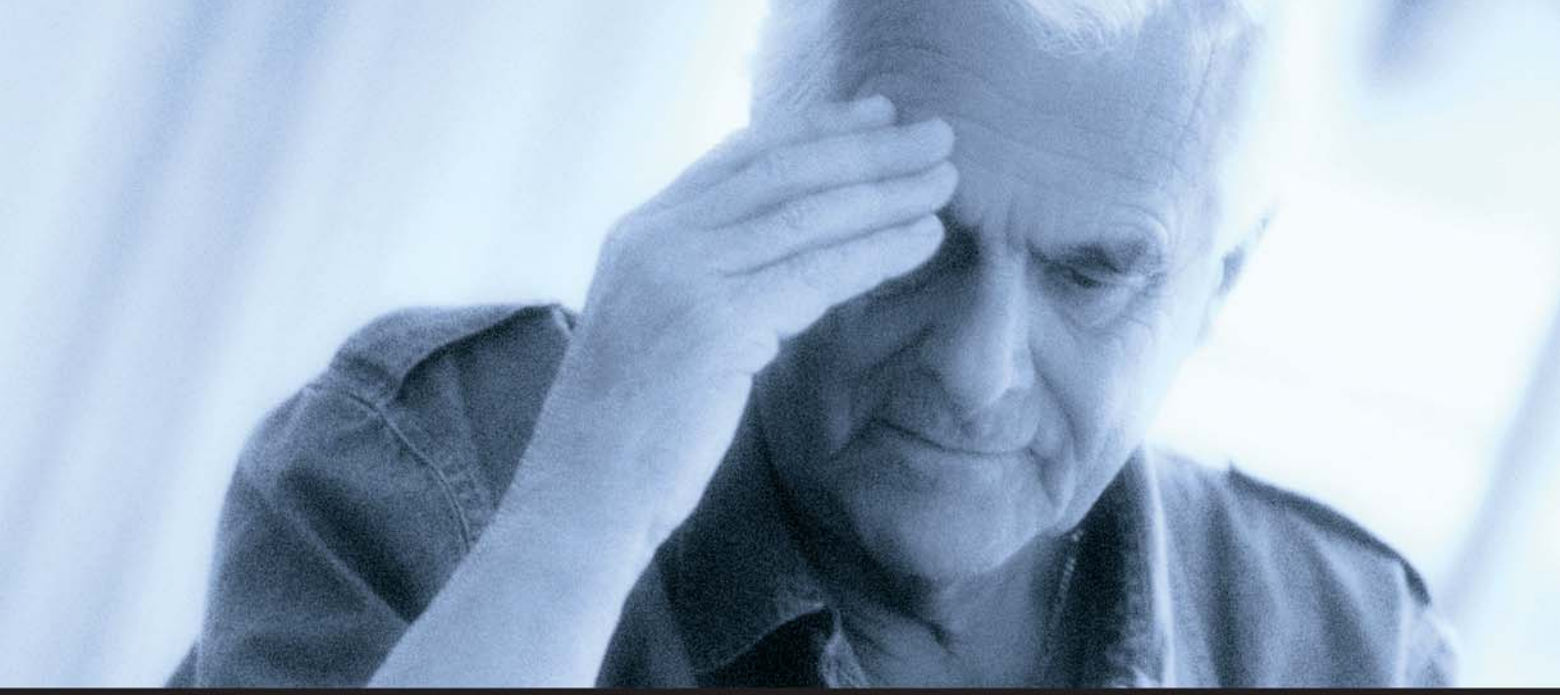

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