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THE MAGAZINE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS



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## PRESIDENT'S VIEWS

### *The Journey*

BY JOHN K. NALAND

Have you noticed that, even if you have just begun a new assignment, some colleagues ask what you plan to do next? Such questioning reflects a tendency by some people to focus on becoming something else as rapidly as possible, rather than making the most of what they are now. Colleagues who are “always becoming but never being” focus on a desired destination (such as attaining some high position years from now) rather than the journey (the day-by-day experiences over the course of their careers).

But there is an alternative philosophy that views the Foreign Service career as a journey rather than a destination. This philosophy encourages taking some emotionally rewarding assignments and beneficial long-term training or developmental details, even if they do not promote the rush up the promotion ladder. It advocates the maintenance of a reasonable balance between work and family since, as the cliché says, no one on their deathbed ever wished they had spent more time in the office.

Obviously, even those of us who try to enjoy the journey must take a fair share of difficult and even dangerous assignments along the way. Thus, there will inevitably be times when the needs of the Service overshadow the needs of family, friends or off-duty interests. But, over the course of a



career, there should be a balance between work and family. There should also be a balance between sacrifices and rewards (both material and emotional).

This “enjoy the journey” philosophy also encourages us to volunteer for additional duties that allow us to “give back” by way of community service and institution building activities. For active-duty members, that could mean serving on an Employee Evaluation Review panel, an interagency housing board or a commissary association. For retirees, that could mean contacting lawmakers to highlight the need for more resources for diplomatic engagement.

AFSA offers several community service opportunities. Our overseas chapters each need a post representative to bring local members’ concerns to the attention of management and AFSA headquarters. The *Foreign Service Journal* is always looking for members to write analytical articles on professional issues and international affairs to further the continuing education of our colleagues. AFSA’s leadership highly values the input of members who take the time to send in their suggestions and criticism. And we depend on members to take the time each year to nominate colleagues for our prestigious awards for constructive dissent (see p. 69).

Last but not least, AFSA needs volunteers from all five foreign affairs agencies to step forward every two

years to fill the 26 vacancies on the AFSA Governing Board. The current board’s term expires next summer and elections will be held this winter for the 2009-2011 term. I will be leaving office, and we will also seek nominations for AFSA’s constituency vice president jobs at State, USAID, FCS and FAS, and for retirees, as well as secretary and treasurer. Finally, we will be filling the constituency representative positions: nine from the State Department, five retirees, and one each for USAID, FCS, FAS and IBB.

Service on the AFSA Governing Board offers the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of your colleagues and their families. The next few years will be critical ones for our profession. Without a strong AFSA Governing Board that is representative of our diverse Foreign Service, diplomacy and development assistance may continue to suffer from inadequate support and respect.

I particularly highlight the need for volunteers to stand for election to the full-time AFSA president and active-duty vice president positions. These jobs — some of the most personally and professionally rewarding in the Foreign Service — are not listed on any agency’s vacancy list. But they require strong candidates to step forward to maintain AFSA’s effectiveness after the summer of 2009.

Information on past election procedures can be found on AFSA’s Web site. An updated call for the coming elections will be issued later this year. ■

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





# LETTERS

## Just Say No

Thanks for your fantastic June issue on Foreign Service personnel issues. However, I would note that the various articles that discuss the deficiencies of the FS personnel system fail to recognize a fundamental truth: as long as the Foreign Service successfully performs its job despite the deteriorating working environment and “benefits,” there is very little real pressure on department management to make fundamental improvements. It took me a while to figure this out during my 30-year FS career, but eventually I did — so by the time of my first ambassadorship in a small West African post that was chronically understaffed, I knew what buttons to push.

When told that there would be a six-month gap in replacing our departed consular officer (and that was only half of one position), and that the handful of other employees at post would just have to divvy up the work (in addition to doing more than full-time jobs already), I told the department, “Sorry, but we’ll just close the consular section from May through September.” Amazingly, the department then “found” a spare officer at a large European post, and we were able to maintain all consular operations without burdening others at post beyond reason.

As long as Foreign Service members continue to absorb the workload — and it doesn’t matter if they do it with or without grumbling, writing scathing articles and op-eds, etc. — nothing will change. When critical

positions remain unfilled, or larger numbers resign from the Service, department management will finally take real notice. Yes, Foreign Service work is among the most challenging and fulfilling around, but it is also seriously undervalued. Those same skills are priced much higher in the private sector, especially in today’s globalized system, so members do have other options.

If folks are discontented by Service conditions, then they should vote with their feet — which will be a much more effective change inducer than all the articles ever written.

*Tibor P. Nagy Jr.  
Ambassador, retired  
Ransom Canyon, Texas*

## Recruiting for Intellect and Leadership

I was glad to read AFSA President John Naland’s column in the May *FSJ* asserting that ambassadors ought to be grown in the ranks of the Foreign Service as opposed to being political appointees. Absolutely right. Appointing unqualified ambassadors not only damages our nation’s ability to conduct effective foreign policy. It punishes the employees at the appointee’s mission who must work doubly hard to do their already tough job, while simultaneously carrying the weight of a diplomatic novice who knows little of what it takes to run an embassy. This is one of the leadership failures of the Foreign Service.

Similarly, Shawn Dorman’s article in the June issue (“Who is the ‘Total

Candidate’? FSO Hiring Today”) spoke of the traditional recruitment cycle the Foreign Service has utilized for FSO selection. Recruiting has focused primarily on intellectual skills. These traits are essential, to be sure, but what of the practical and equally rare skills of leadership and management?

The Foreign Service recruits and promotes people who have an amazing ability to write, report, analyze and discuss foreign policy matters, but have real difficulty when called upon to assume positions of leadership. Many brilliant FSOs have been Peter Principled into jobs where they flounder. Some of them have no idea how to lead or manage people and resources. They would rather hole up in their offices and write cables than actually walk through the halls of their embassy or sit and chat with some of their employees.

This is why a profession with perhaps one of the most highly educated work forces falls so short on organization, leadership and esprit de corps. Ambassadors and senior officers must wear two hats to be effective: intellectual and leader.

We certainly have people with brilliant minds and excellent leadership skills in the Foreign Service, but they are few. A great deal of the morale problem can be remedied by changing the way we recruit and promote our own officers as well as our ambassadors. We need *leaders* to fill leadership roles. A move away from appointing political insiders or bookish



introverts would go a long way toward cementing the leadership structure we must have in place.

Mr. Naland has used the U.S. military as an example of professional education and leadership development, and I agree. A one-week leadership course at FSI for our officers is a flimsy foundation compared to how much time, education and scrutiny military officers are afforded before they are given command of personnel and resources.

The Foreign Service can grow intellectuals with solid leadership skills. We just need to recruit in the right places, train our future leaders well, weed out the non-performers and promote those with intellect as well as a talent for leading people.

*Robert J. Roulston*  
Assistant Regional Security  
Officer  
Embassy Caracas

### Safeguard the Hiring Process

I would like to commend Shawn Dorman for her clear explanation of the changes in the Foreign Service examination system in the June *FSJ*. I must confess that when I heard that the exam system was to be tinkered with yet again, I was a little bit uneasy, particularly with the idea of an online written test.

Upon reflection, it would appear that the new system has been well thought out, and has the potential to lead to a hiring process that is essentially fair. I am not particularly concerned about the elaborate registration process, which others have criticized, because it will have the effect of weeding out those who are not truly interested in pursuing a Foreign Service career.

There is still one aspect of the new system, however, that I find disquieting: the increasing complexity of the intake process itself. A number of new steps have been added, and each

new step creates an opportunity to shape the pool of job applicants according to the prejudices of the day. Because of this, I hope that every safeguard will be put in place to ensure that “political correctness” will not be allowed to intrude upon a process that should, under ideal conditions, be expected to select personnel primarily according to merit. This problem could become especially acute if the written exam were made too easy, thus allowing the Qualifications Evaluation Panel to choose candidates for the Oral Assessment who would not have made it past the written exam in previous years.

There has been a tendency over the past few decades to “lower the bar” with regard to the written exam. When I first took the exam in 1971, it was the hardest test I ever took. I sweated bullets waiting for my marks, but in the end passed and went on to pass the orals, which at the time were little more than a glorified interview. I took the written exam again in 1999, and found that over the years it had become considerably easier, although this was remedied by the much more realistic oral assessment process.

If, over the next few years, standards for the written exam are further relaxed, that would raise a red flag about the purpose and objectivity of the new hiring system.

*James F. Schumaker*  
FSO, retired  
San Clemente, Calif.

### Ignoring USAID?

With specific regard to the June *FSJ*, and earlier issues as well, why do you seem to ignore USAID FSOs and issues? It is certainly true that there are many overlaps between the life and personnel system of State and USAID — but there are also important differences. Are you confirming the suspicion of demoralized USAID staff that the creation of State’s F

Bureau represents the effective integration of our agency into State by stealth?

*Irving Rosenthal*  
USAID FSO, retired  
Washington, D.C.

### Editor’s Note:

*In fact, several articles and columns in the June FSJ (mostly, but not only, in the AFSA News section) discuss USAID concerns, as is true every month. Admittedly, the June issue, focusing on the future of the Foreign Service personnel system, did concentrate more than usual on State Department-specific topics — but that is only because the State cohort accounts for more than 90 percent of the active-duty Foreign Service.*

*That said, let me reassure you that we are eager to publish material dealing with professional and policy topics affecting members from all AFSA constituencies. For more details on how to submit contributions, please see this month’s “Letter from the Editor” (p. 16).*

### Service for the Unaccompanied

As the spouse of an FSO currently on his way to a posting at a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Iraq, I read Kelly Bembry Midura’s June article on family life in the Foreign Service (“Going It Alone: Family Life in the ‘New’ Foreign Service”) with some interest. Because my sister-in-law is career Air Force with previous deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, our family has seen the support given to unaccompanied deployments from both sides of the military/civilian divide. Simply put, State has a long way to go to meet the kind of support the military provides to its separated families.

As Ms. Midura points out, the FLO and its unaccompanied tour specialist are working very hard with few

## LETTERS



resources to assist families left behind, but they are limited by their budget as to what they can provide. By contrast, when my sister-in-law is overseas, her family back at home has access to 24-hour-a-day child care, housing maintenance and car repair services. Located on base are schools, after-school activities and medical care, not to mention a supportive community of teachers and neighbors who are all in the same situation. In many ways, the Foreign Service unaccompanied experience mirrors that of the military reserves, who also lack these on-base services.

This is not to say that the department needs to match the benefits provided by the military, which, after all, gives its members far fewer choices for deployments than FSOs and whose members don't have the option

of quitting. But State should recognize some of the logistical challenges its separated families face.

Concerning the Separate Maintenance Allowance, tandem couples are not eligible unless one takes leave without pay. Ostensibly this is because both spouses could be assigned to the same unaccompanied post, but that requirement ignores the reality of families with children. This is another inequity that the department needs to look at fixing.

*Lisa K. Heller*

*FSO*

*Washington, D.C.*

### **N'Djamena Evacuation**

During my regional travel days I spent some time in N'Djamena and remember the embassy as being on the main street where the media

reported the rebels and Chadian army forces fought earlier this year. Assuming the embassy has not been moved, I am very surprised that anyone remained in there after Jan. 31, as Rajiv Malik recounts ("Three Days in N'Djamena," May *FSJ*).

With the French military base available, I am further shocked that the essential personnel were not moved there on Saturday morning, Feb. 2, after the dependents were evacuated to Yaounde. Sounds like the Emergency Action Committee needs some remedial training.

*Paul Good*

*FSO, retired*

*Herndon, Va.*

### **Use Real Arabic**

The superheroes cover on the June issue neatly symbolizes the outstanding abilities of the FSOs to be brought in via the new examination system. However, it fails to reflect the language knowledge of the Foreign Service.

The book, held aloft by the central figure on the cover, bears a title which is in Arabic letters. However, it is not real Arabic because the words are written left to right, like English, whereas Arabic is written right to left, and because the letters are in the freestanding form (roughly equivalent to capital letters), which is not how words are written that way in Arabic.

Of course, contract artists can't be expected to have foreign language knowledge — their field is art. So it might be good for the *FSJ* to get an advance copy and show any inscription to one of the many FSOs who know the language.

When translated into English, the book title means "KOOB SNOIS-SERPXE CIBARA." (Try reading this right-to-left.)

*Pierce Bullen*

*FSO, retired*

*Washington, D.C.* ■

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# CYBERNOTES

## USIA Alumni Association Reinvents Itself

The United States Information Agency Alumni Association was founded in 1981 to help USIA retirees stay engaged in professional affairs. It has now renamed itself the Public Diplomacy Alumni Association and launched a new effort to foster recognition of and support for public diplomacy — as opposed to public relations — through educational, social and outreach activities, including an annual awards program.

The 450-member PDAA is headed by retired FSO Eugene Nojek. The association has a directory and quarterly newsletter, and sponsors seminars, luncheons and other gatherings.

Its redesigned Web site, at [www.publicdiplomacy.org](http://www.publicdiplomacy.org), features discussion in two broad areas — the debate over public diplomacy, and its practice — with an up-to-date list of links to articles and speeches on each topic. The site also contains a PD community bulletin board, links to relevant associations, think-tanks, PD institutes and other sites, as well as the member-only online newsletter.

The PDAA's 2008 Award for Achievement in Public Diplomacy went to two individuals and one group at the May 4 annual dinner. Jonathan Henick, public affairs officer in Baku, was cited for his efforts in promoting and defending freedom of speech and independent journalism in the repressive environment of Azerbaijan. Nicholas Papp, cultural affairs officer and director of the American Center in Taipei, was honored for revitalizing

and modernizing Taiwan's Education-USA program and extending its outreach to broader publics through the innovative utilization of new media technologies.

The FSN staff in Rangoon received a group award for their outstanding efforts and perseverance in promoting democracy and human rights in Burma. In a challenging environment, they brought to bear a broad range of public diplomacy tools and programs, including exchange programs, the American Center library, English teaching, publications, donated book programs and media outreach.

The winners were chosen from among 17 strong nominations of Foreign and Civil Service employees from the Department of State, both overseas and in Washington, including FSI training specialists and a Virtual Presence Post team.

The PDAA is open to all former employees of the U.S. Information Agency as well as current and former State Department employees, both Foreign Service and Civil Service, and Foreign Service Nationals. The association is intent upon improving PD dialogue with foreign publics and communicating more effectively about what makes America tick, "warts and all." The association also energetically supports efforts to improve current PD operations and structure.

— Susan B. Maitra, Senior Editor

## 2008 Public Diplomacy Report Cuts to the Chase

This year's annual report of the

U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, mandated by Congress to evaluate the effectiveness of government public diplomacy activities, turns a rigorous analytical eye on the human resources dimension of PD — an "important and relatively under-explored topic," the commission notes — and offers seven concrete recommendations for improvement. The report is available online at [www.state.gov/documents/organization/106297.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/106297.pdf).

The commission acknowledges that the challenges confronting public diplomacy are varied, so there is no single fix. It also recognizes that U.S. foreign policy is probably the most significant proximate determinant of how foreign publics view the United States as a player in international relations. Still, as the report states, "getting the human resources dimension of public diplomacy right can go a long way toward enhancing the overall effectiveness of America's outreach to the world."

Looking at PD from the standpoint of its practitioners helps put the problem into perspective. Public diplomacy is the second smallest cone (next to management) in the Foreign Service, and officials acknowledge that the State Department makes no special effort to recruit individuals with relevant experience or skills into the PD career track. The Foreign Service Officer Test and Oral Assessment do not specifically test for public diplomacy instincts and communication skills. Nor does the department's Employee Evaluation Report form



contain any section specifically devoted to public diplomacy outreach.

The commission urges the department to make a concerted effort to recruit PD candidates. It recommends that the FS exam process include questions and tasks directly germane to the conduct of public diplomacy. It also advocates building specific PD requirements into the EER form for all FSOs, with one or more specific tasks of directly engaging and influencing foreign publics as work requirement objectives for PD officers.

Concerning training, a number of “conspicuous and serious blind spots” are identified. The commission recommends that the Foreign Service Institute develop courses comparable to graduate-level university courses in the area of communication theory, with special emphasis on political communication and rhetoric, advertising and marketing theory and public opinion analysis; and that the department establish a nine-month, in-depth public diplomacy course for mid- to senior-level PD officers, mod-

eled on that currently offered to rising economic officers.

The commission’s last three recommendations have to do with the integration of PD into the State Department. To determine the extent to which department officials are taking PD into consideration in actual foreign policy decision-making, the commission recommends a zero-based review of the PD area office staffing structure. Further, observing that the overseas staffing structure has remained unchanged since the 1999 consolidation of USIA into the department and that public affairs officers are largely viewed (and view themselves) as managers and administrators rather than communicators, the commission recommends a zero-based review of the overseas PD staffing model.

Finally, to right the “persistent under-representation” of PD officers in the department’s senior-most ranks, the commission urges they be promoted to senior positions at the same rate as other career FSOs.

— Susan B. Maitra, Senior Editor

### Site of the Month: [www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com)

Though John McIntyre and Tom Bevan founded *Real Clear Politics* in 2000, the site has picked up traffic this year as people flock to find independent data on an historic election. *Real Clear Politics*, with its signature clean design, is user-friendly, effective and succinct.

Aiming to “publish the best commentary, news, polling data and links to important resources from all points of the political compass and covering all the important issues of the day,” the Web site is continually updated and acts as an independent filter for political news. *Real Clear Politics* publishes the major political headlines and editorials, as well as Transcripts/Speeches, Best of the Blogs, Around the World, Real Clear Markets and Real Clear Sports. If users want to delve deeper into the political issues of the day, they can turn to news and election videos, detailed polling statistics, an alphabetized listing of the latest news by issue, as well as RCP’s own political blogs.

But this site’s real value is in that very first screen. There you have the latest polling data on the right and the top, independently filtered political headlines, news and commentary every single day and up-to-the-minute. Basically, you learn who’s winning and why, and how people feel about both candidates. Real clear, indeed.

— Ariana Austin, Editorial Intern

### AFRICOM Architects Lower Expectations

Excitement over the pioneering U.S. Africa Command has been muted in the weeks and months leading up to its scheduled Oct. 1 standup by concerns about Pentagon dominance, a lack of civilian agency resources and incompatible personnel systems.

The difficulties came to light in a hearing before the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs on July 15, “AFRICOM: Rationales, Roles, and Progress on the Eve of Operations” (<http://nationalsecurity.oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=2080>). Witnesses admitted that the goal of staffing at least a quarter of the command with experts from State, Treasury, Agriculture and USAID was “not realistic,” as John Pendleton, director of defense capabilities and management issues at the Government Accountability Office, put it.

Instead, interagency positions have been reduced to 52, or about 4 percent of the staff. Incompatible personnel systems may well put even that number out of reach. By Sept. 30, the Defense Department expects to fill only 13 of the 52 slots, though Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates, the AFRICOM deputy commander for civil-military activities, testified that hiring is being done “through a deliberate process that is progressing well.”

The Africa Command’s creation represents a shift in Defense Department thinking, acknowledged Lauren Ploch, an African affairs analyst at the Congressional Research Service. But Ploch also testified that concerns about the “militarization” of American foreign policy have surfaced.

Theresa Whelan, the deputy assistant secretary of Defense for African affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, sought to allay concerns



**O**mar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir bears criminal responsibility for: the crime of genocide under Article 6(a) of the Rome Statute, killing members of the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups; ... crimes against humanity under Article 7 (1) of the statute, committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack directed against the civilian population of Darfur; ... and war crimes under Article 8 (2)(e)(i) of the statute.

— International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo's July 14 indictment of Sudanese President Al Bashir, [www.icc-cpi.int](http://www.icc-cpi.int)

such as this and other “misconceptions” in her testimony. “The Secretary of State remains the chief foreign policy adviser to the president, and the Secretary of Defense remains the chief adviser on defense matters. The creation of a single U.S. DOD point of contact for Africa will simply allow DOD to better coordinate its own efforts, in support of State Department leadership, to better build security capacity in Africa.”

Whelan added, “The intent is not for DOD generally, or for USAFRI-COM at the operational level, to assume the lead in areas where State and/or USAID have clear lines of authority as well as the comparative advantages to lead.”

The status of the AFRICOM initiative was also covered in a report in the July *Government Executive* magazine ([www.govexec.com](http://www.govexec.com)).

— Susan B. Maitra, Senior Editor

### Government Documents: The Challenge of E-mail

The Government Accountability Office has spotlighted gaps in federal processing and preservation of electronic documents in a new report, “Federal Records: National Archives and Selected Agencies Need to Strengthen E-Mail Management” ([www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-08-742](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-08-742)).

In view of the important role e-mail plays in documenting government activities, the House Committee

on Oversight and Government Reform’s Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and the National Archives directed the GAO to investigate the electronic records kept by 15 senior officials at four agencies: the Homeland Security Department, the Federal Trade Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

GAO found that all four agencies used an inefficient and nonsecure process of “print and file” — e-mails are printed and stored in paper form. Only the EPA was converting the documents to an electronic system.

The GAO also noted that the National Archives and Records Administration, the federal agency charged with management of government documents, had stopped making inspections to ensure that departments properly store e-mail in 2000, although it has sponsored six studies of agency record-keeping since 2003. NARA officials told the GAO that the inspections take too much time and money.

The report was issued on the eve of a vote in the House of Representatives on H.R. 5811, a bill sponsored by House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Rep. Henry A. Waxman, D-Calif., and two other Democrats, to modernize the Federal Records Act and the Presidential Records Act to ensure the preservation of the electronic records (<http://oversight.house.gov/story.as>

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## 50 Years Ago...

While legislation involving the State Department or foreign aid always causes considerable controversy in the House, Foreign Service legislation always goes rather smoothly. ... For a group that has no lobby, no pressure group support, the Foreign Service does very well.



— Rep. John M. Vorys, R-Ohio, “Observations on the Foreign Service,” Sept. 1958 *FSJ*.

2068). The bill orders NARA to set standards for capturing, managing, retrieving and preserving e-mails and other electronic communications and to issue regulations within 18 months requiring all federal agencies to preserve such communications in an electronic format.

Citizens for Responsibility and

Ethics in Washington, a watchdog group known as CREW, is critical of the legislation. The group issued a report in April, “Record Chaos: The Deplorable State of Electronic Record Keeping in the Federal Government,” charging that the bill “fails to make the substantial changes necessary to bring the federal government into the 21st century” ([www.citizensforethics.org/recordchaos](http://www.citizensforethics.org/recordchaos)).

— Susan B. Maitra, Senior Editor

## A Chilean Perspective on Lessons of the Iraq War

Heraldo Muñoz, Chile’s ambassador to the United Nations, has penned a diplomatic memoir that chronicles his experiences during the run-up to the Iraq War from a “behind the scenes” perspective.

Specifically, *A Solitary War: A Diplomat’s Chronicle of the Iraq War and Its Lessons*, published recently with a foreword by former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, examines the Bush administration’s tactics in organizing backing for the U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing military action against Iraq ([www.fulcrumbooks.com/](http://www.fulcrumbooks.com/)).

Ambassador Muñoz received his Ph.D. in international political economy from the University of Denver’s Graduate School of International Studies, where he was a classmate of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and the book begins with a “telling call from Condi.”

A former president of the U.N.

Security Council, Muñoz looks at the United States’ controversial decision to take a unilateral stand and its repercussions for both the U.S. and the rest of the world. According to Muñoz, Washington badgered its allies and repeatedly threatened the “Undecided 6” nations — Chile, Mexico, Cameroon, Pakistan, Guinea and Angola — with trade reprisals in order to pressure them into voting in favor of the invasion.

Washington’s aggressive tactics were not limited to trade reprisals, but included spying on its allies in the Security Council and various acts of bullying, bribery and “diplomatic belligerence.” In Muñoz’s view, this approach has left a legacy of “deep mistrust” between the U.S. and its allies in Europe and Latin America, as well as other nations.

Chile’s effort to offer an alternative resolution to the Security Council was viewed as “an unfriendly act” by the Bush administration, according to reports in the *Washington Post*.

While the book contains grisly details of misguided diplomatic tactics, its focus is on what lessons can be learned as a new American president prepares to take office. “The most important lesson of the second Iraq War is that in a world characterized by global media, new threats and inextricably interwoven political and economic interests, the U.S. needs the support of significant allies and multi-lateral organizations for the long haul,” Muñoz writes.

The author then discusses ways to avoid future conflict and rebuild trust among the international community, noting that the most important price the U.S. paid for its Iraq diplomacy was “in terms of losing authority and respect as a leader of the international community.”

An extensive interview with Amb. Muñoz is available at [www.democracynow.org/2008/3/27/](http://www.democracynow.org/2008/3/27/). ■

— Ariana Austin, Editorial Intern

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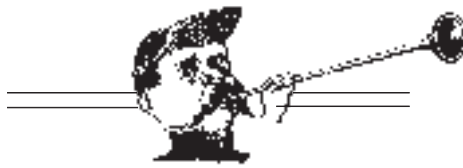
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# SPEAKING OUT

## *State's Wrong Turn on the Information Highway*

BY SCOTT RAULAND

Many of us who have been involved in the State Department's information outreach efforts since the very first days that the Internet became available as a tool for U.S. missions overseas are concerned that the department is falling steadily behind the technology curve and that our ability to reach foreign audiences is actually shrinking.

Foreign Service old-timers will recall that the Internet started becoming available about 1993 — not so long ago in the way that most of us measure time, but an eon in electronic terms.

The U.S. Information Agency and State Department adopted different strategies to deal with the budget pressures of the 1990s, exacerbated by Secretary of State James Baker's decision to open 14 new embassies in the former Soviet Union without seeking any additional funding for them. USIA invested in technology and put an effective stop to hiring, while State continued to hire new FSOs but held off on adopting new technology, sticking with clunky Wang personal computers well past their usefulness.

The 1990s were the go-go days for information outreach for USIA. Because the Internet was new, our technical staff at posts worldwide was relatively free to experiment with developing tools and creating Web sites that made the best use of the latest technology. Believe it or not, for a while our Web pages were almost

*To reach the audiences of the 21st century, we first need to take a few steps backward to undo the mistakes of the 1990s.*

cutting-edge, and most webmasters found their jobs exciting and rewarding.

At the same time, we were transforming libraries into Information Resource Centers. While many FSOs believe that closing libraries wholesale was not the best thing to do, it was hard to argue with the success our IRCs had in providing what at the time was unparalleled access to articles and documents for important contacts in the press, academia, foreign governments and elsewhere.

### **Consolidation and OpenNet: A Temporary Improvement**

USIA, which still tended to operate in more open and public facilities, had relatively free Internet access, allowing our FSOs to do a broad range of information outreach relatively unimpeded. Meanwhile, State relied on an arrangement that required anybody wishing to use the Internet to have a completely separate computer in the office or even on a separate floor.

USIA was folded into State at the end of 1999, ushering in a variety of changes to the way the U.S. conducted information outreach overseas. A little over a year later, when Colin Powell became Secretary of State, an impressive effort was made to bring State's moribund technology up to date. OpenNet delivered on its pledge to bring the Internet to every desktop, thereby reassuring FSOs from USIA that State technology would eventually be up to the job, and persuading State employees that they had finally bridged the huge technology gap.

Unfortunately, technological change moves at such a quick pace nowadays that there is no such thing as "catching up," at least not if you assume that having caught up means you can rest on your laurels. The sense that we had closed the technology gap allowed the first of several mistakes in our information outreach to creep in: the dismantling of USIA's independent Internet access, known as PDNet.

For a brief time, OpenNet appeared able to accommodate our outreach needs, but that didn't last long. Imperceptibly, the focus shifted from using the latest technology to create eye-catching Web pages to bringing that technology under the control of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and the Information Resources Management Bureau. This shift introduced bureaucratic hurdles that have significantly delayed the adoption of new technology.



Believe it or not, we are still fighting battles to use CD/DVD burners in some embassies, or WiFi at remote locations, such as some of our cultural centers. In Central Asia some information management officers try to restrict the use of anything that is external — even drives that IRM calls standard for OpenNet, such as CD/DVD drives and USB ports. At some posts, restrictions for loading photos from digital cameras or flash drives to Web pages are so rigid as to seriously impede the basic business practice of providing information about in-country events, such as the ambassador's press conferences.

Ever get hooked on the “infoseek toolbar”? Many of our webmasters began using them when USIA permitted that. Yet here we are in 2008, and we're still not allowed to use a Google search bar in the Internet Explorer browser on OpenNet. Not to mention the 20 to 30 plug-ins many professionals would like to use to enhance their Firefox browsing experience. We are also routinely blocked from viewing video newscasts, because the OpenNet bandwidth just won't support it.

Getting the Information Systems Center to install approved software on OpenNet, if it's just a matter of preference (i.e., Firefox over Internet Explorer), is often quite difficult and a major disincentive to trying anything new at all.

### **Content (Mis)Management**

The second major misstep was the decision to create the Content Management System, beginning in early 2004. Its initial goal of providing some standardized content to all embassy Web pages seemed useful enough, and the option for technologically strapped posts to have their web pages run entirely on CMS made sense, as well.

But the concept was relentlessly

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*Here we are in 2008,  
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allowed to use a Google  
search bar in the  
Internet Explorer  
browser on OpenNet.*

---

hyped and quickly mushroomed out of control, so that in September 2007 posts were informed (in State 132990) that the Content Management System was now mandatory for all public Web sites. This move, more reminiscent of Soviet central planning than management reform, spells the end for the 58 remaining independent Web pages at posts worldwide.

It was shocking to see this happen, particularly given the fact that in the few instances when input on CMS from public diplomacy professionals in the field has been solicited, the reaction has been resoundingly negative. One discussion that took place in European Bureau circles in late 2006 saw public affairs officers and webmasters across Europe calling for a complete rethinking of CMS, claiming for example:

- CMS is at best a primitive tool that can be helpful to posts with limited bandwidth and/or technical staff. For far too many other posts, CMS is an inconvenient and unnecessary straitjacket that puts severe constraints on creativity and requires far too much time to make even simple updates to Web pages.

- The size and placement of

“local” stories are far too limited. This is a serious drawback, as those items are often the attraction that will draw Internet users to the page and get them to look at other foreign policy topics from Washington. When we have a truly important story, it would be far better to have the flexibility to change the relative sizes of the photos and text.

- The amount of time required to update pages is much too long. It takes our talented staff here in Kabul longer to post updates than it did at the three previous non-CMS posts I served at, all located in developing countries with much more limited bandwidth.

- The provisions for using photos — one of the best ways to grab the attention of Internet users — are completely inadequate. We should not have arbitrary limits placed on either the size or quantity of pictures posted, and ought to be able to use a variety of different methods to post photos and attract the interest of potential readers.

The latter point is particularly important. As Karl Rove noted in a recent commentary in *Newsweek*, “We live in a culture of the visual. And be sure to provide fresh content all the time. In the era of cable TV, talk radio, the blogosphere and YouTube, someone is watching and talking all the time. If you're not pressing content into all available channels, someone else will.”

Someone else like jihadis. As reported recently in the press, Western experts who monitor Islamist Web sites say the technical quality of al-Qaida postings — including those from Iraq and Afghanistan — has dramatically increased from amateurish images that were the hallmark only a few years ago.

In addition, their postings are now often in three languages: Arabic, English and Urdu. Videos look like



## SPEAKING OUT



professionally edited documentaries or television news broadcasts, with flashy graphics, maps in the background and split screens.

### Back to the Future

The implications are clear, but don't take my word for it. Judge for yourself. Check out a mix of embassy Web pages of different-sized posts in different areas. Could they hold their own against sites such as YouTube, Facebook or CNN?

In order to win that competition for attention Karl Rove talks about, there needs to be an overhaul of our outreach efforts — just to get us back to the situation back in the 1990s, when we were at the cutting edge of information outreach.

For starters, I would recommend:

1) A return to the status quo ante of independent embassy Web sites. Use CMS as a supplement to post efforts, not as a required platform for hosting.

2) Regular, external evaluations of embassy Web sites and other outreach products. Internal evaluations like those conducted regarding a handful of CMS sites earlier this year are not helpful. State should instead be looking to independent consultants who can assess how well our Web sites are adapting new technologies and recommend ways to improve our products.

3) Reinstatement of PDNet or an equivalent approach to manage the many crucial developing technologies on the Internet that OpenNet is not capable of handling.

4) Consultations with the field on future developments in information outreach, so that we stay abreast of the latest changes and don't adopt flawed fixes like CMS that hamper our efforts.

5) Placement of information outreach high on the agenda of the new under secretary for public diplomacy.

There needs to be recognition at a high level that our efforts over the past five years have been inadequate, and that much more needs to be done to adapt new technology more quickly. This might include modifying designs for embassies so that there are some sections where employees can have access to essential devices like USB sticks and cell phones with cameras that will allow us to do our jobs better.

USIA had great success using the Internet to reach audiences in the 1990s because it empowered our employees to use their expertise and creativity in all kinds of new outreach efforts. The process of centralizing and regulating our use of Web pages through CMS has robbed us of the ability to keep up with rapidly changing standards and all of the new tech-

nologies that can be used with Web pages, such as videos, webchats and podcasting.

If we want our messages to reach the audiences of the 21st century, taking a few steps backward to the policies of the 1990s might help us bridge the gap that has developed. ■

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*Scott Rauland joined the U.S. Information Agency as a Foreign Service officer in 1993. One of his first major information outreach projects was creating the "Islam in America" Web site in Pakistan in 1999. Currently public affairs officer in Kabul, he has also been PAO in Frankfurt (the first consulate to post podcasts to iTunes) and Quito, and consul general in Yekaterinburg, among other Foreign Service assignments.*



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY STEVEN ALAN HONLEY

On behalf of my colleagues at the *Journal* and AFSA, I would like to thank the 857 people who took our recent online reader survey between May 1 and June 25. That total represents more than 6 percent of our current circulation of 13,800, a very healthy response rate that has provided us with a lot of useful information (and is about double the participation level for our last reader survey, back in 2001). Here are some highlights from the data.

Active-duty Foreign Service personnel comprise 75 percent of the respondents, while 23 percent are FS retirees; the remaining 2 percent are not affiliated with the Foreign Service. Some 91 percent of the survey participants are AFSA members, and more than three-quarters of the active-duty respondents (77 percent) are currently serving overseas.

We began by asking respondents how often they typically read each section of the magazine. Not surprisingly, the most popular department is *AFSA News*, which garnered a whopping 95 percent (74 percent usually read it and another 21 percent sometimes do). But several other departments have similarly large readerships: features (93 percent of you usually or sometimes read those); Speaking Out (56 percent usually read those columns and 36 percent of you sometimes do, for a total of 92 percent); and President's Views and Letters, each of which 91 percent of respon-

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*There are many ways  
you can share your  
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dents usually or sometimes read.

Next we listed the focus sections for each issue over the previous year (May 2007 through April 2008) and asked whether you read all, most, some or none of each. Generally speaking, topics bearing directly on professional concerns were the most fully read: Our May 2007 coverage of the Foreign Service as a career earned top marks, as 58 percent of respondents read most or all of that issue and only 10 percent skipped it completely. Other popular focus topics from the past year included Iraq, five years after the war (March); Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the FS (January); and political Islam (April).

The next section of the survey addressed the *Journal's* online presence. Many of you apparently did not know that the entire contents of each issue have been available on AFSA's Web site ([www.afsa.org/fsj](http://www.afsa.org/fsj)), as well as at [www.fsjournal.org](http://www.fsjournal.org), for three years now. (In addition, you can read selec-

tions from issues published between 2000 and 2005.) We are in the process of exploring some changes to make the magazine's homepage more inviting and searchable, so stay tuned for news about that.

A majority of respondents (53 percent) were very satisfied with the *Journal* overall, and another 39 percent are somewhat satisfied. Nearly half of you (46 percent) favor a continuation of our current goal to maintain a roughly 50/50 balance between Foreign Service-specific professional issues and general foreign affairs coverage, and 60 percent of you see that balance reflected in our pages.

Thanks also for the hundreds of written comments on various aspects of our coverage and format. A clear majority expressed the desire for more "news you can use" about AFSA activities, initiatives and services, as well as Foreign Service-specific issues and concerns — such as the problems faced by minorities, women, families and Members of Household. In addition, those of you from agencies other than State would like to see more coverage of your AFSA constituencies.

Let me assure you that the FSJ Editorial Board fully supports all those goals, but the best way to ensure that happy outcome is to write about these topics yourselves. For information on how to submit a column, article or letter, please contact us at [authors@afsa.org](mailto:authors@afsa.org) and we will be delighted to respond.

Let us hear from you. ■

# AFRICA SEEKS A TRUE FRIEND



Frank Harris

BARACK OBAMA MAY BE AN “AFRICAN SON,” BUT THERE IS STRONG SUPPORT FOR JOHN MCCAIN’S CANDIDACY ON THE CONTINENT.

*BY SAMUEL SIRINGI*

**E**arlier this year, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete was asked his thoughts on the possibility that the United States could elect its first black president, Sen. Barack Obama, whose father was from neighboring Kenya. Pres. Kikwete looked at visiting U.S. President George W. Bush before answering: “Let him be as good a friend of Africa as Pres. Bush has been.”

That response reflects a clear affection for America found generally among Africans as the November general presi-

dential election approaches. Despite growing anti-American sentiment in many parts of the world, the United States is largely popular among Africans, many of whom continue sending their children for education and jobs in America. For the majority of the continent's 800 million inhabitants, who live on less than a dollar a day, America is still the land of opportunity, whose government and people — philanthropists and taxpayers alike — have helped put food on many tables in the face of rising poverty, disease and civil wars.

America is also helping to heal the wounds of recovering nations, like Kenya, which suffered massive post-election violence earlier this year. The country's prime minister, Raila Odinga, recently collected a grant for infrastructure repair while visiting the U.S. to brief top officials on the performance of the country's coalition government.

This dependence on America for foreign aid and cash wired in by the continent's emigrants has meant that elections in America are, to a large extent, regarded as an African affair. Africans want the leading superpower to take the continent's interests to heart, and to ask other donor countries to help as well.

Because of Barack Obama's background, he is considered an African son, drawing even more local attention to the U.S. campaign than in previous years. Many on the continent, which has received massive attention from the Bush administration, feel they would benefit even more if Obama makes history in November. They are so enthusiastic that east and central Africa's largest circulating daily newspaper, the *Daily Nation*, published a 12-page special report when Obama won the nomination — far more space than many U.S. newspapers allotted.

Yet what Africans want most is for Americans to elect a president who has the interests of humanity at heart, regardless of his or her color. As Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade told the UNITY Conference of Journalists of Color in a July speech, "I don't believe Obama will be at the service of Africa. ... I'm not making any postulates. He has to prove it."

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*Samuel Siringi is a bureau chief for Nairobi's Daily Nation newspaper.*

***Despite growing anti-American sentiments in many parts of the world, the United States remains popular among Africans.***

**A Credible Record**

There is also strong support for John McCain's candidacy among Africans, who hope that he will build on the current president's accomplishments. Overall, the Bush administration has spent huge amounts of money on poverty, education and health programs in Africa, and the president visited the continent in January to assess some of the projects it has been sponsoring. In Tanzania, the U.S. has spent \$698 million fighting malaria, a disease that kills more than a million people each year in sub-Saharan Africa, most of them less than 5 years old. The American program aims to get medicine, insecticide and mosquito-stopping bed nets to millions of people, both in Africa and other parts of the developing world.

Washington has also devoted \$30 billion to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, an initiative aimed at saving lives and helping the African continent avert a health disaster that has already claimed 17 million victims. Currently, about 28 million Africans are HIV-positive and 12 million children have lost their parents to AIDS.

Finally, Bush's leadership has secured \$17 million to equip 7,000 Rwandan troops, who are being sent to the Darfur region of western Sudan to handle the ethnic and tribal violence that has raged there for years, leaving about 200,000 dead and more than two million people displaced. Arab militias, said to be backed by the Sudanese government, have wantonly attacked Africans, and numerous rebel groups have attacked government targets. (On July 14, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court, indicted Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, bringing renewed international attention to the conflict.)

Sudan is one of the African countries that appear most comfortable with the Bush administration, to the extent that many of its people would prefer to see Republican John McCain elected to continue current U.S. policies. They argue that George Bush has done much more to tackle the Darfur crisis than did Bill Clinton. And they fear that a return of Democrats to the White House might mean America will turn a blind eye to the continent's crises once again.

“While many in the U.S. fear that Republican John McCain would continue with Pres. George Bush’s hawkish style, the people of Southern Sudan fully support the Republican contender,” the *Daily Nation* reported in May. “The Democrats did nothing for us,” says Juk Langjuk, editor-in-chief of South Sudan’s *BusinessWeek*. “They were not interested.” “McCain would be better for us,” Dr. Loi Cingoth, a columnist with the *Sudan Tribune*, said last December.

Indeed, the worst phase of Sudan’s 21-year civil war, which left 2.5 million dead, took place during the Clinton administration. But according to the newspaper report, everything changed when George W. Bush became president. In just four years, he did more to bring about peace in Sudan than the Clinton administration did in eight years, endearing the Republicans to the southern Sudanese. John Danforth, a former U.S. special envoy to Khartoum, put a great deal of pressure on the government, forcing it to sign a peace agreement with the south in 2005. Notably, the treaty gave the region much more than it had sought during a series of inconclusive peace talks back in the 1990s.

This is perhaps the reason why Obama, as part of his foreign policy plan for Africa, promises to stop the killing in Darfur if elected. “The U.S. needs to lead the world in ending this genocide, including by imposing much tougher sanctions that target Sudan’s oil revenue, implementing and helping to enforce a no-fly zone, and engaging in more intense, effective diplomacy to develop a political roadmap to peace,” his Web site declares.

Obama also wants to help end the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where an estimated 3.9 million people have died from war-related causes since the conflict began. And he supports efforts to bring former Liberian President Charles Taylor, a brutal warlord, to justice for war crimes.

As for John McCain, his Web site says he would ensure that the U.S. will continue to promote democracy in Africa. In a March speech, the senator declared that “The United States must strongly engage on a political, economic and security level with friendly governments across Africa, but insist on improvements in

***Africans want the leading superpower to take the continent’s interests to heart, and to ask other donor countries to help as well.***

transparency and the rule of law.”

### **Looking for a Friend**

Still, many Africans think that the Bush administration’s overall foreign policy, especially the war in Iraq, has not been good for the continent. The U.S. intervention in Iraq is widely seen as a useless distraction that has kept it from doing even more to tackle poverty, disease and internal conflicts in Africa.

There is also suspicion that America is only interested in African countries that offer some value for its interests, such as oil-rich Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia — all nations with economic or security potential. Except for South Africa and Kenya, these countries are also among the top 10 Islamic centers in the continent.

Thus, when Kenya, hitherto one of Africa’s most stable nations, experienced a crisis following the disputed Dec. 27, 2007, general elections, the Bush administration got deeply involved in getting President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga, now prime minister, to form a coalition government. Key U.S. government officials visited Kenya to participate in brokering peace.

(On the other hand, Washington has strongly criticized Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe for using massive repression and violence to force his opponent out of a run-off and then declaring himself duly elected, extending his 28-year reign.)

It is estimated that countries in Africa that already supply about 16 percent of American fuel, will increase their output to 25 percent of all U.S. oil imports by 2015. That factor alone is a major reason why African countries want America to remain a dependable trading partner.

When he visited Benin, Rwanda, Tanzania, Ghana and Liberia early this year, Pres. Bush highlighted America’s commitment to improved health and economic development on the continent, an aspect of his foreign policy that has so far sadly been overshadowed by the war in Iraq.

Although America’s elections will never be won or lost based on the feelings of Africa, people in the region await their results with anxiety. Whatever the result, they hope the new leader will, in Pres. Kikwete’s words, “be as good a friend of Africa as Pres. Bush has been.” ■



# ARE CANADIANS READY FOR A LEAP OF FAITH?

W

hen Sen. John McCain traveled to Ottawa in June, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper marked the occasion by traveling 1,730 miles to Saskatchewan. Even though the man who could become president of Canada's neighbor and largest trading partner was speaking a block from the Parliament buildings, Harper's Cabinet ministers were told to make themselves scarce.

Such is the deeply entangled, counterintuitive and complicated relationship between Canada and the United States, particularly during a U.S. election year. It is a relationship in which Canadian governments are expected to be cordial, but not cozy; in which Republican administrations are often used as punching bags to win votes north of the border; and where, even with so much at stake for Canada, the government strives to remain aloof, to the point of feigning indifference.

At no time in modern history has interest in a U.S. election been greater among the Canadian public. Like much of the world, Canadians have been caught up in the euphoria of a potentially historic moment when a young African-American changes America's place on the

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*Tim Harper is Washington bureau chief for the Toronto Star.*

AMID THEIR FASCINATION WITH THE OBAMA PHENOMENON, OUR NEIGHBORS TO THE NORTH LISTEN AND WORRY.

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BY TIM HARPER

world stage and the way in which the world views America. But while Sen. Barack Obama is being hailed on the streets of Mississauga, Montreal and Moncton, the man Canadians are embracing is a thinly sketched portrait when it comes to bilateral relations.

John McCain, by comparison, is a fully-painted canvas, his views on trading relations, the value of an ally and the importance of shared military responsibilities a comfortable pair of slippers — especially compared to the evolving position of an Illinois senator who has never shown an abiding interest in issues on his country's northern flank.

If Americans are being asked to take a leap of faith on a first-term U.S. senator, Canadians are vicariously doing the same. A June poll of 1,000 Canadians found a majority believe Obama would be a "game changer" when it came to the U.S. image worldwide, and 26 percent of Canadians named him as the politician they admire most on the continent — five points ahead of Harper.

## Unanswered Questions

Canadians would hail the election of a young multilateralist who would engage adversaries, not isolate them; who can change the way the Muslim world views Washington, and America's tactics and policies in the post-9/11 world; and who will bring America to the table

again as a player, not a dictator.

Many share the view of Paul Frazer, a former Canadian diplomat who is now a Washington-based consultant on bilateral issues, that an engaged America at world forums would be like “welcoming back somebody who was missed.”

Yet despite all the excitement his candidacy engenders, there is a long litany of unanswered questions about where bilateral relations would head under an Obama presidency:

- Would he be able to improve the flow of commerce across the Canada-U.S. border?
- Is his publicly stated threat to renegotiate the North America Free Trade Agreement a product of longstanding conviction, or was it forged in the crucible of the Ohio primary? And is his position on that still evolving?
- In the face of a worsening energy crisis, would he really turn his back on the opportunity to tap the Alberta oil sands because of ecological concerns?
- How quickly can he shift Washington’s focus from Iraq to Afghanistan, moving two U.S. combat brigades there and potentially saving Canadian lives in the south of the country, where they are dying in disproportionate numbers?

### **A Trying Eight Years**

If he prevails in November, Obama will come to office with the burden of trying to meet unprecedented expectations that have built up over eight rancorous years of George W. Bush’s administration — a daunting task that he almost surely cannot live up to.

The die may have been cast for bilateral relations in 2000, when a Canadian Broadcasting Company satirist named Rick Mercer grabbed Bush at a Michigan campaign event and coaxed him into solemnly thanking “Canadian Prime Minister Poutine” for his endorsement from Ottawa. (Poutine is a Quebec delicacy consisting of french fries, gravy and cheese curds, a mystery to most of the rest of the country.)

After that inauspicious start, the Bush years have been among the most tumultuous for cross-border relations in generations. Some of the bad blood bordered on the juvenile: witness the senior communications aide to one-

***Obama has shown  
signs of his own  
learning curve.  
Last summer he spoke  
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of Canada.***

time Prime Minister Jean Chretien, who called Bush a “moron” at an international conference in Prague. A member of the governing Liberal Party caucus called Americans “bastards” in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, while a senior Cabinet minister in the Chretien government said Bush was guilty of a lack of international statesmanship for deciding to go to war there.

In return, Bush canceled an official visit to Canada in May 2003.

After Paul Martin assumed the leadership of the Liberal Party, he campaigned so hard against Bush in 2006 (bashing Washington’s climate change policy, among other criticisms) that the U.S. ambassador to Canada, David Wilkins, was compelled to launch an extraordinary public intervention, reminding him that the U.S. president was not on the Canadian ballot.

As if all that were not enough, the two countries have clashed over continental missile defense, softwood lumber (a dispute that was finally resolved under the Harper government) and tough new U.S. rules for border crossings, including a requirement for Canadians to present enhanced identification to traverse the 49th parallel by land.

Then there was the rendition of a young Ottawa man named Maher Arar, whisked away to a grave-like cell in Syria where he was tortured, even after he told the American authorities who detained him while he was transiting New York’s JFK Airport that he wanted to return to his home and family in Canada, where he held citizenship. The Harper government finally awarded him some \$9.75 million in compensation for its role in the affair, but the Bush administration has never apologized. And the U.S. continues to bar Arar from entering the country, based on evidence the Harper government has rejected.

### **A Steep Learning Curve?**

Obama has shown signs of his own learning curve. Last summer he spoke about the “president” of Canada. And his campaign recently sent out a magazine transcript in which the Canadian prime minister is referred to as the president of Hartford.

Then there is NAFTAgate, an affair which, despite its

unoriginal moniker, has become a major embarrassment to the Harper government and explains the extraordinary distance at which it kept McCain during his June visit.

The leaking of a Canadian diplomatic note, which interpreted comments from Obama economic adviser Austan Goolsbee to mean the candidate would bash NAFTA as a political ploy, not an actual policy plan, hurt the Democratic nominee in the Ohio Democratic Party primary. But it could also color relations between an Obama administration and the Harper government.

It was the biggest bilateral gaffe since onetime Canadian ambassador to Washington Raymond Chretien was overheard in 2000 saying the election of Al Gore to the White House would be better for Canadian needs than the election of Bush.

Still, Obama's senior foreign policy adviser, Susan Rice, has Canadian links and knows the country well. And Goolsbee at least received a crash course on Canadian politics after the leak.

If, as expected, Obama is ushered into office with an enhanced Democratic congressional majority, there will be pent-up demand on Capitol Hill for quick, dramatic domestic action, while the international priority will be Iraq. The onus will be on the Harper government to cut through the clutter of domestic and international demands and convince an Obama government that its concerns deserve priority.

### **A Familiar Face**

Sen. McCain, on the other hand, has traveled extensively throughout Canada, has family there and knows members of Parliament and the Canadian Senate. He is a strong backer of NAFTA and traveled to Ottawa earlier this year to make that point in a speech that stressed the value of the Canada-U.S. alliance.

As a senator from a southwestern border state, McCain is well-informed on trade and immigration issues. Although he is tacking back to the center on border security — as Obama doubtlessly will — he has already alienated elements of the Republican base by backing comprehensive immigration reform on the southern flank of the U.S., which critics called an

***If Americans are being asked to take a leap of faith on a first-term U.S. senator, Canadians are vicariously doing the same.***

amnesty for illegal immigrants.

This is important to Canada because those who follow bilateral issues in both countries agree that the “thickening” international border and the Department of Homeland Security's inbred suspicion of Canadians are issues that require urgent attention by the new administration.

Anything that happens on the American southern flank will side-swipe Canada on the northern flank.

The issues touch on commerce, tourism, security — even the failing infrastructure at the Detroit-Windsor crossing.

Tougher security measures brought U.S. visits to Canada to a 35-year low in 2007, and wait times for Canadian visitors and Canadian goods heading south increased 20 percent in one year. One study found that tighter border restrictions cost Canada \$30.6 billion in U.S. exports in 2007.

### **Listening — and Worrying**

A smooth, efficient border is crucial to Canadian interests because even with tougher restrictions, eight of every 10 visitors to Canada come from the United States. Trade between the two nations is staggering, totaling \$1.5 billion per day; and Canada is the largest trading partner of 35 states, including Obama's home state of Illinois.

Last year, the U.S. exported \$248.9 billion worth of goods and services north of the border, 65 percent of all Canadian imports, and imported \$313.1 billion from Canada, representing 76 percent of all Canadian exports.

So even after Obama moves to dial back his pledge to unilaterally force a renegotiation of NAFTA, Ottawa listens. And worries.

Canada is also the largest foreign supplier of energy to the U.S., providing 17 percent of American oil imports. So when Obama starts talking about turning off the tap on Alberta oil-sand imports because they are a dirty energy source, Ottawa listens. And worries. The province of Alberta had planned to boost production from 1.3 million barrels a day to 3.5 million barrels a day over the next decade, and any move to cut off those exports will also become entangled in NAFTA.

McCain, too, has pledged to end American dependence on foreign oil. At stake are U.S. plans to spend \$53 billion to expand or modify refineries to handle the heavy oil from Alberta.

Still, Thomas d'Aquino, president of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, says it is too easy to say a Republican president would be more understanding of Canadian issues and better for the country. He believes Obama would grasp the intricacies of the bilateral relationship, whether the issue is military cooperation under the North American Aerospace Defense Command or in Afghanistan, technological cooperation to combat global warming, or trade disputes.

Besides, NAFTA has been kicked around on both sides of the border for years. Former Prime Minister Chretien once vowed to rip up the agreement if elected in 1993. He was, yet NAFTA survived intact.

### **Ups and Downs**

The history of Canada-U.S. relations has had its infamous flare-ups and its periods of coziness.

President Lyndon Johnson once lectured Prime Minister Lester Pearson, accusing him of "pissing on his rug" after the Canadian came to Philadelphia's Temple University to deliver a speech against the Vietnam War. According to Canadian lore, LBJ demonstrated his irritation with Pearson by grabbing him by the lapels as he made his point.

Johnson's successor, Richard Nixon, thought Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau was a communist, according to archived tapes. It was following a 1969 meeting with Nixon that Trudeau offered the enduring metaphor of life in the U.S. shadow. "Living next to you is in some ways like sleeping with an elephant," Trudeau said. "No matter how friendly and even-tempered is the beast, if I can call it that, one is affected by every twitch and grunt."

Prime Minister Jean Chretien angered Pres. Bush by not only refusing his entreaties to join the "coalition of the willing" in Iraq, but challenging the wisdom of the invasion thereafter. That was seen in Washington as a breach of an understanding that Canada would stay out of the war, but not speak ill of the American effort.

### ***John McCain's views on trading relations and the value of the alliance make him a comfortable choice for Canadians.***

On the other hand, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and President Ronald Reagan were so close that they sang "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" at the so-called Shamrock Summit in Quebec City in 1985. Later Mulroney risked ridicule and a voter backlash at home to continue his close relationship with President George H.W. Bush.

There has been one common thread through all the theatrics over the years, however. On key issues of trade and security, the interests of both countries depend too heavily on smooth relations with each other to allow anything other than continuation of a cordial, productive relationship.

From the Canadian perspective, the need to protect its sovereignty while acknowledging its need to work with the "elephant" will prevail whether McCain or Obama takes the Oval Office in January. ■



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# EGYPTIANS EXPECT A SHIFT IN STYLE, NOT SUBSTANCE

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WHATEVER THE OUTCOME IN NOVEMBER, MOST EGYPTIANS DO NOT EXPECT ANY MAJOR CHANGES IN BILATERAL RELATIONS.

BY SHOHRAT AREF

here is a consensus among Egyptians that there will be no drastic changes in U.S. policy regarding key Middle East issues whether John McCain or Barack Obama takes office in January. The situation in Iraq, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the current standoff with Iran over its nuclear program will all be high on the agenda of the new administration, regardless of whether it is Republican or Democratic.

That said, many experts do believe U.S.-Egyptian relations, which have not been in the best shape under the Bush administration, will improve if Obama is elected. This is for two reasons. First, he is seen as more likely than his opponent to recognize Egypt as an important strategic partner and a driving force in regional peace-making. Second, Obama is expected to engage personally in Middle East diplomacy early in his administration — unlike McCain, who appears likely to operate with more or less the same detachment Bush has shown in this regard.

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*Shohrat Aref is a diplomatic reporter for the Cairo-based Middle East News Agency. She specializes in U.S. politics, reporting from Egypt and the United States. The author wishes to thank Ahmed Gheith, MENA's editorial managing director, for his assistance in conducting interviews for this article.*

## **Egyptian-American Relations: A Warming Trend?**

Ambassador Abdel Raouf Al-Reedy, who worked for 10 years as Egypt's top diplomat in the United States and is currently head of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, describes the temperature of the current bilateral relationship as "cool." He sees a sort of formality, particularly as compared with the administration of Bush's father, and attributes it to the current president's adoption of a one-sided policy favoring Israel. He would expect bilateral ties to be much better under an Obama administration, in light of his readiness to listen to other countries in the region.

Ambassador Dr. El-Sayed Amyin Shalaby, executive director of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, agrees that relations with Washington are not in the best shape. He cites weaknesses in all three diplomatic pillars put in place back in the mid-1970s: the search for peace in the Middle East, cooperation in the Persian Gulf region and the maintenance of U.S. economic and military assistance to Egypt.

He also identifies a prevailing feeling that the Bush administration has not been responsive to the need to promote solid ties with Cairo over the past seven years. But he does detect a greater appreciation within other American institutions, especially Congress, of Egypt's

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importance as a force for peace and stability — a view that he hopes will be reflected in the new administration.

Dr. Adel Soliman, executive director of the International Center for Future and Strategic Studies, a Cairo-based think-tank, offers a somewhat different perspective. He agrees that the bilateral relationship is based on a common desire for peace and stability in the region. But he blames the current differences on the Bush administration's interference in the domestic situation in Egypt under the slogan of promoting democracy and human rights. Soliman adds that there is no doubt that Pres. Bush's speech in the Israeli Knesset earlier this year, in which he strongly supported Israel's settlement policy in the Palestinian occupied territories, has had a very bad impact on Egyptian and Arab public opinion.

### ***The opposition in Egypt foresees better chances for strategic ties with the United States under an Obama administration.***

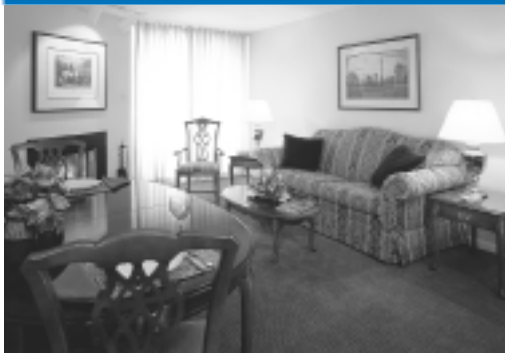
At the same time, Soliman acknowledges that the Egyptians are not good at conveying their message to the American public to clarify views on certain issues. For that reason, he calls upon the Arab communities in the United States to unify their stance, with the aim of defending the interests of the region.

Dr. Abdel Aziz Shadi, a professor of political science and economy at Cairo University, characterizes bilateral ties under the Bush administration as “declining” due to Bush's focus on combating terrorism and promoting political reforms in the region. In his opinion, Bush wants to impose his vision on the Arab countries without taking into consideration the cultural and social nature of those societies, which need more space to adopt such reforms.

If Obama wins the election, bilateral relations might

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get back to normal, assuming he adopts former President Bill Clinton's approach of maintaining the U.S. focus on promoting democratic reforms in Egypt and other Arab countries — and so long as he does that more effectively than Bush has. Shadi believes Obama will appeal to public opinion in the Arab region to convince them to adopt such reforms. Conversely, if McCain is elected, he will keep the current U.S. hardline policy in place.

For these reasons, the opposition in Egypt foresees better chances for strategic ties with the United States under an Obama administration. Mounir Fakhri Abdel Nour, a former member of the Egyptian Parliament who is now secretary general of the Al-Wafd Party and a member of the Egyptian Human Rights Council, grants that whether McCain or Obama wins the election, the new president will continue to advocate the adoption of political reforms in the Middle East and around the world. However, he expects Obama to be more diplomatic in his approach.

### **A Return to Multilateral Diplomacy?**

Beyond the bilateral relationship, there is the broader question of how Obama and McCain would address often-contentious regional issues.

Many Egyptians support withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, which they believe have led to instability in the region; but they differ on how rapidly the drawdown should occur. Those who advocate gradual withdrawal do not want Iraq to be left in a mess that could lead to civil war; in addition, many Egyptians are afraid of Iran's growing influence in Iraq, which they expect to accelerate after the withdrawal of American troops.

Amb. Al-Reedy predicts that if Barack Obama wins the election, he will work to keep his promise to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq — contrary to John McCain, who has repeatedly expressed his intention to adhere to Bush administration policy, even if it means staying in Iraq for 100 years. However, he expects Obama's main priority to be a gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops in a way that will not leave the country in shambles. In contrast, Al-Reedy says, McCain will be more interested in making Iraq an effective part of the U.S. strategy to con-

### ***Egyptian experts disagree about how quickly a Pres.***

### ***Obama would move to resolve the Palestinian-***

### ***Israeli conflict.***

be much different depending on who takes office in January. Specifically, he predicts that Obama will take a multilateral approach in his foreign policy, centered on listening and working with the United States' traditional allies in the Middle East and elsewhere. While he is currently constrained by the need to present himself as a centrist to win the election, he will still seek to follow his own path if elected. For instance, it will not be easy for Obama to maintain his readiness to negotiate with Tehran over its nuclear program against pressure to take a hard line. But he will still place more emphasis on a diplomatic approach than Bush has or McCain would.

The two analysts agree that Obama will follow Bill Clinton's example by actively engaging himself in diplomatic efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This will be even more true if the current negotiations between Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert produce a framework for further talks.

Dr. Soliman concurs to some extent. Yet while he does not foresee any major shifts in the strategy underlying U.S. foreign policy under Obama or McCain, he does see potential for a shift in the tactics the new administration uses to implement it. For one thing, he cites a tendency for Republican administrations to resort to force to solve problems — unlike Democratic administrations, which tend to favor diplomacy.

For his part, Dr. Shadi notes that the thrust of U.S. foreign policy is set by the interplay of various American institutions, including Congress. Thus, the broad outlines of American diplomacy do not depend very much on the outcome of elections. However, each new president has room to set his own priorities. For example, if Obama wins in November, he will devote more attention to working with the European Union on the energy issue than would his opponent. Nor will he focus on the war

trol the Middle East as a whole.

On the other hand, Al-Reedy is also convinced that no future U.S. president can afford to disengage himself from regional diplomacy the way George W. Bush has. Thus, a Pres. McCain may have to be more active than he would like.

Amb. Shalaby also foresees continuity in America's Middle East policy. But the style would



on terrorism to the degree that Bush has, or favor sending more troops outside the U.S. into new conflicts.

Unlike other experts, however, Dr. Shadi does not think a Pres. Obama would move quickly to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Instead, he will first give himself some time to master this complex issue and articulate a new vision. In contrast, a Pres. McCain would continue to pursue the neoconservative policy mapped out during the two terms of the Bush administration.

Hazem Ahmed Gheith, a political science student at Cairo University who does not belong to any party, also does not foresee any major change in U.S. policy under either Obama or McCain. He cites Obama's recent speech before the American Israel Public Affairs

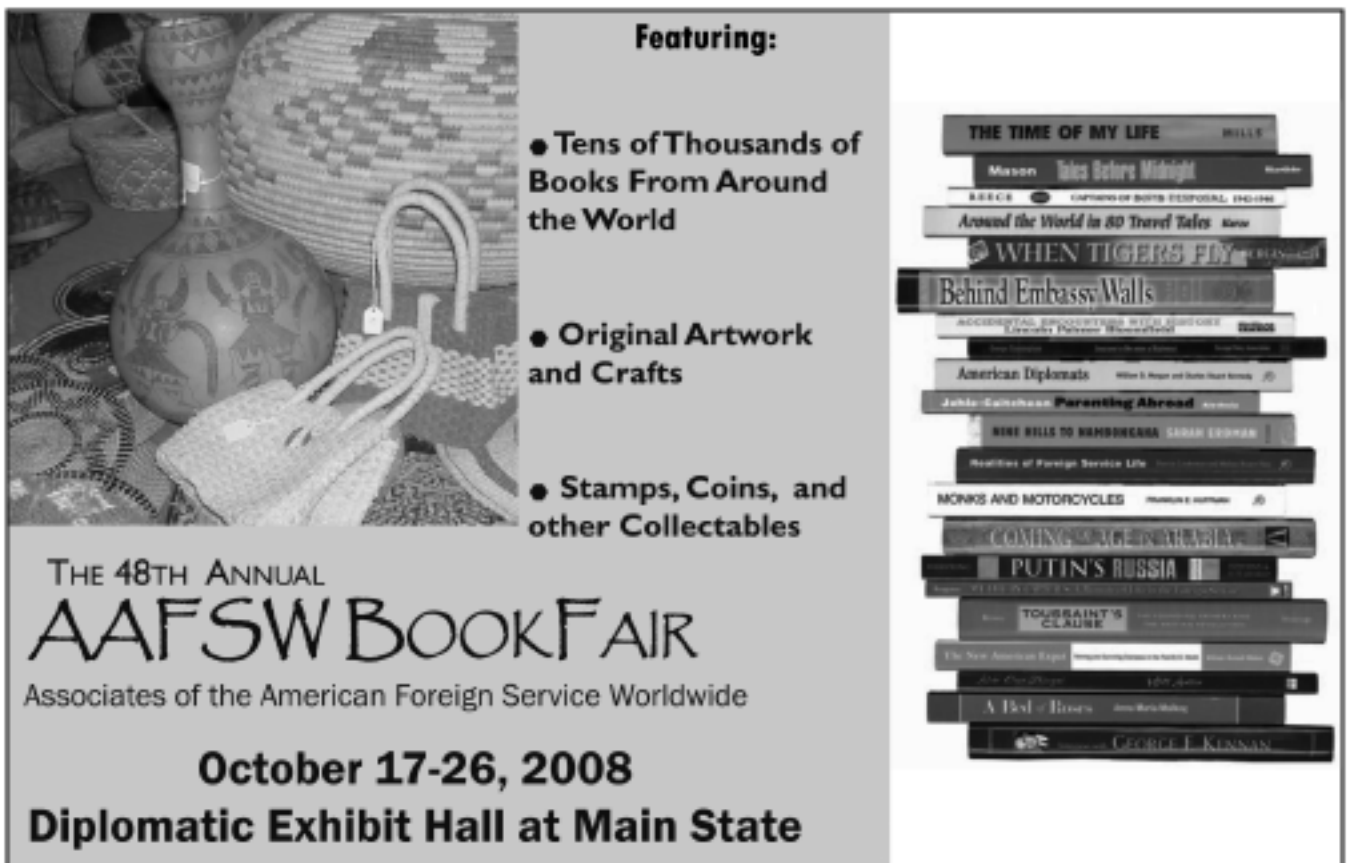
***The Bush administration has not been responsive to the need to promote solid ties with Cairo over the past seven years.***

light of the senator's willingness to work with the Democrats on certain issues.

Whatever the outcome in November, most Egyptians do not expect any major changes in bilateral relations or in the image of the United States. They remain hopeful that the atmosphere will improve, particularly if Barack Obama is the victor. But they are beginning to recognize the need to foster closer ties to American institutions like Congress to defend their interests. ■

Committee, in which he explicitly supported the existence of Israel, backed the continuation of efforts to isolate the Hamas movement and called for reforms in the Palestinian Authority.

If McCain is elected, Gheith expects his administration to represent an effective third term for George W. Bush. But he believes some aspects will be different in




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# BUDAPEST'S BALANCING ACT

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WHATEVER ITS OUTCOME, THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS LIKELY TO IMPROVE THE OPINION OF HUNGARIANS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES.

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BY ÁKOS BEÖTHY

The 10 million-strong Central European republic of Hungary finds itself in a delicate position as the Bush administration prepares to leave office. A staunch ally in what former U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld hailed as “New Europe,” the country supported the launch of the war against Iraq in 2003, and currently has troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Budapest is also indirectly affected by Washington’s plans to set up a missile defense system by deploying interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar station in the Czech Republic. Finally, it has an important role to play in the debate on the future of Europe’s energy supply, where Washington — concerned with Russia’s ever-growing energy muscles — wants its say.

While the two governments have cooperated closely, there is a widespread perception of American arrogance among Hungarians. This has many roots, starting with opposition to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, a war that many people here deem unlawful and based on lies. News of

secret renditions, human rights abuses in Guantanamo Bay and in Iraqi prisons, and alleged manipulation of intelligence data regarding the Iranian nuclear program all made matters worse. And many Hungarians see the refusal of the Bush administration to submit the Kyoto Protocol for ratification, take any real action to combat global warming or support international organizations as selfish and irresponsible decisions.

Although the war in Iraq is probably as unpopular in Hungary as in the United States, being part of the “coalition of the willing” has contributed to one development that is welcomed by all Hungarians. It appears that Washington may admit the country to its visa-waiver program, greatly facilitating travel to the U.S. by Hungarian tourists and businessmen, as early as the end of this year. Obviating the need to endure the long, costly and tedious visa application procedure will certainly improve the somewhat negative image of the United States many Hungarians hold.

## Improvement Is on the Horizon

Whatever its outcome, the upcoming U.S. presidential election is likely to improve the opinion of Hungarians about the United States. John McCain is respected as a war hero and as a man of principles as opposed to George W. Bush, but a win by Barack Obama would result in real

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*Ákos Beöthy has been writing and editing for Világgazdaság (World Economy), Hungary's leading daily business newspaper, since 2000. He covers international and policy issues, macroeconomic trends and the European Union. Earlier this year he spent five months at The Philadelphia Inquirer as an Alfred Friendly Fellow.*

excitement. Such a victory might even rebuild the image of the “American Dream,” so the fate of his promises of changing how politics is conducted in Washington will be closely watched by many Hungarians.

For many people here, the restoration of America’s promise goes beyond the end of the current antipathetic foreign policy. After all, it is not just international relations that determine the life of a nation; Hungarians watched astonished as this land of the free responded to the threat of terror by curbing civil liberties after 9/11.

It seems that Americans continue to worry more about their security than about their liberties. Both presidential candidates strive to look tough on national security, and the controversial provisions of the renewed Patriot Act are not a campaign issue. This surprises many in Hungary, who will be keen to see how these domestic aspects of the war on terror will unfold during the next American presidency.

On the level of intergovernmental relations, Hungary will remain a partner of the United States in stabilizing both Iraq and Afghanistan, irrespective of the election outcome and whether it is McCain’s or Obama’s policy that will start to take shape in the Middle East.

In October, Budapest will send 80-100 troops to Afghanistan to join the 230 currently serving with the International Security Assistance Force. And at the Bucharest NATO summit this past April, it offered a special unit that can be deployed anywhere in Afghanistan, including its most dangerous regions. Meanwhile, the nations of “Old Europe” largely rule out a greater combat role for their troops.

In the case of Iraq, however, there has been some disappointment. When Hungary joined the U.S.-led coalition forces there five years ago, it expected that its companies would be able to share in the billions of dollars being spent to rebuild the country. But most of the bidding firms have realized by now that they have no chance against their American and Middle Eastern competitors.

### **The Role of Russia**

For Hungary, just west of the ex-Soviet republic of Ukraine, the most important issue for the next American

*For many people here,  
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president to address is how to handle a resurgent Russia. Moscow’s August intervention in Georgia, purportedly to defend South Ossetians against Tbilisi’s “aggression,” conjured up alarming memories of Cold War rhetoric. So did its earlier response to U.S. plans to establish missile defense facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic: suspending its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and warning Warsaw and Prague that it

would target sites in their territories with its own missiles.

Budapest hosted one of the talks between the United States and Russia last year, where Washington tried to persuade the Putin government that its missile defense plans are justified by the threat posed by such rogue countries as Iran and North Korea. It also offered to share data with Moscow that it previously shared only with its NATO allies.

The U.S. presidential elections might have a direct impact on the fate of this conflict. The Czech Republic signed a treaty to allow Washington to set up a radar base in July, though its ratification in Parliament is far from certain. In response to Moscow’s growing belligerence, Poland may soon do so as well, though it remains unsatisfied with what Washington has offered in compensation and worries that the U.S. may drop the whole plan if a Democratic president is elected in November.

The problem for Hungary is that it might find itself in a no-man’s land between the United States and Russia. In economic terms, such a buffer zone has already developed in the region, as Russia tries to build an economic stronghold. The main field of Russian expansion is, of course, energy, and the consequences are not limited to Eastern and Central Europe. They also concern the United States, which is interested in finding ways to channel Central Asia’s wealth toward Europe without crossing Russian territory. It is also trying to help the ex-Soviet states in that region break free of the Russian embrace and to find transit routes for their natural gas, so that they do not need to rely on Moscow as their only buyer.

Budapest also has to decide how to handle several del-

## FOCUS

icate strategic questions regarding Moscow's dealings with its Balkan neighbors. First, there is the ongoing Russian confrontation with the European Union and the United States over their decision this spring to recognize the independence of Kosovo. Moscow was a strong opponent of the secession of that province from longtime ally Serbia, so Western backing for the independence of Kosovo has turned many Serbs against European integration and allowed Russia to strengthen its influence.

Meanwhile, Belgrade joined Moscow's South Stream Project to build a pipeline to carry Russian gas to Europe. The Russian-Serb agreement, signed in January, gives majority control to Russia over the Serb section of the pipeline. What is more, Russia also gained control over the biggest Serb oil company. It thus cemented a very strong presence in the backyard of Hungary, whose current leaders — their critics say — do not even try to resist Moscow's growing influence.

To the disappointment of the United States and the European Union, Hungary also joined the project at the

end of February. Both Washington and Brussels favor another pipeline, the Nabucco, which would bring gas from the Caspian Basin and the Middle East to Europe without crossing Russian territory.

The concerns about Hungary's eastern shift have triggered a campaign within the ranks of the largest opposition party, Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union, to improve its own ties to the United States. Bilateral relations between 1998 and 2002 under the conservative government of Viktor Orban were not always unclouded. The main bone of contention was Hungary's decision in 2001 to buy Swedish Gripens for its air force instead of American-made F-16s.

Even before the Hungarian-Russian agreement on the South Stream Project, Orban had denounced what he called an undue amount of Russian influence in Hungary. During a 2007 visit to the United States last year, he cited Russia's huge role in some of his country's key industries, and also criticized the government's decision to nominate someone who had studied at the acade-

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my of the Soviet KGB to head the Hungarian National Security Office.

Orban has a good chance of becoming prime minister again in 2010 — or, given the current political turmoil in Hungary, even sooner if early elections are held. Hungary's foreign policy orientation may well become a campaign issue, and trying to gain the support of the incoming U.S. president will surely play a role in this game.

A recent study by the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (a government-sponsored foreign policy research center) predicts that Obama and McCain would take the same basic approach toward Moscow. Obama regards Russia as “neither an enemy nor a friend,” and there is no sign of willingness on his part to restore closer relations. And McCain's traditional realist logic does not even contemplate the possibility of a partnership with Russia. This suggests that whoever will be the next U.S. president, the distance Budapest will have to bridge between Washington and Moscow will not become shorter.

### **Other Issues**

As for the future of transatlantic relations, the author of the study points out the fact that figures close to McCain hold highly skeptical views about Europe's capabilities. It is thus unlikely that he would make an effort to create a common platform for what he calls “democratic states.” The European countries cannot expect to be regularly consulted on American foreign policy steps by a McCain administration.

It is more likely that he would choose his partners according to his goals, much like the “coalition of the willing.” This approach could lead again to frictions in Europe, similar to that of “Old Europe” and “New Europe,” potentially enhancing the role of small countries like Hungary.

Obama's presidency holds the promise of a more multilateral approach. For Hungary, this suggests that the main institutions shaping its American relations would be NATO, then the European Union. But as expectations about Obama's multilateralism fly high across the world, it is worth noting that such an approach might lead Washington to demand more from its partners.

***Trying to gain the support of the new U.S. president will surely play a role in the upcoming Hungarian elections.***

For Hungary, just like Europe as a whole, one of the most important factors in judging the next American presidency will be its willingness to cooperate in the field of global warming. As the United States is seriously affected by high oil prices, there is a chance that the next president will step up the efforts to lay down the foundations of a more sustainable economic development. The Democratic Party's majority in Congress might also make this task easier.

Both McCain and Obama demand mutuality in reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, but much will depend on China and India. The two governments received a promise at the G-8 summit in July that rich countries would take the lead in curbing emissions. But the documents issued at the summit had very few of the concrete goals needed to keep greenhouse gases from growing, and Europe would like to see a much more determined commitment from the United States. The European Union, for its part, made a unilateral pledge to reduce carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2020, irrespective of what other countries do.

Finally, the next administration's approach to global trade issues will also be closely watched in Hungary. While McCain stands for an open world trade system, Obama gives voice to the more and more widespread anti-globalization and protectionist views of the American public. This suggests that he might engage in trade conflicts as president — most probably with China.

If that happens, protectionist efforts might also be reinforced within the European Union, where there is already a constant battle between member states on how to deal with the influx of cheap — and often low-quality — Asian imports.

For all these reasons, Hungarians are probably more interested in this year's U.S. presidential election than ever before. Not only Americans think of it as a battle of historic significance; it seems so from the other side of the Atlantic as well. Seen from Hungary, the prospects are bright: each of the candidates has the potential to become a respected U.S. leader. However, there are several issues that will test bilateral relations in the coming years. ■

# TRADE IS CENTRAL FOR URUGUAY

**T**HE DEBATE IN LATIN AMERICA IS MAINLY ABOUT WHETHER IT MAKES ANY DIFFERENCE AT ALL WHO MOVES INTO THE WHITE HOUSE IN JANUARY.

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BY LUCÍA BALDOMIR

The upcoming presidential election is the talk of the town in Washington these days, but not in my home country. Tucked under Brazil, far from the United States, Uruguay has long been known as the Switzerland of South America. Its 3.4 million people are middle class by world standards, dependent on agricultural exports, and are more interested in what happens in Argentina or Brazil, their closest neighbors and biggest trade partners, than in the U.S.

Sure, Washington matters. The U.S. government offered a key loan to help Uruguay out of its 2002 financial crisis and, more recently, has become a strategic partner at a time of difficulties for Mercosur (the Southern Cone Common Market), an organization comprised of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. But while Washington sees Montevideo as a friendly capital in a hostile backyard, the biggest concern for most Uruguayans, and most Latin Americans, is making ends meet amid rising food and gas prices.

Of course, regional governments and business leaders have longer-term horizons, worrying about the impact of the U.S. slowdown on their national economies. As the saying goes: “When the United

States sneezes, Latin America catches a cold.”

Although a U.S. recession could trigger a decline in foreign investment, Uruguay is less dependent on American business in today’s global economy than it used to be. Its exports to the United States fell \$75 million in the first five months of this year, a 69 percent drop compared to the same period last year, as the country shifted beef sales to Europe. The United States slipped from the No. 1 spot among Uruguay’s export markets to No. 8, with Uruguay importing more from the U.S. market than it sold.

U.S. companies such as United Airlines, Texaco and Bank Boston have closed or sold their Uruguayan operations in recent years. Others, including plywood maker Weyerhaeuser, have scaled back. But the country’s economy still grew by more than 7 percent last year, as other businesses — both foreign and local — helped make up the gap.

The long-term role of the United States in Uruguay’s economy remains uncertain. Relations depend on a U.S. economic rebound and on how much Washington agrees to open its market to Uruguayan goods and services, especially sensitive agricultural products. Meanwhile, the country is moving to become more globally competitive and less U.S.-focused.

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*Lucía Baldomir is a business reporter for Montevideo’s El País newspaper.*

**Close Ties Will Continue**

No matter who wins the White House in November, Uruguay is among the Latin American countries with the most to gain from good relations. In a region filled with populist hardliners such as Hugo Chavez (Venezuela), Evo Morales (Bolivia), Rafael Correa (Ecuador) and Nestor and Cristina Kirchner (Argentina), Uruguayan President Tabaré Vázquez stands out as a moderate leader alongside Brazil's Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Although Vázquez is Uruguay's first leftist president, he has built on the solid U.S. ties developed by his more market-oriented predecessor, Jorge Batlle. The Bush administration even offered to negotiate a free trade agreement with Montevideo. Though that initiative fizzled due to differences within Vázquez's ruling coalition, the fact that the president even tried to discuss such a proposal shows how far the terms of the debate have shifted. Before the 2004 Uruguayan elections, the most radical wing within Vázquez's coalition promoted the idea of not paying Uruguay's debt to the International Monetary Fund at all. Some even taunted visiting IMF officials with signs that read, "Yankee, go home!"

Earlier this year, Pres. Vázquez signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement with Washington to expand economic opportunities. That agreement has already helped open the U.S. market for Uruguayan blueberries, allowed U.S. turkey imports into Uruguay and increased cooperation in science and technology. But hopes for the long term are bigger: The government considers the TIFA a first step toward more open trade, even if the chance of signing a free trade agreement was discarded before Uruguayans' eyes.

Another clear sign of the deepening relationship is the fact that more top U.S. officials visited Montevideo in the past four years than ever before, including President George W. Bush, who saluted Pres. Vázquez as one of America's friends in the region.

**The Best Choice?**

It's tough to gauge who would be the best U.S. president for Uruguay or Latin America. Some Uruguayans believe they would be better off dealing with a

***Earlier this year,  
Uruguay signed a  
Trade and Investment  
Framework Agreement  
with Washington to  
expand economic  
opportunities.***

Republican administration willing to sign trade agreements, but others would prefer a Democratic president with a different foreign policy.

Anti-Bush feelings rose with the Iraq War and fueled growing anti-U.S. sentiment in the region. For instance, last year I had to choose between going to the United States or Spain for a six-month journalism fellowship. I asked friends, family and other contacts for their input. Almost everyone urged me to choose Europe, citing the arrogance of "los Yankees," but I came to the

U.S. anyway.

Changing Latin American attitudes toward the United States won't be easy for the new administration. It will take a friendlier and more humble U.S. foreign policy that pays more attention to regional concerns; but hopes for that are not high. After all, when Bush was elected, he promised to make Latin America a top priority. However, after 9/11, the war against terrorism became his overriding concern. As a result, the region has become more self-reliant and critical of the Bush administration.

In fact, some regional commentators are convinced that Latin America will never be a priority for any U.S. administration. Sooner or later, the region always ends up disappointed by too little attention — or the wrong kind.

McCain's greatest strength in Uruguay, and elsewhere in Latin America, is his commitment to boost relations with the region and sign as many trade agreements as possible, continuing Bush's approach. For countries that already have free trade pacts with Washington, the challenge is how to build on those accords and enhance their impact. As for Uruguay, the question is how to reach political consensus over free trade and make the most of the Bush administration's final year.

Yet even if Uruguay embraces free trade and McCain wins, many wonder whether the Republican leader can fulfill his pledges. They note that the Bush administration negotiated and signed a free trade pact with Colombia, but couldn't even get the Democratic-controlled Congress to vote on it this year. And the Democrats are expected to pick up legislative seats in November.

Few Uruguayans knew much about Barack Obama until recently. Early this year, local newspaper headlines

## FOCUS

focused mainly on McCain, known as a Vietnam War veteran, and Hillary Clinton, recognized for her years as first lady. It came as a surprise to most Uruguayans that Obama beat Clinton, but now they consider him the favorite in November.

Obama stands out because he opposes most of Bush's policies. Most Uruguayans also believe that he and his fellow Democrats are more inclined than the Republicans to pass legislation that will help legalize the status of immigrants in the United States and welcome them. On the other hand, his protectionist rhetoric stirs real concerns, both within the Uruguayan government and the private sector. Some fear he would add barriers to international trade, perhaps imposing restrictions on beef or other farm products by alleging potential pests or diseases.

It is possible that Obama would be willing to negotiate trade benefits with Mercosur or bigger economic groups rather than doing so bilaterally. Of course, multilateral talks would favor larger countries such as Brazil, with 192 million people, and Argentina, with 40 million, diluting

Uruguay's ability to promote its own interests. But the good news is that Obama shares many of our priority concerns, such as development of alternative energy sources. So negotiations with Mercosur would likely end up helping all its members, even tiny Uruguay.

### **The Future**

The big question for most Latin Americans is whether the next U.S. president will pay more attention to their concerns. Or to put it another way: The debate does not center on who would be better for the region, but on whether it makes any difference at all who moves into the White House in January.

This election comes at a time when the United States is losing ground in the hemisphere. The war in Iraq has damaged its image outside its borders, the U.S. economy is in recession, and China is emerging as a key business competitor. The Bush administration has focused so much time and money on fighting terrorism that its total aid to Latin America last year was roughly equivalent to

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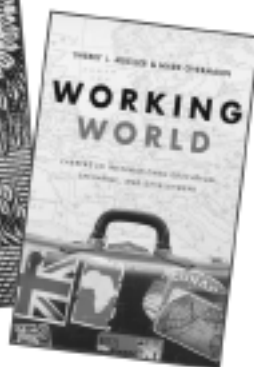
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just one week's spending in Iraq.

Meanwhile, the region is diversifying its relations and faring well, posting some of its best economic growth rates in decades. Sales of food products, minerals and other basics to China, India and Europe helped the region grow by 5.6 percent last year, even as the U.S. housing market tanked. Oil-exporting Venezuela is picking up some of the slack by buying Argentine debt, promoting a new development bank called Banco del Sur and providing long-term loans for oil sales in the region, among other measures. It also bought up a struggling Uruguayan cooperative bank known as Cofac, financed the development of the sugar cane industry, and reached an agreement with state-oil company Ancap to tap Venezuela's massive oil reserves in the Orinoco belt.

Despite the recent economic growth, many Latin Americans remain dissatisfied with democracy. After the end of anti-communist dictatorships in the 1980s, including many backed by Washington during the Cold War,

hopes ran high that democracy could bring prosperity and slash poverty. But progress has been slower than expected, with economic gains unequally distributed and corruption widespread in some countries. The latest annual survey by respected pollster Latinobarometro found only 54 percent of respondents support democratic governments — a finding that suggests limited importance will be placed on the U.S. election results.

The next president of the United States faces a serious challenge in Uruguay and across Latin America: to gain the respect and trust of the majority of the region's 562 million residents and build support for democracy. A failure to integrate the United States with the rest of the Americas could strengthen the populist and socialist governments now actively working to diminish the U.S. role in the region. It could also push Latin America to accelerate the pursuit of ties with Europe and Asia. But most of all, a failure to bond with the rest of the hemisphere would leave the United States more isolated. ■

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# OBAMAMANIA, GERMAN STYLE

ARE GERMANS STARTING TO REALIZE THAT BARACK OBAMA MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO FULFILL THE HIGH HOPES THEY HAVE PROJECTED ONTO HIM?

BY CORDULA MEYER

If Germany were the 51st state of the United States, Barack Obama would not even need to campaign there. According to recent polls, 67 percent of Germans would vote for the senator from Illinois, while only 7 percent would choose John McCain. More than 82 percent of all Germans have confidence in Obama, while just 33 percent feel that way about the senator from Arizona.

The excitement is so widespread that Constanze Stelzenmüller, head of the German Marshall Fund in Berlin, calls him the “Dalai Obama” — saying that the only person more revered in Germany is the Dalai Lama. Support for him is very emotional: Obama’s political style of uplifting, inspiring speeches and his message of unity and hope really appeal to Germans.

However, when he expressed his support for the death penalty for child rapists after the June Supreme Court ruling striking it down, many people in Germany were in a state of complete shock. While there was some coverage of his position back in the U.S., all major German papers ran articles on the subject (some on the front page), as well as a flurry of commentaries asking

how someone seen as the face of a new, better America could call for such a terrible thing?

Politicians from across the German political spectrum condemned his position. “Obama should work towards abandoning the death penalty, not for expanding it,” said Green Party Leader Claudia Roth. Her remarks were echoed by the head of the most conservative party, the Christian Social Union, Erwin Huber, who said: “The ban on the death penalty must be absolute.”

The incident represented the first cooling of the love affair the German public has had with Barack Obama — and the first warning that he might not be able to fulfill the hopes Germans have projected onto him.

## A Complicated Relationship

This level of local interest in a U.S. presidential race is unprecedented. According to the Pew Research Center, 56 percent of the German public follows the contest closely — more than in any other foreign country except Japan and considerably more than in Spain or France.

At the same time, only 31 percent of Germans have a favorable view of the U.S., down an astonishing 47 points from only eight years ago. This is the biggest

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*Cordula Meyer is a senior correspondent for Der Spiegel, based in Washington, D.C.*

swing in public opinion in 24 countries surveyed.

The drop is largely due to disapproval of President George W. Bush's decision to go to war with Iraq and other policies. The Social Democrats, who under then-chancellor Gerhard Schroeder refused to go into Iraq, still proclaim themselves the peace party, the ones who kept Germans out of the quagmire in Iraq. But there is also considerable resentment of Pres. Bush because of his rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, his administration's use of torture and the treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. Nor is former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's quip about "Old Europe" forgotten. These issues still dominate the German view of the U.S. today.

In addition, U.S. policy toward Iran is being watched very closely. Bush's political saber-rattling about World War III last November attracted much more widespread attention in Germany than it did in the U.S. and still reverberates. Following indications that Israel might go ahead with a military attack against Tehran, fear in Germany has increased that Washington might be involved in another war before this president leaves office.

Although relations and, especially, the style of communication between the two countries have significantly improved since Angela Merkel became chancellor in 2005, the view of Bush among the general public has hardly changed. His policy toward North Korea and his half-hearted attempts to restart the Israeli-Palestinian peace process have reassured some in government without altering the German public's negative assessment of him. But they — along with many members of the Merkel government — are clearly just waiting for the Bush era to end. Tellingly, during the president's last visit to Germany there were not even demonstrations against him, a clear sign that even the protesters consider their favorite enemy a lame duck no longer worth the trouble.

Despite their negative views of the U.S., Germans have always liked American popular culture — from Bruce Springsteen to the rapper 50 Cent, from "Sex in the City" to American designers. "We want a change

***John McCain gets substantially less coverage than his opponent, but he is seen as a realist in foreign policy who is supportive of the transatlantic alliance.***

that again lets us say: 'We love America,'" says Social Democrat foreign policy expert Hans-Ulrich Klose. Nobody could make that easier than Barack Obama. That is the change Germans believe in.

#### **Ready for a Fresh Start**

Obama stands for freshness, untainted by the political bickering of the past, and offers a vision of a united America. His life story, with a father from Kenya and a youth spent in Indonesia and Hawaii, is international and a departure from the biographies of presidents past. It is inspiring and intriguing to many Germans that he is African-American, which for them symbolizes in itself a new, better America.

That biography also seems to vindicate the German ideal of multiculturalism, which has come under much public criticism recently. "Obama is the incarnation of Multi-Kulti," says Stelzenmüller. She sees a "pathological similarity" between the two countries at the root of the German infatuation with Obama. "Both countries are very idealistic and want to be good, and for that we want to be loved by the rest of the world." And while Americans "fall in love with their own utopia during this election, Germans fall for the U.S. utopia, as well, because it is so powerful."

Obama's commitment to change and hope is a perfect projection screen for German yearning for what they perceive as a better America. Germans liked the charisma and iconic stature of John F. Kennedy, and they view Obama as his heir. References to him as "the Black Kennedy" abound. For many Germans, says Social Democrat foreign policy expert Karsten Voigt, Obama is "a mixture of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy."

No wonder, as Voigt says, that "Germany is Obama country." Some Social Democrats have even taken the unprecedented step of endorsing Obama. Kurt Beck, their chairman, has said that "an Obama presidency would be good for the whole world." Even Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the tough German foreign minister, closed a speech at Harvard by chanting, "Yes, we can!"

After almost four years of a grand coalition, Chancellor Merkel's no-nonsense, matter-of-fact leader-

ship style, and a general lack of inspiring politicians, Germans long for a charismatic figure. The Christian Democratic parliamentary leader Norbert Röttgen says Obama has generated a mood that “makes it possible to believe in politics.” With membership in all political parties hitting a historic low and half of the membership of the two big parties being 60 and older, there is a general frustration with politics. So many Germans are intrigued that Barack Obama can get people excited about politics and revive democracy that way.

Coverage of John McCain is somewhat more limited. The senator is well-known inside political circles because he regularly attends an annual conference in Munich that draws members of the security community worldwide. It is the one high-level meeting in Germany

***Despite their negative views of the Bush administration, Germans continue to like American popular culture.***

where issues like NATO strategy, the fight against terrorism and many military issues are discussed in depth.

Those who know McCain view him as a realist in foreign policy, somebody strongly interested in and supportive of the transatlantic alliance. Some worry about the prominent neo-conservatives among his advisers

on foreign policy. But the general public in Germany knows little about him except that they associate him closely with Bush. Perhaps because party discipline is so much stronger in Germany than in the U.S., and Bush and McCain are both Republicans, there seems to be little curiosity among the German public about how, or even whether, the two men differ.

Though McCain gets substantially less coverage than Obama, his life story — particularly his record as a war

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hero, as well as his stances on global warming and on torture — is well known. Yet that is not how he is defined. “McCain means war,” a Berlin commentator wrote in July, citing how the candidate hummed “Bomb, bomb, bomb Iran.” Nor do McCain’s confrontational views on Russia do anything to reassure Germans.

### **Poised for Disappointment?**

Yet many members of the political elite warn that relations with the U.S. will not automatically run smoothly if Barack Obama wins in November. Up to now, it has been easy for Berlin to turn down requests from the disliked Bush administration — for example, to send more German troops to Afghanistan. Such requests would be much more difficult to rebuff coming from a President Obama, even though there is very little support among Germans for expanding the country’s military presence overseas.

Furthermore, because Obama was born well after World War II and his worldview has not been shaped as much by the Cold War lens, some experts warn that the transatlantic relationship might be less of a priority for him. Yet while little is known about Obama’s foreign policy positions, the German public sees him as peaceloving and multilateral, which seems to be enough.

Obama had never been to Germany before his trip to Berlin in July, so the announcement of his visit there caused widespread excitement. The country was the centerpiece of his trip to Europe. His initial plans to speak at the Brandenburg Gate caused a controversy, due in part to the fact that the foreign minister, a Social Democrat in Chancellor Merkel’s grand coalition, used Merkel’s reluctance to allow Obama use of the historic site as a way to separate himself publicly from her for the first time. In effect, Obama’s visit marked the beginning of the campaign leading up to next year’s German elections.

The venue Obama ultimately chose, the Victory Column, not only defused the issue but is almost as symbolic as the Brandenburg Gate. Local coverage of his visit has only increased Obama’s status as a political pop star in Germany. *Der Spiegel* devoted a cover story

### **Local coverage of his visit has only increased Obama’s status as a political pop star in Germany.**

to his visit (the second time it has put him on the cover) titled “Obama, an American Idol,” while *Stern* magazine titled its story, “Savior or Seducer?” And the cover of the political daily *Taz* depicted him as Superman. There were also many stories detailing Obama’s foreign policy ideas — as far as he has been specific about them, anyway.

The danger is that in their high hopes, Germans are not only falling for a Democrat, but one they believe must be practically a European himself. But they forget the fundamental differences between the United States and Europe. So they are shocked when Obama does not speak out against a Supreme Court ruling on gun control, and when he supports telecommunications surveillance. And they feel bewildered when he calls for a greater role for religious groups in administering government assistance.

For all these reasons, Germans are in for a disappointment, says Stelzenmüller. As much as they like Obama’s message, they need to prepare themselves for what his policies would look like in practice and how much he would be bound by facts and events once in office. He would most probably not sign the Kyoto Protocol; he would expand the military; and even he would not be able to make the United Nations popular with most Americans.

Once Germans get beyond those unrealistic expectations, however, there would be room for a new era of friendship with America. The style of communication would be different, for one thing. After all, an Obama-led America would be closer to Germany than Bush’s America — just not as close as Germans hope on issues ranging from the Iraq War and dealing with Iran to climate change policies.

Still, the fact that Obama wants to take action against proliferation and restart disarmament talks, and supports multilateral action, will bring him tremendous good will — and maybe even the political leverage to push Germans a little farther than they want to go. Obama adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski has said that if Europe wants to share the decision-making, it will also have to share the responsibilities and the burdens. Germans will be reluctant to do so, but Obama is in a unique position to convince them. ■

# INDONESIANS HOPE FOR PARTNERSHIP

THE FACT THAT OBAMA SPENT SEVERAL YEARS IN JAKARTA AS A BOY DOES NOT MEAN INDONESIANS EXPECT SPECIAL TREATMENT IF HE'S ELECTED.

BY KURIE SUDITOMO

It should come as no surprise that to the extent Indonesians are paying attention to the upcoming U.S. presidential election, they're mainly interested in Barack Obama. Besides his youth and ethnicity, there is the fact that he spent several years as a boy in Jakarta during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

One can find at least seven books by local writers profiling Obama on the shelves of Gramedia, Indonesia's biggest bookstore chain. One, *Jangan Bunuh Obama! (Don't Kill Obama!)*, expresses fear that if he is elected, Obama will be the fifth U.S. president to be assassinated.

The book came out in April, just as *Time* magazine published a profile of Obama's mother, Stanley Ann Dunham, "a white woman from the Midwest who seems to have been more comfortable in Indonesia." That same month, the Indonesian weekly news magazine I write for, *Tempo*, published an article adding a few more intimate

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*Kurie Suditomo is a staff writer for Tempo, a weekly news magazine in Jakarta, writing for its foreign affairs and arts & culture sections. She began as an intern in 1999, then spent three years reporting on national and political issues. In 2005, thanks to a J. William Fulbright Scholarship, she earned a master's degree in Southeast Asian studies from Ohio University.*

details about the family, such as how Ann spent years studying women and blacksmithing among villagers in Central Java, and how the ungainly future U.S. presidential candidate "ran funny, like a paddy-field duck."

The cover illustration for *Jangan Bunuh Obama!* shows the senator, his eyes closed in prayer, with a U.S. flag as a backdrop. Author Hermawan Aksan writes: "Obama means hope. Hope for a more peaceful world. Aside from his flaws, Obama is still very young and offers a program for change that is different from [that of] his opponent, John McCain, and, of course, from [that of] George W. Bush."

One can sense the very same enthusiasm from neighbors and Obama's friends during the four years he lived in Jakarta. Coenraad — who, like many Indonesians, only uses one name — lived next door to "Barry," as he called him then, in the Menteng Dalam neighborhood. He has few doubts Obama will win in November, joking that "He will be the first Menteng Dalam kid to become the U.S. president."

## Strong Feelings

The Indonesian media have a soft spot for Obama. In the early months of 2008, he appeared almost daily on the front pages, in features and in television coverage. In joking with local journalists, U.S. embassy staff urged us to

give John McCain some space, too. “You have to be balanced,” one advised.

But Indonesians understand only too well that America is not only about Obama. The U.S. has always had a strong influence on this country, the world’s third-largest democracy, going back to the young republic’s hasty 1945 proclamation of independence. Now, six decades after former President Sukarno’s bitterness toward the U.S. led him to pull out of the United Nations for several years, a similar wave of anti-American sentiment is back in full swing among Indonesia’s 220 million people. Only this time, the emotion is boiling up from the bottom.

Street demonstrations — almost a daily occurrence in the post-Suharto era — often carry an anti-American message. Muslim groups blame Washington for failing to press for a Palestinian state and for ignoring the suffering of ordinary Iraqis. Angry students see it as the leader of Western neo-colonization in the developing world.

A prime target of such emotion, of course, is the American embassy, which sits next to the vice president’s office in downtown Jakarta. Because of frequent protests against U.S. policy, a 30-man police mobile brigade detachment is stationed there around the clock. As a sign of appreciation, the embassy supplements the men’s daily meal allowance with cartons of instant noodles, packages of cookies, instant coffee and candy. (Four members of the brigade were badly hurt in the bombing of the Australian embassy in September 2004 that killed 11 civilians, so they take threats to the embassy seriously.)

Do the guards know America is going to have a presidential election soon? “Yes, I saw it on television,” said one 20-something patrolman. “Obama from the Democrat[ic] Party and ... um, that old man from the other one.”

Like many other Indonesians, the patrolman knows Obama spent his childhood in Jakarta, but he is not so sure about what that means for the future. He thinks relations between the U.S. and Indonesia are generally good, and appreciates the U.S. government-sponsored police training sessions that have often been held since 2000. But he remains skeptical about American intentions: “Obama may have spent some time here, but he still needs to prove his friendship with us.”

That is exactly how the common people think about the U.S., says Yenny Wahid, daughter of former president

***Indonesians  
understand only too  
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about Obama.***

Abdurrahman Wahid. Her father, popularly known as Gus Dur, leads Nahdlatul Ulama, a 40 million-strong Muslim organization whose moderate interpretation of Islam stands in stark contrast to Saudi Arabia’s strict Wahabi school.

Wahid received her master’s degree from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and once served on President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s staff of advisers. She notes that

both countries may have a warm relationship in a formal sense, but that does not necessarily reflect what mainstream Indonesians feel.

She says America is disliked for its defiant support of Israel and for turning its back on the suffering of the Palestinian people. It is also seen to represent the evil of globalization, which creates social injustice and impoverishes those who reside in rural areas. In this case, the Yudhoyono administration shares the blame for not being independent enough from Washington. “We couldn’t get any closer to America,” Wahid complains.

Still, she feels November’s election may be more important than previous polls because Obama will be one of the candidates. It is not only his emotional ties with Indonesia that are important, but also his rather prophetic vision to become an agent of change after eight years of negativity under the George W. Bush administration.

**Resentment of U.S. Pressure**

Listen to a similar reaction on a lazy Sunday afternoon at Jakarta’s Istiqlal Mosque. The building’s first stone was put in place in 1961 after Yenny Wahid’s grandfather, Wahid Hasyim, introduced the idea of building a monumental place of worship next to the Presidential Palace. It can hold more than 60,000 people, and in mid-June that many people flocked to midday prayers to celebrate the capital’s 481st birthday.

A member of Daarut Tauhid, the group that organized the gathering, won’t give her name, but says her passionate fondness for Obama comes from her neighbor, who claimed to be the former headmaster of his elementary school. She expects Obama to win, but like everyone else, is not sure that will help to arrest a perceived drift in U.S.-Indonesia relations. She finds America too demanding and dictatorial, and says it wields too strong an influence over Indonesia and the current administration. “We don’t

## F O C U S

have to prove anything about terrorism, so we shouldn't mind what they accuse us of," she says.

Retired General Agus Widjojo helps to explain this notion. During President Bush's first term, he points out, the pressure to conform with the U.S. national interest in the war on terrorism was so great that it sometimes violated the very democratic practices Washington espouses. One such case was when Indonesian intelligence apprehended suspected al-Qaida terrorist Omar Al-Farouq and turned him over to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in a clandestine operation in January 2002. Al-Farouq was flown to the U.S. military's Baghram Base in Afghanistan, from which he escaped five years later.

Widjojo says such acts, undertaken without the involvement of the police, are no longer acceptable in the newly democratic Indonesia, because the people hate to see their government bending to Washington's wishes. "We are no longer an authoritarian regime. It should be difficult to pressure us to do something like that," he adds.

Some government insiders believe it is better for the

Americans to play a low-profile role; otherwise, the issue will only exacerbate the anti-American sentiments already prevalent in Indonesian society. "The more they try to push, the more resistance they will get," says one palace official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

### **A Careful Balancing Act**

Pres. Yudhoyono has been very careful in balancing the people's emotion and his administration's interests in pursuing a partnership with the U.S. "Our relations have been excellent, with Washington taking a pro-Indonesian stand since the birth of the reform era," says Dino Patti Djalal, the president's spokesman on foreign affairs.

However, Djalal declines to say whether he favors Obama or McCain and talks instead about the overall relationship. "Whoever replaces Bush must be able to retain that stance and demonstrate an ability to exercise nuanced diplomacy." That means an ability to respect the complexity of the relationship, instead of focusing on just one single issue.



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What Djalal wants to see is a smart U.S. policy, similar to that exercised by many other countries. He feels bilateral cooperation goes well because it stays low-key. This is particularly true in counterterrorism, reflecting Washington's understanding that it is an internal law enforcement issue. But Indonesia will never be a U.S. satellite in the region. "We are more like India in the way we have our own stands and actions," he notes.

Indeed, Gen. Widjojo believes there is little chance Obama or McCain can bring radical change, because most important decisions lie in the hands of Congress. But he would like to see the resumption of the International Military Education and Training program, suspended when Congress froze military relations with Indonesia after soldiers killed as many as 200 civilians in a shooting in a Dili, East Timor, graveyard in 1991. Although those restrictions have now been relaxed, and some bilateral programs are in place, there are still congressional roadblocks in the way of the full relationship.

"As a Democrat, Obama would likely be tougher on human rights' issues, while McCain may help to improve the military relationship, as commonly happens with Republican leaders," the general observes. But otherwise, he does not expect to see too many differences between McCain's policies and Pres. Bush's program.

Widjojo says Indonesia has suffered enough from the military mistakes made during the New Order years. "Future military leaders should be given a chance to study alternative systems and share knowledge on democracy and human rights in other countries," he says. Because the current generation of military officers does not have such opportunities, they do not even study English seriously, Widjojo says.

Such sentiments run parallel to Minister of Defense Juwono Sudarsono's views. Whoever wins November's election should support Indonesia's military capacity-building, he says, so that the country's strategic position can earn more respect from the U.S. "Treat us as a partner, not an ally." ■

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# WHAT TO DO ABOUT GINA

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A SINGLE FS WOMAN, LINDA SUDDENLY FINDS HER LIFE  
DRAMATICALLY CHANGED BY A TRAGEDY AT HOME.

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By JOAN B. ODEAN

Linda looked down at the little girl standing patiently beside her, as the two inched up the line toward the customs official at the Tel Aviv airport. The girl's two braids were coming slightly undone, and she was still clutching the tattered stuffed dog she had barely let out of her sight for the past two weeks. Her lavender backpack hung limply on her back. Linda reached out her hand and put it softly on the blond head; the girl did not react to the touch.

Sighing softly, Linda removed her hand and looked up, checking how much farther they had before their turn came at the customs agent's cubicle. Her eyes burned with the

itchy, sandy feeling one has after traveling a long distance in the dry atmosphere of an airplane, without much sleep. She wanted nothing more than a hot shower followed by crawling into her bed with its crisp, clean white sheets in her darkened, quiet bedroom.

Linda was jarred from this pleasant thought when she remembered that she probably had nothing in the refrigerator. Gina would be hungry. Anything left in the fridge would probably be long past ready to be thrown out. Having hurriedly left Tel Aviv for Ohio two weeks ago, she had had little time to do anything but hastily gather clothes and dash to the airport. Food. She'd have to get some food for Gina. And the bed in the guest room — Gina's room, now — was not only unmade, but buried under a pile of clothes and books. As a single woman with no family left (well, except for Gina) and friends who visit her only once or twice a year, Linda used the guest room as a catch-all for anything and everything.

No, her life was no longer only about her wants and desires — now there was Gina.

Linda's tangled thoughts were interrupted by the immigration agent motioning her to come forward. Gently putting her hand on Gina's back, she guided the girl to the window, pushing their two passports — one blue, one black — through the open slot.

*This story is the first-place winner of the Journal's 2008 Foreign Service fiction contest. Other winning stories will appear in future issues of the FSJ.*

*Joan Broyles Odean, an office management specialist who joined the Foreign Service in 1985, has served in Geneva, Bonn, Tel Aviv, Oslo, Moscow and Washington, D.C. Her story, "Lucky," won second place in the 2007 Foreign Service fiction contest. Ms. Odean is currently posted in Ottawa.*

With a bored expression, the agent regarded the two disheveled travelers before him. He checked the visa in Linda's diplomatic passport and swiped it through the reader. Opening Gina's passport, he looked at the little girl with renewed interest.

"What relation are you to this woman?" he asked her, unsmiling.

"She's my niece," Linda spoke up, her hand still resting protectively on Gina's back.

"Miss ..." the agent checked Linda's passport again. "Krall. I was speaking to the girl. Can she speak English?"

"Of course," Linda said, trying to hide her exasperation.

Gina was staring up at the agent, her wary, blue eyes shadowed with purple circles of fatigue.

"Why are you here?" the agent asked again, staring at Gina. The young girl turned to look at Linda, confusion and a certain fear on her face.

"I..." she stammered.

"Look," Linda risked stepping in, trying to avoid having the situation spiral into something worse. "She's been through a lot. Her mother — my sister — just passed away. She's with me. We're tired — it has been a long flight. Perhaps you'd like me to call the U.S. embassy and we can talk to someone there?" Linda held her breath, hoping the veiled threat would work.

The agent returned Linda's steady gaze. The last thing he wanted was to get into a long, drawn-out tussle with a diplomat. Finally, he sighed and with a heavy hand stamped Gina's passport. Wordlessly, he shoved the two passports back to Linda.

"Thanks," she said curtly and struggled through the turnstile, leading the child.

They made their way past the rows of expectant faces outside the international terminal and pushed through the gypsy cab drivers waiting to grab a fare. Resolutely, Linda steered Gina

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*The girl had said little  
the last few hours —  
the last two weeks, in  
fact, Linda thought.*

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and their cart piled high with luggage outside — momentarily hesitating and blinking against the white sunlight that blinded them — to the curb, flagged a cab, and once everything was loaded, sagged back into the seat.



The two were quiet as they sped toward the city. The events of the last two weeks were a nightmarish blur. Involuntarily, the events replayed in Linda's mind yet again: the phone call received at the embassy at 6 p.m. from the hospital in Akron with the news that her sister had been in a car accident and, though still alive, was in critical condition; the rush to get plane reservations back to the United States; hurrying to her apartment, throwing together a bag. The long plane ride to Ohio. Arriving at her sister's house and holding her perplexed and terrified 7-year-old niece — such a little thing she was, Linda thought. Driving to the hospital and giving the heart-wrenching permission to withdraw life support. Funeral arrangements. People at the house. The lawyer. And then — Gina.

What to do about Gina.

"Of course," Linda had said in a daze in the somber attorney's office back in Ohio. "I'm taking her with me."

The attorney quietly looked at Linda, as if sizing her up, and then rose from the heavy mahogany desk

and went to the window, his back to her. "You know, I only met your sister once or twice," he said. "She was an ... interesting ... woman."

This was probably one of the more blatant understatements in the world, Linda thought. But, at the same time, she deeply resented the subtle aspersion cast upon her sister's character by this man. Kelly had been a free spirit, but had worked hard as a sales clerk to make a solid living for her daughter and herself after the divorce from her last husband. And she had succeeded. They had a small house in the leafy suburbs of Akron; Gina had done well in school; and Kelly had finally seemed to settle down and find satisfaction in being a single mom.

Linda had not been particularly close to her sister or to her niece. She had sent obligatory birthday and Christmas cards to Gina every year, along with some gift unique to the area where she had been posted: a small Bavarian cuckoo clock when she was in Germany; a reindeer muff and hat when she had lived in Oslo; an exquisite Chinese doll from Beijing. She had even flown out to Ohio once or twice for brief visits during the past few years. And, of course, they had met at the funerals of their parents. But by no stretch of the imagination was Linda close to Gina. She knew this explained the child's shyness and reserve with her.

And then, the car accident. Kelly had unexpectedly worked late one evening. The police never decided if she had fallen asleep or had just lost control of her car, which skidded into a ditch and overturned. And life was suddenly different — for Gina, for Linda, for so many people.

The attorney's voice abruptly brought Linda back to the present. "As the only living relative, you are, of course, the logical person to take on the guardianship of this child. However..." he continued, turning back to face her. "I understand you are with

the Department of State? Living overseas?"

"Yes," Linda said, uncertain where the conversation was going. "The Foreign Service."

"And so you will be taking the child to live with you in ..."

"... Israel," Linda said, her voice stronger now.

"...Israel," the attorney echoed, eyebrows rising. "A somewhat volatile spot right now, wouldn't you say?"

Linda contemplated the attorney. "Mr. Modine, what are you trying to say?"

"Simply that I want what is best for the child, as do you, I'm sure," he said, smoothly. "And with your demanding and ... mobile ... career, I just wonder if you can provide the most stable home and give Gina the attention she will need for the next 10 years or so. I simply wonder, my dear," he said, assuming a condescending tone now,

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***"You are, of course,  
the logical person to take  
on the guardianship of  
this child. However ...  
I understand you are  
with the Department  
of State?"***

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"if you have thought this through completely."

Linda stared at him wordlessly. The lawyer appeared slightly discomfited by her gaze. "I want to point out to you

that there are ... options," he continued, his voice fading.

"Options," Linda repeated hollowly.

"Yes," the attorney felt somewhat encouraged. "I know several very nice couples who would be thrilled to have Gina join them as members of their families. And, of course," he smiled thinly, "you would be well compensated."

Linda stared at the attorney with disbelief. She fought to keep her face passive and contain her aversion to this man. She stood slowly.

"Mr. Modine," she said firmly, looking him straight in the eye. "Gina is coming with me. I can provide her the loving and secure home she needs. Hundreds — thousands — of government employees have families overseas. I think this discussion is at an end. Don't you agree?"

Mr. Modine barely inclined his head.



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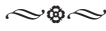
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In the middle of the long plane ride from the U.S. to Tel Aviv, when the flight had caught up to the night and the cabin lights were dimmed to encourage the restless passengers to sleep, Linda had raised the arm rest between the two seats and pulled Gina toward her. The cabin's air was too refrigerated, so Linda had tucked the skimpy airline blanket over the two of them, followed by their two sweaters. Another thing to add to the list next time they traveled, Linda thought wearily — an extra blanket. Always new checklists.

When they had been waiting in the lounge at the airport to board, Linda had suddenly thought, "What if we're stranded in the plane on the tarmac somewhere for six hours?" She had jumped up and hurriedly told Gina to wait for her there while she ran to a concession stand to get some emergency snacks. But after taking a step or two away, she had whirled around and returned to Gina, gripping the child's hand, loaded the bags on the cart, and lumbered down the hallway to the nearest newsstand. Linda grabbed packages of trail mix and some candy bars. Another thing to remember: be prepared with extra food and water, she thought to herself.

On the plane, Gina's warm weight rested against her aunt. The girl had said little the last few hours — the last two weeks, in fact, Linda thought. She continued to clutch the formless gray-pink stuffed animal tightly. When the two had gone through security at the airport, there had been a brief moment of anxiety as the security people ordered Gina to drop her stuffed animal into the bin for passage through the x-ray machines. Gina had stubbornly shaken her head, refusing to let go of the small animal.

For one, wild moment, Linda had had the urge to acquiesce to the small girl. "OK, let's just turn around and

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*Linda thought Gina  
could very probably  
hear the too-forced  
brightness in her voice.*

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not go!" she had wanted to say. Instead, reason somehow took hold.

"Ma'm, you're not getting through here until your little girl lets us X-ray the stuffed animal," the burly security agent told Linda in no uncertain terms.

Linda had knelt in front of her niece. "Gina, you have to do this," she said. "Look at the other end of the conveyer belt. You can wait right here and watch the bin go in, and then out the other side of the machine. You won't ever have to lose sight of it." It took a few minutes, pulling Gina aside so that the agitated passengers stacking up behind her could pass in front of them, but finally Linda was able to pry the animal out of the girl's reluctant small hands.

In the dim, quiet plane, Gina turned to look up at her aunt. "Tell me about the school again," she whispered.

"Oh, you'll like it. There's a sleep-over once a year," Linda said brightly, wracking her brain for things she had heard parents in the embassy discuss about the school.

"And I know they have a good soccer team. Do you play soccer?" Gina shook her head briefly.

"Well," Linda continued, "they have lots of things going on. I know you'll be fine there."

Linda thought that Gina could very probably hear the too-forced brightness in her voice; the little girl wordlessly turned back to the port-

hole, staring out at the stars hanging in the black sky.

Linda felt her insides clutch. For the first time, she acknowledged her fear. Oh Lord, she prayed silently. Show me how to handle this.



In the taxi from the airport to downtown Tel Aviv, Linda impassively took in the dusty, gray-green lotus trees and dark green, pencil-thin cypress trees, and the stark white buildings contrasted against the bright, cloudless sky. So different from the deep, cool shaded streets of the suburbs in Akron that Gina was used to, Linda thought.

"I don't think we'll see a camel here," Linda said teasingly. "But we will later on, when we drive out of the city — I promise."

Gina did not respond.

The taxi stopped in front of a high-rise apartment building fronting on the bright blue Mediterranean Sea, diamonds of light reflecting off the smooth water. Struggling with bags and purses, Linda paid the driver his shekels, muttered "Shabbat Shalom" to him, and led the girl toward the elevators. She noticed that Gina's hold on her stuffed dog was now so tight that the little girl's knuckles were white.

Finally — home. Linda sighed deeply, letting bags tumble off her shoulders and fall out of her hands. Gina stood silently in the middle of the large living room, as if waiting for instructions on what she should do next.

"Well," Linda said brightly. "Here we are!"

She went to the sliding glass doors and threw them open to let some fresh air into the stuffy, stale-smelling apartment. The hot, bright sun poured into the room; the heavy sea air was sultry.

Gina's eyes, trained on Linda, were

large and wary.

"I bet you could go for a nice bath?" Linda said hopefully to Gina, reflecting her own desperate need for a good, soothing soak. When Gina did not respond, Linda turned to the hallway.

"Back here is your room," Linda chirped, hating the false note of cheer in her voice, as Gina shuffled behind her. The two stood in the doorway of the room, looking at the bare bed overflowing with books, papers and clothes. "I'm sorry," Linda said to Gina. "I know this isn't very nice now, but I'll get it cleaned up right away."

Gina stared mutely at the room. The contrast between her peaceful, blue-and-white-eyelet sanctuary back in Akron and this impersonal mess could not have been more glaring, Linda thought, and she felt silent reproach emanating from the girl standing motionless beside her.

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***"But you're the grown-up," she wailed.***

***"You're supposed to know what to do!"***

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"Look," Linda said, hearing an edge in her voice from fatigue and her feeling of incompetence. "Why don't you take that bath while I straighten up here a bit?"

With a small sob, Gina turned on her heel and ran out of the room. Linda, shocked, simply stared at her without moving. But the sound of the front door opening galvanized her into action. She ran out and down the hall

after the fleeing girl. Catching Gina's small shoulder in front of the elevator, she whirled the child around. Something snapped inside of Linda — the tiredness, her anxiety, her sorrow.

"Gina!" Linda shook her shoulders a little. "Look, pal, I'm doing the best I can here. I'm new at this, too. You've got to help me with this. I don't have all the answers!"

Gina stared at Linda, horrified. "But you're the grown-up," she wailed. "You're supposed to know what to do! I don't! You're supposed to know!" Gina's face crumpled into tears.

Linda leaned back, staring at the child, whose head hung down, tears dripping onto her blue top. Linda could almost feel her heart crack with love for the child. She fell to her knees. "Oh Gina, honey," she whispered. "I'm so sorry. So sorry. Please, honey. Please." And she blindly drew

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the small child's body into her arms as Gina cried — great, heaving sobs shook her body.

Linda held her, rocking slightly. Her own tears fell silently onto Gina's blond hair. Gina cried on and on, letting out all the hurt and pain and fear that had been boiling inside of her since her mother's death. Finally, after a long while, Linda felt the child's cries slowing. Linda continued to hold her in a cocoon of warmth.

Finally, she pulled away and looked Gina in the face, gently wiping away the tears that stained her pink cheeks. The child's eyelashes stuck together, her blue eyes still swimming in a pool of tears.

"I am so sorry, Gina," Linda said softly but evenly, conviction threading her voice. "But I can promise you this — I swear to you. I am here. I will take care of you. Nothing will happen to you while I am here. And I love

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*The child's eyelashes  
stuck together, her blue  
eyes still swimming in a  
pool of tears.*

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you, Gina. I love you so much. We will make this work — together. I promise you that."

Gina stared at her, hiccupping softly. Linda gave her a tentative smile.

"I might need some help with this, but I will do the absolute best I can. Will you help me? I think I can do a good job, if you'll be there holding my hand, too. OK?" Linda asked.

Gina smiled softly, and nodded her head. "A-OK," she replied faintly.

Linda drew her into another fierce hug. "A-OK," Linda repeated, standing. "Why don't you go wash your face and let's go out for a hamburger and some of the best ice cream you'll ever taste?"

Gina walked to the bathroom, and Linda could hear the tap running. Maybe, she thought, as she turned into her own bedroom, they would take a walk on the beach afterwards, and watch the sun set with warm sea water running over their feet. Or maybe not — we'll just see how things go.

Linda felt suddenly lighter than she had for several days. She ran a brush through her hair, and then turned to go out with Gina — not even glancing at her bed with its cool, fresh, white sheets. ■



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# WHY THE “F” PROCESS DESERVES THAT GRADE

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TWEAKING THE CURRENT FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PLANNING PROCESS WILL NOT SUFFICE.  
INSTEAD, THE STATUS QUO MUST CHANGE SIGNIFICANTLY.

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BY DENNIS SHIN, CHARLES UPHAUS, TODD SHELTON AND EVAN ELLIOTT

Writing in the March issue of the *Foreign Service Journal* (“Don’t Reinvent the Foreign Assistance Wheel”), Professor Gordon Adams asserts that the “F” process, the Bush administration’s new approach to foreign assistance planning, constitutes a meaningful step toward aligning aid with U.S. strategic foreign policy goals. Prof. Adams also describes the new process as an attempt to strengthen the efficacy of civilian tools of statecraft.

Released to great fanfare as the cornerstone of the administration’s doctrine of transformational diplomacy, the F process promised greater strategic coherence in the use of development and diplomacy as instruments in support of the ambitious goal of “helping to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states ... that conduct themselves responsibly.”

In reality, however, F represents a modest planning and programming exercise, undertaken jointly by the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, affecting only a portion of U.S. foreign assistance. As such, it falls well short of the comprehensive reform of American foreign assistance that growing numbers of observers agree is needed.

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*Dennis Shin is a strategic issues adviser for Catholic Relief Services; Charles Uphaus is a retired USAID Foreign Service officer; and Todd Shelton and Evan Elliott are, respectively, the senior director of public policy and public policy coordinator for InterAction. All four authors are members of InterAction’s Task Force on Foreign Assistance Reform.*

More important, contrary to Prof. Adams’ assertion, the choice is not between pursuing the F process or returning to the status quo and, with it, the continued fragmentation of foreign assistance programs. There is broad agreement, reflected in the report of the Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People Around the Globe Commission — written after the F process was already well under way — that the foreign assistance infrastructure is broken and that the status quo must change.

A coalition of development practitioners within the executive branch, congressional foreign relations staff, civil society groups and implementers have rallied behind the call for comprehensive reform through reauthorization of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. And the coming election, with the hope of a shift in U.S. foreign policy, offers an opportunity to move forward with fundamental reform.

## The Call for Reform

Development practitioners seek reauthorization of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 in order to redefine the set of relationships between the executive and legislative branches and key participants, including host-country governments and civil society, involved in U.S. foreign assistance. The aim is to:

- Elevate development as the central goal of foreign assistance, with the aim of reducing poverty and promoting improvements across a broad range of secondary indicators such as nutrition, basic education and access to health care;
- Emphasize a more holistic view of foreign assistance that looks not only at foreign aid, but considers other factors that affect development, including trade policies, the role of the private sector and efforts to promote institutional capac-



ity for country ownership through anti-corruption aid and democracy promotion; and

- Change the relationship between parties to acknowledge an emerging donor landscape with new entrants, such as private donors and corporations, in which concepts such as participatory engagement and country ownership, featuring an emphasis on grass-roots, community-driven solutions, blur the line between donor and beneficiary.

The call for reform originates mainly from three sources: 1) advocates urging the U.S. to abide by its international commitments to foster development, including the Paris Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals; 2) stakeholders such as host-country governments and civil society insisting upon a more active role for beneficiaries in setting priorities; and 3) lawmakers charged with congressional oversight who view coordination with other donors (multilateral, bilateral, private) as fiscally responsible.

What's different about this latest initiative is its broad base of support. This includes members of the bipartisan HELP Commission; staff of Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., on the Foreign Relations Committee; development experts such as the Center for Global Development, the Brookings Institution and the CSIS Smart Power Commission; and InterAction, a coalition of over 150 private voluntary organizations.

Even more distinctive, these growing calls for greater aid effectiveness are not grounded in skepticism about the value of foreign assistance. Indeed, polling conducted by groups such as the German Marshall Fund, InterAction and the Alliance to End Hunger consistently finds that a vast majority of the American public supports foreign assistance — provided they can be assured that assistance is targeted to addressing poverty, disease

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***The new system seems grounded in its own reality of trying to do more with less.***

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and illiteracy.

The drive to improve aid responsiveness arises from the urgency of addressing a set of chronic needs: the health-care worker shortage, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, food security and the dramatic increase in global food prices, climate change and the competition for scarce resources. Increasingly, donors are working against time or operating under a narrow window of opportunity to deliver services to at-risk populations.

While the global community has rallied to combat HIV/AIDS and has pledged its support for the Millennium Development Goals, persistent challenges remain. Post-conflict environments offer only a brief respite to jump-start development efforts. Global climate change represents a real threat to low-lying coastal regions, such as the heavily populated Ganges/Brahmaputra Delta and the drylands region of sub-Saharan Africa.

Faced with such threats, the status quo, reflected in an antiquated foreign assistance structure geared toward a static world of haves and have-nots entangled in a Cold War era model of competition for influence, is no longer useful. The world of centralized planning has been turned on its head, with economic development assisted by, but no longer solely dependent upon, foreign aid policies.

Moreover, economic growth does not necessarily result in poverty reduction, while the needs of the poor are

often met by a range of policy choices and other drivers, not just “handouts” in the form of foreign aid. As William Easterly observes, technology has empowered a new generation of social entrepreneurs and “searchers” who might benefit from initiatives that serve to incubate and propel innovation at the grass-roots level.

### **F's Obvious Shortcomings**

Upon reflection, the F process was never intended to be the sweeping overhaul of foreign assistance long sought by stakeholders in the development community.

As Adams acknowledges in his article, the Bush administration did not really attempt the kind of comprehensive reform now being widely discussed on the Hill and within the development community. At its root, the F process was simply a planning and budgeting exercise that categorized spending across a range of strategic objectives, so that staff could respond whenever the Secretary of State asked: “How much are we spending in country X or in program area Y?”

The process did not seek to improve aid effectiveness, or to clarify how the U.S. would support its commitments. Instead, it seems grounded in its own reality of trying to do more with less. However, to some extent, it did seek to promote accountability through more detailed tracking of development spending and reducing beneficiary dependence through an “up and out” policy of encouraging countries to move along a graduation trajectory.

For this reason, the administration should not be faulted for all the shortcomings of the F process, including its:

- Focus on “country-based” planning without adequately accounting for country priorities through consultation with host-country government and key stakeholders;
- Reliance on a top-down planning model that substitutes the knowledge,

skills and experience of headquarters staff for a broader assessment of beneficiary needs that USAID field missions and embassy staff could provide;

- Absence of consultation with key stakeholders in the budget and planning process, including congressional authorizing and appropriations committees and other executive branch agencies (most notably Defense);

- Dependence on a strategic planning framework focused on linking foreign assistance to U.S. strategic priorities, but not to the development priorities of key stakeholders; and

- Failure to account for other foreign assistance funding streams, outside of those controlled by USAID and the State Department.

In its defense, the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance (the F Bureau) was assigned an ambitious task: achievement of strategic coherence in its allocation of resources

without expending the political capital necessary to strike up a conversation, much less undertake the grand bargain with key stakeholders required for comprehensive reform. Faced with the thankless task of achieving reform on the cheap, instilling coherence without engaging in full consultations with the legislative branch, civil society groups, or other agencies (particularly the Department of Defense) engaged in foreign assistance, the F Bureau concentrated on what was achievable within its pre-existing legislative authorities. It did not expect the resulting firestorm of criticism from private voluntary organizations, Congress and, most surprisingly, career staff at the State Department and USAID.

The administration's folly lay in overreaching its limited mission with claims and promises of sweeping reform. The most specific manifesta-

tion of this lies in the attempt to squeeze the totality of its foreign assistance programs into a strategic framework straitjacket, in which all programs were to be mapped into one of five strategic objectives. The tool for tracking this process would be a series of templates initially utilized for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

This planning vehicle may have made sense in the supply-chain world of tracking inputs and outputs in the delivery of anti-retroviral drugs. But the attempt to apply it to a mash-up of programs that run the gamut from health and education to countertrafficking and counterinsurgency operations requires a real leap of faith.

### Setting Priorities

At issue is not simply a competition for resources or concerns that development assistance might be shifted to

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other political priorities. It is the attempt to substitute U.S.-defined strategic interests for recipient-need assessments in the identification of development priorities. No degree of precision in the application of metrics can produce an equation comparing the health or education priorities of beneficiaries with U.S. interests in creating stable democracies or interdicting the flow of narcotics.

Advocates for foreign assistance reform seek more effective targeting of aid policies to development objectives, not simply civilian control over U.S. foreign policy. Given the fundamental divergence between the stated goal of the F process — to achieve strategic coherence in State Department planning — and the goal sought by advocates of foreign assistance reform — to improve aid effectiveness — it is futile to simply build upon the current structure, particularly given how discredited the process has become both inside and outside government.

Adams himself points out the many flaws in F's implementation. But one cannot simply chalk up the shortcomings to poor implementation and communication. The next administration could pursue a more limited approach, involving a fine-tuning of the process following its own after-action review. But to do so would be a grave mistake. Greater refinement of indicators will not solve the problems of an antiquated foreign assistance structure. Comprehensive reform requires conversations with all key players, including Congress and other executive branch agencies engaged in foreign assistance programs.

A primary concern of the development community has been ensuring a clear separation between development and political priorities. The F process conflates development and political assistance (e.g., the Economic Support Fund), ignoring their distinct

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***A primary concern of the development community has been ensuring a clear separation between development and political priorities.***

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legislative backgrounds and objectives. The HELP Commission has recommended that these priorities be clearly differentiated, and that development programs be “ring-fenced” to insulate them from misappropriation and misuse.

At the end of the day, as Adams notes, the F process sank into irrelevance as Congress largely ignored the administration's Fiscal Year 2008 budget request, instead approving a final budget reflecting its own priorities.

**Needed: A Grand Dialogue**

While sympathetic to the concerns of the development community and wary of the increased role of the Defense Department, Prof. Adams gives short shrift to the evolution of the development profession. Instead, he seems to equate the roles of diplomacy and development. He views the emergence of USAID as an afterthought, a “strange hybrid” that resulted from the State Department's intrinsic institutional culture, which rendered it incapable of performing strategic resource planning, program design and program implementation.

Adams acknowledges the existence of different corporate cultures at USAID and State, but doesn't appear to grasp the essence of it: USAID is first and foremost an implementation

organization; State is an analysis, reporting and negotiating organization. These are not interchangeable skill sets.

The solution to the challenges in foreign assistance is not simply refining the F process, or having State department personnel take courses in organizational behavior and planning. Adams' faith in the ability of career diplomats to assume this mission underestimates the complexity of development and the significance of the contributions of USAID professionals and civil-society groups. Furthermore, asking the State Department to assume the implementation mission potentially distracts that agency from pursuing the analysis and negotiating missions that are equally vital to America's foreign policy success.

The development community can applaud some of the early achievements of the F process: improved transparency in planning and budgeting, and recognition that, in the greater scheme of things, these programs are all instruments of “smart power” that project U.S. influence as a force for stability and security. But having done so, we must move on to consider more ambitious challenges, many of which other reports have raised. These studies outline the need for a grand dialogue, which might involve discussion of some of the following issues:

- Accounting for other core drivers of development, beyond foreign assistance, such as fiscal and trade policies, private capital flows, remittances, corporate and foundation philanthropy, and regional integration;
- Professionalizing development staff, including strengthening USAID by rebuilding technical capability;
- Establishing crisis funds (humanitarian, conflict) to introduce a needed dose of reality and stability to foreign assistance funding;
- Achieving greater transparency of

delivery mechanisms and procurement;

- Promoting a culture of innovation and risk that emphasizes the piloting, testing and rollout of new ideas, while accounting for the complexities of change management;

- Institutionalizing opportunities for coordination, including accounting for the inter-relationship between country and sector-based planning and the integration of regional and global approaches; and

- Breaking down the stovepiped approach to funding that currently hampers effective delivery of assistance.

Discussion is needed both to clarify the relative roles and responsibilities of all foreign assistance agencies and to move beyond the F process to achieve coherence among valued presidential programs and the full range of development programs — whether they reside within the same institutional tent, as proposed by some, or continue to proliferate through a range of loosely coupled, but tightly coordinated operating units.

As the nation prepares for a presidential election that offers the promise of a significant shift in the direction of U.S. foreign policy, the time is ripe for comprehensive reform. The choice is not between pursuing the F process or returning to the status quo — and, with it, the continued fragmentation of foreign assistance programs. The universal consensus, as reflected in the HELP Commission report, is that “tweaking” the F process will not suffice. Rather the status quo must change significantly.

The major stakeholders now recognize a historic opportunity to shape the future by rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act. In this spirit, let us hope that supporters of reform will not limit their imagination to overhauling the F process, but look ahead to new opportunities. ■

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For further information about State Department eligibility and application procedures, FSOs may contact Linda A. Way in HR/CDA/SL/CDDT at (202) 647-3822 or by email at [lway@state.gov](mailto:lway@state.gov). Civil service employees may contact Paul N. Lawrence in HR/CSP at (202) 643-2134 or by email at [lawncsp@state.gov](mailto:lawncsp@state.gov).

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# BEHIND OFFICIAL SECRECY: FOIA AND DECLASSIFICATION AT STATE

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THE CREATION AND HANDLING OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION IS ONLY PART OF THE LIFE CYCLE OF OFFICIAL SECRETS. HERE IS A LOOK AT THE OTHER PART.

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BY DAVID T. JONES

Over the course of their careers at the Department of State, Foreign and Civil Service employees deal with and create tens of thousands of classified documents. Traditionally, they give little attention to the full life cycle of classified material — its retention, review, declassification and ultimate release. But as these issues impinge on the reality of the 21st-century Foreign Service, with its widening dimensions of information, and also more intense and sometimes conflicting concerns over security versus openness, it can be helpful to look at the process at work beneath the surface of the day-to-day operational use of classified material.

Sooner, not later, each of us will be grappling with questions of releasability of such information under Freedom of Information Act requirements. Just how can information continue to be protected, and should it be? Or, from another standpoint, what can an individual personally write — when on active duty, after resignation or in retirement? The issues are complex, so the following overview is designed to give some insight into how the FOIA and declassification system operate in this transition time.

## Classified, by Definition

The Department of State both generates and receives a great deal of classified information from sources outside the public purview. This includes private communications from

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*David T. Jones, a retired Senior Foreign Service officer, is a frequent contributor to the Journal.*

and discussions with foreign governments; global assessments of issues and problems by FSOs and department analysts; electronic intercepts; satellite photography; and military and intelligence agency materials.

The imperative is to keep such material from those not authorized to have access to it. All material is graded by classification levels, access codes and “compartment” restrictions. It is not enough to have the proper security clearance to see such material; one must have a “need to know,” that is, a specific, job-related requirement for the information.

Yet the information obtained by the Department of State and other government agencies has been obtained through the expenditure of public funds and, consequently, should normally be available to the public. And in fact, the department has conducted systematic declassification of its documents and responded to public requests under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act since 1967, when the law signed by President Lyndon Johnson on July 4, 1966, went into effect.

One must praise a system which, flying against historical precedent, is philosophically committed to providing the U.S. public with detailed information on its foreign affairs — warts and (almost) all.

## How It Works at State

At State, overall control of information resides in the vast warren of the Administration Bureau. As of mid-2007, the bureau consisted of three deputy assistant secretaries, 19 offices and other special groups, such as the Records Management Center and Directives Management. Subordinate to the DAS for information-sharing services, the

Office of Information Programs and Services is the baseline point of contact for anyone seeking access to department records. That office has divisions for programs and policies; requestor liaison; statutory compliance and research; and archiving and access systems management, as well as the State Department's Ralph Bunche Library.

The office also stays current with changes in the law and in policy. It handles ongoing, systematic declassification of documents and responds to public requests under the terms of the FOIA. The office also stays current with changes in policy and procedure for declassification activities mandated by successive executive orders.

The latest such order, E.O. 13392, issued on Dec. 14, 2005, directed the designation of a chief FOIA officer in each Cabinet agency at the assistant secretary level, among other things. The department adroitly dual-hatted the A Bureau's assistant secretary in this capacity. The assistant secretary is also officially the FOIA ombudsman, although in practical terms the authority is delegated to subordinates.

Pursuant to this order, State also created an FOIA Requester Service Center (known as the Advocacy and Oversight Branch) to provide status reports on requests and a public liaison to handle concerns about the service requesters receive. Thus far, it has received only bouquets from users and nary a brickbat, according to Service Center officials. Complaints, they say, generally concern points over which the center has no control, such as how much material may be redacted.

Alongside the FOIA process, the department conducts ongoing, systematic declassification. As even the most security-obsessed will admit, at some point, official information no longer requires protection — whether or not anyone requests it.

At its lowest level — as a handling restriction rather than a security classification — the designation of “Limited Official Use” (now superseded by “Sensitive but Unclassified”) is designed to give protection to information for a limited period. Such designations are accorded, for example, to travel arrangements by senior officials or conference programs, then removed when the travel or meeting is completed.

Other material, ranked by level of classification (Confidential, Secret or Top Secret) and handling restrictions (Limited Distribution, Exclusive Distribution or No Distribution), requires longer periods before it can be released to the public. Such material is protected often for

years, sometimes for decades. Indeed, there is material, such as that associated with nuclear weapons, that has no foreseeable date when it can be released to the public. Material obtained through electronic intercept, code decryption or satellite photography is also subject to extended delays prior to release.

Likewise, the names of specific individuals who provided information, either to diplomats or clandestine agents, might need to be protected indefinitely, even after their death. After all, repercussions from their association with the United States could fall on surviving family members, who may themselves be in a comparably cozy relationship with U.S. officials given that politics is a multigenerational family business in many societies.

Alternatively, the revelation that a senior national leader was also an intelligence source for the U.S. government could harm our bilateral relations even if such an association ended decades ago. Arguably, we are now in a period when any relationship with the U.S. other than the most mundane — even deep in the past — has ramifications that need attentive consideration prior to revelation.

### **Expediting Declassification**

Nevertheless, long-extended protection is the exception rather than the norm, and specific timeframes for the duration of classification have been built into initial classification since 1995. E.O. 12958 directed that the maximum period for classification should normally not exceed 10 years. It also ordered agencies to declassify all documents after 25 years, unless they fall into one of the nine categories of exemption specified in the order. The order further mandated government agencies to establish and conduct a program for systematic declassification review for all records less than 25 years old that are of permanent historical value.

There are exceptions for topics such as U.S. military plans, clandestine operations, “weapons of mass destruction” development or use, and U.S. foreign relations. Such material is not automatically declassified, but requires consultation with the “original classification authority” before any determination.

The order also sought to expedite systematic declassification, aiming to declassify all material over 25 years of age by 2000. At State, there were many delays, and the effort was repeatedly postponed. Some of the delays were the obvious consequence of limited funding for the experts necessary to declassify the material. The deadline was extended to 2006, allowing officials to complete the review of all documents in

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which there was a State Department equity.

The effort, however, is not complete: other agencies have identified documents with State equities numbering in the hundreds of thousands (just as State, in its review, identified documents including material of concern to other agencies). The objective is to review all of this material by the end of 2009. Moreover, newly discovered documents subject to automatic declassification keep turning up from the files of long-term employees who were “pack rats” so far as their personal files were concerned.

The masses of paper documents declassified are routinely transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration, where after NARA processing they are publicly available. Other documents that have been reviewed electronically, notably State Department telegrams from 1973 to 1975, are available in an electronic archival data base (<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-description.jsp?s=4073>).

It is still not possible, however, to transfer a document that has been declassified through a FOIA request directly from the classified electronic system where it was reviewed to an unclassified system accessible to the public. Research is ongoing to permit such transfer and access, but there is no projected date for reaching this objective. Consequently, there is no way for the public to know electronically whether a specific document has already been declassified and released to an FOIA requester.

### Impressive Results

The dimensions of the overall classification/declassification undertaking across the U.S. government are indicated in the Information Security Oversight Office’s 2007 Report to the President ([www.archives.gov/isoo/reports/2007-annual-report.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/isoo/reports/2007-annual-report.pdf)). In Fiscal Year 2007, more than 23 mil-

lion classification decisions were made and more than 37 million pages of historically valuable records were declassified (out of more than 59 million pages reviewed).

The volume of declassifications is significantly below those between 1996 and 1998, when nearly 200 million pages were declassified each year. Total security classification costs for the government for FY 2007 were estimated at \$8.65 billion, up slightly from \$8.2 billion in FY 2006.

Unfortunately, the systematic declassification process at State has been imposed as an “unfunded mandate” — with the department required to comply, but having insufficient funds and resources. Over the years, approximately 200 retired FSOs (designated When Actually Employed) have conducted this work. They both review paper documents at State Annex 13 in Newington, Va., and continue the review process with computerized screening of more current telegrams on a daily basis in department facilities as funding is available.

Yet massive amounts of material have been declassified. Between 1995 and 2006, 98 million pages were reviewed and more than 78 million pages were declassified. Additionally, in FY 2007 alone, department officers reviewed more than 6.7 million pages in both electronic and paper form, and released more than 5.7 million pages.

In the process, the State Department also created a series of special collections containing declassified documents in areas where there has been persistent public perception that “something was rotten” somewhere. Special collections running over 100,000 pages have been released on such topics as the Argentina dictatorship, 1975-1984; Chile (in three sections), 1968-1991; and the American churchwomen murdered in El Salvador in 1980. Former Secretary of

State Henry Kissinger’s telephone transcripts have been posted, as well.

Of enduring public interest are documents pertaining to mysteries such as the fate of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, whose efforts to save Jewish refugees in Europe during World War II led to his imprisonment and, presumably, death in Soviet hands; or the circumstances under which Amelia Earhart died, with intimations that she was engaged in a spying mission for the U.S. when she disappeared and was murdered by the Japanese, rather than dying as a result of poor navigation over the Pacific.

The department is not the only official repository for Department of State documents. Presidential libraries also have in their files masses of department telegrams and memoranda (often of the highest classification, and thus the most interesting to scholars and journalists). Material identified in the presidential libraries is referred to the agencies with primary subject matter interest for their judgment on declassification/release. Reportedly, there are 950,000 pages of material, primarily from the Carter and Reagan presidential libraries, awaiting State Department review.

### FRUS-tratingly Slow

All volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series, produced by the State Department historian’s office, require systematic declassification review as well as interagency clearance. These volumes are supposed to contain pertinent material 30 years in the past; hence, volumes covering U.S. foreign affairs through 1978 should be released by 2008. But until recently, the office ran far behind schedule.

However, following substantial efforts begun in 2001 by a new, “clean broom” State Department historian and an expanded professional staff, FRUS is now closer to

being on schedule. Current projections are to meet publication deadlines (2011-2019) for most, if not all, of the series covering the Reagan years. But a major challenge remains: the volumes must be cleared by other concerned agencies, and frequently the intelligence community objects to the release of documents that the State Department has agreed to declassify.

Indeed, at least once in the past, a volume has been completed (and printed) but not released due to continuing objection by another agency. More recently, a volume on our relations with Japan from 1964 to 1968 reportedly was held up for seven years and was ultimately released only after documents of concern to intelligence agencies were withheld. But who cares if there is an extra year of delay? It isn't noon briefing press guidance, after all — it's history.

Obviously such history is a sensitive topic. Congress has directed that the FRUS be "thorough, accurate and reliable." The requirement to be complete resulted, for example, in the issuance of an expanded (i.e., more accurate) volume addressing the 1954 coup in Guatemala because the original publication had passed over CIA involvement in the operation. A fully complete and accurate study was not released until 2003.

Even release of the most complete material, however, does not necessarily quell controversy: the residual question of the degree of Israeli culpability in the 1967 Israeli Air Force attack on the intelligence vessel *USS Liberty* remains unresolved despite the 2004 release of extensive National Security Agency intercepts. For dedicated conspiracy theorists, as well as historians, there will always be questions regarding whether everything has been released.

An ancillary problem is overall supervision of the interagency review process for FRUS volumes. At one

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point, it was centered at State; but, presumably to accelerate the process, material is now sent simultaneously to multiple agencies — some of which may not favor declassification.

Manuscripts — supposedly fiction as well as nonfiction — by Foreign Service officers and other State Department personnel (either active-duty or retired) are also subject to mandatory review. Thus, at various times the memoirs and accounts of the high-ranking (Secretaries Kissinger, Vance, Christopher and Albright) and the less prominent have been read by a designated reviewer familiar with the topic, then circulated to department bureaus and other agencies if it appears that their equities may be involved.

If the writer has attentively avoided reference to classified material, focused on material in the public domain, and emphasized that controversial comment is personal opinion (not U.S. policy), the clearance process may be completed in as little as two months. If there are differences over whether material can be included, it is possible to appeal. In other agencies, such as the CIA, books have been published with blacked-out sections to demonstrate the extent of agency censorship in specific areas.

**Information on Demand:  
The FOIA Process at State**

FOIA remains a work in progress at State and, indeed, throughout the government. At its inception, rules were in flux, and there were problems with the automatic declassification of relatively lowly classified material or essentially unclassified material with only handling restrictions.

For instance, relatively early in the process, in the 1980s, a Canadian journalist, Jean Francois Lisee, requested information regarding U.S.-Quebec-Canada relations for a book he was writing. During the period for which he sought information, technical limitations in communications at our consulates in Quebec resulted in much of the material being "classified" at low levels — and consequently it was released virtually automatically. A more significant 1977 State Department/interagency study ("The Quebec Situation: Outlook and Implications"), initially classified as secret, assessing U.S. attitudes toward an independent Quebec was also released.

The result was dramatic; Lisee's book, *In the Eye of the Eagle*, roiled our bilateral relations for years. Following that episode and the release of other material that proved contentious in Ottawa, the Canada desk now reviews every item proposed for release in careful detail.

Having received a FOIA request, the supervisor of the appropriate ISS/IPS branch distributes it on the basis of available officers. The law stipulates that requesters must receive a reply within 20 working days, but in practice the initial response is normally limited to a "we're working on it" acknowledgement of receipt.

Other priorities often intervene; funding and personnel are always in short supply. In 2001, the department was dinged by the General Accounting Office (now the Government Accountability Office) and given extremely low marks on addressing the



FOIA request backlog. A major effort in FY 2002 through 2004 (Operation Due Diligence) handled over 11,500 requests, reducing the backlog to 1,996 at the end of FY 2004. However, by FY 2006 it had risen to 3,799. And it rose further, to 4,085 in FY 2007, even though the department processed 4,792 requests during that year.

During FY 2007, according to the department's "Freedom of Information Act Annual Report; Fiscal Year 2007," there were 437 total releases, 925 partial releases and 210 denials.

Separately, hundreds of requests are resolved by informing the requester that there is no such information, transferring the request to the agency that has the records requested, or noting that the information is in the public domain (and telling the requester how to get it).

To assist in public access, the department established a Web site ([www.foia.state.gov](http://www.foia.state.gov)) that received more than 133 million hits during FY 2006, according to the FY 2007 FOIA Annual Report.

Ostensibly requesters are sup-

posed to pay FOIA researchers for the time they spend assessing/evaluating the requested material as well as fees for the material eventually provided (15 cents per page). However, this requirement is more pro forma than real because requests deemed to be in the public interest (e.g., scholarly or journalistic) are free of charge. The fact that fees from public requests cover only 0.5 percent of total costs suggests that only a handful of requesters are unable to find a rationale for getting material without cost.

### The FOIA Force

Although a wide variety of civil servants, Presidential Management Fellows and local university students have all engaged in FOIA/declassification work, the retired FSO hired while in When Actually Employed status remains the gold standard for FOIA reviewers. Because the requirements for familiarity with State Department material and procedures are unique, the work force concentrates on selecting, retaining and, where and when possible, expanding a contingent of former FSOs.

Prospective candidates for reviewers seek formal, written endorsement from individual geographic and substantive bureaus in which they have labored at some point during their careers and are thus regarded as "well and favorably known." These affidavits accompany the application to become a FOIA reviewer as an indication of experience and competence in a particular geographic or substantive area.

The vast majority of this group live in the Washington area, but others come from considerable distances (e.g., Florida and Arizona). The opportunity to "keep your hand in" is unique — and, for many, the supplement to a federal annuity is the difference between sufficiency and comfort. Consequently, many of the FOIA reviewers are individuals who

### Official Secrecy: A Short History

The American classification system has its origins in the 18th century, when the First Continental Congress in 1774 bound its members to keep the proceedings secret "until the majority shall direct them to be made public." More modern classification systems came into being just prior to World War II: Executive Order 8381, dated March 22, 1940, established a comprehensive classification system with differing levels that included work on the Manhattan Project.

Following the war, the system split, with control of information about atomic weapons and other aspects of atomic energy shifting from the military to the civilian Atomic Energy Commission under the terms of the Atomic Energy Acts of 1946 and 1954. The management of all other types of sensitive information has been governed by a series of executive orders and associated amendments that form the basis of the National Security Information classification system, and, since 1967, by the Freedom of Information Act as well.

The successive executive orders updating and amending the classification/declassification regime tend to oscillate between an emphasis on security, or restriction, and an emphasis on access, depending on recent events and the political party in office. E.O. 12958, signed by President Bill Clinton on April 16, 1995, established comprehensive changes in the classification system. That order adopted a more liberal policy toward declassification, in particular, except where atomic energy and nuclear weapons are concerned.

For instance, the previous order, issued during the Reagan administration, had no provision for automatic declassification based on time elapsed from original classification. But E.O. 12958 established automatic declassification times for information designated as having permanent historical value. Further, it restored the Carter administration requirement that the original classifier identify or describe what damage could occur if the information in question were released.

Through its "Electronic Freedom of Information Act" amendments to the FOIA in 1996, the Clinton administration also brought FOIA into the electronic age. The measures mandated establishment of electronic reading rooms for documents released since 1996 and documents of continuing public interest, as well as creation of formats for making FOIA requests electronically.

While essentially maintaining the classification system established in E.O. 12958, the George W. Bush administration added a number of amendments, at least one of which, E.O. 13392, re-emphasized security, partly in light of concerns following the events of 9/11. Among other things, the order extended the period for automatic declassification and expanded provisions for classification or reclassification of materials already in the public domain.

— Susan Maitra, Senior Editor

have worked in this field for years, even decades. There are even individuals who have done such FOIA review work as WAEs for longer than their active-duty careers.

Any given request can elicit a small number of documents or a massive stack of paper in the hundreds or even thousands of pages. Computerized search software based on key words and adapted for FOIA processing can generate huge amounts of material. One of the most useful elements of the software program (when it works correctly) informs the reviewer whether a document has already been released and, if denied in whole or part, the particulars (date, rationale) for the denial.

To save time and effort, prior to embarking on a major case, a reviewer (particularly if the case is “old”) may seek to determine whether the requester still desires the material. There have been instances when the requester had completely forgotten the request, or the project for which it was requested had long gone by the wayside.

Each FOIA case is handled by two separate officers to provide the equivalent of check and double-check. The second, generally a more senior or experienced officer, reviews for accuracy and compliance with the declassification rules and procedures.

In examining a case, each element of each document requires a decision: release in full; deny in full; release in part. For each of the latter two categories, a specific reason must be cited. The most obvious substantive reasons to deny material are that it might still cause damage or that the sources cannot be revealed. Another is that the contents are elements of the “deliberative process.”

Recent material (within five years, as a rule of thumb, or longer if the issue is sensitive) is referred to the country desk for its agreement if release is recommended. As a desk

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***Even release of the most complete material, however, does not necessarily quell controversy.***

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officer, I recall refusing to clear for release an assortment of telegrams written by an ambassador — even though that individual was the requester. It was an easy call: the individuals cited in the telegrams were still politically active and would not have appreciated their relationship with the U.S. government being made public.

Some documents are particularly complex, with multiple agencies and even foreign governments having equities in the information that need to be consulted regarding whether they will agree to its release.

Having finished recommendations, the initial reviewer transfers the case to a senior reviewer, who again checks the decisions on each document. As the referral process can be time-consuming, the requester is provided with the information that can be immediately released and a status report of what has been denied or referred to other agencies. Thus, the results of a request can dribble back to the requester over a period of months.

A denial by an FOIA reviewer, however, does not necessarily end the case. Every requester enjoys a right of appeal, and it is a far from hopeless venture. In FY 2007, 110 appeals were processed (of 390 received).

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*Whether information  
ostensibly is widely  
known by the  
public does not by itself  
justify (or require)  
its official release.*

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Although 65 were fully upheld, 16 were partly reversed and six completely reversed. This is lower than the appeal success rate in FY 2005, when the appellant had almost a two-thirds chance of getting at least some redress, and more information.

**The “Oops” Factor**

When millions of pages of material are declassified — under considerable pressure for speed and with clear deadlines that are embarrassing to miss — there are going to be mistakes. It is these instances of sober second thought (so to speak) that get media attention. Critics trumpet variously that the U.S. government refuses to release widely known facts and material, or material supposedly released or declassified on “open shelves” has been taken back.

Whether information ostensibly is widely known by the public does not by itself justify (or require) its official release. Until information is formally acknowledged, it still retains classified standing — regardless of whether its classified nature may appear ridiculous to some observers.

For instance, for years the existence of satellite photography was widely known but not acknowledged, to avoid questions regarding precision and coverage that might provide tar-

gets with information on how to avoid observation. Or a country may be generally recognized as having been a host for U.S. nuclear weapons, but that fact is not officially acknowledged because the foreign government does not want to address follow-up questions of the “when, where, what kind” nature; other nuclear weapons hosts may not want to face the same questions; or because the United States does not want to begin the “slippery slope” exercise of identifying some countries as host/former host states for nuclear weapons.

In April 2006, reports of the withdrawal of material that earlier had been placed on open shelves at the National Archives and Records Administration surfaced in the media. Prompted by a FOIA request for information on these withdrawals, NARA admitted to a secret review of already publicly available material by several intelligence agencies, including the CIA and at least one other agency (perhaps the NSA), beginning in 1999. Estimates suggest that as many as 55,000 pages of material, including 7,700 from State Department documents, have been withdrawn from public access.

The rationales for this program were rooted both in concern about security lapses — e.g., the 1998-1999 Wen Ho Lee case regarding nuclear program documents — and, more pertinently, a conviction that the mass declassification of documents had included material in which other agencies’ equities were not recognized by the declassifiers. The results of the reviews, however, led to efforts to reclassify parts of documents long in the public domain, making the process look either ham-fisted or risible, regardless of the effort by the reclassifiers to stand on principle.

Whatever the justification, recapturing horses long out of the stable is a hard sell for public relations officers — and always will be. ■

# APPRECIATION

## CONSUMMATE DIPLOMAT, EXTRAORDINARY HUMAN BEING

DAVID D. NEWSOM, 1918 – 2008

BY ROSCOE S. SUDDARTH

I had the great privilege to work closely with David Newsom over many years, most of them turbulent. I interpreted for him with King Idris and others in Libya from 1967 to 1969, then served under him when he was assistant secretary for African affairs and, a decade later, when he was under secretary for political affairs in the midst of the Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, among other major events. I consider David among the greatest of the “greatest generation.” He was certainly a hero to me.

With his family newspaper heritage, his B.A. in English from Berkeley and his master’s degree in journalism from Columbia, David Newsom began his career in publishing. Along with his young bride, Jean, he produced a weekly newspaper in northern California, the *Walnut Creek Courier Journal*. In the normal course of things, he would have become a successful editor/publisher in flourishing postwar California.

Perhaps something from David’s naval intelligence experience in the Pacific during World War II (plus the memoirs of the Pulitzer Traveling Fellowship that had taken him to troubled Asia in 1940-1941) pushed him to take the Foreign Service exam in 1947, which he passed — to the immense benefit of our country. The always modest

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*Roscoe (Rocky) Suddarth is a retired Foreign Service officer who served under David Newsom in three assignments: as political officer in Tripoli from 1967 to 1969; as Libyan desk officer in the Bureau of African Affairs from 1969 to 1971; and as executive assistant to the under secretary for political affairs from 1979 to 1981.*

Newsom claimed he passed because he could tell the examiners how to score a fielder’s choice in baseball, thus demonstrating that he had the grounding in American culture that is an essential component of being a Foreign Service officer.

I did not know David in his early career. Yet his memoirs, due to be posthumously published this fall, show an ability to learn from his experiences. He recalls, for instance, a meeting he attended with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Said in

the early 1950s, when Said warned the American ambassador that if the balance was ever destroyed among the Kurds, Shia and Sunnis, “Iraq would become ungovernable.” This observation may have been a factor in Newsom’s opposition to the recent invasion of Iraq. Once he commented to me, as we entered the presidential palace in Bucharest in 1980 on his mission to express appreciation to President Nicolae Ceausescu for his opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan: “Have you noticed how dictatorships have no one milling about the dictator’s palace, whereas in democracies there

is a hubbub of activity in places like the White House?”

### A Gentle Teacher, Astute Observer

As a supervisor, David was a tremendous supporter and a gentle teacher — as long as you were serious about your work. I remember one occasion when he was negotiating with a rough-and-ready Bedouin Libyan defense minister over the purchase of some F-5 aircraft. When I quoted the literal translation of the minister’s Arabic expression in my draft cable to Washington, “we have rings and wish to buy,” Newsom kindly suggested Washington would be better served if we dropped the folklore and merely reported that he said, “We have the funds and wish to purchase the F-5s.”

*He possessed an  
uncanny sensitivity to  
the requirements —  
foreign and domestic  
— of a successful  
foreign policy.*

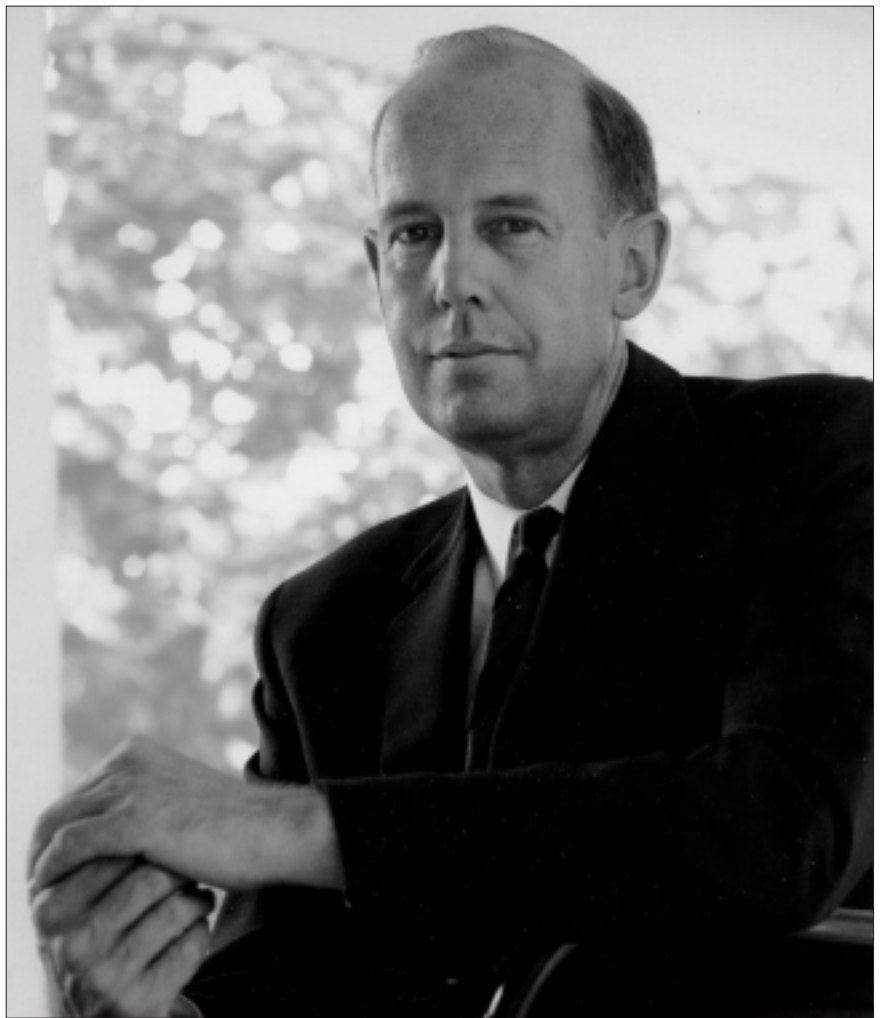


David had little time for “careerists.” For instance, he had an impish way of dealing with subordinates who approached him, hoping to alter his always precise prose in their efficiency reports. He would cheerfully agree, only to add something equally critical, or worse. In the end, the hapless supplicant would abandon his effort, often requesting the original version from the bemused Newsom.

He had many occasions to both laugh and suffer during his rich career. The laughter resulted from David’s inveterate punditry and his wry, ironic, self-deprecating sense of humor — often on full display in staff meetings and at the family dinner table. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie said Newsom was the only Californian he knew with the sense of humor of a down-Easterner from Maine.

David liked nothing better than getting to know the real character of his country of assignment. He often said he found it more meaningful to sip tea in a Bedouin tent than to swell about in the salons of the capital. I remember one mirthful incident on a two-week Saharan expedition he led. At one stop, we had trouble getting the Libyan guard to allow us to enter the Esso oil-drilling compound, where the American ambassador was expected. The guard took one look at the unshaven and burnoos-clad Newsom and said in Arabic: “If that is the American ambassador, then I am King Idris.” David got a kick out of telling that story over the years.

His memoirs — *Witness to a Changing World*, completed in January 2008 at age 90, just prior to his death — are a terrific read. Both personal and serious, the book is a great admixture of sage observations and amusing anecdotes, including astute personal observations on many world figures. It also includes many delicious sketches illustrating Newsom’s superb comic sense. There is,



*David D. Newsom.*

for instance, one account, in Ethiopia, of passing a ferocious lion tethered to a chain on the palace staircase, only to find the waiting Emperor Haile Selassie accompanied by two tiny Chihuahuas.

And there is Libyan King Idris’ explanation of the origin of the myth about the Arab host giving the honored foreign guest the sheep’s eye to eat. The actual practice of showing the eye to convince a guest that the sheep had been recently killed was apparently misunderstood by a British envoy — who ate the eyeball, to the astonishment of his host!

### **In the Eye of the Storm**

David seemed fated to be in the “eye of the storm,” as a 1980 *New*

*Yorker* series described him. Dealing with Lieutenant Qadhafi’s totally unexpected coup in Libya and, later, with the Iranian Revolution and the grueling hostage crisis, as well as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, brought out three of his most sterling qualities: competence, courage and discipline.

Competence was his hallmark throughout his career, inspiring his superiors to give him enormous latitude. As the young head of Arabian peninsular affairs, he negotiated continued access to the Dhahran Airbase in Saudi Arabia and established diplomatic relations with Yemen. As head of North African affairs, he was given a virtual free hand by his admirer and boss, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Mennen “Soapy” Williams, to

*Newsom dealt with the 1969 coup in Libya, the Iranian Revolution and grueling hostage crisis, as well as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.*

make policy in dealing with issues ranging from Algerian independence to advancing our interests from Morocco to Ethiopia.

David said his favorite assignment was as assistant secretary for African affairs, where he could really make a difference — and where he could indulge his fondness for travel to exotic places, visiting all but two of the countries on the continent (and those two were embargoed international pariahs). In his memoirs, he acknowledges that he did not achieve all that he wanted to in bringing change to Africa, but at least maintained some balance in the African policies of the Nixon administration.

For instance, even though he made no major advance against South African apartheid, he did maintain some pressure on the issue by assigning FSO Jim Baker as the first African-American to serve in Pretoria and by having his own charismatic African-American deputy, Beverly Carter, accompany him on the first visit by an assistant secretary for African affairs to apartheid-era South Africa in 1970.

In his last press conference there, Newsom declared: “The American official attitude toward the policy of racial discrimination in South Africa

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has been constant. We abhor racial policies which by law separate men and deny them rights solely on the basis of the color of their skin.”

David was particularly proud of being the first assistant secretary asked to address the annual meeting of the African Studies Association — a group often critical of U.S. policy. It was an unusual gesture, and the 1973 ASA citation read in part: “He has truly earned the admiration and respect of the Africanist community in this country and abroad for his forthright exposition of American policies and his advocacy, often but not always in vain, of proper regard for African values in American diplomatic thinking.”

Amb. Newsom was often called upon to testify before Congress and sometimes to suffer through tirades from the likes of Rep. Otto Passman, D-La. The House Subcommittee on Africa nevertheless gave him a glowing certificate of appreciation. Sen. William Fulbright, D-Ark., told him he was among the very best State Department officials who had ever testified before him.

Overseas, he was a model ambassador, ably supported by his smart, beautiful and stylish wife, Jean, even as she oversaw the welfare of their five talented children. One senior CIA officer told me David was the best of nine ambassadors under whom he had served. With those piercing blue eyes and that firm handshake, one could sense his drive and determination, which he combined with — well — just plain decency.

### **An Uncanny Sensitivity**

George Kennan once said that the greatest weakness of American foreign policy is our failure to understand and factor into our policy the fact that foreign countries often look at the world differently than we do. To my mind, David Newsom possessed an uncanny sensitivity to the

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***As under secretary for  
political affairs, David  
liked to call himself  
“the utility infielder of  
the seventh floor.”***

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requirements — foreign and domestic — of a successful foreign policy.

He had an intuitive grasp of foreign cultures — he even wrote a major book on the subject, *The Imperial Mantle: The United States, Decolonization and the Third World* (Indiana University Press, 2001). As he put it in his homespun Californian way: “Always try to find out what the *real* problem is.” He knew how to talk convincingly to sovereigns. This, aided by his empathy, allowed him to make some difficult points — for instance, on corruption in Libya — without destroying a relationship. In the department, he had to find approaches to an idiosyncratic leadership in Libya and to salvaging a relationship with Nigeria during the Biafran crisis. As under secretary, he sometimes had to impart unwelcome views to the U.S. political level when their wishful thinking did not match the situation on the ground.

He could be equally blunt with the Foreign Service, lamenting its disregard for the context in which our political leaders operate and decrying its cavalier attitude at times toward Congress and the press. This did not prevent him, however, from questioning, as a founder of the American Academy of Diplomacy, the large number of ambassadorial political appointees. He called the appointment of non-career ambassadors “one

of the last unchallenged forms of political patronage.”

He was always generous in praise of others: to Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asian Affairs Harold (Hal) Saunders for their key roles in resolving the Iran crisis; and to Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Chet Crocker for his “remarkable feat of diplomacy” in bringing some peace to southern Africa.

As under secretary for political affairs, David liked to call himself “the utility infielder of the seventh floor.” His superiors sensed his wisdom and wide-ranging experience. So they threw him into difficult issues: the Soviet brigade in Cuba; the rise of Solidarity in Poland; the death of Tito; the sanctions imposed on the Soviets after their invasion of Afghanistan; and — toughest of all — the Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis.

### **Courage**

To me, David’s noblest quality was his courage — combined with his discipline. He showed it throughout his career: for example, in rejecting ill-considered proposals to invade Libya after Qadhafi’s 1969 coup and in resisting congressional pressure to recognize Biafra’s secession from Nigeria. But nowhere was it in greater evidence than in his conduct during the Iranian Revolution.

Despite the fact that Embassy Tehran had previously been briefly overrun by revolutionaries, the Carter administration gave in to political pressure to admit the former shah to the U.S. for medical treatment. David aroused hostility in this town and elsewhere for consistently being opposed to admitting the shah — and perhaps doubly so when his prediction of trouble turned out to be true. He withstood this hostility heroically and never took an “I-told-you-so” attitude — either publicly or privately.



Instead, he devoted himself night and day to securing the safe return of the hostages. Only in his memoirs did Newsom publicly acknowledge his personal opposition to the shah's entry.

I kept in touch with David throughout his remarkable 27-year post-retirement career as a teacher and author. His six books and numerous case studies in foreign affairs, and his work at Georgetown University and the University of Virginia, where he was often given the "best teacher" award, add up to an achievement rivaling that of George Kennan. A re-reading of his frequent columns in the *Christian Science Monitor* provides an education in foreign affairs.

Known for discretion during his career, David was outrageously outspoken in retirement when the occasion demanded. He got a kick out of provocatively writing that the only way he could understand the decision to

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*David often said  
he found it more  
meaningful to sip tea  
in a Bedouin tent than  
to swell about in the  
salons of the capital.*

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invade Iraq — which he vigorously opposed — was that it was the result of an internal coup d'état within the Bush administration by the neocons.

I would like to end by quoting the final paragraph of my friend's memoirs. It gives a fine insight into David

Newsom's greatness:

*This book is being written in 2008, when the force of an aggressive nationalistic ideology has temporarily sidetracked a more studied approach to international relations. It has always been my belief that the United States has within it a balancing wheel that saves it from the danger of suspicion, hatred and conflict that ravage other countries. It is my hope that the balance wheel will again be lubricated to save us from this fate. I would be deeply disturbed to feel that my generation was passing on to those who will follow a nation vulnerable to the tragic instability I have observed in so many other societies in the six decades of my adult life.*

David, we — and your country — will miss you dearly.

*Editor's Note: The obituary for Amb. Newsom appeared in the July-August issue of the FSJ. ■*

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# AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • September 2008

## 2008 AFSA AWARDS CEREMONY

### Honoring Dissent and Performance in the Foreign Service

BY SHAWN DORMAN

*“Our Foreign Service is currently facing some of the most challenging times in its history. Our Service is stretched nearly to the breaking point serving in increasing numbers of dangerous and difficult posts where our members are using their diplomatic skills to promote our nation’s vital interests. The situation facing today’s Foreign Service makes AFSA’s awards program more relevant than ever. Now is the time to honor those who have the professional courage and integrity to speak out forthrightly by taking a stand for what they believe is right; by confronting the status quo; by asking tough questions; by offering alternative solutions; and by giving the best possible counsel that we are trained to give.”*  
— AFSA President John Naland

On June 19, John Naland welcomed approximately 300 guests to the annual AFSA Awards Ceremony in

the Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception Room of the State Department and thanked Director General Harry K.

Thomas Jr. for co-sponsoring the event. The ceremony marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the first AFSA dissent award, the William R. Rivkin Award for Constructive Dissent.

Robert Rivkin, a son of William Rivkin, presented the award for constructive dissent by a mid-level officer to this year’s winner, Rachel Schneller. She was honored for her courage in speaking out about the sensitive issue of the occurrence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Foreign Service personnel returning from war zones. She spoke eloquently of the need to speak openly about PTSD and for the department to provide adequate mental health services for those who serve in war zones. (Note: Articles on each award winner were published in the

Continued on page 74

## GEORGE AND MATTIE NEWMAN FINANCIAL AID SCHOLARSHIP

### AFSA Scholarship Fund Receives Major Gift

BY LORI DEC, SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTOR

In July, AFSA received a substantial bequest — \$658,000 — from the Martha “Mattie” Newman Trust. Retired Foreign Service officer George Newman, who passed away in April, established the AFSA George and Mattie

Newman Financial Aid Scholarship in 2003, when his wife passed away. These new monies will be added to this need-based college scholarship for Foreign Service children.

On July 14, AFSA hosted a lunch for Janet Bayless, the foster daughter of George and Mattie Newman, to celebrate the bequest to the AFSA Scholarship Fund, which is receiving a substantial portion of the proceeds from the late couple’s estate. Mr. Newman also designated the AFSA Scholarship Fund as a beneficiary on his two Veterans Administration life insurance policies.

The Newmans were not able to have children of their own and Janet Bayless — the daughter of their close friends, Alvin and

Continued on page 73

## FOREIGN SERVICE OVERSEAS PAY EQUITY ACT OF 2008

### Committee Acts on the Pay Gap

On July 16, the House Foreign Affairs Committee approved the “Foreign Service Overseas Pay Equity Act of 2008” (H.R. 3202) on a voice vote with no opposition. HFAC Chairman Howard Berman, D-Calif.; Ranking Republican Member Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla.; Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J.; Rep. Don Payne, D-N.J.; and Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee, D-Texas, all made extremely favorable comments in support of the bill and of the Foreign Service. AFSA is grateful for their bipartisan support and to the many members on the committee who actively promoted this legislation and

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Undated photo of George and Mattie Newman.



# AFSA NEWS BRIEFS



## Life in the Foreign Service

■ BY BRIAN AGGELER



## Board Changes

The AFSA Governing Board welcomed several new members in recent months and bid farewell to those heading off to new pursuits. FCS Vice President Don Businger and FCS Representative Stephen Anderson moved on to overseas assignments this summer. Ambassador Harry Geisel resigned as retiree representative in June to take up the position of acting inspector general. He has not been replaced.

Rebecca Balogh joined the Governing Board as the FCS representative in July, shortly after transferring from an assignment at the Northern Virginia Export Assistance Center to her current assignment as commercial service liaison to the National Association of Manufacturers. Her prior FCS tours were in Mexico and West Africa. Before joining the Commercial Service, she worked for both the Peace Corps and USAID. She spent five years in Albania, first as administrative officer for Peace Corps Albania and then as director of a USAID-funded development program. She then served as an FSO with USAID in Abidjan.

Henry Schmick was appointed Foreign Agricultural Service vice president, effective Aug. 11. He has worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture since 1985. Overseas assignments include Buenos Aires, Nairobi, Hanoi and Geneva.

Elaine Tiang-Chu joined the AFSA Governing Board as a State Department representative in May. An Information Resources Management specialist since 1999, she has served in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Washington, D.C. She is currently assigned to the Office of Enterprise Architecture and Planning in IRM, working on IT strategic planning issues. Her husband, also a Foreign Service specialist, serves in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

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**PRESIDENT:** John Naland

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**FAS VP:** Henry Schmick

**FCS VP:** Vacant

**RETIREE VP:** Robert W. Farrand

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**USAID REP:** Michael Henning

**FCS REP:** Rebecca Balogh

**FAS REP:** Vacant

**IBB REP:** Al Pessin

**RETIREE REPS:** Janice Bay, Herman Cohen,

David Passage

## The Dark Ages

The U.S. government's medieval attitude towards maternity/paternity leave for employees is one of the most regressive aspects of our personnel system, and it creates unique hardships for Foreign Service members assigned overseas. Ironically, the people of the Foreign Service are better placed to understand just how unfair these policies are because most of us have had first-hand exposure to the vastly more progressive policies of other countries.

While paid maternity/paternity leave is almost unheard-of in the United States — and nonexistent for federal employees — it is absolutely the norm in virtually every other Western democracy. In places like the U.K., France, Germany and our neighbor Canada, female employees are guaranteed generous amounts of paid leave when they become pregnant and understandably want to spend a considerable period of time caring for the new baby.

Women in these other civilized societies receive full or nearly full salary while taking off many months — in some countries as much as a year — for labor/delivery and newborn care, and their jobs are waiting for them upon their return to the work force. Fathers enjoy similar benefits. No one questions the right of employees to leave the workplace for significant amounts of time for childbirth, and no one expects them to have to sacrifice their income during this period.

In sharp contrast, American employers, including the U.S. government, have a longstanding tradition of stinginess and hostility towards employees starting families. They treat pregnancy as a disease that they reluctantly accept will inevitably cause employee absences, but require the employee to cover with whatever vacation time or sick leave she may happen to have saved up. If she should want to stay out of work longer than her accrued paid leave, our Congress has generously guaranteed through passage of the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act that she has the right to go on leave without pay for up to three months.

Under these circumstances, it is typical for working women in our country to stay on the job up to their delivery dates, then to plan on squeezing in maybe a month or two with the new baby before returning to the workplace. Staying out any longer would be prohibitively expensive.

Herein lies the dilemma for female Foreign Service members

assigned overseas. Most of them cannot stay at their duty station and keep working until their delivery date — and have no option to return to work soon after the birth — because they are ordered on mandatory medevac to a different location for a minimum of three full months, usually from six weeks prior to the delivery date until six weeks afterwards. During this forced three-month absence from work, there is no paid maternity leave available to that employee. She can continue to collect her salary for as long as her accrued annual or sick leave hours last, but then must go on leave without pay.

This harsh approach to maternity hits more junior employees hardest because they typically have little annual/sick leave saved. And why don't we ask the most fundamental question: why should an employee who wants to have a baby be forced to exhaust her annual and sick leave anyway? Childbirth is neither a vacation nor an illness. And what about female Foreign Service employees who have to go on leave without pay for as much as three months during their medevac and are the primary (or sole) income-earners in the family?

Things are only marginally better for male Foreign Service employees assigned overseas. When their wives get pregnant and are medevaced away from post for three months, they do have the option of using annual and sick leave to accompany them for all or part of that period without loss of salary. But again, it all depends on how much leave they have accrued and are willing to deplete.

In a halting first step towards an attempt to rectify this injustice, the U.S. House of Representatives, voting largely along party lines, recently passed a bill that would authorize four weeks of paid maternity leave for federal employees. Foreign Service members applauded this albeit limited measure, but were appalled when the White House promptly threatened a veto, saying that the proposed legislation would “create a costly, unnecessary, new paid leave entitlement” for something that is no different from any other “serious health condition.”

The people of the Foreign Service can only hope that the next resident of the White House will have a more progressive, broad-minded view of pregnancy and childbirth. □



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## Retiree Membership Task Force Launched

Maybe I am being overly pessimistic, but I think the Foreign Service retiree benefits package as currently configured may be heading for a time of close scrutiny on Capitol Hill. Several months ago I wrote that the bipartisan Iraq Study Group 2004 report had estimated the total cost of the Iraq war as around \$2 trillion. Economist Joseph Stiglitz of Columbia University now reckons that figure, including Afghanistan, may even reach \$3 trillion. Add the adverse fallout from the current economic slowdown and the stage is set for fiscal trimming.

Virtually no provision has been made to cover the costs of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in real time, and no one is able to predict when the economic downturn will bottom out. The logical result will be a period of belt-tightening throughout the civilian agencies of the federal government shortly after a new administration takes office in January.

My point is, if ever we needed an organization like AFSA to look after our interests on Capitol Hill — “to watch our collective backs,” as a Governing Board colleague recently said — it is now. As I see it, the advocacy aspect of AFSA’s role in the lives of its members has become far and away its most valuable attribute.

As AFSA Retiree Coordinator Bonnie Brown recently reported in her bimonthly newsletter, notable changes to the federal health care system — in which most of us are enrolled — are being suggested that bear close watching. The main drift of these modifications as the system braces for the first wave of baby-boomers to retire is to limit services provided and to increase participants’ cost of enrollment. Ms. Brown, drawing upon the resources of our entire AFSA team, stays on top of these issues for you and me. And that is only one of the watchdog services the AFSA staff renders for us all.

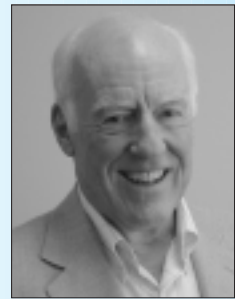
As the voice of the Foreign Service, AFSA is devoted to protecting and improving employment benefits — in what has become an increasingly dangerous career — both for its active-duty members and for those of us who have gone on to second careers or simply to a well-earned retirement.

Alone we can do little to protect our interests, but together we can do a lot. As professional associations around Washington go, AFSA is not particularly large. In fact, we are quite small (with just over 13,000 members) in comparison to such behemoths as the National Association of Retired Federal Employees with 340,000 members, the Military Officers Association of America with 370,000 members and, of course, AARP, which needs no description. It is a compliment to AFSA’s good reputation around town that both NARFE and MOAA are in regular contact with our staff, exchanging views on strat-

egy for dealing with our common employer (and paymaster).

To lift a line from Forrest Gump, small is as small does. So we accept our size and get on with the business of making our voice heard in places that count. In this, we regularly punch above our weight. But we need to do more.

The Governing Board has formed a task force on retiree membership comprised of retiree representatives Hank Cohen, Janice Bay, David Passage and me. Member Services Director Janet Hedrick, Labor Management Specialist James Yorke and Bonnie Brown sit in as advisers. Our goal is to persuade at least 500 retirees from the more than 7,000 Foreign Service annuitants who are *not* AFSA members to join (or rejoin) AFSA this year.



Virtually no provision has been made to cover the costs of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in real time, and no one is able to predict when the economic downturn will bottom out. The logical result will be a period of belt-tightening throughout the civilian agencies of the federal government.

We are considering a wide range of strategies to reach this ambitious, but hopefully achievable, goal. Regrettably, the State Department is barred by law from sharing with us its master address list for annuitants. So we are faced with the challenge of how to communicate with these non-member annuitants who, incidentally, benefit equally with the rest of us from AFSA’s advocacy.

The thought occurs that you, loyal members, might have an idea or two on how we might crack this nut. If we could bring in 500 new members we could, in addition to increasing our clout when we speak out on issues, improve retiree services by hiring an assistant for Ms. Brown as we enter what is likely to be a period of retrenchment across the federal government.

If you have ideas or would like to recommend an annuitant friend for membership, we’d be delighted to follow up. My AFSA e-mail address is: [farrand@afsa.org](mailto:farrand@afsa.org). Or contact Ms. Brown at [brown@afsa.org](mailto:brown@afsa.org). □

## FALLEN DIPLOMATS SCHOLARSHIP CAMPAIGN

## AFSA Donates \$37,500 to Scholarship Fund

On June 24, AFSA donated \$37,500 to the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund's Diplomatic Fund to provide college scholarships for the seven young children who lost a diplomatic parent to terrorism between 1998 and 2003. Five of those children come from Foreign Service families. AFSA's donation was matched dollar-for-dollar by FEEA, resulting in a total donation of \$75,000 that kicks off a fundraising drive by FEEA and the State Department.

FEEA is a nonprofit organization founded in 1986. Its current activities include providing scholarships for the children of federal employees killed in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and the 9/11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon. After the 1998 bombings at the U.S. embassies in East Africa, FEEA established a special Diplomatic Fund to cover the college costs of children who lost a parent in those attacks. For more information, go to [www.feea.org](http://www.feea.org).

FEEA has now started a Fallen Diplomats Campaign to raise \$750,000 in private donations to provide full college scholarships to the seven children in college (or not yet entered) who lost a diplomatic parent to terrorism between 1998 and 2003. If this fundraising goal is reached, then FEEA hopes to extend eligibility to children who may lose a parent to terrorist acts while on



AFSA presents donation to the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund. From left: AFSA President John Naland, Zach Green, Director General Harry K. Thomas Jr., Milton Green and FEEA's Robyn Kehoe.

diplomatic missions in the future. Sadly, such an ongoing fund will likely be necessary.

Upon learning of this fundraising effort, AFSA's Governing Board unanimously agreed to make a one-time donation of \$37,500 taken from the AFSA Scholarship Fund's endowment principal. While this donation will slightly reduce the funds available for AFSA's own annual merit- and financial need-based scholarships, the impact will be more than offset by new donations that the Scholarship Fund has received this year.

On June 24, AFSA President John Naland presented a check for \$37,500 to Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources Harry K. Thomas Jr., at a ceremony in front of the AFSA Memorial Plaques. FEEA Director

of Field Operations Robyn L. Kehoe presented FEEA's matching \$37,500 check. Guests of honor were Mr. Milton Green and his son Zach Green, surviving family members of Barbara Green and her daughter Kristen Wormsley, who were killed by terrorists in Islamabad on March 7, 2002.

This \$75,000 total donation increased the Diplomatic Fund balance to approximately \$325,000, which is \$425,000 short of the fundraising goal. AFSA encourages active-duty and retired Foreign Service members to contribute to this extraordinarily worthy cause. Donations are also welcomed from groups such as Foreign Service retiree associations, A-100 and specialist orientation classes, Senior Seminar alumni groups, ad hoc groups at employees at post, private foundations and other foreign affairs-related organizations. All donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar by FEEA, thus doubling the impact of each individual donation.

Donations are tax-deductible and may be made by sending a check payable to "FEEA-Fallen Diplomats" to: FEEA-Fallen Diplomats Campaign, 8441 W. Bowles Avenue, Suite 200, Littleton CO 80123-9501; by making a credit-card donation by phone to FEEA at (800) 323-4140, or (303) 933-7580; or by making an online credit-card donation on FEEA's Web site at: <https://app.etapestry.com/hosted/FederalEmployeeEducationand/OnlineDonation.html>. □

## Newman • Continued from page 69

Edith Roseman, who are both deceased — was like a daughter to them. George Newman joined the Foreign Service in 1951 at the urging of Alvin Roseman. The Newmans' overseas posts included Manila, London, Seoul, Saigon and Bangkok.

During her high school years, Ms. Bayless lived with the Newmans in Manila while her parents were posted to Cambodia. She remembers that they deeply cared about helping and nurturing young people and fondly recalls the Newmans' looking after many children at post. Even in the last days of his life,



Janet Bayless presenting Newman Trust donation to AFSA. From left: Chairman of AFSA Committee on Education Amb. C. Edward Dillery, Scholarship Director Lori Dec, Treasurer Andrew Winter, Bayless, AFSA President John Naland and Amb. Thomas Boyatt.

Mr. Newman told Ms. Bayless that he wanted to make sure Foreign Service youth "were going to be taken care of." Mr. Newman was cremated, and his ashes will be scattered around the world as Ms. Bayless travels.

Those interested in applying for a scholarship or donating to the AFSA Scholarship Program may contact AFSA Scholarship Director Lori Dec at (202) 944-5504 or [dec@afsa.org](mailto:dec@afsa.org), or visit the AFSA Web site at [www.afsa.org/scholar](http://www.afsa.org/scholar). □

## Awards • Continued from page 69

July-August *Journal*, available online at [www.fsjournal.org](http://www.fsjournal.org).)

AFSA State VP Steve Kashkett presented the Christian Herter Award for constructive dissent by a senior-level officer to Jeffrey Feltman, ambassador to Lebanon, who was honored for challenging a State Department decision to proceed with construction of a new embassy compound on a site in Beirut that he recognized would put the lives of American and Lebanese employees at risk. As Kashkett explained, “He argued persuasively to Washington that the proposed new site would be unsafe. ... When Amb. Feltman ran into opposition at various levels of department management, he took his deeply-felt concerns directly to the under secretary for management and the Secretary of State. Although plans for the proposed new embassy were already at an advanced stage, the ambassador successfully convinced them that a decision to proceed with the project at that location would place the lives of his employees in grave danger. As a result of Amb. Feltman’s outspoken dissent, the plans were shelved.” Amb. Feltman accepted the award on behalf of the embassy’s Emergency Action Committee, which had been unanimous in support of the effort to halt the construction.

The third dissent winner, for an entry-level FSO, went to Luke Zahner for his human rights reporting in Bangladesh during an especially challenging period. Robert Fisk, the grandson of Averell Harriman, presented the award.

### Lifetime Achievement

Ambassador Thomas Pickering presented the Award for Lifetime Contributions to American Diplomacy to Ambassador Thomas D. Boyatt. The two men began their distinguished Foreign Service careers in the same A-100 class. Amb. Pickering described Amb. Boyatt as a man of integrity, noting that they “found it hard to agree on anything in politics, but



Award winners (top photo) from right: Amb. Jeffrey Feltman, Rachel Schneller, Luke Zahner, Victor Williams, Virginia Gregory, Craig Gerard and Megan Myers (for Julie Eadeh), VP Kashkett and Amb. Feltman (middle photo) and Robert Rivkin with Schneller.

we agreed on almost everything else.” He credits Amb. Boyatt for helping to transform AFSA from “a

lunch club” to a strong and powerful organization and advocate for the Foreign Service. Amb. Pickering acknowledged the contributions of Amb. Boyatt’s wife, Maxine, who received enthusiastic applause.

Amb. Boyatt gave a moving acceptance speech, describing what he sees as two parallel universes within the Foreign Service — one being the formal universe of rank and promotions and assignments; the other being the world of esprit de corps, of AFSA and the Foreign Affairs Council, the people and institutions that protect and support the Foreign Service. He played a pivotal role in creating institutions to defend the career Foreign Service — beginning early in his career as a leader of the “Young Turk” movement (see the interview with Amb. Boyatt in the July-August *FSJ*, p. 13; [www.fsjournal.org](http://www.fsjournal.org)) — and continuing today in his role at the Foreign Affairs Council and AFSA.

### Outstanding Performance

The Avis Bohlen Award was presented by Robert Fisk to Foreign Service family member Victor Williams of Embassy Pretoria in honor of his extraordinary work creating educational opportunities for South African students. The Delavan Award was presented by George Harrop to Office Management Specialist Virginia Gregory of Embassy Caracas for her wide-ranging activities in support of improving post morale.

Community Liaison Officer Craig



Maxine and Thomas Boyatt.

Gerard of Embassy Cairo received the M. Juanita Guess Award for, among other accomplishments, his leadership role in creating support systems for families of employees serving unaccompanied tours elsewhere. In his remarks, Craig spoke about the way the face of the Foreign Service is changing, noting the importance of improving spouse employment opportunities. The Guess Award was presented by the son of M. Juanita Guess, Jon B. Clements.

A special award for AFSA Post Representative of the Year was given to Julie A. Eadeh of Embassy Baghdad for her work on behalf of AFSA members and AFSA headquarters in the largest U.S. mission in the world. She could not be at the ceremony, so AFSA VP Kashkett presented the award to her colleague, Megan Myers, who read remarks from Eadeh. Eadeh said that she appreciated the dedication of Foreign Service members serving in Iraq, and that in such a challenging environment, the one thing people could count on was support from AFSA. □





## Foreign Service Journal on the Web [www.fsjournal.org](http://www.fsjournal.org)

The recent *FSJ* reader survey showed that many of our readers do not know that the entire *Journal* is posted online every month. We began posting selected articles from each *FSJ* in 2000 and have been posting the whole issue each month since June 2005. Given the sometimes lengthy period it takes mail to reach far-flung posts, you may be able to get to the current issue more quickly through the Web edition.

In 2007, we updated the *FSJ* site, adding categories of articles to the home page to help people find articles of particular interest, such as those on Iraq service and professional issues, as well as “News You Can Use” and the obituaries. Classifieds are online now as well, as are special advertising sections including the school supplement.

We hope to improve the site further during the coming months, aiming to switch to a more searchable format. Please visit us on the Web and send your suggestions for improving your access to the *Journal*.



ZIYANA BAORICH

## AFSA Bids Fond Farewell to Amb. Heather Hodges

AFSA State VP Steve Kashkett presents a plaque to Heather Hodges, the outgoing principal deputy assistant secretary of State for human resources, for the positive collaboration that AFSA enjoyed with her over the past two years. Ambassador Hodges has left that position to take up her duties as chief of mission in Ecuador.

## BOOKFAIR

The 48th annual BOOKFAIR of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide opens on Friday, Oct. 17, in the Exhibit Hall of the Harry S. Truman Building (Main State). In addition to secondhand books from all over the world, BOOKFAIR will once again feature the Art Corner, Collectors' Corner and an assortment of coins and stamps. It is open from 2-5 p.m. for all badge holders and escorted guests. BOOKFAIR continues from Oct. 20-24 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for this same group. During the weekends of Oct. 18-19 and 25-26, the sale is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Access is through the C Street entrance. VISA, MASTERCARD and personal checks accepted. Please call (202) 223-5796 with questions, or consult the Web site at [www.aafsw.org](http://www.aafsw.org).

## Baggage Fees Reimbursed

Important information on baggage fees, from unclassified message State 78335: Most major U.S. carriers have modified their checked baggage policies by eliminating the practice of allowing free checked bags for some flights and are charging additional fees for all checked baggage. All U.S. government travelers on official orders may be reimbursed for fees charged by an airline for checking in a first and/or second piece of luggage. These additional charges on a first and/or second checked bag that is not overweight or oversized, when actually incurred and necessary, can be itemized and reimbursed per 14 FAM 562.2(3). Please note that the weight and dimensions of checked baggage and the chargeable first and/or second bag have not changed and may be viewed at the respective U.S. carrier Web site.

## Spouse Employment Gets a Boost

In July, Under Secretary for Management Patrick Kennedy sent out a worldwide message announcing an expansion of the Professional Associates Program, a program that provides “professional-level, full-time employment opportunities overseas for appointment-eligible family members.” Thanks to congressional support through supplemental appropriations, the department plans to address the current Foreign Service shortfall in the field by filling up to 105 Professional Associate positions starting immediately. The majority of the PA positions will be compensated at the FS-4 through the FS-6 levels and may be available immediately and through the summer of 2009, depending on each post's specific needs. Regional bureaus will be working with posts to identify and finalize the list of potential PA positions.

Consistent with the existing PA program, appointment-eligible family members selected for PA positions will be expected to serve for a minimum of one year. AEFMs already at post will be eligible to apply through HR/CDA. AEFMs will be hired under a Family Member Appointment. Questions can be directed to [ProfAssociate@state.gov](mailto:ProfAssociate@state.gov).

AFSA supported this decision to increase professional opportunities for spouses, but continues to urge increased funding to boost Foreign Service hiring to overcome long-term staffing shortages.

## Seeking AFSA Post Reps

Help serve your community by volunteering to be the AFSA representative for your post. Post reps help keep headquarters connected to the 70 percent of AFSA membership overseas. The authority and responsibilities of a post rep are spelled out in the AFSA Chapter Manual ([www.afsa.org/post\\_reps/manual.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/post_reps/manual.cfm)). For more information, or if you don't know if your post currently has an AFSA rep, check in with the AFSA membership department at [member@afsa.org](mailto:member@afsa.org). □



## Start a (Funded) Book Club at Your Post

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Bill Burns and AFSA President John Naland have co-sponsored the creation of a Foreign Affairs Professional Reading List to serve as a resource for Foreign Service and Civil Service employees of the foreign affairs agencies. The initiative was launched on June 17 along with an accompanying initiative to encourage employees to form Professional Development Discussion Groups.

AFSA, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and the State Department's Ralph J. Bunche Library, Office of the Historian and Office of E-Diplomacy all collaborated to compile the list, with input from regional and functional bureaus. The list seeks to identify useful books and Web sites to serve as a point of departure for career-long, self-directed professional development. To further assist busy employees, the list designates a small core group of "highly recommended" books that are must-reads for any well-rounded foreign affairs professional. The list is posted on AFSA's Web site at [www.afsa.org/readinglist.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/readinglist.cfm) and on the State Department's intranet at [http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Foreign\\_Affairs\\_Professional\\_Reading\\_List](http://diplopedia.state.gov/index.php?title=Foreign_Affairs_Professional_Reading_List). The list was visited online over 9,000 times during the first month after it was posted.

The list is a live document, and employees and retirees are encouraged to nominate additional titles. Please visit the Web sites for nomination guidelines. Suggestions for books to add and comments about the books listed can be e-mailed to [bookclub@afsa.org](mailto:bookclub@afsa.org).

### Support for Creation of Book Discussion Groups

AFSA invites supervisors with mentorship responsibilities or ad hoc groups of employees at overseas posts and domestic offices to form Professional Development Discussion Groups ("book clubs") for

To further assist busy employees, the list designates "highly recommended" books that are must-reads for any well-rounded foreign affairs professional.

employees to discuss books from the list. AFSA suggests that each group select one or more titles and then meet once a quarter to discuss what they have read. Supervisors are encouraged to participate in the discussions, but may wish to allow entry-level employees to coordinate the groups.

To help launch this effort, the Una Chapman Cox Foundation generously granted \$5,000 to AFSA for a pilot project in which AFSA will provide funding to assist employees at approximately 45 Foreign Service posts in purchasing books to start a professional reading library to be maintained permanently at post. Funds will also be provided to the Ralph J. Bunche Library to facilitate the purchase of books for use by Washington-based discussion groups.

Because the initial funding is limited, AFSA is accepting applications on a first-come, first-served basis, anticipating assistance to 45 Foreign Service posts and the State Department's Ralph J. Bunche Library in purchasing books for a permanent lending library. As of July 18, AFSA had already distributed \$1,900 to assist 15 Foreign Service posts and the State library.

Here's how it works: If an overseas post wishes to create a professional reading library to be maintained permanently as post property (for example, by the DCM or CLO) for use by current and future colleagues, then AFSA will provide a gift card of up to \$100 per post usable at an online bookseller on a one-for-one matching basis for funds raised by allocations from appropriated post funds or other authorized

sources. Thus, if a post expends \$100 from appropriated funds or other authorized sources, funds from AFSA will add a matching \$100 in the form of a gift card.

The one requirement is that the AFSA gift card must be spent on the titles singled out as "highly recommended." Thus, if a post decides to order \$200 worth of books with half of that amount funded through this initiative, \$100 worth would need to be from the "highly recommended" list. The remainder could be other titles that post's book club members wanted, but those would need to be funded by appropriated funds or other authorized sources and would need to be purchased through a normal procurement mechanism.

To apply for an AFSA gift card, a post should first form a book club and then fill out AFSA's online funding application at [www.afsa.org/bookclub.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/bookclub.cfm). Funding is not guaranteed until confirmed by reply e-mail from AFSA. Once AFSA confirms receipt, it should take about 30 days for the post to receive the gift card. Only official book clubs may apply for the matching funds. Ad hoc employee book clubs are still encouraged, but are not eligible for the matching funds. Please e-mail any questions to [bookclub@afsa.org](mailto:bookclub@afsa.org).

Funding is not available for domestically organized book clubs. Instead, AFSA will provide approximately \$500 to the State Department to be given to the department's Ralph J. Bunche Library to facilitate the purchase of books for use by Washington-based discussion groups. Book clubs formed at bureaus and other large domestic offices should contact the Bunche Library to borrow titles from the Foreign Affairs Professional Reading List.

Categories of books include: diplomacy theory and practice; U.S. foreign policy and international relations; public diplomacy; U.S. diplomatic and consular history; global issues; economics, trade and commerce; science, technology and industry; and diplomatic biographies and memoirs. □

**Pay Equity Act • Continued from page 69**

demonstrated their support of the Foreign Service.

The bill, originally offered and championed by Rep. Smith, would give entry- and mid-level Foreign Service members serving overseas the same comparability pay adjustment afforded to colleagues assigned to the District of Columbia (the Senior Foreign Service began to receive this equal treatment several years ago). The bill would close one-third of the gap in October 2009, another third in October 2010, and the final third in October 2011. The bill also increases the death gratuity for Foreign Service members killed overseas.

AFSA has worked hard for many months to achieve this crucial success in the legislative process. Even though many people (even some supporters) thought at the outset of this legislative session that no movement would be possible, H.R. 3202 now has been voted out of committee. By the end of July, it had 28 House co-sponsors plus the full support of HFAC

Chairman Berman and Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen.

In past years, AFSA sought to advance this issue as part of a larger State Department authorization bill. Uncertain that such a multi-issue bill would move this year, AFSA took on the difficult task of promoting a standalone bill. The fact that such legislation has now passed out of the HFAC highlights the fact that AFSA made significant inroads over the last year in isolating the problem, raising its profile and connecting directly with key lawmakers.

That said, there is still a difficult challenge ahead. To become law, the full House and Senate must pass the bill and the president must sign it. Many observers doubt that those steps can be accomplished during this election-shortened legislative year. However, AFSA is working to focus key decision makers on the fact that the ever-widening pay gap must be fixed now; otherwise, it will only deepen. For example, testifying at a Senate subcommittee hear-

ing on the State Department staffing crisis in July, held just a few hours after the committee's vote, AFSA President John Naland stressed the need for Congress to address this long-standing pay disparity. AFSA will not give up on this session despite the long odds.

For its part, the State Department has also restated its strong support for fixing the problem. At the same July Senate hearing, Director General Harry K. Thomas Jr. testified that Foreign Service compensation reform is one of the department's top legislative priorities. He pointed out that both the pending Fiscal Year 2009 budget request and the department's pending Fiscal Year 2008-2009 authorization package seek to end the overseas pay disparity. The administration continues to support fully closing the pay gap, albeit with a pay-for-performance component — a mechanism that is not found in H.R. 3202.

Find background material on the AFSA Web site or contact Legislative Director Ian Houston for updated information. □

**NEWS FROM THE HILL****AFSA Testifies on Staffing Crisis**

BY KIM HAYWARD,  
AFSA LEGISLATIVE STAFF

**O**n July 16, the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management (part of the Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs) examined the human capital crisis at the Department of State during a hearing titled "A Domestic Crisis with Global Implications: Reviewing the Human Capital Crisis at the State Department." AFSA President John Naland and Ambassador Ronald Neumann, president of the American Academy of Diplomacy, testified at the hearing, giving their accounts of the current crisis and their recommendations for the foreign policy challenges that the next administration will face. Ambassador Thomas Boyatt, president of the Foreign Affairs Council, provided written testimony.

Naland told the committee that the title for the hearing could not have been more accurate. He spelled out several of the factors that have led to what is now being called a crisis. These include significant vacancies in Foreign Service positions worldwide, lack of sufficient training, increased dangers of overseas postings and a steady decline in morale. "Due to the mismatch between resources and requirements, hundreds of Foreign Service positions worldwide are now vacant. . . . All together, 12 percent of overseas Foreign Service positions are now vacant."

Naland's key emphasis was to urge the 110th Congress to reverse years of underinvestment in the Foreign Service. Increased funding is needed to address the significant staffing shortfall and to train career diplomats to conduct 21st-century diplomacy. "I am confident that my colleagues would welcome a 'grand bargain,'" Naland stated, "that coupled a significant expansion of Foreign Service staffing with a strengthening of their professional development system." (Naland's full testimony can be found

online at [www.afsa.org/congress/071608testimony.cfm](http://www.afsa.org/congress/071608testimony.cfm).)

Neumann, who most recently served as U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, recognized the critical need for State Department reform to address the staffing crisis and the need for training throughout the Foreign Service career. He emphasized the Service's need for additional resources and training, especially as current foreign policy challenges cause it to be stretched thinner than ever.

Amb. Boyatt's written testimony echoed those same sentiments. He stated: "These critical challenges and opportunities can only be met effectively through a significantly more robust foreign affairs capacity that features skilled diplomats and foreign assistance professionals." Chairman Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, and ranking Republican Member Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio, both strong supporters of the Foreign Service, sought to fully understand the needs of the Foreign Service as the United States faces ever-increasing foreign policy challenges abroad. □

## Keeping the Home Culture Alive

Some of our kids only see our official “home” once every two or three years. Often, temporary repatriation to a place that’s supposed to be familiar and comfortable is just another international move, and sometimes even more difficult when the neighbors don’t understand why we’re so different.

So what do we do? How do we bring our American history and culture to the forefront so the Fourth of July gets equal face time with Diwali or Eid al-Fitr? How do we get kids excited about Thanksgiving when it’s not even a day off from regularly scheduled classes?

Bringing kids to the United States for every home leave and R&R is one option. It’s expensive and time-consuming, but worth it to see the kids watch Independence Day fireworks from the Capitol steps. Making kids understand their history, their heritage and, indeed, their home, however, takes more than that. It’s an effort on our part as parents that extends beyond summer vacations and Christmas holidays.

Last year, the community liaison officer for Consulate General Chennai instituted a “USA Fun Day” for consulate kids. Each month we gather informally at one family’s home and share information about a specific topic. The kids do most of the research and presenting. This year we’ve covered black history, the Revolutionary War, Pilgrims, women’s history and family genealogy, along with Christopher Columbus and other explorers. Last year, we did our home states, famous Americans and the Pledge of Allegiance. After we’re done, the posters and reports go to our playroom and bedroom walls so the kids see them daily.

Printed materials are an invaluable source for keeping our home and heritage alive overseas. Book series like *American Girl* put our children right in the thick of American history.

We should prepare our children to embrace all that our country is, and in turn ensure that “home” leave is just that — a place our children feel they belong. It’s well worth the effort.

There are a number of magazines available for all ages. One called *American History* is geared for high-school students and offers a thorough overview of topical subjects. An issue with “Epidemic” blazoned on the cover connects influenza deaths in World War I to avian flu, an issue with which we are all familiar. For those with an even more specific interest, the same publisher offers specific titles such as *America’s Civil War* and *Wild West*.

For the middle school set, *Cobblestone* magazine brings American history to life with letters from the past and interviews with historians, as well as a touch on current events. A sister magazine, *Calliope*, covers world history in the same manner.

For current events, *Time for Kids* is indispensable and has three subscription options: one for kindergarten and first grade, one for second and third grades, and one for fourth through sixth grade. The Web site ([www.timeforkids.com](http://www.timeforkids.com)) also includes teacher resources with worksheets and mini-lessons to accompany each issue.

There is so much material available on the Web. Often there are too many sites to wade through, but some of our favorites include those on Colonial Williamsburg and Historic Jamestown, Alcatraz Island, the Smithsonian Institution and Acadia National Park. Finding Web sites about places in your hometown and about famous landmarks is key to getting your kids interested in their American heritage.

And if you’re like me, summertime isn’t a time off for the kids’ learning. Flag Day falls on June 14, so we create a flag and recall its history and symbolism. One year we made a flag out of paper chains. We also pull out the *Complete Book of United States History* and the *Complete Book of Presidents and States* workbooks as refreshers on subjects covered before.

Our lifestyle demands flexibility and global awareness, but we also have a duty to provide a sense of belonging to something bigger than our mobile family and smaller than the world. America is the home country for our Foreign Service. We should prepare our children to embrace all that our country is, and in turn ensure that “home” leave is just that — a place our children feel they belong. It’s well worth the effort. □

*Michele Hopper was raised overseas as an Army brat and continues the overseas life as a Foreign Service spouse. Currently in India, she’s also lived in Togo, the Philippines, England, Niger, Algeria, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Belgium. After six years out, her four kids are asking for a tour back home.*

### A Selection from the Web:

American History: [www.historynet.com/magazines/american\\_history](http://www.historynet.com/magazines/american_history)

*Cobblestone*: [www.cobblestonepub.com/magazine/COB/](http://www.cobblestonepub.com/magazine/COB/)

*Time for Kids*: [www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids](http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids)

Colonial Williamsburg: [www.history.org/kids/games](http://www.history.org/kids/games)

Jamestown Settlement: [www.historyisfun.org/Jamestown-Settlement.htm](http://www.historyisfun.org/Jamestown-Settlement.htm)

Alcatraz Island: [www.nps.gov/alca/historyculture/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/alca/historyculture/index.htm)

Smithsonian Institution: [www.smithsonianeducation.org/students/](http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/students/)

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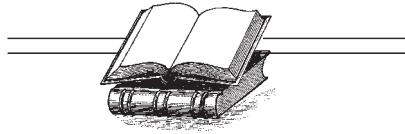
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# BOOKS

## Two Views of Lydia

### **Distinguished Service: Lydia Chapin Kirk, Partner in Diplomacy**

Roger Kirk, editor; Syracuse University Press, 2007, \$22.95, hardcover, 273 pages.

REVIEWED BY TED WILKINSON

When Lydia Chapin Kirk published a selection of her letters in 1952 as *Postmarked Moscow* — the first of her four books — Americans were enthralled with her vivid depiction of the challenges of life as an ambassador's wife and the chatelaine of Spaso House. Her experience seemed as adventurous and exotic to Americans as a trip to the moon, and the book was a bestseller.

In fact, the Moscow tour was only one phase in an extraordinarily rich and accomplished life. As her son Roger documents in this collection of her memories, service came naturally to her. Born into a Navy family, she relished the challenges of accompanying her husband, Admiral Alan Kirk, to his three post-retirement embassies. Yet far from stifling other interests, Lydia Kirk also excelled as an artist, a activist for the Red Cross and Junior League, a lecturer and a novelist — all the while she was a devoted mother to three children.

Beyond mere duties, service abroad brought Lydia Kirk challenge, glamour, adventure and the chance to

*Kirk's descriptions  
of diplomatic life  
sparkle with color  
and wit.*

witness history. While her father was naval attaché in Paris just before World War I, she was delighted to hear visiting ex-president Theodore Roosevelt hail him as one of the finest naval officers he had known. Later, when her husband was naval attaché to Ambassador Joseph Kennedy in London, the couple heard Neville Chamberlain proclaim that he had achieved “peace in our time” at Munich.

Having commanded U.S. naval forces for the Normandy landing, Adm. Kirk was a hero in postwar Europe, and he and his wife received an unusually warm reception upon his appointment as ambassador in Belgium in 1946.

Ideally prepared as a diplomatic partner, Lydia Kirk stepped into her new role with gusto. Her descriptions of life in Brussels sparkle with color and wit, covering such figures as Princess Elizabeth Ruspoli, a “miniature Marlene Dietrich,” who was said to have “held court to German officers in her bathtub ... [while] she gave refuge to English aviators in a back room.”

Asked to serve as hostess for the

bachelor Belgian ambassador in Washington as he received President and Mrs. Truman during the Belgian prince's state visit, she did such a good job that the Prince sent her a silver cigarette box inscribed “Pour la Grande Maitresse del la Cour.”

Her husband's Moscow appointment in 1949 came as a complete surprise, and the change from Brussels was brusque. Stalinist paranoia was at its peak. Lydia Kirk was determined to “make it work,” but the challenges were enormous. Once, when Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and his wife Ludmila came to lunch, Mrs. Kirk asked if their son Anatoli had been able to keep up his English since their time in the U.S. Mrs. Gromyko replied that he practiced in his room, since “he has no one to talk to here.” Mrs. Kirk refrained from suggesting that he get together with her son Roger, who was taking a year off from college to work with Russian staff in the embassy, lest the suggestion be seen as “a crude American attempt” at subversion.

The Korean War only increased the frostiness of the Cold War, but Lydia Kirk, determined not to let the embassy's spirits sag, kept Spaso House humming with social activities. Still, the contrast was stark. At a New Year's ball, “we managed to forget how far away from home we were until we opened the windows at midnight to let the New Year in, and no sound came through — no bells, no singing, no whistles, only a draft of



chill Moscow air. ...”

Later, when it was almost time to leave post, Amb. Kirk gave thanks to the assembled staff of the residence at 4 a.m., after a costume ball. In a sentimental response, the pantry man said “never before had there been such happiness in Spaso House.”

Ten years later Adm. Kirk, then 74, was called back from retirement for service in Taipei by President Kennedy, who said he needed “an older man with diplomatic experience and a military background ... to face up to Chiang [Kai-shek].” Lydia Kirk found the assignment less welcome than earlier ones, but as always she rose buoyantly to new challenges, such as dealing with the redoubtable Mme. Chiang. Unfortunately, Adm. Kirk’s assignment was curtailed by illness, and he died in October 1963.

Returning to New York as a widow, Lydia Kirk turned next to writing and produced three imaginative mystery novels before beginning her memoirs. After her death in 1984, the task of editing the incomplete manuscript fell to Roger Kirk, who used her letters, the recollections of his sisters and his own memories to cover several long periods that his mother had not written about.

The result is a smooth and fascinating narrative, full of interesting insights from a woman who had a front-row seat in the theater of history.



REVIEWED BY  
JULIE GIANELLONI CONNOR

I took this book for review thinking it was the sort of biography I would really enjoy reading, and to which I could give a big thumbs-up. And I did enjoy it, as will those who love history, like to read about the Foreign Service

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***I have to admit to sighs  
of regret as I read the  
book. Lydia Kirk had  
the chance to live the  
“high life.”***

---

in previous eras or enjoy learning about dynamic women.

But reading these memoirs was not the unalloyed pleasure I had anticipated. Although the book illuminates some ways in which the Foreign Service has improved, it also reveals some respects in which our institution is less than it used to be.

This book is based on a draft memoir that Lydia Chapin Kirk began working on in the 1960s and on letters she sent from Moscow and Taipei. Those documents were all woven together by her son Roger Kirk, a former ambassador to Somalia, Romania and the U.N. organizations in Vienna, who is the editor of this volume.

Ambassador Kirk has also written a preface to the book, while Robert Orris Blake, a career FSO currently serving as ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, has contributed a very revealing and laudatory sketch of Lydia Kirk in a foreword. But it is still a very-first-person account that covers 86 years of Mrs. Kirk’s life.

It is not uncommon nowadays to hear about U.S. military dynasties: generals who are sons of generals who were sons of generals. This book highlights a similar tendency in diplomacy. Lydia Kirk’s father was posted with his family to the embassy in Paris as naval

attaché. Her husband was ambassador to three countries, and her son also served as ambassador three times.

But the book also underscores the fact that these diplomatic dynasties tended to be based on the East Coast, comprised of men from the right families who went to the right boarding schools and the right universities.

While I am more than happy that the Foreign Service is much more diverse nowadays, I have to admit to sighs of regret as I read this book. Lydia Kirk had the chance to live the “high life,” with servants, and summer vacations at exclusive beach resorts, and dinner parties with Very Very Important People, and luxurious ocean liner crossings.

The book also makes clear what high value an accomplished wife represented, both for a career military man and a diplomat. Kirk published four books, but not until her family was grown and her husband’s career a success. Her role in making the embassy in Moscow bearable — by organizing parties for the staff and going out to explore the city and serving as hostess for official events — is quite clear.

I found it interesting that, while Lydia Kirk was quite broadminded about foreign ways, the one group she ridicules is U.S. Southerners, whose accent and opinions she mimics in a very unflattering way.

So who should read this book? I would recommend it for Foreign Service spouses, who can make their own judgments about whether they prefer the modern Foreign Service or would have liked Lydia Kirk’s lifestyle better. Those interested in England during World War II or in Russia just after the war would benefit from reading her first-hand accounts.

Finally, to any Foreign Service parents who despair about how their chil-





dren will turn out, this book offers hope that your son (or daughter!) might also one day grow up to be an ambassador.

---

*Ted Wilkinson, a Foreign Service officer from 1961 to 1996, is the chairman of the FSJ Editorial Board.*

*Julie Gianelloni Connor, a member of the Senior Foreign Service, has served overseas nine times in her 27-year career. During her career, she has been on an unaccompanied tour, had a trailing spouse, been part of a tandem couple, and been a single mother with dependent — but never yet a dependent herself. She is a member of the FSJ Editorial Board.*

## Decoding the Russian Enigma

### Living With Stalin's Ghost: A Fulbright Memoir of Moscow and the New Russia

*Bruce C. Daniels, Connecticut Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2008, \$10.00, paperback, 150 pages.*

REVIEWED BY DALE HERSPRING

This book was a welcome change from the weighty political science publications I normally find myself critiquing. At just 150 pages, it is an easy read, but is also very informative.

Professor Bruce Daniels normally teaches 16th- and 17th-century history at the University of Texas at San Antonio, where he is the Gilbert M. Denman Endowed Professor of American History. However, one day in 2006 he woke up to discover that he had been selected to spend six months at Moscow State University teaching some of Russia's best and brightest on a Fulbright grant.

---

***This delightful book should be required reading for anyone living in Moscow or going there.***

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The only problem was that he had only visited Russia once and did not even know the Cyrillic alphabet. But lest the reader get the wrong impression, that is precisely what makes this account so interesting. Instead of looking at the city from the standpoint of an academic expert or an FSO back for a third tour, Daniels freely admits that he knew almost nothing about Russia, and certainly nothing about the trials and tribulations of living on the local economy.

Contrary to the book's title, Daniels does not focus on Stalin's Russia — at least not in the formal sense. But as he astutely observes, the dictator's "legacy haunts the new Russia and is shorthand for the Soviet legacy."

One of Daniels' chapter headings makes a point I wish my students understood: "Russia Is a Hard Country to Know: Do Not Trust First Impressions." To support that thesis, he cites a wealth of examples from daily life in Moscow. One of the funniest parts of this chapter is his account of getting his rather modest (but very expensive) apartment wired so he could get CNN.

Then there was the time at the dry cleaner's he spent an hour trying to explain to the clerk, mainly through

gestures, that the purple tie she had handed him was not the sweater he had brought in to get cleaned. She was less than polite, and the people in the line behind him became aggravated. He held his ground, and eventually got his sweater. But the encounter left him absolutely convinced that Russian sales personnel are all trained to scowl at customers.

Daniels was always able to find an English-speaking student to take him around Moscow, so he gives a helpful overview of the capital's many sights. (He resisted the lure of the Arbat for a while, but eventually succumbed.) And his discussion of tipping etiquette demonstrates the generation gap in Russian society: older individuals seem to be against it, younger ones expect it.

In short, this delightful book should be required reading for anyone living in Moscow or going there. Come to think of it, I think I will require my students to read it next year. It is a far cry from the articles and books they read on things like system maintenance, interest aggregation or articulation, not to mention a hundred other conceptual frameworks.

Even though some of my colleagues would disown me for saying it, one cannot really hope to understand a country if one cannot make sense out of its cultural idiosyncracies. And as anyone who has dealt with Russia knows, it has a lot of them. ■

---

*Dale Herspring, a Foreign Service officer from 1971 to 1991, served mainly in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, specializing in political-military affairs. A university distinguished professor of political science at Kansas State University since 1993, he is the author or editor of 12 books and numerous articles.*



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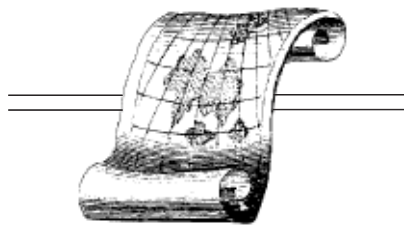


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# REFLECTIONS

## *Balkan Babas*

BY STEPHANIE ROWLANDS

As I left the house with my 18-month-old daughter, Haley, one morning, my neighbor, Baba Florika, was out pruning her rosemary bush. She opened her gate to get a better look at Haley in the stroller.

“Oh no, no, no,” she tsked. Leaning over, she took off my daughter’s shoes. “The feet need to air,” she said. “It’s better for the baby. It’s much too warm to be out walking with a baby like that.”

I smiled, nodded, and bit my tongue. Haley and I continued walking down the street. Not half a block down, Baba Danche was out sweeping the sidewalk.

“Oh, Stephanie,” she crowed. “Isn’t Haley cold? You must cover her feet.” She leaned over and put the shoes back on.

I coughed heartily to cover my laughter, but then had to listen to how to prepare mountain tea that would help my cough.

I might be 36 years old, have an advanced degree, two healthy, happy children and a somewhat sane household — but here in Skopje, the advice never stops flowing. I receive helpful hints every day. On every outing some well-meaning person will suggest a better way to live my life — from child care, husband care and personal care to gardening and cooking. Inevitably, someone or something is either too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry.

Babas — grandmothers — don’t have a corner on the advice market, to be sure. My 40-year-old single neigh-

*Here I am, thousands  
of miles from my  
parents, with a whole  
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watching my back!*



bor, Toni, frets about Haley’s “exposed” back. He is certain that because she’s not in a onesie, some sort of terrible malady will consume her. And an older gentleman on the bus scolded me for not making my sweating son, Kai, wear a jacket.

On one particularly trying day, after at least 10 people had pointed out some fault in my parenting, I ruefully bemoaned what appeared to me as my obvious look of inadequacy to another neighbor, a Macedonian mother with a 14-year-old and a 3-year-old.

“Oh, they do that to everyone,” she assured me. “It’s their way of showing you they like you.”

Her comment gave me pause. I remembered the time Nada cut the last rose of the season from her garden and gave it to me to adorn my table for a work-related reception I hosted at my house. And the time Florika rang my doorbell at 7:30 a.m. with a plate full of warm bread, fresh from the oven, for our breakfast. And the time Danche ushered me into her house for homemade burek, a Macedonian savory pastry.

I also recalled the time Toni walked me over to the outdoor market, instead of just telling me the directions. And often at the market I’ve heard “Dobra Majka” (good mother) in hushed approval from the babas and vegetable salesmen as I walk by, pushing my stroller with one hand and Kai’s trike with the other.

Today Baba Nada calls to me from her gate as I walk up to my house.

“How are you feeling?” she asks.

“Better, thanks,” I croak. I actually sound worse than I feel.

“Tsst. Tsst, you must drink lots of tea, the mountain tea,” she shakes her finger at me.

“I am, I am. It’s perfect for this cough,” I nod.

“And put your head over a steaming pot of water, like this,” she holds her hands to the side of her face and bends forward, almost bumping her head on the fence.

“Yes, yes, I will, right away.”

“Good, good,” she nods. “Then you will feel better.”

I smile. Here I am, thousands of miles from my parents, with a whole neighborhood watching my back! No wonder I feel so safe here.

My mother can rest easy knowing that the Balkan babas will look out for me. ■

---

*Stephanie Rowlands teaches English to preschoolers and is a freelance writer. She and her FSO husband and their two children currently live in Skopje. They previously lived in Mexico and Guatemala.*

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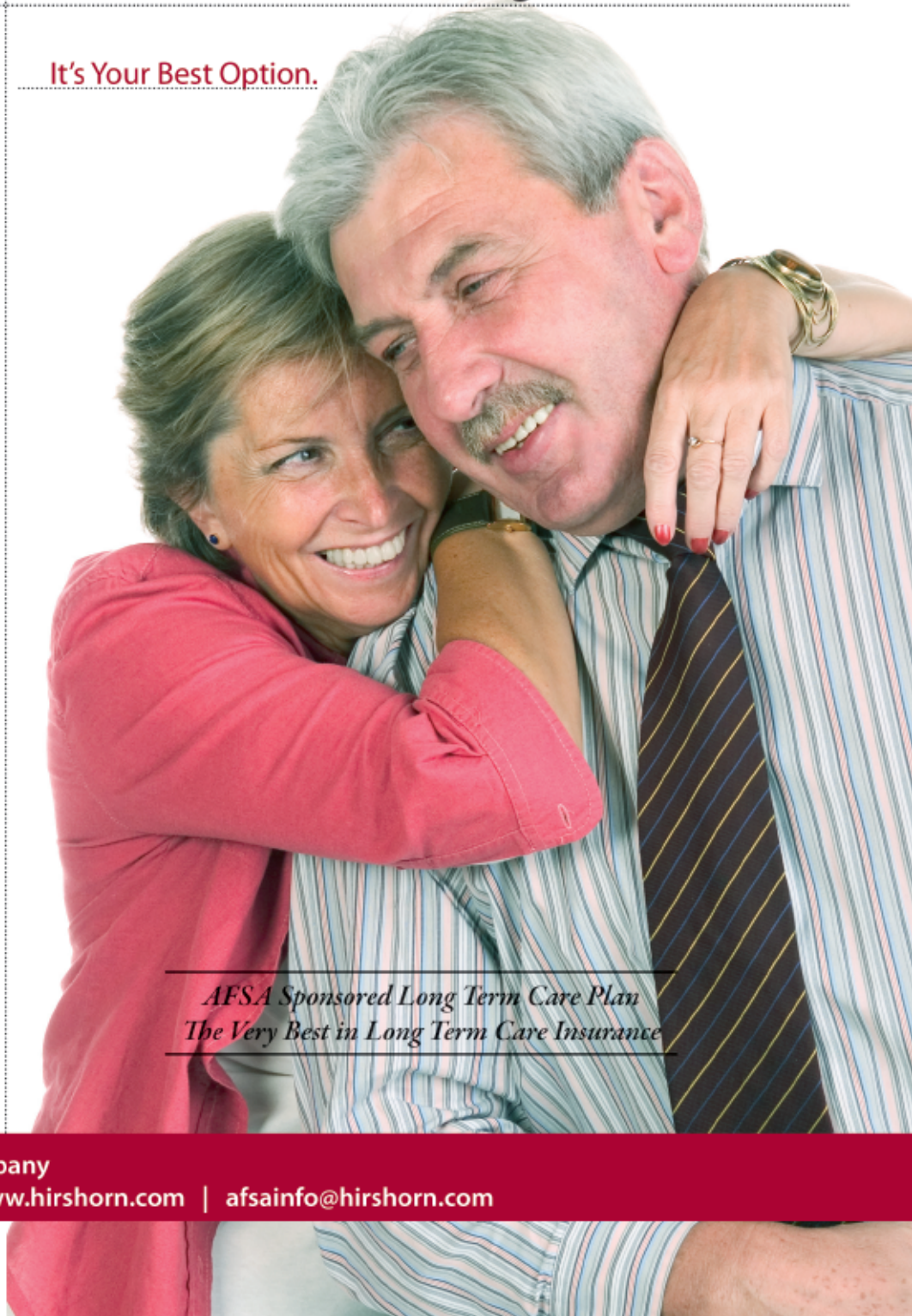
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