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President's Views

Diplomacy and Patronage Don't Mix

By Susan R. Johnson

The continuing debate over non-career ambassadorial appointments should focus on the real issues involved: the pressing need for skillful diplomacy in the 21st century; the experience and skills required to be an effective ambassador; and the impact of reserving 85 percent of ambassadorial appointments to Group of Seven countries, and 58 percent of those to G-20 capitals, over the last 40 years for political appointees.

The expansion of globalization has enhanced rather than diminished the importance of diplomacy as a tool for regulating and promoting beneficial cooperation among nations. With that in mind, President Obama and Secretary Clinton have called for strengthening the Department of State, which is supposed to be our premier foreign policy institution and the only one charged with institutional responsibility for diplomatic service. But how does this rhetoric square with the reality that the most senior positions at State, abroad and at home, continue to be filled by political appointees? Such practices demonstrate little regard for how U.S. diplomacy works. They also do serious, long-term damage to the integrity, morale and professionalism of the institution.

A number of recent studies address the degraded quality and capacity of the State Department and propose remedies. They all concur that the Foreign Service must do a better job of attracting, developing and retaining top talent. But this goal cannot be met by continuing the practice of reserving most of the key posts abroad, as well as an increasing number of senior leadership positions in the department, for non-career appointees who are not accountable for their performance. That practice lowers professional standards and politicizes the culture of the institution, making it more difficult to recognize and reward merit.

To be sure, accomplished non-career individuals can be assets as chiefs of mission — as long as it is recognized that the institution's strength fundamentally rests on the quality and motivation of its *professional* cadre. The complexity of contemporary diplomacy places a premium on knowledgeable people with a long-term commitment to managing the difficult foreign policy challenges before us, and the knowledge, skills and experience to do it adroitly.

It is worth noting that the diplomatic services of the G-7 and G-20 already have structures suggesting that they understand this. Can we really afford to have a less strong professional diplomatic service than do China, Russia, Japan, India and Brazil, not to mention a number of our traditional allies in Europe? Should we not aim for a fully professional diplomatic service with clear standards for demonstrating successful performance, as is required of the country's senior military officers?

With this in mind, the president's prerogative to appoint ambassadors, and the Senate's responsibility to confirm them, should both be leveraged to strengthen the State Department. All diplomatic appointments must be based on relevant experience, exceptional qualifications and personal distinction.

In particular, the de facto sale of ambassadorships should stop. To ensure a robust institutional infrastructure capable of developing the highly skilled and motivated diplomatic service that our nation requires, there should be a ceiling on the number of non-career appointments. (In 1980 the late Senator Charles Mathias suggested a 15-percent cap.)

A new leadership commitment to appointing knowledgeable and experienced career officers to important positions overseas and in Washington, D.C., would be an important step toward improving the professionalism, institutional memory, continuity and credibility of our diplomatic service. Bipartisan consensus on these points would go a long way toward strengthening the State Department so it can conduct the diplomacy needed to better protect and promote U.S. interests in a complex, fast-changing global environment. ■

Susan R. Johnson is the president of the American Foreign Service Association.

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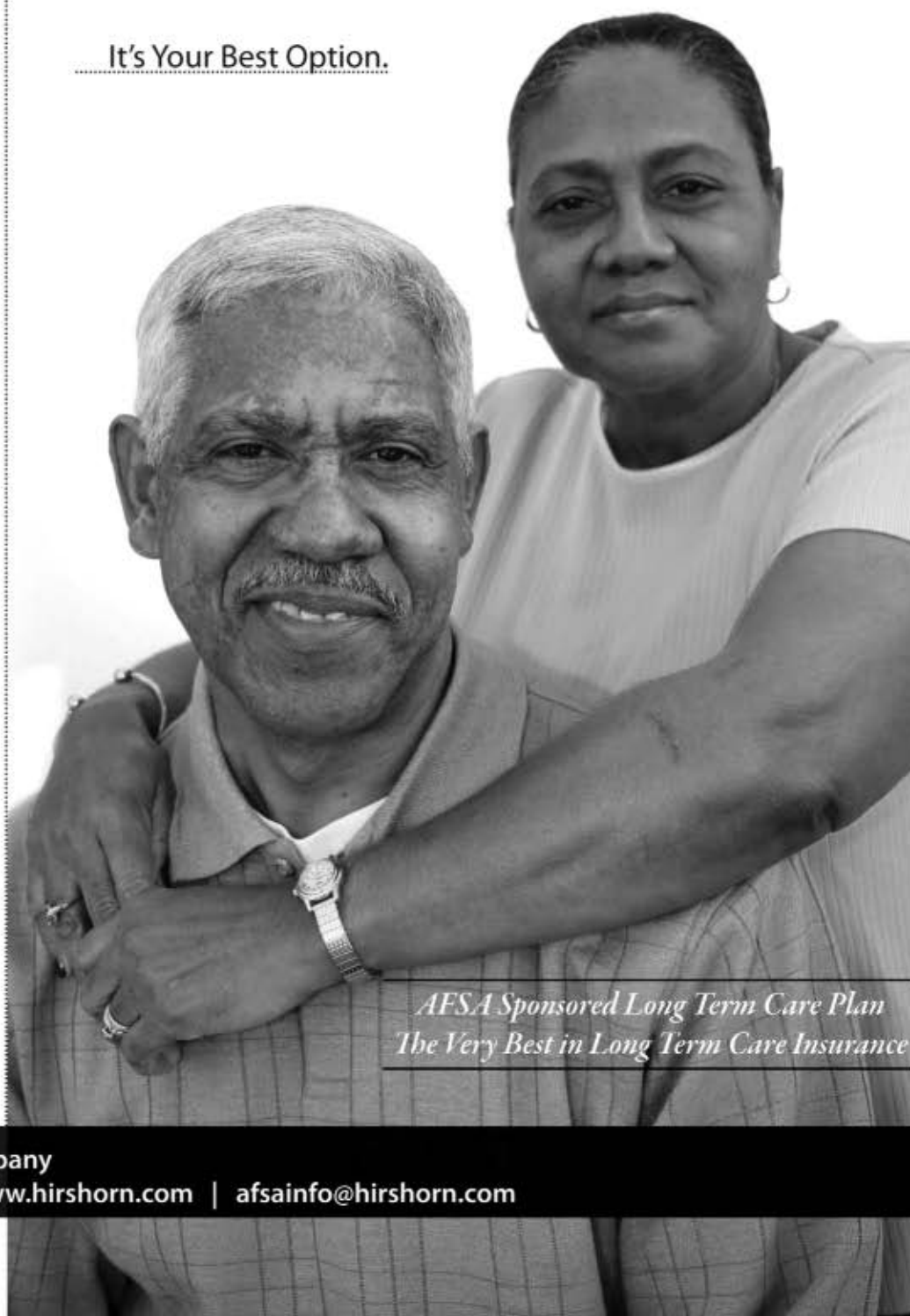

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LETTERS

Real Foreign Service Work

I would like to commend outgoing AFSA president John Naland for taking issue, in his President's Views column in the July-August issue of the *Journal*, with Ambassador Ryan Crocker's comments about "the real work of the Foreign Service" and where it is being done.

Naland's fervent hope that the Foreign Service will not "morph into a diplomatic Foreign Legion" says it all. As he points out, there is plenty of diplomatic work to be done in many capitals around the world to persuade other governments to join our efforts in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. And as history shows, when our efforts are highly controversial, abroad as at home, that is no easy task.

At the risk of irritating many colleagues (and perhaps some friends), I believe that much of what the Foreign Service is being asked to do in Iraq and Afghanistan today — and was once asked to do in Vietnam — is not diplomacy but nationbuilding, provincial reconstruction, etc. Assigning such functions to the Foreign Service and basing the State Department's requests for increased resources on this burgeoning, yet questionable, role weaken our ability to carry out traditional diplomatic responsibilities. This is even more true when, as Amb. Crocker's remarks suggest, our colleagues in many capitals around the world who are trying to bring friends and allies along in support of our foreign policy are accused of "not stepping up to the plate" and, by sly inference, of being cowardly in avoiding dangerous posts.

Robert H. Miller
Ambassador, retired
Bethesda, Md.

Unacceptable Discrimination

I found the sentiments Richard W. Hoover expressed in his letter titled "Don't Encourage Them!" (July-August *FSJ*) demeaning toward the gay and lesbian members of the Foreign Service.

I cannot state with 100-percent accuracy that gays and lesbians exist in every country in which we have diplomatic representation, but I can say that the U.S. does not have a good record of accepting minorities in this country. All minorities in our country have been discriminated against at one time or another, starting with Native Americans, the first Americans, and continuing on to African-Americans and other persons of color, who are still discriminated against. This history is evident in the virulent verbal attacks against President Barack Obama, the first non-white male to be elected U.S. president.

I remember when black couriers were only allowed to travel from the airport to the U.S. embassy in South Africa. Happily, that is no longer so.

Discrimination against any group is not the face of America that we should be showing to the many countries around the world where loyal Foreign Service employees — straight, gay or lesbian — represent us. Times are changing.

Jerry Lujan
FSO, retired
SaddleBrooke, Ariz.

Not Quite Equal Yet

I am very pleased that since the publication of my Speaking Out column, "Hope for Gay and Lesbian Foreign Service Employees" (May), there has been significant progress on the extension of benefits to same-sex Foreign Service families. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has expanded the definition of Eligible Family Member to include same-sex partners, thus providing them with various benefits, such as travel orders, visa support, FSI training, access to health units and (for U.S.-citizen partners) overseas hiring preference and diplomatic passports.

Yet while I am thrilled at the prospect of receiving some of these benefits for my partner, Daniel, I do want to make it clear that this is not yet the "equal benefits" victory that the news headlines seem to portray. As I mentioned in my Speaking Out column, two of the main issues for me are that my partner cannot join me in the U.S. except as a long-term tourist, and he is discriminated against in our overseas missions' hiring practices. These two major barriers remain firmly intact, although I understand that the Bureau

of Consular Affairs is currently pursuing creative efforts for a workaround on the domestic assignment visa issue. The key issues of health insurance and pension benefits remain unresolved, as well. But the Secretary has done all she can short of additional legislative action, and I commend her for those efforts.

I was also quite surprised to see the *Journal* publish a letter from retired FSO Richard Hoover (July-August) opposing my call for economic, career and quality-of-life improvements for gay and lesbian Foreign Service employees. His argument apparently is that since our "habits are unacceptable" to most Americans and foreigners alike, it is actually in the department's interest to provide an unwelcoming work environment for us. According to this viewpoint, our very presence is undermining the values that our Foreign Service attempts to project overseas.

I don't know what American values Mr. Hoover attempted to project during his career, but I have been proudly representing my country for the past 18 years because I believe it represents such cherished values as freedom of opportunity, tolerance, and respect for diversity and equality under the law. Gay and lesbian employees in the Foreign Service help reflect these values rather than diminish them.

Did the *Foreign Service Journal* seriously find it beneficial to publish a letter questioning the appropriateness of our very presence within the ranks of the Foreign Service? I'm all for journalistic balance and the expression of alternative views, but opinions such as this are demeaning and no longer have a place in polite society. ■

Steven Giegerich
Consul
Consulate General
Hong Kong

CYBERNOTES

Waiting for Godot at USAID

On Aug. 12, foreign aid guru, Harvard professor and medical doctor Paul Farmer confirmed the expectations of many observers by bowing out of consideration for the position of Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

An experienced practitioner of foreign health and development assistance, with extensive on-the-ground experience in Haiti, Rwanda and elsewhere, Dr. Farmer had seemed an impossibly well-qualified candidate for the position. Now, with his graceful exit to become the U.N. deputy special envoy to Haiti under former President Bill Clinton, fears for USAID's prospects in the Obama administration have grown.

Many blame the White House's sluggishness in selecting a nominee for Farmer's exit (**http://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/10/update-on-paul-farmer-and-usaid/**). Even Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton commented that "the clearance and vetting process is a nightmare, and it takes far longer than any of us would want to see" (**http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/07/13/clinton_complains_of_nightmare_vetting_process**).

But that issue is only a lightning rod for more deep-seated concerns. Many see the inability to fill the post, empty for an unprecedented seven months now, as a sign of the administration's failure to deliver on its commitment to advance foreign aid (**www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2009-08-15/can-usaid-survive-without-a-leader/?cid=hp:beastoriginalsR2**).

> Without a strong administrator, USAID's voice will be lost in the current interagency debate.
>
> — Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., Letter to the Editor, Aug. 9, *www.washingtonpost.com*

Strong leadership is required to do this. Without it, as Senator Richard Lugar, R-Ind., ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wrote in an Aug. 8 letter to the *Washington Post*, "President Obama's pledge to double foreign assistance would be like adding a third story to a house that had a crumbling foundation."

Institutional atrophy and a loss of expertise at USAID have seriously compromised the effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance, as three former administrators acknowledge in their comprehensive review of the agency and its mission, "Arrested Development: Making Foreign Aid a More Effective Tool," in the November-December 2008 issue of *Foreign Affairs* (**www.aplu.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=1075**).

The only way to correct this, say Andrew Natsios, J. Brian Atwood and M. Peter McPherson, is to re-establish USAID as the vital, autonomous and authoritative leading agency for American foreign assistance — whether as an entity within State or as a new federal department devoted to development.

Sen. Lugar's Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009, introduced in late July with Sen. John F. Kerry, D-Mass., and a group of bipartisan co-sponsors, would give USAID the lead role in strengthening the capacity, transparency and accountability of American foreign assistance activities (**www.opencongress.org/bill/1/111-s1524/show**). The legislation is now in committee.

In a related development, at a July 10 State Department town hall meeting Sec. Clinton announced the launch of a "Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review" modeled on the Department of Defense's Quadrennial Defense Review (**www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/july/125949.htm**).

Clinton said she hopes, foremost, that the review will move State away from year-by-year planning to focus on overarching goals, and that this will

improve resource allocations and strengthen future requests to Congress. She also expects the QDDR to highlight a comprehensive plan for development — not just foreign assistance — in an effort to further integrate USAID into State.

Although the department intends to publish the results of the QDDR by 2010, the specifics of the undertaking — namely its scope, funding and completion date — remain hazy. Given the cost in staff and contractors that the Defense Department incurs in its QDR, this is not an inconsequential matter.

Moreover, some observers, such as Jim Thomas, vice president for studies at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, have voiced concerns that such an exercise may not, in any case, be appropriate for State because the department tends to operate in a more daily, crisis-management mode than the Pentagon (**www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0709/071509l1.htm**).

To follow the QDDR process as it takes shape, watch the State Department's blog (at **http://blogs.state.gov/**) and press releases (**www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/index.htm**).

Meanwhile, at this writing there are still no candidates to lead the nation's premier development agency. And whether USAID will be further submerged into the State Department, threatening the end of its development mission altogether, or become a new, more powerful institution in its own right, remains to be seen.

Site of the Month: www.usip.org

In tandem with the construction of its new headquarters, the United States Institute of Peace, a nonpartisan institute founded and funded by Congress for the management and resolution of conflicts and continuation of stability thereafter, has been reconstructing its Web site (**www.usip.org**).

Chief among the alterations is the addition of several impressive resources, among them an amazing aggregation called "On the Issues" (**http://origin.usip.org/on_the_issues/**). For instance, all of the resources and research on major hot spots collected by USIP during its 20 years of existence are now available in a subsection titled "Conflict Resources."

"On the Issues" also offers a set of transcripts discussing the background and stakes for the United States of recent developments in conflict zones. These "Expert Interviews" contain some of the most succinct, reliable and informative accounts of recent events in Iran, Lebanon and North Korea. Currently, the coverage of issues and conflicts extends only as far back as 2007, but the project continues to expand.

Given the rapid escalation of nearly all the topics covered in these expert interviews, one might expect them to become obsolete eventually. Instead, USIP has reacted to the pace of events by conducting interactive discussions with its experts on the institute's *Facebook* pages (**www.facebook.com/pages/United-States-Institute-of-Peace/75608370019**). It has thereby succeeded in creating one of the most consistent and informative databases on these highly contentious, fluid issues available anywhere on the Net.

"On the Issues" is just one of the many new resources on the site. Others include records of congressional testimony, peace agreements from around the world, and briefings on events and field work, as well as collections of oral histories (**www.usip.org/resources-tools/types**). Using these links, one can quickly gain a sound general knowledge of the background and impact of any prominent issue and go into depth on it easily.

Hope from The Hague

Two cases coming out of international dispute resolution institutions based in The Hague are helping restore faith in the conciliatory powers of world bodies.

The first decision, handed down on July 13 by the United Nations International Court of Justice, settles a dispute between Nicaragua and Costa Rica over the San Juan River (**http://article.wn.com/view/2009/07/14/UN_International_Court_of_Justice_Affirms_Nicaraguan_Soverei/**). The case, brought before the court in 2005 by Costa Rica, concerned issues of maritime regulation dating back to an 1858 treaty. Though the court sided in favor of Nicaraguan claims, San Jose has given every indication it accepts that decision, so the 150-year-old conflict may finally be laid to rest.

Similarly, a ruling on July 22 by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the administrative organization for international dispute resolution that is housed with the ICJ in The Hague's Peace Palace, has settled a dispute over the oil-rich Sudanese region of Abyei. The issue arose in negotiating the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement between northern and southern Sudanese forces (**http://news.xinhuanet.com/**

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50 Years Ago…

This, then, is the challenge: Are we, the peoples of the economically advanced free nations, going to persevere in our efforts to help the one billion people in the free world's less-developed areas place themselves firmly on the road to progress? Or are we going to be found wanting in this supreme test of our free and democratic way of life?

— Under Secretary of State Douglas Dillon, from a talk delivered to the Harvard University Association in Cambridge, Mass., on June 11, 1959; *FSJ*, October 1959.

english/2009-07/23/content_11756009.htm).

Both the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and its former foes in the National Congress Party have expressed satisfaction with the newly demarcated borders and agreed to observe them.

These successes, however, were partially overshadowed by the fifth anniversary of the ICJ's ruling against Israel's construction of a separation wall between Israeli and Palestinian territories (**www.sott.net/articles/show/190312-Five-years-after-ICJ-ruling-Israel-expands-its-illegal-Wall-onto-more-Palestinian-land**). Despite a decision by the court and a vote by the U.N. General Assembly declaring an obligation for signatories to the Geneva Convention to compel Israel to uphold the rulings, there has been no action by any party to the dispute.

Still, the list of pending cases voluntarily brought before the ICJ — among them such monumental disputes as Kosovo v. Serbia and Peru v. Chile — is a reassuring indication of a willingness to attempt international arbitration and other nonviolent conflict solutions (**www.icjcij.org/docket/index.php?p1=3&p2=1&PHPSESSID=7721bda04b0456828d608a58319ebc3d**).

The new, independent International Criminal Court, meanwhile, is investigating four situations — in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Uganda and Sudan (Darfur) — and began its first trial in January (**www.icc-cpi.int/**). Established under the Rome Statutes in 1998 and opened for business in 2002, the ICC is backed by 110 nations but is still boycotted by the U.S., China, Russia and India.

To keep up with these contentious cases and other issues surrounding the more than 20 functioning international courts, follow reports issued by the Project on International Courts and Tribunals (**www.pict-pcti.org/index.html**).

The Beautiful Bunker?

The 1990s witnessed a gradual turn away from creative designs for U.S. embassies. As fear of terrorist attacks rose, the buildings slowly moved from cultural representations of America's unique vitality to fortresses. Some critics now claim that embassy architecture has reached a nadir, as architects told to value safety above all other considerations churn out what the *Los Angeles Times* — a frequent reporter on this issue — has called "one-size-fits-all bunkers"(**http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2009/07/**).

The State Department has long been under wide-ranging criticism for failing to fulfill one of the "Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture," formulated by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and issued by President John F. Kennedy in 1962, that federal facilities "reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the federal government." So in July 2008, State's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations commissioned the American Institute of Architects to review embassy architecture (**www.dwell.com/articles/philip-kennicott-on-americas-embassies.html**).

And on July 9, 2009, the AIA's 21st-Century Embassy Task Force released a 40-page report, "Design for Diplomacy: New Embassies for the 21st Century," to the public (**www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aiab080400.pdf**). It cites the Center for Strategic and International Studies' 2007 report, "The Embassy of the Future," as a key source of information for its own findings and recommendations (**http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/embassy_of_the_future.pdf**).

Both reports agree that it is possible to blend aesthetics and security in embassy design. Furthermore, the AIA's report highlights several ways in which the OBO can achieve this perfect harmony while also lowering costs.

The Road to Damascus

President Barack Obama made a sharp break with George W. Bush–era foreign policy in late June, when he announced his intention to send an ambassador, as yet unnamed, back to Syria

(**www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/07/26/us.middle.east/**). Former President George W. Bush had withdrawn the last U.S. ambassador from Damascus in 2005 in light of plausible accusations of Syrian involvement in the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri earlier that year.

While Pres. Obama's decision reflects his longstanding commitment to pursuing dialogue, the move still comes as something of a shock. As recently as this spring, pundits believed that such a step was still a way off (**www.brookings.edu/articles/2009/0319_syria_saab.aspx**).

Although Damascus has not come forward with any clear concessions, its responses to recent regional events — for instance, this year's Lebanese legislative elections, the destabilization of Iran, and entreaties from Israel via Turkey to resume Middle East peace negotiations — have revealed a possible unclenching of the Syrian fist (**www.usip.org/countries-continents/asia/syria**).

Such shifts, especially the weakening of the Iran-Syria alliance (**http://blog.oup.com/2009/07/iran_syria/**), allow Damascus to regain its centrality to Middle Eastern affairs while opening itself more directly to new pathways — perhaps even a Washington-led peace process.

As Pres. Obama has asserted, Syria will play a vital role in the future of Iraqi security (its border serves as a gateway for international insurgents, among other concerns), Iranian-American relations and Arab-Israeli peace discussions. Such a pivotal state certainly merits ambassadorial contacts to facilitate the high-level diplomacy that will be needed.

However, although Washington has decided to nominate a new ambassador and resume dialogue, this is only a tentative first step in a long and delicate process. Any major changes in the region could jeopardize the precarious, convergent pathways of U.S. and Syrian interests (**www.mcclatchydc.com/commentary/story/71793.html**). And in such a fragile environment, it behooves pundits and politicians alike to closely follow developments in Damascus (**www.cfr.org/region/414/syria.html**).

For now, both sides celebrate a vital and constructive change in Middle Eastern relations. In July Syrian political writer Sami Moubayed published an open letter to the future ambassador: "With great pleasure we welcome you to Damascus, a city of lights, history, peace and passion. Damascus is a warm host, and has been good to all your predecessors from the days of George Wadsworth during World War II, all the way to your immediate predecessor, Margaret Scobey" (**www.fw-magazine.com/category/5/279**). With any luck, this attitude will endure, whatever lies ahead.

Syrian Ambassador to the U.S. Imad Moustapha has long voiced his expectation and eagerness that any post-Bush administration would seek to re-establish full Syrian diplomatic relations (**http://foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4544&page=1**). The tech-savvy ambassador keeps a personal blog that will presumably express his thoughts on the current form such reconnections are taking (**http://imad_moustapha.blogs.com/**).

For more background on U.S.-Syrian relations, see **www.usip.org/resources/issues-syria**. ■

This edition of Cybernotes was compiled by Editorial Intern Mark Hay.

SPEAKING OUT

Public Diplomacy: A View from the Front Line

BY THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY FRONT LINE WORKING GROUP

Over the past decade a new generation of public diplomacy officers has risen to the mid-level ranks of the Foreign Service. We have no institutional memory of the U.S. Information Agency; many of our careers began with the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the realization that not everyone loved America or our values. We departed for our first tours with the goal of dispelling increasing misperceptions about America, spread at an alarming rate through the unregulated, and often inaccurate, new world of mobile technology.

It was at that point that our government realized what many of us learned through experience: people-to-people exchanges matter; we need to invest in the long term when it comes to diplomacy; and we cannot achieve our policy objectives in democracies without gaining buy-in from foreign publics. The new generation of public diplomacy officers is ready to take on these challenges in order to promote U.S. strategic interests. But to do this, PD officers need to be empowered, integrated and equipped to succeed in the 21st century.

There have been a number of reports on public diplomacy from the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, the RAND Corporation and the Heritage Foundation, and from members of Congress. However, to our knowledge this is the first time a group of active-duty mid-level officers has come together to discuss these issues and put pen to paper. We hope our comments and suggestions will add a new perspective, and start a conversation about the direction of public diplomacy among current State Department PD practitioners.

We hope to start a conversation about the direction of public diplomacy among current State Department PD practitioners.

Give All Public Diplomacy Officers a Seat at the Table

In practice, it is up to every single public diplomacy officer to insert himself or herself into policy discussions in Washington and at post. For the past few years, PD officers have been embedded in the regional bureaus, specifically in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. This arrangement has been beneficial for the bureaus, the regional offices and the embedded officers, generally referred to as "embeds."

Embeds have gained an understanding of the broader policy issues surrounding their particular countries and, in turn, bring public diplomacy expertise to policy discussions from the outset. For their part, bureaus can better achieve their policy objectives when they have an integrated public diplomacy strategy.

The following three examples illustrate the strategic importance of PD.

When Kosovo declared its independence in 2008, it was the embedded PD desk officer who spearheaded the outreach plan for gaining public support in Europe for formal recognition. Similarly, during the August 2008 Russia-Georgia War, the PD desk officer coordinated real-time formal messaging to be used by the interagency community and our embassies to counter Russian misinformation. And during interbureau and interagency discussions of NATO's mission in Afghanistan, the PD desk officer has consistently emphasized the point that a major obstacle to increased European commitment is the low public support for the mission among the populations of Allied countries.

As such examples demonstrate, the PD desk officer adds value by explaining the importance of negative public opinion as a "drag" on achieving our policy objectives. Moreover, such of-

ficers engage policymakers on how to best shape public opinion in pursuit of U.S. interests. None of these initiatives would have been as successful without the embeds' thorough understanding of U.S. policy in those countries and their informed PD perspective. Accordingly, all bureaus would benefit from embedded public diplomacy desk officers in their regional offices.

Today, the success of U.S. diplomacy relies more heavily than ever on cooperation from our democratic partners and allies, who answer to their own publics. "Mutual understanding" remains a catch phrase in the public diplomacy portion of Mission Strategic Plans, but the work needed to gain buy-in for U.S policy from foreign publics — much of the meaning behind the phrase — must be an integral part of each MSP. Embassy leadership should recognize this by encouraging political and economic officers to work with public affairs officers to identify key audiences and opinion-makers on issues of strategic importance, and to cooperate and participate in outreach designed to influence those audiences.

Create More Opportunities for ECA and IIP

The expertise of the Bureaus of Educational and Cultural Affairs and International Information Programs can be more fully utilized if they are more engaged in policy discussions. Even though ECA and IIP report to the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (known as R), the critical role the programs they oversee play in advancing our foreign policy objectives is not always clear. The two bureaus' long-overdue move out of SA-44 in Southwest Washington, D.C., has brought them physically closer to Main State. And that proximity brings with it the chance for better collaboration.

There is no shortage of talent at ECA and IIP; within both bureaus, there is a large cadre of dedicated and experienced Civil Service employees. These professionals have created a range of effective programs, but at times the link between programs and U.S. foreign policy priorities lags or is missing entirely. To address this, we should increase the opportunities for those bureaus' civil servants to work on State's policy desks and in overseas missions, and simultaneously augment the Foreign Service presence in ECA and IIP program offices

One option would be to offer 12-month rotations in ECA or IIP for non-PD Foreign Service personnel to gain in-depth experience either in exchange and cultural programming, or creating traditional and new media products. Similarly, Civil Service ECA and IIP employees should have the opportunity to do rotations in regional PD offices and be encouraged to bid on hard-to-fill public diplomacy positions overseas. These rotations would help all personnel in those bureaus, as well as the regional PD offices, work together more effectively to ensure that there is no disconnect in our implementation of foreign policy.

Develop an Esprit de Corps

As mid-level public diplomacy officers, we recognize the need to build a strong esprit de corps among all PD-cone FSOs, regardless of rank, position or career history. Those who lead the public diplomacy cone, fully aware that USIA as it existed is not coming back, need to help PD officers at all levels build a stronger sense of identity, and emphasize a unified mission within the PD family.

Like the Bureau of Consular Affairs, R and the regional public diplomacy offices should develop a reputation for taking care of their own when it comes to career development and bidding. We also need to promote the PD "brand" at all career levels. With a strong sense of shared identity and purpose, both new and experienced PD officers — and the rest of the State Department — will know that the R Bureau is a place to build a successful career and to make a difference in U.S. foreign policy.

R has already begun to do this by creating a formal "staff line," modeling itself like other under secretary offices. This change is an example of PD inserting itself into the policy process, integrating itself into State Department culture and claiming a seat at the table. It would further strengthen the regional press and public diplomacy offices if a PD-cone deputy assistant secretary were assigned to each bureau, with a mission to keep senior PD officers linked into the policy process and thus better informed and more relevant. Even the most experienced public diplomacy officers are at a disadvantage when they enter policy discussions late — or not at all.

Smart Technology for Smart Power

Today's PD officers need to be technologically savvy and fully equipped with the most modern tools to promote our values and messages. They must master print, radio and television media as well as podcasts, webchats, blogs and social networking sites. Other tools at our disposal that have been in use for some time include books, magazines and DVDs. While still incredibly useful, these do not necessarily reflect the communications

practices of young populations across the world. In Africa, Iran, China and Russia, young people are reaching out as much as they can across borders through their laptops, cell phones, Blackberries and iPhones to update their *Facebook* profiles, follow each other on *Twitter*, and far more. The State Department's leadership realizes we need to be a significant player in this growing space, but the funding for that has not yet materialized.

Resources need to be provided to every embassy, and throughout the department, to allow PD officers and staff to access these technologies, with a streamlined process to gain approval to add software and hardware to our OpenNet terminals. As the tools change, PD officers will require a more sophisticated approach to ongoing education in order to stay current, enhancing their ability to apply these technologies appropriately.

The Bureau of Information Resource Management, IIP's Information Resource Officers and Information Resource Center staff must be trained in the logistical use of new media and their strategic application for public diplomacy. We also need to reach out to information technology private-sector giants like Google and Microsoft to create partnerships that enable us to use these technologies with foreign audiences worldwide.

Finally, we need to empower PD officers overseas to determine how best to employ emerging technology in their specific program environments. In some countries, SMS may be the most effective way to reach out to audiences with limited Internet connectivity. In others, Web-based technologies have already replaced print media. Working with their front offices, public affairs officers must be able to choose which media are the best to use to communicate effective messages to their particular audiences, given the reality of limited staff and budgets.

Bureaus can better achieve their policy objectives when they have an integrated public diplomacy strategy.

Develop the Next Generation

PD officers usually will do at least two, and possibly four, years of out-of-cone work before bidding on their first public diplomacy position. When they do bid on those jobs, they are often disadvantaged in the process because they cannot clearly demonstrate their public diplomacy expertise. The PD leadership can help by establishing clear guidelines for new officers that outline necessary skills (program management, budget review, public speaking, media training, etc.) and how to obtain them during entry-level tours, whether in PD positions or not.

This can be accomplished in liaison with the Public Diplomacy Training Division and the Consular Training Division at the Foreign Service Institute. However, this means that embassies will have to balance their needs on the consular line with the need to develop a professional public diplomacy corps within the Foreign Service. (This applies to other cones as well, of course.)

Armed with this skills development plan, both the officer and prospective supervisor can be confident that bidders on FS-3 PD jobs will be prepared for the work, whether or not they already have public diplomacy on their resumé. USIA's junior officer training program sharpened the skills of entry-level personnel going into assistant cultural affairs officer and assistant information officer positions, placing them under the supervision of experienced PD officers and including rotations in consular, political/economic and management sections.

Furthermore, mid-level officers in the field should be encouraged to be creative and innovative by competing for special funds that R would earmark to develop new programs.

Expand Mid-Level Training and Professional Education Opportunities

The need for a highly professional, well-educated public diplomacy corps has never been greater. A stronger PD officer corps will have the ability to reach new audiences, as well as neglected ones, using a variety of methods.

A public diplomacy expert combines policy expertise, media savvy, a general understanding of education and the performing arts, and experience with grants administration, budgets, technology and cultural exchange projects — a daunting repertoire to master. Regrettably, mid-level officers all too often have been denied the professional development opportunities necessary to achieve the most effective outreach skills.

Opportunities should also be given for officers to earn a master's degree in

public diplomacy at the University of Southern California, or to enroll in comparable programs around the U.S. This and other graduate-level opportunities should be offered on the same basis as other long-term training, such as Princeton's Master's in Public Policy program.

Financial assistance should also be considered for officers who seek degrees on their own time in fields such as the performing arts, education, journalism or communications, all of which are applicable to PD work.

A final note: Many of the suggestions we make regarding the need for better strategic vision, reforms in the current bureaucratic structure, more (and more tailored) training and more resources have not occurred to us alone. Most reports on public diplomacy come to some or all of the same conclusions. There is recognition across the board that to achieve results in public diplomacy requires a motivated, well-equipped team with a common strategic vision and the means to deliver the goods.

We hope that this column not only serves to start a conversation about public diplomacy among our ranks, but adds to the greater dialogue on how best to achieve our foreign policy objectives. ■

The Public Diplomacy Front Line Working Group is comprised of the following mid-level PD officers: Stefanie Altman-Winans, Kerri Hannan, Shari Bistransky, Jennifer Rahimi, Jean Duggan, Jean Briganti, Ruth Anne Stevens-Klitz, Tristram Perry, Bix Aliu and Jon Berger.

The group welcomes comments at pdoforchange@gmail.com, and invites readers to visit its Facebook page, Public Diplomacy Officers for Change.

FS Know-How

PD: A View from the Promotion Panel

By Julie Gianelloni Connor

My experience serving on the threshold promotion board this summer confirms my longstanding belief that the public diplomacy cone requires urgent attention if it is to become truly competitive with other FS cones. In hopes of improving the outlook for my fellow PD officers, I'd like to offer some observations on how the promotion process works and recommendations for our cone.

Classwide vs. Conal

First, a little background. All officers compete for promotion twice: once by cone and once against all their peers at the same rank. In 2005, the "multifunctional" competition was changed to a "classwide" review of officers. In that year, PD had the lowest percentage of officers promoted classwide to FS-1 and FE-MC, and the second-lowest to FE-OC.

We did better the following year, placing third at the FS-1 and FE-OC levels (behind the political and economic cones) and last at the FE-MC level. But that was the high-water mark for PD-cone FSOs in the classwide competitions at the FS-1, FE-OC and FE-MC levels.

In 2007, we were last at every level. In 2008, not a single PD officer was promoted classwide to the FS-1 level (the only cone to suffer this indignity) or to FE-OC (sharing the insult with management, which also failed to get any officer promoted classwide). And the PD promotion rate was second-to-last (ahead of management) at the FE-MC level. Although statistics for this year (2009) are not yet available, that miserable result is likely to be repeated.

Here are some tips to help public diplomacy officers become truly competitive with other FS cones.

The key to being promoted classwide, at least at the FS-1 level, is to demonstrate leadership and ability not only within your own cone but also outside it. Yet PD officers (at least the cohort I saw) generally seem to stick pretty close to their own field of expertise. In sharp contrast, lots of officers from other cones serve in mid- to senior-level jobs outside their own cones or in "leadership" jobs, such as deputy chief of mission, principal officer or office director.

Though serving out-of-cone is necessary to be competitive classwide, it is also true that too much of that experience can be detrimental in the conal competition. So it makes perfect sense for public diplomacy officers to give up trying for the sorts of jobs that result in classwide promotion and instead stick closely to in-cone work. And that strategy works fine — until the officer gets to be in the Senior Foreign Service and finds that PD jobs at that level are few and far between, and that just doing public diplomacy work does not make an officer competitive for senior jobs when compared with other officers who have already served as deputy chiefs of mission and principal officers at smaller posts.

(One other note: Judging by my experience on the threshold promotion panel, only masochists are going to do cultural work exclusively. It will not suffice to get an officer promoted into the Senior Foreign Service.)

Myth Busting

The articles in the focus section of this issue contain some claims dear to the hearts of all PD officers. Unfortunately, what I saw on the promotion panel makes clear that they are now the equivalent of urban myths.

Myth No. 1: PD officers are fond of saying that with the experience accrued from their earliest assignments in managing large staffs and budgets, they should be competitive for top positions. If this were ever true, it no longer is. Given the disastrous personnel cuts of the 1990s, followed by the "Iraq tax" and other downsizing in

recent years, it is rare to find a public diplomacy section anywhere near the size of other sections in embassies.

For example, think about the American officers in an overseas post. The consular section is swarming with entry-level officers. Management, even at smaller posts, still has a substantial number of sections headed by an FSO: human resources, financial management, information management, general services, etc. Medium-size political and economic staffs generally number at least four to five officers, plus an office management specialist and, frequently, an Eligible Family Member.

In comparison, American OMS jobs in public diplomacy sections went the way of dodo birds in the 1990s, as did many assistant information and assistant cultural affairs officer positions. That means that only the very largest PD sections, those that still have an AIO or ACAO, can compare even with medium-size political and economic sections in terms of how many officers section chiefs supervise. Or to put it another way, a political counselor at a medium-size embassy in Latin America is usually supervising at least twice as many American employees as the public affairs officer.

This, in turn, means that all other section heads are gaining an advantage in managing personnel, which leads to opportunities to shine in Employee Evaluation Reports by working out employee disputes and issues, writing evaluations that get commendations, etc.

As for Locally Employed Staff, once again the numbers in the consular and management sections dwarf those in PD. Even political and economic sections seem to be adding LES, while PD's ranks were chopped in 1999 when support staff — drivers, financial staff and data managers — were transferred to State management sections. In short, according to what I saw in the EERs, any advantage in terms of managing people and resources that PD officers may have at the FS-3 and FS-2 levels disappears by the time they reach FS-1 — which means PD officers are operating at a real disadvantage vis-à-vis their counterparts in terms of supervisory responsibility, a key factor in making it across the threshold.

Myth No. 2: Many of us are convinced that State's culture is anti-PD, and that members of other cones have no interest in public diplomacy. I know all too well that this was true in the past, having suffered under a DCM who regularly admonished the country team that "If you want to ruin your career, speak to the press." However, based on what I read in the personnel files, this old axiom is no longer true. Indeed, listing PD as a requirement for advancement (e.g, including it in the promotion precepts) has been spectacularly successful.

Every last officer overseas — if one believes what one reads in the EERs — is out there talking to the media, giving speeches at universities and high schools, and meeting with nongovernmental organizations and other community leaders. If they are not doing so, that failure is being written up as an Area for Improvement. (In fact, urging officers to do more PD has become one of the most popular recommendations for non-PD FSOs. For example, an economic or consular officer may be directed to increase his or her public outreach by giving public speeches or meeting with the media.)

That said, I do not believe this sea change has come about because PD officers have successfully "infected" State with our values (as some officers claimed would happen at the time of consolidation). It occurred because changes in the world have made everyone more aware of the need to fight the battle of ideas in the public arena. Nor should this shift be surprising, given the younger generation's propensity to use technology and to embrace openness. But old PD hands still act as if nothing has changed — when it most definitely has.

A corollary to this myth is the belief that only seasoned PD officers can adequately "do PD." That is not what the EERs indicate, with many officers from other cones getting rave reviews for their stints as PAOs, IOs and CAOs and for "new technology" pilot projects.

What Is to Be Done?

If PD officers are not competitive classwide, what will become of them? One answer to that question comes from Bruce Gregory, who was for many years the staff director of the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy and who currently teaches PD. Gregory has been saying for quite a while that the PD cone should disappear, with officers being absorbed into the political cone. The logic behind this is that the skill sets needed to be a good PD officer — good writing ability, superior contact work, excellent political judgment, and a "nose for the news" or for coming trends — are similar in both cones.

Based on the EERs I read this summer, I have to say that there may be something to this idea. Otherwise, how can political officers with no public diplomacy experience be functioning successfully as public affairs officers? Besides reading about officers from other cones successfully serving

as PAOs, IOs and CAOs, I also read evaluations for non-PD officers serving in what should be "plum" PD Washington-based jobs. For example, non-PD officers seem to be staffing the National Security Council Press Office. And over the past decade, they have also occupied top staff jobs in the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and in the Bureau of Public Affairs.

While abandoning public diplomacy as a cone is one possible approach, I would instead recommend that we get our act together and become more competitive with the other cones. So here are some practical suggestions for my PD-cone colleagues.

• Get yourself some out-of-cone experience in the mid-grades. You will need it as your career advances.

• Despite the discouragements, go after those DCM and PO positions.

• Make sure your Employee Profile (what we old-timers still call our Personnel Audit Report, or PAR) is correct and up-to-date, no matter how much effort it takes. Check it every spring for accuracy. The promotion panel uses printouts of the profile for everything from jotting down notes from your EERs, to jogging their memories about your career when the board holds discussions, to checking for hardship postings and language skills.

• Rating and reviewing officers should give subordinates strong recommendations for promotion. Avoid any ambiguity. Don't write, "I recommend this officer for promotion at the first opportunity," but "I recommend this officer for immediate promotion." This explicit recommendation was not necessary when we were USIA officers, but it is part of State culture and is essential now.

PD officers are operating at a real disadvantage vis-à-vis their counterparts in terms of supervisory responsibility.

• Now that I've served on the threshold panel, there is no question in my mind that PD officers are being disadvantaged by a failure of senior leadership. Of course, with six under secretaries for public diplomacy in 10 years, including long periods with no one in place, how could it be otherwise? And even when there is an effective leader in R, he or she is usually focused on policy issues, not pursuing career enhancement for PD-cone officers.

Steps for State Leadership

Unlike other cones, there are few if any jobs in Washington for PD FSOs to encumber. The Bureau of Consular Affairs relies heavily on career consular officers to fill senior slots. Management officers are natural fits for the Office of the Under Secretary for Management, the Administration Bureau and the executive offices of all regional and functional bureaus. And political and economic officers dominate the regional bureaus, as well as the offices of the under secretaries for political and economic affairs and certain functional bureaus. But where do public diplomacy officers go?

Slots that seem like they should be "reserved" for PD officers, such as public diplomacy positions in PA and at the National Security Council, frequently (dare I say usually) go to officers in other cones. Moreover, the political appointees in the under secretary's office and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs tend to bring in other political appointees to fill staff jobs. They are also willing to take officers from any cone to serve on their staffs.

The remaining PD senior jobs are few and far between, which results in PD officers at the FS-1 level and above being shoehorned into jobs on the Board of Examiners, in the Office of the Inspector General and similar offices. Thus, mid- and senior-level PD officers find it particularly difficult to get the high-level PD Washington experience they need.

Some leadership on the part of senior FSOs who want to help level the playing field for PD officers could go a long way. First and foremost, more senior-level jobs need to be created for senior PD officers. The cone needs a path that does not crash and burn at the FS-1 level when PD officers begin to be non-competitive for senior jobs. Here are some specific suggestions:

• The under secretary should choose PD-cone officers to fill senior- and mid-level staff positions in R.

• Confer (finally) assistant-secretary rank on the head of the International Information Programs Bureau. Then fill the position with a career officer, and make sure the deputy assistant secretaries are also PD officers. Titles are important. Board members understand what a deputy assistant secretary does — but a coordinator?

• If the assistant secretary of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs really has to remain a political

appointee, at least make sure that ECA deputy assistant secretary positions are reserved for public diplomacy officers.

• Give PD officers preference when filling senior jobs in the Bureau of Public Affairs, especially the department spokesman and deputy spokesman positions.

• Do whatever is required to have PD officers fill positions in the National Security Council press office.

• All top PD officers should do what the best assistant secretaries in other bureaus are already doing: write extra memos for the EER files of the best PD officers working for them, whether in the field or in Washington. As I can attest from my time on the threshold panel this summer, a first-person memo by an assistant secretary adds extra "oomph" to a personnel file.

• Be generous in writing up PD officers for commendation and nominating them for departmental awards.

Although the myth persists that only seasoned public diplomacy officers can adequately "do PD," the EERs say otherwise.

If at least some of these steps are not taken soon, then I predict that savvy Foreign Service officers will get the message: Doing PD is fine for a tour, but not for a career — unless one is content never to have a shot at senior State Department leadership positions. ■

Julie Gianelloni Connor, a PD-cone Senior Foreign Service officer, served on the 2009 threshold (FS-1 to SFS) promotion board. Currently an office director in the Bureau of International Organizations, she has served in many different regions with USIA and State and has been a public affairs officer, information officer and cultural affairs officer at various posts. She is a member of the FSJ Editorial Board.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Doug Ross

LEADERS OF THE OLD USIA AND STATE HAVE SOUGHT TO ADAPT PUBLIC DIPLOMACY TO NEW PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS AND THE REVOLUTION IN GLOBAL MEDIA.

BY JOE B. JOHNSON

I still remember the sunny day in 1999 when I stood in the lobby of the U.S. Information Agency headquarters in Southwest Washington, D.C. I was looking through a large window on the courtyard, where the ceremony to commemorate the closing of the agency was in progress. Director Joseph Duffy and scores of dignitaries were speaking of USIA's storied history. Across from me, an elevator opened and snapped my mind back to the day's task. Movers emerged pushing office furniture on trolleys, headed over to Foggy Bottom. USIA's Western Hemisphere Af-

fairs Office was already on its way to the State Department.

Ten years later, the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs for the Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau continues to operate, as do the other USIA "area offices" in their respective geographic bureaus. The sixth under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs, Judith McHale, was sworn in this year. The two bureaus established in 1999 (Educational and Cultural Affairs and International Information Programs) stayed in the USIA building on C Street SW until this year.

With social networking, what's new is not so much the underlying information systems and applications as how they are used.

Because most of USIA's Washington staff remained in place when the transfer took place in 1999, a successful merging of the two agencies' cultures was impeded. Moreover, much of the strategy and tradecraft that marked USIA withered. Over the years, many new people have replaced USIA veterans, and the ranks of trained PD officers have suffered ups and downs along with the department's overall work force.

But by fits and starts, successive leaders of the old USIA and State have partially rebuilt the foundations and have adapted public diplomacy, both to new public expectations and to the revolution in global media.

State's New Web 2.0 Strategy

In the mid-1990s, USIA pioneered Web technology with an overhaul of its Information Bureau. At the time of the merger, agency personnel felt certain that the State Department's antiquated technology would hold them back. Their fears were unfounded, however, thanks to constant pressure from the new USIA contingent, and also thanks to former Secretary of State Colin Powell's Diplomatic Readiness Initiative.

The latest and most dramatic change is the State Department's embrace of new media for public outreach. With social networking, what's new is not so much the underlying information systems and applications as how they are used. Feeding Web sites and sending "targeted" messages was the USIA mantra. That was appropriate for that era; indeed, it is still a basic task for public diplomacy. But today the emphasis is on trying to draw people together in online social networks.

Using the Internet to discuss things and transact business has burgeoned all over the world in the past few years. In the March 3 issue of *Business Week* ("Why Widgets Don't Work"), Ben Kuntz explains it this way: "There are three modes, or mindsets, people take on when they use interactive communications: receiving, hunting and doing. You receive a phone call. You hunt for a book at the library. You take an action — say, writing an article such as this. The history of the Web is a transition between these phases."

The latest phase has been dubbed Web 2.0, and the department is definitely testing the waters, if not swimming just yet. It is making its own Web sites more interactive and also setting up pages on commercial Web sites like YouTube and Facebook.

One of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's early speeches was a video appeal to citizens titled "21st-Century Statecraft," reminiscent of the 2008 presidential campaign. (Watch it at www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6PFPCTEr3c&feature=channel_page.) Sec. Clinton talked about citizens' direct involvement in building friendship among nations; touted the department's pages on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter; cited State Department Web pages like the Dipnote blog and ExchangesConnect (http://connect.state.gov); and urged viewers to send a $5 contribution to relief of refugees in the Swat Valley of Pakistan via text message.

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Philip J. (P.J.) Crowley told me: "USIA was a great institution, created for a particular purpose — the Cold War — and for an information environment with relatively few media outlets." The decline of mainstream media is happening faster in the United States than elsewhere, but throughout the world new media are on the rise.

In 2008, the major public affairs Web pages of the State Department all changed to more participatory and visual styles. And a new social networking site, ExchangesConnect, made its debut.

Joe B. Johnson carried out every major public diplomacy and public affairs function during a 33-year career in the Foreign Service. He now consults on government communication programs for the Computer Sciences Corporation and conducts training at the Foreign Service Institute.

• *www.state.gov — The Dipnote* blog was among the first innovations to be added to State's flagship Web site. Now it has been joined by videos of senior officials' speeches and other participatory features, like "Ask the Secretary."

• *www.America.gov* — On these pages aimed at foreign publics, a reader can download the booklet "Being Muslim in America," participate in webchats with U.S. experts, read and comment on blogs about current affairs, take a quiz or answer a poll.

• *www.exchanges.state.gov* — This traditional site lists exchange program opportunities, publicizes exchange programs and hands off the visitor to ExchangesConnect and its Facebook page.

• *http://connect.state.gov/* — ExchangesConnect is usually the first site mentioned when observers talk about social networking. Launched in October 2008, this page claimed more than 12,000 members by August 2009. Both American and foreigner exchange program participants are invited to sign up, as on Facebook and Twitter.

In 2008, the major public affairs Web pages of the State Department all changed to more participatory and visual styles.

But Will It Work?

While these pages' members are growing rapidly, the numbers are still small, and everything is experimental. It will take a while to figure out which approaches work best. Pages tend to be thin on comments, whose number and quality are typical measures of performance.

One standout venture has been America.gov's Democracy Video project, which has attracted more than 900 entries and many more viewers and participants. (You can view the videos at www.youtube.com/user/DemocracyChallenge.) On the other hand, an electronic game for cell phones produced at a cost of $400,000 garnered rather modest usage.

Bruce Wharton, the office director for public diplomacy in the Africa Bureau and a former IIP deputy coordinator, says that social networking programs are evaluated according to three criteria: reach, engagement and credibility — each of which can be measured through readership statistics and Web ratings.

As Wharton says, "We're inviting the world to talk to us." He continues: "I know that I will never be able to create content that's of interest to a 15-year-old Brazilian or a 17-year-old Pakistani." State's pages constantly invite visitors to comment, so that "the reader can see his or her own words published on a U.S. government Web site. People may feel that they've been heard." (PD staffers monitor comment pages for spam and obscenities.)

In order to comply with federal regulations, the department representatives took part in a U.S. government team that negotiated special terms of use for government pages on several major social networking sites. Internal guidelines for employees' work-related participation on commercial sites appear on an internal wiki page, where any employee can register and add information or propose changes.

It's important to remember that overseas opinion is shaped more in Arabic, Russian, Chinese and other foreign languages than in English. IIP and a growing number of embassies employ writers to monitor foreign-based blogs and communities of interest to American foreign policy, and to add comment and information. These in-house bloggers must identify themselves online as government employees. A dozen members of the Digital Outreach Team in Washington post comments in Arabic, Persian and Urdu on selected Web sites to defend against hostile or misleading material. They also publish reports on the intranet about trends in online comment throughout the Muslim world.

Embassies are also beginning to hire writers experienced in social networking to advocate online. That's a new communication model: instead of one broadcasting to many, it's many to many. The practice expands exponentially the number of department employees who can comment on behalf of the government, so it's only a matter of time before a comment, either by a U.S. official or by a foreign reader, creates a public affairs flap. "There have to be some rules of the road," Crowley says, adding, "We have to be prepared to back up our FS personnel."

Cultural Exchanges: Younger, Broader

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchanges was part of the State Department until 1978, when USIA took it over. The program the agency operated retains the same basic contours today; but, unlike in the past, exchanges and cultural programs are targeting high

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school–age individuals, and English-teaching programs have become a medium to reach disadvantaged youth who can't afford to travel.

All exchange programs suffered a downturn after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, prompted heavy restrictions on foreign travelers. But for the past few years, student numbers have been climbing, both for Americans going abroad and for inbound foreigners. Concern about hostility toward the U.S. led Congress to appropriate more funds for State Department exchanges. New monies have concentrated on the Muslim world, displacing to some degree the former Soviet Union as a regional focus.

It's important to remember that overseas opinion is shaped more in Arabic, Russian, Chinese and other foreign languages than in English.

Nearly one million people from America and around the world have already participated in programs conducted by ECA. Last December former Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy James Glassman summarized the role of exchange programs as a tool of public diplomacy this way:

"The problem with exchanges is that they're relatively expensive — though, compared to what the government spends in other areas, maybe not so expensive. So we'd like to do more, and we have increased those exchanges dramatically. They're up 50 percent in the last three to four years. It's a pretty dramatic increase. We know they work, and it does make sense to put resources into things we know work."

Joe B. Johnson

Reading Room 2009

Reduced Budgets, Wildly Inflated Expectations

USIA focused tightly on opinion-makers and future leaders, without spending great sums on youth programs or casting its net widely. But the State Department is now expected to appeal to untold millions of young people — especially in the Muslim world — through mass outreach. Relatively cheap ventures on the Web will not get the job done.

Under Secretary McHale will ask Congress for significant additional funding, probably stressing programs like English Access Microscholarships. Since it started in 2004, this program has allowed some 44,000 teenagers in more than 55 countries to learn English after school and in the summer. The idea is to start a relationship with young persons from poor backgrounds who are seeking a better life, mindful that English opens doors to employment and educational opportunities around the globe.

Cultural exchanges have become more youth-oriented, as well, and more likely to occur outside the traditional concert hall and museum. For example, the Rhythm Road American Music Abroad program, cosponsored by Jazz at Lincoln Center, sends 10 U.S. music groups a year abroad to present original American music, including jazz, urban and roots. Because musicians tend to show off on the Web, this program has a vibrant footprint in social media.

Another major idea comes from Capitol Hill. Senator Richard Lugar, R-Ind., wants to expand venues where diplomats can meet the public outside their secure but remote embassy buildings. USIA's network of America Houses, binational centers and libraries was

downsized and dismantled during the 1990s. But on May 19, the Senate unanimously passed S. Res. 49, which calls on the Secretary of State to consider re-establishing publicly accessible American Centers and consider more accessible locations for public diplomacy facilities worldwide. The Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act mandates collocation of all facilities except those run by the Peace Corps. Unless State can obtain a waiver, this initiative will have to focus on partnerships with local institutions rather than building programs, in most cases.

PD Force Multiplication ... Or Duplication?

Two years after Congress merged USIA into State, terrorists struck the United States, and public expectations changed. The ensuing funding increases for government information and cultural programs were ad hoc and spread across several agencies, while interagency coordination was weak. As a result, State is laboring to recover leadership in public diplomacy.

In one of her first appearances after confirmation, Under Secretary Judith McHale said at the Center for a New American Security: "The national security implications of engagement have not been lost on our colleagues at the Department of Defense, which has become heavily involved in what we call public diplomacy and they call strategic communications."

The Associated Press reported earlier this year that over the past five years, according to Department of Defense budgets and other documents, "the [amount of] money the military spends on winning hearts and minds at home and abroad has grown by 63 percent, to at least $4.7 billion this year. That's almost as much as it spent on body armor for troops in Iraq and Afghanistan between 2004 and 2006. This year, the Pentagon will employ 27,000 people just for recruitment, advertising and public relations — almost as many as the total 30,000-person work force in the State Department."

The figures are not comparable, but DOD's sponsor-

ship of Web sites in foreign languages, public opinion and media research and other "activities of interest to public diplomacy," as one State Department expert calls it, tend to dwarf State's level of effort. That trend may have peaked, however. Faced with growing questions about its role, Defense closed the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Support to Public Diplomacy in early 2009. Both houses of Congress have called for review and clarification of DOD's resources and policies on international information programs.

New words like "engagement" and "three-D diplomacy" may begin to replace the old paradigm and re-cast press and cultural affairs as a truly integral part of diplomacy.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Agency for International Development has hired media relations staff members at its posts around the world. USAID and other agencies sponsor exchange programs that look a lot like State's in many cases. Last year, State's Interagency Working Group on U.S. Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training tallied 249 international exchange training programs, involving about 1.4 million participants and representing a federal investment of more than $1.5 billion. Fourteen federal departments and 48 independent agencies reported activities for the IAWG's FY 2008 Annual Report. Many of these programs are duplicative, but enjoy dedicated staff support.

Previous administrations have done little to regulate and coordinate all these activities. In this administration, Denis McDonough seems set to exercise strong interagency leadership as the deputy national security adviser for strategic communications, with McHale as the lead agency representative. Coordination is at least off to a faster start than before.

Brand Obama

Last June, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Crowley pointed to two "bookend" events since last year's presidential election. "On one end, there's President George W. Bush's final press conference in Iraq, where he has to dodge shoes thrown at him," says Crowley. "On the other end, there's President Barack Obama's speech about U.S.-Muslim relations in Cairo."

Since that time, Sec. Clinton has also incorporated public outreach into her travels more than any other Secretary of State. However, these new official faces won't turn around our foreign policy by themselves. The president's June speech in Cairo drew generally enthusiastic reviews in the region and captured mass-media attention; by all accounts, he broke through Muslim stereotypes about Americans with his call for frank dialogue. Within a few days, however, the media focus returned to traditional points of dispute: the question of Palestine, American military action in Iraq and Afghanistan, and other intractable issues. As more time passes, more and more issues of contention dissipate the glow of a new administration in Washington.

In a way, public diplomacy makes more of a difference today than it did when the U.S. image was in decline. Ironically, when pundits worried about our "failed public diplomacy," there was no way it could address the root problem: genuinely unpopular policies espoused by top leaders who disregarded world opinion. Now that dialogue and negotiation are active again, advocacy can make a difference on concrete issues from climate change to nuclear proliferation.

You Can't Go Back

The collapse of the Soviet Union and ensuing changes in power relations, the disaggregation of news and information media and the rise of the Internet, and the challenge of Islamic extremism did more to reshape public diplomacy than the late Senator Jesse Helms and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, the major authors of the consolidation of USIA and State.

Looking back, it is clear that a new landscape has emerged over the past decade to reshape diplomacy itself. In 1999, the State Department approached USIA as an add-on, indicated by the shorthand "public diplomacy." Now terms like "engagement" and "three-D diplomacy" may begin to replace the old paradigm and recast press and cultural affairs as a truly integral part of diplomacy. But whatever the buzzwords used a decade from now, the disciplines of communication strategy, media relations and cultural diplomacy will remain indispensable to the State Department's mission. ■

PD PRACTITIONERS: STILL SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS

ATTITUDES WITHIN THE FOREIGN SERVICE TOWARD PUBLIC DIPLOMACY WORK HAVE NOT WARMED MUCH A DECADE AFTER STATE ABSORBED USIA.

BY WILLIAM A. RUGH

Throughout the existence of the U.S. Information Agency (1953-1999), the status of its Foreign Service employees was always somewhat ambiguous. They were first referred to officially as "Foreign Service reserve officers" to distinguish them from the State Department's Foreign Service officers. Even when they were given the formal title of FSO, an unspoken but clear distinction remained in the minds of everyone in the Foreign Service.

We assumed that those who were in the political cone would have by far the best chance to reach the highest levels of the career Foreign Service, serving as deputy chief of mission or ambassador. Some economic-cone officers who showed special understanding of political issues were also considered to have a chance to become ambassador, but it was rare that anyone in the consular or administrative (now management) cone would make it that far.

Doug Ross

It was even rarer for a USIA officer to make it to DCM or ambassador, and the tiny number who did were usually considered to be tokens. It was assumed that before the Deputy Secretary of State sent the list of nominees for ambassadorships over to the White House for approval, he had asked the assistant secretaries if they could think of a USIA officer to include in the list as a candidate for a small post because he wanted to have some "balance."

USIA officers were quite aware that virtually all the State Department FSOs they worked with side by side at embassies around the world thought that the work they themselves were doing was more important than anything a USIA officer might contribute. Traditional diplomacy — representing the United States officially to the host government by making formal presentations to officials and reporting to Washington on official relations —

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was, they were convinced, the "real" work of any embassy. The State Department employees who did administrative or consular work were merely performing support functions, as were the representatives of other agencies such as USIA or the departments of Commerce and Defense.

No one ever publicly discussed this hierarchy, but everyone sensed it. In Washington, the physical separation of USIA from State (in buildings on opposite sides of town) helped to make this distinction even more apparent to the people involved. USIA directors from Edward Murrow to Bruce Gelb often felt their agency was not being given the respect it deserved.

Many USIA Foreign Service officers were, however, perfectly happy with careers that gave them increasing responsibility, and they did not regret the fact that they had little chance to become an ambassador one day. This was especially true of those who preferred cultural or educational jobs, because they believed very much in the importance of that work. These FSOs were content to be assigned to the cultural side of the USIA operation in increasingly large posts, or to be a public affairs officer at almost any post. Even many USIA officers who preferred the information side of the work only aspired to be assigned to information officer positions or as a public affairs officer in important or interesting posts.

Whatever their motivations, these officers had all joined USIA because they wanted to perform public service, they were fascinated by the challenges of cross-cultural understanding, and they were convinced that they were doing useful work for their country and the world. They were proud of what they were doing, even though they were aware that some of their State Department colleagues tended not to appreciate its importance. As long as they continued to get periodic promotions and advanced into increasingly responsible USIA assignments, that was enough.

No Longer Separate, but Still Unequal

Because the career paths of USIA Foreign Service officers were quite separate and distinct from those of their State Department counterparts, the latter had little direct exposure to the details of USIA programs and responsibilities. Moreover, even those State officers who were interested in what their colleagues from other agencies did had their hands full trying to excel at their own jobs so they could be promoted. (The competitive environment for all Foreign Service personnel was, and is, rather intense, because it is an up-or-out system with a certain percentage of each grade level being "selected out" each year.) So the typical State Department officer was simply not interested in USIA work because it was not career-enhancing to understand it or do it.

The principal argument for merging the two agencies was to bring public diplomacy closer to policymaking.

When the idea arose in the 1990s to merge USIA into State, the principal argument advanced in its favor was that it would bring public diplomacy (what USIA did) closer to policymaking (what State does). Although many career officers at USIA were apprehensive — rightly, as it turned out — that public diplomacy would be swallowed up in the much-larger State bureaucracy, some of them were also attracted by the idea that the merger might indeed make State officers more aware of the value public diplomacy officers add to the process. Once it was inside State instead of outside it, the PD function would perhaps gain more respect and its practitioners would have more input into policymaking. (Also, those USIA officers who really did want to become ambassador some day thought they might have a better chance as part of State.)

But soon after the 1999 merger, it became apparent that nearly all of these hopes would be disappointed. A 2008 survey of more than 200 former senior USIA officials, many of whom had worked at State after the consolidation, found that 79 percent rated the merger into State as a "disaster," and 91 percent said the merger did not increase the role of public diplomacy professionals in the policymaking process.

Some of the officers transferred to State from USIA ended up in one of the six regional bureaus. The assistant secretaries who headed those bureaus tended to regard these new arrivals primarily as additional bodies to be used wherever they were needed, often filling in as regular desk officers, just like other State Department personnel. Some did PD work, but it was rare that they were consulted in policymaking sessions about the public

diplomacy aspects of various options. Murrow famously complained that public diplomacy personnel were not "in on the takeoffs," but only brought in afterward for the "crash landings." This seems not to have changed with the merger.

Other USIA officers were transferred to new State bureaus, such as International Information Programs or Educational and Cultural Affairs. The latter bureau was headed by an assistant secretary, but both IIP and ECA stayed put across town in the old USIA headquarters at 301 4th Street SW — out of sight and mind of the policy people at Main State.

This dispersal of career PD officers around the State Department destroyed the cohesion and efficiency of the public diplomacy field support function in Washington that had worked very well when USIA existed. All of the transferred USIA officers now had to work through layers of State Department bureaucracy to support public affairs officers and other public diplomacy professionals at embassies and consulates around the world.

The dispersal of career PD officers around State has destroyed the cohesion and efficiency of support for public diplomacy field offices.

Moreover, the new under secretary of State for public diplomacy and public affairs, while nominally the successor to the director of USIA, in fact had none of that position's authority over personnel and budgets, and was therefore unable to provide cohesion and unified direction to PD officers at State or at embassies abroad. And overseas, each PAO reported only to the ambassador, and through the ambassador to an assistant secretary — no longer to a public diplomacy agency in Washington.

While USIA existed, its regional area offices deter-

mined the budgets of field offices and wrote performance evaluations on PAOs (the ambassador wrote a second one). But after the merger each ambassador, who almost always came from a non-PD cone, had a major say in the PAO's budget, and he or she wrote the only performance evaluation that counted.

To protect and nurture the profession of public diplomacy, the Foreign Service should stop trying to make everyone a PD practitioner.

Still Second-Class Citizens

This unfortunate situation has been made worse by a notion that has become a mantra at State: "Every FSO should be a public diplomacy officer." That appealing idea would have great merit if it meant that every Foreign Service member truly understood and appreciated the value of PD work.

Unfortunately, attitudes within State toward public diplomacy have not changed much in the decade since the merger. Regional assistant secretaries back in Washington still see PD-cone officers as pegs to fill slots rather than as public diplomacy experts, while chiefs of mission and their deputies typically regard the PAO and other PD-cone officers at their embassy as utility shortstops available to do almost anything, whether it requires PD skills or not.

Former Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes asked all embassy officers to speak to the press more often, and many have done so. That is good, but public diplomacy involves much more than media interviews. It encompasses long-term educational and cultural programming, and a mindset that is focused on creative ways to conduct a dialogue with foreign publics as an important tool serving American interests. That aspect is not well understood.

PAOs have a new problem, as well. Rather than heading an independent agency's team, with a consolidated Washington office dedicated to backing them up, now they are just another staff position reporting only to the ambassador. And they have no defense against inappropriate assignments that divert them from PD work, because the under secretary for public diplomacy has no influence over PAO assignments

To sum up, then: The 1999 merger destroyed what had been an efficient relationship in public diplomacy management between Washington and embassies abroad under USIA. And at the same time it failed to create what was intended to be a compensating benefit: more respect at State for public diplomacy and its practitioners. So, by and large, the old State Department attitude toward public diplomacy as a second-class function remains intact, although still unspoken.

Adding insult to injury, State is filling many overseas public diplomacy positions with FSOs who are not in the PD cone and have never done that kind of work before. (Regrettably, the under secretary for public diplomacy is not involved in those assignments.) An analysis by veteran public diplomacy professional Mike Canning found that as of January 2008, 127 of the nearly 600 public diplomacy positions at our embassies and consulates had gone to non-PD officers. At the same time, 226 of the PD-cone officers serving abroad were not in PD positions.

In addition, the merger was supposed to open senior diplomatic positions to public diplomacy officers. A few more of them have become DCMs or ambassadors, but as the Public Diplomacy Advisory Commission's 2008 report noted, public diplomacy officers are still "significantly under-represented in the seniormost ranks of department management."

PD Skills Are Different

The main point that has been missed in all of this is that the effective PD practitioner has a very different mindset from other diplomats and an entirely different approach to the career. True, the skills of each type of diplomat in each cone are learned mostly on the job, working under more experienced senior officers who serve as role models. But PD work requires an interest in, and an understanding of, dealing with the general public, the media, universities and others in the local society — and doing so in the open. It also requires management skills and the effective use of a large team of local employees, as well as good interpersonal skills.

Political officers, by contrast, deal mostly with classified matters, work with local officials and have little use for local employees or skills in management or public communication. To put it bluntly, most non-PD officers,

even senior ones, really do not know much about public diplomacy, although many think they do. Fortunately, just as a PD-cone officer does not need to know how to issue a visa or write a report on the local military or economy, a political or economic officer or a defense attaché does not need to know how to process a Fulbright grant. These are all separate functions, and the PD officer can seek collegial support without being able to do their work.

In fact most non-PD officers, even senior ones, really do not know much about public diplomacy, although many think they do.

Whenever a non-PD–cone officer is assigned to the public diplomacy section of an embassy as a cultural affairs officer, however, his or her supervisor, the PAO, must devote time and effort to training and mentoring an individual who is not really interested in public diplomacy work — or, worse, is unhappy with the assignment because it seems to be a sidetracking of his or her career. Similarly, if a political-cone officer who has never done PD work is assigned as a PAO, his or her subordinates will be in the awkward position of having to teach the boss the basics of the job.

What has been lost, then, because of the merger, and because of the notion that "every FSO must do PD," are the professionalism and efficiency that came with the specialization of PD work. It is simply a mistake to assume that every Foreign Service employee needs to be interchangeable with every other one. The best PD officers are those who have come up through the ranks, carrying out increasingly responsible assignments. To protect and nurture the profession, the State Department should recognize that fact and cease trying to make

everyone a PD practitioner.

What about the argument that senior officials, including ambassadors and DCMs, need to understand public diplomacy to do their jobs well, so they should have PD assignments during their careers? Certainly every senior diplomat should have a few skills that PD-cone officers have already developed, such as how to deal with the press, but those can be learned in a specialized training course. And while it is not necessary for a senior diplomat to acquire all the other PD skills, such as how to manage a Fulbright program, he or she should appreciate the purpose of such programs so they can cooperate with the PD professionals to carry them out.

For all these reasons, it is a mistake to insist on assigning non-PD officers to most overseas public diplomacy jobs. Just as many political and economic officers are given rotational assignments at their first embassy — for example, a stint as a consular officer at the entry level — non-PD officers should be assigned to public diplomacy sections only at the lowest levels in larger embassies, where they can learn about the work but not have major responsibilities for doing it.

The under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs has little actual authority over personnel and budgets.

In short, public diplomacy practitioners need to be recognized and appreciated for their unique expertise, best learned via multiple on-the-job training opportunities — just like consular, political or other functions. Young PD-cone officers should be encouraged to work their way up the ladder in increasingly responsible positions, where they will learn to do the job well. American diplomacy will benefit greatly once the State Department revises its personnel policies to take these essential facts into account. ■

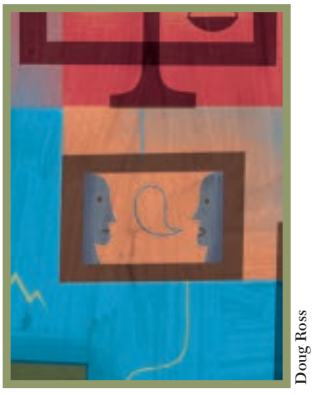
A HOLISTIC APPROACH

INSTEAD OF BRINGING BACK USIA, WE SHOULD UTILIZE ITS BEST PRACTICES TO RESTORE AMERICA'S PD CAPABILITIES.

BY MICHAEL MCCLELLAN

Both in the pages of the *Foreign Service Journal* and elsewhere, many writers have bemoaned the decline of public diplomacy since the demise of the United States Information Agency a decade ago. They generally argue that resurrecting USIA, or creating a new entity, would do much to reinvigorate that crucial function.

While bringing back USIA (or an equivalent agency) would very likely enhance our cultural and informational programming, the problem goes much deeper. Contrary to what many Foreign Service members seem to believe, public diplomacy has never been the sole purview of one government agency or one embassy section. Rather, it is the cumulative result of programs and outreach conducted across all areas of the bilateral relationship — not just press contacts and cultural programming, but the full range of military and civilian assistance. Thus, while USIA in the past, or an embassy public affairs section in the present, may engage in the most visible form of such outreach, that mission should be carried out across *all* areas of U.S. engagement abroad.



Doug Ross

Public diplomacy in this sense is not just about using cultural, educational and informational programming to promote a positive image of the United States (important as those missions are). In an article published by the Vienna Diplomatic Academy ("Public Diplomacy in the Context of Traditional Diplomacy," October 2004) and on the Web site of the United States Information Agency Alumni Association (www.publicdiplomacy.org/45.htm), I proposed the following definition of public diplomacy that focuses on policy outcomes and not on processes: "The strategic planning and execution of informational, cultural and educational programming by an advocate country to create a public opinion environment in a target country or countries that will enable target-country political leaders to make decisions that are supportive of the advocate country's foreign policy objectives."

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Such coordinated engagement becomes even more effective and enduring when manifested in terms of what I like to call "monuments" and "people on the ground." Let me use my recent experiences as a public affairs officer in Ethiopia and Kosovo to highlight the impact of such an approach.

Public diplomacy has never been the sole purview of one government agency or one embassy section.

A Tale of Three Universities

Earlier this year I visited Haramaya University, located near the historic Muslim city of Harar in northeastern Ethiopia. USAID established it in 1954 as an agricultural college to train Ethiopian agronomists and other agricultural experts.

As I entered the administration building's lobby, I saw a series of almost two dozen portraits of the university's presidents. The first six were all Americans; in fact, it was not until 1963 that an Ethiopian was appointed to head the school. Since then, all presidents have been Ethiopians.

The current holder of that office, Dr. Belay Kassa, proudly declared that his university was "built by the Americans" and all the students and faculty know it as the "American university." On the wall outside the main door is a large marble plaque that details the founding of the school, and explains how the U.S. government built it and Oklahoma State University ran it for several years until the Ethiopians could take it over.

Soon after the communist Derg regime overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie's government in 1974, however, the marble sign was plastered over with cement and the portraits of the presidents removed, to deny the United States any credit for the university. For almost 20 years, students in this predominantly Muslim region of Ethiopia came and went without any mention of the founding role of the U.S.

That all changed in 1991, when the regime was overthrown. Once it became clear that communism would not return and it was politically safe to acknowledge America's contributions, an older member of the faculty told the new president about the marble sign. The university quickly uncovered, cleaned and restored it, and it now speaks proudly to the many visitors who come and go every day. Likewise, the portraits of the presidents were pulled out of storage and restored to their rightful place.

At Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia's flagship university and the alma mater of almost all of the nation's leaders for decades, the John F. Kennedy Library stands proudly in the center of the campus. Its American "look" and 1960s-style architecture mark it as a unique structure, reminding every student that it was a gift from the American people. After nearly 50 years, the library continues to be one of the most attractive buildings on campus.

Likewise, while I was PAO in Pristina we took the lead in establishing the American University of Kosovo as a public-private partnership that received no U.S. funding in its startup phase. It has since been able to obtain USAID funding and benefits from USAID scholarships, but that was not true in the beginning. Since opening its doors in 2003, the AUK is now considered the most prestigious university in Kosovo, and its impact as an American institution with American administrators and faculty can hardly be overestimated. It has already educated more than a thousand students, and its graduates are starting businesses, working throughout the government and making a difference across all areas of society.

As an English-language institution, the American University of Kosovo is also beginning to attract Serbian students. Studying alongside Albanian peers, they are making friends across the ethnic divide and building relationships that will have a long-term impact on Kosovo's society.

Rethinking Foreign Assistance

These kinds of "monuments" would seem to be an extremely cost-effective way of achieving public diplomacy benefits in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives. Each project is usually a one-off expense that does not require a long-term financial commitment or ongoing support, yet can generate decades of positive publicity. Sadly, though, they are no longer the stuff of our foreign aid.

Current U.S. assistance to Ethiopia is heavily focused on food security and health (HIV/AIDS and malaria). While these needs are certainly important, in both cases our commitment is unending, with little chance of the assistance program ever becoming self-sustaining. Both types of aid cost vastly more than either the university or the library in today's dollars, and ending either program will generate negative publicity for the U.S. Further, as is usually the case with humanitarian assistance, the mem-

ory of the assistance dies soon after the program stops, with little if any long-term PD benefit to the United States.

Here is an example of how important it is to put "people on the ground." Responding to President John F. Kennedy's call to volunteer overseas, thousands of young Americans joined the Peace Corps and came to Ethiopia. They taught English in cities, towns and villages across the country, each one reaching hundreds of impressionable teenagers and young adults. Several decades later, the ripple effects continue. As I can attest, it is quite common for older Ethiopians (many now in positions of leadership) to talk about "Miss Mary from Iowa" or another favored teacher who made such a profound, lifelong impression on them during their high school years.

Investments in libraries, universities and other "monuments" are a cost-effective way to achieve our foreign policy objectives.

By contrast, today's Peace Corps Volunteers mainly work in health care supporting HIV/AIDS programs. While that serves a critical role, no doubt saving lives, will Ethiopians 30 or 40 years from now be talking about "Miss Mary from Iowa" and how she taught them to use condoms?! Surely the PD value to the United States is not the same, even though important work is being done.

Here is another aspect to consider. In the past, USAID officials were personally engaged with the population in rural areas as they worked in agricultural assistance, water supplies, electrification and other areas of developmental assistance. Those officers did the bulk of the work themselves, spending much of their time in the field.

Now, however, it is common for contractors to run aid projects. Because these individuals are often third-country nationals, the local population does not always make the connection to the idea that we are helping them. Moreover, no matter how diligently USAID works to brand every outreach effort so the American people get credit for what is being done, recipients often think that it is Catholic Relief Services or some other nongovernmental organization that is helping them, not the U.S. government.

At the same time that USAID and the Peace Corps were changing their focus, USIA began shutting down cultural centers around the world, thus removing yet another level of person-to-person interaction between Americans and foreign audiences. Those facilities have been replaced by Information Resource Centers inside embassies and American Corners in outside institutions run by partners. However, actual contact in these places between Americans and local audiences is occasional and short-term.

In addition, the emphasis in exchanges has shifted away from sending Americans abroad to bringing foreign participants to the United States. While such programs are certainly a great and often life-changing experience for the participants themselves, far fewer people benefit from them than when an American Fulbright professor, musician, speaker or other participant goes abroad and interacts with foreign audiences. One Fulbright professor teaching in a university in Ethiopia for one academic year will influence far more people than an Ethiopian professor who spends a year in the U.S. Yet the cost is not significantly greater.

Person-to-Person Diplomacy

As these examples show, the diplomatic side of assistance programs has largely shifted away from putting Americans overseas in direct contact with foreign audiences. Such contact still occurs, of course, but not nearly on the scale of the past.

In terms of building long-term relationships and positive attitudes toward the United States, our focus should not be on "quality time," but on the *quantity* of time that comes from Americans living in foreign countries and developing personal relationships.

The U.S. military understands this, practicing the kind of person-to-person diplomacy that the civilian side of government seems to have lost. In Ethiopia, for example, civil affairs teams work directly with people in the most far-flung areas of the country, digging wells, building and refurbishing schools, and carrying out other projects that affect local communities. Whether they work with contractors or do the work themselves, the units rack up "face time" that can pay dividends.

Military doctors and veterinarians also take part in the Medical Civil Assistance Program and the Veterinary Civil Assistance Program. MEDCAP and VETCAP provide vaccinations, checkups and medical care in conjunction with local medical providers in villages and rural areas. In addition, U.S. Navy port calls often bring thousands of for-

eign citizens into direct contact with the military through ship tours, band performances and other public outreach.

These examples demonstrate that the U.S. military understands the value of having its personnel engage local populations directly to show the "softer side" of American military power and to cultivate positive attitudes toward military personnel. The public diplomacy value that accrues to the military, and by extension to the U.S. and the American people, is much more significant as a result of having this people-to-people interaction.

At the same time that USAID and the Peace Corps were changing their focus, USIA began shutting down cultural centers around the world.

With that model in mind, how can the Foreign Service practice public diplomacy more effectively? Clearly, there must be deep structural changes in the way foreign aid is administered before we can go back to the USIA-era best practices of focusing on "monuments" and "people on the ground." And that obviously will not happen overnight. However, we should begin devoting a certain percentage of U.S. assistance to the establishment of universities and libraries in the developing world. Spending just 5 or 10 percent of our current aid budget this way would have a lasting impact on education there — and on bilateral relations.

Second, public diplomacy practitioners must have more autonomy in decision-making and planning programs. As with development assistance, PD has increasingly become a matter of administration and contract management, rather than having Americans do the work directly on the ground. Under USIA, programming was much more field-centered; it was understood that Washington supported overseas posts, not vice versa. Now the reverse is increasingly the case. To change this, more decision-making should devolve to the

embassy level and become decentralized, with each PAO having greater leeway to design and implement programs in consultation with the country team.

In support of this approach, public affairs officers should be able to direct resources from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in much the same way that they already direct some International Information Programs Bureau funding. Just as IIP gives PAOs "I-Bucks" to spend on a variety of programs, it would be highly useful if PAOs had access to "E-Bucks" that would allow them to allocate resources across all exchange and cultural programs in the way they wish. For example, in Ethiopia two exchange programs had to be cancelled in 2008 and 2009 because of the low return rate of participants (at least half of the participants stayed in the U.S.). Yet those resources could not be redirected to bring more Americans to Ethiopia or to pursue other cultural or educational programs there.

In conducting exchanges, we should put more emphasis on sending Americans abroad than on bringing foreign participants here.

Likewise, political developments in a country might well argue for putting all E-Bucks into a large International Visitors program in one year, while a year later the embassy may want to respond to the establishment of a new university by arranging for a team of American experts and professors who can kick-start curriculum development. With a combination of significant I-Bucks and E-Bucks, the PAO could design a country-specific strategy that would effectively utilize all available resources in support of our foreign policy objectives there.

Spend Wisely, Not More

We can all agree that many people around the world are helped every year through the generosity of the American

taxpayer via programs ably administered by USAID, the Peace Corps and other institutions. But the public diplomacy impact of that assistance has, I would argue, noticeably declined over the past several decades as our focus has shifted from monuments to programs, and from direct assistance to contract administration.

Moreover, "helping people" cannot be the sole objective of our assistance. In the final analysis, aid — like PD — must serve the objectives of U.S. foreign policy.

Restoring America's PD capabilities will not be easy, but it can be done if we look hard at existing programs and redesign them for the challenges that lie ahead.

Restoring America's public diplomacy capabilities will not be easy, but it can be done if we look hard at existing programs and redesign them for the challenges that lie ahead. Fortunately, changing our approach does not have to cost any more than we are already spending.

We do, however, have to spend that money more effectively in each country where we have a presence in order to effect real change in foreign perceptions of America and the American people. We must also put more faith in our own people by decentralizing decision-making to the embassy level, putting more "people on the gound" in direct contact with local populations. Finally, we should allocate a portion of our assistance dollars for "monuments" that will have long-term, lasting impact in each country.

By taking these steps, we may once again begin to see public diplomacy successes across the full range of overseas programs, both military and diplomatic — thereby making it easier for foreign leaders to support America's foreign policy objectives. ■

THE LAST THREE FEET: PD AS A CAREER

ONE REASON PD OFFICERS DON'T GET THEIR FAIR SHARE OF SENIOR JOBS IS THAT THEY DON'T COMPETE FOR THEM. BUT THAT'S FAR FROM THE WHOLE STORY.

BY MONICA O'KEEFE AND ELIZABETH CORWIN

Edward R. Murrow famously observed that "The really crucial link in the international communication chain is the last three feet, which is bridged by personal contact, one person talking to another."

But a decade ago, in preparation for the Oct. 1, 1999, absorption of the U.S. Information Agency into the State Department, public diplomacy officers were preoccupied with making sure our phones would be answered and our lights would stay on. We were busy thanking our drivers and information technology folks, writing new job descriptions for Foreign Service Nationals, obtaining grant authority, memorizing new acronyms and much more.

While most were also mourning the passing of our home agency and predicting difficulties for the practice of public diplomacy, some of us hoped that consolidation would bode well for PD practitioners as individuals, at least in terms of expanding the range of positions open to us. But it didn't exactly work out that way.

Monica O'Keefe and Elizabeth Corwin both joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1985. Now Senior Foreign Service officers at State, Monica currently serves as a member of the Board of Examiners, while Elizabeth is counselor for cultural affairs in Berlin.

The Way It Was

Doug Ross

At that time, it is important to recall, USIA FSOs entered the Foreign Service by passing the same written and oral exams as State officers. Once hired, however, we had our own nine-week orientation course, a separate assignment process and distinct career paths — and we spent most of our time in the field.

Our administrative, educational and policy bureaus were staffed by civil servants, political appointees and a handful of FSOs. Even our "under secretary" for management, the executive secretary to the director and the chief of Foreign Service personnel were all Civil Service employees. This division of labor freed up Foreign Service officers "to close that last three feet," something they couldn't do in Washington.

Our first tours usually lasted between three and 12 months, during which we rotated through several sections of an embassy. On our second, and sometimes third, tours we served as assistant cultural affairs officers, assistant information officers and assistant public affairs officers, get-

ting practical training. We'd then become full-fledged CAOs, IOs and PAOs.

At the senior levels, we filled those three job categories in Cairo, Beijing, Mexico City, Moscow, Bonn, New Delhi and other large, important missions. At any given time, perhaps four or five USIA FSOs would be serving as ambassadors, while others staffed the Public Affairs Bureau and regional bureau press offices back at State.

The public diplomacy function had the lowest percentage of appropriately ranked employees filling DAS and DCM positions as of January.

The rest of us spent our careers in USIA managing our own budgets, buildings, equipment and U.S. and Foreign Service National staffs, ranging from media and educational advisers to cleaning crews. Most of us knew we could do no more than aspire to an assignment as public affairs officer in one of the major embassies somewhere in the world.

Once we were part of State, many public diplomacy FSOs anticipated that our management experience, combined with the opportunity to serve in other cones, would make us shoo-ins to become consuls general, deputy chiefs of mission, principal officers and ambassadors.

Immediately after consolidation, there was definitely an increase in the number of public diplomacy–cone officers serving as deputy chiefs and chiefs of mission. USIA had a number of senior officers with broad policy jobs, and they smoothly moved into similar jobs in the State Department. But since then, the number of PD FSOs serving as COMs and DCMs has declined. While there are currently 50 political officers serving as ambassadors and 17 economic, 14 consular and 11 management, there are just seven PD ambassadors.

As of January 2009, the public diplomacy function also had the lowest percentage of appropriately ranked employees filling deputy assistant secretary and deputy chief of mission positions. Only 3.8 percent of DAS positions are held by PD officers, compared with management (4.9 percent), consular (5.1 percent), economic (8.3 percent) and political (9.4 percent). The percentage of PD officers in DCM positions is only slightly better: 4.8 percent of PD officers hold DCM positions, compared with management (7.4 percent), consular (9.1 percent), economic (10.9 percent), and political (13.6 percent).

Today's Senior PD Officers

For this article, we interviewed about a dozen public diplomacy–cone Foreign Service officers, including some serving at the highest levels of the Service, some who failed to get there and others who have insights into the way the assignment process works. There is, of course, some subjectivity in these accounts, but they track with statistics we garnered from two divisions of the Human Resources Bureau: the Office of Resource Management and Organization Analysis, and the Office of Career Development and Assignments. (We acknowledge, however, that many other bureaus weigh in on personnel decisions.)

One of the main reasons PD officers don't get a proportionate number of jobs as chiefs and deputy chiefs of mission and as deputy assistant secretaries of State is that we don't compete for them. In part, this is a self-fulfilling prophesy — we don't get the jobs, so we stop trying for them. But beyond that, here are several possible explanations:

- Many public diplomacy officers sense that our work is undervalued by the political appointees and the political, economic and management officers who make the assignment decisions. And several senior PD officers tell us that the Foreign Service is still seen through the prism of political and economic reporting and "traditional" Foreign Service policy roles.
- Chiefs of mission and their deputies work with foreign governments, while public diplomacy practitioners are seen as working with the public.
- Most people understand what an information officer or a cultural attaché does, but not as many know what a public affairs officer does.
- Many senior PD officers have never done an out-of-cone assignment, which weakens their attractiveness as candidates.
- There are few Foreign Service public diplomacy positions in Washington, so most senior PD officers spend the bulk of their time overseas. That, in turn, means that they don't know "the building" — and people in Washington don't know them. Nor do they know how to lobby for senior-level jobs.
- Current senior PD officers don't have the range of

policy experiences that they would have had in a separate agency.

• Senior PD officers may not be bidding as strategically as traditional State officers.

One senior PD officer relates the following experience: "Having been out of Washington since the Warren Christopher years [1993-1997], I didn't have a clue as to how the senior assignment process worked. So I bid on a few DCM positions based entirely on family concerns. Much to my surprise and delight, I was short-listed for the only position that met all the criteria for my family. I wouldn't have known what to do at that point if 'Executive Women @ State' hadn't put together a session on getting senior-level jobs. I then threw myself into lobbying, and guess what? The two people I was told to lobby didn't answer my e-mails or return my phone calls. The lack of feedback and transparency will probably keep me from bidding on DCM jobs the next time around."

PD officers who are serving as ambassadors generally agree that the following characteristics or experiences helped them: Being a team player, working hard, making tough decisions to promote U.S. national interests, acting independently and showing good judgment, being able to communicate complex issues to the public and within the department, managing staffs and using foreign languages.

Prospects for Mid-Level Practitioners

We asked these same senior individuals to comment on how they view career prospects for the next generation of public diplomacy officers. Based on their comments, and extrapolating from HR/RMA's statistics, we foresee a sizable crop of PD deputy chiefs and chiefs of mission in the coming years.

First of all, newer PD officers have learned to seek out-of-cone and Washington assignments. Already, half the staff in the Operations Center are PD-cone, and public diplomacy officers are landing other good interfunctional jobs, although not yet in proportion with our numbers.

Embedding PD operations within the larger geographic bureaus has helped those officers become part of the policy team. Some public diplomacy officers have gained policy experience and visibility within the larger geographic bureaus, but other bureaus still maintain a separation.

Encouragingly, newer public diplomacy officers have learned to seek out-of-cone and Washington assignments.

One senior PD officer comments, "I have been extremely impressed with those [PD officers] with whom I interact in my current position. They now quite routinely engage fellow FSOs from other cones, including the most senior officers in the department, and in my experience do so with as much skill and confidence as FSOs from any other cone. They clearly see themselves as fully integrated into the bureau's operation, and see that their talents are very much recognized and appreciated. In general, they have moved well beyond any sense that they are 'outsiders' or in any way not full members of the team.

"My sense is that PD officers, especially to the extent that they are prepared to delve into and commit themselves to working extensively on hard issues under challenging circumstances, will be able to demonstrate the kinds of skills and experience needed to gain such senior policy assignments."

One thing that might hurt mid-level officers is that they are not managing the large staffs and facilities that PD officers were a decade ago. But the lack of our own staffs and facilities means that we work more closely with general services officers and other embassy sections, honing our negotiating, persuasion and teamwork talents.

Entry-level public diplomacy officers have the same problem as their peers in other tracks: they must wait a tour or two before working in their chosen career track. ELOs are impatient to do the work they joined the Service to do. But assuming the new hires persevere and follow the path set by current mid-level officers, they should be able to rise to unprecedented heights and in unprecedented numbers — if they can gain the necessary Washington work experience.

Clouds on the Horizon?

Even as we predict a rosy future for mid-level and entry-level PD officers, we have some concerns.

• There is still the issue of PD work being undervalued. This is evident in the promotion statistics, where few public diplomacy officers are promoted in the classwide pool. It is also evident in how frequently political and economic officers get PD assignments as consolation prizes.

• A key reason we don't do well on classwide promotions is because our accomplishments are long-term or intangible. We can't write in our Employee Evaluation Report that the new prime minister credits his International Visitor trip 15 years earlier with changing his attitude toward capitalism. Nor can we prove that the seminar we organized last year on the Freedom of Information Act just led the host country to pass its own Freedom of Information Act. On the press side, it's hard to write that the absence of an anti-American demonstration or editorial is due to our efforts.

• With PD officers serving less time in those jobs and people from other tracks doing a public diplomacy tour or two, there is less opportunity for hands-on training for PD officers. PAOs, IOs and CAOs all need previous experience to be effective as press and cultural officers.

• Whether it's because of the severity of the deficit of mid-level PD officers or because public diplomacy work is undervalued, a disproportionate number of those positions were "frozen" — that is, not filled in this last round of the assignment process. This has set up a vicious cycle in which there are fewer and fewer opportunities for mid-level officers to hone their skills and knowledge.

• Instead, many of those jobs are going to entry-level officers. This means that mid-level PD jobs are being filled with people who don't have any experience, depriving those already in the Foreign Service of the chance to sharpen their skills. This disconnect will only become worse once the current hiring surge kicks in.

We understand that very recently, the Bureau of Human Resources, in consultation with the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy (known as R), created some 20 new entry-level PD positions, which R and HR will work together to staff. This is a promising development, but not nearly enough considering the number of new PD officers expected to enter the Foreign Service in the next couple of years. Already public diplomacy is one of the most popular career tracks chosen by entry-level officers.

The Big Question

With all this in mind, how can State keep PD officers committed to their cone and make sure they get the experience and training they need?

One thing we can do is make Washington-based public diplomacy assignments more attractive and career-enhancing by connecting them to the policy process. Toward that end, here are some ideas:

We should make Washington-based PD assignments more attractive and career-enhancing by connecting them to the policy process.

- Fill more office director and senior human resources positions with public diplomacy officers, so that we are present at the policy table — and so someone keeps us in mind during the assignment process.
- Convert the PD office director positions into deputy assistant secretary positions.
- Make sure that PD officers are proportionally represented in deputy chief of mission, chief of mission and deputy assistant secretary positions, as a way of encouraging PD officers to bid on such jobs.
- Give R more control over PD assignments, much as CA controls consular positions.
- Acknowledge that PD officers don't easily fit in the political/economic box and develop a more flexible and creative way of making assignments.

While for public diplomacy it's important to go the last three feet, for career advancement the department must go the *first* three feet by providing the training and career path that will keep PD officers motivated. The big question that PD officers should be discussing with their State Department colleagues is this: How can we develop a system where we do both effectively? ■

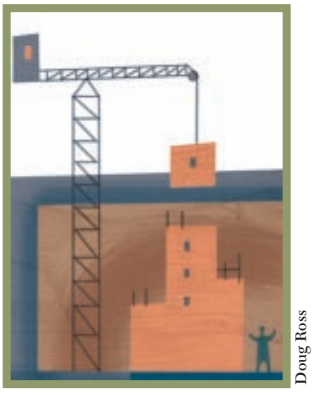
ADDRESSING THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY CHALLENGE

A NEW AGENCY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE — THE U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SERVICE — COULD ENSURE BOTH CREATIVITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PD OPERATIONS.

BY WILLIAM P. KIEHL

Ever since the amalgamation of the U.S. Information Agency into the Department of State on Oct. 1, 1999, there have been calls for a serious re-examination of that reorganization. In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the clamor for rethinking the public diplomacy "challenge" became more urgent and more frequent. But except for some minor tinkering, nothing has been done.

While the quality and cohesiveness of our public diplomacy efforts have continued to deteriorate, over the past decade at least 40 governmental and nongovernmental reports have examined the problem through many prisms and with many lenses. All of these studies agree on one thing: As currently organized and practiced, public diplomacy has become the weakest link in our national security.



Doug Ross

This is neither the time nor the place to re-argue the merits of the various proposals contained in the many reports. Nor is it practical simply to return to the status quo ante with a resurrected, "back to the future" United States Information Agency.

Today, in contrast to the 1950s when USIA was created, there are many government and nongovernmental actors on the public diplomacy stage. Thus, we must look at what is missing in our public diplomacy and identify practical steps that can be taken to address those gaps.

The Current State of PD

The flaws in the present configuration of public diplomacy's "lead agency," the Department of State, are not difficult to discern. To put it bluntly, Foggy Bottom prides

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During a Foreign Service career of 33 years, Kiehl served as principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and in numerous public diplomacy positions at home and abroad. He is the author of Global Intentions Local Results: How Colleges Can Create International Communities *(CreateSpace, 2008), edited* America's Dialogue with the World *(The Public Diplomacy Council, 2006), and has published many articles on public diplomacy.*

itself on its commitment to diplomacy, but it does not understand well or appreciate public diplomacy.

The clash of cultures continues. The traditional State Department mode of operations is Washington-centered, elitist, cautious and secretive — all qualities perfectly suited to the conduct of traditional diplomacy. But they are antithetical to public diplomacy, which is field-driven and encourages egalitarianism, risk-taking and transparency. Similarly, when State looks to public diplomacy, it sees public affairs and focuses on immediate gains when it should be looking at long-term engagement, measuring "success" in decades, not hours. The scale and intensity of this clash of cultures are extreme: to use an oft-cited analogy, "traditional diplomacy is from Mars and PD is from Venus."

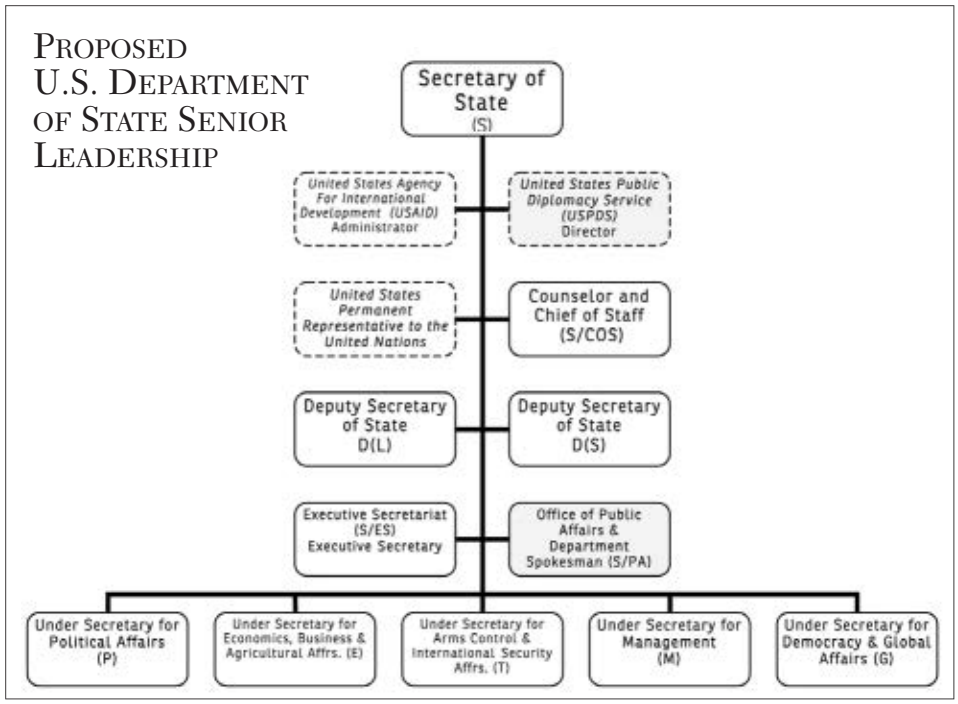
Who is in charge? The overseas practice of public diplomacy is lodged within each of the department's regional bureaus, with a scattering of PD officers placed in functional bureaus, almost as an afterthought. Public diplomacy officers abroad report through deputy chiefs of mission to regional assistant secretaries in Washington, D.C. — not to the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy (known as "R"), as one might expect.

Compounding the problem, there is no global view or oversight. Instead, embassy public affairs officers often find themselves pursuing conflicting and contradictory goals, sometimes becoming nothing more than press agents for their ambassador. There is no chain of command from R to the public affairs officers in the field who implement public diplomacy every day. Equally important, there is no feedback loop from the field to the PD leadership in Washington.

Responsibility without authority spells trouble. Within the State Department, there is no central budgeting, management and personnel authority over public diplomacy. Instead, each regional bureau has its own pot of money and set of personnel to deploy as it wishes, without any means to coordinate its actions with other regions. Even the two PD bureaus in State (International Information Programs and Education and Cultural Affairs) and the overseas PD operations in the regional bureaus operate in parallel universes, with scarcely any coordination.

Despite some tinkering with the original PD structure within State a couple of years ago, the under secretary still commands a relatively small "front office" staff and a tiny fraction of the overall PD budget. It is simply unacceptable that a position responsible for the success or failure of America's public diplomacy utterly lacks the authority to affect the outcome.

The Voice of America suffers from laryngitis. The Broadcasting Board of Governors that inherited the civilian U.S. government international radio networks with the breakup of USIA in 1999 has had its own twisted, tortuous decade-long journey. Without going into the details, suffice it to say that as troubled as public diplomacy is today, its problems pale when compared to the massive and costly dysfunctionality of the U.S. government's civilian international broadcasting as conducted by the BBG. Permitting international broadcasting to "go its own way" since 1999 has led nowhere but downhill.



Source: William P. Kiehl

A lead agency for public diplomacy is missing in action. Recognizing that not only State but also the Department of Defense, the U.S. Agency for Interna-

tional Development and other agencies play an important role in America's engagement with the world, there have been attempts in the past decade to empower the under secretary for public diplomacy, or some entity within the White House or Defense, to take the lead in public diplomacy. The National Security Council has been proposed for this role, as well. The White House announcement in May of the creation of a Global Engagement Directorate is just the most recent example.

None of these solutions has worked because R was too under-resourced and powerless, even within the State Department. The White House Office of Global Communication (created in 2002 and allowed to die unheralded in 2005), the Defense Department's Office of Strategic Information (created after 9/11 and closed under fire in 2002) and the Pentagon's Office of Support for Public Diplomacy (shut down in 2009) were seen variously as ineffective, too propagandistic or sinister. The NSC has had no operational responsibility (at least since the Iran-Contra affair), and thus would be out of its lane, as well.

A United States Public Diplomacy Agency

An agency with a unity of command and clear lines of authority in public diplomacy does not now exist. Should one be created, however, it would be the natural lead agency for PD and could function effectively in that role.

In the narrative that follows, such a new specialized agency of the Department of State — which for convenience we may call the United States Public Diplomacy Service — comes to life (see Figure 1, p. 48). Modeled in part on USAID's relationship with the Department of State and in part on the best of the structure of public diplomacy that worked so well from 1953 to 1999, the organization outlined here also incorporates new technological elements such as new media and the Internet, engagement with the private and NGO sectors, clear interagency coordination, and a culture of creativity and constant evaluation of programs and outcomes. Implicit, of course, is the fact that PD input into the policy process at home and abroad from the beginning is an absolute necessity.

In the proposed new setup, the Bureau of Public Affairs, headed by the department spokesman, is removed from the public diplomacy configuration and placed directly with the Secretary of State, whom it traditionally serves and where it rightly belongs. This change also eliminates potential conflicts on domestic dissemination of public diplomacy materials, prohibited by the 1948 Smith-Mundt Act that constitutes one of the legislative foundations for official U.S. international information and cultural exchanges.

The new agency's own structure makes clear its openness to the private sector and raises research, evaluation and measurement to a central position (see Figure 2, p. 50).

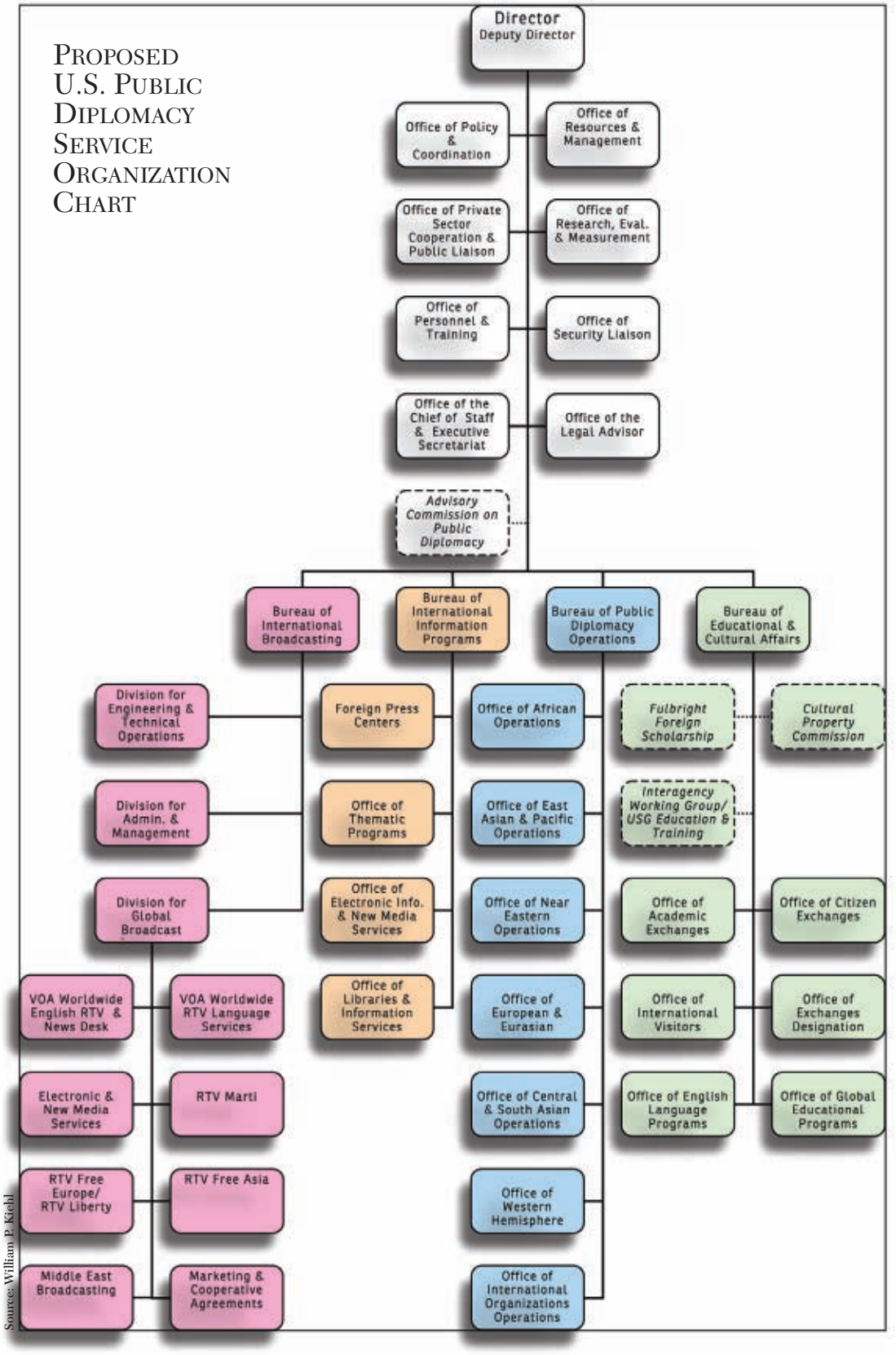
The miracle, however, is not that the USPDS can come to life, but that it can do so in a budget-neutral way. In these perilous times, with growing budget deficits as far as the eye can see, it is essential that even something as important as America's engagement with the rest of the world be measured according to the strictest fiduciary standards. That is why this institutional framework is both lean and horizontal. The $1.7 billion a year currently expended for public diplomacy within the Department of State and the BBG is essentially identical to the budget carried over to the newly proposed structure. In time, this figure should grow to be commensurate with the importance of American global engagement; but initially, no additional funds would be needed.

Because the structure superficially resembles the old USIA, critics may claim this is nothing more than an old agency's recreation, even as they acknowledge that it may have been a mistake to merge it into State. But the USPDS is not USIA with a new name: it is public diplomacy with a new *face*. The new agency within the State Department will be "plugged into" State not only at the top and in the field, but at every level within the department to ensure seamless policy access and guidance. At the same time, it will have the cohesiveness and chain of command now missing from public diplomacy and, as a more agile and flexible entity, the ability to bring more creativity to our global engagement.

A Closer Look

In such a new agency, eight offices would report to the director, including the Office for Research, Program Evaluation and Measurement (including Media Reaction). Based on the successful approach ECA has undertaken in the past, all U. S. Public Diplomacy Service programs and activities will have ongoing evaluation and measurement of their effectiveness. The Office of Private Sector Cooperation and Public Liaison, as the name implies, would be the central point of contact for engagement with the private sector and the NGO community. The Office of Policy & Coordination would serve as a direct link between State's Policy Planning, senior leadership and the new agency, as well as being a point of contact for Defense, USAID and

PROPOSED U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY SERVICE ORGANIZATION CHART



Source: William P. Kiehl

other government agencies at the operational level. It is expected that senior State FSOs and representatives of the uniformed military, as well as PD officers, would staff this office.

A policy officer would be an integral part of each of the geographic offices in the Bureau of Public Diplomacy Operations. These positions, along with the Public Affairs Bureau offices in the State Department's geographic bureaus and in the Office of the Spokesman, would be the main opportunities for constant engagement between USPDS officers and State's non-PD officers. As a matter of agency policy, USPDS officers would be expected to serve at least one tour within State or another national security or foreign affairs agency, at home or abroad, as a junior officer, again as a mid-level officer and, finally, as a Senior Foreign Service officer (that is, for as much as 25 percent of the career). State FSOs would be encouraged to serve in USPDS positions, as well.

The USPDS is not USIA with a new name: it is public diplomacy with a new face.

Administration and management layering are deliberately kept to a minimum in this proposal. Rather than executive offices in each bureau, there is a central Office of Resources and Management reporting to the director, and a satellite Division for Administration and Management in the Bureau of International Broadcasting that inherits the relatively larger staff and budget of the BBG.

Completing the director's front office constellation are a Legal Adviser, a Chief of Staff's office that also functions as the agency's executive secretariat, and an office for security liaison with State's Diplomatic Security Bureau (to ensure smart security and accessibility for overseas USPDS facilities and cultural centers). The Office of Personnel and Training would have the responsibility of providing all human resources, whether they are Foreign Service, Civil Service or Locally Engaged Staff. The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, a presidentially appointed board with the duty to report annually to Congress, would also have immediate access to the director.

The bulk of the new agency's Washington, D.C.-based personnel, however, would reside in just four bureaus, two of which already exist in the Department of State (IIP and ECA). These two bureaus remain largely as they are currently constituted, adding only the Foreign Press Centers that are now a part of Public Affairs. The third and largest bureau, International Broadcasting, would be based on the current BBG, streamlined and reconfigured to include integrated radio, TV and new media.

The fourth bureau, Public Diplomacy Operations, would bring together all overseas PD operations and Washington support at a single location, with six regional offices and an office concentrating on international and multilateral organizations. It is this bureau that would connect public diplomacy's worldwide vision to individual regional and country-specific programs. Overseas PD officers would have a direct link through this bureau with USPDS leadership. These officers would also provide the necessary field perspective to make worldwide public diplomacy programming effective at the local level.

If Not This, What? If Not Now, When?

Aside from the obvious objections to creating a new entity by those vested interests who may feel that in a zero-sum game of resources, one agency's gain will result in their loss, some may simply object to how this agency is structured. Some critics may find the inclusion of international broadcasting an unnecessary complication because of its sheer size or its dysfunctional record.

Others will see in any new PD agency the re-creation of USIA in another form. Still others may fear that unless public diplomacy is totally integrated into the Department of State, PD officers will not have a seat at the policy table and will have fewer opportunities for ambassadorships and other senior policy positions.

Then there will be those who object to the very idea of creating a new structure, claiming that it's not organization but policy that is important. Others may believe that an articulate and charismatic national leader and a foreign policy more in conformity with American ideals are all that is necessary to carry public diplomacy forward. There are, of course, reasonable replies to every one of these objections, though perhaps there is no perfect answer to the PD challenge.

Surely, however, the great mistake would be to do nothing and allow America's public diplomacy to continue to drift. It is time for Congress and the Obama administration to put aside all the arguments and build a structure for our public diplomacy mission before this opportunity is lost.

While creating a functional organization is not poetry or high policy, it is a necessary precondition for getting the job done. ■

CHANNELING THE COLD WAR: U.S. OVERSEAS BROADCASTING

THE NEED FOR A CLEAR MISSION IS AS APPLICABLE TODAY IN REACHING MUSLIMS AROUND THE WORLD AS IT WAS WITH SOVIET-BLOC AUDIENCES.

BY ROBERT MCMAHON

The democratic revolutions that swept Eastern Europe in 1989 came to a stunning and violent end on Christmas Day in Romania with the execution of President Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena. One of the first to learn was Gerd Kallhardt, a translator of the dictator's speeches for Munich-based Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. As the broadcasts streamed in from Bucharest, Kallhardt and a colleague tried to come to grips with the news. "We looked at each other and said: 'What happens now? Communism is dead. There is no more use for the radio,'" Kallhardt recalled several years later.

That sentiment reverberated more loudly at the end of 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. A triumphal period for the U.S.-funded stations like RFE/RL and the Voice of America soon gave way to uncertainty and what looked like the death knell for a number of language services. Barely one year after the Soviet disintegration, the U.S. government moved to cut RFE/RL's roughly $220 million budget by two-thirds. By the end of the decade, overall funding for international broadcasting had dropped significantly, and the Clinton administration and Congress agreed on broader cutbacks to the U.S. public diplomacy apparatus.

Doug Ross

Yet two decades after the Berlin Wall came down, RFE/RL is thriving in a sparkling new headquarters in the Czech capital of Prague, broadcasting around the clock to new "target" countries such as Iran and Afghanistan. Another post–Cold War entity, Radio Free Asia, was set up in the late 1990s according to RFE/RL's "surrogate" model and broadcasts to nine authoritarian states, including China. Prompted by surging interest in reaching Muslim audiences after the 9/11 attacks, Congress approved the creation of Arabic-language satellite television station Alhurra and substantially increased funding for initiatives like television broadcasts to Iran and radio transmissions to tribal areas of Pakistan.

Expanded funding for Persian-language television (VOA's Persian News Network) and radio (RFE/RL's Radio Farda) was credited by a number of media experts with placing U.S. broadcasters in the forefront of international media efforts to inform Iranians when mass protests

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erupted following the June 12 presidential elections. As this article went to press, Congress was considering a budget of between $717 million (Senate) and $745.5 million (House) for U.S. civilian international broadcasting, nearly double the level of a decade ago.

U.S. broadcasting officials claim their 60 language services reach a weekly audience of 175 million listeners, overall, second only to the BBC among international broadcasters. But experts disagree about the value of these new services. Some critics consider them window dressing for an incoherent public diplomacy strategy, while others accuse those directing U.S. international broadcasting efforts of failing to learn the lessons of the Cold War stations. Chief among these lessons is the need for a clearly defined mission, which is as applicable today in trying to reach Muslims in authoritarian states as it was in connecting with captive Soviet-bloc audiences.

Citing a need to inform as well as transform, some analysts also point to a lack of rigor in the way some of the broadcasts are organized and carried out. In particular, concerns about a lack of quality control have arisen in connection with stations like Alhurra ("The Free One"). Media reports in 2007 about Alhurra's airing of speeches and interviews of leaders of Hezbollah and Hamas prompted questions about the journalistic mission of the station. The controversy revealed a lack of knowledge about broadcasting content within the non-Arabic-speaking management. And, among other things, a 2008 report by the University of Southern California Center on Public Diplomacy found that Alhurra failed to meet basic journalistic standards.

Soon after taking office, President Barack Obama set out to engage global publics, especially in the Muslim world. The president's June 4 speech in Cairo called for a "sustained effort to listen to each other and trust each other." Many experts believe that a well-functioning U.S. international broadcasting system is essential to such dialogue, and have expressed hopes the Obama administration and Congress will give fresh scrutiny to the complicated U.S. broadcasting apparatus.

"We still have a rather fragmented collection of international broadcasting entities, and that's holding back their effectiveness," says Kim Andrew Elliott, an audience research analyst in the U.S. International Broadcasting Bureau who writes a blog on PD issues. There also continue to be questions about the impact of the new broadcasting efforts on Muslim audiences in terms of attitudes and opinions toward the United States. "Whether they're moving the needle is not clear," said one congressional staffer in late June, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Broadcasting and Public Diplomacy

U.S. government-funded radio broadcasting has its roots in World War II, when the Voice of America was created at least partly to counter fascist propaganda. Such broadcasting efforts were to become a key part of the broader U.S. foreign policy initiative known as "public diplomacy." That initiative's overarching goal is to advance U.S. policies and values through the use of "soft diplomacy" — the dissemination of information, educational and cultural exchanges, and so on.

During the early years of the Cold War, U.S. policymakers debated the form of public diplomacy most suitable to connect with peoples living in closed totalitarian societies in the Soviet bloc. Some believed that an emphasis on culture, such as the display of American art abroad, would be most preferable. Others argued that targeting information to opinion-makers and influential citizens should be the priority. In the end, the government adopted both approaches, and radio has played a prominent role ever since, currently garnering about half of all U.S. funding for public diplomacy.

The Voice of America's mandate, enshrined in the charter signed into law in 1976, centers on three main points, excerpted here:

- To "serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news."
- To "present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions."
- To "present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively" and "present responsible discussions and opinion on these policies."

During the Cold War, VOA broadcast to the former Soviet bloc as well as to Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. It is worth recalling that its purveyance of culture could be subversive. Willis Conover's legendary jazz broadcasts over 40 years attracted an avid following in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, helping to bolster the image of American culture at a time when official media portrayed it as debased.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, on the other hand, was set up to serve as a substitute news source for the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where governments controlled the flow of information. The surrogate

broadcasters were independent of direct U.S. government control and operated under a requirement to provide accurate and objective information to ensure credibility.

Many of them functioned in ways similar to those of an opposition press, scrutinizing everything from government harvest reports and communist party purges to incidents of religious persecution or human rights violations. Writings smuggled out of the Soviet Union — known as samizdat — and important works such as *The Gulag Archipelago*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn's towering account of life in the Soviet prison system, were serialized on RFE/RL broadcasts. The aim of such coverage was to reveal the weaknesses of the communist system, appeal to national identity and promote the emergence of other centers of power.

Soon after taking office, President Barack Obama set out to engage global publics, especially in the Muslim world.

From the beginning, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty set up research and evaluation sections within individual broadcast services. By the early 1980s they had evolved into more formal research entities that issued regular situation reports on countries in the region and came to be regarded by both American and international audiences as the finest of their kind. The prodigious research and monitoring effort utilized translators like RFE's Kallhardt to gather clips of more than 1,000 newspapers and periodicals from communist states, as well as enormous reference libraries on personalities and institutions from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The last vestige of RFE/RL's research and analysis division was discontinued in 2008 due to funding constraints, just after producing a series of widely lauded reports on jihadi information sources, but its example remains relevant. A. Ross Johnson, RFE's director from 1988 to 1991, says the research unit underpinned the credibility of the broadcasters. "The point that's relevant today is if you're going to do in-depth broadcasting focused primarily on so-called target countries, you've got to be terribly well informed on the situation there," Johnson says. "You can't do that on the fly. You've got to have people with the cultural, linguistic and area expertise, as well."

"A Chaos Developed"

The collapse of the Soviet bloc turned the concept of monitoring on its head. The challenge was no longer parsing the tightly controlled official speeches and news reports of totalitarian states, but instead sorting through a dizzying array of new media, much of it unreliable. "A chaos developed," says Kallhardt, who continued to monitor media from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in the post-communist period.

The U.S. broadcasting infrastructure itself had become increasingly unwieldy. By the end of the 1990s it included a cluster of separate broadcast entities and federal agency and grantee organizations, including RFE/RL and RFA. Each had its own management and, in some cases, what appeared to be duplicative staff and functions. Meanwhile, the budget for such broadcasting was on a steady decline, from $573 million in 1994 to about $420 million by the end of the decade.

Mission drift was also a problem. With the end of the Cold War, U.S. international broadcasters were operating under a variety of mandates, some coping with increasingly outmoded transmission methods and questionable program formats. Audience surveys showed alarming drops in listeners in some key areas. A review of VOA's Arabic service found it was registering barely a whisper, its audience mired at about the 2-percent level for years.

Congress revamped the administrative structure of U.S. international broadcasting in 1994, creating the Board of Broadcasting Governors to oversee all non-military U.S. international broadcasting. The 1994 act also set up the International Broadcasting Bureau to consolidate some broadcast operations within the BBG. IBB provides transmission services to all broadcast operations and has a direct role in support services and audience research for VOA and Radio/TV Marti, directed at Cuba. In addition, for the first time the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty were brought under the same organizational heading.

The bipartisan BBG consists of eight members from the fields of mass communications and foreign affairs, appointed by the president but reporting to Congress. The Secretary of State is an ex officio, non-voting member. Sitting board members serve part-time and may continue in their regular occupations.

The previous entity overseeing the activities of RFE/RL, the Board for International Broadcasting, had been

set up as a firewall between the broadcast services and the government funding them, to prevent tampering. The new entity retains this firewall function, but individual governors now have more authority to micromanage.

Former board member Norman Pattiz, for example, had an enormous influence on the development of programming to the Muslim world. Pattiz, the founder of Westwood One Radio, was closely involved in setting up Radio Sawa and Radio Farda, whose formats focused on pop music as a way of attracting listeners to news content. This drew criticism from some veterans of U.S. broadcasting such as former VOA director Robert Reilly, who wrote in a 2007 *Washington Post* op-ed: "It seems that the board transformed the 'war of ideas' into the 'battle of the bands'."

Post-9/11: Rebirth of a Cause

The inability to prevent the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks marked a "failure of imagination," in the famous words of the 9/11 Commission. It was also widely seen as a result of the breakdown in U.S. public diplomacy. Dozens of think-tank reports over the next few years proposed new ways to engage Arabs and Muslims and undermine the "root causes" of terrorism. The BBG, which had already begun putting together a new strategic plan before the attacks, was given additional funding to broadcast to the Middle East and other critical regions.

In 2002 the board unveiled its strategy under the title "Marrying the Mission to the Market." It emphasized the need to reach large audiences by applying modern broadcast techniques, including music formats, and allocating resources to focus on high-priority broadcast markets. In the aftermath of 9/11, it said, the priority in international broadcasting was improving outreach to Muslim countries.

The plan repeatedly referred to target listening areas as "markets," lending a new, commercial-sounding approach to U.S. international broadcasting. It expressed a determination to reach Muslim audiences where U.S. popularity had plummeted: "We stand ready to launch new model radio and television operations in a multitude of Is-

lamic languages. America's message will be heard and seen." The strategy shift triggered debate, which continues to this day, over whether an attempt to attract larger audiences through methods such as pop music programming subverts the larger, traditional mission of broadcasters to be a forum for information and ideas.

Some critics dismiss these stations as window dressing for an incoherent public diplomacy strategy.

The BBG's strategic plan reaffirmed a central aspect of U.S. public diplomacy — the promotion of freedom and democracy — which it would pursue by disseminating "factual and balanced news and information." Having determined through audience surveys that it had expanded the listening area for U.S. international broadcasting from 100 million to 175 million between 2002 and 2007, the BBG released an updated strategic plan for 2008 to 2013 emphasizing ways of gauging the impact on those audiences. It retained the mission of promoting freedom and democracy and added a new goal: to "enhance understanding through multimedia communication of accurate, objective and balanced news, information and other programming about America and the world to audiences overseas."

The post-9/11 broadcasting emphasis reflects areas of greatest concern to U.S. national security. The board scrapped the Arabic service of VOA and replaced it with Radio Sawa (Radio "Together"), geared to young audiences through a pop music format, in which newscasts are embedded. The board says surveys have consistently shown Radio Sawa is a ratings hit in much of its broadcast region in the Middle East and North Africa.

And in 2003, the board terminated RFE/RL's Persian-language Radio Azadi (Radio "Liberty") and put in its place Radio Farda (Radio "Tomorrow"). Initially, Farda also emphasized pop music, but has since steadily moved to increase the amount of news and current affairs programming and bolster its Internet presence.

Alhurra came one year later, followed by VOA's Aap Ki Dunyaa ("Your World") in Urdu to Pakistan, and VOA's Radio Deewa (Radio "Light") in Pashto to Pakistan's tribal areas near its border with Afghanistan. Music and entertainment programming are also important features of Aap Ki Dunyaa, although it has shifted to more news coverage at times of major developments.

To supporters, the changes spearheaded by board members like Pattiz injected dynamism into a stodgy broadcast system and made sense as a way of stirring interest in the huge under-30 population in many Muslim target states. The approach resonated among a number of members of Congress, gaining powerful allies like then-Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., the current vice president. "How do you get these people to listen? It sure as hell isn't [with] a news program," Biden told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee meeting in 2003. "Does anybody in [the United States] between the ages of 15 and 30 tune in in any numbers to public broadcasting? It's an incredibly important means of communication. What do they do? They listen to rock stations."

But critics say the BBG has abandoned the worthy practice of targeting elite audiences within countries of concern, and muddled the mission of U.S. broadcasting. A 2007 report by the McCormack Tribune Conference Series, whose participants included a number of former top VOA and RFE/RL officials, labeled U.S. international broadcasting "an illogical patchwork, an archipelago of broadcasting organizations lacking clear individual missions and lacking a normal separation between management and oversight."

A Foray into Television

Questions about the mission also surround the latest, and most expensive new arena for U.S. broadcasting — satellite television. There, too, BBG officials stress the importance of editorial independence and objectivity. In the case of VOA's Persian News Network, which provides eight hours of original programming daily, the added resources and editorial model appeared to be having the intended effect of attracting an Iranian audience, especially during the tumultuous days following the June 2009 presidential vote. PNN, along with BBC Persian TV, was deluged with e-mails and other messages during the height of the demonstrations, and both stations attracted the scorn of Iranian authorities. VOA officials emphasized their commitment to balanced coverage. "We don't have in our charter, 'promote democracy, change the world'," VOA spokeswoman Joan Mower told the *Los Angeles Times*.

The largest U.S.-funded television broadcaster, Alhurra, has had fewer such watershed moments. In its first five years the station has confronted perceptions that it is too

close to official U.S. doctrine, as well as charges that its zeal for editorial independence — notably its programming related to Hamas and Hezbollah — directly undermines U.S. policy in the Middle East.

There also continue to be debates about whether or not it is truly building an audience. The May release of the annual viewer survey by the University of Maryland and Zogby International indicated Alhurra was the least-watched station in the region and that viewership was declining. The poll found that its audience share had dropped from 2 percent in 2008 to 0.5 percent in 2009. It also found that Al-Jazeera is still the number-one news source for 55 percent of the Arab world.

In response, the BBG stressed that its own research showed Alhurra was reaching a growing audience. In late spring, the board said the station was reaching 26.7 million people weekly across the Middle East, up almost one million from the previous year.

Concerns about a lack of quality control have arisen in connection with stations like Alhurra.

Meanwhile, questions persist about the quality of Alhurra's programming. A 2008 study commissioned by the BBG and conducted by the USC Center on Public Diplomacy found that Alhurra failed to meet basic journalistic standards, suffered from poor programming and was plagued by perceived bias. But the BBG stands by the station as a purveyor of balanced news and current affairs programming, with an emphasis on human rights, religious freedom and "insight into the policies and people of the United States."

Restore Independence, Clarify the Mission

Some critics have called on U.S. policymakers to phase out international broadcasting efforts altogether, surrendering the field to credible Western sources like the BBC. However, U.S. broadcasters provide a vital service for a

comparatively tiny portion of taxpayer dollars. Moreover, the programs remain popular in Congress, as evidenced by fresh examples of "surge funding" for broadcasts to Iran and Pakistan.

To make performance benchmarks more apparent, other analysts recommend following the BBC model: consolidate the best U.S. assets into one entity, perhaps run by VOA, which would retain editorial independence. Alternatively, a recent report by the Baker Institute says that U.S.-sponsored international broadcasting programs, with the exception of news services, "should be brought under the strategic direction of the public diplomacy policies and goals of the U.S. government as defined by the president, Secretary of State and under secretary of state for public diplomacy."

While the idea of consolidating U.S. international broadcasting services has merit, an even more effective approach would be to return them to their roots.

While the idea of consolidation has merit, an even more effective approach would be to return U.S. international broadcasting services to their roots, granting them the greater independence they enjoyed in the Cold War era while clarifying their missions. To quote the 2007 report of the McCormack Tribune Conference Series: "Broadcasting organizations should be re-empowered to run their own operations without BBG interference … [and] none of the broadcast components should be subordinated directly to the State Department."

The report also urged Congress to "reimpose and strengthen the conceptual and operational distinctions between the Voice of America, whose broadcasts should emphasize American life, values and policies, along with world news, and the surrogate broadcast stations, whose primary function is to stimulate debate within the target area by serving as 'local' broadcasters."

The 21st-century world is awash in information. No factor separates today's U.S. international broadcasters from their Cold War predecessors more starkly. The modern versions of VOA and RFE/RL compete with other media via satellite TV, blogs, cell-phone texting and audio streamed on the Internet, in addition to radio. But while it is true that the media landscape of major Muslim states of concern to U.S. policymakers — Pakistan, Iran, much of the Arab Middle East — is substantially different from the former Soviet bloc, numerous experts have rightfully identified a thirst for credible information and discourse in these countries as great as existed during the Cold War.

Accordingly, extensive cultural and political programming about the United States and detailed, insightful reporting on local developments in target countries remain just as important in today's post-9/11 context as they were during the Cold War. The current hodgepodge of broadcasting entities appears to cover some of this terrain some of the time, but without the necessary rigor.

Obama administration officials, working with Congress, must undertake a vigorous review of the various mandates under which U.S.-funded stations are operating. The administration should then heed the advice of public diplomacy veterans and revive the focus on broadcasting to elites in important countries such as Iran, Egypt and Pakistan, scrapping the music-heavy formatting of stations like Radio Sawa and Radio Farda. There is a place for music within overall programming, but not as an organizing principle aimed at growing "market share."

Congress and the administration should reinforce the separate editorial identity of the surrogates — such as Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Radio Free Asia — keeping them distinct from the Voice of America and protecting them from BBG meddling. They should also provide extra resources to the monitoring of program content and impact. There is too little available research about the impact of U.S. international broadcasting to the Muslim world. Broadcasters need better in-house gauges of program quality, as well, including the expensive but necessary periodic translation of all programming, especially that directed to the Muslim world.

Finally, the administration needs to pursue greater coordination on international broadcasting strategy in the U.S. foreign policy community, and initiate a public discussion of the purpose of U.S. broadcasting. Too few Americans, or members of Congress for that matter, understand it.

While it may seem that today's challenges require new approaches, in fact the greatest problem for U.S. international broadcasting is that it has strayed too far from the fundamentals that distinguished its Cold War success. ■

FS Heritage

The Diplomat and the Duchess

One of America's first (more or less) professional diplomats, a Jefferson protégé, quickly became an effective practitioner of his craft.

By James R. Bullington

In November 1784, a slight, sandy-haired young man arrived in Paris to take up his duties as secretary to the new U.S. minister to France, Thomas Jefferson. At 25, William Short had no international experience and had never even set foot outside his native Virginia. But he had the strong support of his new boss: Jefferson had come to consider him his "adoptive son." A frequent visitor to Monticello, Short had accompanied Jefferson on his narrow escape from General Banastre Tarleton's loyalist troops in 1781. And, as a newly minted lawyer, he helped settle the estate of Jefferson's deceased wife, Martha, to whom Short was related.

Thus began the career of one of America's first (more or less) professional diplomats. Although he had few qualifications and his appointment was based wholly on his personal relationship with Jefferson, Short learned quickly, became an effective practitioner of his craft and, over the next 11 years, rendered important service to the new American nation. Jefferson was a good judge of talent.

Ultimately, however, Short was disappointed both in his professional and personal life. This disappointment seems reflected in his portrait by noted American painter Rembrandt Peale, which was included in an exhibit in the Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg in 2008. The museum identified him as "America's first career diplomat" — a designation that on investigation seems both questionable (there are other potential claimants to that appellation) and not very meaningful (in those days there really were no career diplomats, at least not in any sense resembling our understanding of that term today).

Nevertheless, the portrait piqued my curiosity, and I looked for further information on Short. Thankfully a professional historian, George Green Shackelford, has done the necessary research and published a biography: *Jefferson's Adoptive Son: The Life of William Short, 1759-1848* (University Press of Kentucky, 1993). This profile is based primarily on information in that book, plus an article on "Thomas Jefferson and William Short" published by the

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James R. Bullington was a Foreign Service officer from 1962 to 1989, serving as ambassador to Burundi and dean of the Senior Seminar among many other postings. After a stint in academia, he was Peace Corps director in Niger from 2000 to 2006 and served as editor of the online professional journal American Diplomacy (www.americandiplomacy.org) from 2007 to 2009. Currently retired in Williamsburg, he is a senior fellow at the Joint Forces Staff College.

The portrait of William Short (above) by Rembrandt Peale is used by permission of the Muscarelle Museum of Art at the College of William & Mary. It was a gift to the college in 1938 by Mary Churchill Short, Fanny Short Butler and William Short.

Thomas Jefferson Foundation (www.monticello.org).

Son of the "Squirearchy"

Short's forefather, also named William, immigrated to Virginia in 1635 as an indentured servant. He eventually became a landowner, and his grandson, the third William Short of Virginia, had by 1741 ascended to the "squirearchy," with 40 slaves and a grist mill. The sixth William Short of Virginia, our subject, was born in 1759.

He had a classical education (Latin, Greek, math and philosophy) at William & Mary, where he was a founding member of Phi Beta Kappa in 1777, becoming its second president the following year. He was also a member of the Virginia militia, but there is no evidence that he participated in any combat during the American Revolution. After graduation in 1779, he stayed on in Williamsburg to study law under George Wythe. (John Marshall was a fellow student.) He passed the bar in 1781 — Jefferson was one of his examiners — and moved to the new capital, Richmond, to practice law.

With Jefferson's help, Short was elected to the prestigious Virginia Executive Council of State in 1783, a position that often led to the governor's office — both Madison and Monroe were members of the council early in their careers. He soon became disillusioned with politics, however, and after Jefferson's 1784 appointment as a "treaty commissioner" in Paris, Short was delighted to accept an invitation to become his private secretary.

Jefferson's Secretary

Jefferson replaced John Jay as one of three treaty commissioners, along with Ben Franklin and John Adams. The Treaty of Paris between the United States and Britain, ending the Revolutionary War and securing U.S. independence, had been signed on Sept. 3, 1783. However, several issues remained unresolved, and there were ongoing negotiations with the French, Spanish and Dutch to conduct. So the U.S. treaty commissioners remained in place for two more years.

At 25, William Short had no international experience and, in fact, had never been outside his native Virginia.

Franklin was concurrently minister to France, and Adams was concurrently minister to Great Britain, so in their ministerial capacities they were each authorized an official secretary. Jefferson, however, was not authorized a secretary as treaty commissioner, so he had to hire Short with his own funds (at an annual salary of $1,000 plus room and board). Because Short did not speak French well, Jefferson first sent him to live for six months with a French family in a rural village, where he became fluent.

Franklin returned to the United States in 1785, and Jefferson replaced him as minister to France. Thus Short's official diplomatic career began that October when Congress approved his appointment as Jefferson's secretary. He remained in this capacity until 1789, when Jefferson departed and left Short in charge of the mission.

After Jefferson became Secretary of State in 1790, he secured Short's commission as permanent chargé d'affaires, the first chargé appointed by the U.S. government. He was 31. His new position was nonetheless a setback for Short, as he had hoped to be designated minister.

Diplomat Meets Duchess

At this time Paris was a crucially important diplomatic post for the United States, and this put Short, as secretary and then chargé, at the heart of American diplomacy. He was especially successful in helping to open markets to U.S. exports, and also reported ably on the upheavals of the French Revolution, predicting accurately that mob rule would be replaced by a despot.

Soon after he joined Jefferson in Paris in 1785, following his language training, Short met the woman who became the love of his life: Rosalie, the Duchesse de la Rochefoucauld. Beautiful, charming, well-educated and 23 years old, she was in an unhappy marriage of convenience to her 53-year-old uncle, Duc Louis Alexandre de la Rochefoucauld. When she met the 26-year-old Short at a house party at her country chateau, the two were immediately attracted to one another. They became dancing partners and friends; friendship developed into romance; and before long they were lovers.

Extramarital affairs were not unusual among the French aristocracy of that era, and the duke was willing to tolerate the relationship between his wife and Short so long as they were discreet, which they were. Rosalie's letters, which Short preserved, as well as his seven-year quest (after the duke's death) to make her his wife, indicate their love was strong.

U.S. Fiscal Agent

When Short was appointed chargé in Paris, he was simultaneously named by Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton (on President George Washington's instruction, no doubt as recommended by Jefferson) as the sole U.S. fiscal agent in Europe. It was in that capacity that he rendered his greatest service to his country: negotiating several critical loans at favorable rates, mainly from Dutch bankers (then the most important moneylenders in the world). The loans were used both for domestic investment and to pay off higher-interest loans from France and

Spain contracted during the Revolutionary War.

Short remained in Paris with dual responsibilities as chargé and fiscal agent until 1792, all the while hoping to be named minister. Instead, Pres. Washington gave that position to Gouverneur Morris, naming Short minister to the Netherlands. This made good sense in view of his job as fiscal agent, since it facilitated his relationship with the Dutch bankers; but it also took him away from Rosalie, so he was again unhappy with his assignment.

While in The Hague, Short was much distracted, both professionally and personally, by events in France. The revolution had turned increasingly violent, and Rosalie's husband was arrested and executed. Short managed to put some of Rosalie's property in his name to protect it from confiscation, a maneuver that was honorable in the circumstances — he eventually returned the property to her — but would not likely be tolerated by today's State Department.

Treaty Commissioner in Spain

In 1792, Short acquired a third important position, in addition to his roles as minister to the Netherlands and U.S. fiscal agent, when Pres. Washington named him and William Carmichael (who was then chargé in Madrid) as joint treaty commissioners to Spain. They were to negotiate a treaty defining boundaries, securing navigation rights on the Mississippi and resolving various commercial and maritime claims. Thus, after only seven months of residence, on Dec. 18, 1792, Short departed The Hague for Madrid. On the way, he was able to spend two weeks with the now-widowed Rosalie.

Short's tenure in Spain proved to be professionally frustrating. Soon after his arrival in February 1793, Spain became allied with Britain in the war with France, and this stalled negotiation of a Spanish-American treaty. Little progress had been made by the summer of 1794, when his co-commissioner Carmichael was recalled and Short was named sole commissioner and, concurrently, minister to Spain. At the same time, John Quincy Adams succeeded him as U.S. fiscal agent and minister to the Netherlands.

In 1792, Short acquired a third important position: Pres. Washington named him a joint treaty commissioner to Spain.

Delayed communications and rumors led to the impression in Washington that Short was on poor terms with the Spanish government and that this was the cause of delays in the treaty negotiations. Although this was untrue — or at least no fault of Short's — it led to his replacement as treaty commissioner by Thomas Pinckney in late 1794. In fact, the negotiations had been largely completed by this time.

Adding personal distress to Short's professional frustrations was his deep concern about Rosalie, who had been imprisoned by the Revolutionary Committee of Public Safety in 1793. She was released after 10 months, but Short was increasingly anxious to return to France and be with her.

Resignation and Return

As soon as he learned of Pinckney's appointment, Short submitted his resignation from the diplomatic service. It was only at the personal request of Pres. Washington that he remained in Spain until Pinckney's arrival (in June 1795) to assist with final conclusion of the treaty, which was signed in October. Short resubmitted his resignation as soon as this was accomplished and departed for Paris in November. He planned to marry Rosalie and take her to the United States.

Rosalie welcomed Short and was happy to live with him in France. She proved unwilling, however, to marry him or to move to the United States, probably because she did not want to abandon her aristocratic lifestyle or exchange her position as duchess to become plain Mrs. Short. Always hoping she would change her mind, Short continued to live with her for the next seven years.

Finally, he concluded that marriage was impossible and also decided that he did not wish to spend the rest of his life as an expatriate. So in June 1802, he boarded a ship for Norfolk. After his return to the United States Short's relatives and friends engaged in vigorous matchmaking, but he remained a bachelor for the rest of his life. (In 1810, Rosalie married another aristocrat, the Marquis de Costellano.)

Since Jefferson had become president in 1801 and frequently invited him to Washington, Short hoped for another diplomatic post. However, Jefferson reminded him of his policy that no one would be continued in a foreign mission after an absence from the United States of more than six or eight years — and Short had been absent for 17 years. Moreover, by this time successful participation in domestic politics had become a prerequisite for senior diplomatic appointments.

Short had inherited property in Virginia, but did not wish to become a planter; nor did he want to resume his abandoned legal career. He used his capital and financial skills to invest, with considerable success, in canals and later in railroads, as well as in land on the western frontier. He took up residence in Philadelphia and was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society.

A Brief Appointment to Russia

Near the end of his second term, in 1808, Jefferson wanted to enlist the help of Russia in the growing confrontation with Britain over maritime rights and the impressment of seamen. That summer, after Congress had recessed for the year, he offered Short the position of minister to Moscow. Short was delighted to accept and departed in September of that year for Paris, where he was to await news of his confirmation by the Senate before proceeding to his new post.

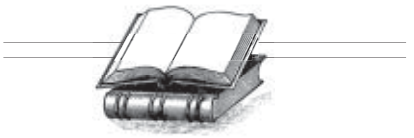
Jefferson handled the politics of this appointment badly, and did not send Short's nomination to the Senate until February 1809, just before leaving office. The result was the Senate's first-ever refusal to confirm a presidential diplomatic appointment, on the grounds of the new mission's cost and the potential for further "entanglement" in European affairs. (In March, President James Madison nominated John Quincy Adams for the same job; he was also rejected at first, but won confirmation in June 1809.)

Unusual for Virginia gentlemen of his time, Short was opposed to slavery and had sold the slaves he inherited when he went to France in 1784.

Short learned of his rejection in Paris and immediately returned to the United States, humiliated by the experience. He never again sought any public office, remaining in Philadelphia for the rest of his life. His investments prospered, and he supported worthy causes, including the abolition of slavery. (Unusual for Virginia gentlemen of his time, Short was opposed to slavery and had sold the slaves he inherited when he went to France in 1784.)

He maintained a regular correspondence with Jefferson, visited him at Monticello on several occasions and contributed to the fund that rescued him from financial disaster in 1825.

William Short died in 1848 at the age of 89. Though disappointed in his professional and matrimonial ambitions, Short nonetheless enjoyed what most people would consider a highly interesting and successful life. He served his country well, and helped lay the early foundations of American diplomacy. ■



BOOKS

We Are the World?

The Great Experiment: The Story of Ancient Empires, Modern States and the Quest for a Global Nation
Strobe Talbott, Simon & Schuster, 2009, $18, paperback, 512 pages.

REVIEWED BY TED WILKINSON

Strobe Talbott's previous five books dealt largely with arms control and/or the USSR, and drew heavily on his 20 years with *Time* magazine. *The Great Experiment* is more ambitious, sounding a clarion call for putting traditional concerns of national sovereignty behind us and embarking on a great experiment of governance by global rules.

As Talbott notes, throughout modern Western history the rewriting of international rules has been a reactive process. The Thirty Years War and the Treaty of Westphalia led to the modern nation-state system. The Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna produced a century of great-power concert in Europe. World War I spawned the League of Nations and World War II, the United Nations. However, the catastrophes that threaten us today — economic collapse, climate change and nuclear proliferation — require us to be *proactive*.

Talbott acknowledges that the path toward the goal of global governance will be incremental. But we must begin the journey.

But is global governance even possible? The first section of *The Great Experiment* examines relevant precedents in rich detail, among them the "ecumenical" empires from Hammurabi through the Seljuk Ottomans that generally tolerated religious diversity and local autonomy, as well as the more recent European and American practice of federalism.

While it may seem surprising today, Talbott recalls that the concept of world federalism was widely endorsed in the immediate aftermath of World War II, even by future presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. He reminds us that the talented young Cord Meyer became the first president of the U.S.-based United World Federalists in 1947, only to leave the organization and join the CIA when it became evident to him that the world must be rid of the scourge of communism before world governance might be possible.

Despite the many ways in which the United Nations has served Washington's interests in the past six decades, the organization's limited effectiveness in dealing with scofflaw regimes has only reinforced general American skepticism about world governance. When Barack Obama described himself as "a fellow citizen of the world" during a July 2008 visit to Berlin, columnist George Will attacked him for not putting America first. Other campaign adversaries seized on "Obama's drive for U.N. global governance."

Talbott admits that his eight years at the State Department, seven as Deputy Secretary of State, gave him "a fresh perspective on the power of nationalism ... as well as the shortcomings of internationalism." He shared President Bill Clinton's acute disappointment with the trend toward American exceptionalism that led to Senate rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the International Criminal Court and the principles of the Kyoto Protocol — even before the 2000 elections. And his initial illusion that George W. Bush as president might emulate his father's cautious, consultative style on international issues was soon dispelled.

Even the more internationalist course that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice set during Bush's second term was largely vitiated by the performance of John Bolton as ambassador to the U.N. Several unnamed political appointees in the White House and the Pentagon went so far as to tell Talbott that the Iraq intervention and the tensions it caused with the United Nations had been "an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone."

In conclusion, Talbott acknowledges that the path toward the goal of global governance must be incremental. The first step is stemming the erosion of international institutions of the Bush 43 years. In parallel, world leaders must focus on stabilizing markets and eliminating poverty in order to avert recurring economic crises. To advance arms control, we must seek further reductions to American and Russian nuclear stockpiles, revive the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, pursue a multilateral cutoff of fissile material production and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

And to combat climate change, we must heed the warnings of the scientific community and take measures that go beyond what may (or may not) be agreed at the Copenhagen summit in December. If we can meet these challenges, Talbot contends, "we will be giving ourselves time and useful experience for lifting global governance in general to a higher level."

The Great Experiment is a great read, both for history buffs and for students of international organizations. Talbott's policy prescriptions are less detailed than his analysis of precedents. But he points out that a more detailed roadmap for the future is to be found in *Power and Responsibility: International Order in an Era of Transnational Threat*, published by the Brookings Institution (of which he is president) earlier this year.

Talbott recalls that the concept of world federalism was widely endorsed in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

Ted Wilkinson, a Foreign Service officer from 1961 to 1996, is the chairman of the FSJ Editorial Board.

Effective Intervention

The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and for All
Gareth Evans, Brookings Institution Press, 2008, $19.95, paperback, 349 pages.

REVIEWED BY LEON WEINTRAUB

We have heard "never again" in response to mass atrocities so often that it is now almost impossible to take that pledge at face value. Even as lessons from the Holocaust recede from memory, the horrors of Cambodia in the mid-1970s, Rwanda in 1994, Srebrenica in 1995, Kosovo in 1998 and Darfur since 2003 have all fueled calls for "humanitarian intervention": international efforts to save endangered innocent lives by means of a robust military response.

Despite abundant lip service, however, that approach has had only limited success as a rallying cry for effective action. The likely recipients of such intervention — small, weak countries caught in a spiral of civil conflict — tend to see the movement as justification for neocolonialist foreign meddling in local affairs. And those nations likely to carry out the actions — significant powers capable of launching expeditionary forces — have been none too pleased with what they viewed as manpower and budgetary drains. Finally, many of the nongovernmental organizations already providing humanitarian relief under challenging, if not horrifying, conditions, do not want their role to be compromised by an implicit alliance with an invading military force.

The person who, more than any other, pushed the policy world to move from that earlier concept to the new intellectual construct of "responsibility to protect" is the author of this book, Gareth Evans. A former Australian foreign minister, he is a previous president of the widely respected International Crisis Group, and was co-chair of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. It was ICISS that, in 2001, published its report, "The Responsibility to Protect," and Evans has become the leading proponent of "R2P" since that time.

This response to genocide turns humanitarian intervention on its head. Rather than the international community having primary responsibility, it is now each sovereign state that has the duty — as an essential part of its

sovereignty — to protect all persons within its borders from those who would do them harm.

As Evans explains, it is only when a state is unwilling or unable to avert such harm that "the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect." In other words, intervention to protect a vulnerable or attacked population must be a last step, not a first one, tried only when less intrusive measures — e.g., incentives, sanctions, boycotts, embargoes, no-fly zones — fail to stop the loss of life.

In addition, after prevention has failed and reaction (including possible military measures) has occurred, there is also a responsibility to rebuild, in order to minimize the chances that the violence will flare up again. The book's Appendix B lists both direct and more long-term structural measures for each category of action.

Many Foreign Service members will at some point be asked to make recommendations concerning possible measures to stop civil disturbances that threaten to deteriorate into mob action and mass violence. It is therefore essential that they be familiar with the full spectrum of actions that can be pursued before any call to "send in the Marines" or the 82nd Airborne.

Evans puts forward a compelling argument for formal adoption of R2P by the community of nations, a step that gained traction at the 2005 World Summit Outcome and was endorsed by the U.N. Security Council in 2006. However, the recent United Nations General Assembly debate saw growing concern (real or feigned) that the "responsibility to protect" would become "a right to intervene."

This is a discussion all members of the Foreign Service would do well to follow, given the grim reality that chaos and violence show no sign of ending in today's world.

Evans puts forward a compelling argument for formal adoption of "R2P" by the community of nations.

Leon Weintraub, a Foreign Service officer from 1975 to 2004, is director of the University of Wisconsin's Washington, D.C., Semester in International Affairs Program.

A Senseless Incident?

Attack on the Liberty: The Untold Story of Israel's Deadly 1967 Assault on a U.S. Spy Ship
James Scott, Simon & Schuster, 2009, $27, hardcover, 374 pages.

REVIEWED BY EDWARD PECK

Israel's fierce attack on the USS *Liberty* during the Six-Day War still generates heated discussion more than four decades later. Although journalist James Scott is the son of a surviving *Liberty* officer, his coverage of the incident is carefully researched, extensively annotated and refreshingly non-polemical. He raises understated but important questions about the decisions to cover up the attack, the

shameful treatment of the survivors, and America's relations with Israel.

Scott vividly reminds us of the undisputed facts of the case:

• The Sixth Fleet had been ordered out of the eastern Mediterranean shortly before the attack, but the warning never reached the *Liberty*, a World War II-era cargo ship converted to an easily recognizable intelligence collector. Unarmed save for four .50-caliber machine guns, she flew the American flag, with internationally registered hull markings several feet high.

• On the morning of June 8, 1967, Israeli jets repeatedly circled the ship, which was in international waters off Gaza. They attacked at 2 p.m., dropping napalm and leaving 821 cannon and rocket holes, as well as damage from machine guns and shrapnel. A surface-launched torpedo blasted a hole 24 by 39 feet in the unarmored hull.

• The attack killed 34 Americans and wounded 171, many seriously — more than two-thirds of the crew, by far the heaviest loss to a U.S. ship since World War II.

• Two protective aircraft carrier missions were launched, only to be recalled on direct orders from Washington. Seventeen hours passed before help arrived.

• President Lyndon Johnson's senior advisers were deeply divided on how to respond, but he accepted Israel's apology for a tragic mistake and reparations. The survivors were ordered to remain silent. There was no Israeli investigation, and no Israelis were punished. Nor was there a congressional investigation. The conduct and findings of a very brief Naval Court of Inquiry have been sharply criticized by key participants.

• The ship's captain kept his heavily damaged, partially flooded ship afloat despite the death or wounding of most of the crew, his own concussion and multiple wounds. He was awarded the Medal of Honor, but it was not presented by the president, or even conferred in the White House, as is customary. Instead, he received it at the Washington Navy Yard without a press release or press coverage. The Secretary of the Navy made the presentation, and the chief of naval operations, who read the citation, later called it "a backhanded slap in the face."

Although Scott is the son of a surviving Liberty officer, his coverage of the incident is refreshingly non-polemical.

Scott's careful examination of thousands of Israeli and American documents, many declassified only recently, indicates that Israel was aware of the ship's nationality both before and during the attack. More significant from both domestic and international relations perspectives are the sometimes questionable actions subsequent U.S. administrations have taken to prevent attention to the attack, and thereby discourage criticism of Israel. Efforts by the survivors to generate a full-scale investigation have been totally ignored.

Many countries pay very careful attention to our close ties to Israel, which they correctly perceive as having a significant impact on our relations with them. *Attack on the Liberty* presents compelling information about a painful aspect of that relationship, without any provocative finger-pointing. It fully merits a careful reading. ■

Edward Peck, a retired FSO, was chief of mission in Mauritania and Iraq and also served in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, among many other assignments. Ambassador Peck has lectured at FSI and other U.S. government institutions and does other public speaking and writing. Resident in Maryland, he travels extensively in the Middle East.

AFSA NEWS

American Foreign Service Association • October 2009

THIRD EDITION OF POPULAR BOOK WILL BE RELEASED NEXT YEAR

AFSA Embraces Role as Publisher

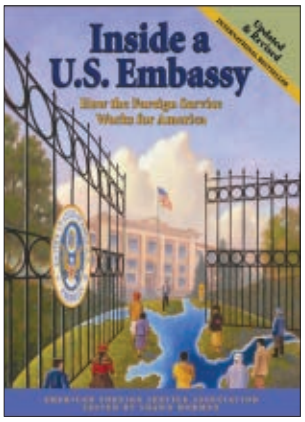
BY FRANCESCA KELLY

How many Foreign Service members have heard the question, "What is the Foreign Service, anyway?" Or, "What do you actually *do* overseas?"

One of the biggest hurdles facing the State Department and other foreign affairs agencies is the lack of knowledge on the part of the average American about what it is we do at missions abroad. And such a void in understanding can easily be filled with misperceptions.

AFSA has striven for many years to demystify the public image of diplomacy. This outreach has included releasing a number of books, including: *Tales of the Foreign Service* (University of South Carolina Press, 1978); *Duty & Danger: The American Foreign Service In Action* (booklet, 1988); *Inside a U.S. Embassy* (1995, 1996, 2003, 2005) and *The Foreign Service Reader* (1997).

However, it was not until issuing the 2003 edition of *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, compiled and edited by *FSJ* Associate Editor Shawn Dorman, that AFSA began to look seriously at marketing, promoting and distributing its own book about the Foreign Service. Six years after publication, the book is still in steady demand, with average sales of 400-500 copies a month. To date, AFSA has sold over 70,000 copies.



Updated and revised in 2005, *Inside a U.S. Embassy* contains Foreign Service stories from around the world, as well as essays about embassy life and work. These include "day in the life" journals that show in detail what a typical day is like for people in various embassy positions, from ambassadors to economic officers and information management specialists.

This past spring, as AFSA was making plans to put together a new edition of the book, the question arose: Should we find a

Continued on page 74

DIPLOMATIC SECURITY AND HUMAN RESOURCES REVISE FAM

Foreign Contacts Reporting: An Update

The following is condensed from a cable by AFSA General Counsel Sharon Papp. For the full text, visit www.afsa.org/contactreporting.cfm.

For more than five years, AFSA has undertaken vigorous efforts to bring about a long-overdue update of the regulations governing the reporting of foreign contacts, cohabitation and intent to marry foreign nationals. The Bureaus of Diplomatic Security and Human Resources have finally revised the Foreign Affairs Manual, working closely with AFSA lawyers and accepting many of our suggestions.

HR has rescinded 3 FAM 4100 Appendix B (old 3 FAM 629, 1988) and developed a new chapter, 3 FAM 4190: Marriage Requirements of an Employee to a Foreign National or to a U.S. Citizen. DS has developed an entire FAM chapter, 12 FAM 270: Security Reporting, that is intended to be the primary resource for security reporting requirements. 12 FAM 270 covers processes relating to marriage to and cohabitation with foreign nationals, implications of dual citizenship for the security clearance process and other incidents that employees with clearances must report.

AFSA encourages all members to familiarize themselves with the new rules, especially those relating to foreign nationals from countries with critical human intelligence threat posts and travel to critical-threat posts. For a classified list of these countries, see the Security Environment Threat List, which can be accessed on the DS Source Web page. Because failure to comply with these regulations can result in the suspension or revocation of your security clearance, curtailment from post and

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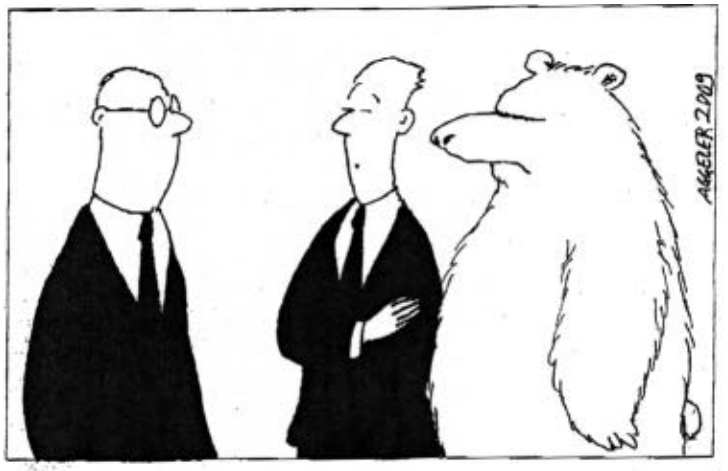
AFSA NEWS BRIEFS

New FSJ Editorial Board Members Appointed

The new AFSA Governing Board has approved the reappointments of Ted Wilkinson as FSJ Editorial Board Chairman and current board members Joseph Bruns, Stephen W. Buck, Julie Gianelloni Connor, Jeff Giauque and George Jones. It also approved the appointments of the following new members: May G. Baptista, D. Ian Hopper, Lynn W. Roche, Rima J. Vydmantas and Mary E. Glantz (Governing Board Liaison). The new Editorial Board, which will serve for two years, had its first meeting on Sept. 15. We welcome our new members and also salute the departing members of the current Editorial Board for their dedicated service: Jim DeHart, Laurie Kassman, Yvette Malcioln, David McFarland and Al Pessin.

Life in the Foreign Service

BY BRIAN AGGELER



"Hodges here is the new Special Envoy for Ursine Affairs."

Support AFSA with a CFC Gift!

You can easily support AFSA by designating #11759 and/or #10646 on your Combined Federal Campaign pledge card. This is a great way to support the entire Foreign Service community.

- The AFSA Scholarship Fund (CFC # 11759) provides merit awards and undergraduate need-based scholarships to Foreign Service children to help pay for their college education. Go to www.afsa.org/scholar/CFC11759.cfm for more information.
- The Fund for American Diplomacy (CFC #10646) reaches out to the general public to demonstrate how diplomacy is our nation's first line of defense and how the Foreign Service works for America. We target our message to high school and college students, business and community leaders, media and our own FS employees. For more information, go to www.afsa.org/CFCFAD.cfm.

Annual Art and Book Fair

It's that time of year again! The annual Art and Book Fair, sponsored by the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide, offers an opportunity to hunt for bargain books and exotic art treasures. The fair will first open its doors from 2-5 p.m. on Oct. 16, for all badge holders and escorted guests, continuing for this same group Oct. 19-23 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. During the weekends of Oct. 17-18 and 24-25, the fair is open to the general public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The sale takes place in the Exhibit Hall of the Harry S Truman Building. Access is from C Street. Visa, MasterCard and personal checks will be accepted. By special arrangement, Silk Road Imports will sell a variety of imported goods on behalf of AAFSW. And the ever-popular Art Corner has been considerably expanded to present a much larger collection of goods from all over the world.

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Filling in the Blanks

During the course of the past year, in my previous job, I helped rewrite a portion of the Foreign Affairs Manual. It was a lengthy, collaborative process, involving coordination with several functional bureaus, other agencies, many overseas posts and all regional bureaus. Dozens of pairs of expert eyes repeatedly reviewed our draft from numerous perspectives. Every portion was scrutinized, tweaked and scrutinized again.

A week after it was published, I got an e-mail from the field pointing out a perfectly valid, obvious omission that nobody had considered.

As that example demonstrates, the rules are not perfect. Much of what AFSA's labor management office does is devoted either to pointing out areas that are inadequately addressed, or assisting the many employees affected by situations unforeseen by the writers of the rules.

In his last column, my predecessor lamented what he called management's hard-line attitudes and unsympathetic insistence on applying the most rigid interpretation of the regulations, which he blamed for most of the grievances and employee discontent that AFSA handles.

When problems arise, those who implement the regulations sometimes imply that employees are seeking to "game" the system, or have failed to comply with regulations, or that something desirable is simply prohibited. Yet often the most important question is whether the rules apply fairly to the situations in which employees have been placed.

As it happens, the change of administration in AFSA coincides with new management in several of the offices most involved in employee issues. My initial meetings with those managers have convinced me that there is much good will and much desire to develop and to support the employees who carry out State's mission throughout the world.

It is my hope that as these managers settle into their new roles, they will resist bureaucratic inertia and will question and improve — rather than adapt to — the procedures currently in force.

AFSA routinely brings to management's attention cases where we feel a rule does not apply, as well as cases where it might be better for the State Department's mission to change a rule affecting employees rather than force employees to follow it.

On a related subject, in my last column I announced my intention to set up virtual advisory committees to bring issues to AFSA's attention. These committees are up and running, and have already provided us with some excellent perspectives on issues important to our members. For example, members have proposed that AFSA:

• Urge the department to implement the provisions of FTR 302-14, and offer a home marketing incentive program for employees who face home-sale losses due to reassignment;

• Push for more specialist-generalist conversion opportunities;

• Promote administrative leave and telecommuting options to enable employees to have a child in the U.S. without burning annual or sick leave, pursuant to the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009;

• Seek application of the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004 to retired Diplomatic Security agents;

• Advocate measures enabling diplomatic passport holders to transit airport security faster, under a "trusted traveler" program;

• Push for a more level playing field on assignments for disabled employees and those with special-needs dependents; and

• Encourage State to expand Eligible Family Member employment opportunities overseas through telecommuting, enabling EFMs at one post to perform work for another post or for offices in Washington.

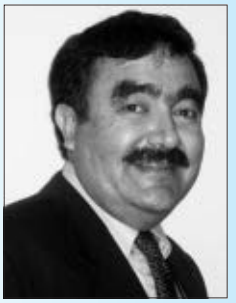
The committees meet by e-mail, and are therefore accessible to employees posted overseas. Please join one if you have issues you care strongly about, or suggest a focus for a new committee. I cannot guarantee that we can change a particular regulation, for there are often good reasons why things are as they are. But I do guarantee that my office will vigorously pursue the issues you raise and consult committee members as we develop positions and take action on issues of interest. Visit the State Web page at www.afsa.org for more information.

If your interest is more general, and if you are a State Foreign Service employee in Washington, I urge you to consider joining the State Standing Committee. This group will meet regularly to discuss AFSA agenda items. As with the advisory committees, my office may also consult with Standing Committee members as we develop positions on issues. The Standing Committee is more structured, meets physically and will address larger, more general issues.

However you choose to participate, know this: AFSA cannot truly be the voice of the Foreign Service unless you make your own voice heard. ❑

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

Where Does USAID Fit?



As an agency that is unaccustomed to being in the limelight, USAID does not often show up on the average citizen's radar screen. In spite of some truly significant successes worldwide, we do not toot our own horn. Indeed, most people would be hard pressed to define what USAID is.

This sad fact is invariably mentioned by the seven public members who serve on our yearly Performance Evaluation Boards. Impressed by what they read in the Annual Evaluation Forms, these private citizens spontaneously vow to talk to their colleagues about the great work we perform for our country.

One reason for our invisibility is a regulatory prohibition on lobbying the general public and Congress. Another reason is that the media prefer to focus on problems, not accomplishments.

But perhaps the main reason is that no one seems to know just where USAID fits in the federal picture.

In the past, with USAID or its predecessor in the lead, foreign assistance programs in health, agriculture, education, business, housing and democracy helped rebuild wartorn Europe, kept the communist threat in check, reconciled ancient enemies and provided emergency assistance to countries suffering natural disasters. However, once the Cold War ended, we cashed in our peace dividend and slashed our programs and staff.

While the 21st century saw a doubling of foreign assistance, this did not translate into a strengthening of the agency. Instead, a large part of this new funding shifted to the State Department, the Millennium Challenge Corporation and even the military. Ironically, the powers-that-be did not trust the agency and, in effect, replaced it with new programs and agencies.

Of late, we finally have renewed support from both the executive and legislative branches of government to expand our staff and in-house expertise. We are now considered part of the national security trident: Defense, Diplomacy and Development. We should be happy, right?

Yes and no. Yes, because USAID is finally getting recognized for our essential service to the country. No, because there is an internecine government struggle regarding our ultimate level of independence. On the one side, the State Department is pulling us closer by increasing control of the budget, policy and planning functions; on the other, Congress is introducing legislation to strengthen these activities at USAID.

Senators John Kerry, D-Mass., Richard Lugar, R-Ind., Robert Menendez, D-N.J., Bob Corker, R-Tenn., James Risch, R-Idaho, and Benjamin Cardin, D-Md. — three Democrats and three Republicans — introduced the Foreign Assistance Revitalization and Accountability Act of 2009 (S. 1524). And in the House, Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif., who is chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, drafted the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (H.R. 2139).

Both these bills have the aim of overhauling and reforming foreign assistance — correcting the damage done by the constant earmarking and the fragmentation and dispersal of aid programs to other agencies. The winner of this tug-of-war will answer the question of where USAID fits. Will USAID simply be an appendage of the State Department, or will we be entrusted to manage the whole set of development tools ourselves? Stay tuned… ❑

Briefs • Continued from page 68

AFSA Joins Facebook

We are happy to report that AFSA has joined the social networking world by establishing its own Facebook page. We encourage all of our members, and other interested parties, to visit the page and become "fans" of AFSA. To do so, simply go to www.facebook.com, type "American Foreign Service Association" into the search box and then click the "Become a Fan" button at the top of the AFSA page. You can also go directly to the AFSA page by visiting www.facebook.com/afsapage.

We will use the Facebook page as another way of getting information to our members by posting links to news items of interest, sending reminders about upcoming deadlines, alerting you about a new issue of the *Foreign Service Journal*, notifying you of upcoming AFSA events and posting pictures from AFSA-related ceremonies and events.

We also hope to have input from members about how we use the page in the future.

We encourage people to post comments and observations. (Please be civil; otherwise we will have to call the Facebook police.) The page is being administered by Marketing and Outreach Manager Ásgeir Sigfússon; any comments or questions about the page may be directed to him at sigfusson@afsa.org.

Members may also want to become fans of AFSA's other pages on Facebook: the *Foreign Service Journal*, our *Inside a U.S. Embassy* book and the national high school essay contest all have their own Facebook pages. ❑

12TH GRADER WRITES ON ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Sec. Clinton Hails AFSA Essay Contest Winner

BY TOM SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton presented the first-place award for AFSA's 2009 National High School Essay Contest to Brian Parker on June 14. Brian, a 12th-grader at Springbrook High School in Silver Spring, Md., submitted his winning essay on the subject, "Challenges to the U.S. Foreign Service: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." Lynn Parker, Brian's mother, and Sharon Cohen, his teacher and mentor, were also received by Sec. Clinton.

MICHAEL GROSS

Sec. Clinton presents the first-place 2009 essay award to Brian Parker, on June 14. AFSA President Susan Johnson is at right.

Thirty finalists received honorable mention certificates for their excellent essays. An AFSA advisory panel of judges selected the winners. This year's winning essay was deemed one of the most outstanding submissions in the history of the contest. The first-place award comes with a check for $2,500.

The goal of AFSA's High School Essay Contest, now in its tenth year, is to stimulate interest in a Foreign Service career among American high school students across the country and abroad. AFSA promotes the contest widely through direct mailings to social studies teachers, as well as through listings on various Web sites, including Facebook. In that way teachers, as well as students, are made more aware of the role of the Foreign Service.

The 2009 contest generated more than 250 submissions from high school students nationwide. Students were asked to analyze and explain how Foreign Service members promote U.S. national interests by participating in the resolution of today's major international problems.

The contest is open to all students in grades nine through 12 attending a public, private, parochial or home school, or participating in a high school correspondence program anywhere in the U.S., as well as U.S. citizen students attending schools overseas. Students whose parents are members of the U.S. Foreign Service or have served on the advisory committee are not eligible.

AFSA consultant Perri Green deserves much credit for ably administering the contest since its inception in 1999. For more information about the essay contest and to read this year's winning essay, please go to www.afsa.org/essaycontest. ❑

Foreign Contacts • Continued from page 67

disciplinary action, seek the advice of the Regional Security Officer or your agency's security office if in doubt about whether to report. AFSA attorneys are also available to give confidential advice regarding these issues.

The regulations cited below apply to all employees and contractors under chief-of-mission authority as well as State Department employees and contractors assigned to the United States. Employees of other foreign affairs agencies serving in the United States should check with their agency's security offices for reporting requirements, or contact AFSA's attorneys for guidance.

Foreign Contract Reporting Requirements

Key requirements of the 12 FAM 262 and 12 FAM 274 regulations include reporting unofficial contacts from critical HUMINT threat posts if both parties agree to a second meeting; reporting "contact and/or associations with persons or organizations who the employee knows or suspects advocate the unlawful overthrow of the U.S. government," or who are associated with foreign intelligence; and reporting a contact any time that "illegal or unauthorized access is sought to classified or sensitive information."

Contact reports should be made within one business day of the contact, using online Form DS-1887. The new rules define what DS considers to be a contact, which includes e-mail, text messaging and chat rooms. If an employee is unsure whether to report a contact, he or she must do so.

The requirement to report relationships with foreign nationals from non-critical HUMINT threat countries involving continuing romantic or sexual intimacy has been eliminated. However, DS may legitimately question employees about such relationships, which could affect an employee's security clearance or assignments.

Requirement to Report Certain Personal Travel

12 FAM 264 and 12 FAM 276 advise that U.S. government employees at post must notify the RSO at least two weeks in

Continued on page 74

Visual Diplomacy: Bringing Art to Embassies

BY FRANCESCA KELLY

WERNER HUTHMACHER

Sol LeWitt, "Wall Drawing #1256: Five Pointed Stars," acrylic paint, installed in 2008 at the American Embassy in Berlin. Gift of the artist through FAPE, made possible by The Honorable Ronald S. Lauder and Mrs. Jo Carole Lauder. A team of artists worked together to install the work.

In Stockholm, a city where the light is diffuse at best and almost nonexistent in winter, a 1932 oil painting by American artist Edward G. Eisenlohr (1872-1961) was recently displayed in the library of the U.S. ambassador's residence. The painting, "Rural Texas," was on loan from the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas, through the State Department's Art in Embassies Program. It depicts a landscape very different from the Scandinavian urban environment outside the residence windows.

Eisenlohr chose warm desert colors to portray a Southwestern canyon, and the oil-on-canvas features hues of salmon and terra cotta for the rock face, contrasted by blue-gray shadows and green trees dotting the landscape. The effect is one of heat and brilliant sunlight.

Thousands of miles south, an outdoor stone installation by New York artist Elyn Zimmerman stands in the courtyard of Embassy Dar es Salaam, commissioned by the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies as part of the newly constructed mission. Made up of a circle of African red granite sculptures surrounding a shallow pool, the large-scale 2004 work is titled "Assembly of Friends." The cool, trickling water provides a fluid contrast to the solidity of the towering figures.

The American art that appears in these and other U.S. missions overseas is there due to the State Department's Art in Embassies Program, complemented by the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies. Although their goals often overlap, the two operate quite differently.

The **Art in Embassies Program**, established in 1963 as a part of the U.S. Department of State and currently under the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, plays a vital role in our nation's public diplomacy through a culturally expansive series of temporary exhibits and permanent collections. For its temporary exhibits, AIEP arranges for the loan of American art from corporate and private collections, galleries, museums and individual artists, to be displayed in the public rooms of more than 180 American diplomatic residences overseas. Each exhibit is on view for a period of two to three years, to coincide with an ambassador's tenure. ("Rural Texas," the painting that was in Stockholm, has just returned home; a new exhibit will follow the next U.S. ambassador to Sweden.)

ART IN EMBASSIES

Mickalene Thomas, "Girlfriends and Lovers," 2008, acrylic, enamel and rhinestones on panel. Currently in AIEP's "Contemporary African-American Artists" exhibit at the Waldorf Astoria, the residence of the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, New York. On loan courtesy of the artist and the Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, Ill.

One reason this loan program is so successful, according to Senior Curator Robert Soppelsa, is because AIEP works "in collaboration with incoming ambassadors to come up with a theme for an exhibit, which can be related to the political, cultural or even geographical climate of the host country and its relation to the United States."

Since 2005, AIEP's mission has expanded to overseeing all facets of building a permanent art collection for newly constructed U.S. missions worldwide. As an integral part of the department's cultural exchange effort, AIEP also has established relationships with thousands of artists and dealers domestically and internationally. This broadened function unites American culture and that of the host country in ongoing artistic conversation by including local talent. For example, a new collection in Beijing features Chinese and American artists.

AIEP provides international audiences "with a sense of the quality, scope and diversity of American art and culture." Internationally known artists such as Martin Puryear and Jasper Johns share the spotlight with emerging artists. The vast majority of art in American missions abroad is accomplished through this vital program.

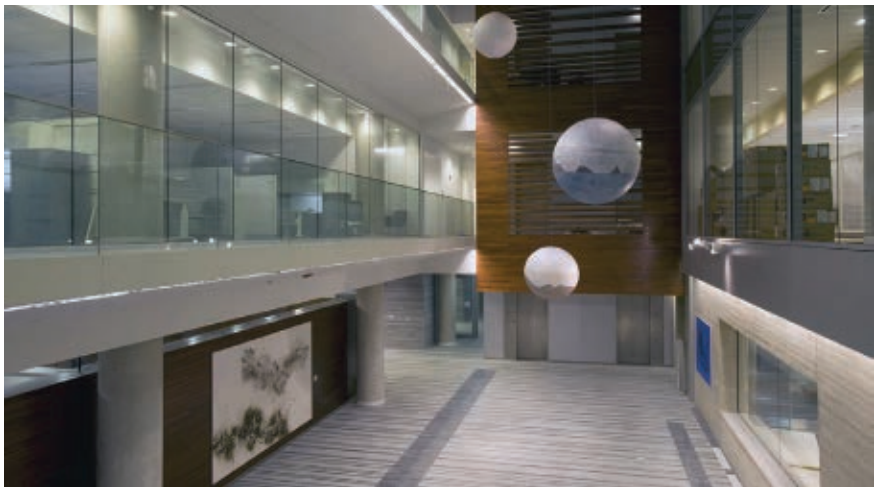
The **Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies** was established as a nonprofit organization in 1986 as a response and a complement to the State Department's cultural diplomacy endeavors. Founders Leonore Annenberg, Wendy W. Luers and Carol Price had

served overseas as spouses of ambassadors. They, along with co-founder Lee Kimche McGrath, had seen the need for more permanent American art in U.S. ambassadorial residences, but their vision soon widened to include all official American buildings overseas. FAPE focuses largely on commissioning works from contemporary American artists — works that are specifically designed to become a permanent part of a particular space.

The foundation has expanded, donating American works of art to more than 70 countries, and is currently funding site-specific installations through its Art in New Embassies program in Kingston, Mumbai, New York, Beijing and Guangzhou. Other programs opened by FAPE include the Leonore and Walter Annenberg Award for Diplomacy through the Arts and the Lee Kimche McGrath Original Print Collection.

In 2001, FAPE assembled an unprecedented collection called "Gift to the Nation" comprised of 245 American artworks representing more than 145 artists. These works have been placed in permanent locations in embassies around the world.

"FAPE is unique," says Director Jennifer Duncan. "As a nonprofit supporting a government agency, it is able to provide the State Department with permanent, monumental works of art, without spending public funds, thanks to the generosity of FAPE's artists and private American citizens."



ART IN EMBASSIES

Works by American and Chinese artists dazzle visitors and employees alike in the Embassy Beijing atrium. Russell Crotty, three spheres, 2004, pencil, paper and mixed media on Lucite: "Sands of Time," 48" diam., "Looking for Baade's Widow," 36" diam., "Western Skies," 72" diam.; Cai guo-Qiang, "Eagle Landing on Pine Branch," 2007, gunpowder on paper mounted on five-panel screen (bottom left); Qin Feng, "West Wind East Water," 2006, oil on canvas (bottom right).

FAPE also provides financial support for restoration projects, such as preserving the ancient statues on the embassy grounds in Rome and refurbishing the Marshall Center, which once served as the headquarters of the Marshall Plan, in the 18th-century Hotel de Talleyrand in Paris.

FAPE carefully selects artists when commissioning contemporary artwork, collaborating with an architectural project team from OBO to locate an appropriate space for the permanent installation. One current project is a giant mural by Dorothea Rockburne that is being readied for shipment to Embassy Kingston. The work, depicting the night sky, honors former Secretary of State Colin Powell, whose family hails from Jamaica.

Although their organizational structures are different, AIEP and FAPE are alike in one important way: each has found a unique way to engage in diplomacy through the arts. Says Duncan: "Art is a universal language that transcends borders. Our gifts enhance our nation's presence overseas by affording people from other countries insights into our cultural traditions."

Next time you find yourself at the ambassador's holiday party or wandering through the gardens of an embassy compound, you may want to point out the art exhibits and sculpture installations to international guests. A lot of thought, time and funding, as well as hard work from the folks at both AIEP and FAPE, go into our nation's "visual diplomacy."

For more information on the Art in Embassies Program, please visit http://aiep.state.gov.

To find out more about the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, please go to www.fapeglobal.org. ❑

FOUNDATION FOR ART AND PRESERVATION IN EMBASSIES

Elyn Zimmerman, "Mkusanyiko wa Marafiki/Assembly of Friends," 2004, African red granite. Gift of the artist to U.S. Embassy Dar es Salaam through FAPE.

Publisher • Continued from page 67

"real" publisher or continue to publish it ourselves? Initial queries to several publishers brought strong interest.

And, when Dorman attended an international studies conference in New York City, she found enthusiastic interest from a number of academic publishers there.

But she had what she describes as an "aha!" moment — "a little like the end of *The Wizard of Oz*," as Dorman puts it — as she sat with an editor from a small publishing house looking out over the exhibit hall filled with dozens of publishers. "But you're *already* a publisher," the wise editor said. "Why would you want to give your book away? They'll give you $1 a book, when you could be making $10."

Still, it took several months of research and negotiations with a number of publishers, leading to five firm offers, to convince AFSA that, indeed, there's no place like home.

"I realized that not only do we know the core market for this book, but we're probably already reaching it," explains Dorman. "Having embraced the fact that AFSA is a small publisher — now called 'Foreign Service Books' — we are planning to consider more book projects after the next edition of *Inside a U.S. Embassy* is completed."

And, of course, AFSA will continue, as it has for the past 85 years, to publish the *Foreign Service Journal.*

AFSA did not altogether abandon the idea of working with a publisher to help give the book a wider reach, however. As of Aug. 1, Potomac Books, Inc., took over distribution of the current edition of *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, in an arrangement that should provide the best of both worlds. Potomac will also be the exclusive distributor for the new edition.

Potomac Books is a good fit for AFSA. Formerly part of the British publishing house Brassey's Ltd., the Northern Virginia-based company publishes books on U.S. and world history, intelligence studies, sports, security studies and international affairs.

Inside a U.S. Embassy is one of AFSA's best outreach tools, and helps fulfill AFSA's mission to educate the public about the role of the Foreign Service and diplomacy. The book is on the syllabus for more than 40 university courses and is used for a number of military training courses, as well. A Chinese publisher wants to issue a Mandarin-language edition of the book.

In addition, U.S. embassies have purchased hundreds of copies for representational use, and the State Department's recruiting division uses the book for outreach and education. Their bulk orders have helped sustain the book program, and AFSA is grateful for their longstanding support.

Finally, the book has inspired those curious about a Foreign Service career to take the next crucial steps in getting hired. At our July recruitment lunch for newly minted Foreign Service generalists, where AFSA was offering complimentary copies of *Inside a U.S. Embassy*, an entry-level officer was overheard commenting to his friends, "That book changed my life."

Find more information about *Inside a U.S. Embassy* and a link to Potomac Books at www.afsa.org/inside. ❑

Foreign Contacts • Continued from page 71

advance of personal travel to any country with a critical HUMINT threat post. State Department employees stationed domestically should directly notify DS's Office of Counter Intelligence. Domestic employees of other foreign affairs agencies should contact their agency's security office.

Reporting Requirements for Employees with SCI Access

Please see 12 FAM 264.2(g) about the special security obligations required of employees having access to sensitive compartmented information.

Reporting Requirements for Employees Who Intend to Marry or Cohabit with a Foreign National

DS has shortened the time period for reporting intent to marry to 90 days. Reporting your intent to marry or cohabit with a foreign national is intended to allow DS to provide you with a determination on whether the intended relationship may have an adverse impact on your security clearance, and for HR to do the same for your career — *before* you take action. 12 FAM 275 contains new details.

Employees must submit a security package and obtain approval from the chief of mission or principal officer prior to cohabiting with a foreign national (or a U.S citizen who is not on your orders) in U.S. government-provided housing. (Domestic employees must submit a security package to DS within 30 days from the start of a cohabitation relationship with a foreign national.)

Seeking approval to cohabitate is separate and distinct from declaring a member of household to the COM under 3 FAM 4181.

Regardless of duty location, DS will conduct appropriate checks on the intended foreign national cohabitant or spouse.

Other Reporting Requirements

There are several additional reporting requirements of which employees should be aware, including financial issues, such as bankruptcy; arrests; and applications for foreign citizenship. Please see 12 FAM 270 for details.

Possible Consequences of Not Reporting

Failure to report foreign contacts, travel to a critical-threat country, or intent to marry/cohabit may result in the employee's curtailment from post, suspension/revocation of security clearance, and/or disciplinary action. Accordingly, when in doubt report the contact or call one of AFSA's attorneys for confidential guidance.

If you wish to speak with an AFSA attorney about any of these situations, please direct your questions to General Counsel Sharon Papp or AFSA Labor Management Attorney Zlatana Badrich at (202) 647-8160 or papps@state.gov or badrichz@state.gov. ❑

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The sale take place in the exhibit Hall of the Harry S Truman Building. Access is via the C Street entrance. VISA, MasterCard and personal checks are all accepted. Also, "Silk Road Imports" will sell a variety of goods on behalf of AAFSW. The popular ART CORNER has been expanded to present a much larger collection of goods from all over the world.

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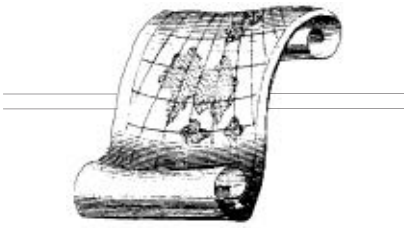

REFLECTIONS

Throwing in the Towel in Casablanca

BY MICHAEL VARGA

The first months of my assignment to Morocco's commercial capital were a disappointment. Like any young man who has seen Humphrey Bogart's "Casablanca," I was prepared for romance, intrigue — maybe even a little unconventional reporting. Instead I collected data on the Moroccan fishing fleet as it battled Russian trawlers overfishing just off shore. And I investigated textile exports to the U.S. that originated in the city's sweatshops but were labeled "Made in Indonesia." Not exactly the stirring highlights for a memorable tour. But then things got interesting.

One day I returned after a morning at the port with the Fisheries Research Center's director to find a message to call "Fouad" (not his real name), a professor of English language at Hassan II University. Students there had decided to produce a play I'd written about migrant farm workers who had slipped into America, mostly from Cuba and Haiti, dreaming of "the good life." Instead, they wound up on the circuit of following the seasons, traveling from Florida to Wisconsin, harvesting fruit, vegetables and even Christmas trees for pitiful wages, all the while falling deeper into debt.

At the time, Morocco's king — Hassan II — was trying to build the third-largest mosque in the world and was graciously allowing Moroccan citizens the opportunity to contribute to the effort. In other words, people were being shaken down in every quartier of the country for donations.

The students weren't willing to give up that easily.

The students had asked my permission to rewrite some of the lines for the overbearing overseer — a nasty character who never appears on stage but is a barking voice ordering them around — substituting the king's pronouncements.

It was risky, and I didn't want the students to get into trouble. Since the play would be performed in English, they were sure that most French-speaking/Arabic-speaking Casablancans would be oblivious to their clever ploy. But it would heighten their satisfaction in performing, they told me.

When I returned Fouad's call, he told me that he was bowing out as the play's director. He didn't have sufficient time to rehearse, he said. This was a radical turnabout. Fouad had been excited about working on the play and was using it as an exercise for his students to master some unique idioms ("throwing in the towel" was one the migrants often used as the sun beat too hot and the quota looked impossible to meet). Some students who were not even in the play were writing term papers about phrasing differences among the characters.

I suspected that either Fouad had gotten cold feet about the daring use of the king's own words, or someone in the Interior Ministry had been tipped off and pressured him to abandon the project. And I accepted that this probably meant the end of the production.

The students weren't willing to give up that easily. We were just a few weeks from opening night, and they insisted that I step in as director.

In the end, overflowing crowds rewarded the students with ovations each night. In the heart of noisy, smelly Casablanca, they brought to life the plight of farm workers in forgotten fields who fought against "throwing in the towel." The students escaped any punishment from the government and relished their little moment of flicking the king's nose.

Now in retirement, I often think back on that tour in Casablanca. And every now and then I dig out the play and remember how the students threw themselves into it, becoming migrant farm workers in America, struggling to escape unpleasant pasts and dreaming of new lives, free of an overbearing boss.

Paging through the album, I notice again that Fouad is not in any of the photos. And I ponder the fact that while I was mystified by his sudden change of heart, the students seemed to know in their souls why he withdrew. ■

Michael Varga served in the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Morocco and Canada. His stories and essays have appeared in a wide array of journals, and four of his plays have been produced and one published.

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